“DEVOLUTION”: SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR TERRITORY SCHOOLS

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March 1996
DECLARATION

The work present in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for an award at this or any other university.

C. A. CAMERON
ABSTRACT

Local self-management, popularly known as devolution, is a political initiative in English-speaking nations over the last couple of decades taken to promote community participation in education. In Australia, state and territory governments are responsible to provide public education services but with this policy they devolve decision-making, management and responsibility, as considered appropriate, to the local level. Functions that are devolved to be performed locally, in the school communities, are managed within parameters established by the governments and as directed, supported and monitored through arrangements made in their respective systems for these purposes.

The policy of self-management in education has aroused contention. This has resulted primarily from a publicly perceived ‘rhetoric/reality gap’, wherein governments are seen to advocate ‘devolution’ as educationally beneficial for children but actually institute it as a cost-cutting strategy. Although acceptance has been widespread nonetheless and there is enthusiasm about the administrative advantages it offers, there is resentment where governments are considered to have been heavy-handed in handling its introduction. This has been the case in the Northern Territory, especially with growing enforcement of its acceptance from the mid-1980s.

This dissertation is devoted to the NT experience: it provides background on the Territory and its education system; the substance of the policy is considered and a theoretical model against which to analyse it is devised; the development and implementation of the policy are traced; its impact in two Aboriginal communities is studied on an exploratory basis, a prerequisite for which is an introduction to education in remote Aboriginal NT; and the findings of the study are finally reconsidered, to identify emergent characteristics, advisable direction with the policy and any need for further research. It gives the NT Government substantial feedback on a major policy initiative in public education. A fuller study of the impact of ‘devolution’ across the Territory could use this thesis as its base.
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<td>AASEA</td>
<td>Australasian Association of Senior Educational Administrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACEA</td>
<td>Australian Council of Educational Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACENT</td>
<td>Advisory Committee on Education in the Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE (NT)</td>
<td>Australian College of Education (Northern Territory Chapter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACER</td>
<td>Australian Council for Educational Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AECG</td>
<td>Aboriginal Education Consultative Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>AEP</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEPMU</td>
<td>AEP Management Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEPSU</td>
<td>Aboriginal Education Programs Support Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AESIP</td>
<td>Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEU (NT)</td>
<td>Australian Education Union (Northern Territory)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP (NT)</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party (Northern Territory)</td>
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<td>APS</td>
<td>Australian Public Service</td>
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<td>APSI</td>
<td>Action Plan for School Improvement</td>
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<td>ASSPA</td>
<td>Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness</td>
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<td>ATSI</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSIC</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATU (NT)</td>
<td>Australian Teachers Union (Northern Territory)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASU</td>
<td>Curriculum Advisory Support Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>C&amp;AD</td>
<td>Curriculum and Assessment Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>COE</td>
<td>Commonwealth Department of Education</td>
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<td>COEP</td>
<td>Community Development Employment Projects</td>
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<td>COP</td>
<td>Community Development Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Community Education Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLP</td>
<td>Country Liberal Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>COGSO</td>
<td>Council of Government Schools Organisations</td>
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<td>CPE</td>
<td>Commissioner for Public Employment</td>
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<td>Cost Price Index</td>
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<td>Commonwealth Teaching Service</td>
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<td>DAA</td>
<td>Department of Aboriginal Affairs</td>
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<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>DH&amp;CS</td>
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<tr>
<td>EA</td>
<td>East Arnhem</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAC</td>
<td>Education Advisory Council</td>
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<td>EAG</td>
<td>Education Advisory Group</td>
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<td>BO</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities</td>
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<td>ERA</td>
<td>Evaluation, Research and Evaluation</td>
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<td>ERC</td>
<td>Economic Review Committee</td>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>ET</td>
<td>Executive Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>(Sabatier's) General Model (of Policy Change)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLC</td>
<td>Homeland Learning Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRC</td>
<td>Human Rights Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICPA</td>
<td>Isolated Children's Parents' Association Information Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV AC</td>
<td>Investigations, Visions, Actions &amp; Changes</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCNT</td>
<td>Joint Committee on the Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSSC</td>
<td>Junior Secondary Studies Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOTE</td>
<td>Languages Other than English</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPC</td>
<td>Literature Production Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHR</td>
<td>Member of the House of Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Member of the Legislative Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPCE</td>
<td>(General) Model for Policy Change (in Northern Territory Public) Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>National Aboriginal Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAEC</td>
<td>National Aboriginal Education Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESB</td>
<td>Non-English-Speaking Background</td>
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NRG  National Reference Group
NSW  New South Wales
NT  Northern Territory
NTA  Northern Territory Administration
NTBOS  Northern Territory Board of Studies
NTCEA  Northern Territory Council of Educational Administration
NTCTF  Northern Territory Commonwealth Teachers Federation
NTDE  Northern Territory Department of Education
NTETA  Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority
NTG  Northern Territory Government
NTIER  Northern Territory Institute of Educational Research
NTISEO  Northern Territory Institute of Senior Education Officers
NTOC  Northern Territory Open College (of TAFE)
NTPA  Northern Territory Principals’ Association
NTPR  Northern Territory Parliamentary Record
NTPS  Northern Territory Public Service
NTTF  Northern Territory Teachers’ Federation
NTTS  Northern Territory Teaching Service
NZ  New Zealand
ON  Operations North
OS  Operations South
PAP  Primary Assessment Program
PEA  Principal Education Adviser
PEO  Principal Education Officer
PNG  Papua New Guinea
PSEMA  Public Sector Employment and Management Act
QC  Queen’s Counsellor
RCIADIC  Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
RCP  Regional Council of Principals
RT  Relief Teachers
SA  South Australia
SAAECC  South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee
SAC  Subject Area Committee
SC (Commonwealth) Schools Commission
SDP Standard Devolution Package
SEAPREAMS South-East Asia & Pacific Region Educational Administrators & Managers Symposium
SEG Senior Executive Group
SPOND Schools Policy and Operations North Division
TAFE Technical and Further Education
TLC Trades and Labour Council
UK United Kingdom
UN United Nations
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNO United Nations Organisation
USA United States of America
WWII World War Two
PREFACE

Education in its fullest sense, as I have come to understand it, is fundamental to development in society: I regard the educative process as concurrently the catalyst for progress, the vehicle for its realisation and the means of its consolidation. Development, in this view, is taken in its inter-related and mutually dependent social, cultural and economic dimensions. The core concept is that accumulated knowledge and skill enable mankind to have vision, the vision may be realised and the further knowledge and skill derived in its pursuit enrich contemporary society and may be absorbed, stored and relayed to succeeding generations, sustaining the developmental momentum. Education links the process and provides its vitality.

This conception has been crystallising over thirty-odd years' service in Papua New Guinea and Australia's Northern Territory. In both systems, my professional leadership and administrative roles have included involvement in the vanguard of implementation of the policy shift, to decentralise management of education services and thereby to encourage community participation in and acceptance of responsibility for the education of its youth. My understanding of parents', teachers' and administrators' expectations and misgivings and of the attendant pitfalls, frustrations, successes and rewards therefore stems from first-hand experience. Similarly, my view of societies in transition derives from my experience of working with indigenous peoples throughout my service, augmented by contacts interstate and recently at symposia with participants from around the South-East Asia and Pacific Region.

I am firmly committed to the principles underlying local self-management of education as appropriate for formal schooling. I also see a corollary in the view that education is integral and basic to activity in society, that it would be futile if it were divorced from the reality and necessity of social, cultural and economic maintenance and advance. During my research on the self-management concept, however, I was surprised at the paucity of substantive evidence of its value to children's education and to society to justify our making so universal a commitment in such a sensitive realm, nationally and internationally. I must admit to having had some reservations personally, from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, about both the validity of the justification proffered and the apparent inconsistency between this and the actual motivation behind acceleration of the policy's implementation. I also rue some procedures adopted for expedience during this period. My disquiet does not detract from the policy, as I conceive it, nor does it qualify my commitment but such factors can affect perceptions adversely and hence hinder efficient and effective implementation.
I am now less naive about what goes on in the public policy process than I was when I first broached the task. The experience has been invigorating and has broadened my perspective. I am keen to continue working in the area: to justify the policy with evidence of its beneficial effect across the Territory; to promote understanding and optimum effectiveness in its implementation; and to enhance the Government's accountability in this context. The research and deliberation involved in the study provide a starting point for such pursuits.

Thanks are due to many people for their direction, support and encouragement whilst I have been engaged in the study, too many for me to risk identifying them individually. There are some general acknowledgements, however, that I must make. Since about 1984, I have been working towards recording formally some of the perspective, values and perceptions I have developed and to do so with the benefit of disciplined academic scrutiny and in time to be able to apply the professional development I derive from the endeavour. The NT Department of Education executive has given me the opportunity, with a combination of study and furlough awards, colleagues have encouraged me a great deal and numerous personnel, from base level to senior executive, have been generous with their time, knowledge, wisdom and the resources at their disposal. People at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak were similarly most co-operative and helpful, and staff of the NT State, the Northern Territory University, ANU's North Australia Research Unit and the Australian Bureau of Statistics libraries, COGSO and Feppi have been superb in their efforts to help me with the resource materials I wanted to examine. I have also called upon relevant discussions since the mid-1960s with clients, colleagues and resource people from home and abroad to a considerable extent.

Naturally, most of the time has been devoted to research which has been necessary and generally interesting but has not always proven fruitful (e.g. the voluminous records of the Legislative Council from the late 1960s and the Legislative Assembly from its inauguration in 1974) or even pertinent The most difficult aspects, I have found, have been culling all but the most relevant materials from those amassed, modifying my style to record these in a cohesive and accessible text, justifying findings which I see as axiomatic and coping with discoveries and omissions which embarrass my pet theories. Dr. Alistair Heatley, as my supervisor, has been demanding and persevering with direction and advice tempered with encouragement in meeting these challenges and I am most appreciative of his efforts. Dr. David Trollope has also provided valuable assistance, in the specialist area of public policy analysis in particular. I am also very grateful to the people with whom I live - they are marvellous in their enthusiasm and support for my academic indulgence and their accommodation of my routines - their occasional ribald comments, as ever, help to keep things in perspective.
Chapter 1
Self-Management In NT Education: A Policy Issue

Public education is generally contentious in the western world. Its orientation is primarily towards youth, it has status as human investment, it costs the public purse dearly and the yield is difficult to quantify. There are also expectations that it should manage and smooth the path of change in society and remedy the afflictions entrenched therein.

In contemporary Australia the contention is exacerbated by human nature; systems and educators are predisposed to fulfil the assumption that education should be ‘all things to all people’; and throughout the community, ‘everyone is an expert on education’. There are two other factors, potentially inflammatory: the cost-effectiveness of education tends to be placed under particular scrutiny, not the least by the media, in times of constraint; and Australian expenditure on education has been comparatively modest, by international standards, and proportionately declining since the 1970s.

‘Devolution’, whereby school communities can manage their own affairs to a large extent, has been introduced in this climate, advocated officially in the 1970s-90s on educational grounds and publicly perceived as an economic strategy and thereby extending the public education debate. These phenomena are all national and there is a national education ‘umbrella’ but each system has its own response. That is distinctly so with the policy of local self-management in education in the Northern Territory (NT).

This dissertation concentrates on that policy. Its primary purpose is to study the conception, development and implementation of self-management in the Territory and to explore its impact, using a theory-based model for policy analysis. Indications for the policy's future and for further research in the area will then be drawn from the findings.

1 E.g., Dawkins, The Honourable J.S., & Holding, The Honourable A.C., Skills for Australia, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1987. “Cost-effectiveness” and “the productivity of our education and training resources” featured in the rhetoric on education and training in “structural adjustment” but no effective means for their measurement were introduced.

2 E.g., Schools Council, Australia's Teachers: An Agenda for the Next Decade, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1991, 7–32, outlined changing and expanding expectations of teachers in schools and circumstances relevant to their work.

3 Marginson, Simon, Education and Public Policy in Australia, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, Victoria, 1993, 10, 86. Proportional spending on education dropped from its highest level, 6.1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1975–76, to 5.2%, 1989–90, and with spending @ 5.6% of GDP in 1987, Australia ranked 12th amongst the OECD countries. See also, Foggo, Di., “New Directions and Opportunities in Education Reform”, in Riley, Dan (ed.), Industrial Relations in Australian Education, Social Science Press, Wentworth Falls, New South Wales, 1992, 85–95.
THE TERRITORY EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

NT education has undergone substantial change in recent times. Public education services have been managed under three successive arrangements since World War II (WWII). Their administration to the early 1970s reflected their urban/remote dichotomy. Urban schools (‘community education’) were administered from Adelaide under an agreement between South Australia (SA) and the Commonwealth, effectively through extension of the SA system. Schooling in Aboriginal communities (‘Aboriginal education’) was the responsibility a section of the Northern Territory Administration (NTA). There was no link between the mainstream and Aboriginal community services.

Population concentrations differed greatly. The urban centres were Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine and Nhulunbuy, as they are today. Aboriginal communities are still scattered throughout the rural/remote areas. They range from tropical settings in the Top End, to waterholes on the Barkly Tableland and the Tanami Desert rim and the ranges, sand plains and usually dry watercourses of Central Australia. Between the extremes are the mixed townships along the highways and occasional small mining towns. The climatic pattern, of the dual, warm wet monsoonal and dry south-easterly, seasons of the tropical north merging into four seasons, with hot summers, cool winters and small rainfall in the south, and the large daily temperature range of the desert, is similarly contrasting. Flora and fauna vary from north to south, occurring in accordance with the landscapes and climatic conditions. The natural attributes of a locality influence the lifestyle and livelihood of most of its human inhabitants. Despite the social and economic developments, increased services and facilities and heightened mobility of the last twenty years, the basic demographic differences persist.

In 1973–4, with Labor newly in office in Canberra, four coincident politically-generated innovations in education that affected the NT occurred The dual functions were amalgamated, the Commonwealth Teaching Service (CTS) was instituted to employ teachers for Australia's Territories, localised education administration was advocated, and the Schools Commission (SC) was established “to systematise Commonwealth funding … to bring all schools up to common resource standards” and to address federally perceived priority needs. The unification of the Territory's services and the inception of the CTS were McMahon Coalition initiatives brought to their culmination by the Whitlam Labor Government. Decentralisation of education administration was

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5 Marginson, 207–8. The NT could not access SC Programs until it became a state-type system, in 1979. [Marginson had previously been a Research Officer with the Australian Teachers Federation (ref. The Territory Teacher, July 1982)].
an element of the CTS proposal. Labor commitment to increase the Commonwealth contribution to funding schools and to resolve the state aid debate through an equitable subsidy arrangement gave rise to the SC. These developments had a lasting impact on NT education and they persist, albeit modified to some extent, in 1996.

NT education operations were amalgamated under the Commonwealth Department of Education (CDE) in 1972. Both bodies of teaching staff were disbanded with the inception of the CTS in 1973 as the new employer, allocating teachers to the Director (NT) for deployment. The single NT education system was now totally Canberra's responsibility and the Director (NT) was accountable for operations to the CDE. His professional staff were employed and appraised by the Canberra-based CTS, a separate agency in which he had no jurisdiction. Later, Dr. James Eedle was moved to distinguish himself from “the harlot”: whereas she “was supposed to have power without responsibility”, he felt he was expected to accept responsibility for staff over whom he had authority. This anomaly persisted in practice to the early 1990s.

The third arrangement developed from Self-Government. Education was the last major function transferred to Darwin. Eedle was the founding Secretary (permanent head) of the NT Department of Education (NTDE). During his tenure, the administrative staff moved from the Australian Public Service (APS) to the NT Public Service (NTPS) and the NT Teaching Service (NTTS) replaced the CTS in the Territory. In 1993, the NT Public Sector Employment and Management Act (PSEMA) delegated jurisdiction over all NT Public Sector (PS) employees, teachers included, to the Commissioner for Public Employment (CPE). The Secretary now combines administrative management of education services and leadership and management of all staff on conditions established by the common employer. The separation of system management and employment of personnel remains but day-to-day responsibility for staff rests with the Secretary. This is consistent with arrangements for most other NT Government (NTG) agencies.

Progress towards local self-management in public education throughout the NT has been sustained throughout the system's evolution from the early 1970s. The initial focus was on urban school communities but the same policy and provisions have applied similarly in outlying locations. School councils are fundamental to self-management. In

8 The Australian Education Union contends that the nature and circumstances of teachers' work render conditions for other Public Sector employees partially inapplicable. The CPE has not responded to its satisfaction. This contretemps was manifest in union bans on extra-curricular activity in schools in the latter half of 1995 and has escalated into further industrial action in 1996. Separate awards negotiated by police and fire officers are considered precedents.
1974, there were few such bodies but in 1996 they are the norm. They are neither universal nor mandatory but they are expected, encouraged and generally necessary. Provisions allow different forms to evolve and some diversity is developing. This is especially so in Aboriginal communities in remote localities.

A school council is the legally sanctioned executive of a school community. It thus holds the key to realising the concept of local self-management throughout the NT's diverse educational environments. Its development plan, an approved Action Plan for School Improvement (APSI), is its principal operational instrument and a basis for negotiation.

Authority and responsibility for management of education services have moved, over 50 years, from Canberra and Adelaide to Darwin and largely on to the individual communities. The NTG's provision of education services is legislated in the Education Act (the principal act of 1979 and subsequent amendments). The Minister is responsible for the legislation and has authority over and responsibility for the services that it sanctions. Critical aspects include that

1. The Minister may take all measures which, in his opinion, are necessary or desirable
   a. to assist parents of children in the Territory in fulfilling their responsibility to educate their children according to the individual needs and abilities of those children;
   b. to make education services, provided by him, available to all people in the Territory;
   and
   c. to assist all people of the Territory with their own education.
2. The Minister shall establish and maintain education services in the Territory.
3. The Minister has power to do all things that are necessary or convenient to be done in, or in connection with, the performance of his function under this Act.10

The Minister may establish school councils and delegate to them functions related directly to the delivery of education services locally. His powers in this area and the possible functions and responsibilities of a school council are outlined in the relevant section, enabling the self-management policy to be implemented. In particular, they define the establishment and operation of school councils and detail pertinent ministerial prerogative and responsibility.

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9 Geoff Hodgson, then principal of Casuarina High School, established a school council in 1973. The author followed suit in Tennant Creek in 1974, and Harry Payne recalls setting up the Alice Springs High School Council at about the same time. Dr. Hedley Beare was the central instigator and the principals were the initiators locally, it was not a response to public demand - as Payne commented (17 October 1995) it was a ‘top-down’ system initiative from the outset.

