A HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES
IN NEW SOUTH WALES, 1909 - 1939

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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This work is dedicated to

TOMBO WINTERS

who has never failed to respond to a call for support and who has never ceased to struggle for justice for his people
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of Aboriginal people have been closely involved in this work, but I particularly wish to thank Tombo Winters, Isabel Flick, George and Mavis Rose, Jack Campbell, Joe and Isobel Flick, Julie Whitton, Kevin Cook, Terry Widders, Barbara Flick and Karen Flick. Their support, encouragement and criticism has been generous and invaluable. All of the people who agreed to participate in this research shared a part of their lives with me, offered me their time, their interest and patient teaching for which I am very grateful.

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Access to source material was granted by Brewarrina, Walgett, Moree, Duaringa and Talbragar Councils and by the Pye family, owners of Gingie station. C.D. Rowley and the late A.P. Elkin allowed me access to unpublished papers. Dennis Jeans has kindly permitted me to reproduce two maps from Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901.

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my own original work and has not been submitted in whole or in part for a higher degree at any other University or institution.
SUMMARY

This thesis traces NSW Aboriginal political activity and demands from 1909 to 1939. In examining the background to the situations of Aboriginal communities in the early 1900s, two factors appear to have been of major importance. One was the degree of compatibility between Aboriginal and rural capitalist land use. The other was the labour requirements of rural industries. There are clear indications of internal colonial economic relations continuing until at least the late 1930s. As European land use intensified regionally, Aborigines attempted to secure their position by demanding tenure over land of significance to them. Initially, the creation of reserves was as much a result of this Aboriginal demand as of white settler desires to segregate Aborigines.

Although seldom interfering in situations satisfactory to white employers, the Aborigines Protection Board had formulated a policy aimed at the "dispersal" and "mergence" of Aborigines by the early 1900s. The period of its most aggressive implementation of this policy was from 1910 to 1921. Aboriginal resistance over this period was restricted to individual communities.

By the 1920s, white rural townspeople, with few economic links with Aborigines, had become the major lobby acting on the Government, demanding State intervention to create a thoroughgoing system of segregated residential, educational, medical and other facilities. Increased white demand for land caused revocation of many Aboriginal reserves. Inter-community Aboriginal political links were formed in regions where revocation caused the loss of reserves which Aborigines had taken an active role in acquiring and which had been providing an agricultural or residential base.

The Protection Board conceded to the pressure from towns to segregate Aborigines when the Depression demonstrated the apparent failure of "dispersal" by disproportionately high Aboriginal unemployment. Although a long term commitment to "dispersal" was retained, amendments to the Protection Act greatly extended State power over Aborigines, particularly to restrict Aboriginal domicile. This power was perpetuated in the "new" Welfare Board legislation from 1940. Professional anthropologists provided an ideological rationalization for this extension of State power.
The conditions faced by Aborigines across the State began to appear more similar during the 1930s. The Depression exposed more clearly than ever before the systematic exploitation of Aboriginal labour. The implementation of the new Board policy further threatened Aboriginal civil and residential rights. In this context, regional inter-community networks of political organization developed into broader coalitions.

The demands made by Aborigines were consistent over the 1909 to 1939 period. These demands were not simply those of a civil rights movement. Community, inter-community and inter-regional coalition demands were always of a dual nature. Aborigines wanted equality with white citizens in economic, social and legal spheres. They also wanted, however, recognition of their prior and separate rights to land, demanding secure tenure over land of significance and the opportunity to establish an independent economic base.
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## ABBREVIATIONS

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<td>AAL</td>
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<td>Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association</td>
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<td>AIAS</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies</td>
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A NOTE ON USAGE

An apostrophe, indicating the possessive, has not been used in the phrases "Aborigines Protection Board" and "full citizens rights". For both phrases, contemporary usage of an apostrophe was erratic. In the case of the Protection Board, Aborigines had no control and the Board so seldom acted in the real protection of Aborigines that the possessive is not justified. For "full citizens rights", there is some confusion as to whether "citizens" was used in the singular or plural and often the word appears to have been a contraction of "citizenship". In direct quotations, then, the varied contemporary usages have been allowed but in the body of the text no apostrophe has been used.
INTRODUCTION

A HISTORY OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES
IN NEW SOUTH WALES, 1909-1939

This is one history and one history only of Aboriginal communities in NSW. The most obvious limitation to this work is that it is a history of Aboriginal communities written from the outside, by a white Australian with a limited and continuously reassessed understanding of the internal values and dynamics of Aboriginal communities.

This is not, therefore, a history of Aboriginal community life nor a "social" history nor a study of changes within Aboriginal communities over the period from 1909 to 1939. Such histories will clearly be essential to a complete understanding of Aboriginal community history. Some observations on these themes have been made through the course of this work, arising from discussions with Aboriginal people. These observations have not, however, been extensively developed as it is at least difficult, and perhaps impossible, to do this from the outside.

What this work does attempt to do is to describe the pressures generated by the changing contexts within which Aboriginal communities existed and to relate these to the political activity and demands of Aboriginal communities. Such activity and demands have been defined as those of the formal, inter-community Aboriginal political organizations, of the type recognized by Europeans and as those of Aborigines at the community level.

It is not to be expected that the full reasons for which Aborigines might make a demand will be expressed in that demand itself, particularly when stated most formally and publicly. The political demands of minority, colonized groups are usually, of necessity, framed in expressions, models and images recognizable to those in power. So the demands of Aboriginal communities, whether expressed by formal organizations or in the actions of single communities, indicate what Aborigines wanted but not necessarily why they wanted the objects of their demands.

Aborigines have at times, however, indicated the complex of reasons for which they made specific demands and some discussion of
these reasons has been included in this work. This discussion is not intended to be complete or exhaustive: the reasons for Aboriginal political demands will be more fruitfully explored with and by Aboriginal analysts.

The work for this thesis was initiated and has been carried out on the premise that Aboriginal recollections, perceptions (past and present), interpretations and criticisms of my developing analysis were all essential. While more documents created by Aborigines were found than was expected for the period under study, the majority of available documents have been written by whites and reflect their priorities and interpretations. Aboriginal experiences and interpretations of their own past have been largely undocumented and instead remain in the memories of Aboriginal people, to be transmitted orally. These memories, the past recounted and therefore interpreted in the present, must form a crucial part of any history of Aboriginal communities. Together with Aboriginal-created documentation from the period under study, they must be juxtaposed and compared with white-created documentation to begin an analysis of Aboriginal history even from the "outside".

Discussions with Aboriginal people have shaped my view of the issues of importance to Aboriginal communities, of the areas of major impact of economic, governmental and white general community actions and have enhanced and expanded my interpretation of white-created documentation. The responsibility for the analysis reached, however, lies with me and remains a white view, although one which has changed and hopefully will continue to change as my learning from Aboriginal people continues.

There has been very little research into the history of Aboriginal people in NSW in the early twentieth century. This has not been accidental but has instead resulted from the general white assumptions, incorporated in the work of A.P. Elkin from the 1930s and perpetuated by most later white writers, that there was simply little of interest to look for in south-eastern Australia.

In terms of theoretical approach, the field of race relations in general has until recently been held by the liberal social scientists. Their work on Aborigines in south-eastern Australia has usually appeared as an appendage to studies which have continued to
focus on northern and western Australia.

C.D. Rowley's important but necessarily eclectic trilogy¹, published 1970-71, functioned on a descriptive analogy with colonialism based on the "moving frontier" principle that change occurs in a regular pattern in relation to time and distance from the point of initial invasion. His criterion for defining an area "colonial" appears to be the predominance of "full-blood" Aborigines in the Aboriginal population. Although he cites other criteria, his demarcation of "colonial" and "settled" areas coincides precisely with this population distribution and cuts across coherent areas of land use and rural industry organization². Rowley's analogy with colonialism had no more than descriptive power. It enabled him to compare post-1945 Aboriginal political activity in "colonial" areas with the decolonization movements of the third world³, but left him in difficulties when explaining the 1930s political movements in southeastern Australia, an area he regarded as "settled" by the twentieth century.⁴

He has resorted, somewhat cautiously, to the theory of "institutionalization", which has been developed to a greater extent by Frank Stevens.⁵ While claimed to be a derivation from Erving Goffman, this concept is no more than a simple amalgamation of Elkin's "pauperization" and Oscar Lewis' "Culture of Poverty" models and is similarly ahistorical.⁶ The "institutionalization" concept has led to assump-


2 Compare maps on p xi and p2, and see pp1-3,14, Remote Aborigines.

3 Ibid, eg, p12.


tions about south eastern Australia which are parallel to those of Elkin: that is, that there was little of interest occurring and certainly no active role taken by Aborigines socially, economically or politically between the end of armed conflict and the advent of professional social scientists into administration in the late 1930s. Any Aboriginal protest occurring during and after the 1930s was based on reaction to the (to Rowley and Stevens) inexplicable perpetuation of white prejudice but also, following Lewis, on Aboriginal misperceptions of reality and inability to respond to "progress".

The more recent attempt of R.A. Wild to analyse Australian race relations in a Weberian sociological framework has been subject to the valid criticism that it explains nothing and in its few empirical applications is simply misleading.¹

More useful theoretical approaches appear likely to emerge from comparative marxist race relations analyses. M. Hartwig's suggestion that H. Wolpe's model of internal colonialism in South Africa may be applicable in Australia is important although there are a number of difficulties, some of which Hartwig has noted.² There are others, particularly the difference between the South African situation in which the conserved, non-capitalist mode of production occurs on land separate from that of the mining-industrial complex into which colonized workers are recruited and the situation of the Australian pastoral industry, where both modes of production require the use of the same land.

Wolpe's theory is nevertheless useful and not least because it directs attention to specific economic relations and points out the advantage to the capitalist economy of the conservation of the non-capitalist mode of production. His argument, however, is aimed at relating economy with ideology. This thesis does not attempt to develop the economic or ideological elements of Wolpe's argument in relation to NSW. There is as yet insufficient empirical data to


fully test the theoretical concepts involved. There are, however, certainly indications that the economic relations described by Wolpe functioned during the period under study and I have suggested the areas where this theoretical approach is relevant.

Unpublished post-graduate historical material has, however, produced important empirical data for the mid and later nineteenth century. A. Curthoys' work on the 1856 to 1883 period provides significant insights into the relationship between changes in European land use and the situation of Aborigines. S. Johnston's study of NSW Government policy from 1880 to 1909 produced some extremely important empirical evidence. The weight of Elkin's work was such, however, that Johnston, despite her own empirical data, reached conclusions in conformity with Elkin's "historical" theory that "protection" policies represented "segregation" and contributed to increasing "pauperization".

For the twentieth century until the mid 1930s there are very few historical secondary sources indeed. An unpublished undergraduate thesis by D. Dwyer continued to focus on Government policy but he rightly questioned Johnston's argument that the NSW Aborigines Protection Board was a segregating body. A more useful work is the as-yet unpublished account by J. Fletcher of the development and (he argues) the demise of the system of segregated schooling for Aboriginal children in NSW from 1788 to 1947. Fletcher, too, has focused on the policy of a Government agency, the Education Department, but as the school has become such a central institution in white community life he has also explored the dynamics of white-Aboriginal relations in rural towns.

D. Barwick's work on south western NSW and Victorian Aboriginal

communities is extremely important. Barwick and J. Beckett have been
the major anthropologists to have published work which extended their
original synchronic research in NSW into an historical dimension.
The reception of Barwick's work has, however, been a marker of resis-
tance to the view of south eastern Aborigines as economically and
politically active and, particularly, as agriculturalists. Her doc-
toral research was completed in 1963, was well known to Rowley during
the writing of his trilogy and the essentials of her historical in-
formation was published in 1972 yet the situations she documented
have continued to be regarded as somewhat of an aberration.

Beckett's work in far western NSW pastoral areas has been use-
ful, notably his recent article on the life of George Dutton, both
for Beckett's observations and for the Aboriginal oral information
recorded.¹ Even Beckett's original research was far more positive
than Elkin's work in relation to NSW, but as late as 1978 Beckett was
still using Elkin's model, albeit critically, to explain the context
for George Dutton's life story and had avoided the central conflict
between this "intelligent parasite-pauperization" model and the sit-
uations described by Barwick.

B. Hardy's Lament for the Barkindji² is also a source for some
Aboriginal oral information but her work is indeed a lament, drenched
with images of Aborigines as passive and pathetic "dependente:s" on
pastoralists or on Government. While it is possible that Hardy was
influenced by Elkin's "pauper" concept through Beckett's work, it is
more likely that she has simply reflected the perpetuation of the
same stereotypes which imbued Elkin's writing.

The most important change in the nature of available literature
concerning south eastern Australia has been the publication over the
last decade of a number of autobiographies by Aborigines from this
region. Reference to these works has allowed, for example,
R. Broome's Aboriginal Australians³, which draws heavily on secondary

¹ "A Study of a Mixed-Blood Aboriginal Minority in the Pastoral
West of New South Wales", unpub MA, ANU, 1958.
"Kinship, Mobility and Community among Part-Aborigines in Rural
Australia" in International Journal of Comparative Sociology,
V.6, No.1, March 1965.
"George Dutton's Country: Portrait of an Aboriginal Drover" in

³ Sydney, 1982.
sources with no attempt at theoretical analysis, to present an out-
line of south eastern Aboriginal history which at least concedes
Aboriginal presence and action.

The autobiographies of Jimmie Barker, Margaret Tucker and Ella
Simon and the fictionalized autobiography of Monica Clare's novel
Karobran, have each been only lightly edited by whites\textsuperscript{1}. Phillip
Pepper's more recent family history\textsuperscript{2} has been an important innovation
in form, with Pepper's own account unedited and juxtaposed with a
chronological account, to provide a context in a formal style more
recognizable to whites as "history". Pepper's book, among other
things, makes explicit the central questions raised not only by the
earlier Aboriginal autobiographies but by oral historical evidence.
These questions are how the experiences of individuals and their
current perceptions of their own past can be related to the general
stream of events and to an analysis of those wider events. This
thesis offers no specific answers to those central questions but the
questions themselves have been the motivating ones for much of the
research involved.

The sources for this thesis include both Aboriginal recollec-
tions of the past and documents created by Aborigines and whites.
There are obvious problems in the collection and interpretation of
Aboriginal oral evidence by a white researcher, not least among
which is the high degree of inter-racial tension and hostility exist-
ing in Australia. Discussion of the more detailed complexities of
this issue has, however, only recently been opened and will prove
extremely important as more Aboriginal views are heard.\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Mathews J (ed): The Two Worlds of Jimmie Barker, Canberra, 1977.
\item You Are What You Make Yourself To Be: The Story of a Victorian
\item Working Party of Aboriginal Historians, 1981: "Aboriginal History
in the Bicentennial History, 1788-1988: A celebration of our res-
istance to colonialism" in Bicentennial History Bulletin, 3,
pp21-25.
Barwick D: "Writing Aboriginal History: Comments on a Book and its
Reviewers" in Canberra Anthropology, V.4, No.2, October, 1981,
pp74-86.
\end{enumerate}
As my personal relationships were and have remained strongest among Aboriginal communities in the north west of the State, this has been the principal area in which my discussions with Aboriginal people have taken place, although I have also talked with some people from the far west and the north and south coast. The concentration of discussion with Aborigines in the north west has introduced two types of regional bias into the thesis which it has not been possible to overcome entirely. The people with whom I talked in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett were a reasonably representative cross-section of the elderly Aboriginal people in those towns, some of whom had been and were still active politically, while others had neither taken a role nor an interest in Aboriginal political movements. The people from other areas, however, have usually been involved in current Aboriginal political activity and are people I have met through my own association with that movement.

Some discussions were tape-recorded, during others notes were taken and many more were informal talks in the context of social or political activity. A list of the more formal "interviews" has been included in the Appendix. The biographical details shown of the people involved will make clear that there are many Aboriginal communities from which I have not gained personal recollections. This problem has been partly overcome by the fact that surviving Aboriginal-created documentation is far more common for the east and south west of the State than for other areas, largely because of the varied region stories of Aborigines in NSW. Oral and documentary sources are, however, complementary rather than equivalent sources and so a regional unevenness remains. The imbalance can be removed only with detailed regional collection of Aboriginal oral evidence, and while some of this work has been done or is being done at present


there is a clear and urgent need for more research.

The use of oral evidence in this thesis has been limited to the conventional approach of relating oral accounts of specific incidents to documentary material. The accounts of individual participants in any incident have been compared with each other and where possible with contemporary documentation. Aboriginal oral accounts have proved to be extremely accurate wherever such cross-checking methods were available. My interpretations of any incident have in turn been discussed with the Aboriginal people who spoke about it initially.

The only published sources of Aboriginal opinion during the 1909 to 1939 period were some north coast newspapers for the 1920s; the metropolitan, Dubbo and north coast press for the late 1930s; the pamphlet "Aborigines Claim Citizens Rights!" by Bill Ferguson and Jack Patten and the newspaper Patten edited during 1938, The Australian Abo Call. There is also, however, a statement by Joe Anderson on film from 1933.

Archival sources used have obviously included the NSW Aborigines Protection Board documents. The Board sources are less detailed in the 1916 to 1939 period than before or after because of bureaucratic and budgetary arrangements. They form, nevertheless, the main source which runs continuously through the period under study and although at times abbreviated in the extreme, provides generally useful information. This is, however, often impossible to interpret fully without additional information from Aborigines. There are some further problems, notably the Board's failure to record some leasings and revocations of reserves as these events became more common. For this reason, information such as the total acreage of land "reserved for the use of Aborigines" has been drawn from the Crown Lands Department Reports and the NSW Government Gazettes, rather than from Protection Board sources.

The records of NSW public schools (found in the Department of Education In-letters) and the Premier's Department Correspondence files contain much more detailed information for specific periods, namely those in which some conflict was occurring which led to the creation of documentation. These two Departments' files are the major source of surviving Aboriginal correspondence.

The Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics collection of Annual Aboriginal Census figures has been useful as much for their reflection of the attitudes of census collectors, the police, as for
information on the actual size of the Aboriginal population. By collating the information from the few years for which individual police patrol returns are available with the years in which the larger police district figures exist, a regional analysis of changes in the enumeration of the Aboriginal population in the 1927 to 1937 period has been possible. This has proved of some value in analysing the effects of the Depression.

As this thesis has attempted to broaden the focus of attention beyond Government policy, it has been essential to seek documentation outside archival sources. Municipal and Shire Minutes have therefore been examined in 4 towns, Brewarrina, Walgett, Moree and Dubbo⁴. Pastoral property records have been examined for three Walgett North properties, Dungaloo, Bangaree² and Gingie³. Finally, selected local newspapers have been examined for the north west, north coast and south coast regions⁴.

As changes in European land use, population and labour needs appear to be crucial elements in any analysis of the context in which Aboriginal communities were existing, attempts have been made to follow these processes. Such information is, however, scattered and there is nothing so useful for the twentieth century as D.N. Jeans' Historical Geography⁵ is for the nineteenth century. For information on these topics I have used sources such as the Crown Lands Department and Western Lands Commission Reports; NSW Year Books and Statistical Registers; the work of contemporary geographers; that of C.J. King on the legislation relating to closer settlement and various regional histories.⁶

Sources concerning general relations between Aborigines and whites, particularly with members of the white working class, are

1 Municipal and Shire Minutes are in the possession of the respective bodies.
2 Held in NEU Archives, A272 and A316 respectively.
3 In the possession of the owners of Gingie station, Pye Brothers, and held at the station premises.
4 Listed in Bibliography.
5 An Historical Geography of New South Wales to 1901, Sydney, 1972.
Regional histories listed in Bibliography.
extremely scarce. N. Wheatley's¹ work on unemployed workers' movements has provided some information in relation to rank and file white workers' contact with Aborigines, as has F. Heulin's Depression memoirs² and Kylie Tennant's novels and recollections³. It was possible, also, to interview one white unemployed workers' organizer, Jack Booth, who became closely involved with the western Aboriginal political movement in the 1930s⁴. It might be noted here that race relations in north western NSW towns today are such that it is virtually impossible for a researcher who openly associates with the Aboriginal community to gain any oral recollections at all from white townspeople, working class or not.

Finally, contemporary anthropological sources have been found to reveal more about the needs and attitudes of anthropologists than about the existing situation of Aborigines. Some interesting but extremely fragmentary observations were recorded by Caroline Kelly in 1936 and 1937⁵, in work carried out under the pressure of Elkin's need for quick results to support his campaign for entry into the NSW administration. More detailed comment emerged from the work of Marie Reay⁶ and Grace Sitlington⁷ in the early 1940s. Although their work was essentially synchronic and was often directed towards providing information for Elkin to use in relation to the "assimilation policy", it nevertheless contained some important information to compare with Aboriginal accounts of the situation in north western towns in earlier periods.

1 "The Unemployed Who Kicked", unpub MA(Hons), MU, 1976.
3 In particular The Battlers, 1941 and Tiburon, 1935. Kylie Tennant was interviewed during the course of this work, Interview T53.
4 Interviews T57 and T58.
5 "Study of a Small Native Community Living Near a Country Town", 1936, Elkin Papers.
6 "A Half-Caste Aboriginal Community in Northwestern New South Wales" in Oceania, V.XV, No.4, June, 1945, pp269-323.
"Native Thought in Rural New South Wales" in Oceania, V.XX, No.2, December, 1949, pp89-118.
"Mixed-Blood Marriage in North-Western New South Wales", in Oceania, V.XXII, No.2, December 1951, pp116-129.
As this analysis of the 1909 to 1939 period was written, it became increasingly obvious that further research was required for earlier periods as well as reinterpretation of the work which has already been done. It also became clear, however, that much of the Aboriginal community and inter-community political activity of the 1909 to 1939 period could only be understood if the events of the later nineteenth century were taken into account.

For this reason, the first chapter of this thesis has been devoted to a necessarily tentative reinterpretation of the later nineteenth century, although this is not technically included in the period under study. This chapter has drawn on published and unpublished secondary sources, the Protection Board Reports and a previously unavailable source, the Board’s Register of Reserves. These have been used to set out the changing pattern of European land use and labour needs and to relate these processes to that of reserve creation and the situation of Aboriginal communities before the Protection Board gained its legislative base in 1909.

Central to this reinterpretation of the later nineteenth century and so also to my interpretation of the events of the twentieth century, is the argument that most previous analyses have involved a confusion of three separate issues. The first is the compatibility or otherwise of European and Aboriginal land use, for both economic and cultural purposes. Clearly, within the boundaries of a single European-"owned" property, there exists a higher degree of compatibility between Aboriginal land use and European pastoralism than with European agriculture or dairying. This is not necessarily the case, however, on a regional level.

The second issue is the compatibility or otherwise of the skills of Aboriginal and European economic activities. It cannot be assumed that a high degree of compatibility between Aboriginal land use and large scale European pastoralism also indicates a compatibility of skills. Conversely, it cannot be assumed that a low degree of compatibility of land use with European agriculture also indicates a low compatibility between the skills of that industry and indigenous economic practices.

The third issue is the "question" of Aboriginal ability to learn not only the skills but also the concepts of European economic activities and in particular the concepts of agriculture. That this has been an issue at all results from the perpetuation among white
analysts of deeply entrenched ideologies, renewed and reinforced during the period of European colonial expansion, involving value judgements about and justifying power relations between people practising varied economic, social and cultural activities.

One consequence of the confusion of these three issues has been the assumption of an Aboriginal predisposition to the work of the capitalist pastoral industry. A further consequence has been the drawing of a false distinction between the capitalist pastoral and agricultural industries. While there is quite clearly a difference in the nature of land use in these industries and so a difference in compatibility with Aboriginal land use, there has at times been a similarity in the labour needs of each industry, in that each required high levels of labour but only on a seasonal basis. Both elements of rural capitalist industries, land use and labour needs, require analysis as they were often independently variable and both were of significance in the relationship between Aborigines and the capitalist economy.

Aside from some use of secondary sources in the first chapter, the body of this thesis has been written from original research using the sources outlined above. Published Aboriginal autobiographies have been used as primary sources in the same way that my own discussions with Aboriginal people have been used: as accounts of the past recalled in the present.

The last chapter, however, covers much of the period about which J. Horner wrote in his biography of Bill Ferguson. Horner was able to speak with a number of people involved in the 1930s political movement who have since died. To a very limited degree, I have used Horner as a primary source in regard to this form of oral information. I have found some distortions in Horner’s work, however, most of which appear to have arisen from the attempt to describe a complex series of political organizations through the individual biographical method. As will be obvious, my analysis of the late 1930s political activity differs from that of Horner and I have used his work only sparingly and with caution.

1 Vote Ferguson for Aboriginal Freedom, Sydney, 1974.
The final issues to be discussed are those of terminology and orthography. For the colonizing population, I have used the descriptive terms "white", "British" and "European" interchangeably, except where a specific institution or ideology is indicated in which case "British" or "European" will be used with their more precise meanings.

To this point, indigenous people have been described as Aborigines but this word and its usage requires clarification. In English usage, the word has usually been a description of a group of indigenous people in contradistinction to the first European colonizers.

There are shared linguistic roots for Australian indigenous languages and there were general similarities in the technology used across the continent prior to European invasion. There were and are important underlying similarities in ritual and philosophy among indigenous Australian cultures and there was and is shared participation in ceremony across vast areas of land and across language boundaries.

Like the indigenous people who occupied the north and south American continents before European expansion, however, the people living in Australia before 1788 did not carry out identical ritual, social or economic practices nor did they speak a single language. The concept of a uniform "aboriginal" society was born out of European preconceptions and ignorance at the time of invasion.

From the very earliest periods of colonization, however, data was collected on the "customs" of the local "tribes" and, particularly as the European colony expanded, there was much evidence of indigenous people's cultural and economic diversity accumulated. Yet the concept of an "aboriginal" population, with a uniform culture, economy and, most importantly, psychology, has not expanded and the real meaning in white Australian English usage of the word "Aborigine" remains "the other". Stereotypes have continued to substitute for reality. The parallel situation in North America has been discussed by R.F. Berkhoffer in _The White Man's Indian_.