Functions of school councils include the principal aspects of school councils' roles in self-management. They may advise on implementing NTG policy and formulate their own policies on local education services and their delivery, including priorities for programs, and determine use of allocated funds. School-community liaison is another important function. A council may also determine logistical aspects of its school's operation, in service delivery and in its use as a community asset. Within set parameters, a school council in the Territory may thus play a vital role and exercise considerable influence and responsibility in the local school.\textsuperscript{11}

This development will be explored in detail. Suffice it to say, in the meantime, that in the NT every community can exert substantial authority over its education policies and programs, accepting responsibility accordingly. This is formalised in legislation and made practicable with resources, documentation and official mechanisms. Limitations of these provisions, other than as set by governments, are mainly in the vision and the capacity of a school community.

**THE ABORIGINAL DIMENSION**

Society generally is dynamic, evolving. Society in transition suggests a more hurried social development than that normally associated with evolution and may involve social dislocation. It refers to movement in a human entity's development that involves drastic change with some extra-ordinary elements introducing, attempting to direct or to accelerate that change. Socially disruptive influences may flourish if the society becomes vulnerable in the course of such upheaval, upsetting its system of social regulation.

The indigenous peoples of the NT are experiencing such change. Traditionally-orientated Aborigines are endeavouring to embrace a western lifestyle in a capitalist economy and to cope with two or three tiers of democratic government whilst trying to preserve their traditional heritage. Dependence on governments has largely replaced their material self-sufficiency and the availability and attraction of some alien goods and practices have eroded their physical and social wellbeing. Their aspiration to accommodate both traditional Aboriginal and contemporary western attributes is consequently thwarted. Although there have been some successes through local initiatives and using affirmative action programs in such areas as community government and the homelands movement, confusion and disillusionment are widespread.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., Part IX.
Aborigines live and travel throughout the Territory. Some dwell in urban centres and in small rural townships. They also reside in fringe camps on the outskirts of these locations. Most are based in substantial, usually remote, communities, formerly termed “government settlements”, where they comprise the majority of the population. These service the more remote homeland centres that have burgeoned since the mid-1970s. A high degree of mobility prevails.

The reasons for movement amongst Aboriginal peoples are myriad. Traditional cultural commitments and attendance at meetings on indigenous affairs and land rights are prominent. The frequency and extent of travel have increased with ready availability of and access to modern air, land and water transport and the wherewithal to use it. Expectations of ‘the good life’ inevitably attract people to the urban centres but so do prospects of education, training and employment opportunity. Difficult circumstances in the home community, whether of domestic, political or cultural origin, also feature. The homeland movement varies in stimuli, ranging from commitment to personal fulfilment and cultural revival, fiscal or political opportunism, escape from western influences, alcohol-related problems in particular, local social problems, temporary banishment for misdemeanour and manipulation by ‘do-gooders’. Marriage between young men and women of different and distant tribal backgrounds is said to be leading increasingly to residence in the relatively neutral urban environment. In Alice Springs, movement from homeland centres to the city is increasing, to escape from the alcohol-related problems which had previously contributed to the homelands movement. The irregular attendance at school which bedevils Aboriginal children’s educational achievement is partly attributable to their parents' mobility.

Indigenous societies in transition generally have major regulatory, as well as social, adjustments to make. The needs are essentially political. Some are generated internally, to enable management of the social change being experienced. Many changes are required to manage the social, cultural and economic interfaces with the outside world, immediate neighbours in particular. Others are imposed by external forces, such as the United Nations Organisation (UNO), multinational enterprises and international political and economic dynamics. For many such societies, the necessary change is of immense proportions. They are generally expected to move from age-old regulation founded in native lore, through religious proselytisation and western-based colonial

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12 Powell, Alan, Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria, 1982, 232–34, recorded the development of the policy of assimilation for Aborigines and government settlements in the Territory, post-WWII. The Macquarie Dictionary, 1991, 1604, defined “settlement”, inter alia, as “a welfare establishment in an underprivileged area providing social, cultural, and educational facilities for the people of the area, including personnel to assist them”. This is consistent with Aborigines' needs, as expressed by A.P. Elkin (1948) and recorded by Powell, and the provisions subsequently made.
administration, occasionally with changes between competing creeds and/or powers, to so-called independence with self-government. International participation may follow, using introduced, adopted and adapted western institutions.

Aboriginal peoples in Australia's NT have had, and continue to have, much of this experience. Since they comprise a substantial indigenous minority in a predominantly western, albeit quite cosmopolitan, polity, this is inescapable. It is a relatively recent development, however, in terms of the evolution of Aboriginal habitation in Australia, involving very rapid change.

THE POLICY ISSUE

Devolution of functions in education has been proclaimed as valuable for children, responsive to local needs and appropriate for the future of the Territory. This study reviews this major NT education policy initiative. The NTG's policy of local self-management in public education and its implementation generally are examined and its impact in remote Aboriginal communities is sampled. The background, in terms of the policy environment and of the policy itself, will be canvassed first. Its effectiveness will then be probed and the implications considered. The principal outcome sought is a basis for a comprehensive evaluation of the policy's implementation. This would enable such appraisal to proceed, first with the policy's impact in Aboriginal communities and then in the urban settings. The ultimate goal would be to assemble empirical data with which to account for this aspect of Territory education and to inform its future development.

The initiative was dubbed devolution. It was devised to translate into practice the concept of self-management in education institutions operated by the NTG for the delivery of education and training services. This was to be achieved by devolving functions, with responsibility, progressing from administration to policy and then programs, to the local education communities. Self-management was therefore the policy direction and devolution was a means for its realisation.

Despite such distinction, devolution was the label attached to the initiative at its formal introduction in the NT and when it was presented as an ERC cut. The details will be explored in greater depth in the fourth chapter. In the meantime, it is important to appreciate that there is confusion: the facts, that self-management is a long-established policy, that devolution of functions is a mean to its realisation, that its identification as an ERC outcome was incorrect and that it has not proven economical, do not alter perceptions. Consequently, the constructively intended policy is dogged by the tarnished
image it acquired when a step in its implementation was mistakenly promulgated as
an austerity measure.

Self-management in education applies across the Territory. Forms of implementation vary as they evolve in the divers circumstances which prevail. Schooling levels cover pre-school and early childhood to post-compulsory and tertiary entry. Social, cultural and geographic environments range from the most remote Aboriginal communities to multicultural suburbia. Institutions include one-teacher schools, large primary schools, area schools and community education centres (CECs), junior and comprehensive high schools, a secondary college and a composite post-compulsory education and training complex. There are other, more specialist, institutions, offering services such as instrumental music and language education and catering for children with exceptional needs. They are all becoming self-managing under a set of common principles and provisions, each according to the needs and circumstances of its community. In many localities, self-management is therefore likely to take unique forms.

The very universality of this initiative was innovative, possibly enlightened. Its flexibility in devolving control was also new. Major integral features provided for local community participation in priority-setting, policy-determination, decision-making, specialisation, accountability and responsibility in service delivery. Such decentralisation was qualified, necessarily: it was to develop in partnership with the public education agency. Accountability for the service and for use of public moneys was, and remains, critical.

Ultimate direction, accountability and responsibility remain at the centre. They are broadly prescribed parameters established under Territory and Australian legislation. Specific formal commitments, such as individual agreements, can also apply. Official funding is allocated principally in accordance with the parameters, may be supplemented under agreements and is subject to audit. Education communities that exercise lateral thought have wide scope within such provisions to develop specialist emphases and to use flexibility and discretion. They may also seek support for educational innovation.

Eric Pedersen rationalised the government's role in New Zealand's decentralised and devolved systems. He argued that

by giving away responsibility for devising the means by which objectives are achieved, governments must simultaneously impose constraints through a (common) curriculum and system of regular
assessment … (to) monitor how effectively learning opportunities are fairly distributed throughout society.\textsuperscript{13}

He held that decentralisation of functions in education required reciprocal reinforcement of central curriculum and assessment responsibilities in the interests of equity in service delivery and quality of outcomes. A government could thus account through monitoring the use of public moneys to realise politically determined outcomes.

In the Territory, system accountability for provision of education services and commitment of public moneys demands evaluation of the service and its delivery. Political and cultural considerations, their associated sensitivities in particular, make this review important in the senses of urgency and obligation. Its conduct, however, can arouse expectations; it must therefore produce useful outcomes.

Study of the policy's implementation in two Aboriginal remote communities will consider progress, form and effect and identify characteristics. The communities of Maningrida and Gapuwiyak are examples of this element of the clientele whose needs, resources and circumstances are exceptional in contemporary Australia. Directions for future research will emerge with indications for policy and strategies in formal education in such locations.

The analysis will first canvass and review the conception, development, substance and implementation of the policy. No other such research has been conducted in the NT or Australia, so this is the initial foray in the field. The task is therefore to be accomplished principally by working from primary sources, the most appropriate and relevant of which are identified. A policy analysis model to discipline the study is a prerequisite.

**A MODEL FOR ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY**

Thomas R. Dye outlined the basic need for models for policy analysis, to

1. simplify and clarify our thinking about government and politics;
2. identify important political forces in society;
3. communicate relevant knowledge about political life;
4. direct inquiry into politics; and

5. suggest explanations of political events and outcomes.\textsuperscript{14}

He borrowed several political analysis models and applied them to public policy. The study in hand is concerned with a policy and its dynamics, from conception to review. It requires a model that will help understanding of an evolving process. Although the policy itself is paramount, its evolution is also important. Its substance has been determined successively through its conception, development, implementation, evaluation and subsequent adjustment. The way is kept clear for its continuing development, to maintain its pertinence to contemporary society and hence its dynamism.

Of the models Dye used, five are partially applicable to this pattern. The \textit{institutional} model can be applied to a government agency and its operation but it is more concerned with arrangements than with policy and policy dynamics. In contrast, the \textit{process} model concentrates specifically on policy dynamics and omits the substance of a policy. The \textit{group} model concerns itself with conflict and competition, focussing on interaction between the players in policy development to the exclusion of its substance and implementation. Although recognising that public policy can reflect the preferences and values of those in government, the \textit{elite} model does not allow for the consultative element in Territory education policy development nor for the vitality of this process. The \textit{systems} model deals with public policy as a political output and takes into account the inter-relation of the elements of the policy environment. Nevertheless, it does not accommodate readily the situation being studied, where the Government has taken an initiative, will have its way and wants to take the populace with it but has the numbers not to worry unduly about self-preservation. Some adaptation of one or more of these models is indicated.

The other models chosen by Dye are less suitable. The \textit{rational} one measures the value achieved in terms of tangible fiscal return from outlay. An established base of previous practice is required for the \textit{incremental} model, whereas this study is concerned with an innovation. The \textit{game theory} model requires competition and tends towards theory and hypothesis - here, an actual policy process is to be examined. They are not promising.

One of the more applicable models will be adapted. Specific concern with policy dynamics, operation of a government agency, public policy embodying and imposing the government's preferences, developed through the political system interacting with other elements of the policy environment, are features appropriate for the task envisaged. The \textit{process} model is therefore preferred as readily adaptable; it deals

with dynamics and provides a basis for studying how decisions are made and what effect they have.\textsuperscript{15}

Dye's depiction of this model develops into a simple framework, illustrated in Figure 1.1. It involves identification of the issue and, successively, development, implementation and evaluation and subsequent adjustment of the program. Such compartmentalisation of activity is simplistic and too rigid for direct application to public policy-making in education in the Territory and it eschews direct consideration of the policy itself. Adaptation is possible, however, both to accommodate the course that the policy actually takes and to pay due attention to the policy environment.

FIGURE 1.1 A DYNAMIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

<table>
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Brian Hogwood and Lewis Gunn concentrated on ‘the real world’ in Britain. They provided a basis for process-oriented study of policy with a framework devised for both descriptive and prescriptive analyses. This enabled “study (of) the unfolding over time of the complexities of the policy-making process” which lends itself readily to local self-management in education. Since it is retrospective, in their conception it is a descriptive policy study, considering how a policy has been developed.

They proposed a series of “stages through which an issue may pass” as a flexible framework. The elements they identified as useful were “issue search … filtration … (and) definition, forecasting, setting objectives and priorities, options analysis, policy implementation, monitoring, and control, evaluation and review, (and) policy maintenance, succession, or termination”. They are neither exhaustive nor individually discrete or essential. Rather, they may be adapted to suit issues and circumstances as required. The representation of “policy studies - knowledge of policy and the policy process” is pertinent, involving study of the policy content, process and outputs and its evaluation. A structure for the study to which the elements of the framework can be adapted is thus provided.\textsuperscript{16}

Policy dynamics in Territory education are iterative as well as sequential. Ralph C. Chandler and Jack C. Piano defined iteration in public administration as the process

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 20–44.
\textsuperscript{16} Hogwood, Brian W., & Gunn, Lewis A., Policy Analysis for the Real World, Oxford University Press, New York, 1984, 3, 4, 18–9, 24–6, 28–9. Hogwood and Gunn characterised “prescriptive” analyses as being concerned with how policies should be developed.
wherein feedback was generated as effects were observed, enabling reconsideration of the original design and assumptions.\(^\text{17}\) Developing the concept in the policy process, William H. Dutton and Kenneth L. Kraemer concluded that such feedback, involving “multiple iterations of the model results”, was necessary in trialling a model in order to refine it so that the final product would have the impact desired.\(^\text{18}\) Iteration in this context has been borrowed from its application in computer technology; it may be understood as a repetitive process in policy development successively involving an impulse and its impact, feedback from the impact with response to the feedback included in subsequent impulses.

In the process under consideration, development is sequential, as illustrated in Figure 1.1, progressing from stage to stage and able to continue to adjust in response to changing circumstances. Refinement occurs, overall, within each of the stages and at their interfaces through iteration, with processing driven by the NTG's agenda, to refine and clarify the principles and practices, to assist in converting the minutiae into action, to develop commitment and to imbue the players with the appropriate understandings. In the UK, Hogwood and Gunn acknowledged feedback and “interactions … among the various stages of the process, … among the various participating organizations and between organizations and the larger social and economic environment”. They attributed formal recognition of these phenomena to David Easton, who earned renown in the 1950s–60s for his contribution in applying systems analysis to political systems.\(^\text{19}\) Hague and Harrop similarly acknowledged Easton's contributions in their introduction of the dynamics of converting inputs to outputs in the context of political change.\(^\text{20}\) Patton and Sawicki, in their representation of policy analysis, A Basic Policy Analysis Process, showed feedback as integral, both internally from development of policy and externally from outcomes of policy implementation.\(^\text{21}\) The importance of feedback and interactions in public sector activity was graphically represented in Ostrom's Framework for Institutional Analysis, cited by Sabatier.\(^\text{22}\) Figures 1.2-5 are


\(^{20}\) Hague, Rod, & Harrop, Martin, *Comparative Government and Politics: An Introduction*, Macmillan Education Ltd., Houndmills, England, 1987, 22–4. The author recalls (1960) a systems analysis model, understood to have been developed by Easton (mid-1950s), comprising “inputs” combining with “withinputs” to produce “outputs” which generated “feedback” which in turn became part of the “inputs” in the next operational cycle.


derived from Ostrom's schema to depict the iterative nature of the dynamics in NT education policy development.

Figure 1.2 shows activity in the government policy process as occurring in political, administrative and operational fields. These correspond to Ostrom's levels of analysis, respectively, of constitutional choice, collective choice and operational choice. Although they are largely separate and hierarchical in the theoretical structure, the links between them, as indicated, are vital and are typically two-way. The dynamics of the political field, principally the government of the day, are outlined in Figure 1.3. This is the element in which the major policy decisions are reached, for Territory education, through intra-government processes. The main links with the other fields are indicated, whereby policy decisions and instructions for their implementation are conveyed to the system as outputs. Feedback stems from implementation, a process-generated input.

FIGURE 1.2 THREE FIELDS OF POLICY PROCESS
Figure 1.4 represents iteration in the system's overall administration. Here, the policy decisions are converted through the bureaucratic processes depicted into official strategies and programs for implementation across the Territory. Interaction with other fields includes receipt of policy decisions and instructions and conveyance of strategies and programs with support for their implementation to the regions and the individual education institutions. Further feedback results.

Activity in the operational area is outlined in Figure 1.5. The official strategies and programs which have been adopted, adapted and resourced in the system's central administration are implemented in this element which comprises the Territory's education institutions. The inputs are the broad strategies and programs received from
the administrative field, with instructions and support. Outcomes and feedback are its outputs.

FIGURE 1.5 DYNAMICS OF THE OPERATIONAL FIELD

![Diagram of the dynamics of the operational field]

The learning and teaching that occur in classrooms and students' educational and personal development are the core business of the system. This fact brings the process into focus. The high level of iteration, of contributive and responsive human and unit interaction within each of the fields and between them, characterises it as a human service delivery apparatus. The whole political, administrative and operational structure exists primarily for the sake of the activity in the operational field and its outcomes.

Sabatier valued Ostrom's model highly for consideration of human and institutional interactivity in government decision-making. For his purposes, he needed to make provision also to recognise behaviour within the policy subsystem and the effect of system and external factors on implementation. His General Model of Policy Change Focusing on Competing Advocacy Coalitions Within Policy Subsystems (GM) catered for these.

In the study of local self-management in Territory education, all the players are regarded as belonging to the NT education policy community. Sabatier's GM is largely applicable to analysing this policy process. Its most active element is the policy subsystem, effectively a dynamo made up of the three fields and comprising the activity which generates, implements and reviews policy. His competing advocacy coalitions are then policy sub-communities interacting with the fields, the polity and each other within the dynamo. Its applicability to this study is limited only in that it is devoted primarily to process; it does not look also at the policy itself.  

Figure 1.6 outlines the model to be adopted for the study. Its adaptation from Sabatier's GM involves some changes in the terminology employed and the detail of his framework is reduced to make it more directly applicable to Territory education. Three conceptual modifications have been made: his stable parameters and external influences have been identified as the principal relevant components of the policy environment and they have been redesignated the stable and volatile influences; whereas he saw the former as impacting upon the latter, Figure 1.6 depicts a bilateral relationship between them; and consideration of the policy itself is inserted. The first is justified on the grounds that it enhances the model's clarity for application; regarding the second, whilst the Territory policy environment can reasonably be expected to determine in part the impact of external forces, it is not so sound as to be able to absorb changes in government or policy in Canberra, serious fluctuations in socio-economic conditions and other such factors without being affected; and the third allows the study to clarify the policy and to identify what it has to offer the NT polity. The impact of its implementation may then be assessed and future directions considered in terms of the underlying intentions.

FIGURE 1.6 A DESCRIPTIVE PROCESS MODEL FOR POLICY CHANGE IN NT PUBLIC EDUCATION

The modifications do not detract from the integrity of the GM as Sabatier conceived it. These liberties adapt the model from concentration upon policy process theory to
the analysis of a Territory policy process which is fundamental to the study. The model, the study and the thesis must be brought together, for cohesion. Table 1.1 outlines the study.

TABLE 1.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

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The structure of the study largely relates to the adapted model: the introduction presents the policy environment; the preparation provides a general introduction to the policy; the NT setting develops the Territory policy environment and introduces some external influences, both of which influence conditioners; the process traces the activity that has taken place in the dynamo; the focus is narrowed in ATSI settings, preparatory to exploration of the policy's impact in the Aboriginal area of the operational field; and review rounds off the study with conclusions drawn. The thesis recording the study should become a factor in the form of feedback to the system.

The thesis will be compiled accordingly, its chapters recording the research stages in sequence. It is a matter of starting with the background, moving through the process, sampling its outcomes and looking to the future with the benefit of findings gleaned. The research is concerned primarily with the activity in the policy dynamo and with the policy itself. Reference will be made to the other elements of the model in establishing the background against which the policy process unfolds and as they subsequently affect it. The methodology to be employed needs to be considered.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THE THESIS

The pioneering nature of the study requires delving into primary sources. The initial step has explored the issue and the purpose of the study. A theoretical overview will be developed next. Consideration of the policy environment, relevant external influences and the policy itself will follow, preparatory to tracing activity in the dynamo. The Aboriginal community context will then be introduced as a distinct segment of the policy environment, to provide background for the penultimate stage. Against this, two exploratory case studies will be conducted and their findings analysed. The final stage
will be an overall review of the study to highlight salient aspects of the process and indications for future direction. This step in particular will provide feedback as input into subsequent activity in the dynamo, thereby becoming integral to the process.

This chapter sets the scene for the research. It introduces the issue, the study and its purpose. A theoretical basis has been established, and, in turn, the parameters and structure of the study have been outlined. The context of the study having been defined, documentation of the study may proceed, corresponding to the research steps identified.

The first stage of the research will be recorded in the second chapter. The term, education, will be discussed, to clarify its use in the study. Literature on parent and community involvement in public education will be scanned, to aid understanding of self-management in education as a concept, internationally and nationally for background, and in the NT to develop the study. That segment will define the study's conceptual base.

Attention to the Territory polity will follow, with consideration of the policy that has been developed to meet its needs. Relevant physical, historical, economic, demographic and cultural information will be assembled. This will introduce the policy environment, the real background against which the policy has been conceived, developed and implemented, recognising also the extra-Territorial forces which have prevailed. Introduction of the policy itself, as it stands in 1996, will follow. From this, the NTG's intention with the self-management policy and what it offers will be clear. The third chapter, accordingly, outlines the challenges of opportunity and barrier, past, present and future.

The policy's development and implementation are then to be traced. Documentation of proceedings, arguments and perceptions of the principal policy communities and other involved parties are the main sources. They will be supplemented with reference to subsidiary articles and the recollections and perceptions of selected people who have been involved. Indications for evaluation of process and practice should emerge. Principal players in the policy community, themes, events, practices and rhetoric may then be seen in the light of the reality of the policy environment and the intention of the policy. A résumé of this research will be provided in the fourth chapter.

The final research stage is on implementation of the policy in Aboriginal communities. The remote Aboriginal element of the polity is essential background, as a feature of the process is that a uniform policy is being implemented where needs and circumstances are in some respects different from those that are common al over the Territory,
The fifth chapter will introduce aspects of these communities that are relevant to implementation of the policy in such locations.

The policy's operation in practice will be examined in two Aboriginal communities. Exploratory case studies are to be conducted at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak, selected both for the characteristics they have in common and for their distinguishing features. Table 1.2, “Intended Outcomes & Measurement Criteria”, is an instrument, prepared to make for control, consistency and comprehensive coverage. It is original, designed specifically for the exploratory research on the impact of local self-management in education in Aboriginal communities. This was done as principles and priorities crystallised in research on the policy and its underlying intentions.

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<th>TABLE 1.2 INTENDED OUTCOMES &amp; MEASUREMENT CRITERIA</th>
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The research instrument was developed primarily from the essence of the policy as reflected in the legislation, the rationale for the policy's introduction and development and the direction provided for its implementation. “Intended Outcomes” were derived from the Education Act, specifically as it detailed the Minister's responsibilities with respect to the provision of formal education services and as it introduced incorporated school councils\textsuperscript{24} . “Measurement Criteria” were developed with consideration of official policy statements and supporting materials and of projects developed in the NT to implement the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP)\textsuperscript{25} . It was designed to assess the realisation of the ideals of the policies through

\begin{tabular}{ |p{5cm}|p{15cm}|}
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\textbf{INTENDED OUTCOMES} & \textbf{MEASUREMENT CRITERIA} \\
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• financial procurement, management & accountability & • financial procurement, management & accountability \\
• entrepreneurial management including contracts & & • entrepreneurial management including contracts \\
\hline
\textbf{REFOCUSED EMPHASES} & \textbf{MEASUREMENT CRITERIA} \\
\hline
• curriculum priorities & • curriculum priorities \\
• traditional culture in school education & • traditional culture in school education \\
• English & indigenous language in school programs & • English & indigenous language in school programs \\
• expectations of education & training: & • expectations of education & training: \\
• far community aspirations & • far community aspirations \\
• in community planning & development & • in community planning & development \\
• for individual personal aspirations & • for individual personal aspirations \\
• for participation in Australian & global society & • for participation in Australian & global society \\
\hline
\textbf{IMPROVED COMMUNITY AWARENESS & CONFIDENCE} & \textbf{MEASUREMENT CRITERIA} \\
\hline
• general perceptions of school council & • general perceptions of school council \\
• community perception of education service delivery & • community perception of education service delivery \\
• staff perception of community's attitudes & • staff perception of community's attitudes \\
• progress with Aboriginalisation & community perception & • progress with Aboriginalisation & community perception \\
• feedback from DEET & other NT agencies & • feedback from DEET & other NT agencies \\
• feedback from Feppi & • feedback from Feppi \\
• reasons why adults in community visit/discuss school & • reasons why adults in community visit/discuss school \\
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\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{24} NTG, Education Act Part II, Section 6, and Part IX.
consideration of the use made of opportunities provided and initiatives taken for self-management.

The “Intended Outcomes & Measurement Criteria” is located in the introductory chapter as it is an important part of the methodology to be employed in the research. It is anticipated that its suitability for the purpose will be put to the test when it is used at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak. The findings of the case studies, thus derived, will then be analysed to identify and consider salient features. The sixth chapter will document the conduct and analysis of the case studies.

The study and the thesis will conclude with review of the policy's development and implementation to date. This will identify and highlight consistencies and anomalies in policy and practice, evaluating its evident effectiveness, both overall and specifically as indicated at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak. Indications for future directions to be taken, in policy development and implementation and in further research, will then be identified. Finally, the study itself will be reviewed in terms of the dynamics of policy development and of Dye's purpose of political analysis.
Chapter 2
Local Self-Management in Public Education

OVERVIEW

Three principal concepts are central to this thesis. The first is education itself, a constructive service with which to maintain a human state, stimulate it to develop and provide it with the knowledge, understandings and skills necessary for advancement. Parent and community involvement in public education will then be scanned, to ascertain the basis for the contemporary surge to open up the halls of learning and embrace the clientele in the service. Consideration of devolution and school councils in Australia will follow, to appreciate the phenomenon at the national level.

These concepts will then be melded in the hypothetical self-managing education community. The relationships between them will be considered with reference to the policy process, in terms of the theoretical model developed. It will enable the policy, its ideals and rationale, its development and implementation and the dynamics of its operation to be grasped.

EDUCATION

The essence of the throwaway line, ‘Everyone's an expert on education!’, a common rueful utterance amongst teachers and administrators, underlies much of the tension in public education service delivery. Paradoxically, it also reveals the pre-eminence of formal education in Australian society. The players in the policy process (see Figures 1.2-6), clients and staff alike, contribute from understandings and expectations of education derived from their own perceptions of the process and their respective roles in it, from their related experience and training and their own formal educational development. It is therefore inevitable that the level of interaction is high. This should be a strength, to sustain debate, promote systemic responsiveness and enhance the relevance of the service and the quality of its outcomes.

The term, “education”, has assorted connotations. In this study, it is conceived in a comprehensive sense, embracing the full range of education and training for academic, vocational and personal development and fulfilment. Education is understood to be all-pervading, an omnipresent and integral element of society, fundamental and critical to its maintenance and development. It is important to develop this conception, as assessment of the impact of self-management beyond the institutions is a key aspect of the investigation. Students' educational outcomes, however, remain paramount in education's comprehensive overall function.
Formal statements on the nature of education support the contention that education is fundamental to development in society.\(^1\) This view holds that education performs three developmental functions: as the means of consolidation, it enables succeeding generations to imbibe knowledge, form attitudes and master practices and skills as they develop in their respective societies, thereby ensuring that achievement is maintained; it is a vehicle for development, as contemporary knowledge, attitudes, practices and skills equip society to capitalise on its accomplishments in response to the challenges it faces; and as a catalyst, it promotes lateral thought and stimulates the intellect, enhancing ability to analyse experience, conduct research and experiment, to have vision and to plan, design and invent to realise envisaged outcomes. The capacity to learn from and consolidate this experience and to transmit it to succeeding generations is also promoted. The view of education as fundamental to development in society, as catalyst, vehicle and means of consolidation, is thus well-established. Public education is distinguished as the formal segment, from pre-school and early childhood to tertiary entry, for which governments accept direct responsibility and provide services using public revenue.

**PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Australian educator, administrator and academic, Professor Fenton Sharpe rated devolution of decision-making to the education community as “the most conspicuous contemporary feature of school system management in Australia”. Some skepticism is evident in his argument.

> The ultimate aim of the process is said to be better teaching and learning …. (Widespread) as devolution is and as profound as its implications are for the roles of system and school administrators, the process remains little understood and many of its claims have not yet been tested by reputable research.\(^2\)

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A basic expectation of devolution of functions to the local level to enable school communities to manage their own education service delivery is that it will improve formal schooling. This major general policy is therefore flawed, Sharpe suggested, in that the underlying assumptions have not been validated.

The implied rationale, that local school governance intrinsically enhances children's education, stems from a hierarchy of expectations. Self-management is conceived to attract community participation, influencing the school's curriculum and giving parents the chance to exercise their rights, knowledge and skills, ultimately for children's benefit. The assumptions on which this reasoning is founded are fallible. Empowerment of school communities is assumed to attract positive community involvement but local politics may counter this. Although decision-making on local issues should be best-informed when localised, assertive personalities with ill-matched agendas can hold inordinate sway. The crucial assumption, that children benefit educationally from parent and community involvement, is taken as axiomatic. The reasoning is instrumentalist; with so critical a matter at stake, incontrovertible supportive evidence from rigorous research is essential to justify the policy.

The rhetoric is plausible and palatable but lacks substantiation. A sample of literature in the area yields no evidence that the proclaimed benefits may reasonably be expected. On the contrary, American sociologist James Coleman, in a comprehensive analysis of the American public school system, declared that

(t)he only factors that were found to affect a student's learning to any significant degree were (1) family background and (2) the family background of classmates. Family background affected the child's verbal abilities and attitudes toward education, and these factors correlated very closely with scholastic achievement.

Coleman and Swedish educator Torsten Husén subsequently argued, with reference to secondary education and the school-to-work and youth-to-adulthood transitions, that only families enjoying “economic respectability” were interested in their children's education. Andrew Theophanous noted a similar tendency in the context of social justice in Australia, where


those students who do well … are generally young people from more
advantaged backgrounds (i.e. in relation to the income, wealth and
social status of their families of origin).⁵

Coleman and Husén suggested that schools might offer more to families, and hence
to society, than families could offer schools and their children's education.⁶ American
sociologist Mary Brinton referred to the exclusion of Japanese parents from their
children's education and advocated study of “the layers of institutions involved in
human capital development”, without the family/parent dimension, to inform policy
on improvement of social institutions in the USA.⁷ NT educator Jean Loke explored
commitment to parent participation in school governance in the Territory and identified
barriers to optimum realisation of self-management, including some she attributed to
the system and some to the policy itself.⁸ Explicit reservations such as these, however,
were rare.

Predisposition in favour of the principles underlying the policy was wide-spread despite
the absence of supportive evidence. In Britain, psychologist John Coleman claimed
that “it (was) becoming more and more apparent that relations between home and
school (held) the key to the child's intellectual progress”.⁹ Educational psychologist
Ronald Davie concluded that the home environment was “much more important
than schooling in determining educational progress” but claimed to have evidence
that “schools (did) make a difference”.¹⁰ Educator/sociologist Michael Fullan and
educational researcher/anthropologist Suzanne Stiegelbauer reviewed literature on parent
and community involvement in education since about 1960 in the USA, the UK
and Canada. They detected a consistent belief that “the closer the parent (was) to
the education of the child, the greater (was) the impact on child development and
educational achievement”.¹¹ Like Brinton, American sociologist James Stigler drew
comparisons between the USA and Japan, focussing on a perceived common normative

⁵ Theophanous, Andrew C., Understanding Social Justice: An Australian Perspective.
⁶ Coleman, James S., & Husén, Torsten. Becoming Adult in a Changing Society. Centre for
⁷ Brinton, Mary C., ‘Institutions and Human Capital Development’, “Families, Childrearing
and Education”, in Bourdieu, Pierre, & Coleman, James S. (eds.), Social Theory for a Changing
⁸ Loke, Jean, “Barriers to Parent Involvement in Schools: A Search of the Literature”,
in Maddock, Trevor, & Woods, Jack (eds.), Theory, Research and Action in Educational
Administration, ACEA Pathways Series No. 5, Australian Council for Educational
Administration, Hawthorn, Victoria, 1994, 174–82.
⁹ Coleman, John C. (ed.), The School Years: Current Issues in the Socialization of Young People.
¹⁰ Davie, Ronald, “The Home and the School”, in ibid, 122–43.
¹¹ Fullan, Michael G., with Stiegelbauer, Suzanne, The New Meaning of Educational Change.
belief in the USA that, inconclusive empirical evidence notwithstanding, “there ought to be a match between families and schools”. This could explain the turn to instrumentalism to formulate policy.

The New Zealand Government, with its Education Act 1989, instituted decentralisation of administration of public education in 1989. It was stressed that the effectiveness of this policy relied on the collaboration of parents, students, educators, private enterprise, the NZ Government and the community at large. Its purpose was to remove the administrative inefficiency perceived in the system's management. Responsibility for the administration of education services was relocated to the institutions with functions devolved to boards of trustees, each established to forge a partnership between the staff and the community served. Each school was to develop its own operational charter, within parameters set by the state, to become a formal agreement with both the community and the state. Accountability was to Parliament, for use of funds committed and for the fulfilment of the terms of the charter. The Government's rationale for devolving functions and responsibility was that more autonomous management and accountability at the school level should produce greater attention to effectiveness. The reform removed central administration and placed schools under public scrutiny to account administratively and through their educational outputs.

Jules Flight was involved in the reform to mid-1995 as a secondary principal. In his perception, the initiative had been taken for administrative and fiscal reasons but was intended to benefit classrooms. Generally, he rued the stress and disruption experienced by the principals, staff and parents where there was tension associated with their boards, the refocus of the principal's role from professional leader to manager, the loss of homogeneity in education service delivery, the disintegration of system functions and a reorientation of the system from schools to the Minister. In his opinion the reform had not affected teaching or learning during its first five years. He saw resultant competition and widening gaps between schools, a concurrent growth in home schooling and increase in truancy as pertinent and unfavourable indicators.

15 Jules Flight had recently been appointed Director (Enterprise Development) at the Auckland College of Education when he discussed the NZ reform with the author, 11 December 1995. Right is well regarded amongst his colleagues.
At Auckland's Pakuranga College, the Board of Trustees was responsible for some 1530 secondary-aged students, a day care centre and an adult education program. Acting Principal, Rob Jackson, was positive about the discretion decentralised administration had given his institution, as Flight had been in his own experience. Jackson's views on the adverse effects of competition between schools and preoccupation with management mirrored those expressed by Flight.

Pakuranga had opted to remain centrally funded for staffing purposes. A high proportion of its staff attracted salaries high in their respective ranges and central administration was committed to pay individual staff members' full entitlement where schools took this option. Schools that elected to have direct funding for staff were obliged to manage within their allocations, which were calculated on salary averages only. It was suggested that such an arrangement could lead boards of some directly funded schools to select staff more on the salaries they would attract than on their professional and personal qualities.

Relationships between the Pakuranga Board of Trustees, college administration and staff were evidently harmonious and productive. Some difficulty was experienced in achieving an appropriate ethnic balance amongst the Board's parent and community members. It advocated parent participation in the belief that children benefitted from school best “when home and school (worked) together”.16

Flight and Jackson's information and attitudes were not necessarily representative. They serve well, nonetheless, to indicate some of the reality of the NZ reform in practice. Reflecting on its progress, the Ministry reported that

(a) key feature of the reform is the increased role for parents and other community stakeholders in the governance of the school. This has also been the most difficult area of the reforms to implement. It promises much but the evidence suggests that it will take some time to reach its full potential.

Some instances which demonstrated the important contribution parent and community participation can make to the institutions and learning were acknowledged. Conclusive evidence that such involvement was actually valuable for children's education, however, was not offered.17

16 The author visited Pakuranga College, 6 December 1995.
This glimpse of NZ's experience indicates that the effect of parent and community participation was not yet meeting expectation. It was consistent with observations previously cited, most of which concluded essentially that such involvement might be expected to be beneficial despite the lack of substantive supporting evidence. It also indicated again that major policy in education was being developed largely on the optimistic expectations of policy-makers. The rationales for parent and community involvement seemed to exhibit a respectable-class orientation in their assumption of consequent benefit for children.

Theory to cater for the innumerable variables and substantive data to support parent and community involvement in education is needed. James Coleman urged development of social theory, with research “to realize the opportunities and avoid the problems” of contemporary “purposive social organization”. Charles E. Bidwell was more specific, voicing need for theoretical bases to assess the dynamics and the effect of family-school and family-system relations, with respect to children's education and socialisation in the USA. With his recent reservation, already cited (P.22), Sharpe urged that relevant research be conducted immediately in case, in Australia, we might have been moving “too far, too fast”.

The views of Sharpe and of James Coleman on parent and community involvement in education were canvassed in view of their professional credibility in the area. Other scholarly views considered were selected largely on their relevance rather than their authorship. Reference to the NZ experience was included as a current and pertinent case in point. Some perceptions do not support parent and community involvement as beneficial for children's educational development but the supportive ones are clearly in the majority. The principal outcome from this research is confirmation that the policy has been endorsed in principle but lacks educational justification from empirical evidence. This is disturbing for Australia, where commitment to local self-management in public education is extensive.

**SCHOOL COUNCILLS AND ‘DEVOLUTION’ IN AUSTRALIA**

The move in Australia had its genesis in the late 1960s-early 1970s. Momentum subsequently developed, in the following two decades. It has not been thoroughly analysed but descriptive commentaries abound.