This British-Australian attitude now exists alongside a movement among indigenous people in Australia which recognizes the similarity of their general experiences at the hands of British invaders across the continent, their common resistance to these experiences and the necessity for joint, coordinated action to change existing conditions. English terminology has been used to express this concept of a generally similar experience of the past and the present as there was

no word, before 1788, in indigenous languages to describe all the people who lived on the continent (including Tasmania) nor has a word been adopted from any one language to fill this purpose.

In this thesis, where indigenous people in general or indigenous people's political movements are discussed or, alternatively, when the concept of a "uniform" people and society held by whites is discussed, the word "Aborigines", one of those used by indigenous people's political movements, will be used. Exceptions will be found in direct quotations from individual political activists in the period under study who chose alternative words like "Natives" or, most significantly, "Australians". Throughout the text the word "Aborigines" has been routinely capitalized as a proper noun, a demand long fought for and eventually won by Aboriginal political movements. In direct quotations from whites in the period under study, capitals have been used only if present in the original, as an indication of contemporary usage and attitudes.

However, both the diversity of indigenous people's culture and economy and the regional diversity of European means of seizure and use of land and indigenous people's labour, need to be recognized. When discussing regional situations or when describing events in specific areas, this thesis will use the words which indigenous communities in that region continue to use to describe themselves.

In most regions of NSW, this has been a word, shared among the languages of that region, which before the invasion meant "human beings", with strong masculine gender associations. After the invasion, the meaning of these words altered to become "human beings who were not the invaders", or, more succinctly, "our people". The use of these words does NOT indicate, as Broome seems to believe, that "Aborigines saw the world in racial categories as did the Europeans".¹

The approximate regional boundaries of usage and the pronunciation of these words meaning "our people" have been shown on Figure i. Where a specific group of people who spoke one of the languages within a region is referred to, they will usually be named by their language name and some of those used are shown on Figure ii.

As will be obvious from these maps, the question of spelling indigenous language words is an issue and in NSW at present the

¹ Aboriginal Australians, p155.
WORDS MEANING "OUR PEOPLE", WITH APPROXIMATE BOUNDARIES OF USAGE.

PRONUNCIATION

Mari: is pronounced like the English word "Murray" and has already been written as "Murrie" and "Murri".

Guri: Two regional variants: in the south west and south coast, the first consonant sounds to the ear of an English speaker as k; on the north coast it sounds like a hard g. Has already been written as "Koori" or "Koorie".

vowels used are pronounced as in the following English words:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a as in cut} \\
\text{u as in put} \\
\text{i as in sit}
\end{align*}\]

Vowel sounds are lengthened by doubling the letter, as in Wiimpatja.

stress is on the first syllable.

plurals: The words on this map are in the singular form. In general usage plurals are formed by the English method of adding an s to form "Maris", "Guris" and "Wiimpatjas". In the far west, the Paakantji plural form, Wiimpatjaku, is also used.
Figure II

SOME LANGUAGE AREAS MENTIONED IN TEXT.

WANCKUMARA  MURUWARI  YUALAI  CAMILARAI  BANDJALANG

PAAKANTJI  NGIYAMBA  WONGAIBON  WIRADHURI  DJANGATI

JOTA  PANCRANG

PUMBANCERRII

PRONUNCIATION

As for Figure i.

Stress on first syllable, then lesser stress on third syllable of longer words.

Equivalence in sound of consonants t and d, p and b, k and g.

Two vowels together are a diphthong, but consonant pairs tj (or dj) and ng represent one sound each.
situation is extremely fluid. In those Aboriginal communities, however, where dictionaries, collections of stories or other written forms of local languages have been produced or are being worked on, there is an increasing trend towards use of a sensible and rationalized orthography which is appropriate for all Australian indigenous languages. This has involved the avoidance of the clumsy English spelling approximations of indigenous pronunciation and particularly the English "oo" form.

The relevant points here are that a rationalized orthography involves a constant value for each vowel: these have been explained on Figure i and are commonly agreed upon. In indigenous languages, however, unlike English, no distinction is made between the pronunciation of "t" and "d", "p" and "b", or "k" and a hard "g". For people writing down any language, then, a choice has to be made about whether to use the letters which in English pronunciation are voiced, that is "d", "b" and "g", or those which are voiceless, that is, "t", "p" and "k".

For specific language names (Figure ii) I have used the spelling currently being used by the Aboriginal communities involved. Where no written form of language name has yet been decided on by Aborigines, I have used that with a rationalized form appearing most recently in white literature. As can be seen from this map, decisions as to the use of the the three voiced or voiceless consonants have not been uniform across the State.

For the regional words meaning "our people", my choice of spelling will be more contentious. The 2 major regional differences in pronunciation of the word I have spelt as Guri are noted on Figure i. I have made the assumption that these are differing pronunciations of the same word and have chosen the voiced consonant as this, to the ear of an English speaker, is closest to pronunciation in the region where indigenous languages were most recently spoken as a first language, the north coast. This, however, raises yet another problem of consistency in that the Wimpatjaku of the far west have already chosen voiceless consonants in their orthography. The issue will obviously remain open.

Perhaps most contentious will be my spelling of Cumeragunja, which is not the currently accepted spelling. The Aboriginal writers of the 1909 to 1939 period, however, spelt the word in a number of different ways, all of which included English approximations of
indigenous pronunciation. William Cooper, who lived there for most
his life, spelt the word "Cumeroogunga" or "Cumeroogunja"\(^1\). Jack
Patten spelt it "Cummeragunga"\(^2\) and the word was at times abbreviated
to "Cumera"\(^3\). As use of the "oo" form confuses even English speak-
ers as to current pronunciation, I have settled on a compromise,
closest to that of Patten. This spelling, "Cumeragunga" reduces the
number of letters and is least misleading in terms of current pronun-
ciation although it retains English values for both vowels and
consonants.

\(^1\) Cooper's correspondence with NSW Premier, 1936 to 1939, PDCF,
A36/404, A36/1028, A38/931.

\(^2\) Patten to NSW Premier, Telegram, 3/2/1939, PDCF, A38/931.  
_Abo Call_, July, 1938, p1.

\(^3\) H Hargreaves to W Gale, 5/3/1939, PDCF, A38/931.
CHAPTER 1

ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES TO 1909:
THE DYNAMICS OF LAND AND LABOUR

Aboriginal history in NSW did not end with the end of armed resistance to invasion. Through the later nineteenth century, Aborigines sought to establish themselves in a viable position within the options open to them in the changing settler capitalist economy and society. They sought to do so in ways which held significance to them in terms of their own values. By the turn of the century, this had led to a situation in which Aboriginal communities were living in a wide variety of conditions. Not only these varied conditions but the dynamics which had created them require some explanation as both had a direct bearing on Aboriginal expectations for the future.

Aboriginal community situations were varied largely because the settler capitalist economy had varied widely on a regional basis and within a region had often undergone substantial change over time. Aboriginal access to and use of land was a crucial element in the relationship between the two groups. Aboriginal reserves were being created during the 1870s and 1880s mainly in response to Aboriginal demand and so the process of reserve creation is one important parameter in analysing this relationship. When the creation of reserves was mapped in relation to time, it was found that the maps of reserves became not maps of Aboriginal population density but maps of change in the settler capitalist economy.

Aborigines took action to assert their position in situations in which they were under pressure over access to land and in maintaining or establishing their economic independence. This simple formulation of the situation was, however, greatly complicated by the interaction of Aborigines with whites with whom they were not directly connected economically, namely white townspeople, and then by the establishment of a State agency in 1883, the Aborigines Protection Board. This chapter will attempt to link these elements and trace the changing regional patterns of European occupation and the actions taken by Aborigines to meet those changes. The regional diversity of rural capitalist industries can be analysed by following
the two general processes occurring region by region.

One of these processes was the intensification of European land use with a resulting alteration in compatibility with Aboriginal land use. Even the relatively low stock density of large scale pastoralism, usually the initial form of European land use, altered and, in the far west, destroyed, the environment over time. The situations referred to here, however, are the changes from large scale pastoralism either to smaller scale pastoralism, with higher stock densities, or to agriculture or to dairying. Each of these changes decreased the compatibility of Aboriginal and European land use.

The other general process was a reduction in the labour needs of European rural employers, including a trend towards methods which were labour intensive on a discontinuous basis only. This process occurred in both pastoral and agricultural industries. It resulted from a change in land use, for example, from pastoralism to agriculture or agriculture to dairying or it resulted from changes in technology, such as the introduction of fencing to pastoralism or of mechanization to either agriculture or pastoralism. This process decreased the opportunities for Aboriginal employment in the capitalist economy and resulted in an increasingly specialized recruitment of Aborigines into discontinuously labour intensive activities in that economy.

From the relatively early days of colonization, Aborigines had been employed for seasonal agricultural work by farmers who did not have access to convict labour.\(^1\) During this time the foundations were laid for the European myth of the "hunter and gatherer" to become a useful stereotype of Aboriginal labour as "unreliable". The opportunity for Aboriginal incorporation into the European economy as a source of continuous labour did not occur until the 1850s. Sheep-raising pastoralism had by this time extended and consolidated to the Darling and Barwon, with only some penetration beyond these rivers.\(^2\) The industry required high levels of labour for shepherding. After the cessation of transportation and the failure of various pastoralists' plans to import alternate unfree (and non-

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1 Jeans, *Historical Geography*, p75.
2 *Ibid.*, p137, Figure 25.
white) labour, the 1850s goldrushes created a temporary but severe shortage of pastoral labour.

In this situation, Aborigines were rapidly recruited into the pastoral labour force for the continuous work of shepherding and the seasonal work of shearing and associated activities. In some areas this occurred as rapidly as within 5 years of the cessation of armed hostilities.\(^1\) With a relatively low stock density, some degree of compatibility was possible between Aboriginal and European economic and cultural land use within the boundaries of any one property. A mechanism was developed in the pastoral industry for the exploitation of Aboriginal labour which can be described as internal colonialism of a model similar to that developed by Wolpe.\(^2\)

If a whole social group of Aboriginal people could be coerced or encouraged to settle permanently on a pastoral run, some or all of the costs of the labour of the Aborigines employed by the pastoralist could continue to be borne by subsistence activities of the non-employed members of the group. So long as this labour force continued to be defined as "nomadic hunters and gatherers" or as in some other way different from European employees, their "indirect wages", such as the cost of accommodation and education of dependents, could be ignored altogether.

During the period when sheep-raising required high levels of continuous labour and when Aborigines were needed to provide it, there appear to have been at least as many testaments to the "reliability" of Aboriginal labour as to any alleged "unreliability".\(^3\) Aborigines were employed as shepherds and shearsers across a wide area.

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2 Wolpe, "Theory of Internal Colonialism".

of the State, from the lower Darling in the south west to the Namoi, Gwydir and Macintyre rivers in the north west. 1 In some districts, the stock camp situation allowed pastoralists to obtain labour very cheaply by payment only in kind and only to "the tribe" rather than to individual workers, thus ensuring the continued presence of the whole social group. 2 This was not, however, a uniform situation, and during the 1850s Aboriginal pastoral workers in the Gwydir, Namoi and Liverpool plains district and shearsers on the lower Darling had seized the opportunity afforded by the shortage of white labour and had successfully demanded high cash wages. 3

The mechanism of exploitation of Aboriginal labour from a partially self-sustaining camp was not only developed by the sheep raising industry of the interior but also by the beef cattle pastoralists of the coast. Cattle raising, however, did not require continuous workers like shepherds and in its labour needs, although not in its land use, was much more like the agricultural industry, requiring high levels of labour only discontinuously. A resident Aboriginal camp was just as, if not more, useful in this situation. Subsistence activities could support labourers in the off-season, at no expense to the pastoralist who would still have a secure and readily mobilized labour source for mustering and other labour intensive activities.

For Aborigines, the pastoral camp situation allowed security of residence on land which held significance for them, access to that land and some freedom from violence and harassment. Coercion, however, to make an Aboriginal group reside on any one property undoubtedly occurred more often than has been documented" and camp residents were subject to sexual as well as labour exploitation. "Encouragement" for a group to associate themselves with any one property was effected partly by the issue of some form of ration to all people in the group. Pastoral employers also seconded measures initiated by government, such as the issue of blankets and "king" and "queen"

1 Ibid, CCL Reports from Gwydir (1855, 1858); Liverpool Plains (1855, 1856); New England, Macleay, Albert and Lower Darling (1858). Bridges, "Aboriginal and White Relations", p744.
2 History of Bourke, V.II, pp165-180.
3 Curthoys, "Race and Ethnicity", p110.
4 History of Bourke, V.II, p169.
plates, which more often bore the name of the pastoral property on which the recipient lived than any Aboriginal name. The anxiety of pastoralists to conserve their supply of labour was suggested by their successful lobbying of government to limit the supply of alcohol to Aborigines in the 1860s. This was less motivated by a concern for Aboriginal health than a belief that alcohol would make "previously valuable" Aborigines "useless" in "pastoral and grazing occupations".

While the 1850s goldrushes led indirectly to the rapid recruitment of Aborigines into the pastoral industry, they also led to an intensification of European land use. The south coast economy until the 1850s had been developing with timber-felling, beef cattle raising and whaling. Each had allowed a high degree of compatibility with Aboriginal land use and Guris had been employed in all these industries, continuously and seasonally. Influxes of miners to the gold fields not only changed activity around the fields themselves but required an increased food production in the colony. This need was largely met by a change in the south coast economy to agriculture and dairying, rapidly decreasing Guri access to land and employment.

The increased white population drawn by the goldrushes then incorporated into the labour market, was one of the pressures leading to the 1861 Land Act which increased the penetration of agriculture and dairying on the south coast and to a lesser extent on the north coast, with a focus on the far northern river valleys. The south

The king- and queen-plates for Dungalear, Mogil Mogil, Terry Hie Hie and Kunopi are notable examples of plates inscribed with the name of a pastoral property, as in "King of Dungalear". More general names were used for inscriptions, such as "King of the Barwon Blacks", although such generalized categories may have been later developments. The use of king- and queen-plates appears to have been infrequent on the middle Darling and in the Corner Country.

2 Curthoys, "Race and Ethnicity", pp166-8, quoting a Member of Parliament for the lower Darling area, 1868.

3 Ibid, pp109-111.

4 Ibid.

Jeans, Historical Geography, p168.

western pastoral area was, however, most directly affected by selection in the 1860s and 1870s. This change occurred concurrently in the south west with the introduction of fencing, although this technological change spread only slowly from the south to the north of the state.¹

Fencing not only limited Aboriginal access to land but it eliminated most of the need for continuous labour in sheep-raising by making shepherds unnecessary. This did not in itself make Aboriginal pastoral camps unnecessary but it meant that as fencing spread large scale sheep raising became, like the beef cattle industry, only discontinuously labour intensive.

On the coast, Aboriginal subsistence food sources included the sea and estuaries as well as the land and rivers. In the south west, however, subsistence food sources were less diverse and reliance on the land and rivers was correspondingly greater. As steamer traffic was disrupting subsistence fishing from the Murray at this time also², the loss of employment caused by fencing and competition with an increased white labour force occurred concurrently with a decrease in access to traditional food resources.

Although impeded in the south west by the alienation of some of the larger pastoral runs, substantial selection did occur and so too did the penetration of agriculture. Small pastoral selections with higher stock densities decreased the earlier level of compatibility with Aboriginal land use and also required less labour, which was often provided by the selector's family. Even pastoral use of fenced selected land therefore jeopardized both Aboriginal access and employment. On agriculturally utilized selections, European and Aboriginal land use was totally incompatible and necessitated the break up of the camps.

The 1861 Land Act was, however, generally ineffective in the central and north western pastoral areas. Land use in these areas was not therefore intensified, nor did fencing become established practice until late in the 1870s. Beyond the Darling and Barwon, it was only during the 1860s that the real invasion by Europeans took place as sheep and cattle runs were extended and consolidated by heavy stocking of land reoccupied by Aborigines during the gold-

¹ Jeans, Historical Geography, pp19, 282. Hardy, Lament, p134.
² Barwick, "Pioneers and Policy", p47.
Massacres occurred west of the Barwon in the early 1860s and armed hostilities occurred further west until the 1870s. Conflict probably also continued sporadically into the early 1860s on the upper Macleay and Clarence Rivers as the beef cattle industry penetrated, leaving the alluvial land lower down the rivers to agriculture.

It was Gurus from areas immediately surrounding Sydney, from around the goldfields and from the south coast, the areas first hit by intensification of European land use and loss of employment, who made the first demands on government for the means to establish their economic independence. During the 1860s, Gurus from the coast and the Hawkesbury asked for fishing boats and Gurus from each area asked for land. Faced with a lack of Government response, Gurus continued to request land, demanded validation of their tenure over land they already occupied or took possession of further areas of "vacant" land. In the 1870s, the Government began to respond to Guri demands by a series of notifications of "Reserves for the Use of Aborigines". Good quality land on the south coast was heavily settled by whites by this time. The land which Gurus occupied or requested in this area was usually sandy land near the coast and appears to have been intended as a residential base from which to fish. Some land around Yass and Sofala, however, was occupied for cultivation.

1 Jeans, Historical Geography, pp272-3. Hardy, Lament, pp84-90,144-122.
2 Ibid, p122. Massacres at Hospital Creek, north of Brewarrina and at Bundinbarina, west of Collarenebri probably occurred in this late 1850s/early 1860s pastoral expansion beyond the Barwon and Darling. See Interview T37 and all those with Brewarrina Maris. My best estimate of the Hospital Creek massacre is the early 1860s, an estimate based on the 2 main orally transmitted variants of the account and the recorded death of one of the massacre survivors, Polly Marshall, in 1919 at the age of 70.
3 Curthoys, "Race and Ethnicity", p144-145.
4 Ibid, pp162-3,199. APBR, F1, F2, F141.
5 Ibid, F1, F2, F20, F100 "101, F110, F141.
6 Ibid, all of the above Folios include descriptions of the land reserved and the use to which it was being or was intended to be put.
Through the 1870s also, some Christian missionaries became aware of Aborigines in economic distress. Predictably, this resulted from contact with Gurus in the south west, where intensification of European land use and loss of employment had been coupled with severe reduction in access to the only subsistence food sources available. The endeavours of Daniel Matthews to establish the Maloga Mission, from which the Guri community later moved to the adjacent Cumeragunja reserve, have been well documented.¹ Matthews saw the Mission as a segregated refuge, on which Aborigines could be converted to Christianity and trained in the "civilized" pursuit of agriculture. It is also well known, however, that many members of the Guri community with which Matthews was involved, were associated with areas in Victoria where land use had intensified at an earlier date and that some had participated in the farming of the reserve at Coranderrk.² It is clear that Gurus in the south west were recruiting Matthews to their own end of gaining land, rather than acquiescing in his intentions for them.

To the south west of Sydney, a similar, less publicized but more successful Guri recruitment of Christian aid was occurring. A local parish priest appealed for funds for Burrarorang valley Gurus and in 1876 was able to buy 78 acres of good quality land at the junction of the Cox's and Wollondilly rivers. This land was handed over to the Guri community without, apparently, any supervisory administration and 9 years later they were reported to be making "a very fair living rearing stock and growing maize".³

Guri occupation of land on the north coast appears to have begun somewhat later than on the south coast. In the far northern rivers district, however, a scramble for alluvial land was occurring among incoming white settlers by the late 1870s." If Gurus had occupied land in the area they were unable to hold it against white pressure. The notable exception was the 200-acre island known as Cabbage Tree in the Clarence near Wardell, where Gurus had "themselves taken

1 Curthoys, "Race and Ethnicity".  
2 Barwick, "A Little More Than Kin".  
3 Barwick, "Pioneers and Policy".  
4 Johnston, "Government Policy".  
5 APBRR, F30, F56.  
6 Jeans, Historical Geography, pp239-49.
possession" and had been farming for many years before the island was notified as reserve in 1893.¹

"suffering circumstances existed in the lower Macleay river valley and the area to Wingham in the south and Coffs Harbour in the north. White settlement was occurring in this area at a much slower rate during the 1870s² and Guris were able to occupy and hold a number of pieces of high quality alluvial land, particularly around the mouth of the Macleay, before 1880.³

Responding finally to missionary concern at the economic distress of Guris in the south west and embarrassed by the numbers of dislocated south coast Guris who had moved into camps in Sydney itself, the Parkes Government appointed a "Protector of Aborigines" in 1881.⁴ In the census of Aborigines collected by the police under the Protector's authority in 1882, the demand for land from Guris on the south coast and in the south west was confirmed. One census return suggested the dual value which Guris placed on land when it referred to Guris of Braidwood and the south coast:

... whose aspirations at all times were to be allowed some land they might call their own in reality; which they might cultivate unmolested for the use of themselves and their families; and where aborigines of surrounding districts might meet periodically for the purpose of holding corroborees and other exhilarating games.⁵

When the Aborigines Protection Board was created in 1883 to expand the role of the Protector, it may have been the result of effective lobbying by missionaries and philanthropists which prompted Government action, but this occurred at the same time as Aborigines were trying to establish their independence in areas where they were under pressure.

The creation of reserves for Aborigines was an obvious way in which the new Board could act. Mapping the process of reserve creation suggests, however, that the Protection Board had no initiating role in this process. Reserves were, instead, notified in response

1 APBRR, F186.
   APBR, 1893.
2 Jeans, Historical Geography, pp239-49.
3 APBRR, F62, F67, F68, F69, F70, F74, F80.
4 Curthoys, "Race and Ethnicity", pp230-1.
to changing patterns of European land use and to Aboriginal attempts to meet these changing circumstances. In the following series of maps, the notification of Aboriginal reserves has been correlated with the major Land Acts, which have been used as reference points in the complex process whereby changing land use both generated and was facilitated by successive pieces of legislation.

Figure 1.1 shows the reserves created between the 1861 and 1884 Land Acts. Most of these reserves were notified before the Protection Board began to function actively. It is clear that the reserves bore no relation to the conflict and violence of invasion: while armed hostilities and massacres occurred in the west and north west, reserves were being created at the opposite end of the State. Of the 29 reserves notified in this period, 24 were validations of Aboriginal occupation of or requests for land. Only 5 were the result of missionary or white citizen proposals for reserves on the segregated refuge model. Even one of these, at Cumeragunja, cannot be seen out of the context of that Guri community's petition for land as compensation for dispossession.

Although reserve creation was clearly going to be an important function of the Protection Board, it had also taken on the role of the distribution of blankets and rations to "destitute" Aborigines. This proved initially to be a minor part of the Board's duties. The census of 1882 had shown that 81.2% of the enumerated Aboriginal population of 8,919 were self-sufficient, the majority from permanent employment in the capitalist economy and the remainder from a combination of seasonal employment and subsistence activities. The Board decided in 1884, however, to encourage the already existing Aboriginal interest in European education by issuing half rations to children attending school.

1 APBRR, F1, F2, F10, F12, F20, F21, F64, F66, F67, F68, F80, F81, F100, F101, F110, F150, F141, F160.
3 Ibid, F170.
4 Barwick, "Pioneers and Policy", p47.
4 Johnston, "Government Policy", p76. Johnston's analysis of these census figures, (Appendix A[i]) shows that of the total enumerated Aboriginal population, 57% were employed permanently in the capitalist economy (or supported by such employment) while 24.2% were supported by a combination of casual or seasonal labour and traditional subsistence activities.
5 APBR, 1885.
The value of the Board's adult ration issue was less than that generally given to destitute or unemployed whites by charitable institutions\(^1\) but the precise nature of the difference is significant and can be seen by comparing the Board's issue with rations normally issued to pastoral workers as "keep". Standard weekly Board rations consisted of "8, 2 and \(\frac{1}{2}\)", being 8 lbs of flour, 2 lbs of sugar and \(\frac{1}{2}\) lb of tea.\(^2\) The usual weekly "keep" for pastoral workers was at least "8, 10, 2 and \(\frac{1}{2}\)", the additional figure indicating 10 lbs of meat.\(^3\) The Protection Board did allow up to 7 lbs of meat to be issued per week in special cases but this meat issue was never general.\(^4\) Legislation in 1903 making the killing of most native fauna an offence was vigorously opposed by the Board on the grounds that:

... in the past aborigines and others of aboriginal descent under the Board's care have depended largely upon native game for their animal food ... the Act would therefore operate harshly if enforced against them, more especially as the Board were not in a position to make anything like a general issue of meat rations.\(^5\)

Protection Board rations, then, had always necessitated the continuation of Aboriginal subsistence activities. This suggests that Wolpe's model of an internal colonialism in which the colonized work force is partially sustained by the conservation of traditional, non-capitalist economic activity is not only of relevance to the pastoral industry. Whenever Aborigines were unemployed, permanently or seasonally, from any capitalist industry and when they were then "supported" by the Protection Board rather than by mechanisms for unemployment relief accessible to white workers, this "support" was achieved more cheaply than that for white unemployed.

1 Johnston, "Government Policy", p117.
3 Rolls, Wild Acres, p191, describing "keep" on the Liverpool Plains properties. APBR, 1890, p7, describing "keep" on remaining cattle properties in Shoalhaven district.
4 Meat issues were never enumerated in Board Reports and in those of the 1880s and 1890s even the locations at which meat was issued were not specified. An example of the small amounts of meat issued, however, can be gained from APBR, 1890, Report on Moruya District, p9, showing 4,171 lbs of flour issued during the year but only 19 lb of meat; or Report for Boggabilla District, p9, 4,286 lb flour and 50 lb meat issued.
5 APBR, 1904, p4.
The Protection Board, throughout the 1880s and 1890s, was prepared to issue standard rations to Aborigines who were unemployed.\(^1\) The consequent reliance on continued subsistence activities was of value to the capitalist economy which was recruiting Aborigines increasingly for seasonal or casual work only. It was also of significance during the Depression of the 1890s\(^2\), immediately prior to which at least 82.5\% of the enumerated Aboriginal population of 7,700 were self-sufficient because of employment for part or all of each year in the capitalist economy.\(^3\) Finally, as the Protection Board was successful in 1904 in winning de facto immunity from prosecution for Aborigines who killed native fauna for subsistence\(^4\), non-capitalist economic activities continued to play a significant role in supporting the Aboriginal workforce when unemployed.

Figure 1.2 shows the Aboriginal reserves created between the 1884 and 1894 Land Acts, which was the first decade of active Protection Board operations and includes the years of the impact of one drought in western areas and then the Depression. The reserve creation pattern shown bears little relation to the distribution of the Aboriginal population as revealed in the 1882 census. It bears even less relation to the distribution of the "full-blood" Aboriginal population whom the Board was assumed to be "protecting", and which was concentrated in the far west, the north west and on the far north coast.\(^5\) Reserve creation instead reflected changes in European land use, just as had been the case before the formation of the Protection Board.

The 1884 Land Act was more effective than that of 1861 in breaking up large pastoral properties. With changes in technology like the introduction of mechanized harvesting equipment in the south west, the results over the ensuing decade were an extension and intensification of agricultural selection in the south west, the central west and on the north coast, with the far northern rivers

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2 Aid to white unemployed during the 1890s Depression was not systematic nor Government controlled. Without a standardized unemployment relief figure it is (and was during the 1890s) difficult to compare relief for unemployed whites with that for unemployed Aborigines "supported" by the Board.
3 *APBR*, 1890, Appendix E.
seeing a further major change with the spread of dairying. The introduction of new fodder for dairy cattle allowed the penetration of dairying onto the slopes of the Tweed, Richmond and Clarence river valleys, which presented the first challenge to the beef-cattle runs.¹

The decade also saw the penetration of fencing, some selection and some agriculture, although accompanied by very little mechanization, onto the northern tablelands and slopes.² Selection in the Western Division was, however, limited and the process was partly reversed by the drought of 1888 and then the Depression. The large scale sheep and cattle runs in this area therefore remained relatively unscathed, although their labour needs had been altered by at least perimeter fencing.³

There were 85 reserves notified between 1885 and 1894 and of these, 55% (47), were validations of Aboriginal occupation of land (31) or responses to Aboriginal requests for land which was occupied immediately (16).⁴ All of the reserves created for these reasons were on the north coast, the south coast or in the south west, with the exception of two located on the northern tablelands. Those notified on the south coast were again usually on coastal, sandy land, intended as a residential base from which to fish. All of the others were either under cultivation already when notified or were intended for immediate preparation for cultivation.

The Protection Board was, of course, particularly anxious to respond to demands for land for cultivation, imbued as it was with the concepts current in the white population (and reflected in the Land Acts) that small scale, yeoman farming was an essential basis for "civilization". More specifically, it was assumed that a "nomadic, hunting and gathering" people could be "civilized" by the practice of agriculture.

¹ Jeans, Historical Geography, pp216-25, 227-64, Figure 42, p216.
³ Jeans, Historical Geography, p217.
When speaking to about any of the reserves created in response to Aboriginal demand during the reign of Queen Victoria, Aborigines insist that the land was given to them in perpetuity by the Queen. This is not a reflection of the gullibility of Aborigines, as some sympathetic white analysts have assumed. Instead it is an explanation of the standard explanation of the reserves given by the Board or its agents to the Aborigines for whom the reserves were not... 1. Some people wrote down what they had been told and their accounts are consistent. They were told that the reserve was Crown Land, that is that it belonged to Queen Victoria. They were also told, however, that the reserve would remain in their possession forever on the condition that they stayed in occupation of the land.

The Board's intention to tie Aborigines to a specific piece of land and thus "cure" them of their "nomadism" is obvious. So too is the Board's belief that where Aborigines were in occupation of land and where demonstrably utilizing it, even as a residential area, their continued occupation would either not be challenged or, if it was, it would be defensible. This belief on the Board's part proved accurate during the nineteenth century. It took successful action on a number of occasions to defend Aboriginal tenure of land, although this was usually at what later proved to be the high cost to Aborigines of transforming permissive occupancies or other independent tenure into reserve status or of inviting closer Board surveillance of existing reserves.

The significance of these reserves for Aborigines, however, went beyond the European concepts of land holding and use to which the Protection Board subscribed.

The reserve at Cumeragunja, although notified in 1883, was not brought under cultivation until the late 1880s because of disputes between the white parties involved. The Guris of that community were, however, intensely eager for land to work independently and in 1887 further requests were made to the Government for land. Two such requests were made by John Atkinson and his brother William Cooper,

1 Mrs A Hamilton to NSW Premier, 14/4/1926, Bateman's Bay public school files, DEIL, in relation to the reserve at Bateman's Bay. Chris Davis to Prime Minister, 21/1/1937, PDCF, A37/193, in relation to Euroka Creek. Herbert Davis to Chairman, Select Committee, SC on APB, ME, p45, in relation to Rollands Plains, 1938.
then a young man in his mid 20s who was to become a major political activist in the 1930s. Their letters touch on a number of important issues. Each asked for 100 acres of land adjacent to the Mission and they were emphatic that the land should be held in inalienable title so that it could be securely passed on through their families. Atkinson's letter explained most clearly the reason for his inability to buy land outright:

Having for several years tried to save enough to pay for a selection I find it an utter impossibility, not being able to secure constant work all the year.¹

As the Protection Board Reports for the period confirm, Guris in the south west were finding that with greater selection and the penetration of mechanized wheat farming, they had access only to discontinuous employment.²

Cooper's letter made clear not only the basis for the request but as well the dual value which he placed on the land:

As there have been no grants of land made to our tribe ... I do trust that you will be successful in securing this small portion of a vast territory which is ours by Divine Right.³

Cooper, Atkinson and other Aborigines in areas of intensifying European land use were not asking for random allocations of land. While they usually intended to use it in ways consistent with the surrounding European economy, they wanted land which was located in areas of significance to them on the basis of their traditional associations. Cultivation of a defined area of land may have appeared to reflect the assumption of European lifestyle and values, but appearances did not necessarily represent the reality.

Cooper's and Atkinson's requests for 100 acres each were modest in a period when 500 acres plus capital outlay was considered necessary in that area to provide a family with a comfortable living.⁴ What Cooper and Atkinson each received was a 27½-acre

1 John Atkinson to JM Chanter MP, 16/11/1887, CSIL, No.12756, Box 1/2667.
2 See, for example, all reports from south western districts in APBR, 1980, Appendix A.
3 William Cooper to JM Chanter MP, 4/11/1887, CSIL, No.12756, Box 1/2667.
"family farm block" on Cumeragunja reserve in 1888.¹ Neither the missionary body then controlling the reserve nor the Protection Board which took over the administration in 1897 could afford the capital outlay necessary for adequate irrigation. Arable land on the original 1,881 acres reserved was limited and the hostility of surrounding white and holders prevented expansion for some years. Modest extensions were made in 1893 and 1900 but all the land remained flood prone. By 1898, however, 20 "family farm blocks" of varying sizes existed on an area of 300 acres of the reserve.² Under such circumstances, not even the great skill and determination which the Cumeragunja farmers demonstrated very early in the reserve's history could have provided adequate returns to support fully the families to whom the blocks were allocated.

The situations of the Guri families farming land north of Yass and to the west of Sydney, on reserves of larger areas and somewhat higher fertility, were marginally better. These families were reported to be making a modest living³ while the independent farm at Burragerang continued to produce "very fair" returns in 1890.⁴ This farm was transformed into Aboriginal reserve land in 1891 in the complex process of the Board's defence of Aboriginal tenure against an encroaching white neighbour. The land continued, however, to be worked independently by the Guri farmers there and its changed status did not perhaps appear as a disadvantage with the Board offering assistance in the form of seed and wire.⁵

The situation on the north coast, however, was entirely different. On the 25 acres of high quality alluvial land occupied by William Drew and others at Kinchela before 1880 and held under permissive occupancy, more than adequate returns could be gained from labour intensive but not capital intensive farming methods.⁶ This was also the case on, among other occupied locations, the 41 acres of the two Fattorini Islands near Kinchela, farmed by John Mosely,

1 APBRR, F170.
2 Ibid, F170, P5.
3 Barwick, "Pioneers and Policy", p52.
5 Ibid, F30, F56.
6 Ibid, P68, F74.
the Linwood families and others before the reserve was notified over them in 1883.¹

The Board had, however, little ability to acquire such high quality land against even the moderate pressure of white settlement in the Macleay area unless Guris had occupied the land before the early 1880s.

The land occupied by one of the Davis families at Rollands Plains, north-west of Port Macquarie, in the mid 1880s was classified by the Board as "suitable for grazing only". The greater size of the 87 acre reserve notified over this land in 1886 indicates its lower quality. After 4 years of Guri occupation, clearing and farming, however, the Board reclassified the reserve as "suitable for grazing and cultivation".² A similar situation was that at Euroka Creek, up-river from Kempsey and later to be known as Burnt Bridge. Here a reserve of 172 acres was notified in 1894 on the application of another Davis family. Again, the larger acreage indicates its slightly lower quality compared to the alluvial land around Kinchela but nevertheless the Davis' had cleared 30 acres in the first year and planted a portion with maize and pumpkins.³

Despite the reduction in availability of high quality land for reserves, the Macleay valley and the surrounding district was the major one where the areas of land which Guris were able to occupy and hold were fertile enough to provide a comfortable living. This was the only district where a relatively slow rate of white settlement allowed the Protection Board to make a substantial response to the sustained Guri demand for land by notification of further reserves of at least reasonable quality.

On the far northern rivers, where Guris were in occupation only on Cabbage Tree Island, the Board attempted to replicate the Macleay district situation of multiple, small scale farming reserves. To this end it notified a number of reserves in the Clarence and Richmond river areas late in the 1880s without Guri request. The intense pressure of white settlement in the area by this time was reflected, however, in the quality of the land reserved, most of which

¹ Ibid, P69, F70.
² Ibid, F62.

Chris Davis to Prime Minister, 21/1/1937, PDCF A37/193.
was either too sandy or too thickly timbered to be suitable for cultivation.¹

These reserves formed part of the remaining 45% of reserves created in the 1885 to 1894 period and which were all notified without Aboriginal request, however important they were to become in the future. Other than those of the far northern rivers which reflected Board desires, the rest were the result of white identification of a "problem" in relation to Aborigines, the "problem" being either that they were in need of aid or that they were "causing trouble" by their presence near towns. The "solution" considered appropriate by both local whites and the Board was the notification of a reserve which would define and restrict Aboriginal residence as well as providing a refuge.²

Some reserves of this nature were notified on the coast but a number were notified too in the northern tablelands and slopes area where fencing, selection and agriculture were beginning to make an impact by the dislocation of some Maris from pastoral camps. The presence of Aborigines around towns in all areas, however, was also the result of some voluntary movement of Aborigines towards towns at least partly with an interest in gaining access to public schools. Aboriginal enrolments and white parental opposition were both signalled by the first school segregations, in areas of high intensity land use, at Yass in 1883 and at Brungle in 1888.³

Three of the reserves created without Aboriginal request were somewhat different. The reserve on over 5,000 acres of land 9 miles out of Brewarrina and those at Oban, near Guyra, and Burra Bee Dee, near Coonabarabran, were notified around or near a Mari pastoral camp.⁴ That at Brewarrina would, it was hoped, draw the town Mari population out to it, where they would be under the control of the same missionary body running Cumeragunja and Warangesda.⁵ Instead,

¹ APBRR, F190, F220, F221, F222, F223, F224.
² Ibid. These reserves can be distinguished because of their relative proximity to towns and by the dearth of information in the Register of Reserves concerning the Aborigines who were expected to live on them. The b··m comments in this source and in the APBR over the period indicate the pressures involved in their creation.
³ Fletcher, "Aboriginal Education", p96.
⁴ APBRR, F90, F115, F155.
⁵ APBR, 1884.
it became the residential location of the Mari camp from Quantambone pastoral property, one slightly affected by selection and on the "resumed area" of which the reserve had been sited. Maris successfully ran the reserve as a (very) small pastoral concern, the missionaries not themselves being pastoralists and with the profits used to fund the missionary and later Board operations there.¹

When Quantambone wanted its seasonal labour supply, however, it was readily accessible at the Mission, to which it could be returned in the off-season to be "supported" by Board rations.² The Oban and Burra Bee Dee reserves fulfilled the same role in areas where labour needs remained high because of much remaining pastoralism and low mechanization of agriculture but where selection was eroding the compatibility between Aboriginal and European land use on individual properties.

Some large scale pastoral operations were, however, able to continue their tradition of secondment of government mechanisms to secure their seasonal labour force without the formality of reserve creation. In areas where subsistence activity was becoming less possible because of surrounding selection, drought or the disruption caused to the environment by even large scale pastoralism or alternatively where the capacity of pastoralists to provide some form of support for a resident camp in the off-season was reduced because of the Depression, the Protection Board offered an alternative. Pastoralists simply informed the Board that some or all of the members of the resident camp were "destitute" in the off-season and the Board was prepared to remit the cost of standard rations.³

¹ Ibid, 1885 to 1917 show that Brewarrina mission usually made a respectable profit, with its wool clip, all shorn by Mari station residents (the wages of whom are not recorded in the Board's records), at times fetching prices comparable with the best in the district, (eg, APBR 1911). As with the other large area of reserve land at Cumeragunja, however, the Brewarrina Mission even as a small scale concern was under-capitalized, suffering stock losses because of lack of capital to irrigate, or even to pump water from the river, and often under-stocked (eg, APBR, 1907).

² Interviews T16, T18, T22, C8 and C12. Work remains to be done on the records of Quantambone station, held at ANU, Canberra, to establish the actual rate of employment of Maris, but all residents of Brewarrina interviewed, and, notably, Mick Collis (Interview C12) who was a permanent employee of Quantambone for many years, are unanimous that the Mission supplied most of the discontinuous labour for the pastoral station.

³ APBR, 1885 to 1894.
The location of some of the properties in the north west and on the northern slopes which took advantage of this subsidy have been noted on Figure 1.2. Another indication of both the presence of pastoral camps and of the pastoralists' concern to encourage their continued existence has also been noted on this map. In 1893, and probably in other years of the decade as well, ceremonies involving large numbers of people and lasting several weeks were held on properties at the locations noted, without any obstruction from pastoral land holders.¹

The 1894 Land Act facilitated much greater penetration of agricultural selection on the northern slopes, of small scale pastoralism on the northern tablelands and of dairying onto the steeper slopes of the far northern rivers, previously held by the beef cattle runs. In the south west, the wheat boom was well under way by the mid 1890s, shifting more land from pastoral to agricultural use. In this area, however, land use was not discrete as it was on the northern slopes, and in the south west wheat and sheep were often raised on the same property, keeping stock numbers high but allowing no compatibility with Aboriginal land use. On the south coast and to the south west of Sydney, dairying was being abandoned in favour of the boom area of the far northern rivers. White populations in these southern areas were therefore declining or at least stable, but Aboriginal employment opportunities were also being reduced.²

The differing rates of changing land use are suggested by the change in the numbers of properties in various pastures protection board districts in the 1893 to 1905 period.³ The sample districts are those shaded on Figure 1.3. Brewarrina had been one of the more attractive for selection in the Western Division after 1884 and in 1893 the number of properties stood at 87 but drought and depression had reduced this to 60 by 1905. Walgett North was less well watered and the large original runs remained virtually intact, the number of properties rising from 39 in 1893 to only 49 in 1905. In the northern central division, Pilliga district was least attractive, yet even here property numbers increased from 47 to 85 from 1893 to 1905.

¹ Ibid, 1893, p3.
² Jeans, Historical Geography, pp227-294.
³ Australian Pastoral Directory, 1893 and 1905 editions.
Moree district was extremely attractive, and here property numbers rose from 38 to 524 in the same period. On the coast, the penetration of dairying is clear in the rise in property numbers in the Casino district from 22 to 120, while the slower rate of change in the more rugged Clarence backcountry is indicated by the rise from 18 to 65 properties.

In the 1895 to 1905 period, 45 new reserves were created, shown on Figure 1.4, but although the Aboriginal demand for land continued unabated, very few of these reserves were notified in response to Aboriginal demand. Only on the south coast, to the south of Yass and in the Macleay and Nambucca areas were reserves notified after requests by Aborigines and again those on the south coast were residential bases for fishing, while the others were intended for cultivation.\(^1\) One of those created on the Macleay was notified for John Mosely, whose Fattorini Island farm had been washed out in the 1897 floods. He was allocated a reserve in 1898 adjacent to that of the Davis family at Euroka Creek, taking the total area reserved there to 534 acres.\(^2\) Other Guris moved onto the island Mosely had vacated and began farming again.\(^3\)

The Protection Board's reluctance to respond to Aboriginal demands for land may have reflected growing anxiety over its role as the distributor of aid to destitute or unemployed Aborigines. The Board's figures for ration distribution were published in the form of an annual average of monthly ration issues, an extremely poor indicator of actual patterns of Aboriginal employment when this was discontinuous. This figure, however, is the only statistical source which covered the period from 1885 to 1918. It is not directly comparable with the census of 1882 and 1891 but does suggest the information on which the Board was making its judgements.

From the position of 1890, when only 17.5% of the enumerated Aboriginal population was in receipt of rations (according to the average monthly issues) drought in the west, the Depression and then further drought had increased this figure to 26.4% in 1894, then to

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1 APBRR, F6, F7, F9, F17, F44, F104, F242.
2 Ibid, F242.
3 APBR, 1903, 1906 and later. Both Fattorini Islands continued to be resided on and cultivated into the early 1920s, see APMB, 27/6/1924.
36.6% in 1900 and finally to a peak of 40.1% in 1904. The two most obvious artificial inflating factors in these figures were the pastoral owners successful secondment of Board subsidies in the form of rations to pastoral camps and the Board's own invitation to Aborigines to apply for half-rations for their children attending school. The proportion of rations issued to children had increased steadily, from 30% in 1885 to 41% in 1890, 46% in 1900 and 47% in 1904. Adult ration applications decreased after 1904 but a continuing increase in ration issues to children kept the total number of rations issued high. In a context of general white opinion which viewed "charity" as a dangerous initiating factor in "pauperizing" recipients, the Protection Board was reassessing its role drastically in the 1895 to 1905 period.

A major impediment to Board response to Aboriginal demands for land was, however, simply a lack of available land as the pressure of white settlement increased. In an attempt to satisfy the sustained demand, the Board decided after 1895 to subdivide some of the larger inland reserves which were potentially suitable for cultivation and to create "family farm blocks" on the model of those at Cumeragunja. The same problems confronted "family block" holders on reserves such as Warangesda and Burra Bee Dee, however, as did those at Cumeragunja. Without adequate capital outlay for irrigation and other necessary improvements, the development of such small "family blocks" was virtually impractical.

The vast majority of reserves created from 1895 to 1905 were reflections of white demands or needs. Depression, drought and selection were forcing Aborigines off the land in specific areas and they were moving towards towns where whites in turn identified them as a "problem".

The most interesting situation was that on the northern slopes and tablelands, where, as Figure 1.4 shows, there was a proliferation of reserves over this period. Some were created near towns, but 6

1 APBR, for respective years.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid, 1905 to 1909.
5 APBR, 1895.
were away from towns of any size at all and simply encapsulated the Mari pastoral camp of the large run which was being broken up by selection. Notable examples were Terry Hie Hie and Kunopia, south and north of Moree respectively, and both properties which had claimed Board rations to subsidize their camps in the previous decade. The others were Brushfield, out of Bundara; the Mole near Quambone; Walhallow, near Quirindi and Wingadee, out of Coonamble.¹

Maris continued to regard these camps as being of precisely the same kind as the non-reserved camps in the Walgett North area² and for obvious reasons. The reserves had allowed some security of residence for Maris in areas of significance to them but they had also secured a labour force in a region where seasonal labour needs remained higher than the south west because of much continued pastoralism and the low degree of mechanization of agriculture in the area. Maris of Walhallow, Terry Hie Hie and Wingadee, for example, simply continued to be recruited for the seasonal labour needs of the immediately surrounding properties and then returned to the reserve in the off-season. Selection in itself generated employment for fencing and clearing but this work, although not seasonally tied, was still of a casual, short-term nature.³

A similar process of eliminating the compatibility of Aboriginal and European land use was occurring in the backcountry of the far northern rivers as the beef cattle runs were broken up for dairy farms and the Guri stock workers displaced. The labour needs of this process were initially high because of the clearing and fencing involved but with even less compatibility of land use than on the northern slopes, no Guri stock camps were encapsulated and instead the reserves which appeared for the first time in this area were located relatively close to towns. The slower rate of change on the upper Clarence, however, allowed the continuation of beef cattle raising and also of Guri stock camps such as that on Yulilbar station. This camp was finally encapsulated as reserve around 1920.⁴

1 APBRR, F147, F148, F157, F158, F163, F164, F166, F168.
2 Interviews T35, T39.
3 APBR, 1895 to 1905 consistently make these points when referring to these reserves.
A number of reserves were revoked in the 1895 to 1905 period, all of which had been notified without Aboriginal request and most so poorly sited that Aborigines had refused to use them. One of the very few instances in which the Board revoked a reserve which was being occupied was that of Walgett. Responding to white complaints about Aboriginal presence so near the town, the Namoi bend reserve was revoked. At the same time, with the Board probably expecting to replicate the relationship between the Brewarrina mission and Quantambone station, a reserve was notified 6 miles out of Walgett on the "resumed area" of Ginge Ginge station.¹ The Board's action was a total failure: Maris continued to camp near town in the Namoi bend while those of the Ginge pastoral camp remained on their preferred campsite closer to the station homestead. The reserve was not revoked but was forgotten for 30 years.²

In another attempt to respond to white town demands, the Board extended a reserve to the north of Yass, originally notified for the Lewis families in 1875. The Board hoped to encourage Yass town Guris to move to the extended reserve but admitted defeat in 1903. This situation, however, generated one of the first conflicts between the Board and Aborigines over the nature of reserve land. In paying closer attention to the Lewis' land, the Board discovered that the families had decided against planting crops in the poor seasons of 1902 and 1903 on land which the Board itself had classified as "suitable for sheep run only". Instead the Lewis' were gaining some income from the land by letting it for agistment. When the Board objected to this form of land use, the Lewis' held to the original explanation of their tenure over the reserve as it had been expressed to them. It was their insistence that the land was set aside for their use only and as they saw fit to which the Board took greatest exception. The Board had chosen this reserve on which to relocate the Yass town Guris and now wished to define the land as being for the use of all Aborigines and for none in particular.³ What the Board in fact needed was land reserved for the use of the Board

¹ APBRR, F95, F98
² APBRR, 1895.
³ Interviews T35, T39, T41.
³ APBRR, F141,143.
⁴ APBRR, 1903, p8.
itself and this was increasingly how it viewed and used the reserves.

The patterns of reserve creation until the 1905 Closer Settlement Act can give some insight into the varied regional effects of changing European land use on Aboriginal communities. Other dynamics of change can be seen from a brief region by region description of some of those communities in the early years of the century.

It will be clear that absence of reserve creation did not indicate absence of Aborigines but instead either a stable, or only a very slow change in, European land use. In the north western and far western pastoral areas, Aboriginal pastoral camps remained on many properties in 1901, the time of the formation of the Western Lands Commission which, in effect, froze any major changes in size of Western Division properties until 1934. From 1893, data is available on the acreage and stocking rates of pastoral properties and a correlation with Aboriginal oral evidence confirms the reasons for the continued existence of Aboriginal pastoral camps.

For the two north western districts for which oral evidence has been collected for this study, Brewarrina and Walgett North, the relationship between the scale of the pastoral concern and the presence of a Mari camp is unarguable. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 set out the largest properties in each district in 1905. All of the known Mari camps in the pastoral district have then been listed in association with the property on which they were located. As these tables show, the 9 Mari stock camps in the Walgett North district were located on 9 of the 13 largest properties in the district, in which there were 49 properties. In the Brewarrina district the 6 Mari stock camps (including the Board station) were located on 6 of the 8 largest properties in a district with 60 properties altogether.

The major collection of oral evidence on the location of Wiimpatja camps in the far west in the early 1900s is contained in Hardy's work. Although her list of camps is not claimed to be exhaustive, the association of these camps with the largest stock holding properties in each of their respective districts is still

1 NSW Western Lands Act, 1901. King, "Closer Settlement".

2 From the Australian Pastoral Directories and The Sheepman's Post Town Gazetteer and Stock Directory of NSW. The latter includes acreages as well as stock numbers.
### Table 1.1
**WALGETT NORTH PASTORAL DISTRICT 1905**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties in descending order of size</th>
<th>Number of sheep</th>
<th>Presence of Mari camp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Goondoobluie</td>
<td>84,940</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Gingle</td>
<td>63,480</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Boorooma</td>
<td>63,057</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Dunumbral (Old Bundinbarrina)</td>
<td>52,200</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Llanillo</td>
<td>49,790</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Angledool</td>
<td>48,409</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Bangate</td>
<td>43,744</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Morandah</td>
<td>42,322</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Dungalear</td>
<td>37,164</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Yeranbah</td>
<td>37,549</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Piangobla</td>
<td>22,955</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Moongulla</td>
<td>20,620</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Bairkin</td>
<td>11,460</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Pastoral Directory

### Table 1.2
**BREWARRINA PASTORAL DISTRICT 1905**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Properties in descending order of size</th>
<th>Number of sheep</th>
<th>Presence of Mari camp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Weilmoringle</td>
<td>50,768</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Milroy</td>
<td>44,623</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Quantambone</td>
<td>44,580</td>
<td>Yes, in form of A.P.B. Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Yarrawin</td>
<td>43,675</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Charlton and Compton Downs</td>
<td>40,206</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Bundabulla</td>
<td>33,963</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Gilgoin</td>
<td>19,505</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Muckerawa</td>
<td>18,737</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australian Pastoral Directory
clearly discernible. Hardy is not specific about the length of time for which these camps were maintained after the 1905 period and as depopulation, resulting from relatively later regional invasion, probably continued for longer than in other areas few firm statements can be made. The camps in the far Corner Country, however, like that of Yancannia, were certainly still in existence in the 1930s and after.

Most of those in the Walgett North area were still in existence in the 1930s, while at least 4 of those in the Brewarrina district, (again including the Board station) were in existence in the 1930s. All of the properties with camps in 1905 maintained their positions among the very largest stock holders in their districts over the next 3 decades, with most improving their ranking within that scale.

The continued presence of a camp on any property does not appear to have borne any relation to changes in ownership and certainly not to the changes from individual ownership to that of large pastoral companies. Taking Walgett North as an example, 8 of the 9 properties with camps remaining in 1905 had been owned by private individuals in 1895, but the effects of the Depression and then another drought had altered that pattern considerably. By 1905, 5 of these 9 properties were in the hands of 3 large pastoral companies and yet the camps remained. Over the next 3 decades some of these properties faced a number of changes of ownership, with large companies usually holding around half of them but not necessarily the same properties.