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Four common features are evident: subjective assessment is favourable; the self-management models evolving vary, with no stereotype imposed or standard emerging; governments, through their public education systems, are the initiators; and local public involvement is formalised in an incorporated school council or similar body the *raisons d’être* of which are the acceptance and performance of devolved functions. It is widely assumed that self-management of education at the local level locate prerogative and responsibility appropriately and will enhance the quality, relevance and effectiveness of delivery of the services. There is no evidence to vindicate such confidence in the educational viability of this direction. Rather, the indication is that this major policy initiative in Australia is founded, as overseas, in expectation only.

The principal feature of self-management is parent and community involvement in local public education service delivery. Typically, it is formalised in a representative school council established and incorporated under an act of parliament. This legislation enables functions to be devolved to the school council, giving the education community authority and influence with responsibility in the local governance of public education. The conceptual hierarchy thus comprises public participation, with the school council the legal entity to formalise that involvement and devolution of functions the means to make it practicable. This is the trend in formal provisions but broader, informal, parental and community contribution is expected as an informally derived benefit.

Australian writings on self-management deal with the devolution of functions and the role of the school council. From the early 1970s, almost invariably, one is represented as a major element of the other. Their mutual dependence is evidently axiomatic.

David Gamage traced the development of school councils in Australian public education. He started with the Currie Report (1967), which recommended such bodies for the ACT. All Australian systems canvassed the notion in the 1970s. SA legislated for incorporated school councils in 1972 and Victoria (1975) and the ACT (1976) followed suit. Deliberations in New South Wales (NSW) in 1973–4 led to cabinet support in principle but moves to decentralise were abandoned in the face of opposition from teacher and parent organisations. Western Australian (WA) and Queensland did not support the idea and Tasmania permitted experimentation only. Political commitment, obviously, ranged from total to token and nil.

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22 In Papua New Guinea, formally constituted governing boards were established, at district and individual school community levels, 1969–70, under Australian administration. Dr. Ken McKinnon was then Director of Education in PNG. He moved from that position to chair the (then) new Schools Commission.
Devolution of functions ensued, sporadically. In SA and Victoria, the initiative was boosted in the early 1980s. SA's (1981) Keeves Committee found in favour of decentralising authority in education, recommending its extension to school communities. Victoria (1983) amended its legislation to authorise school bodies to make decisions and accept responsibility in policy-related, managerial and logistical aspects of their schools' operations. Queensland, WA, Tasmania and NSW, despite its early start and subsequent attempts to reactivate the initiative, began to develop some momentum in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This coincided with similar moves in England, Wales and New Zealand beginning in 1989 and in the USA in 1990. Gamage noted international recognition of Australia's pre-eminence in this reform in 1990.23

The nature of the trend was exemplified in its instigation in NSW. Priorities and rationale for change in education administration were enunciated in a report in 1974. It was compiled under the direction that any public policy changes were to relate to the polity and its future; educational advancement, for its own intrinsic value, was not a prime consideration. It was assumed that the prevailing “rapid material change” would persist for a long time, constantly challenging the intellect, revising values and replacing traditions. The education system was required to seek ways in which all individuals may develop and express their personality, may conduct their lives with dignity and responsibility, and may widen the sense of community throughout (the) society in an era of upheaval. The education service was to equip the populace to cope with its future. Reform proposed for contemporary circumstances included decentralisation of administration to regions and schools to improve efficiency and to locate decision-making closer to the classroom. This was calculated to improve formal education's ability to meet changing needs and to promote community involvement in education. Policy-making and planning were also to be localised, to the grass roots to serve the community's interests. The major outcomes envisaged included

- a more knowledgeable and informed electorate … an educationally minded community … educational and social value of school-community interaction … local community renewal … (through) interest and involvement in education … (and) greater participation of the community in the decision making processes.24

23 Gamage, 38–40.
These directions have become common in reform across the nation. The rhetoric has been orientated more towards educational and social outcomes than in the NZ case.

For more than a decade, prominent educators in Australia have advocated community involvement in public education. It is conceived as manifest in three partnerships, between parents and educators in the local school, between the agency and the local education community and between the government and the public. Local education-related decision-making, management and responsibility are the prime emphases.

The SC convened a national conference on school-based decision-making in 1977. Chairman, Dr. Ken McKinnon, claimed that it put into practice “the principles and openness and participation” the SC considered essential to improve children's education. Lyndsay Connors reported on a national move to address governance of schools in Australia, stemming

not just (from) the demands for participation in schooling … but the expanding view of professionalism being taken by teachers, the political trend to consultation in decision-making, and the search by administrators for increased effectiveness and sensitivity in providing services.

She judged the conference as having enthused the participants. The philosophies and principles espoused there were consistent with those recorded in NSW in 1974. They indicated that some momentum had developed in the evolution of self-management, as distinct from autonomy, at the education community level.

The Hon. Mr. Justice K.J.A. Asche, QC, erstwhile senior Family Law Court judge and present Administrator of the NT, is known for his commitment to education. In 1982, he outlined his conception of an effective council in a state education institution in a paper on education policy-making. Typical membership comprised administrators, staff representatives and non-professionals. In practice,

(t)he Chairman will … be a lay person and the task of explaining, defending, or asking approval for administrative action will fall on the principal. … (W)here the system is working well, voting will not reflect any suggestion of lay persons versus professionals … you will find members of teaching, administrative and lay groups on either side of the fence as it should be.

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Asche focussed on the role and the effect of the lay members, specifically on whether they really represented the community and whether they actually did influence education in the institution. His response to each issue was categorically affirmative.  

Brian Caldwell, an Australian educator, administrator and academic, advocated local self-management. He outlined

a framework within which school councils may work in the development and updating of school policy and improving the policy making process … (assuming) that councils have a valuable and powerful role to play and that a policy perspective and a policy framework have much to offer in achieving this end.

Caldwell explored the hierarchy of education-related policy making-in government systems. (The pyramid envisaged by Caldwell's pyramid differs from the continuum represented in Figure 1.2 but the hierarchies are similar.) The government was at the apex, with its prerogative and responsibility to make policy. It was supported by its education agency which normally shaped and implemented the policy. Education communities comprised the base, where, in each school, the principal and staff provided programs suited to students' needs. At the local level, ability to make policy varied, both with legislation and government policy and in accordance with the qualities and interests of the principal and the staff. Assorted possibilities arise from these variables and the mixes that result. Where the elements of the hierarchy are favourable, a school council could be established. He believed this body could be involved, either influencing or determining policy in the school community.

Caldwell recognised policy-formulation in a school community as very political. He distinguished routine decisions from policy deliberations. The former was normally clear-cut, recurrent and managed in familiar, clearly understood and accepted circumstances. The latter usually involved a complex array of problems, diverse agendas amongst contributors, with “uncertainty and risk” typical of the courses of action available for the issue in contention. He cited J. D. B. Miller's “essence of a political situation” as applicable to that faced Australian principals and councils, where

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someone is trying to do something about which there is not agreement; and is trying to use some form of government (such as a school council) as a means and as a protection. Political situations arise out of disagreement.

In Australia, according to Caldwell, principals worked in more volatile situations than did their North American counterparts and their role appeared to be more political in nature. He noted in particular that Australian principals were obliged to work with numerous people and interest groups amongst whom there was a notable lack of cohesion. The policy process in a school community, in his conception, was integrated, not a succession of discrete component parts. He saw the school council as concerned primarily with policy issues, not school operations.\(^{28}\)

Devolution of functions to school councils encountered cynicism and resistance. This was noted by educator and academic, Dr. Ross Harold, but the essential cause of this reaction was not readily identified. It may have been normal resistance to change, rejection of the devolution initiative, suspicion of the underlying motivation or retaliation to the introductory process as it had been perceived. Harold maintained that the move to devolve was essentially political. He detected a shift in approaches to public administration in the English-speaking world, starting in the late 1970s, arising from the general perception that governments at all levels were wasteful, inefficient and unresponsive to community needs, and that there was a financial necessity to ensure that the public received more Value for money’ from its tax dollar.

The consequent official imperative was to raise efficiency and effectiveness in public services. In response, corporate managerialism was employed, to minimise bureaucratic arrangements and to extend to the responsible front-line managers the authority, responsibility and flexibility to expedite service delivery. He saw devolution in education as deriving from this doctrine. He referred to a declaration by the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, that

\[\text{(r)esources available to schools stand at their highest level ever. We must now concentrate on the most effective use of those resources, in schools, at the system level and nationally …. The issue here is … the quality and appropriateness of their achievements to those young Australians who pass through them.}\]

Harold detected a clear message:

    schools must ‘lift their game’ by becoming manifestly more productive;
    they must be seen to generate more responsive outcomes from existing
    levels of public resource use.

Dawkins was mouthing the principles of corporate managerialism, in Harold's opinion, and thereby imposing managerialism on formal education services.29

The move to devolve, to promote and realise the concept of the self-managing school, was not justified on pedagogical grounds. It is therefore noteworthy that there was not substantial professional debate on the subject, even ex post facto. Political rationalisation on its intrinsic educational worth, to appease disenchanted educators and clientele, was also remarkably scarce. Harold understood Queensland primary principals' hostility to have stemmed from the autocratic manner in which the policy was perceived to have been implemented in their system. Conversely, he also accepted the argument

    that, given the inevitability of tighter resource conditions, it is more
    appropriate that difficult allocational choices are negotiated at the local
    ‘workface’ level, rather than made at the centre and applied uniformly

He felt that this principle applied to decisions with industrial implications just as it did to those concerned with curriculum and the deployment of resources.30

In balance, Harold saw devolution as inevitable and recognised some positive attributes. He considered the onus to be upon the principals to take advantage of these whilst coping with the problems. In his view, its implementation in the ACT had also generated tension between the authority and its schools. He observed that this was normal and beneficial in a dynamic system and judged the ACT one as well able to respond appropriately.31

Harold's observations reinforced perceptions that education was political in nature at system and individual school levels and intensely so in the move to decentralise. He referred more than others to the educational dimensions of the trend to devolve. The ACT experience, in his commentary, was broadly typical of others in Australia and

30 Ibid., 8–9.
31 Ibid., 20.
abroad. He cautioned that an education system which failed to respond to community needs and expectations would do so at its own peril.

The SC promoted the school community concept. Its schemes encouraged joint school-community identification of local issues and the seeding of promising initiatives to address and resolve them. School communities were encouraged to grasp opportunity and prerogative, identify needs and priorities, take initiative and accept responsibility for their education services. Harold saw irony in the realisation of this ideal through devolution in coincidence with the SC's demise: that body had worked on the premise that school was most valuable and effective when developed locally for local needs and with local accountability.

In the Victorian experience, he inferred that devolution had grown out of educators' resistance to bipartisan political sallies to have choice, diversity and accountability to the community supersede equality as the paramount objective of the services. Despite his reservations about corporate managerialism, he saw the move to devolve as desirable. He felt it
difficult to envisage how schools can become less uniform and provide meaningful parental choice, unless the political policy makers allow schools some discretion to develop their own identities and to promote themselves.  

He considered also the politics of decision-making in the local education community and the implicit demand upon the principal. He canvassed the decision-making processes available: the principal alone, as in the traditional stereotype; the principal in consultation with senior personnel in the school; or the school council of which the principal is ex officio a member, the executive officer and its senior education advisor. Regardless of the process employed, he considered the principal had to be mindful of a range of complex issues about authority, power, participation and industrial relations … (and) have an eye to the political implications of the structures and processes by which the final decision will be made … (anticipating) reactions of key players in the political decision-making process (in determining) the extent and form of the data that are fed into the process.

32 Ibid., 44. Cf. the NZ experience, where self–promotion in some high profile schools was perceived to have had an adverse effect on vulnerable ones nearby.
Harold's monograph developed his perception of governments' purposes in devolving functions to promote the self-managing school. He saw the partisan policy makers as increasingly inclined to take an interventionist stance toward what goes on in schools. The corporate managerial techniques they are using to affect the behaviours of staff in local schools involve … devolving more responsibility over detailed resource use, while … requiring school communities to draw up development plans which include a number of curriculum goals which the policy makers themselves have devised. The goals and the consequent school plans are then the basis for much more rigorous and pervasive evaluating and reporting procedures to local communities and to the State Minister.33

Perceptions of this development vary in terms of its implications for systems, the services and their delivery. Harold's discussion, however, highlighted three common features: political intervention at national and system levels; more rigorous accountability for use of public moneys and service outcomes; and more active and wider community involvement in policy development, service delivery and local accountability. They make for achievement of two important goals in devolution rhetoric, choice for the clientele and diversity in schools' offerings.

**A SELF-MANAGING PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA**

Common structure, principles and features are evident in self-management as it is evolving in Australia. They may be considered in terms of the model derived from Ostrom and Sabatier. Each state and territory government provides public education services within its jurisdiction. As shown in Figure 1.2, this is done with policy-making and ultimate responsibility vested in the political field, conversion of policy into programs, direction and support services in the administrative field, and service delivery, or program implementation, in the operational field. The activity of the three fields unfolds the policy process (see Figures 1.3-5). Together, the three fields comprise the system. The government's agency, usually a ministerial department, is composed of the administrative and operational elements of the system.

33 *Ibid.*, 46. Harold's appreciation of the motivation and initiative to devolve functions to the school community level is consistent with Harry Payne's (October 1995) observation, that it was “all top-down”.

36
The adapted model (see Figure 1.6) was developed for consideration of policy change in a government's jurisdiction. Policy, in this conception, is generated and regenerated in the policy dynamo which comprises the three fields of the system and the iterative activity and interaction within and between them. Such policy development is conditioned by external inputs to the process in the dynamo. This model accommodates the principal elements of the policy of self-management in public education as it is generally evolving in Australia.

The observations of Gamage, Caldwell and Harold, *inter alia*, and consideration of early attempts to decentralise in NSW have shown that the policy originates in the political field. For all the rhetoric, it is consistently a political initiative to make service delivery more efficient. The agencies implement the policy; maintenance, development, direction, support and monitoring are the responsibility of the administrative field; and delivery takes place in the operational field, in institutions and in specialist units designed for exceptional needs. In the process of iteration, the resultant outcomes generate feedback, or internal input, to the other elements within the dynamo. The resistance of two policy sub-communities, teachers and parents, in NSW in the 1970s, and Dawkins' ultimatum exemplify factors impacting upon this policy process: the first was the advocacy coalitions competing within the jurisdiction; and the second was an external volatile influence from the policy environment.

*Figure 2.1* illustrates a self-managing education community as a microcosm of the operational field of the policy process. It represents the key entity, where the service is delivered, executing the system's core business, and where the policy produces results in the form of educational outcomes and feedback. The policy's outcomes obviously go beyond the system and the particular education community and into the broader populace, through young peoples' participation in society. Therefore, the individual education community, whilst being integral to the process, merges with the overall environment as well through the impact of the policy.
The education community is taken as comprising the staff of the school, the students, their parents and other interested and involved citizens. The school council is composed of parent, staff and community representatives, in some instances with student representatives in secondary institutions, and the principal, *ex officio*, is a member and its executive officer. The school council is the community's official and legal organ for local education-related decision-making and negotiation. It is therefore the council to which functions are devolved and resources supplied.

The council develops its education development plan (*cf.* a board of trustees' charter in NZ) which, when endorsed, is effectively a contract between the education community and the government. This provides the principal basis upon which the council accounts to the government, the parents and its community generally. In this arrangement, the players' observation of the principles of partnership, authority with responsibility and accountability is critical to effective local management of education.

An Australian principal's role is affected as self-management evolves. Its core functions of professional leadership, administrative management and public liaison are unchanged but it is increasingly political. The functions grow more complex with
the addition of the localised decision-making powers of the school council-System administration personnel now deal officially with the school council on policy, supply and accountability matters whereas previously they had worked directly with the head. The principal is the system's senior officer in the education community and is now also the school council's executive officer. The school's operation remains ultimately the responsibility of the system, so the principal, as a government employee and manager, is still directly accountable. The main development is that the responsibility is now managed jointly in a partnership between the system and the local education community. The principal's role is delicate and critical. Whereas some incumbents find it overwhelming others revel in the room available for ‘creative management’.

Caldwell, with Jim Spinks, outlined a conception of the dynamics of self-management in their Collaborative School Management Cycle. It was generally consistent with the thinking behind the policy as it was evolving, and provided a model for councils to consider. Particular features were its

(integration of) goal-setting, policy-making, planning, budgetting, implementing and evaluating … (and) appropriate involvement of staff, students and the community, with clearly defined roles for governing bodies … (focussing) on the central functions of schools - learning and teaching.

A self-managing school was characterised as having substantial decentralised authority to determine the allocation of the resources allocated. Such decision-making was recognised as occurring within parameters set locally, systemically and nationally, and accordingly accountable.\(^{34}\)

Figure 2.2 is a modification of the model developed by Caldwell and Spinks: its detail is simplified to make it more representative of the pattern evolving across Australia; and the Policy Group and Program Teams are elaborated and their linkages inserted for clarification. The role of a school governing body was recognised in developing the Cycle but school governance was given limited attention with concentration primarily on administration. Notably, no justification for self-management on the grounds of improvement of educational outcomes was offered nor was this aspect addressed.\(^{35}\)

The contribution of Caldwell and Spinks was nonetheless important. They provided insight into the dynamics of administrative policy and program development,


\(^{35}\) Ibid., 213–28.
implementation and review at the school community level. Self-management was constructively and strongly advocated. In the context of this study, a school council, functioning as represented in Figure 2.1, could well adopt their model for management of resources; it is also applicable to the school’s curriculum. The ideals of the policy, in terms of educational benefit for children, may be seen to be served if this, or another such model, were applied first to the educational program and then to the school administration to support the curriculum. Such an arrangement would complete provision for implementation of the policy at the local level, with fulfilment of children's educational needs pre-eminent and administration subordinate. This would be a satisfactory culmination of the policy process, providing for its sustained regeneration (as developed in Figures 1.1-6 and elaborated in Figure 2.1).

36 Spinks, c. 1993, conducted workshop sessions for public education administrators in Darwin. His principal message then was that they should analyse their performance of their roles, take the necessary steps to make their professional activity superior to their administrative operations, and subsequently keep paring the latter and promoting the former.
This chapter has explored theoretical literature relevant to local self-management in education. The concepts involved have been clarified in terms of legitimacy and connotation. Their theoretical inter-relationships have also been established. Experience with developing and implementing the policy in practice in the Territory may now be examined but requires first an appreciation of the regional setting.

37 Ibid., vii, 3–4, 5.
Chapter 3

The Northern Territory Education Setting

The clientele, the service and the delivery infrastructure should be known when a human service policy is examined. This chapter will outline the Territory's the policy environment and the public education scenario. Together, they provide the foundation of the policy of local self-management in education and its implementation in the NT. Particular factors, such as small constituencies in often far-flung electorates, the CLP's hold on government sustained over twenty-two years and seven general elections and the proportionately large Aboriginal segment of the population, have considerable ramifications for all the human services. The policy environment and its education component are therefore basic to this study.

THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Government and Politics

The Territory polity is unique in Australia. It is the smallest and occupies a vast area, its 173,900 residents comprising less than 1% of the nation's population and located in almost 17% of the land mass. Despite the logistical implications and the NT's status as an Australian territory, the NTG functions largely as any state government.

Statehood for the Territory is a Government objective. Although this was well to the fore in the CLP's rhetoric associated with the recent federal election, achievement of such status is not imminent. Alan Powell recorded the quest for Territory autonomy as starting in the mid-1940s. Progress was slow, contained by the Commonwealth, which, in Alistair Heatley's view, kept the NT's “executive authority … firmly under control until the mid-1970s”.

In practice, management has moved in fifty years from colonial administration to quasi-state government.

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3 “Editorial”, Northern Territory News, Darwin Monday, January 15, 1996, decried Chief Minister Stone's efforts in pursuit of Territory statehood, and Northern Territory News. 23 February 1996, reported House of Representatives candidate Nick Dondas pledging his support for statehood at the CLP's campaign launch, so it is obviously still on the political agenda.
4 Powell, 229
5 Heatley, Alistair, The Government of the Northern Territory. University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, Queensland, 1979, 31–45. Post-WWII to Self-Government, the Territory was administered under the Commonwealth Departments of Interior (to 1951), Territories (1951–1968), Interior again (1968–72), the Northern Territory (1972–75), and Northern Australia (1975–78).
Most constitutional and socio-economic development has occurred over the last twenty years. The Territory's first legislature, the Legislative Council, was established in 1947, in reality constituting little tangible advance towards autonomy. Even when the fully elected Legislative Assembly replaced the Council in 1974, Canberra remained dominant. Self-government was set in train with the election of the Fraser Coalition Government in December 1975, realised in 1978–79 and consolidated to 1983. With Labor subsequently in office in Canberra, the quest for Territory statehood came to the fore again, generally with bipartisan commitment.

The CLP has retained office from the Legislative Assembly's inauguration. The NT is “the only Australian polity not to experience a partisan change in the period of general administrative transformation from the late 1970s”.

The CLP is largely populist: social class counts for little; political ends are generally pursued on pragmatic rather than ideological grounds; the will of the people is lauded as the primary arbiter in public policy; an accompanying paranoia over dissension is never more apparent than in industrial disputes involving public sector unions; and the Territory's small constituencies ensure that the electorate, its individual representatives, the Government and its administration have ready access to each other and overlap extensively.

There remains heavy dependence upon the Commonwealth for revenue (@ 80% in 1993–94, almost 80% in 1994–95 and 75% in 1995–96). There is in consequence little room for adherence to doctrine in the political field.

Chief Minister Paul Everingham held sway from Self-Government until his resignation in 1984. His administration's developmentalist direction was founded in the pre-self-government rhetoric, when catchcries commonly featured “national interest, untapped potential, defence and strategic considerations, the advancement of Aboriginal welfare, simple justice and, above all, the redress of past neglect”. The Government was the principal catalyst for development of the Territory's “narrow, fragile and vulnerable economy”.

Ibid, 11–2.


Heatley, 1995, 10, 15. Northern Territory of Australia, Budget Paper No. 3, 1994–95, 1, stated that “the Commonwealth (accounted) for nearly 80 per cent of total revenue and grants” in the NT budget, “compared to 55 per cent in the States”. Budget Paper No. 3, 1995–96, 1, acknowledged the Commonwealth's provision of “75 per cent of the total revenue” for the NT, comparing with “55% in the States” and “declining in real terms since the peak of 90 percent in the years immediately after Self-Government”.

curbed economic growth in the mid-1980s but the spirit and the commitment to economic development persisted.\textsuperscript{11}

The CLP was destabilised between Everingham's resignation and Perron's installation as Chief Minister (see Table 4.1). The loss of Everingham's control, a less productive relationship with the Commonwealth under the Hawke Labor Government and the constrained circumstances of the succeeding chief ministers all contributed. Despite these shortcomings, the Labor Opposition in the Territory was unable to topple the Government which was returned convincingly at the general elections of 1987 and 1990. With the leadership restabilised, the CLP retained office with an increased majority in 1994.\textsuperscript{12}

Perron's administrations had five distinguishing features: tightened fiscal management was manifest particularly in the estimates review and rationalisation of expenditure in 1991; promotion of the Territory in Asia developed a higher profile, with Shane Stone given the new Asian Relations and Trade portfolio in December 1992;\textsuperscript{13} the Public Sector Employment and Management Act (PSEMA) reformed the public service; constitutional development towards statehood became less prominent; and overall, purpose, cohesion and stability were evident in the parliamentary leadership. After Stone was elected Chief Minister the Asian endeavour was reinforced. His distinctive leadership style is evident but no major change in direction is yet apparent. The Howard Coalition's recent election to federal office is expected to lead to some adjustment in the relationship between Canberra and Darwin but its substance is mostly a matter of conjecture.

The modest size of the Territory's population contributes to the populism in its politics. The politicians are kept in touch with the realities, including opportunities, with which enterprises and constituents are faced and they approach them pragmatically more than from an ideological base. As Heatley observed, “smallness affects all NT institutions and processes, not least those in the bureaucratic realm”. The NTG's approach to policy-formulation is influenced both by the polity's demographics and by Territorians' tendency to vote for personally preferred candidates rather than from party allegiances. Finn ministerial control of administration was established at Self-Government, instituted initially to redress the bureaucratic dominance experienced under the Commonwealth.

\textsuperscript{11} E.g. Efforts to develop relations with Asia, developing in the 1990s, dated from Self-Government
\textsuperscript{12} Jaensch & Wade-Marshall, 77, 79, 310–2. The CLP Government was returned in 1994 with seventeen seats to Labor's seven.
\textsuperscript{13} Gomez, Brian, International Business Asia. Vol. 3, No. 4, North Sydney, NSW, 17 March, 1995, 8, reported Stone envisaging Darwin as Australia's “first genuine trading outpost”, the result of sustained effort in the vanguard of overtures to Asia, “building close links with governments in neighbouring countries”.

44
The “primacy of the political over the bureaucratic” is entrenched and taken for granted.\textsuperscript{14}

Proximity of ministers and their senior executives occasionally leads to suggestion of impropriety. Heatley noted that there had been “complaints of undue politicisation and partisan patronage” but that these were juxtaposed with “claims of excessive bureaucratic influence”.\textsuperscript{15} Right or wrong, such perceptions are inevitable, given that the Government expects its administration to be sensitive to its political programs and the closeness and public visibility of ministerial-executive relations. With such a small and intimate polity, the practices of public figures are readily scrutinised and their idiosyncrasies are bound to attract attention.

The NTG's high profile in Territory development since 1 July 1978 has obviously been conditioned by local circumstances. The unique features of the Territory polity, the proximity of the electors and their representatives and the fragility of economic activity in particular, have been influential in the role of the Government as it has evolved. The populace is therefore a key element of the policy environment.

**Territory Demography in the 1990s**

The NT population is unusual. It differs in size, distribution, composition, work participation, health and mobility from the national pattern. Relevant statistical details are summarised in Table 3.1. Most of the data considered are based on the 1986 and 1991 Census returns.\textsuperscript{16}

The NT is sparsely populated, @ 1 per 30 km\(^2\). Nearly half of the Territory's people reside in Darwin and 70% are concentrated in the five urban centres. The remainder dwell elsewhere, mainly in townships, on pastoral properties, at mine sites, in Aboriginal communities and homelands and at resorts, road-houses and work camps.\textsuperscript{17} There was substantial growth after Cyclone Tracy and coincident with Self-Government. From 1976 to 1981, the annual rate of increase was 4.5%, nearly four times the national figure.\textsuperscript{18} Diminishing available funds from the mid-1980s is

\textsuperscript{14} Heatley, 1995, 10, 13, 15.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} ABS, Northern Territory in Focus 1994. Commonwealth of Australia, Darwin, 1994, was a prime source.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 21–2, Table 4.1. Current build–up in Defence Forces* presence should be reflected in the 1996 and 2001 returns. ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics (June Quarter 1995). Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1995, 4, 7, 9, recorded population growth for 1994/95 @ 1.6%, 0.4% above the national average. The reliability of Territory demographic statistics is poor, due to under-enumeration, as acknowledged in ABS, Northern Territory's Indigenous People. Commonwealth of Australia, Darwin, 1994, 3.
\textsuperscript{18} Protocol and Public Relations Unit, Northern Territory Profile. Department of the Chief Minister, Darwin, 1985.
reflected in the reduction in growth to an annual average of 1.64% from 1986 to 1991; this rate, only 35.5% above the national average, has been maintained subsequently. Over 95% of the estimated growth in 1994–95 was natural, the remainder resulted from migration which yielded a positive return for the first time in the 1990s.\(^{19}\)

**Table 3.1** shows the relative youth of the NT's population. The infancy and school-age elements are slightly larger than the national average, as is the 20–44 years range. They hold implications for education and training, to provide schooling for the former and professional and technical training for the latter. It is noteworthy that the 15–19 years bracket falls below the national level, the only one to do so from 0 to 44 years.

**TABLE 3.1 NORTHERN TERRITORY / NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE - OVERVIEW\(^{20}\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>NORTHERN TERRITORY</th>
<th>AUSTRALIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Population, June 1995</td>
<td>173 900</td>
<td>18 054 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Growth, 1994–95</td>
<td>1.64%</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age, 1991</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>32 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Aged 0–4 years, 1991</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Aged 5–19 years, 1991</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Aged 15–19 years, 1991</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Aged 65+ years, 1991</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Force Participation Rate, 1993</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate, 1993</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{20}\) Derived from ABS, Northern Territory in Focus 1994, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey 1994 and Australian Demographic Statistics: June Quarter 1995.

The Territory has a diverse cultural heritage. Powell outlined its Aboriginal, European and Asian origins\(^{21}\). In 1991, 18.6% claimed birth overseas, half each from English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries.\(^{22}\) The ABS projection of the Territory's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) population in 1994 was 26.9% of the total.\(^{23}\) There is also linguistic diversity. Over 60 migrant languages and 50

\(^{19}\) ABS, Australian Demographic Statistics: June Quarter 1995, 10.
\(^{21}\) Powell, *Far Country*, passim.
\(^{22}\) ABS, *NT in Focus*, 24.
Aboriginal languages are spoken. Indonesian, Malay, Japanese, Mandarin, Italian, Greek and traditional Aboriginal languages have priority in public education. Table 3 summarises students' participation in such programs. Approximately one-third of school-aged Tenitorians speak a language other than English at home and ATSI students make up a similar proportion of school enrolments. Although Tenitorians aged from 5 years predominantly speak only English at home, Aboriginal, Asian, European and Middle Eastern languages feature.

TABLE 3.2 NT SCHOOL ENROLMENTS IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH (1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE CATEGORY</th>
<th>COVERAGE</th>
<th>ENROLMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6 Languages</td>
<td>over 7 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>5 Languages</td>
<td>almost 5 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
<td>33 Language Programs</td>
<td>almost 3 500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Urban school enrolments generally reflect this diversity. Elsewhere they vary, predominantly Aboriginal in Aboriginal communities and homelands and pastoral properties, mixed in townships along the highways, and predominantly non-Aboriginal in mining communities. Three important needs emerge: to cater for native tongue maintenance; to promote multilingualism; and to ensure universally functional competence, at the minimum, in the common language, English.

The NT economy has a relatively large public sector, mining has expanded rapidly and its manufacturing is limited. The considerable volatility experienced from year to year is due to heavy reliance on mining and primary produce and their susceptibility to international market forces. The Territory's typically modest share of the Australian GDP (normally @ 1.1%) compares favourably with its high per capita contribution (e.g. in 1992–93, 7.9% above the national level).

The Territory's public sector was proportionately large, second only to that in the ACT. In 1993, public employment was 10.2% above the national level. Such a variation could be explained principally by the Governments' providing most community services

24 SAC Languages Other than English (LOTE), Northern Territory Policy on Languages Other Than English, NTDE, Darwin, 1988, 3.
in the NT and the logistics of catering for a small, far-flung and diverse clientele. It also reflected the importance of public sector activity in the NT economy.

High transience, intra-Territory and interstate, is typical of the NT populace. Territorians' mobility, locally and abroad, results from economic activity, human factors and cultural commitments. Movement into and out of the NT (1986–91) was the highest in Australia, rivalled only by the ACT[^29]. The extent of intra-Territory movement is also high, from observation and anecdotal information. Travel for Aborigines stems from myriad cultural and social factors; others move mainly to accommodate employment circumstances, family ties and children's education. Although the non-indigenous population is stabilising, it remains frequent practice for families to move interstate, usually to the state of origin, for their children's senior secondary and tertiary education, and for retirees to make a similar move. These trends are reflected in the statistics for the 15–19 years and 65+ years brackets.

Youth dynamics are important. This is recognised in the first goal for schooling in Australia, to educate “all young people …(to develop) their talents and capacities to full potential … (to meet) the social, cultural and economic needs of the nation”.[^30] Although it focusses on school-aged students it embodies principles that are essential in their moving from school to adult livelihood. Educated and skilled youth is acknowledged as vital to development.

This vital element of the NT's populace, aged 12–25 years, was highlighted by the ABS: it comprises 26% of the population and incorporates 25% of the labour force, 23% of the total employed (with 30% working part-time), and 39% of the Territory's unemployed[^31]. The reality for youth is more serious than these details suggest. As already noted, the 15–19 years bracket constitutes an anomaly in the Territory population profile in its comparatively small size. Also, proportionately, there are more Aboriginal 12–25-year-olds than others but they have lower representation in formal education (see Table 3.3). A high proportion of them live in outlying communities: these are often overlooked in unemployment details; and people who are temporarily engaged in Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) in these locations do not register as unemployed, leading to further distortion of such statistics. The indication is that this component of the Territory populace requires attention, both for its members' sakes and in the interests of the NT polity's future.

[^31]: ABS, Northern Territory in Focus, 35–6.
### TABLE 3.3 DIFFERENCES IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF TERRITORIANS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>NORTHERN TERRITORY</th>
<th>NON-ATSI</th>
<th>ATSI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males, 1992</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>48.25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females, 1992</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>51.75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Aged 12–25, 1991</td>
<td>26% (36%)</td>
<td>30% (28%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%age in formal education)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban-Dwelling, 1991</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Force Participation, 1991</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment, 1991</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households, 1991</td>
<td>84.4% (2.1%)</td>
<td>15.6% (12.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(%age in improvised”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dwellings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All-Cause Mortality”, 1979–91</td>
<td>8 277</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Deaths”, 1994</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The ATSI and non-indigenous components of the NT population differ in several demographic respects. The divergence in age distribution, noted amongst the 12–25 years age group, is pronounced, with Aborigines proportionately outnumbering others markedly from 0 to 24 years, and dwindling by comparison even more remarkably from 25 to 54 years.33 Table 3.3 shows 9% more males than females overall but 3.5% more female Aborigines than males. Non-Aborigines are predominantly urban-dwellers whereas almost two-thirds of the ATSI population live in outlying communities. These differences obviously have implications for the provision of human services.

Some serious gaps between the lot of indigenous Territorians and that of others are evident. The ATSI work force participation and unemployment rates contrast starkly with those for non-Aborigines, as do details of housing. Health statistics similarly reveal disparities whereas non-Aboriginal Territorians' health approximates the national

standard, “Aboriginal Territorians have substantially poorer health … across all ages, both sexes and virtually all causes of disease”.34 This is evident in the relatively high rate of Aboriginal mortality; it should be remembered, in this context, that a substantial proportion of non-Aboriginal people move interstate after they retire and therefore their eventual deaths do not register as Territory statistics.

Details such as these are not new. In fact, some gaps are closing, as indicated in the mortality rates. There are also mitigating factors that ‘flesh out’ the bare statistics and put circumstances into clearer perspective, as evident in the comparative mortality rates. In some cases, the data available does not mesh exactly and some informed deduction is required. It is indisputable, however, that outcomes of contemporary society for indigenous Territorians tend to be different from and less favourable than for their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Details of the Territory's indigenous population from the 1986 Census35, the 1991 Census36 and the 1994 ATSI Survey37, reveal three distinct demographic patterns. Growth is evident (see Table 3.4), although under-enumeration, acknowledged by the ABS in the 1991 Census38, may mean that it is slower than the statistics suggest.

**TABLE 3.4 TOTAL ATSI POPULATION IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34,678</td>
<td>39,910</td>
<td>46,041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ATSI distribution is predominantly outside the main urban centres [see Tables 3.5 (a), (b) and (c)], in Aboriginal communities and homeland centres, notwithstanding the fact that some rural localities have mixed populations.

**TABLE 3.5(a) ATSI POPULATION DISTRIBUTION (1986)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural Localities</th>
<th>Other Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31–32%</td>
<td>47–48%</td>
<td>31–32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 3.5(b) ATSI POPULATION DISTRIBUTION (1991)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Centres (1 000+)</th>
<th>Rural Communities (200–999)</th>
<th>Rural Remainder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34 Plant et al. 1995, xi, 17–9, 24.
36 ABS, Northern Territory in Focus 1994,24.
37 ABS, National ATSI Survey 1994,94.
TABLE 3.5(c) ATSI POPULATION DISTRIBUTION (1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital City</th>
<th>Balance of NT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.42%</td>
<td>85.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the indigenous population is youthful (see Table 3.6), with almost half under 20 years of age. 25 of the 56 main Aboriginal Communities are located in the Top End (north of latitude 15°S) and the larger ones (except for Alekarengre, Barunga, Lajamanu, Lytente Apurte and Yuendumu) are more frequent in Arnhemland, the Tiwi Islands and near the west coast. The remainder are located throughout, more remote from each other, with smaller communities interspersed especially in the Barkly Tableland and Sandover areas. Several homeland centres have been established west of Alice Springs, in the Sandover area and near Tennant Creek and Borroloola, and there are some in the western coastal area, but the greatest concentration is in Arnhemland, between Gunbalunya (Oenpelli) and Yirrkala. Given such wide distribution of Aboriginal communities, with their diversity in size, composition, language and environment, and their relative isolation, each is likely to be a discrete and unique entity.

TABLE 3.6 ATSI POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION (1994)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0–4 Years</th>
<th>5–9 Years</th>
<th>10–14 Years</th>
<th>15–19 Years</th>
<th>20+ Years</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 977</td>
<td>6 145</td>
<td>5 475</td>
<td>4 583</td>
<td>23 860</td>
<td>46 040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such details of the polity reveal its demographic character to be relatively dynamic. It features youth, ethnic diversity and transience. Outside the main centres, the small population is thinly scattered over a vast area. The economy is growing but fragile. An anomalous situation for the Territory's young people and some discrepancy in the respective circumstances of ATSI Territorians and others are evident. They are prime examples of vital information to be conveyed to the NTG policy process as inputs from the policy environment to the political field of the policy dynamo.

The NT Cultural Environment in the 1990s

The demographic background ensures diversity in the NT's cultural environment. Culture is taken in the literal sense of being the way of living which has evolved for a particular group of people and is relayed to succeeding generations. The cultural environment of the Territory is therefore an amalgam of the manifold heritages and

40 PEO (Bilingual Education) Paul Bubb, advised (conversation, 27/7/95) that a recent LOTE survey identified 52 Aboriginal “languages” in use in the Territory. He explained that Aborigines consider each indigenous tongue a “language”, linguists describe some groups of tongues as “dialectically close”, and the NTDE labels them collectively as “languages and dialects”, thereby preserving integrity and obviating a semantic issue.
circumstances of the human groups it embraces, with their respective occupational pursuits and social and cultural accoutrements as maintained, adapted and shared. The diversity of human origins and fields of endeavour in the Territory of the 1990s has produced an exciting mix, young, enterprising and able to be productive but potentially volatile and needing cohesion.

The ancient landscape and its flora and fauna as they have evolved through aeons of phenomenal change provide the enduring background. The advent of mankind is the current change. Aborigines, the first known human inhabitants, arrived some 40 000 years ago, concurrently generating ecological adjustment and adapting to the natural environment. Today's human occupancy began with European and Asian immigration. Visiting mariners were succeeded by exploration, European settlement and exploitation of resources, such economic activity attracting Asian participation. British-style colonial government took charge, regulating affairs and supplemented by Christian missions bent on 'saving the natives'.

Contemporary population dynamics in the Territory are mainly attributable to Post-WWII developments. These include European immigration, communication and transport advances, economic development, governments' recognition of the proximity of northern neighbours and its implications for security and commerce and Asians' attraction to Australia. Ethnic composition and policies promoting multiculturalism, racial tolerance and cultural sensitivity, responsibility for Aboriginal welfare and efforts to reconcile indigenous inhabitants and the dominant white forces in Australian society have also helped to mould the Territory character. It is a genuinely cosmopolitan polity, an important factor in terms both of expectations of education policy and services and of the resources implicitly available.

The result is a composite cultural environment. There are some harmonious blends. Malls and shopping centres reveal the extent of racial and linguistic mixes amongst public and attendants with prevailing harmony and egalitarian spirit. Similar trends are seen in businesses, public utilities and industry and at sports and public venues. The wares and patronage of clothiers, markets, restaurants, theatres and cinemas, museums and art galleries, art and craft outlets and traditional cultural events bear witness to widespread interest in disparate sartorial, culinary, diversionary and artistic tastes and their influence upon each other. In such blends, distinct ethnic and cultural entities are generally not eroded but reinforced and enriched. In short, the culture of the Territory is rich and exciting, rewarding participants and generally auguring well.

Some contradictions exist Management of Territory affairs reflects its history, pre-Self-Government, of administration as an Australian territory. This is evident in the
Governments' prominence in community services, paternalism towards disadvantaged groups and bold and determined enterprise, policy development and decision-making. Anomalies abound in these circumstances. The NTG's occasional heavy-handedness is generally accepted despite the independence of which its citizens boast, the fragility of MLAs' tenure in small electorates and the ready access between constituents, their elected representatives and public officials. There is general tolerance of affirmative action programs favouring disadvantaged minorities, even in the face of the occasional strident declamations of their self-appointed mouthpieces. The populace's dependence upon and expectation of the Governments to support its endeavours and discharge of responsibility contrast with its oft-professed pioneering spirit. Such contradictions reflect complacency where vision and enterprise are needed.

Social unrest, unless addressed, is liable to threaten the equilibrium. Aborigines' disillusionment is one element, stemming from the collision of age-old traditional cultures and pervasive, predominantly western, international cultures. Indigenous Territorians adversely affected are prone also to the manipulations of opportunists, exacerbating disaffection and occasionally fuelling antagonism. Despite the absence of pan-Aboriginalism, constructive, comprehensive and thoroughly programmed resolution is needed to obviate potentially destructive confrontation.

Possible backlash in reaction to social justice measures designed to reconcile indigenes with non-indigenous Australians is also a volatile element (noting Noel Pearson's comments to the National Press Club41). Positively discriminatory policies, legislation and programs are generally accepted but perceived abuse of provisions occasionally arouses disquiet amongst non-Aborigines. Issues of this nature are prominent around general elections.

The substance of the NT cultural environment cannot be conveyed in a simple statement. It is rich, diverse, cosmopolitan, all-embracing and rewarding to sensible participants. The three predominant elements, European, Aboriginal and Asian, suggest its directions. Paradoxically, its virility, pride and spirit merge with dependence on the Governments. An image abroad, however, of a Laid-back lifestyle, dynamism and broad world view, generally serves it well, nationally and internationally. There is potential for genuine reconciliation with indigenous Territorians; therein also lies an Achilles' heel. Indigenous aspirations and the Commonwealth's commitments make recovery and regeneration of Aborigines' traditional heritage in remote communities feasible. Distinction between “Aboriginal” and “non-Aboriginal”, on the other hand, emblazoned throughout official documentation, epitomises a reality in Territory.

41 ABC Television, National Press Club, 12 April 1995.
cohesion and harmony. Cultural dynamics thus constitute another important source of input into policy-making, reflecting demanding challenges and a wealth of resources.

**THE EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT**

This study is concerned with the education component of the total policy environment. Public education in NT in the 1990s has evolved in the main from the inception of the CDE in 1973. Previously, there had been the dichotomy of services administered from Adelaide in urban centres and for Aboriginal communities under the NTA. These were amalgamated to form the NT Division of the CDE.

**Canberra Management, 1973–79**

Much of the foundation for the policy direction of this era was laid in the Neal-Radford Report. The McMahon Coalition Government had commissioned it to establish the CTS. Decentralisation of decision-making, with community and teacher participation and “greater integration between (education) and community life” in education management, were fundamental.42

Subsequent developments in the NT caused upheaval. Education providers combined under a new agency, ‘Aboriginal education’ was no longer a discrete entity and SA relinquished responsibility for urban schools. Teachers had mixed feelings, faced with joining the innovative CTS and competition from an expected influx from Papua New Guinea (PNG). Change was inevitable, however, with the new Labor Government intent on social reform. Some people were overwhelmed by its magnitude and the speed of its implementation.

Familiar structures and procedures were rearranged. Traditional checks and supports disappeared, teachers' professionalism and parents' rights were elevated and their participation in decision-making was encouraged. The executives of their newly-formed bodies43 responded, favouring the reforms44, and had ready access to the Director (NT). The idealised conception of education and teachers, officially promoted, had lasting impact on NT education. The changes introduced, however, were not universally welcomed, willingly accepted or effectively implemented.

43 The NT Commonwealth Teachers Federation (NTCTF), and the NT Council of Government Schools Organisations (NTCOGSO).
Many former NTA (Welfare) personnel rued the loss of their identity and saw the future of ‘Aboriginal education’ compromised. Some were dismayed at being pitched into a comprehensive system and the new arrangements confused them and eroded their security. Urban parents' worry about their distance from ‘South’ and the quality of education was exacerbated by the cessation of SA's supervision. System officials exhorted public and personnel alike to grasp the opportunities offered by the new system and to believe that the development was for the best.45

Local political involvement in education began formally with the installation of the First Legislative Assembly in 1974 and the institution of incipient arrangements for self-government. The responsible Executive Member had a liaison role in relation to education and oversight on an advisory basis.

The Fraser Coalition replaced the Whitlam Labor Government in 1975. The Executive of the Legislative Assembly was upgraded to a Cabinet in 1976, with the Executive Member for Education included. In 1977, the Second Assembly election returned the CLP and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) formed an Opposition. The scene was now set for Self-Government in 1978 and the transfer of the education function a year later.

**Darwin Management, 1979–96.**

Management of public education in self-governing NT conformed to the MPCE (see Figure 1.6). The first Everingham Government inherited the relatively new NT Division of the CDE, complete with CTS teachers. From 1 July 1979, the new self-governing polity took charge of policy and its education agency executed it [see Table 3.4 for Ministers and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)]. Decentralised implementation with accountability in service delivery was the direction taken. These elements corresponded with the Three Fields of Policy Process (see Figure 1.2): policy was to be determined in the political field, with public participation in its formulation; the administrative field was to transform the policy into services with direction, support and accountability provisions; and the services were to be delivered in the operational field with emphasis upon local self-management and responsibility. The process thus conformed to Ostrom's levels of institutional analysis model from the outset.

In the early stages development was hectic, tapering off as the revamped system settled. Education, teaching service and school councils legislation (1980–83), Direction for the Eighties (1983), Board of Studies legislation (1984), Towards the 90s (1988) and the Estimates Review Committee (ERC) (1991) followed by the Devolution

45 The author, as a principal, newly a CTS member fresh from PNG in 1974, grappled with the attitudes and feelings prevalent at the time, working with ex-Welfare personnel, anxious parents and aspiring politicians. He established an incorporated school council in this climate.
Symposium (1992) were the principal landmarks. “Excellence”, “educational outcomes for children”, “community involvement” and “partnerships” became familiar catch-cries. Despite the contention of most of the developments, there was consistency throughout.

At Self-Government, public education was fragmented, enjoyed limited public confidence and lacked sound policy and curriculum bases. Minister Jim Robertson asserted political authority over education, notably in establishing the NT Teaching Service (NTTS). CEO Eedle favoured a common service for all employees and teachers wished to preserve their CTS membership but Robertson's will prevailed. Heatley attributed Eedle's subsequent redeployment to this fracas.

Table 3.7 gives an inkling of the reality of executive influence in the NT's education system. The CEO's pre-eminence under the Commonwealth was replaced with local political control at Self-Government. Once the Territory's own system was established and policy directions were set, its founding Minister moved on. In the succeeding (almost) fourteen years, there were eight ministerial changes and one change of CEO.

**TABLE 3.7 NORTHERN TERRITORY EDUCATION EXECUTIVES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EXECUTIVE MEMBER / MINISTER</th>
<th>CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… 1974</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>H Beare (from 1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1974</td>
<td>EJ Andrew</td>
<td>H Beare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1975</td>
<td>EJ Andrew</td>
<td>JD Gallacher (acting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1975</td>
<td>EJ Andrew</td>
<td>JH Eedle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1975</td>
<td>MB Perron</td>
<td>JH Eedle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1977</td>
<td>JM Robertson</td>
<td>JH Eedle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 July 1979</td>
<td>JM Robertson</td>
<td>JH Eedle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1980</td>
<td>JM Robertson</td>
<td>SP Saville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1982</td>
<td>JM Robertson</td>
<td>GJ Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1982</td>
<td>MB Perron</td>
<td>GJ Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1983</td>
<td>T Harris</td>
<td>GJ Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1986</td>
<td>DW Manzie</td>
<td>GJ Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1987</td>
<td>RA Hanrahan</td>
<td>GJ Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1988</td>
<td>T Harris</td>
<td>GJ Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 1990</td>
<td>SL Stone</td>
<td>GJ Spring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

46 The Public Sector Employment and Management Act of 1993 disbanded the NTTS and teachers were included as Public Sector employees alongside other NT Government, former NTPS, personnel.

47 Heatley, Almost Australians, 118. Chan, Frances, King of the Kids: Paul Everingham. First Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Diflo Publications, Palmerston, 1992, 98, recorded founding NTPS Commissioner, Norm Campbell, as recalling Eedle's move as an example of a departmental head who was “doing a good job” and was “hurt” in the reshuffle of CEOs that Everingham was then conducting.
Geoff Spring, the most prominent figure in public education in the Territory to date, was appointed Secretary almost a year before Robertson relinquished the portfolio. He remained the CEO for ten-and-a-half years, experiencing six of the ministerial changes. Control technically stayed in the political field, but Spring, a politically astute bureaucrat and a member of the CLP, provided continuity in education management and maintained and developed the policy from the base he had helped Robertson to establish. Towards the end of Spring's tenure, Stone was asserting himself as a ‘hands-on’ Minister. Late in 1992 they were succeeded, respectively, by Fred Finch and Michael Fong. There was clear a delineation here: the Minister concerned himself with the politics of the portfolio and required the CEO to concentrate on operations. Steve Hatton, the current Minister, is assuming a higher public profile than did his predecessor. With the policy direction set by Robertson, Spring has been the predominant influence in the evolution of Territory education.

Policy development commenced officially in September 1980. Direction for the Eighties, the Territory's comprehensive statement of education policy, resulted. Supplementary information statements elaborated its principal elements. Specific policies were then promulgated, detailing the initial commitments. Impetus for school councils and the establishment of the Board of Studies (NTBOS) were immediate outcomes. The latter crowned curriculum reform and duly legislated to legalise authority and responsibility in curriculum, assessment and certification.

Towards the 90s followed over a fourteen-month period in 1987–88. The standards, accountability and devolution elements of Direction for the Eighties were developed, and the Action Plan for School Improvement (ASPI) was introduced. A 1987–1991 strategic plan detailed fiscally-based strategies in education and training that were consistent with Direction for the Eighties and Towards the 90s. It also foreshadowed ERC developments.

The CLP Government of early 1991 was secure and able to tackle the problems foreseen in the rising level of public expenditure at the time. It established the ERC to study and advise on rationalisation of public sector commitments. Education's share was 5.2% of the savings to be made. Efficiency measures affecting schools aroused ire. Although most were gradually accepted, the development of definitive guidelines for the devolution process, perceived to be part of the rationalisation of administrative processes, continues to rankle.

Stability and consolidation characterised the Finch-Fong management, with confidence in the leadership at the time publicly acknowledged. Hatton's tenure as Minister, since mid-1995, has been marked principally by wrangling with the AEU over an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) for teachers. From November 1995 and to March 1996, it is destroying the post-ERC accomplishments through polarising teachers, the central administration and the NTG. In terms of the policy process, the people who deliver the service in the operational field are at loggerheads with the personnel in the administrative field and with the Government MLAs in the political field. Public expression of the consequent antagonism and distrust between operational personnel and both administrative staff and their mutual employer results, eroding confidence in the system and the service.

During the main period covered by this study, 1973–95, there have been several principal influences in the policy process. Beare gave the initial direction. Much of this was taken up by Robertson in shaping the basis of Territory education. Spring masterminded further development, advising successive Ministers on policy refinement and directing implementation. The Finch-Fong endeavour to consolidate policy, fine-tune operations and promote an appropriate professional tenor was timely adjustment of the system but, as indicated, it is likely to fall victim to disputation. The initial policy direction has been maintained throughout these twenty-odd years.

It has been noted that the three fields of policy process have functioned from Self-Government. It may be argued that the administrative field has been influential in policy development, especially whilst Spring was CEO. One of administration's roles,

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53 Jaensch & Wade-Marshall, 91. The Government had been returned at the October 1990 election with 14/25 seats to Labor's 9 and 2 went to Independent candidates.
54 NTDE, ‘Executive Summary’, “Rationalisation of Expenditure Document”, Darwin, 1981. “Efficiency measures” were spread, @ “a (5%) reduction in schools and colleges and an (11–16%) reduction in administration and services” NTPR, Vol. XXXIII. 14 April 1991–22 August 1991, 782, recorded Stone (MLA, Port Darwin, Minister for Education), as stating “education will lose 5% within the school fence, 11.3% in education support services and 15.9% in corporate and administrative services”, in his response to a censure motion.
55 E.g. Confidence in leadership and management of the system was formally expressed at the 1995 AGMs of NTCEA, by IPP, Mick Myers, and NTISEO, by the author as VP, and witnessed by the author in a temporary stint as a member of SEG, October-December, 1994.
however, in any government policy process, is to provide advisory support for its minister (internal iteration), and, as in this case, the Minister and the Government make the policy decisions. In the current contretemps, the Australian Education Union [AEU(NT)] is a policy sub-community, as represented in Figure 1.6, having input to the policy dynamo. On one hand its executive is an advocate, negotiating on its members' behalf within the dynamo; on the other it is a volatile influence affected by current policy and affecting public perceptions (external iteration).

The Structure of the System in the 1990s

The structure of the system needs to be understood to grasp the policy process in Territory education. It is obvious from Table 3.8 that the NTDE conforms with the familiar bureaucratic pyramid. Secretary Fong has been striving to flatten the structure, the better to reflect priorities and relationships in its responsibilities and functions. This influenced corporate planning during 1993–95.

TABLE 3.8 NORTHERN TERRITORY EDUCATION STRUCTURE

![Diagram of Northern Territory Education Structure]

Source: Northern Territory Department of Education

From an operational perspective, there are seven tiers which, ideally, mesh with each other as shown in Figure 3.1. The Minister has political authority and responsibility;

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56 NTG, Public Sector Employment and Management Act Northern Territory of Australia, Dafwio, NT, 1993, reformed public employment. A nett result was that all Education personnel became Public Sector employees, whereas previously the dual, NTTS and NTPS, employment arrangements had applied.
the Secretary (CEO) has executive authority and responsibility, and heads the Senior Executive Group (SEG) of divisional heads; SEG members join with regional and sectional managers to form the Management Group; operationally, the Territory is divided into nine regions, each led by a superintendent and managed with its council of principals; and the service is delivered in education communities each of which consist of the staff, council members, clientele, public and resource personnel involved. Beyond is the remainder of the Territory polity. In this arrangement, central administration directs and supports service delivery, recognises principals and superintendents as its front-line managers and emphasises local self-management.

FIGURE 3.1 EDUCATION SYSTEM OPERATIONS IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, 1996.

The Education Advisory Council (EAC) and the Board of Studies (NTBOS) are statutory bodies. They are independent of the system and comprise representation of
the NT education community, the former advising the Minister on policy on providing education services in the Territory and the latter advising the Secretary on policy on curriculum and assessment. Both bodies are subject to ministerial direction, and the Secretary also can direct the NTBOS.\textsuperscript{57}

Table 3.8 shows the organisation of the NT education system as it stood in 1994. Since then, there have been some minor alterations, none of which affects the study in hand. Figure 3.1 is a conceptual representation of that organisation, highlighting the relationships which exist between the tiers and conveying the bi-permeable nature of their interfaces.

As shown in Table 3.8, the system's business is performed in four divisions. Schools Policy and Operations North (SPOND) and Operations South, the operational ones, deliver the services and make necessary local arrangements. Curriculum and Assessment Division (C&AD) and Corporate Services Division provide professional and administrative support for the system. Schools' needs are paramount.

The system's raison d'être and inter-divisional relationships were encapsulated in the SPOND Divisional Plan. It stated that

the purpose of all Departmental activity is to improve educational outcomes for students … through quality support to the operational divisions from the service divisions.\textsuperscript{57}

This was complemented with the C&AD's mission,

to maximise schooling outcomes for all NT students by providing appropriate and high quality curriculum, assessment and certification policies, procedures and resources.\textsuperscript{58}

Corporate Services is responsible for the administrative support that enables the secretariat, the operational divisions and the C&AD to function and to concentrate on their respective responsibilities.