1 Hardy, Lament, pp177,192. For 1905, the camps Hardy lists were correlated as follows: Menindee District: 5 camps, on 1st, 3rd, 8th, 9th, 13th largest of the 45 properties in district: Wentworth District: 3 camps, on 1st, 4th and 5th largest of 30 properties in district; Wilcannia District: 2 camps, on 2nd and 6th largest of 25 properties in district; Bourke, Ivanhoe and Milparinka Districts, one camp mentioned in each, all on largest property of the districts' 88, 31 and 17, respectively; Wanaaring District: one camp, on 3rd largest of 14 properties.

2 Ibid, p195.
   Conversations with Wiimpatja women, Dorris Hunter (born c.1937) and Alice Bugme (born c.1935) who grew up at the Yancannia camp. Interview T28.

3 Interviews T22, T27, T30.

4 Australian Pastoral Directories, 1905-1939.
   Sheepman's Post Town Gazetteers.

5 Ibid.
The continued existence of the camps reflected not paternal pastoralists' charity but rather the specific labour needs of the properties on which they were located. These labour needs were the product of both acreage and of flock size and even very large flocks on large acreages meant a low stock density and a sustained, although decreasing, compatibility between European and Aboriginal land use.

The value to the pastoral management of the accessibility of stock camp labour was well understood by Maris and has been clearly pointed out by Henry Hardy, a Mari born in 1897 whose father was born on Dungalear.

... Fellas that owned Dungalear, they said no-one was allowed to be sacked or anything like that there, and their reason was, any time they wanted men they didn't have to go running about town looking for them, they could just come to the camp and get what men they wanted. [It was] nothing to see 40 or 50 men in one morning, going up, some with the drays and things, fixing up yards and bough shades for lamb marking.  

When Reg Murray, a Mari born in Walgett in 1915 who grew up on Ginge and Dungalear camps, described these camps, he expressed the common Mari attitude toward them:

[Ginge and Dungalear] had mostly more Aboriginals than whites as stockmen and woodcarters and the likes ... And there was big camps of Blacks used to be there. The people there weren't loafers: it was their home. Anyone got crook or there was a busy time, like shearin', comin' on, they used to just go down and pick whoever they wanted to employ 'em. They was there prepared to work ... and I mean they could. They was pretty smart men, they understood their work and they could do their work.  

These camps had continued to look much the same from the earliest memories of Henry Hardy, of Arthur Dodd, born on Dunumbral in 1890 and who spent his childhood on Dungalear, the land to which his mother's people belonged, and of Ivy Green, born on Dungalear in 1905 and remaining there until she was 19. No housing was provided by the pastoralist for Mari workers or any other member of the camp.

1 Interview T5.
2 Interview T45.
3 Interviews T5, T6, T9, C10, C46, T50.
5 Interview T57.
Maris supplied all their own accommodation, building traditional shelters from traditional materials in Arthur Dodd's childhood and later modifying this construction with European materials like tin and canvas. On at least one station, Weilmoringle in the Brewarrina district, Maris were aggressively discouraged from building housing which appeared more permanent.¹

The camps varied in size, but seem to have often contained between 100 and 200 people and a wide range of age groups.² Some form of ration was available to all, whether they were too old or too young to work, and whether or not they were employed at the time.³ The quality of such rations was, however, often very poor, with, for example, the meat issued consisting of guts and scraps rather than normal cuts.⁴ Ration provisions on Dungarear were more generous than on other properties but this is not surprising as Dungarear was the most successful of all the district's properties in claiming ration costs from the Protection Board, which continued to remit money to the station until 1922.⁵ None of the pastoral properties, however, provided an adequate amount of food for all the members of the camp and modified subsistence activities continued.⁶

While large game like emu and kangaroo were brought into the camp regularly by men, the major contribution to the camp food supply came from the work of women, particularly older women, who on many days of each week would take the children into the bush to collect vegetables, fruit, small game and to fish.⁷ The introduction of the rabbit had been an important modification of the traditional diet as

¹ Interview T16.
² Interviews T5, T6, T16, T35, T36, T37, T39, T45, C38. At times the camps on Dungarear, Gundablui and Bangate appear to have held over 200 people. One such estimate, of 250 to 300 people in the Bangate camp was made by Jim Fernando, Interview C38, who was butchering at Bangate in 1926 and so could be expected to be able to recall a reasonably accurate numerical estimate.
³ All interviews cited in n.2 above.
⁴ Ibid. There appears to have been a strike by Mari rouseabouts at shearing on Yarrawin in the immediate post-WWII years over this issue. (Interviews T18, C34).
⁶ All interviews cited in n.2 above and C46.
⁷ Ibid.
well as providing a source of cash employment. The advantage to the pastoralist of encouraging continued subsistence activity has been pointed out by Reg Murray:

... the reason the white people let us go on to their property [was] to clean up some of the nuisances, like kangaroos and rabbits, to the grasses ... ¹

By 1909, the camps provided a substantial, but no longer the major, component of the labour force on the large stations. Research remains to be done on station records of earlier periods, but in the ¹¿ of the 1910s Maris provided an average of 25% of the total casual employees on Gingie, 26% of those on Bangate and 30% on Dungalear.²

The nature of their employment was similar on each station. Maris formed only a small proportion of the permanently employed workforce, although some held senior positions such as overseer and there were some Maris among the shearsers, particularly before contract shearing was introduced in the mid 1910s. Maris were employed far more often than whites, however, as boundary riders and as casual labourers for the seasonal, labour-intensive work of scrubcutting, lamb-marking, mustering and general shed work at shearing time.³

Mari women were employed as domestic workers for the homestead and white employees' quarters as well as for the heavy work of laundering, but again they were usually employed as casual rather than permanent staff. The depersonalized nature of this utilization of Mari women's labour is suggested by entries in the Dungalear ledgers such as:

Gin, 5 weeks washing at 7/- per week.⁴

As this quote also suggests, Maris were receiving cash wages in the area in the 1910s, although an entry as a cash wage in a station ledger may have been transferred in reality to payment in kind by way of an account with the station store. As there was no award declared

¹ Interview T45.
² Dungalear Ledgers, 1910, 1911, 1914-1919.
⁵ Bangate Cash Books, 1907, 1909, 1911, 1917.
⁷ Gingie Ledgers, 1913, 1917, 1919.
⁸ Ibid.
for NSW general pastoral or agricultural workers before 1921, wages paid to permanently employed Maris were the result of negotiation with the station management and so varied from station to station. Dungalear, for example, usually paid Maris wages equal to those of whites while Gingie usually paid Maris lower wages than whites in the same jobs. On each of the stations where records were examined, however, even where equal wages and later, in the 1927 to 1932 period, award wages were paid, they were invariably the equivalent of the rate paid to white workers who were provided with "keep", that is, with board and lodging. The discrepancy between the "keep" provided for white workers and that for Maris allowed even those pastoralists paying equal wages to avoid some of the real cost of their labour.

Not all Maris in the Walgett North area lived in or worked from the camp situation, nor did people live in the one camp all the time. Older people formed the nucleus of each camp and tended to remain on the same property, but certainly around 1900 young and middle-aged working men and women were seeking employment on various stations and moving between station and town camps. Henry Hardy's family, for example, was in the Namoi bend camp at Walgett when he was born in 1897 and his father, a contract horse-breaker, worked not only on Dungalear where he had been born, but on most of the other properties in the district. Arthur Dodd's family was moving between Dunumbral and Dungalear camps in the 1890s and by the time Arthur was being employed as a shedhand and then as a shearer in the mid 1900s, he was working on Gingie as well as Dungalear and at times shore as far away as Walcha, east of Tamworth. Other Maris had left pastoral work altogether: some were earning a living catching and selling fish while others were working to the south and east of the Barwon on the Brewarrina, Walgett and Pokataroo railway lines.

1 NSW Year Books, 1925 to 1929, "Employment" and "Wages" sections.
2 An award for rural workers was declared in the NSW Arbitration Court in 1927 and Aborigines were specifically included. Jurisdiction was transferred to the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in 1929 and in 1932 Aborigines were excluded from this award. To be discussed in Chapter VI.
3 Interviews T5 and T6.
5 Interviews T5, T41.
Aborigines living in pastoral camps appeared to be living in a situation closer to that of a "traditional" lifestyle than Aborigines in most other situations in the state. These camps were certainly one source for the maintenance of traditional knowledge and practice in the far west, the north west and the back country of the north coast. In the Walgett North district, the camp situation allowed Mari languages to be spoken freely and as the first language of children into the early years of this century.¹ Large ceremonies were held on Gundablui in 1899 and on Dungalair around 1900, again without obstruction from pastoral management.² European pastoral work could be carried out at the same time as young people were taught not only traditional skills and knowledge but also the recent history of battles and massacres.³

Young Maris in the Walgett North area who grew up in regular contact with their people in the camps learned the central tenets of traditional philosophy, even where they did not learn (or were not taught) the details. These central ideas involved relationships to land and the general principle of incorporation of Aboriginal "outsiders" into the Mari community, with consequent reciprocal obligations. From such central concepts developments occurred which, while derived from traditional philosophy, bore more direct relevance to the changed and changing contemporary situation.⁴

Many of these processes continued to a later date in the more recently invaded far western corner country, where languages continued to be spoken fluently and ceremonies were held in conjunction with people to the north and west of the State border until at least the 1910s.⁵ The length of time since invasion and the continued existence of stock camps were not, however, the only factors involved in the extremely complex process of change in indigenous philosophy

1 Interviews T35, T36, T37, T39, T45. The relationship between language and "culture" is complex and there is some independent variability in that obviously an indigenous language can continue to be learnt and spoken fluently at the same time as rapid social and economic changes are occurring.

2 Interviews T35, T39.

3 Interviews T27, T30, T35, T39.

4 Interviews T35, T37, T39, T45.

5 Interviews T27, T28, T30.

Beckett, "George D'elong's Country".
and practice. Most of the stock camps on the far northern rivers, where dairying was penetrating, were broken up in the early 1900s yet Guri languages continued to be spoken fluently and as the first language of the children into the mid 1930s. This was the case even at Runnymede Protection Board station, near Kyogle, where a white resident manager had been installed as early as 1899.¹

In the Walgett North area, alongside the continued knowledge of tradition, at least some Maris wanted their children to receive European education. Before 1900, Maris had attempted to enrol their children in the small public school at Collarenebri and the even smaller schools functioning at Mogil Mogil, Angledool and Gundablu.

After 20 years of indecision and contradictory actions on this issue, the Education Department had by 1900 moved to a rigid position of exclusion of Aboriginal children from public schools on any objection from white parents. So when the white parents involved with these 4 small schools (who must have been the Mari parents' fellow pastoral workers) objected to the attendance of Mari children, the schools were segregated. The Mari demand for access was sustained but the Education Department confirmed the decisions to segregate in 1900 and again in 1905.²

One of the reasons that Maris continued to camp in the Namoi bend was that the Walgett public school was one of the few in the area which remained open, for the time being, to Mari children. The pastoral stations using camp labour in the district made no alternative arrangements for the children of their Mari workers.

On the northern slopes and tablelands, Maris continued to be mobilized for seasonal work in both the pastoral and agricultural industries. The intensity of selection in the area through the 1890s and 1900s also generated a high level of casual but not seasonally tied work in clearing, fencing and then fencing maintenance. The 1891 census showed a high rate (80%) of Mari self-sufficiency in this region. Although there are no directly comparable figures for later periods it is significant that in 1906, after a decade of rapidly

1 J Howard, response to Elkin, "Questionnaire", 1936, Question 10, p4, Elkin Papers.
intensifying land use and a corresponding reduction in traditional subsistence resources, 73% of the residents at Walhallow reserve were independent of Protection Board aid, indicating a high rate of employment.¹

As in other areas, Maris had been seeking access to the services of white towns and to public schools. Protests from white parents succeeded in segregating the public schools at Wollar near Gulgong in 1898, at Gulargumbone in 1899 and at Breeza, near Werris Creek in 1902.² It was in this region and in this context of intensification of European land use, changes in the needs of white employers and an increase in conflict between whites and Maris over access to town services, that two Maris, Jim and Joe Governor, set out in 1900 to kill or terrorize a named list of former employers who had cheated or humiliated them and all of whom were small- to medium-scale selectors. Contrary to the impressions left by previous white-written accounts of this episode³, neither of the Governor brothers were atypical of other Maris in the region, with their combination of both traditional and European education and of both casual cash employment and subsistence activities to achieve self-sufficiency. The impact of the Governors' actions was great on both Maris and whites, although impossible to assess accurately. The episode did, however, earn the Protection Board some Parliamentary criticism for "creating blacks' camps" and no doubt gave it further cause to question its own role.

In the south west, where Guris had been by the turn of the century pushed almost entirely off the land, the major reserve continued to be that at Cumeragunja. Barwick has thoroughly documented the farming activity there in the 1890s and early 1900s, demonstrating that the family block-holders maintained a high yield for both their blocks and the reserve's general crop when climatic conditions in the area allowed. In the severe droughts of the years 1902 and

¹ APBR, 1890 to 1909.
³ The works of Frank Clune, Thomas Keneally, and most recently that of Eric Rolls in Wild Acres. The assumptions about the "Aboriginality" or otherwise of the Governor brothers are present in all these works but are even more obvious in Fred Schepsci's film of Keneally's book, The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith.
⁴ In "Pioneers and Policy".
1903, the block-holders decided against risking a crop and leased portions of their blocks to "Indian hawkers" and others for agistment to secure a cash income. This decision was vindicated by the total failure of the station's crop in these and the following year because of drought, but, as it had done at Yass, the Board objected strongly to this use of the land, instructing its manager to drive off the lessees' stock and dismissing the angry protests of the blockholders' as "frivolous".¹

It is useful in relation to both the issues of land use and labour needs in both the Western and Central divisions to compare the two maps reproduced here as Figure 1.5 and 1.6. The continued existence of pastoral camps in the Walgett North area, the far west and to a lesser degree in the Brewarrina and Bourke areas is suggested by the size of flocks on what remained properties of high acreage. The rapid change in land use intensity in the south of the Central Division as well as the area around Guigong gives an indication of the pressures on Aborigines in those areas. Finally, the combination of wheat and sheep raising in the south west is suggested by the relatively large flock sizes on land which was also under cultivation. The exception, which becomes clear on close examination of these two maps, is the claypan area immediately to the north of the Murrumbidgee river (and also of the Warangesda reserve). The claypan made the land unsuited to wheat farming and so some relatively large scale pastoralism, without cultivation, was retained.

South coast Guris continued in the 1900s to use both reserved and non-reserved land as a residential base. Some gained casual or seasonal work with white dairy or crop farmers while others were employed in the continuous work of the timber industry, either felling or in the saw mills.² Many south coast Guris, however, continued to support themselves fishing, some at a subsistence level but others increasingly selling their catch in competition with white fishermen.³ A total of 37 Board-provided boats were in use by the turn of the century: more than half had been supplied to south coast Guris who

¹ APBR, 1904, p8.
² Ibid, 1890 to 1909.
AVERAGE FLOCK SIZE 1901

Source: N.S.W. Statistics
Registrar 1901
Table 30

Number of sheep in flock
- 1500
- 1501-2500
- 2501-5000
- 5001+

0 50 100 150 miles

Reproduced with permission of D.N. Jeans
from An Historical Geography, p293.
Figure 1.6

GRAIN WHEAT IN NSW
CHANGES IN ACREAGE 1892 - 1902

Reproduced with permission of D.N. Jeans
from An Historical Geography, p219.
used them for fishing while the lesser number provided for north coast communities were used as often for ferrying supplies to island reserves as for fishing.¹

Of all of the regions which had experienced intensifying European land use by the turn of the century, the north coast was unique for a number of reasons. The high rate of white settlement in the region, for the intensive land use of either agriculture or dairying, had made traditional Aboriginal and European land use incompatible. This had by no means, however, closed off traditional subsistence resources of the rivers, estuaries and sea, nor had dairying or even beef cattle raising penetrated to the most rugged back country. Both the coast and the back country were significant for their traditional cultural, as well as economic, value.

These conditions existed also on the south coast, but with the colder climate, and a less fertile and narrower coastal plain, the Guri population had probably always been lower on the south coast than on the north. Certainly by the early years of the twentieth century, the north coast appeared to have the highest concentration of Aboriginal people of any region of the State.

While the pressure of white settlement had challenged north coast Guri land use, leading to the occupation and, in some cases, the successful Guri holding of land, white land use had also generated a high level of employment for Guris. Most of this was either casual, in the form of clearing and fencing for new farms, or seasonal, in planting or harvesting. Particularly on the sub-tropical far north coast, however, even seasonal harvest was of a different nature to that in other agricultural regions.

The climate allowed many farmers to plant two maize crops annually, one harvested in October-November and one in January-February.² Guris not only worked as labourers on these crops, the harvesting of which included the labour-intensive and arduous work of husking as well, but they also worked on the sugar cane harvest which occurred between the two maize harvests. Guris on the far north coast were then in a particularly favourable position economically

¹ Ibid, 1899.
even when only seasonal employment and traditional subsistence resources were considered. It appears also, however, that Guris on the far north coast were employed in the continuous work of dairying to a higher degree than previously assumed while in the more rugged inland areas they were involved in the timber industry.  

The independent agriculture of the Guris on Cabbage Tree Island continued successfully in the 1900s. The Island's rich alluvial soil allowed good returns from cane farming with labour intensive but not capital intensive methods and comfortably supported the 50 Guris living there. The Board had by this time revoked a number of the poor quality reserves in the area which Guris had refused to use and had installed a resident manager on one of its few alluvial reserves, at Grafton, in 1892. It was hoped that the Guris living on the numerous, non-reserved camps in the area would be attracted to this reserve which was to become a central "Home". To this end, the manager instituted farming on a portion of the 305 acre reserve but at no stage was independent Guri farming allowed and returns from the station crop were always remitted to the Board. Considering the consistently high degree of self-sufficiency among Guris in the area it is hardly surprising that such a situation was unattractive and the "Home" seldom contained more than 60 residents, despite repeated Protection Board attempts to "induce" independent Guris to settle there under managerial control.  

Further south, in the Bellinger, Nambucca and Macleay valleys, a comparable employment situation existed. Although the rate of white settlement was still slower than that of the far northern rivers, substantial seasonal harvest work was generated although only from maize and other fodder crops rather than in combination with cane. There were also, however, important sources of continuous employment available in the timber industry. In the Nambucca and Bellingen districts, in particular, numbers of Guris were employed not only in

1 APBR, 1890 to 1909. J Hagan and B Castle are currently conducting further research on Aboriginal involvement in north coast industries.

2 APBR, F225, F226, F228. APBR, 1892 to 1909. Note that of 1908, p9, reporting that from the "healthy appearance and dress of the majority of aborigines who visit the Home from other centres, it is considered there is no distress among the aborigines in the district". Aboriginal refusal to settle at the "Home" noted in APBR, 1900, 1903, 1906, 1908.
the sawmills but in the highly skilled associated trade of ship building.¹

The unique element in these three river valleys was the high degree of independent Guri agriculture, made possible by Guri occupation of land and the slower rate of white settlement. With only minimal aid from the Protection Board in the form of seed and fencing wire, all of the cultivated reserves were producing good returns around 1900.

The land at Euroka Creek, originally assessed like that to the south at Rolland's Plains as "suitable for grazing only", had yielded a maize crop from 17 acres of cultivated land in 1896, and fruit trees, vegetables and poultry supplemented the produce of the reserve.² After the extension for John Mosely in 1898, the maize crop of the following year had yielded 800 bushells, with the "greater portion" of the land now under cultivation with both maize and vegetables. Guris there had built themselves comfortable slab dwellings, barns and stockyards.³ Reserves on similar quality land to the north in the Nambucca and Bellingen valleys and those to the south towards Port Macquarie were all producing similarly high yields at the turn of the century.⁴

It was, however, the rich alluvial lands occupied by Guris towards the mouth of the Macleay which were producing the best results. Referring to the Fattorini and Pelican Islands and other reserves near Kinchela the Protection Board reported in 1899:

They are all cleared and cultivated, maize being chiefly grown. On the whole, the Aborigines are in a fairly flourishing condition, having horses and sulkies of their own. They have also provided themselves with boats, those supplied by the Government having worn out.⁵

¹ Ibid, 1890 to 1909. Aboriginal employment in the sawmills of the area noted in 1890 Report and after. Responses of WJ Enright and EJ Dailey to Elkin, "Questionnaire", 1936, Question 1, p4: Question 13, p1, Question 14, pl. Members of the Doyle, Jarrett and Whaddy families had by 1936 been working as shipwrights for many years, the Doyles for two generations. Elkin Papers.

² APBR, 1896.

³ Ibid, 1899.

⁴ Ibid, 1895 to 1902, after which the detailed conditions on these small reserves were no longer reported regularly, although occasional comments were made.

⁵ Ibid, 1899.
Yet, although "flourishing" at the turn of the century, the previous two decades had seen the emergence of at least one of the forces which would destroy even the Macleay district reserves as bases of Guri economic independence. With a large original and so a large surviving population, Guri enrolment at public schools on the north coast in the 1880s had been substantial and increasing. While the first effective school segregations had been in the south west at Yass and Brungle, the most persistent complaints from white parents about Aboriginal attendance at public schools during the 1880s had come from the north coast.¹

Although the Education Department attitude to Aboriginal enrolment was not yet fixed, the Minister capitulated in 1890 to the clamour raised from the north coast and Guri children began to be excluded from the region's public schools. In an attempt at compensation, "special" Aboriginal schools were established often, as Fletcher has pointed out, within walking distance of the public school. These "special" schools were usually established on existing reserves: the first at Barrington near Gloucester in 1890; then at Forster in 1891; at Rolland's Plains, Pelican Island, Kinchela and Wauchope in 1892; at Grafton and Cabbage Tree Island in 1893; at Purfleet near Taree in 1903 and at Burnt Bridge in 1905. There were, in all, 27 segregated "special" Aboriginal schools created between 1880 and 1909: 15 of them were on the north coast.²

The denial of access to an increasing number of north coast public schools and the location of usually the only alternative schools on reserves forced alterations in the residential pattern of Guris, who were now under pressure either to move their whole family to a reserve or at least to leave their children there with relatives. On the far northern rivers, for example, it was segregation of the public school as well as the intensifying pressure of white settlement which forced Guris, who had previously refused to have anything to do with the Protection Board, to move onto the Dunoon reserve, 6 miles north of Lismore, where a "special" school was established in 1909. These families, once forced onto the reserve, independently began cultivation there.³

¹ Fletcher, "Aboriginal Education", pp100-5.
² Ibid, pp100-5, 287.
³ APBR, 1903, p8; 1906, p9.
³ Garriard to APB, Inspection Report, 6/6/1911, CSIL, Box 7121.
For the Macleay district reserves already under cultivation, however, the establishment of a "special" school and the resulting increases in population posed further problems. The growing resident population threatened to exceed the productive capacity of even the most fertile of the small reserves. The school in itself invited closer surveillance by both the Protection Board and the Education Department, which paid the salary of the non-resident teacher. Thus on both an economic and a general level, the "special" schools eroded the independence of these reserves.

An important and ominous symbol of this erosion of independence occurred in 1899, when that most prosperous area of Guri occupied land, the permissive occupancy of William Drew and others at Kinchela, was made Aboriginal reserve land. Formalization of tenure in this way may have been necessary to secure what was clearly prime land from the pressure of white settlement, but it appears that the adjacent "special" school and the reserve's increased population had been the major factors in the Board's decision to exercise closer control over the land by notifying it as reserve.¹

While the Drew's land may have generated enough capital for some dairying development, most of the Macleay area reserves were only just keeping pace with their growing populations, the result of both the presence of schools and of intensifying white settlement. These reserves had a low rate of claiming adult rations but their cultivation was not producing enough excess capital to change from labour intensive forms of land use.

Aborigines living in pastoral camps appeared to be living in a manner closest to that of a "traditional" lifestyle and it was certainly the opinion of the Protection Board that it was Aborigines "especially in the inland districts who still cling to their old traditions and superstitions". The Guris of the Macleay, Nambucca and Bellinger rivers, on the other hand, appeared to be living the perfect example of the "civilized" lifestyle to which the Board hoped all Aborigines would aspire. They were permanently occupying and successfully cultivating clearly defined areas of land; they were engaging in European employment which was relatively often of a permanent nature and they had displayed an early and sustained inter-

¹ APBRR, F67, F68.
APBR, 1899.
est in European education. Yet the appearance did not accurately reflect what was a far more complex reality.

The Guris of the Macleay, Nambucca and Bellinger districts are those who have been most recently involved in ceremonial activity, which continued at least until the mid 1940s. During the earlier years of the century, some of the Guris with the longest experience of secure tenure over and independent cultivation of reserves were also those with a most detailed knowledge of traditional philosophy. Some of the families who participated in the most recent ceremonies were the same families who had been most tenacious in demanding and defending their rights to independent cultivation and secure title over reserve land which they, too, clearly regarded as a "small portion of a vast territory which is ours by Divine Right".¹

There were through the nineteenth century general patterns to the changes in European land use and labour needs but these general patterns did not affect Aborigines in identical ways or simultaneously across the State. Just as differing regional geographic and historical conditions determined European activities, they also allowed greater flexibility in some Aboriginal responses, for the Guris of the north coast, for example, when compared with those in the south west.

The constriction of access to white towns and schools, with the collaboration of the Education Department, was a phenomenon developing across many regions but this, too, was varied by regional conditions and related factors like the intensity of Aboriginal demands for access. The Protection Board had been created without a clearly defined role and with no legislative base. It had in reality extended its physical presence and its very limited power across only a portion of the State.

There were, then, very few legal constrictions which applied to all NSW Aborigines before 1909. The sections of the Vagrancy Act which prohibited whites from "wandering and lodging" with Aborigines carried heavy penalties like a month's imprisonment for the white

¹ Interviews TS1, C61.
Morris B, "Change and Oppression".
See following Chapters II, V and VII.
person (man) convicted, but such convictions were rare. The provisions of the Liquor Act prohibiting supply of alcohol reaped more white convictions but were only loosely drafted. A Supreme Court decision in 1903 ruled that supply was in fact prohibited only to "full-blood" Aborigines and this was certainly the practical situation in at least north-western NSW before 1909.