Operations North (ON) is centrally-based. It consists of five regions, and includes curriculum advisory, student services, distance education and management support units.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Education Act}, Part III, 14–16, Part IIA, 7–14.
Schools Policy also reports to the ON Deputy Secretary who is thus responsible for operations in the Top-End and for operational policy across the Territory. Several operational support functions also serve the whole Territory. Operations South (OS) is run from Alice Springs. It comprises three regions and its operational support provisions complement those in the north. Darwin-based support personnel with Territory-wide functions report to an OS supervisor when working there.

In each region, the superintendent works with the regional council of principals (RCP) as a regional policy team. The superintendent reports to the divisional head and is responsible to lead, monitor and manage education services in the region, and functions as the senior education official and resource for communities, leading and supporting policy implementation, procuring specialist assistance as appropriate. Feedback on policy implementation, service delivery and perceptions in education communities is an important element of the role.

In a local education community, the principal has responsibilities and functions reflecting those of the superintendent in the region. Principals participate at the regional level in the RCP. They can thus provide feedback from the operational field through the superintendent to the Management Group, the SEG and the administrative field generally.

A second centrally-based Deputy Secretary (upgraded from Assistant Secretary) is responsible for the C&AD and tertiary liaison. The C&AD serves the system and education communities with policy development and implementation in curriculum, assessment and certification. The heads of its three sections, curriculum, evaluation, research and assessment (ERA) and equal opportunities (EO) report to the Deputy Secretary. Overall, C&A business covers identification, documentation and/or evaluation of courses and instruction to provide schools with direction and materials to inform their programming and teaching. Perspective and parameters, with advice from the NTBOS, are set by appropriateness for Territory needs and consistency with national directions and standards.

Corporate Services Division is Darwin-based, providing administrative support for the system's operation. Its Deputy Secretary is responsible for human resource management and development, management services, planning and revenue, information systems, client services and public relations. The heads of these sections have system coverage and manage relevant policy, setting administrative parameters.

60 NTDE, “Common and Agreed National Goals”, provided direction for national consistency.
The education system thus fits the policy process model. The Minister, representing the political field, meshes with both the polity and the system. The administrative field, comprising the Secretary, SEG and Management Group and the support units led by its members, links with the political field and the operational field. In turn, the RCPs and the education communities which make up the operational field meet the administrative field through the superintendents and, through school councils, the polity beyond. A cycle is completed by the polity which connects with the operational field and the political field. The line and staff relationships implicit in this hierarchy are vital for communication throughout policy conception, development, implementation and review. Personal relationships between people at all levels, such as teachers and their MLAs, officials and staff in cultural, social, sporting and other pursuits and contacts with other segments of the Government and the polity form an invaluable network, extending the process. These relationships, whether they be formal or informal, are important for public relations; they are also necessary for maintenance of order and direction, without which effective policy-related iteration would also be liable to lapse.

**Relationships in the NT Education System in the 1990s**

Behind the formal structure of the system, there are some key operational relationships which influence its effectiveness heavily. To all intents and purposes, they are official but the importance of the underlying informal dynamics of interpersonal relations cannot be over-rated. Although providers in all professions would claim the same qualification, it is critical in the human services, by virtue of their focus on people

Superintendents and principals share responsibility for the quality of liaison between system administration and education institutions. School councils are an increasingly important factor. A principal and a superintendent, senior educators and Public Sector employees, form the bureaucracy/school interface, a principal/council executive/superintendent team forms interfaces between school operation, school community and system administration. The common priority of children's education ideally governs their deliberations.

The system is vulnerable in the area of bureaucracy/schools relationships. The ‘us-them’ syndrome, between schools generally and ‘the office’ or ‘the Department’ is omnipresent. Justification of perception of such division is debatable but it exists and is therefore real. It is counterproductive, deflecting focus and application from purpose and undermining morale, thereby impeding efficiency and effectiveness. Evolution of self-management thus offers an opportunity for negative assumptions to permeate communities, eroding their benefit from the attendant provisions.

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61 Fong is wont to observe, occasionally ruefully, “Perception is reality!”.
Official management of professional services produces some distance between system administration and service delivery. As already noted, the NTG and the Minister make the policy decisions and the administration translates policy into programs for the education institutions to implement. Conversely, the system exists because of the work of schools, implementing policy through delivery of service, Ostrom’s representation of iteration in the policy process aids understanding of the relationships and interaction in the education system.

Education policy is influenced by community expectations and the readiness of the NTG, the system and educators to respond. Children’s education is politically sensitive, possibly more so than other public services, being fundamental to societal livelihood and wellbeing and due to its youth focus, its developmental purpose and its largely unquantifiable product. Dynamics of society add fickleness to perceptions of education services and their delivery in schools and stress for practitioners results.

Small electorates and a fragile economy keep politicians sensitive to constituents’ and industry’s views. Evidence of feeling in electorates, as registered by MLAs, abounds in parliamentary records following announcement of the ERC measures. The influence of industry is evident in secondary education policy. School councils offer convenient forums to convey messages to the NTG when there is disaffection abroad.

Spring deepened division between schools and ‘the Department’. With his directive style and distance from schools, his penchant of keeping the NT in the vanguard of national trends and undertaking extra tasks for the Government and his political affiliations and influence, he was prone to commit the system, ill-prepared, to functions and responsibilities additional to its established programs. Instructions commonly specified absorption of additional commitments “within existing resources”. Systemic cohesion, commitment and confidence were consequently eroded.

62 It is arguable that health is as sensitive as education. The author holds that education is the more sensitive of the two, by virtue of its significance to social and economic wellbeing and its youth orientation but also because in contemporary society the mystique of yore has been dispelled more from education than it has from health.
63 E.g. Recent emotive asbestos-related issues (incl. Ross Park, Tennant Creek, Humpty Doo, Moil and Millner Primary Schools and Maningrida CEC, 1993–5) were peripheral to teaching and learning but they eroded schools’ conduct of their core business.
64 NTPR, Volumes XXXIII-IV, teems with Opposition MLAs’ negative criticisms of ERC measures and their impact in schools in their electorates. MLAs Hickey, Cartwright, Bell, Stirling and Bailey were to the fore. Ministers Stone, Perron, Finch, Manzie and Hatton were most prominent amongst Government members, often quite defensive despite their dominance in the parliament.
65 E.g., Direction for the Eighties, 6–7, 46–53; Towards the 90s, iii. 9; You, Your School & Devolution; BOS Mission Statement.
66 E.g., Policies on Languages other than English (LOTE) and the establishment of community education centres (CECs) were implemented without appropriate promotion and resourcing.
Schools are susceptible to extra-ordinary imposition. Educators are inherently predisposed to fulfil society's expectations of them, often regardless of whether they can or may do so.\textsuperscript{67} Their conservatism makes accommodation of such expectations stressful, in that they tend to acquiesce, treating extra obligation as extra work rather than taking stock to excise anachronisms, prioritise and integrate additions. Burnout is increasingly frequent amongst sincere people as a result.

Demographics exacerbate tensions. A school's parents normally comprise a wide sample of the NT society. A school council's community membership commonly includes parents involved in education, entrepreneurs, government officials and politically active people, including the local MLA. Occasionally members fail to distinguish their everyday activity and their views or aspirations from their roles as school councillors. Hence, school-related debate may stem from agendas remote from children's learning.

These factors compound pressure for a principal.\textsuperscript{68} The head of any education institution is concurrently a leader and supervisor of staff, mentor for students, senior education adviser to the community and its official link with the system, executive officer of the school council and manager of school business. Conflicting commitments are an occupational hazard.

Routine educational, managerial and fiscal accountability cause tension. This can be exacerbated by unexpected developments. Policy changes can require schools to adjust to accommodate new initiatives. School councils may wish to ignore Government imperatives, contest executive decisions or introduce radical practice. Clear perspective, strong fibre and integrity are necessary attributes in a principal.

Effective communication between the principal, the school council executive and the superintendent is imperative. This team can be an asset in policy development, program design, implementation planning and local and system implications. It can also maintain equilibrium in the partnership, mitigating stress for the principal, obviating manipulation and promoting public education.

was arguable, with hindsight, that it was counterproductive to proceed with implementation under these circumstances.\textsuperscript{67} DEET and community expectations that schools/CECs will act as \textit{de facto} agents for DEET is a telling example. The nett result is that in Aboriginal communities teachers commonly perform community education, advisory and administrative tasks that are not their proper responsibility.\textsuperscript{68} Pusey, Michael, \textit{Dynamics of Bureaucracy: a Case Analysis in Education}, John Wiley & Sons Australasia Pty. Ltd., Sydney, NSW, 1976, Chapter 5, “The Disabling Pattern”, sought “to explain the internal dynamics of the system that impede the implementation of its own publicly stated policies”. He found in Tasmanian secondary education counterproductive tensions and their underlying causes recognisable in public education in contemporary NT, especially in the context of schools–system relationships.
Measured from either its inception or Self-Government, the NT education system is young. It started as an innovation, underwent rapid development after Self-Government and is now stabilising. It is a government agency. Political preeminence, public consultation, decentralisation of management and accountability are maintained and developed as essential *modi operandi*. Consultation and community involvement in policy development are standard and a degree of self-management in school communities is the norm.

Documentation of policy is thorough and accessible, targeting educators, parents and public. Official launches and accompanying media coverage promote community awareness. Despite some division between the administrative and operational fields, all functions are integral, mutually dependent and performed by Public Sector employees deployed in the NTDE. As noted above, the system is vulnerable in this area. Any tension is invariably manifest at the administration-operations interface.

Spring had a major impact. His innovations set directions to the new millennium. Prevailing circumstances and his juggernaut style enabled him to proceed according to his own lights; his high-handedness and remoteness from service delivery exacerbated intra-system tensions. All this aside, it is difficult to imagine the system's current state of development and vitality as being achieved without some such combination of uncompromising commitment and vision. Cohesion and trust were casualties. His fulfilment of the ERC requirements of Education was his last major task: public education sustained loss of credibility in the process and widespread cynicism was aroused but implementation of self-management was completed and necessary administrative reform was effected. Spring was thus involved in the move to devolve from Self-Government until just before the Devolution Symposium, its principal influence and driving force.

NT education in the mid-nineties offers challenge and opportunity. It has stabilised. Values and ethics, leadership, policy direction, infrastructures and resources are clearly established and there are vital roles, tangible benefits and personal rewards for people able to see and prepared to grasp the opportunities to participate and contribute. Despite the current dispute, when the system is viewed with this perspective, it is attractive to anyone interested in education and Territory development.

The concept of self-management in education has been explored. A picture of the NT has now been developed and its public education system outlined. The latter has been done in terms of its development and function and with reference to a purpose-designed theoretical policy process model. The study of the evolution of self-management in public education in the Territory can now proceed.
Chapter 4
Policy on Self-Management in the Territory

THE POLICY SCENARIO

Local self-management of education is contentious. It is perceived as imposed by the NTG. It breaks with tradition in the delivery of public education, itself sensitive as an expensive essential public service, youth-focused and yielding an unquantifiable return. Views range widely and are usually subjective; formal exchanges are frequently loaded, occasionally vitriolic. Parents and the public are set in their expectations and perceptions of education, whilst teachers are jealous of their professionalism and anxious about their conditions. Self-management localises decision-making, giving the education community authority and responsibility in school governance. Parents and school staff can both also wield influence as voters in the small Territory electorates. The situation is thus complex and laden with emotive, political and industrial potential.

The theoretical models considered in Chapter 1 help to conceptualise the process, the players and the extraneous influences, and to arrange them in perspective. The development of the policy and its implementation is represented objectively with application of models adapted from Ostrom's Institutional Analysis and Sabatier's Competing Advocacy Coalitions models. The Ostrom derivatives (Figures 1.2–5) first illustrated the iterative nature in the process. Adaptation of the theory for the NT education policy process overall was then introduced in Chapter 3, identifying the relevant elements of the process fields and their principal interfaces (see Figure 3.1).

Iteration as it occurs in policy on NT education may now be considered more closely. The fields of this process (see Figure 4.1) align with the theoretical policy process model (see Figure 1.2). In this case, the NTG is the political field, the education system's central administration is the administrative one and education operations make up the operational one. On education policy, they function separately and interact with each other to form the policy dynamo. They interact with the polity as well.

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1 See Figures 1.2–6 and 3.1.
Each of the units in a field has its own function and connects with the others. Individually, most also join with one or more units in other fields and with the public, as and when appropriate for their respective roles and responsibilities, forming interfaces between the fields and with the polity. Policy on education, in practice, is conceived, developed, implemented, evaluated and reviewed primarily through the activity within the units and the interactivity between them but also in their interaction with the polity. Each of the units has a specialist role. Collectively, they are grouped in fields by the broader nature of their functions. The fields in turn are bound together by their common purpose and commitment.

The quality of the interfaces determines both the cohesion and dynamism of the process and public participation and confidence in the system. Some interfaces which are critical to the effectiveness of the process, and hence, of the education system, with respect to self-management, are illustrated in Figure 4.1: in the Government, Cabinet decrees the policy; the interface formed by the Minister and the Secretary determines the tenor of the process; system administration, led by the Secretary, determines and supports policy execution; the interfaces between superintendents, principals and school councils are vital to its implementation; and the teaching-learning interaction between teachers and students in the schools and their classrooms is paramount in the whole process. The MLAs and people involved in schools form key links with the polity. System support units also play essential roles in this dimension, public input to policy on curriculum and dissemination of information being prime examples. In a healthy policy environment, the elements would be synchronised and the interfaces would be...
synchronmeshes between the individual fields and with the polity, as represented in Figure 4.1.

The education system is integral to Territory society. People who are involved in this industry are also members of the polity and many are participants privately as well as officially.² Hence, in the NT education community, on policy matters in particular, the informal interfaces between the polity and the policy process are typically more extensive than the formal ones. This stimulates further the activity within the dynamo.

Sabatier’s GM was adapted to fit the NT education policy process (see Figure 1.6). It accommodates the specific components of the process for the self-management policy (see Figure 4.2). Figure 4.1 represents the policy dynamo which, with its fields, interfaces and players, is a conglomerate of competing social, political, ideological, academic and official interests. The dynamo is the vital element, continually regenerating the policy process: its function is iterative, and policy and policy outcomes are its output. It is both constrained and refuelled, as illustrated in Figure 4.2, by the contemporary realities of the policy environment, some stable and others volatile. Both determine the resources available for activity in the dynamo and their use may be specified (as with Commonwealth tied grants).

² Teachers, officials and politicians are also often parents of school-children. MLAs commonly attend meetings of school councils in their electorates and professional associations interect with the political and administrative fields.
The stable aspects of the policy environment, once set, change little. Participation in approved primary and junior secondary education courses is compulsory for school-aged students in the Territory as it is throughout Australia. The NTG is obliged to provide public education services and has legislated accordingly, specifying parents' responsibility for their children's formal education. The Territory public expects that these services will assist its young people to become competent, responsible and contributive citizens as adults, equipped with the skills and knowledge to prepare for and engage in useful livelihood. National policies and priorities can vary and legislation may be amended, but these are adjustments rather than substantial changes.

Volatile factors in the policy environment are apt to disturb the equilibrium. Territory education services, like others, can sustain palpable impact from some. The Whitlam Labor reforms, Self-Government under the Fraser Coalition and the Hawke Labor Government's reduction in funding for the Territory have been noted. Although the CLP has held office since Self-Government, its fiscal circumstances have required several belt-tightening exercises, such as the ERC measures. Negotiation by policy sub-communities, particularly those represented by the NT Council of Government Schools Organisations (COGSO), the AEU(NT), Feppi, industry, ethnic groups, associations
formed on exceptional needs and religious and sporting interests, from lobbying to confrontation, can produce variables, especially when local general elections loom. The priority accorded Asian languages in schools reflects the NTG's vision of commercial, diplomatic and cultural relations with its northern neighbours. Measures taken in response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) arise from the combination of an extraneous social imperative and education policy outcomes, where formal education services are perceived by ATSI interests and sympathisers as failing indigenous Australians. There are fiscal implications in most such developments, whether they result in reordering or reducing current commitments or committing additional tied grants.

Activity in the dynamo is conditioned by fiscal resources more than anything else. Stable influences generally ensure that these resources are available, with volatile ones affecting their volume and the prioritisation of their use to some extent. It may be argued that the quality and quantity of human and material resources are determined by their availability but, in the current economic climate, they tend more to accord with the way in which the moneys allocated are managed. It is a matter of juxtaposing what is required with what can be afforded and deriving value for money, whether it be in paying teachers, staffing schools, taking initiatives, purchasing/developing materials, updating technology or providing advisory support. Quality assurance has the challenge to find the golden mean.

**The Issue and the Stakeholders**

The NTG's decision to devolve authority and responsibility to education communities instituted self-management. The NTDE was responsible for its implementation. It was implicitly expected that system personnel, interest bodies and the public, having been consulted, would embrace the policy. Parents of school children and the public, as well as school and office-based staff, were to contribute. (See Table 3.4, “NT Education Executives”, Table 4.1, “Principal Parliamentary Players” and Table 4.2, “Office-Bearers of Policy Communities” for key personnel in the process.)

**TABLE 4.1 PRINCIPAL PARLIAMENTARY PLAYERS IN NT PUBLIC EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

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* Authorities for the details outlined above, to 1995:

- Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Record, 1974–1995, Northern Territory of Australia;
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5 The parent Liasion officer replaced the COGSO Executive officer.

* Covers the teachers' organisation under its successive denominations.

References


ATU (NT), The Territory Teacher, a January 1992 – August/September 1993.

AEU (NT), Territory Educator, October 1993 – August/September 1995.

Feppi, Newsletter, 1993–94.

N.B. Names are italicised where the author's memory is the source and actual incumbency has not been able to be confirmed from the available records.

There has been resistance to self-management, especially post-ERC, mainly from the teachers' and parents' bodies. During consultation, the debate that fleshed out the issue should have been largely spontaneous, conclusions being reached largely with consensus. The volatility of the scenario, consequently, was occasionally exacerbated by perception that the outcomes were predetermined and not really negotiable.

The protagonists are the provider, the NTDE at the behest of the NTG, and the client, the public. Exchange on aspects of self-management in parliament has been frequent: Government MLAs are committed to support the policy; the Opposition is bound in principle to test it but there has generally been bipartisan support for the ideals. Most MLAs have contributed, their political commitments tempered by personal appraisal, briefing by officials and fuelling by constituents. Successive education Ministers and CEOs have been prominent.