The major legislative restrictions on Aborigines in this period were in Commonwealth law, rather than in that of NSW. Aborigines were specifically excluded from the Commonwealth franchise but the situation was complicated for NSW. There was confusion as to whom to define as Aboriginal but, more particularly, Aborigines of any definition were not excluded from the NSW franchise and so by Section 41 of the Commonwealth Constitution were entitled to vote at Federal elections. While some Aborigines may have declined to vote at any elections and others may have been deterred from voting by their interpretation of the Commonwealth Act, certainly some Aborigines did vote at both tiers of the electorate and a lesser number became active in local political parties.

The Commonwealth Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 had more general effect and had been based on a NSW precedent of 1900. In practice, the result of the Commonwealth Act was that NSW Aborigines were judged ineligible for pensions if they lived on a reserve or managed station, regardless of whether they received rations or any other benefit from the Protection Board.

The pressures were, however, building up in NSW for legislative change in relation to Aborigines. As suggested earlier, the Protection Board was becoming increasingly anxious about its own role in initiating the "pauperization" of Aborigines. It is clear with hindsight that the Board was irrelevant in the dislocation of Aborigines from the land or the reduction and discontinuity of their

1 APBR, 1904, p4 for a report of one of these rare convictions.
2 Ibid, 1903, p3; 1904, p4.
3 Stan Leslie to Premier, 10/1/1938, PDCF, A37/193.
4 Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Acts, Nos 63 and 64, 1900.
5 Stan Leslie to Premier, 10/1/1938, PDCF, A37/193.
6 Horner, Vote Ferguson, p163.
7 Interview T24.
8 NSW Old Age Pensions Act, No.74, 1900.
9 PSBR, 1938, p14.
employment opportunities. From the Board's annually averaged monthly ration issue figures it appears that the Depression and the western drought kept adult ration issues high only until 1904. The number of rations issued to adults began to fall after this date and before the Board had attempted to reduce their number.\(^1\) The issue of rations was a reflection of the state of the capitalist economy, not of Board actions.

The Board, however, believed its ration issues had played a causative role in increased demand and it did not anticipate the trend towards improved employment opportunities for Aborigines after 1904. It had come to view its reserves, and particularly those with a manager (known as stations or missions) as analogous to the "Poor Houses" providing "indoor" relief during the 1890's Depression. The Board had expressed the view that there was a need to clear the stations of "undeserving" Aborigines in terms which were very similar to those expressed in the press about white recipients of charity or unemployment relief.\(^2\) Yet although the 7 stations in existence in 1900, shown on Figure 1.7, absorbed 35% of the Board's budget, they contained only 9% of the known Aboriginal population, estimated at 7,000 in that year.\(^3\)

The Board's anxiety arose not only from its fears about increasing numbers of ration issues and expenditure but perhaps even more from the change in the apparent biological composition of the Aboriginal population. In 1882, only 26.7% of the known Aboriginal population had been of apparently mixed Aboriginal and European descent. In 1900, this proportion had risen to 55%.\(^4\) The people defined as "full-blood" had continued to do what the Board expected: their numbers had declined. Those defined as "half-caste", "quadroon" and "octoon" had, however, greatly increased in numbers. The

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1 APBR, 1904 to 1909. A Circular had been issued to Board staff in 1898 instructing them to reduce ration issues by "removing" the able-bodied and the young from stations. (Johnston, "Government Policy", p99). This instruction however had had no effect on adult ration issue figures.

2 APBR, 1898.
Dickey, "Charity", pp22-3.

3 APBR, 1900.

Figure 1.7

PROTECTION BOARD STATIONS IN EXISTENCE IN 1900

- Runnymede (Stoney Gully)
- Crafton "Home"

Key locations:
- Brewarrina
- Warangesda
- Brungle
- Cumeragunja
- Wallaga Lake
Board believed that instead of the decreasing responsibility on the State envisaged in 1883, it now had on its hands (and feared it had fostered) an escalating responsibility on the State as the increasing numbers of people who were not "full-blood" claimed aid in one form or another.

An additional factor, however, was that Board members had defined Aboriginal people by what they believed to be biological descent although this had never been more than a subjective assessment of skin colour. The Board, again confusing appearances with reality, had assumed that Aborigines would also define themselves "biologically", separating themselves from the Aboriginal community if their skin colour was fair. What the Board saw in the first two decades of its operation was that this was not the case: Aboriginal people who were very fair in colour were identifying themselves socially and culturally and their decisions to regard themselves as Aborigines were not made on the basis of colour of their skin.

The Board's concern at the increase in the non-"full-blood" population was thus a composite of two fears. As an agency of Government it was anxious to reduce expenditure and this was more urgent after its own budget was cut in 1902. It also feared, however, the persistence and now-apparent growth of a community which was culturally different from the colonizing society. As R. Scobie, a member of the Board from 1901 to 1918, expressed this fear:

They are an increasing danger, because although there are only a few full-blooded Aborigines left, there are 6,000 of the mixed-blood growing up. It is a danger to us to have a people like that among us, looking upon our institutions with eyes different from ours.¹

The Protection Board, therefore, felt under pressure early in the new century to end what it saw as a growing Aboriginal "dependence" but also to assault the social and cultural unity of Aboriginal communities.

¹ NPD, V.57, p1967, 27/1/1915.
CHAPTER II

DISPERSAL AND A NEW DISPOSSESSION BEGINS

As early as 1903 the Board was calling for comprehensive legislation as a basis for its activities. It was to take another six years to gain such legislation but the Board's aims were made clear, or could reasonably be suspected, before this. Overall, the Board intended the dispersal and disappearance of existing Aboriginal communities, in both a cultural and a genetic sense, although it drew back from publicly admitting to the latter. In detail, this was to be achieved in three major ways, all of which were addressed in the 1909 legislation. Firstly, the Board wished to disperse the "undeserving" able-bodied, of whatever "caste", forcing them off the reserves and so, it hoped, into permanent positions in the labour force. It could have begun this process by the cessation of ration issues, but this could not force Aborigines to leave their communities or what they had regarded as secure places of residence on reserves, and for this power the Board needed...ation. The Board did not believe that adult or adolescent able-bodied Aborigines required any special training to become members of the working class, although it probably believed that they would form a lower echelon of that working class. The Board was certainly prepared to force Aborigines into the work force under any conditions, and when Guris at Grafton refused to work for wages less than those offered to white workers, the Board declined to allow them ration issues, berating them instead for their "idleness" when there was "plenty of employment offering".

1 APBR, 1903.
2 Ibid, 1898, 1903.
3 APB Circular 1898: to all Managers to remove "the able-bodied and the young" from reserves and to refuse them rations if they did not take employment. CSIL, Box 6467, No.99/763.
4 The Board's circulars of 26/3/1914 and January 1915 (No.50) state that "all full-blood, half-caste, quadroon and octroon boys of 15 years and upwards should be compelled to leave the Board's stations and seek employment". APBOL. There is no suggestion that special training might be necessary to achieve this result.
5 APBR, 1909, p9.
Secondly, the Board wished to intervene in the increase of the non-"full-blood" population by reducing the birth rate.\(^1\) Thirdly, the Board wished to end the identification of non-"full-blood" Aboriginal people with the remaining section of the Aboriginal population.\(^2\) This was a task which it acknowledged to be a difficult one and so to succeed must focus on those who were most impressionable, that is, the children.\(^3\) The mechanism to achieve both of these last two aims appeared to present itself in the existing "apprenticeship" system, operated by the State Children's Relief Department, in which State wards were "apprenticed" as domestic servants. An "apprenticeship" system for Aboriginal children which concentrated on removing girls "before reaching the age of puberty" from their communities would, the Board believed, lower the birth rate and as both the girls and the boys removed would be bound in employment for at least four years in the homes of white people, the Board's expectation was that they would not wish to return to "the camps"\(^5\) and its intention was that they were never to be allowed to return.\(^6\)

Despite the Board's rhetoric both before and after it achieved the legal powers it sought over Aboriginal children, it must have been as aware as the State Children's Relief Department that "apprenticeships" even for white State wards involved no education in reality and could not be compared with an apprenticeship in a trade. It was this awareness which in 1915 led the Departments of State Children's Relief and of Public Instruction to consider abandoning the word in relation to the situation of State wards, whose indentures invariably meant simply that "the very large proportion of boys become the employees of agriculturalists, while the girls become domestic servants".\(^7\) The Protection Board persisted with both the word

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1 APBR, 1922-23, p1; 1923-24, p1. The latter states: "...Upon reaching the age of 14...no-one is allowed to remain in idleness upon a reserve, there to get into trouble and raise another generation of illegitimate children who would also become a burden on the State".

2 APBR, 1912, p7, and throughout most Reports for the period.

3 Ibid, 1910, p4; 1911, p2; 1920-21, p1.


6 Ibid.

7 AW Green (President, State Children's Relief Dept) to Undersecretary, Dept of Public Instruction, 23/2/1915. SCRDCF, Miscellaneous papers, 9/6156.
and the scheme because it provided the Board with a mechanism, not for "training" Aborigines, but for removing them from their communities.

As with the first component of its overall aim, that of forcing the able-bodied into the workforce, the Board began to attempt the "apprenticing" of young Aboriginal adolescents before it achieved any legislation. In 1906, a year in which the Board demanded powers in loco parentis over all Aboriginal children, its Report showed that it had tried to remove and "apprentice" children from those communities which had had the longest experience of Board control, the southwestern stations of Warangesda and Cumeraganja. With "inducement", "persuasion" and the threat of the withholding of rations, the Board had sought parental consent for its plans and had been resisted at every step. Aboriginal parents had specifically refused, firstly, that their daughters be placed in the "Girls Training Home", at the time sited near Warangesda; secondly, that their children be sent away to Sydney to service; and, thirdly, that the children's wages while in such service be banked under the control of the Board. Some parents had "consented" in the face of Board "persuasion", but when their children experienced physical or emotional mistreatment and escaped to their homes, the Board complained that Aboriginal parents were refusing "to assert their authority" by making the children return to their employment.

Anticipating legislation to enable it to pursue its aims of dispersal, the Board's chronic shortage of capital became, ironically, an even more important issue because although the Board hoped to be providing rations and other aid to fewer people, it needed funds to establish the apparatus for "disposing" of children, namely separate Girls' and Boys' "Training Homes", as well as for an enlarged field staff to exert greater discipline and carry out more efficient dispersal of adults and collection of children. This need produced further changes in the Board's attitude to reserve land which it began to see as a source of its own self-sufficiency, rather than

1 APBR, 1906, p5.
3 Ibid, 1908, p8.
4 The term is the Board's, used on its standard "Record of Ward" form and throughout its internal circulars and Minutes, although used far less frequently in its public documents.
that of Aborigines. If the revenue accruing to the Board from the
cultivation or stock-raising on reserves could be increased then the
inadequate Parliamentary vote could be supplemented.

On this basis, the Board decided to reorganize its largest
reserve sited on potentially productive agricultural land,
Cumeragunja, and in 1906 installed a farm overseer and invested
heavily in rabbit-proof fencing, an improved water supply, a Massey-
Harris cultivator and other machinery for large-scale wheat cultiva-
tion.¹ Maximization of arable land for Board profit brought the
interests of the Board into direct conflict with the interests of the
family blockholders, who were in possession of nearly 300 acres of
the reserve land. In 1907, the Board resumed the family blocks, on
the spurious excuse that the blocks had been "neglected" and began
the farming of all the available land for Board profit with wages
being offered to those former blockholders whom the manager chose to
employ.²

Such intensified Protection Board activity was not the only
pressure operating on Aborigines in this decade. White settlement
continued its acceleration on the north coast and as the drought
lifted in the western and south western areas white demand for land
resulted in the Closer Settlement Act of 1905. Land readily avail-
able for white settlement had, however, been severely reduced by the
1884 and 1894 Land Acts, and so while the Lands Department did resume
some private leasehold land and acquire some privately-owned estates
for Closer Settlement, it began almost immediately to look to the
Crown Land reserved for various public purposes to satisfy the
demands placed on it. In 1906 it announced a policy of "the curtail-
ment of reserves ... to free as much land as possible for settlement"³
and reported in 1907 and 1908 that it was pursuing this policy
"strenuously".⁴ Where the Department felt it absolutely could not
revoke reserve land which could nevertheless be made "productive", it
made such reserves "revenue-producing" by leasing, either for grazing
or for cultivation.⁵

¹ APBR, 1906, p3.
³ CLDR, 1906, pp1-2.
⁴ Ibid, 1907, p1; 1908, p6.
⁵ Ibid, 1907, p1.
Aborigines were affected by the reduction of land reserved for a number of purposes, most obviously that reserved for public recreation, camping or travelling stock route, one-third of the latter reserves having been revoked by the early 1920s. While land reserved specifically for the use of Aborigines formed only a small proportion of all reserve land, it too fell under the scrutiny of the Lands Department, which required assurances of the continuity and "productivity" of Aboriginal use of these reserves. Individual whites, on the other hand, viewed precisely those reserves which Aborigines were utilizing most continuously and "productively" as potential acquisitions, as, in fact, land still to be colonized.

The Protection Board by 1906 had little inclination to increase the area of land reserved for Aborigines, focussing as it was on a long-term policy of dispersal, but neither did it wish to have that reserve area diminished, considering the interests of either Aborigines or the Board itself. Requests from the Lands Department and from individual whites for revocation of Aboriginal reserves had begun to flow steadily into the Board from 1903, but the Board had just as "steadily refused" all such requests, going so far as to "threaten legal proceedings against a European who had illegally occupied a reserve" in 1906. As Aboriginal reserves were technically Crown Land, the Lands Department had felt free to revoke the Booligal reserve on the Lachlan for white settlement in 1906 without consulting the Board, which protested sharply and successfully, winning an assurance that the Lands Department would not revoke unilaterally. The pressure on the Board intensified, however, and was revealed in its insistence, repeated annually until 1911, that "the land already available to this unfortunate race is so limited that every attempt on the part of Europeans to acquire these Reserves for settlement purposes should be strongly opposed."

Figure 2.1 shows the reserves created from 1906 to 1913, by which time the total area of reserved land had peaked and notification of new reserves virtually ceased. Although there were no more

1 Ibid, 1923, p1.
2 APBR, 1903, p2; 1906, p3.
4 Ibid, 1910, p6, and similarly worded statements in all earlier Reports since 1903.
5 APBR. APBR. APBM. NGG.
revocations in this period than there had been in the decade before, the only new reserves notified reflected white needs or demands. Reserves were notified on the far north coast where dairying continued its penetration and Carowra Tank reserve was notified in the arid Lachlan-Darling interfluve in anticipation of easier settlement after completion of the railway to Broken Hill. More of the other new reserves were responses to white townspeople's insistence on the definition of the residential area available to Aborigines. At Angledool, however, a reserve was notified on a corner of the pastoral property and a manager-teacher installed in an attempt to counter the segregation of the area's public schools. Although the station came to function as the residential site for the Angledool pastoral property camp, Maris were reluctant to move onto the relatively small and unfavourable site under managerial control. Some families continued to camp outside the station boundaries until the manager made attendance at the school conditional on residence under his supervision.¹

In 1909 the Board gained its legislative base in the Aborigines Protection Act, which came into force in June 1910 and which contained few surprises after the Board's Reports for the previous six years. The structure of the Board was confirmed: it remained as an adjunct to the Colonial Secretary's Department, its close link with the Police Force was retained in that the Commissioner of Police was to continue to be the ex officio Chairman, while the remaining members were to be appointees.² All of the active sitting members were duly reappointed and "the whole of the officers of Police throughout the State" were appointed "Guardians of the aborigines" under Section 6 of the new Act.³

As has been pointed out by a number of writers, this Act was not legislation for segregation.⁴ The 1835 section of the Vagrancy Act

¹ Interviews T5, T6, T20.
³ APBR, 1910, p1.
⁴ Johnson, "Government Policy", p121. Dwyer, "The NSW Aborigines Protection Board: 1909-1923". Rowley in Outcasts (p12) makes the suggestion that the "protection", that is segregation, involved in the 1909 Act was not
prohibiting whites from "wandering or lodging" with Aborigines was incorporated as Section 10 of the 1909 Protection Act, but this was essentially an attempt to limit the increase of the non-"full-blood" Aboriginal population, as both members of the Board and of Parliament appeared to believe that miscegenation rather than regeneration from within the Aboriginal community was the major cause of this increase.\(^1\) The Protection Act also incorporated the power previously held under the Liquor Act, prohibiting the supply of alcohol to Aborigines and extended the definition of those to whom supply was prohibited from "full-blood" Aborigines only to "any person having an admixture of aboriginal blood in his veins" and who was in receipt of any aid from the Board, which was consistent with the definition of those to whom most other sections of the Act applied.\(^2\)

Other than these two sections, the whole thrust of the 1909 Act was towards the dispersal of the Aboriginal population. Section 8 vested all Aboriginal reserves and all property thereon in the Board and specifically gave it the power to expel any Aborigine from any or all reserves, a power which the Board sought as a disciplinary measure as well as an aid to dispersal of the able-bodied or the "light-caste".\(^3\) The Act contained no powers to confine Aborigines, and the only power over Aboriginal residence was the "move on" power of Section 14, by which Aborigines could be ordered to leave a specified vicinity but not to go to any specified place.\(^4\)

This "move on" clause was explained in Parliament as an aid to the Board's power to expel from reserves, by enabling it to prohibit expelled people from camping just outside the boundary of a reserve. It was suggested that this section would also operate to the benefit of white townspeople but while the parliamentarians debating the bill were aware of the occurrence of complaints from towns about Aboriginal camps, there is no suggestion that they expected such complaints to be

\(\text{thoroughgoing and that some limited attempts were made at separating the non-full-blood section of the Aboriginal community in an, again, half-hearted attempt at "mergence" but he underestimates both the intentions and the activity of the NSW Protection Board.}\)

1 NPD, V.57, p1960, 27/1/1915.
3 APBR, 1909, p2.
a major concern of the future. Instead, all speakers in the debates concurred in the assumption that the priority for the Board was to ensure that Aborigines who were of "less" than "full-blood" were "merged" or "absorbed", at least economically, into the general population in the interests of reducing "dependence" on Government assistance. Sections 8 and 14 of the proposed Act met little opposition other than a concern that any legislation might hamper the independence of Aborigines who were already self-supporting.¹

The Protection Board had, however, suffered a defeat during the drafting of the bill in its attempt to gain total power, in loco parentis, over Aboriginal children. While the sections dealing with children, numbers 11, 12 and 13, were applicable to a wider proportion of the Aboriginal population than any other section, namely any person "with an admixture of aboriginal blood" whether in receipt of Board aid or not², the bill as it went to Parliament gave the Board only that power held by the State Children's Relief Department over white children. This meant in effect that while the Board would have the legal power to sign "apprenticeship" indentures for Aboriginal children, it could neither do this nor remove a child from its family, without the consent of the parents or the child, unless it could prove before a court that the child was neglected.³

The Board knew already that this power was too limited to achieve its aims and a last minute attempt was made from the floor to include the power of summary removal of Aboriginal children at the Board's discretion by Robert T. Donaldson, the member for Wynyard who had been on the Protection Board since 1904 and who was a major architect of its policy.⁴ His motion was rejected, however, on the grounds that the bill placed adequate power in the hands of the Board as it stood and so these sections passed into law unchanged.⁵

The Board's problem was simple: the children it wanted to remove were not neglected. As it complained through the Colonial Secretary when seeking amending legislation to solve its problem:

At the present time the law is that the State can take control of neglected children, but under the

¹ NPD, Vol. 36, pp4542, 4549, 4551-2, 15/1/1909.
³ APBR, 1910, p4; 1911, p2.
⁴ Ibid, 1904, p1; 1909, p2.
⁵ NPD, V.36, pp4552-3, 16/12/1909.
law these children cannot legally be called neglected ... If the aboriginal child happens to be decently clad and apparently looked after it is very difficult indeed to show that the half-caste or aboriginal child is actually in a neglected condition, and therefore it is impossible to succeed in court.¹

From 1910, therefore, the Protection Board launched a campaign to achieve the power of summary removal of children by arguing that the normally accepted criteria for judging "neglect" were irrelevant in the case of Aboriginal children. To do this, the Board drew on prevailing white stereotypes of Aboriginal people, claiming for the first time in its existence that Aboriginal communities were places of "vice" and "depravity" from which "vicious surroundings" Aboriginal children must be "rescued".² So confident was the Board that its depiction of the uniform "immorality" of Aborigines would be recognized and accepted by whites, that it described the "vice" of its own stations in the same Reports of 1910 and 1911 in which on later pages it portrayed those stations as "happy", "contented" and "moral" communities in which the children were "industrious", "orderly" and "attentive".³ The Board's intention was to introduce an intangible element, the all-contaminating "immorality" of Aboriginal parents, which would make any apparent evidence of care and concern for their children seem accidental or deceptive and would make parental consent unnecessary.

This Protection Board campaign was not limited to its Reports, and culminated in a deputation to the Colonial Secretary in May 1912.⁴ In this widely publicised meeting⁵, R.T. Donaldson was the speaker who most impressed the Minister and who expressed not only the emotive arguments about the innate "vice" of Aboriginal communities but also the Board's view that the permanent removal of children represented the cornerstone of its policy when he said:

The whole object of the Board is to put things into train on lines that will eventually lead to the camps being depleted of their population and

² APBR, 1910, p4; 1911, p2.
³ Ibid, 1910, pp8,9,11 and 5; Similar discrepancies can be found in 1911 Report.
⁴ Transcript of deputation in: CSIL, Box 7204, 13/121, 13/5/1912.
⁵ SMH, (leader), 14/5/1912; DT, 14/5/1912, 25/5/1912.
finally the closing of the reserves and camps altogether ... But this can never be achieved until the children are removed from the low surroundings of the camps ... In this way, the children will be saved and the camps abolished.¹

This deputation convinced the Colonial Secretary, although it was not until 1915 that amending legislation was enacted, against vigorous parliamentary opposition, giving the Board the total power it wanted.² In the same year, two inspectors were appointed, H.L. Swindlehurst and R.T. Donaldson, who, although the Board's second choice for the position, proved to be the more energetic of the two in the implementation of the policy he had helped to formulate.³

In 1916, after a bureaucratic conflict between the Board and the Colonial Secretary's department over the appointment of the Inspectors, the Board was restructured and the private citizens who had comprised the majority on the Board since its inception were replaced by senior public servants of those departments thought to be appropriately concerned with Aboriginal affairs, such as Education, State Children's Relief, Colonial Secretary's and Public Health.⁴ Meetings were held only monthly rather than weekly after this time, and decision-making devolved increasingly into the hands of the Board's full-time staff: its Secretary, A.C. Pettit and its Inspectors, Donaldson and Swindlehurst, who resigned in 1921 and was not replaced.⁵ Donaldson had been heavily involved in the formation of Board policy and both he and Pettit had sat on the Board's policy committee of 1915, whose affirmation of previous policy directions was endorsed by the incoming public servant Board Members of 1916.⁶


² AP (Am) Act, 1915.

³ APBR, 1915, p1. Throughout the Board's Minutes Donaldson is the Inspector whose name is most frequently mentioned as having made a report or a recommendation on various topics and he was more frequently chosen to carry out surveys of either land or stations. Donaldson is the Inspector most frequently remembered by Aborigines, when recounting episodes from both the 1910s and the 1920s, (eg, Interview T35).


⁵ APBR, 1917, pp1,3.

There was a high degree of consistency in the Board's aims throughout the 1910s, despite the major changes in its composition.

As one immediate consequence of the Board gaining its legislative base in 1909, with the determined hope that it would achieve eventually the power it wanted over children, the Board's shortage of funds appeared acute. The Government had approved the purchase of the old hospital at Cootamundra so that the Board could establish a Girls' Home that was physically removed from contact with existing Aboriginal communities, but extensive renovations were necessary even after the purchase. A rapid expansion of the number of resident managers employed after 1909 meant a further drain on funds, partly for the small portion of the managers' salaries paid by the Board but more importantly for the construction of residences and, significantly, fencing. After the emotional call in the 1910 Board Report for the refusal to Europeans of access to reserves for any settlement or economic purposes, the issue was not mentioned at all in the 1911 Report, for the good reason that the Board had itself begun, although at first on a small scale, to lease some reserves to whites in order to supplement the vote which the Government had just refused to increase.

The reserves on which the Board installed a resident manager shortly before or after it gained its legislation are shown on Figure 2.2 with the year in which the "station" was officially created in consequence of the manager's appointment indicated. The managers were selected by the Protection Board, although the Department of Education paid the major portion of their salaries, at the rate for a teacher in a small "provisional" school. After 1900 Cumeragunja was the only station with a qualified teacher for the segregated school on the reserve, and on all other stations the manager fulfilled the role of teacher as well. The paucity of

1 APBR, 1910, p4; 1911, p3.
2 APBR, 1912-1915.
3 APBR, 1911, Appendix J, "Receipts and Expenditure" and equivalent Appendices in all later Reports. APBR, 1912, pp2-3.
4 Teachers' Record Cards, Dept of Education. Most managers were paid as teachers of Class 7 or the slightly larger Class 6 status school. APB Salaries Register, 1917-1920.
the managers' skills in teaching were acknowledged by the annotation on the employment file of each which indicated that they were permitted to teach "in Aboriginal schools only". ¹

The qualities actively sought by the Board in its managers were marriage, general bureaucratic skills, "firmness", "kindness", "knowledge of aborigines or other native races" and preferably a Christian faith of any denomination, as some members of the Board believed (in what proved a miscalculation) that "where the influence of religion is at work, the people are best under control". ² The Board usually encouraged missionary activity on its reserves and stations, even after the 1916 restructuring in which some of the more ardent Christian philanthropist members of the Board resigned. ³ It was far more cautious, however, in relation to Aboriginal Christian lay preachers, two of whom, John Davis and Harry Connelly, were reluctantly granted permission in 1915 to enter reserves for services but on the proviso that they made "brief visits" only. ⁴

For Aborigines, the imposition of the far-reaching control of a resident manager was deeply resented. Patrols by local police of "unsupervised" reserves were intrusive enough, but a manager was able, and indeed was instructed, to exercise 24-hour surveillance. ⁵ Throughout the Protection Board period and with very few exceptions, managers were disliked and were regarded by Aborigines simply as "the white man standing over them". ⁶

Managers were installed on these reserves for reasons which, as usual, varied with the location of the reserve. Cootamundra was, of course, the new Girls' Home and had been selected at a site intentionally distant from an Aboriginal community. ⁷ Edgerton too was an

¹ Teachers' Record Cards
⁴ GE Ardill to APB, Inspection Report, 16/6/1911, CSIL, Box 7121.
⁵ Ardill was one of those who resigned.
⁶ APBM, 8/5/1915.
⁷ Interview T48: Isabel Flick gives a vivid account of the intrusive nature of police inspections of Collarenebri reserve, as well as those the the manager and matron at Toomelah Station, 1938-1940. Regulations, AP Act, 1909-1943, Reg No.14(a) and 16.
⁸ Interviews T1, T5, T35, T39.
⁹ APBR, 1911, 1912.
entirely new location, a property purchased concurrently with the revocation of the town reserve at Yass, in the Board's most determined effort to comply with white townspeople's complaints.¹ In all of the other cases, managers were imposed on existing Aboriginal communities. Of those on the north coast, it appears that the Board hoped that Nymboida might provide a more suitably distant reserve for Guris than that near the rapidly growing town of Grafton, while it can reasonably be suspected that the managers sent to Ulgunah and Cabbage Tree Islands were intended to begin some additional cultivation which would return revenue to the Board rather than solely to the Guris already growing crops there. The new stations of the northern slopes area perhaps reflected some lingering effects of the Governor episode, but more probably were simply responses to substantial Mari populations on the reserves concerned. Whatever the reason for the manager's appointment, however, the new stations became foci of Board's activity, as the older stations continued to be.

Histories of the stations are therefore important in an analysis of Aboriginal response and resistance to the Board's aims in the first decade in which these were reinforced by legislation. A rational approach must be maintained, however, as the Aboriginal station communities were by no means isolated from other Aborigines in their area and as the tactics available to Aborigines in resisting the Board were determined by their regional economic and social context. Finally, in at least one area where the Board established no stations in the early years of the decade, the Macleay district, there was nevertheless a great deal going on. The following tables and maps set out some of the few quantifiable aspects of change and conflict over the decade. The figures available, however, are often incomplete, ambiguous and at times misleading, as discussed in the notes to the tables, and can serve as little more than an indication of actual conditions.

¹ Ibid, 1910, pp6,8.
### Table 2.1

#### POPULATION ON ABORIGINAL STATIONS 1908 - 1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Population in 1915</th>
<th>Population in 1921</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 1908 or in</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>year of creation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>..................</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumeragunja</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walhallow</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warangesda</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewarrina</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallaga (Lake)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angledool [1912]</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burra Bee (1910)</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseby Park</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brungle</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Hie Hie [1912]</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euraba [1912]</td>
<td>79 (c) 46</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulgundahi Is [1911]</td>
<td>71 (c) 73</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage Tree Is</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runnymede</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymboida [1911]</td>
<td>64 (c) 21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevington [1910]</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgerton [1910]</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunoon [1912]</td>
<td>no separate figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B**

#### Population loss to 1921*  
(arranged in descending order of loss)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Nett loss</th>
<th>% loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumeragunja</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymboida</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warangesda</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warangesda</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewarrina</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallaga Lake</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymboida</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walhallow</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burra Bee (1910)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallaga Lake</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brungle</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevington</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulgundahi Is</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevington</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Hie Hie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runnymede</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angledool — no figures</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: APBR, 1908 to 1920-21.*

**Notes for Table 2.1** (see below, page 87)
Notes for Table 2.1

(c) indicates that station figures were not provided in text of 1915 Report so census figures for the immediate district, appended to the Report, have been used.

* The year 1921 was one of sharp recession in the NSW economy, after a brief post-war boom, and the resulting unemployment affected Aborigines (APBR, 1920–21) causing the Board to allow some Aborigines previously forced off stations or reserves to return on a temporary basis, as it had done in the drought year of 1915. Figures for both years' populations may, therefore, have been higher than in previous years, but these are the only available figures for the period.

Table 2.2  ABORIGINAL STATIONS OR RESERVES:
in decreasing order of Protection Board activity to 1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children removed to become wards of APB* 1912 - 1921</th>
<th>Expulsions against adult men from 10/11/14 to 19/8/15† (all others unenumerated)</th>
<th>Successful Board prosecutions against Aborigines under A.P. Act, 1913‡</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brewarrina</td>
<td>Warangesda</td>
<td>Cumeragunja (19 non-alcohol-related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angledool</td>
<td>Brungle</td>
<td>Warangesda (13 non-alcohol-related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilliga Res</td>
<td>Cumeragunja</td>
<td>Brungle (9 non-alcohol-related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warangesda</td>
<td>Edgerton</td>
<td>Balranald (5 non-alcohol-related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brungle</td>
<td>Brewarrina</td>
<td>Goodooga (all alcohol-related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumeragunja</td>
<td>Wallaga Lake</td>
<td>Brewarrina }</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ul gündahi Is</td>
<td>Terry Hie Hie</td>
<td>Pilliga }</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walhallow</td>
<td>Roseby Park</td>
<td>Tumut { Bateman's Bay } (none alcohol-related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallaga Lake</td>
<td>Sevington</td>
<td>Edgerton }</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseby Park</td>
<td>Erambie (Cowra)</td>
<td>Euraba }</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singleton Res</td>
<td>La Perouse</td>
<td>(none alcohol-related)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euraba</td>
<td>Eruaba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sevington</td>
<td>Ul gündahi Is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgerton</td>
<td>Cabbage Tree Is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgandrame Res</td>
<td>Nymboida</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burra Bee Dee</td>
<td>Pelican Is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>Dunoon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Hie Hie</td>
<td>Singleton (St Clair)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runnymede</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymboida</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage Tree Is</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source and Notes for Table 2.2 (see below, page 88)
Sources
A: APBRW, c.1912 to 1928.
B: APBOL, No.36, 10/11/1914; No.51, 7/1/1915;
   No.60, 17/2/1915; No.86, 19/8/1915.
C: APBR, 1913.

Notes to Table 2.2

* The children removed to become Wards of the Protection Board,
  (whose records are found in APBRW) were not the only children taken
  away. The State Children's Relief Department became officially res-
 ponsible for children with fair skin colour ("quadroons" and
  "octroons") by the amendments to the Protection Act in 1918, but the
  Protection Board had been handing fair children to the SCR Department
  from as early as 1912 (see "Inspection Reports", 27/5/1912 and
  28/5/1912 by J T Jenkins, SCR Inspector to APB, CSIL, Box 7121 and
  APBM, 8/7/1915). While there are a number of reports which suggest
  that more children than recorded in APBRW were taken from a specific
  place at any one time, the only one for which exact figures are men-
  tioned is that in the Walgett public school file, (5/12/1917), which
  states that 5 children were removed, only 3 of whom appear in the
  APBRW. A ratio of 3:2 children going into the Protection Board
  system and the State Children's Relief system respectively would
  appear to be a conservative estimate, particularly as the non-"full-
  blood" proportion of the enumerated Aboriginal population was 71% in
  1909 and 90% in 1921. The figures for the number of children removed
  in Table 2.2 and in Figure 2.3 can therefore be considered as a sig-
  nificant underestimate, although until the State Children's Relief
  Department Records of Wards are analysed the degree of inaccuracy
  cannot be judged.

† This brief period is the only one for which names and indications
  of age are given, although the Board had been referring in its
  Reports since 1909 to the "exodus" from its reserves and stations of
  "those formerly claiming to be Aborigines". (APBR, 1910, 1911, 1912,
  1913, 1915). One problem with these figures is that they underesti-
  m ate the number of people forced to leave a station or reserve in
  response to one expulsion order. Many of those expelled had to
  choose either never to see their family again or to take them with
  them. In one of the very few fully enumerated examples, two families
  of "octroons" were expelled from Brewarrina station in 1912, possi-
  bly with formal orders against the adult men only, and this meant a to-
  tal of 15 people forced to leave (APBR, 1912, p6). As the Board's
  records appear to be incomplete in many ways, there may have been
  other people expelled from November, 1914, to August, 1915, but even
  if this were not the case, the total for this period of 126 expul-
  sions against adult men must have affected a great many other people
  as well in their immediate families.

A second problem with these figures is that there is no indication
  given as to the reason given for expulsion, ie, whether on grounds of
  "caste", of being "able-bodied" and therefore undeserving of aid or
  whether on disciplinary grounds. The interlocking nature of the
  various grounds for expulsion will be discussed in the following
  regional analyses.

§ A distinction has been made between alcohol-related charges and
non-alcohol related charges, to give an indication of the minimum
number of successful Board prosecutions which may have arisen from
conflict with the manager. This is only a minimum, however, because
drunkenness charges were easily fabricated and successfully prosecuted and were one means of controlling Aborigines. Even if the Aboriginal person concerned had been drinking, there is no reason to suppose that a charge of "drunk and disorderly on an Aboriginal Station" may not have arisen from a confrontation with the manager over issues of Board management or policy, rather than from irrational behaviour arising simply from the consumption of alcohol. This was the only year in which the Board published substantial details of prosecutions, other than in 1911, when most related to Cumeragunja and will be discussed below.
Flawed though all these figures are, a comparison of Tables 2.1 and 2.2 reveals a number of important points which are consistent with the Board's Minutes throughout the decade. Firstly, while the oldest and the largest of the stations suffered the greatest absolute loss in population, the north western stations suffered a disproportionate number of removals of children. The greatest conflict, however, tended to be on the stations of the south west, Cumeragunja, Warangesda and Brungle, with Cumeragunja offering the most sustained and confrontationist resistance. Brewarrina, although hardest hit by the removal of children and losing more than half its population, did not appear to have any great degree of conflict over this period.

The indices for conflict in Table 2.2, namely the figures for expulsions and prosecutions, are both from periods early in the decade. Only the figures for the numbers of children made Wards of the Board are drawn from a source which was continuous and which, just as significantly, is not restricted to a focus on the stations, as the police and State Children's Relief officers as well as Board's inspectors and managers were involved in the removal of children. When these figures are analysed regionally and over time it can be seen that the focus of Protection Board activity was shifting from the south to the north of the State over the decade, while the pace of the removal of children was accelerating. Both trends are shown on Figure 2.3. Keeping these factors in mind, we will first compare the north west and the south west, and then discuss the northern slopes and coastal areas.

THE NORTH WEST

Brewarrina, Angledool and Walgett

Brewarrina, the longest established station of the two in the area, had been a relatively stable community before 1906, with the only additions to its population being the beleaguered Wollar Maris, forced to Brewarrina in 1900 after the school segregation and the Governor episode.¹ The nucleus of the population had been the Ngiyamba camp of Quantambone property and with no overseer on the mission other than the teacher-manager, the Mari stockworkers had

Figure 2.3

NUMBERS OF CHILDREN REMOVED TO BECOME WARDS OF A.P.B. 1912 - 1921

A: 1912 TO 1916 (INCLUSIVE)

- NORTH WEST: 19 Children: 13%
- NORTH COAST: 27 Children: 18%
- NORTHERN SLOPES: 28 Children: 18%
- FAR WEST: No Children
- SOUTH WEST: 46 Children: 30%
- METROPOLITAN: 9 Children: 6%
- SOUTH COAST: 22 Children: 15%

Total removed: 151

KEY
Percentage figure shows the region's proportion of the total number of children removed over each period.

B: 1917 TO 1921 (INCLUSIVE)

- NORTH WEST: 59 Children: 25%
- NORTH COAST: 54 Children: 23%
- NORTHERN SLOPES: 62 Children: 26%
- FAR WEST: No Children
- SOUTH WEST: 41 Children: 17%
- METROPOLITAN: 5 Children: 2%
- SOUTH COAST: 14 Children: 7%

Total Removed: 237

SOURCE: A.P.B.R.W.
been returning a regular profit for the Board. At least one family asked the Board for land to work on the reserve as their own, but in the absence of irrigation even for domestic purposes, their request was dismissed as impractical. There had never been, therefore, an independent economic base for Maris on Brewarrina itself.

After 1906, new groups of Ngiyamba people moved onto the station in the wake of somewhat closer settlement to the south along the Bogan, and the population peaked in 1910 with an average of 175 people but this year was also the first in which the number of Maris on the station at the end of the year was less than the average figure. Some people whose skin colour was fair had already been forced off while others with fair children were, in 1911, "greatly disturbed in mind lest the children should be taken from them". By 1912, the population had dropped to an average of 146 even though a number of old people and families with school age children had been forced ("very loath to go") onto the station, under threat of removal of their children.

Conditions were poor on the station, with more than 23 families living in one and two roomed tin huts with black soil earthen floor and traditionally-designed bough shade verandahs. While marginally better housing than that of the pastoral camps, the station's huts were not only overcrowded but were built huddled together or, as Maris have described them, "all in a heap". By the end of 1912 typhoid then severe measles had broken out, followed early in 1913 by a diphtheria outbreak. Estimates of the death toll range from the Board's 10 to Jimmy Barker's 25. Distress caused by poor condition and poor health was added to by the unsuitability of the series of managers on the station, some of whom were brutal and dictatorial,

1 APBR, 1890-1910.
3 Garvin to APB, Inspection Report, 12/7/1911, CSIL, Box 7121.
6 Garvin to APB, 12/7/1911, op.cit.
7 APBR, 1912, p6.
8 Matthews (ed), Jimmie Barker, p51.

7 Interview T6.
8 APBR, 1913, p8.
another a drunkard and others again just incompetent.¹

Loss of population continued, although the high regional proportion of "full-blood" Maris shown by the Board's figures would suggest that there were fewer "lighter caste" people to expel on the basis of colour alone. Indeed, of the 7 recorded men expelled in 1914 and 1915, the only two whose "caste" was noted were both "full-bloods" and both family men, one with two children and one with four.² The expulsion drive of this particular period was clearly aimed at able-bodied of any "caste" rather than those of fair skin-colour. By December 1915, there were only 34 people left on the station.³ In this year, Jimmie Barker was "apprenticed" from Brewarrina, and when he returned in 1919 he found that most of the families he had known were no longer there and that of the nine families who were, most had arrived since 1915.⁴

There had therefore been not only a far higher population loss than is suggested by the figures of Table 2.1, but also a very rapid turnover of population. Yet the numbers of expulsions as shown in Table 2.2 were lower than those of the south west, and the Board's Minutes suggest far fewer disciplinary expulsions, reflecting a lower level of conflict through the decade, with the notable exception of Jack Coombes, Senior, expelled in 1916 "for setting the manager at defiance and urging the younger lads to disobey orders".⁵

The rapid turnover of residents on the station meant that the numbers of children removed were not so disproportionately high as appears at first as the children were being drawn from a wider population than that on the station at any one time. The low level of confrontationist resistance to the Board and its managers was partly the result of this rapid turnover of residents and the corresponding difficulty of organizing among people experiencing Board control for the first time and only newly thrown together. The major reason for the low level of confrontation was, however, also the reason for the high population loss despite few expulsions: Maris in the region had

¹ Matthews (ed), Jimmie Barker, p54, pp63-4, p111. APBM, 21/1/1920.
² APBOL, No.86, 19/8/1915. T Garvin to APB, 12/7/1911, op.cit.
³ APBR, 1915, p5.
⁴ Matthews (ed), Jimmie Barker, p112.
⁵ APBM, 7/12/1916.
some relatively safe alternative places to go and could resist the Board's aims for themselves or their children by the non-confrontationist tactic of escape.

After the devastating epidemics of 1912 and 1913, Jimmie Barker's mother had done just this with her two sons and had taken them into the town camp. The problem which arose here, however, was that while the town's public school was not officially segregated, it was made very plain to newly-arrived Maris that their children were not welcome at the school with the excuse that it was "full". Without access to the town school, the Barker children were still vulnerable to Protection Board accusations of neglect and Mrs Barker was forced by the police to return to the mission. Nevertheless, at least some of the families who left the mission over the decade successfully established themselves in the town camp, increasing its numbers and leading to protests from white townspeople to the Board in 1920.

The continued existence of pastoral camps provided a safer refuge and many of the people either expelled or escaping from Brewarrina in the 1910s went to Yarrawin and Gilgoen camps or the even more remote Weilmoringle. Pastoral camps also provided a refuge for people from Angledool mission, whose population had dropped from 109 in 1912 to 53 in 1915, and where proximity to the border allowed a further avenue of escape although Maris were extremely cautious in taking this route as the Queensland administration was feared as much if not more than that of NSW. With general employment levels being high in this decade and with Mari employment on properties with camps running at approximately 30% of the total employees, the possibility of economic independence away from the Board was better than it had been in the earlier two decades, a factor which both aided Aboriginal interests in avoiding unwelcome

1 Jimmie Barker, Transcripts, AIAS, F Tape 114, 16/4/1972.
2 Ibid.
3 Interview C23 (Bert Gordon).
4 APBM, 14/7/1920; 1/9/1920.
5 Interview T22 (Ray McHughes).
6 APBR, 1915, p7.
7 Interview T6.
Board policies and allowed the Board to feel it was succeeding in its intentions of dispersing the Aboriginal population.

Nevertheless, the issue which had forced the Maris of Angledool onto the Board's station in the first place, that of education, remained an important one and was exacerbated after the public school at Walgett was segregated in 1917.¹ The Board did not wish to interfere in the pastoral camp situation as it was satisfactory to the pastoralist, and only one child was removed from a property, Dungalear, by the Board in this decade², with the exception of the 5 children removed from the Gingie camp in 1917 in action initiated by white townspeople rather than by the Board.³ Most children taken by the Board in this region were taken from the stations and the high number removed indicates that while many families did escape to pastoral properties, the Board was able to use the two stations as channels to draw at least some children into its "disposal" system. The Board's hold over Maris was that with no education available to their children on pastoral properties, parents were forced towards the stations if they wanted schooling for their children.⁴ Walgett public school had been one of the few alternatives, and even after its segregation, a missionary school functioned in the Namoi bend. This alternative to Protection Board control, poor as it was, proved attractive enough to substantially increase the Mari population in Walgett⁵, a result which was to have repercussions in the next decade.

Confrontationist resistance to Board policy had been low over the decade because economic and some social alternatives existed for Maris. Even in the Board's terms, however, the results of its policies could only be called mixed. While it had reduced the populations of the stations, the chaos induced by the rapid turnover of residents on Brewarrina had effectively disrupted stock-raising activities, and in 1921 the Board abandoned all such efforts and leased the major portion of the reserve to a neighbouring white pastoralist.⁶ The lower population had not decreased the Board's

¹ Walgett public school file, 1917, DEIL.
² APBRW.
³ T King, Teacher, Walgett public school to H Clemens, Regional Inspector, 17/11/1917. Walgett public school file, DEIL.
⁴ Interviews T5 and T6.
⁵ Walgett public school file, 1923, DEIL.
⁶ APBM, 2/3/1921.
expenditure on the station which, on the contrary had risen markedly from £184 in 1910 to £504 in 1921\(^1\) when the Board undertook some of the improvements to the housing and water supply which had been recommended in 1911.\(^2\) Finally, the Board had created the illusion that people with fair colouring or those who had previously lived on reserves, whether they worked outside or not, had disappeared into the general community, whereas in fact they had simply moved to other locations, with other Maris, and continued to regard themselves as Maris. Some of the families forced off the mission precisely because of the fair colouring of some of their members\(^3\), such as the Gordons and the McHughes, continue today to form an integral part of the Brewarrina Mari community.

THE SOUTH WEST
Warangesda

Warangesda station was located 2\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles west of Darlington Point on the southern bank of the Murrumbidgee River. The 1,875 acre reserve took in the site of a traditional ceremonial ground of great significance to the Wiradjuri residents although ceremonies were no longer being conducted there by the turn of the century. Farm blocks had been allocated on the station to Guri families but they could not even begin economic production without irrigation and this was a capital outlay which the Board was neither willing nor able to make.\(^4\) As at Brewarrina, there was never any independent economic base for Guris on the mission itself.

Wheat was being produced on a portion of the station in the 1900s and 1910s, although never very successfully owing to a sequence of drought, flood and pest infestation.\(^5\) The profits from these crops, such as they were, always went to the Board and Guris were simply employed for wages and rations. The area to the east had been

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\(1\) APBR, 1910, 1920-21. These figures exclude the salary of the manager from the Education Department and include the profits made from sheep raising in 1910 and from leasing in 1920-21.

\(2\) T Garvin to APB, 12/7/1911, \textit{op.cit.}

\(3\) \textit{Ibid.}, and Interviews C23 and T22.


\(5\) \textit{Ibid.}

\textit{APBR}, 1906, 1908, 1909.
taken up with agriculture by the wheat expansion since 1881 but the presence of a large claypan area to the north and south of the mission ensured the continued existence of pastoral stations in the vicinity, although the size of the original large holdings had been reduced by selection and the sheep flocks depleted by the effects of drought and the rabbit plague.¹ Whatever Guri pastoral camps had existed had been broken up in this process but there was still short term contract work available on these smaller holdings as well as on the larger properties remaining north of the Lachlan.² Warangesda men were also able to get work in the busy harvest season on the wheat farms.³

The level of conflict between Aborigines and the Board's managers had always been higher on Warangesda than on Brewarrina. Warangesda people had protested as early as 1890 about the removal of their children to the station Dormitor.⁴ Warangesda in 1906 was in fact the focus of the nascent "apprenticeship" scheme, with the Board's "Girls' Training Home" being sited there, but parents still refused to allow their daughters to be placed in this 'Home'.⁵ There had also been persistent Aboriginal complaints about conditions on the station and in particular about the wages paid to Aboriginal men working there.⁶ This issue of wages seems to have been brought up more often on Warangesda than on any station other than Grafton.

Warangesda, then, had always been a troublesome station for the Board with a high level of conflict and a rapid turnover of managers. The station conditions had never been good, with small and overcrowded huts built too close together, and they became increasingly run down under incompetent managers.⁷ In addition, the station was located in a region with a low proportion of "full-blood" Aborigines and so probably had a large number of relatively light-skinned Guris

1 Jeans, Historical Geography, p222,292.
2 APBR, 1909, p3.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid, 1890.
5 Ibid, 1906, p11.
6 Warangesda Mission: Manager's Diary, 18/3/1887-11/4/1897. AIAS.
T Garvin to APB, Inspection Report, 18/6/1912, CSIL Box 7121.
as residents: precisely the people whom the Board wished to be rid of. There were, therefore, a number of reasons why the Board should wish to pursue its dispersal program very actively on this station.

It is not known if any children were taken from Warangesda before 1912 but in May of that year there was wide press coverage of (and editorial support for) the Board's desire to gain the power to summarily remove children from their parents. With the Board's persistent attempts to remove their children to the dormitory and the "Training Home" fresh in their memory, Warangesda Guris took this reported threat seriously and responded dramatically. By June 1912, only 12 children were left attending the school although 26 were enrolled. Parents had taken their children away from the mission and onto the pastoral stations in the surrounding areas where, even though there were no longer Guri camps, it was still possible for workers to keep their families with them for the short term rabbiting and fencing contracts on which the men were engaged. The teacher at the mission school explained the absentees to visiting Board member, Thomas Garvin, by saying that the parents:

... were afraid, from what they saw in the newspapers, that the Board intended taking their children away from them.²

The Board's response was simply to press ahead with the removal program. Garvin suggested that:

From this station alone, I think ten or twelve children might be sent to the Cootamundra Homes when the necessary legislation has been enacted to enable the Board to do so.³ (Garvin's emphasis)

The Board did not, in fact, wait for the 1915 legislation, but removed children in 1913 and in most subsequent years of the decade.⁴ Aboriginal fears had been quite justified.

The disputes about wages and conditions had also continued and in 1912 Garvin found that Guris were leaving the station because "conditions were too severe" and that they refused to work for the manager because they said that they could "earn better money off the station".⁵ Garvin recommended that they be paid more money but his

1 SMH, DT, 14/5/1912.
2 T Garvin to APB, 18/6/1912, op.cit.
3 Ibid.
4 APBRW.
5 T Garvin to APB, 18/6/1912, op.cit.
suggested wage was still below that which could be earned on surrounding farms and properties and its payment was still left to the discretion of the manager.\(^1\) By 1913 the men had had enough and in October, while engaged in harvesting the first reasonably successful station crops for many years, they seized their opportunity and struck for higher wages. The manager, on instructions from the central Board, responded by immediately expelling all of the men who had organized or taken part in the strike.\(^2\) In 1913 alone, more than 40 men were expelled from Warangesda either as a disciplinary measure against those who challenged the Board's control by striking and other "trouble-making" activities or as a means of removing the lighter "castes" and the able-bodied. Disciplinary expulsions continued over the rest of the decade as did expulsions on the grounds of colour.\(^3\)

Expulsions, however, were not the only method used by the Board to stamp out resistance. In 1913, 14 of the 19 recorded cases against Aborigines in Darlington Point court related to events occurring on Warangesda and only one of these involved alcohol. The remaining 13 were charges such as assault, disorderly conduct and obscene language, all of which could easily have arisen from confrontations with the manager. The fines were sizeable, ranging from 10/- to £2 and four men were gaolled for refusal to pay.\(^4\)

Gurri resistance at Warangesda was by no means silent and unarticulated, although more detailed regional oral histories will be necessary to explore the community's view of events. A glimpse, however, can be gained from the account of the local Member, who in 1915 reported that at Warangesda he had heard:

\[\ldots\] an aborigine, who was highly educated, explaining how the aborigines were being plundered of their rations, robbed of their lands and reduced to the position of slaves.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Ibid. Garvin's suggested wage was 3/4 per day whereas Guris employed round Cumeragunja were earning 7/- per day in 1909 (APBR, 1909, p9).
\(^2\) APBR, 1913, p11.
\(^3\) APBOL, 7/1/1915 (20 men expelled); 19/8/1915, (5 men expelled). APBM, 11/10/1917.
\(^4\) APBR, 1913, pp3-4.
\(^5\) NPD, V.57, p1965, 27/1/1915.
It is significant in relation to the 1913 prosecutions, however, that there were no charges of trespass, which would have arisen if expelled people had not obeyed the order to leave. The indications from these prosecutions and from the Board's Minutes are that once expelled, Guris did leave the mission. For them, as for families escaping from the station to protect their children, the short term pastoral work apparently offered some alternative. This alternative was far less satisfactory and reliable than the pastoral camps of the north west and was unattractive enough to make Guris attempt to improve conditions on the mission, but, when they were forced to make the decision to escape with their children or when expelled, they did have somewhere else to go.

On the one hand, the Guri refusal to live under repressive managerial control and their escape to protect their children, and on the other hand, the Board expulsions of the "light-castes" and the able bodied, its removal of children and its continuing disciplinary expulsions to break the persistent resistance of those Guris remaining on the station, had combined to produce the most drastic proportional population reduction of any of the major stations. By 1921, there were only 48 Guris left on Warangesda. The Board decided in 1924 that there was no longer any justification for the expense of a manager there and sold off the station's stock and machinery. The region was one in which river frontage land like that at Warangesda was at a premium in the mid-twenties for agricultural settlement, and the Board was willing and the Lands Department eager to revoke the reserve but the remaining Guris refused to leave. Most were forced off when the last manager had the huts there pulled down, but as late as 1930 one old man still refused to leave, living alone in a humpy and apparently tolerated by the new white "owners".

While the Warangesda people had been prepared to leave the site of the station in the face of repression, they did not lose either their community links or their association with the general area, their country. Some went as far as Oxley to the west and Hillston to

2 APBM, 17/10/1924.
3 NGG, 16/4/1926 for revocation notice. Oral evidence collected by Peter Read, ANU.
4 Ibid.

Our Aim, XXIV, 7, 22/3/1930, p5.
the north, but more remained within a much smaller area, some spending the rest of their lives no more than thirty miles from Warangesda. Most continued to work on properties around the district when jobs were available and, when there was no work offering, many camped at Darlington Point town camp, and some at Hay, Narranderra and Grong Grong.1 Once again, the Board's "dispersal" had been largely an illusion.

Cumeragunja

The patterns of European land use around Cumeragunja station, on the Murray, had been significantly altered by the wheat expansion since 1881, which had developed into a boom from 1891 with the Moama district as one focus.2 Unlike Warangesda, where the existence of the claypan areas had preserved some pastoral holdings in the immediate vicinity, Cumeragunja was surrounded by wheat and mixed farming concerns by the early 190s and to find even short term contract or shearing work on pastoral properties meant travelling long distances, sometimes up to 300 miles.1 The major source of employment close by was seasonal work on agricultural properties and with this intensive land use there was absolutely no profit to the European land owner in permanent Aboriginal camps. What was in fact required was an itinerant work force which could be compelled to move on once the busy harvest season was over. Aboriginal workers were therefore far more dependent on the reserve at Cumeragunja as a permanent place for themselves and their families to stay than were Aborigines at Brewarrina or even those at Warangesda.

The ties of the Cumeragunja people with the land of the reserve were even stronger than those of the Warangesda community. The Cumeragunja people believed they had won at least a partial victory in their demand for land with the allocation of the first farm blocks in 1888. With the extensions to the reserve and the multiplication

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3 Jeans, Historical Geography, pp220-221.  
4 APBR, 1912, p8.  
of the blocks available to individual families in the 1890s the community must have held the not-unreasonable belief that, despite the inadequacy of the blocks and of funds to develop them, the future would bring improvement. Meanwhile, as Barwick has shown, they utilized the blocks in the most sensible and economic ways possible, given bad seasons and undercapitalization. Their apparent security of tenure, as well as the independent income generated by the cropping or leasing of the blocks, gave the Cumeragunja community a solidarity and confidence found on few other stations.

A further factor in the confidence of this community may have been the presence of the teacher, Thomas James, a Mauritian missionary who was the only qualified teacher in the Board's employment after 1900, and who had married a Cumeragunja woman. The station was therefore unique in offering a standard of education equivalent with normal Government schools for white children and in having a member of the Board staff who was actually partisan to the Guri residents, rather than an alien instrument of the Board. The importance of the presence of James should not however be overestimated: the Cumeragunja community's demands for land, compensation and fair treatment obviously sprang from a far broader base than the pressure of one individual.

The Board's seizure of the farm blocks in 1908 generated intense bitterness. Immediately after the land was taken there were a series of confrontations with the Board's manager, one of which was described by the local Member of Parliament as occurring because the Gurus "became a mob of howling savages and surrounded the manager's residence and shots were fired" [by the manager]. This description, of course, is more revealing of white attitudes than of the causes of the dispute. The Board's reaction to what it called "disappointment" over the loss of the farm blocks was to forcibly remove the "culprits" and "undesirable residents" from the station, a measure which it was apparently able to achieve even without the powers of the 1909 Act. The issue of the farm blocks was not, however, to be forgotten.

1 Teacher's Record Cards
2 NPD, V.36, p4547, 15/12/1909.
3 APBR, 1908, pp7-8. The managers were empowered to initiate trespass charges under Sections 131 and 133 of the Crown Lands Act (APBR, 1906, p2).
Another area of conflict at Cumeragunja was over the Board policy of removal of children. The Board had tried to "apprentice" girls from Cumeragunja as early as 1908 but their parents had refused to force them to stay in situations where they were unhappy or ill-treated.¹ Knowing from experience, then, the distress caused by "apprenticeships", Guris at Cumeragunja were alarmed by the news in May 1912 that the Board intended seeking powers of summary removal. Their initial response was to resort to the short term techniques of defence used in all Aboriginal communities: they refused to cooperate at all with Government officers and they taught their children to run off into the scrub at the first sign of an approaching official. A State Children's Relief Department Inspector visited Cumeragunja in May 1912, two weeks after press coverage of the Board's intended new powers. He reported:

It was impossible to see all the children. A 'mulga wire' had preceded me and on my arrival the camp was in a state of consternation. An impression was abroad that children were to be taken from their parents — 'babies from their mothers' breasts' so it was said; some of the old hands were in tears and the women were lowering and sullen. Most of the boys ran off into the bush and were not seen by me during the day.²

A longer-term method of resistance was for families to remove their children from the station altogether and to utilize the border location of Cumeragunja to cross the Murray into Victoria and out of the jurisdiction of the NSW Board. The State Children's Relief officer anticipated such a result and urged a gradual approach.

Thomas Garvin, however, when visiting the station for the Board in June 1912, recommended the removal of at least some of the 52 children he classed as "quadroon" and "octroon", and his implication was clearly that all must eventually be removed. In Garvin's list of children to be taken the names of some of the earliest block-holders, Coopers, Atkinsons, Morgans and others, constantly appear. He anticipated difficulties because most of these children were "living with their parents, who are apparently looking after them", yet he felt it "a pity to have children who are almost white brought up on a 'Blacks' reserve. Far better that they should be taken away from it and gradually merged into the general population". He stressed,

¹ Ibid.
² JT Jenkins to APB, Inspection Report, 28/5/1912, CSIL, Box 7121.
however, that more legislative power was needed:

... as there will be great heart-burning and opposition to the separation of children from their parents, who will not give them up unless compelled by law to do so.¹

As with Warangesda, the Board did not wait for the 1915 amendment but instead began removing children in 1912 and took more each year, with the exceptions of 1914 and 1916, until and including 1921.² It is not known how many children were removed over this period as the Board's Record of Wards show only those children under Board control and not those passed over to the State Children's Relief Department. Cumeragunja Guris remember the removals and the escapes, with children running into the bush and mothers swimming the Murray clutching their children³, and they remember the physical confrontations with the Board's officers as they tried to leave with the children they had managed to "collect".⁴

The disputes over the Board's policy on children added to the unrest which had continued on the station since the seizure of the farm blocks. Police were called in to "keep the unruly elements within bounds" in 1909⁵ and in 1911 "a number of undesirables" were expelled for "misconduct".⁶ During this year, the Board prosecuted 39 Cumeragunja Guris for breaches of the Protection Act, including "abusive language" and "disorderly conduct". On no other station did the Board prosecute more than one Aborigine in this year, with the exception of Nymboida where two people were convicted of "gambling".⁷

The intensity of conflict on Cumeragunja continued and is obvious from the list of convictions shown in Table 2.2 for 1913, with only 6 being alcohol-related and 1 of the rest being charges such as disorderly conduct, language and malicious damage to property — all possible results of conflicts with the manager. The penalties were quite high, with only two being less than 10/- and four being £.

¹ T Garvin to APB, Inspection Report, 9/6/1912, CSIL Box 7121.
² APBRW.
⁴ Interview C.33.
⁵ APBR, 1909, p9.
⁷ Ibid, p3.
o month in gaol but there is no record of whether payment or gaol occurred. There is also no record of the number of prosecutions by the Board which failed at Cumeragunja nor do we know how many of the matters were defended, but at least one Gurri from the station took legal action in 1914 to appeal against an expulsion order and in fact won the case.1

The 1913 list of convictions gives an important indication of the tactics being used by Guris. Eight of the Cumeragunja convictions were for trespass, with only one of the fines being less than £1 and with the others ranging from £1 to £2 or one week to one month in gaol.2 The charge was obviously being treated seriously and with good reason, because it arose from Guris defying the Board's authority by refusing to obey expulsion orders. The fact that these charges were laid at all indicates the struggle that the Board was having to enforce its control over the station, and that specific land was obviously an extremely important element, with at least one of the men convicted of trespass being Bagot Morgan, one of the original blockholders.3 The regional context was relevant as well, however, and the only other station to have such a high proportion of trespass charges was Brungle, which was similarly located in an intensively agricultural area which offered few alternative places for Guris to live and few remaining subsistence resources.4 In response to this form of resistance, the Board was forced to amend its Regulations in 1915, strengthening its powers to prosecute for trespass and creating the new offence of "harbouring any expelled aborigine".5

Violent disturbances continued on Cumeragunja, however, into 1917 with the manager, who was armed with a revolver, reporting:

... the unsettled state of some Aborigines, and breaches of discipline, requiring numerous expulsion orders.6

This manager resigned after failing to restore order although he had called for and received police assistance from Moama.6 The new

1 APBOL, 11/8/1914, Leonard Kerr vs APB.
2 APBR, 1913, pp4-5.
3 APBM, 4/9/1913.
4 APBOL, 14/6/1915, New regulations 28(A) and (B).
5 APBM, 24/5/1917; 23/8/1917.
6 Ibid, 21/6/1917; 26/7/1917.
manager, however, was confronted with the same situation and dealt with it in a similar way: by firing on residents; by disciplinary expulsions for "assaulting the manager", "general bad behaviour", "insolence" and "defiance of the Board's authority"; and by Police Court prosecutions.\(^1\) The continuing unrest, as well as police concern about the manager's use of his gun, forced the Board to dismiss this manager in late 1918.\(^2\)

The situation by 1919 was that by expulsions and removals of children by the Board and by the response of Guris in taking their children away from the station, the population of Cumeragunja had declined significantly.\(^3\) This process however had been even harder for the Board than at Warangesda, because the Cumeragunja Guris were more desperate in the defence of their right to live unmolested on the station. Even with the great reduction in population, the residents remaining on Cumeragunja were by no means subdued.

In May 1919, in response to further conflict and the flight of more families across the river to escape removals of their children, the Board decided that to quell the unrest it would try to gain the consent of parents before their children were removed. If the parents refused, however, their children could still be taken with the consent of the Board only, so this concession was meaningless. The Board did state, however, that parents had the right to visit children so removed at least once a year and that the Board would supply a travelling and sustenance allowance for the purpose.\(^4\) It was not known if this decision was ever conveyed to Aborigines or if any parents were ever able to take up the offer.

Further concessions were made in June 1919, after a visit to Cumeragunja by A.W. Green, member of the Board and President of the State Children's Relief Department. The community was promised renovations to all the huts and allocations of larger plots around each hut so that vegetables could be grown, but the major concession was that for the first time the Board decided to allow girls taken away

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1 Ibid, 11/10/1917; 9/5/1918; 13/6/1918.
3 Population figures from APBR for Cumeragunja:
   - 1908 — 394
   - 1909 — 286
   - 1912 — 243
   - 1915 — 230
4 APBM, 14/5/1919.
to service to return to their families "for a time" after completion of their "apprenticeship".\footnote{1} This reversal of its earlier commitment to permanent removal of children was not entirely a response to Aboriginal opposition, however, and resulted just as much from the Board's belated recognition of the implications of its own policy.

Despite the Board's rhetoric in the 1909 to 1912 campaign for additional powers, it did not remove Aboriginal children suffering from "neglect" but had aimed its removal activity at girls around the age of puberty. Of the 539 children removed by 1921, 79% were female and 72% of these girls were between 12 and 14 years old.\footnote{2} In the same period, more than half of the girls "apprenticed" had been indentured to employers in middle-class city suburbs like Mosman, Pymble and Strathfield.\footnote{3} By the later years of the decade then, the Board had on its hands a problem which, in the words of its Secretary, was "beginning to create a considerable amount of anxiety" namely, "the disposal of girls who have been out in domestic service for a number of years and have reached a marriageable age".\footnote{4} As "most" of these girls were in the city, where there were relatively few other Aboriginal people\footnote{5}, the Board's refusal to allow them to return home or to any other Aboriginal community meant in effect that the Board was condoning marriage or sexual liaison with white men. Although the Board's whole policy of dispersal had been based on an unstated assumption that racial intermixture would occur, the reaching of "marriageable age" of the girls it had taken away forced the Board to confront the reality of its assumption, which was in contradiction to contemporary white attitudes, and so the Board retreated. Its concession to the Cumeraungunja community in 1919 was therefore also a concession to prevailing white rejection of racial mixture, although it was not until 1920 that the Board abandoned completely its commitment to permanent removal of children. Instead, it now ordered that all "apprenticed" girls should be returned at the completion of indentures to their home or to the nearest station, instructing

\footnote{1} Ibid, 25/6/1919.
\footnote{2} APBRW.
\footnote{3} Ibid.
\footnote{4} APBOL, No.1050, 26/6/1920
\footnote{5} Ibid.
managers "to endeavour" then to arrange for the girls to be married as quickly as possible.\(^1\)

While the Board did grant some concessions at Cumeragunja in 1919, it made clear at the same time that these concessions were only a change of tactics: the dispersal program was to be slowed down but not abandoned. The intention was that "all except full-bloods and half-castes" were to be removed from the station, but that this was now to be done "quietly". In addition, the Board decided that wages should be paid only to "full-bloods and half-castes", which meant that those ... who had worked on farm blocks but whose skin colour led them to be classified as "quadroon" or "octroon" were now no longer ... to have the opportunity of earning wages for working what they believed to be their own land.\(^2\)

Consistent with the assumptions behind disciplinary expulsions, the Board refused to consider the conflicts at Cumeragunja as a reflection of deep-rooted problems and instead saw the disturbances as the work of individuals. As well as the Curis expelled because they were branded as "trouble makers", the Board focused on the partisan "outsider", Thomas James, who as an employee of the Board was vulnerable. The Board tried (unsuccessfully) to convince the Education Department that instead of retiring James when he reached the age of sixty in September 1919, it should in fact transfer him to another Aboriginal school, so that he would be removed entirely from Cumeragunja. The reason given by the Board was that his presence at Cumeragunja "would continue the friction and strife which had been prevalent".\(^3\)

More disturbances led to the sacking of yet another manager in January 1921 and to another inspection by a member of the Board, this time B.J. Doe, MLA. Again, there were some concessions designed to reduce the level of tension. The Board suspended some of its expulsion orders and withdrew its objection to Thomas James as teacher. As at Brewarrina, however, the chaos generated by the dispersal activities had disrupted attempts to work the land for the Board's profit and so despite the heavy capital investment which the Board had made in machinery, Doe's report recommended the complete abandon-

\(^1\) Ibid
\(^2\) APBM, 25/6/1919.
\(^3\) Ibid, 27/8/1919.
ment of farming on Cumeragunja. The Board agreed and proceeded to sell off the stock and machinery and to lease the major portion of the 2,800-acre reserve to whites and to allow a local white sawmiller the rights to timber off the remaining wooded areas. The Cumeragunja Guris were left huddled on a 14-acre corner of the reserve, watching the land they had cleared and worked being used to the profit of whites.¹

This decision predictably led to further conflict and more disciplinary expulsions. In August 1921, acting on the "trouble maker" principle, the Board moved again to end the employment of Thomas James as teacher, on the grounds that it was "not in the best interests of the Aborigines" for him to stay.² This time the Board was successful and James' services were terminated in December, although the Board was apprehensive that Guris would remove their children from the school in protest.³ In August, also, the Board tried to expel James' son, Shadrack, but he continued the Cumeragunja tradition and refused to comply with the order, seeking legal advice. The Board was forced in turn to ask the Crown Solicitor's advice and had to rewrite the expulsion order in different terms to protect itself from court proceedings. The political nature of the expulsion is evident from the Board's insistence throughout that "the presence of [Shadrack] James on the Station is a menace to the good government thereof".⁴ James, however, still refused to leave the station and the Board prosecuted him for trespass. The result of the case is not recorded.⁵

By December 1921, although the population had been reduced by 51.8% of its 1908 total, the resistance had not ended. The Board decided to act in two ways. Those defined as "undesirables" by the Board were to continue to be "weeded out", but as the level of discontent was so high, the Board reconfirmed its 1919 decision to carry out this process only "gradually". In a final attempt to restore order on the station, however, the Board decided to act aggressively and remove the veil of civilian government. For three months, from

¹ Ibid, 12/1/1921.
² Ibid, 19/8/1921.
³ Ibid, 7/12/1921.
⁴ Ibid, 17/8/1921; 21/10/1921.
⁵ Ibid, 7/12/1921.
December 1921 to March 1922, a Police Station was established at Cumeragunja and the Guris there were ruled by a resident police officer.\(^1\) This show of force had its effect — the remaining residents were subdued, temporarily. Over the next ten years, the degree of conflict was notably reduced and no shootings or violent disputes between the manager and the residents were reported.

The resistance was not over, however, but rather took less confrontationist forms. The exodus of families with their children continued and in 1927 the Board was so concerned as to seek legal advice on how it could regain control over children taken across the Murray into Victoria by their parents.\(^2\) These Aboriginal tactics appear to have been very successful: the Board's Records of Wards do not show any children to have been taken from Cumeragunja from 1922 to 1928 when the Records cease. Some children may have been turned over to the Child Welfare Department over this time and so their removal would not have been recorded by the Board, but Aboriginal oral sources seem to associate most of the removals with the pre-1922 period.\(^3\)

Some of those who left Cumeragunja went as far as Melbourne, where a community of exiles developed which was to form the nucleus of later political activity. Others found seasonal work in the agricultural areas to the north and south of Cumeragunja, while others again moved only across the river to the camp at Barmah.\(^4\) Over the next decade many Cumeragunja people moved between all three situations, but it appears that few lost their sense of identification as Cumeragunja Guris.\(^5\) Again, the Board had succeeded in creating the illusion that the numbers of Aborigines had decreased, but temporary dispersal did not mean disappearance.

For those remaining on Cumeragunja during the 1920s, life was far from happy. By 1924 the dispersal program, the disciplinary expulsions and the Guri escape to protect their children, had reduced the population by 62.7% of the 1908 figure.\(^6\) The proposed "renova-

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1 Ibid, 7/12/1921; 2/3/1922.
2 Ibid, 2/9/1927.
3 Barwick, "Pioneers and Policy", p56.
4 APBM, 2/9/1927.
5 Barwick, "A Little More than Kin", demonstrates that at least in the early 1960s this was still the case.
6 Barwick, "Pioneers and Policy", p57.
tion" of the houses took place from 1921 to 1926, but amounted to little more than the patching up of houses that had been built 20 or 30 years before.\textsuperscript{1} To further discourage "light-caste" or able-bodied Guris from returning to Cumeragunja after they had been engaged on seasonal work, a total of 21 houses were pulled down or burnt by the management.\textsuperscript{2} In 1927 the inadequate water supply failed altogether and was not repaired until 1934, so that for seven years even the growing of vegetables around the huts to supplement the meagre ration was impossible.\textsuperscript{3} General health was poor and trachoma was raging untreated.\textsuperscript{4} At no stage did Cumeragunja people forget that their land had been taken from them, and in 1927 they made a formal request to the Protection Board for the farm blocks to be reallocated. They were, however, curtly dismissed by the Board, which informed them:

... that the experiment of farm block farming was tried at Cumeragunja and proved a failure, and the Board has no intention of altering the present system.\textsuperscript{5}

The Board had succeeded in maintaining its control and in severely reducing the population, but the bitterness and hostility generated by its policies and methods were to bear fruit in the desperate conditions of the 1930s.

**Edgerton**

The situation on Edgerton station, which closed completely in 1916, appears at first sight more drastic but can be explained very briefly. The first residents of the new station in 1910 had been the majority of Guris who were in receipt of Board rations from the police in Yass town in 1909.\textsuperscript{6} They had been forced to move to Edgerton because the Board refused to issue any further rations at Yass itself.\textsuperscript{7} The problem for the Board was that it classed these

1 APBR, 1921-22; 1925-26; 1926-27.
3 Ibid.
4 SC on APB, ME, p74, 15/2/1937.
5 APBM, 4/2/1927.
6 APBR, 1909, p21; 1910, p10.
7 Ibid, 1910, p22.
Guris as "mostly quadroons and octroos" but it "encouraged" their residence on Edgerton as it hoped they would draw the other Guris from the camps around Yass out to the station.¹ This process occurred to some extent and the population had risen from 29 to 66 by December 1913.²

At this stage the Board felt confident enough to begin expelling the "lighter-caste" and able-bodied adults and removing children, in accordance with its policy but also under increased pressure to reduce expenditure because of war-time budget restrictions.³ The conditions of the war had also, however, improved employment opportunities and by 1915 a major construction project in the district had created more jobs.⁴ With the need for dependence on the Board reduced by favourable local employment conditions, and with no specific ties to the land at Edgerton, Guris simply moved away from the unwanted managerial interference of the station and went back to Yass, which they had left only unwillingly in the first place and where their children could get some schooling at the convent despite the public school's segregation.⁵ The Protection Board had succeeded in reducing the numbers on its ration lists but it had failed totally in its intention to remove the Guri community from Yass.

THE NORTHERN SLOPES

For the northern and central slopes region there is little information, but it appears that Mari resistance to the Board was seldom confrontationist, but rather took other forms. The most dramatic response to Board policy was on one of the newer stations, Euraba, where a manager was imposed on the population of the old Kunopia pastoral camp in 1912. This northern area does not appear to have been subject to the wave of anxiety concerning the Board's removal of children which swept through the south western communities and the

¹ Ibid.
² APBR, 1913, p9.
³ APBOL, 13/8/1914; October 1914; 31/10/1914; 10/11/1914; 7/1/1915; 17/2/1915.
⁴ APBR, 1915, p6.
⁵ Ibid. Only 9 people were left on Edgerton in December 1915.
⁶ SMH, 24/5/1927.
⁷ Yass public school file, 1929, DEIL.
older stations after the 1912 publicity.¹ With the 1914 parliamentary debates leading to the Board's acquisition of greater power, however, Maris at Euraba became alarmed and in April 1915, began to leave the station in substantial numbers, causing the Board anxiety in its turn.² The manager was instructed to withdraw rations from anyone preparing to leave the station and to try to "persuade" the men to leave their wives and children behind while they left the station for work, (therefore, of course, making the children more vulnerable to removal).³ No population figures are available for 1914 and, significantly, the Board made no figures available in 1915, but a comparison of the 1913 and 1915 census figures for the immediate Boomi district shows the scale of the exodus. From a 1913 population of 114 Maris of whom 25 adults and 50 children were receiving rations, by 1915 there were only 46 Maris, 23 of them children, in the district, and none were receiving rations, suggesting that virtually no-one was left on the station.⁴

The border location of the station was significant and many families, like that of Hannah Duncan, took their children into Queensland to keep them beyond the reach of the NSW Board, and sustained themselves with contract or camp pastoral work on Queensland stations to stay out of the reach of that State's administration.⁵ The increase in Euraba station's population by 1921 reflected incoming new families, drawn to the station by the same problem facing all Aborigines, the constriction of access to public schools even where there was no formal segregation⁶, as well, no doubt, as the poor employment situation of that particular year.⁷

¹ This may simply reflect a lack of evidence: the detailed inspection reports of Garvin, Ardill and Jenkins (CSIL Box 7121) provide most of the evidence of Mari and Guri response to Board aims and particularly to the May 1912 publicity, and the inspections of northern slopes stations and reserves in 1912 occurred in February or April 1912, before that publicity. Nevertheless, there appears to be no indications from these reports that Maris on the northern slopes were apprehensive of Board policy at this stage, whereas those at Brewarrina station were alarmed.

² APBM, 15/4/1915.

³ Ibid.

⁴ APBR, 1913, pp17, 22; 1915, pp12, 17.

⁵ Interview C49, Hannah Duncan (nee McGrady).

⁶ APBR, 1912, p11. Interview T16.

⁷ APBR, 1920-21, p5.
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From further south, there is even less indication of events on the large stations such as Terry Hie Hie, Burra Bee Dee and Walhallow. The Board had attempted to satisfy Maris demands for land in this increasingly agricultural area of allocating family farm blocks, at least on Burra Bee Dee and Walhallow, but with the same limited results from undercapitalized concerns.\(^1\) All of these stations, however, lost population during 1915, despite the fact that drought had made this the worst of the war years in terms of employment prospects. Overall, the Board's ration lists were temporarily increased in this year in response to decreases in Aboriginal employment\(^2\) but Aborigines were not going onto the stations, and into the reach of the managers, to seek rations.

The war had a far more significant effect on the northern slopes area, however, in that the closer settlement after 1905 was intensified with the scheme for Returned Soldiers' Settlement after 1916.\(^3\) Even the poor quality Pilliga scrub area, for example, had been reclassified by the Lands Department to encourage selectors\(^4\) and Maris were therefore coming under increasing pressure not only from the Protection Board but from intensified white settlement. Although largely undocumented, there appear to have been substantial internal Mari population movements in the region from 1917 onwards, one of them being the dispersal of the Mari camp at Wingadee, also known as Redbank. This reserve had probably been leased before 1920 and while many of the Mari residents may have gone to Coonamble or Walgett, some families went to Pilliga reserve to the east where a "special" school had been opened in 1912.\(^5\) Many of the children taken from Pilliga reserve, in removal activity which occurred mainly in 1920 and 1921, had been born and had grown up on Wingadee and had only recently arrived at Pilliga.\(^6\)

4 Rolls, Wild Acres, pp205-6.
5 APBR, 1912, p25.
6 APBRW, see for example, ward numbers 182, 189, 202, 348, etc.
While the precise course of events at Wingadee is undocumented, the case of Sevington is more clear. The Board's Inspector Donaldson recommended in 1918 that in view of the white demand for land, the greater portion of the 2,750-acre reserve could be made profitable to the Board by leasing and the Mari population were fenced off in a corner of the reserve in October of that year so that the neighbouring pastoralist could run his stock on the remainder.\(^1\) The leasing of reserves had a complex history in this decade, however, and will be discussed more fully in relation to the north coast.

THE COAST

From the south coast there is again little record of confrontationist resistance or indeed of the general situation. Some of the expulsions of the 1914 to 1915 period were on "disciplinary" grounds, rather than against either the able-bodied or those of "light-caste" but here again there were no charges of trespass. There were alternative places for Gurus to go, with a number of "unsupervised" reserves along the coast and also camps on land not reserved such as Woragoe outside Nowra.\(^2\) At least one of those expelled for opposing the manager at Wallaga Lake in 1915, Paddy Pitman, travelled as far north as Sydney to camp not on the tightly supervised reserve at La Perouse but on the unreserved land at Salt Pan Creek, in the area now known as Riverwood.\(^3\) While employment opportunities for Gurus were probably more limited on the south coast than in any other region, Guri self-sufficiency was enhanced not only by subsistence fishing but by fishing for the market, at which they were successful enough to cause local white fishermen to protest to the Protection Board through the Fisheries Department in 1914 and in 1918.\(^4\)

The north coast situation was far more complex, with, as would be expected, substantial differences in the course of events on the far northern rivers when compared with the area to the north and south of the Macleay. The Board's activity was very limited in the

Also number 392 for an indication that some Wingadee people had gone to Walgett.

1 APBM, 11/9/1918; 30/10/1918.
2 Nowra Leader, 15/11/’935.
3 APBOL
   Interview T51.
4 APBM, 5/2/1914; 22/10/1918.
back country of the far northern rivers, with no expulsions being recorded at Runnymede station, although the Guri population fell as it did on most other stations, while the one child whose removal was recorded was not taken until 1921. In the more established agricultural areas, however, the Board was active much earlier on all except the one station where Gurus had established a successful economic base in agriculture, Cabbage Tree Island.

The high employment opportunities on the far north coast had allowed Gurus at Grafton station to remain uncooperative towards the manager, and they had flatly refused to do any work at all on the Board's maize crop unless paid wages, an attitude which an inspecting Board member viewed with concern in 1911. When the Board circularized managers in the same year with its Regulations which threatened expulsions and removal of children, some Gurus had simply left the station and returned to the alternative camp sites at South Grafton and elsewhere from which the had been trying to entice them.

It was in 1915, however, the Board gained its new legislation concerning children, th at Grafton and Nymboida decided that the stations were unsafe and, like the Maris at Euraba, began to move away in substantial numbers, causing the Board to try to reassure them that it did not intend to take their children "without careful enquiry". Far from being reassured, Gurus took their case to the local white press, gaining sympathetic coverage in the Grafton Argus. While the population at Grafton temporarily stabilized, the Gurus of Nymboida kept on leaving and the station was empty by 1917.

The situation of Dunion is less fully explained in surviving documents but it appears that the manager did not actually become resident until 1914, after which there were a series of conflicts

1 GE Ardill to APB, Inspection Report, 15/6/1911, CSIL Box 7121.
2 Ibid. APBR, 1906, p8.
3 APBM, 28/1/1915; 4/2/1915; 11/2/1915.
5 No copies of the Grafton Argus survive from this period. The reference to the article, which clearly indicates its sympathy with Gurus whose children were "being interfered with", is APBM, 4/2/1915.
6 APBR, 1917, total absence of reference to Nymboida as either a reserve or a camp.
between him and the Guri residents, at least some caused by attempts to remove children. The results were that the Gurus, including those who had been farming the land, moved off the reserve and closer to the town of Lismore, vowing that they would not remain under Board control, the manager resigned in December 1916 and the "special" school was closed. Donaldson, by this time active in his travels as the Board's Inspector, investigated the Lismore Gurus, and managed to remove some children classified "orphans" but was opposed successfully (and interestingly) by the local police in attempts to remove the children of the families who had left Dunoon, who had succeeded in enrolling their younger children in schools and whose older children were already working or "apparently looking after themselves". After 1917, when it was clear that a manager would not be reappointed, some Gurus returned to Dunoon, although the Board by this time was making plans to lease the reserve.

For the Gurus of Grafton, Nymboida and Dunoon, alternative camp sites and good employment opportunities, (with the exception of the drought year of 1915) combined with diverse subsistence resources to allow escape from the Board even in an intensively settled agricultural area. For those resident on Ulgundah Island, however, the situation was more difficult, as although agriculture had not been highly successful because of the poor quality of much of the island, the Gurus, having occupied it, held a substantial commitment to that area of land and so were far less willing to leave in the face of Board pressure. On this Island, too, while some expulsions occurred in 1913, only two children were taken before 1916: as with much of the rest of the north coast, this community lost far more children to the Board in the second half of the decade and once the Inspectors were active. Gurus who were children in this later period can remem-

2 Barrie to Nesbitt, 13/11/1917, op.cit.
3 APBM, 7/12/1916.
4 Police Inspector A Lewis to APB, 6/11/1917, CSIL, 17/120, Box 7483
5 AJ, 7/1922.
6 APBR
ber hiding in the Island's cane fields whenever Donaldson arrived.¹

The intensifying Protection Board pressure was however, as always, secondary to the pressure of white settlement. From the earliest white requests to the Board for revocation of reserves, the focus of attempted white acquisition was the reserve land of the north coast, although there were requests to revoke from other areas of intensifying land use, such as the Armidale area², and it was a reserve on the western fringe of "closer settlement", on the Lachlan, that the Lands Department had unilaterally revoked in 1906. This incident had resulted in the Department agreeing that it would not revoke Aboriginal reserve land without consulting the Board, but no such agreement had been reached on the issue of leasing reserves.

One well-documented example of the situation on the north coast is that of Percy Mosely, son of the John Mosely who had occupied one of the Fattorini Islands and then moved to Euroka Creek. Percy Mosely had a family relationship, probably by marriage, to the Fields family, and in 1914 Mosely was in occupation of the reserve land at Ballengarra, originally set aside for Robert Fields in 1894.³ Early in 1914, Mosely applied to the Board for some formalization of his occupancy and cultivation of the 20-acre reserve and in June was assured by the Board that he could consider his occupancy secure, after which he began preparations for another maize crop.⁴ At about the same time, however, a white man applied to the Lands Department for a lease over this reserve and his application was approved.⁵

The Protection Board protested on Mosely's behalf, but the Lands Department refused to change its decision so the Board sent the police to ask Mosely if he "might know of some vacant reserve to which the Board might remove him".⁶ Mosely, however, refused to leave the land or the crop, so the Board decided, without consulting the Gurris of Rolland's Plains reserve, that Mosely should be given a permissive occupancy of 6 to 10 acres there and "transferred without

¹ Interview C56.
² APBR, 1909, p5.
³ APBRR, Folio 73.
  Interview C61.
⁴ APBM, 18/6/1914.
⁶ Ibid, 1/10/1914.
delay". 1 Mosely still refused to move, and in February 1915, the Board offered him £10 "out of pocket expenses", to be paid only after he left the reserve. 2 When Mosely refused to accept the money, insisting that the land and the crop now ready to harvest was his, the Board washed its hands of the matter and the police forcibly evicted him early in March. 3 The white lessee then took possession of the land and the crop.

Mosely moved his family north west to Rolland's Plains, so adding another to the four or more families living there. Mosely himself went on to Sydney, to explain to the Board in person "his desire to again occupy the reserve" and his argument that the white lessee had received the proceeds of his labour. 4 The Board was convinced to some extent, asking the white lessee to remit £7/2/6 to Mosely, being one-third of the profits of the maize crop and suggesting to the Lands Department that the lease be terminated. 5 Mosely remained immovable in his demand for "repossession" of Ballengarra, despite the Board again offering him the choice of any vacant reserve land and the Board felt confident enough to assure him that at the termination of the Lands Department lease, he would be able to return to the reserve. 6 The Lands Department, however, ignored the Board, and renewed the white occupier's lease, over the protests of both Mosely and the Board, which as some consolation again offered £10 to Mosely, who again rejected the money. 7

In the course of this dispute, the Board paid some attention to the situation at Rolland's Plains, noticing that in the latter part of the year some of the Guri residents leased a portion of the reserve for agistment. Despite the fact that the Board itself had classed this land as best suited to grazing purposes 8 and the fact that cultivation in the severe north coast drought of late 1915 was extremely risky, all crops on the other Board reserves failing over

1 _Ibid_, 14/10/1914.
2 _Ibid_, 4/2/1915.
5 _Ibid_, 20/5/1915; 10/6/1915.
7 _Ibid_, 7/10/1915; 28/10/1915; 16/11/1915.
8 _APBRR_, Folio 62.
this period, the Board strongly disapproved of the Guris of the reserve receiving a cash income from it in this way. After ordering the police to intervene in the existing arrangements, the Board immediately called for the agistment on part of the reserve with the fees now to be paid to the Board itself.2

Although the Board was already leasing some areas of reserve land, the Ballengarra dispute raised the issue formally, and the Board initiated discussions with the Lands Department which resulted in both an agreement that the Department would henceforth neither revoke nor lease without Board approval and in a sanction of the Board's practice of leasing reserves, with the profit accruing to the Board "to be utilized for the benefit of Aborigines" in general.3 This meant, in other words, that leasing fees would supplement the funds of a Board forced into even greater austerity measures by the war-time economy.4 During 1915, then, the Board circularized all Superintendents of Police, asking them to estimate the rental value of any reserve land in their area.5

By 1917, however, the Lands Department pressure on the Board to revoke reserves was intensified by the emotive appeal of the Returned Soldiers' Settlement Scheme. The Board was by this time composed largely of public servants with little time to inquire into the matter and who had had no part in the Board's reserve creation activity. Donaldson, as the most experienced of the Inspectors, was chosen in January 1917, to survey the existing reserves with a Lands Department officer, to select those which could be made available for Soldier Settlement.6 With his commitment to the eventual "closing of the reserves and camps altogether", Donaldson was probably not unmoved by Lands Department arguments for revocation, although on occasions he recommended against it.7 In the brief period of most intense pressure for soldier settlement, from 1917 to 1919, 8

1 APBR, 1915, pp6-8.
2 APBM, 18/11/1915; 25/11/1915.
3 Ibid, 7/1/1915; 8/7/1915; 12/1/1921.
4 APBQL, 13/8/1914; October 1914.
6 APBM, 3/1/1917.
7 Ibid, for example, 2/10/1918, when a series of Lands Department requests for revocation or leasing of a portion of Grafton reserve turned out, on inspection, to be for the only watered portion.
reserves were revoked for this purpose, while 7 such applications were refused.\(^1\) Most requests for revocation were for the fertile north coast reserves.

The following Figures 2.4 and 2.5 compiled from Lands Department figures because of the progressive incompleteness of Board records\(^2\), show that Soldier Settlement did not significantly change the pattern of reserve revocation, but merely added to the steady erosion of the area reserved for Aborigines over the decade. The significant fact shown is that, particularly after 1915, the north coast bore the brunt of this permanent land loss. The reserves revoked on the north coast in this decade were not, however, the very best quality reserves in terms of land. While requests for revocation of reserves such as Kinchela were received, the Board resisted them, either because Guris were so obviously continuing to utilize the land "well" in the Board's view or because the Board had intentions of making these reserves revenue-producing by leasing.

After the 1915 agreement with the Lands Department, the Board intensified its own leasing activities, with local police and, again, Inspector Donaldson, as its advisors in the field. Some white applications for leases were refused, but 5 of the 6 Soldier Settler requests were acceded to, as were most of the others.\(^3\) From the position of 1913, when only 2.5% of the Board's income from stations and reserves was derived from leasing, in 1921 the figure was 12.5%, over a period when despite the decline in actual productivity of the stations, resulting from dispersal activity, the introduction of the Sale Store system had increased the Board's revenue.\(^4\)

All of the good-quality alluvial land reserved in the area north and south of the Macleay came under this pressure, as did that of the same quality in the far northern rivers area. By 1918 most of Dunoon was under lease to returned soldiers and there had been repeated requests for either revocation or leasing of Grafton, while around the Macleay, Killawarra, Urunga, Cow Creek, both of the Shark Islands

\(^1\) APBM, 1917 to 1920.

\(^2\) Particularly after the 1916 restructuring, the Board's Minutes become briefer and less informative, and revocations noted in these Minutes do not correspond with those in the Government Gazettes, which are probably the more accurate record.

\(^3\) APBM, 1917 to 1920.

\(^4\) APBR, Sales and Produce Accounts, 1913 and 1920-21.
Figure 2.4

CHANGE IN AREA RESERVED FOR
THE USE OF ABORIGINES (AR)
1909 - 1921

[Graph showing changes in acreage, with two lines indicating 'Total AR Land' and 'North Coast AR Land' over years 1909 to 1921.]
ANNUAL LOSS OR GAIN IN
ABORIGINAL RESERVE ACREAGE: 1911-1921
and Pelican Island were all partially or wholly leased and now the Board itself was leasing Ballengarra to a white man.\textsuperscript{1} Even a portion of Kinchela reserve was under lease by this time, although the 25-acre permissive occupancy of William Drew had only been increased to an area of 30 acres when formally made reserve land in 1899.\textsuperscript{2}

On many of these reserves, including Kinchela, Guris had still been cultivating the land when the Board leased them to whites. One well-documented example is that of Rolland's Plains, to which Percy Mosely had taken his family in 1915 and which had shortly after been partially leased. The Davis family for whom the land had originally been reserved conducted a twenty-year campaign for its return, and the following letter from Herbert Davis to the Select Committee on the APB of 1937 is consistent with all the Protection Board's records.

We consider that we ain't getting a fair deal by the Aborigines Protection Board regarding a piece of land situated at Rollands Plains. That was a standing dense scrub. That was cleared by me and my brothers. After we had cleared the land and put it into value, it was then leased to a white man, Mr Clarrie Avery by name.

The land was given to us on condition that we cleared it. We fulfilled all conditions and cleared the land and fenced it off and resided on it for over 30 years.

The land, when a standing scrub, was valued by the valuator, Mr H. Watters, at £2 an acre. It is and was valued at £42 per acre after we had cleared it.

Several applications was made to the Aborigines Protection Board for to continue cultivation and were each time refused.

Avery told me that they allowed me two acres and the house included.\textsuperscript{3}

As is suggested in Davis' letter, some Aborigines attempted to stem the loss of land by requesting leases themselves over the reserves. The Davis' applications for a lease of Rolland's Plains were rejected in 1919 and again in 1920.\textsuperscript{4} George Kapeen was apparently more successful, being himself a returned serviceman, at Cabbage Tree Island, but this reserve was so adequately supporting

\textsuperscript{1} APBM, 1/11/1917; 31/1/1918; 3/4/1918; 30/5/1918; 13/6/1918.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid, 2/10/1918.
\textsuperscript{3} SC on APB, ME, p45.
\textsuperscript{4} APBM, 14/5/1919; 14/7/1920.
the Guri community there that the Board had not considered leasing for its own benefit at this stage.¹

In the other area which suffered major reserve loss because of either revocation or leasing at this time, the northern slopes, Mungindi, Narrabri and part of Sevington had all been leased by 1918.² Only Gurs at Walcha reserve were successful in securing their occupation by lease in 1917 but even this was temporary and in 1925 the Board leased the reserve to a white man who made a more attractive tender.³ One of the original Guri lessees at Walcha described in 1938 the conditions of the reserve after the transfer:

Our complaint here is that the Aborigines Protection Board allows white men to run sheep, cattle and horses, on the Aboriginal Reserve, and they eat all the feed, so we can’t keep horses for our children to ride to school. The fences around the reserve are cut and are falling down.

Some of us tried to grow vegetables, corn, potatoes by the river-side, but the white people cut down the fences and let their stock in to trample down and eat what we planted with so much labour. All our work is gone for nothing.⁴

Conditions were probably similar on those leased north coast reserves such as Pelican Island, where Gurs remained and continued to attempt cultivation, with the white lessee encroaching on their remaining land despite the obligatory undertaking “not to interfere with the Aboriginal occupants”.⁵

Percy Mosely, however, was one who refused to accept bureaucratic decisions as final. After the leasing of Rolland’s Plains, he returned to Ballengarra and organized an unofficial arrangement with the white lessee. This was still functioning in 1924: the white lessee used Mosely’s pair of Clydesdales for ploughing and in return Mosely lived on the reserve, farming a share of the land.⁶

With land lost by revocation and leasing, the area available to Gurs of the north coast was decreasing rapidly. This process bore no relation to the size of the Guri population in the area, which remained consistent at approximately 24% of the total enumerated

¹ Ibid, 13/10/1920.
² Ibid, 23/8/1917; 31/1/1918; 21/3/1918; 30/10/1918.
⁴ James Yarrie to The Abo Call, June, 1938, p2.
⁵ PSBR, p45, gives a copy of the standard lease form.
⁶ Interview G61.
Aboriginal population throughout this decade. Instead, of course, the loss of land bore a direct relation to the interests of the growing white population of the region.

Concurrently with this reduction in accessible land came an increase in Protection Board interference and control. One reflection of this is in the greater number of children taken by the Board from the north coast in the later years of the decade (as shown on Figure 2.3) but in this period as well the Board imposed resident managers on several Guri reserve communities of the mid and lower coastal areas, these new stations being shown on Figure 2.6.

The manager at Mount Olive exercised supervision over the reserve at St Clair too, and also kept an eye on the Aborigines' Inland Mission (AIM) Home for Children in Singleton town itself, which, after complaints from white townspeople, a successful school segregation, and the dismissal of the AIM supervisor for "improper conduct" in relation to the girls at the Home, was eventually incorporated into the Board's administration as a single-sex Boys' Training Home. At Urunga, on an island already partly leased, the Board paid the local Fisheries Inspector, E.C. Smithers, to act as manager and to increase the Board's revenue by the laying of extensive oyster beds around the island's foreshores.

At Kinchela, the hopes held by William Drew and others in the 1880s for economic independence had been almost completely eroded. There were by 1921, 114 Guris on Kinchela, the two Fattorini Islands and Pelican Island under the Kinchela manager's control, with only 14 of them being children of school age. The reserves had been divided up into "farm blocks" for individual families and such blocks could only have been very small, with portions of Pelican Island and Kinchela already leased and the Board's manager having instituted

1 APBR, 1909 to 1915, after which regional populations cannot be derived until 1927, with the first surviving original police patrol returns for the Annual Aboriginal Census. The North Coast proportions of the enumerated Aboriginal population in 1915 and 1927 are similar at approximately 24%. After this, changes in Aboriginal population enumerated are caused by factors which will be discussed in a later chapter.


3 Singleton public school file, 1918-1920, DEIL.
   APBR, 1918.
   APBM, 2/6/1920; 12/1/1921.

4 APBR, 1918; 1920-21, p4.
Figure 2.6

STATIONS IN EXISTENCE 1921

Newly created stations shown with date of creation.

KEY
* Existing Station.
☐ Site of Station closed before 1921.
maize farming for the Board's profit on another, again unspecified, area of the reserve lands. Nevertheless, Guris were successful in retaining the major proportion of the profits from the maize grown on these reserves, and in 1921 this amounted to £322 as against the Board's share of £177. The figure for private profit is impressive under the circumstances, but when divided among 114 people would not have gone very far towards self-sufficiency.¹

While there had always been camps in this area which were not on land secured by the Board as reserves, such as that at Greenhills just outside Kempsey, it can be assumed that the population of such camps, never separately enumerated, began to rise with this intensification of Board control over communities living on reserved land. In fact, along the whole of the north coast, the only reserved land and station community to emerge from the decade relatively unscathed was that of Cabbage Tree Island, and a full explanation for this can only emerge after collection of oral evidence from the area.

THE DECADE

In the Protection Board's terms, its first decade with a legislative base had produced mixed results. It had quite clearly reduced the populations of Aborigines resident on its stations, but with the opening of new stations towards the end of the period, the proportion of Aborigines under the control of a resident manager had risen from 17% in 1909 to 19% in 1921, with the total enumerated Aboriginal population rising from 7,370 to 7,551 over the same period.² Furthermore, as was obvious to Aborigines earlier than to the Board, residence on a reserve did not mean automatic dependence on the Board, and while the Board's Reports cease recording even an average number of ration recipients across the State after 1915, some statistics were issued to the Government throughout the decade.

The figures published in the NSW Statistical Register for 1920 show that from 1910 to 1919, the average annual number of ration issues had in fact risen from 1,703 to 2,582, an increase of 879. On the other hand, until 1918, (when the differentiation between adults and children ceased in this source) nearly two-thirds (63%) of this

1 Ibid, 1920-21, pp3,8.
increase had been caused by ration issues to children, which were only half as expensive as those to adults and which may have reflected increased Aboriginal need for the schooling provided on reserves and stations. While the Board had undoubtedly caused significant movements of Aboriginal populations, it is arguable that it had succeeded in its aims of either reducing its expenditure or in changing either the economic or cultural status of any Aborigines.

The Board had, however, been successful in setting up an apparatus for removing children which had become more efficient over the decade. This very success had created other problems, as the Board realized increasingly that it needed to exercise some control over the residence of Aboriginal families if it was to be able to gain control of the children it wanted. With no power to confine Aborigines in a specific place, it had tried to use the manipulation of ration issues at Euraba, Grafton, Nymboida and probably elsewhere, to control Aboriginal residence in order to secure control over children. Finally, the Board's retreat from its commitment to the permanence of children's removal had been as much a response to its own success as to the sustained Aboriginal parental protest. Nevertheless, the Board continued to regard "apprenticeships" as a vital part of its operations and entered the decade of the twenties with intentions to take more children, even if only for four years.

In a reaffirmation of its commitment to reducing its responsibilities, the Board had gained further amendments to the Protection Act in 1918. These amendments had redefined the word "Aborigine" to limit its meaning in most sections of the Act to "full-blood" and "half-caste" Aborigines only. The Board, however, retained discretion to allow any "other person" to reside on a reserve and to be subject to expulsion. The successful harvest of "collected" young people had strained the Board's own "disposal" facilities and in any case it was confident that the Child Welfare Department could be used to remove "quadroon" and "octroon" children now that the precedents and stereotypes of the need to "rescue" them from "vice" had been firmly established. The only section of the Act for which these amendments extended the definition of "Aborigine" beyond even that of

1 NSW Statistical Register, 1919-20, p351.
2 APBR, 1920-21, p5.
3 AP (Am) Act, 1918.
1909 was section 9 relating to alcohol, the supply of which was now prohibited to "any person apparently having an admixture of Aboriginal blood".

In general over the decade the Board's direction had shifted away from providing aids such as seeds and boats to enable Aborigines to be self-sufficient. Instead it had taken advantage of high labour needs to appear to have "forced" Aborigines onto the labour market and it had certainly forced Aborigines off at least some reserves. The Board's limited expenditure was increasingly directed to building homes for managers, as well as huts for Aborigines and to creating, in iron and fences, a tangible expression of its own restrictive presence on those Aborigines under its control.¹

For Aborigines, the Board's policy had added one more factor to the varying pressures they faced in each regional situation. The tactics used by Aborigines in their resistance to unwanted Protection Board interference varied according to both the degree of Board pressure, which varied widely itself, and with the social and economic conditions of the region in terms of both European activities and remaining avenues for traditional subsistence activities. Confrontationist Aboriginal resistance was greatest in this decade in the south west, the area where a high degree of Protection Board interference was combined with a low level of geographic, economic and social alternatives for Aborigines outside of the Board's reserves as places of residence as well as of aid.

The Board's policies had generated a movement of Aboriginal population as people sought to escape the Board's interference. Some were successful and some were not. Margaret Tucker has explained her family's decision to leave Brungle because of the Board threat to their children. The family moved to the unsupervised reserve at Moonacullah because the "special" Aboriginal school there was an accessible source of education, as well as because there were relations of the family living there. The Board's imposition of a manager on this reserve in 1917, as a response to increased population, placed the children in jeopardy again and this time the Board

¹ The difference in ratios of expenditure is impossible to enumerate because of the lack of detail in the Board's Reports, particularly after 1915. The different directions of expenditure are noticeable, however, between even APBR 1911 and APBR 1915, Appendix D in both.
was successful in breaking up Margaret Tucker's family.¹

As with the Barker family at Brewarrina access to schools was a major issue in the alternatives Aboriginal families could seek, as the Board could more easily argue neglect if children were not attending school. This pressure acted as a counterforce, generating a movement of Aborigines towards reserves with "special" schools as the Board's powers over children increased.

To this contraction of social alternatives was added the actual contraction of area available to Aborigines as closer settlement intensified white pressure on available land. At the same time as Aborigines in some areas faced loss of camping and subsistence opportunities because of this pressure, the area reserved specifically for the use of Aborigines was being eroded by the same pressure. In addition, the Protection Board was increasingly seeing the most economically viable of the reserves, the alluvial land of the north coast, as a source of cash revenue for its own programs, rather than as a source for Aboriginal self-sufficiency and so had begun to erode still further the available reserve land by leasing.

While the Board had generated a movement off the reserves, therefore, pressures from the regional context in some areas were acting to force Aborigines onto reserves, and these were precisely the regions in which reserve land was being lost by revocation or leasing most rapidly. If the period from 1909 to 1921 had seen the eventual subjugation of resistance in the south west, even if temporarily, there were areas of tension developing elsewhere.

¹ Tucker M, If Everyone Cared, pp80-83, 90-96.
APBR, 1917.