Three deuteragonists, or competing advocates (cf. Sabatier's advocacy coalitions), have had high profiles. The parents' and the teachers' organisations are automatically parties to the consultative process that is fundamental to education policy development in the Territory, Working parties established to consider policy include COGSO and AEU(NT) representation. They typically play watchdog roles in formal consultation and campaign publicly where they take issue. Education Shadow Ministers are also vocal in parliament and through the media. COGSO, the union and the Shadow Ministers occasionally complement each other in their resistance to aspects of the NTG's initiatives, effectively forming informal advocacy coalitions when they do so. This was the case in the ERC consultations.³

The policy sub-communities' positions should be considered. The Government, often perceived as conservative in policy, is populist in practice. Policies and procedures are therefore founded more in pragmatism than in ideology. CLP MLAs in parliament usually support policy initiatives, Opposition Members treat them at least with skepticism and those not bound by any party line exercise their own judgement. The NTDE, as a Government agency, is responsible to promote and support its policy on education and to implement related decisions.

³ E.g. NTPR, Volume XXXIV, 3046–7: Rick Setter (CLP, Jingili), supporting Minister Stone (Port Darwin) over the SDP, suggested that the Opposition was supporting the union and some COGSO elements, not children's education. He recalled similar alliances having opposed other initiatives but then enloushing about their outcomes. NTCTF, Newsletter, July 1975, reported that ACENT indicated a partnership developing between the union and COGSO.
COGSO is commonly regarded as the parents' body. More precisely, as the body's name indicates, it represents affiliated organisations, school councils in particular but also any other parent organisation associated with a NTG school. Its business is therefore conducted by delegates of affiliated organisations, principally by the COGSO executive which is elected annually by the delegates.\(^4\)

COGSO has swung. On self-management, it was aligned from its inception with the Government, lobbying for school councils with devolved powers. More recently, its executive has been skeptical and resistant on some aspects of the policy's development and implementation, in practice becoming loosely allied with the AEU(NT) executive and the Labor Opposition. Initially, COGSO was primarily an advocate for school councils and parent bodies but it moved in the mid-1980s to become more a scrutineer on their behalf. This shift can be seen in terms of stages of development of the policy, prevailing imperatives and the body's leadership. Relevant legislation and regulations were achieved in partnership with the Government. Subsequent development was in practice driven by the system executive, pushing the parent body into a reactive role. This eventually became opposition when fiscal necessity, rather than educational outcomes, was perceived to be the principal factor in development and implementation of the policy and education communities' compliance implicitly mandatory. In parallel with the swing was a move in COGSO leadership, from politically inclination towards the Government to greater affinity with the Opposition.\(^6\) Although COGSO covers the Territory, its executive, by virtue of its strength and its access to the political and administrative fields, influences the body's stance and handles negotiation.

The AEU(NT) is, as its name declares, the NT education union. All teachers and executive teachers (ETs) engaged in public education are eligible for membership, as are assistant teachers.\(^7\) Membership is voluntary and is taken up by a substantial proportion of those eligible but by no means all of them. Its organisation has four levels, with the school at the base, then the regional, NT (executive) and national (executive) layers. Although it began as a professional association and is integral to the

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\(^6\) E.g., Ian Pontifex was a businessman and an influential member of the CLP and Richard Creswick was a journalist whose objections to some measures detailed in the SDP were aligned with the Opposition and the AEU(NT), as borne out by communications, September–October 1991. As co-members of the education task force reporting to the ERC in 1991, Pontifex and Creswick took opposing stances on these issues.

\(^7\) Base level full–time classroom practitioners are classified as teachers; the promotional levels in the teaching force range from ET1 (senior teacher) to ET9 (superintendent); and assistant teacher is a classification for Aboriginal paxaprofessionals, their eligibility for membership of the union justified by the roles they perform in teaching teams, especially in bilingual programs.
system policy process, teachers and their issues, both individually and collectively, are the union's bread and butter - it is primarily concerned with industrial matters.

The union changed its tack early. As with COGSO, there was initially a partnership with the education system and involvement in consultation on policy became automatic. A contradictory broad characteristic of teachers is their natural conservatism but ideological radicalism. The dismissal of the Whitlam Government sparked off extensive debate amongst members on the union's role in the political process, with views ranging across the ideological spectrum and many registering the belief that as a professional association it should be apolitical. As time has passed, the union executive has increasingly been perceived as left-inclined and politically aligned with the Opposition. The representation of teachers expanded with the imminence of Self-Government. The union's involvement in the education process has several facets. Its typically combative role as teachers' advocate on industrial issues has been apparent in its scrutiny of policy where, like COGSO, it has become reactive and resistant to change. Executive members have generally been Labor partisans.

Other vested interests have made relatively modest contributions. These include the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), Feppi, the Isolated Children's Parents' Association (ICPA), the Northern Territory Principals' Association (NTPA), and the Northern Territory Institute of Senior Education Officers (NTISEO), each commenting where its area of interest may have been affected. Individual school councils are occasionally to the fore on local issues. These and other such bodies also contribute as advocates or advocacy groups.

**The Consumer-Supplier Relationship**

The relationship between the public and the education agency in the operational field is akin to that of consumer and supplier. School-age children, their parents and the public, in differing respects, are clientele; schools are the points of service delivery, so children are direct consumers; and parents are clients, availing themselves of assistance to educate their children. The public at large constitutes clientele too, as appropriate education of succeeding generations is vital to the wellbeing of society. Relationships

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9 Spring was wont to refer to union executive members as “those Marxists”.

10 Pedersen (1993) included people concerned with language and culture and the needs of and opportunities for particular minority groups and students with disabilities and special learning needs as advocacy groups in the policy process in New Zealand.

11 Ian Tuxworth [MLA (CLP, then National), Barkly, 1974–90] advocated a voucher system, with a monetary value placed on a child's education and parents issued with vouchers accordingly, giving them prerogative to buy the service as they chose. His portrayal of the process as an over-the-counter transaction usually ended with a dismissive “It's as simple as that!”.
can be quite complex, with the education system often expected to be all things to all people and educators commonly endeavouring to respond accordingly.

The NTDE's role is to provide the service. It does so for children individually and for society, assisting parents to pave the way for young people's self-sufficiency, livelihood and contribution in adulthood. It also provides specialist support, public liaison and information services and seeks and heeds input on needs and expectations. In a fiscal sense, the education system is integral to the Territory economy, in its provision for youth and in its circulating considerable public moneys in the process.\textsuperscript{12}

The self-management concept extends the client-supplier concept. As self-management evolves, there is concomitant refocus of emphasis, from the agency to individual education communities.\textsuperscript{13} The CEO locates relevant decision-making as close as possible to the point of delivery, in schools. In this perspective, the agency's priorities are to promote and support excellent service with optimum effectiveness and efficiency in its central administration. A self-managing school becomes the provider, its community shoulders its share of responsibility through its school council and the administrative provisions comprise its principal general policy and resource base.

\textbf{Figure 4.3} represents such a school, serving an education community in the NT polity. Local policies and programs are determined with input from the principal and the staff of the school, the community and the education system; expectations and requirements are drawn together, prioritised and formalised in policy and planning by the school council; and the school's service is then provided using the resources routinely allocated through the system and those negotiated by the council with the system, within the community and from other sources. The operational field is thus epitomised, with the school the key point in the process, delivering the service, producing the outcomes and generating feedback on the policy's impact.

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{E.g.} “Rationalisation of Expenditure Document” (1991) recorded the Education and the Arts allocation of 1990-91, @ $ 295000000, as the second largest in the Territory Budget – it amounted to 5.263\% of the total.
Feedback from the point of service delivery, in terms of the MPCE, is conveyed through two channels. Data on educational outcomes, assessed through monitoring mechanisms and appraised by school staff and the council, are relayed back through the policy process, within the dynamo, to the administrative and political fields. Where feelings are strong, favourable or otherwise, the attitudes and perceptions of staff, council members, parents and other involved people are also relayed, through their respective policy sub-communities, the advocacy groups, as volatile influences on the process. This is a critical function of the iteration, ideally leading to further understanding, refinement and commitment in the light of the feedback.¹⁴

The legal dimension complicates the concept. The Act requires approved formal education for children aged from six to fifteen years, obliges the Minister to provide an appropriate education service, and recognises parents as responsible to educate their children. Students in the given age bracket are thus clients by compulsion, as are their parents who are obliged to use an approved service. Such provisions are


¹⁵NTG, Education Act. Part I, 4, Part II. 6 [l(a)].
made by the NTG on behalf of the society, enacting its will through legislation, with authority and responsibility for implementation and enforcement vested in the Minister. Within these parameters, self-management affords parents some choice, authority and responsibility locally. The process, represented by the MPCE, enables them to exert influence in the political and administrative fields as well, internally and externally.

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY**

Self-management in education in the NT dates from the inception of the CDE and the policy in 1996 reflects that direction. Initially, it was a philosophically-based innovation in public education administration. In its development, educational design and altruism have given way to fiscal rationalisation and pragmatism. Despite this shift, the policy direction has been consistent.

As indicated in Chapter 1, the dynamics are complex. The NTG's direction, with consultation in policy development, implementation and public reaction, refinement with further consultation, adjustment of implementation, consequent reaction and further development, have given the policy's advance its constantly iterative, if occasionally spasmodic, course. The levels of resultant community awareness, commitment and ownership will be telling in evaluation of policy implementation. The development and implementation of self-management can be divided into six stages, outlined in Table 4.3, to help identify the key events and factors and the reactions. Although this suggests a compartmentalised process, there has in fact been substantial overlap, especially in 1977–79, Relevant documents are listed in Table 4.4.

**TABLE 4.3 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SELF-MANAGEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1972–79</td>
<td>Recent Commonwealth management to Self-Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1983–87</td>
<td>Implementing NT education policy to its first refinement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1987–90</td>
<td>Implementing the “Strategic Plan (1987–91) for... NT Government Education Policy”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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16 Joint Committee on the Northern Territory (JCNT), Inquiry into Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory: Transcript of evidence (taken at Canberra), Thursday 7 February 1974, 689–91, Beare's historical outline.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>YEARS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to the October 1990 Legislative General Election.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1991–92</td>
<td>Expenditure review and implementation of ERC measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1993–…</td>
<td>Consolidating policy and operation in education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4.4 DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO SELF-MANAGEMENT IN NORTHERN TERRITORY PUBLIC EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DOCUMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Schools in Australia: Report of the Interim Committee for the Australian Schools commission (Karmel report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory: Report from the Joint Committee on the Northern Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Draft Green Paper on Education in the Northern Territory: Aims and Directions for the 80's (sic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORIGIN</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neal &amp; Radford, for Australian Government (Neal-Radford Report).</td>
<td>Recommendations provided the bases for the establishment of the CTS and the ACT Schools Authority and for local school governance in Australia's Territories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karmel et al. (Karmel report)</td>
<td>Reported on conditions in schools in Australia and recommended accordingly, including the aspects of equity of opportunity in education and community participation in school governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCNT's report to Australian Government.</td>
<td>Recommendations provided direction for self-government and eventual statehood for the Territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCNT's post-Cyclone Tracy report to the Australian Government.</td>
<td>Re-affirmed recommendations of initial report, devastation of Darwin notwithstanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAG</td>
<td>Recommended on administrative structure of NT education system to Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister Robertson for NTG</td>
<td>Proposed structure and policy direction for administration of public education in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>DOCUMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td><strong>Green Paper Primary and Secondary Education in the Northern Territory: Directions for the 80s</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td><strong>Northern Territory Schools: Direction for the Eighties.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td><strong>Northern Territory of Australia Education Act</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td><strong>“Strategic Plan (1987–1991) Implementation of Northern Territory Government Policy for Education”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td><strong>Towards the 90s: Excellence, Accountability and Devolution in Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td><strong>Towards the 90s: Excellence, Accountability and Devolution in</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>DOCUMENT</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>“Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Action Plan for School Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>“Rationalisation of Expenditure Document”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Education Amendment Act 1991 (No. 64 of 1991)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Education Amendment Act (No.2) 1991 (No. 71 of 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>DOCUMENT</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>The Northern Territory board of Studies Mission Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Public Sector Employment and Management Act (No.29 of 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Northern Territory of Australia Education (School Councils) Regulations (as in force at 7 June 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Partners in Education: Parent Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Education Amendment Act 1994 Amendment Act 1994 (No. 67 of 1994)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 1, 1973–9.

Local self-management was introduced in NT education in the early 1970s, some other interpretations notwithstanding\(^{17}\). The Neal-Radford Report advocated decentralised decision-making, with community and teacher participation and “greater integration

\(^{17}\) E.g. Henry Gray, 1991, had devolution “arriving in Australia” in the latter 1980s, and Stone, “Parents Responsible1;” 25 April 1992, stated that decision-making was devolved to NT school councils in 1991.
between (schooling) and community life” in administration. School councils, autonomy for schools and teachers' professional independence characterised the Commonwealth approach to public education and were adopted for the CTS and the ACT Schools Authority. Promoting this move towards self-management, the Director (NT) won COGSO's support. Some schools responded, with official recognition. Some schools responded, with official recognition.

There was general cohesion between the Director (NT), Dr. Hedley Beare, COGSO and the Teachers' Federation (NTCTF) from the inception of the new Commonwealth system. NT politicians' goal of self-government, however, was at odds with the Canberra orientation of the education system and the teaching service. Diverse agendas were therefore bound to compete in designing Territory education when self-government began to take shape.

The CDE advised the Joint Committee on the Northern Territory (JCNT) against devolving education to a NT government. An authority akin to that intended for the ACT, responsible to the federal minister and independent of a local legislature, was advocated. COGSO and the NTCTF supported this model. The union held that school principals should account directly to the CEO with “no intermediate hierarchy”. The JCNT concluded that the large functions of health and education “should, for the time being” remain Canberra's responsibility but urged comprehensive community involvement.

When Eedle succeeded Beare his priorities were to refocus attention from structures to functions and to raise teachers' professionalism and expectations of children. Much more local responsibility for schools was promoted, involving school councils with

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20 The CEO and COGSO were clear on their roles but the union was not, to which members' contributions to the NTCTF publications in 1973 bear witness.
24 NTCTF, Newsletter July 1974, “The Accountability of Principals and Staff”.
professional associations of teachers and parent and citizen volunteers. He supported local self-management but he also sought authority to develop rigour and cohesion to improve the quality of education.\(^{27}\)

In the First Assembly, Executive Members wanted executive roles rather than liaison ones but their responsibilities were not defined.\(^{28}\) The Commonwealth's failure to establish the promised Education Advisory Committee\(^{29}\) and dissatisfaction with the education system\(^{30}\) exacerbated antipathetic feelings towards Canberra. Neither the Assembly nor the Director of Education had authority to act and the education agency in Canberra was perceived as inert.

The change in federal government in December 1975 wrought no immediately tangible change. The Minister was cautious on NT education, especially with respect to any self-management.\(^{31}\) The union's role in the education fabric was beginning to develop. It advocated parent involvement in the design of Territory education and itself sought a broader role, notably in the self-management aspect. It addressed teachers' professionalism and examined its future, including the political dimension.\(^{32}\) Overall, it was becoming more organised and active on contemporary issues.

The Legislative Assembly's Executive powers were defined in 1977. Giving Darwin responsibility for planning education, Canberra enabled preparation of policy for Territory administration of education but did not resolve the prevailing impasse in day-to-day management.\(^{33}\) Standards, staffing and teacher accommodation remained issues, persisting until the function was devolved in 1979.\(^{34}\)

Some Territorians with vested interests regarded Canberra's bureaucratic control of education, teachers' independence, school-based curriculum development and school

\(^{27}\) Eedle, James, Selected Papers 1975–6. CDE (NT Division), Darwin, c. 1976, 41–6, 35–7, 59–68.


\(^{29}\) NTPR. Vol. IB, August 1975–December 1975, 683; Vol. IIB, June 1976–August 1976, 22. NTCTF, Newsletter, July 1975, "A.C.E.N.T.", reported the CTF and COGSO agreeing that ACENT should be established as an interim measure towards setting up a schools authority.


\(^{31}\) NTTF, Newsletter, March 1976, reported the Minister's intending to study the concept before making any commitment.

\(^{32}\) NTTF, Newsletter, September 1976, the President felt the union's role on political matters was "to present facts... and allow members to make their own decisions". The membership was divided on the issue.


\(^{34}\) E.g., ibid., Lawrie (Ind, Nightcliff), 435–8 & Questions Without Notice Nos. 2090, 2091 & 2116; MacFarlane (CLP, Elsey), 499.
autonomy unfavourably as characteristics of Commonwealth administration.\textsuperscript{35} An official joint statement on school-based decision-making was generally positive but acknowledged concerns and alluded to changes mooted as self-government approached.\textsuperscript{36} The negative attitudes towards the service eroded confidence and frustrated those responsible for its delivery. Such disillusionment amongst the clientele and system administrators offered a Territory Government the opportunity to stamp its authority on education and to harness it to demand.

Community influence, excellence and accountability were the cornerstones of the CLP's education policy. Its general platform advocated society in which fulfilment of individual potential, unfettered life and livelihood, participation and tolerance were possible, tempered with concomitant responsibility. Its position on education, based largely on the Victorian Liberal Party's policy, featured rigour, community involvement and capability in basic skills and knowledge as fundamental to the development of youth.\textsuperscript{37} Prior to Self-Government, the party aspiring to power was thus set to establish political control of education. The direction and momentum towards self-management fitted its platform.

The ALP(NT)'s approach to education, in contrast, was born of commitment to combat disadvantage. It sought to remedy “anti-social features” of society through “social democratization”.\textsuperscript{38} Adoption of the ACT education model was proposed, highlighting democratisation and decentralisation. It favoured a community-based education system, its schools locally controlled and administratively autonomous, responding to individual community peculiarities and offering equity in opportunity.\textsuperscript{39} Labor's conception of system administration emphasised teachers' professionalism and independence and schools' operation beyond government control.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{35} The author experienced the negative attitude of interested and informed parents and public towards Canberra's administration of education in the Territory as a principal and in 'selling&' the school council and community involvement concepts.


\textsuperscript{39} Platform as Adopted by the Third Biennial Conference, Australian Labor Party (NT Branch), Darwin, 1977, “Education”, “Objective”.

\textsuperscript{40} NTTF, Newsletter, July 1977, recording ALP candidate Pam O'Neil on Labor policy on education, pre-election, 1977.
The parties were both committed to local governance in education and flexibility to accommodate local priorities but their stances differed. They were distinguishable in service focus and systemic structure. Whereas Labor gave priority to equity, overcoming disadvantage and allowing maximum independence in individual school and system operation\(^\text{41}\), the CLP advocated rigour and excellence and was bent on a ministerial department. So, prior to the transfer of education the CLP and the ALP differed on priorities and service delivery but were both committed to the self-management principle.

**Stage 2, 1977–83.**

The Everingham Executive (Second Assembly) was installed in 1977 and Self-Government was scheduled for mid-1978. Health and education were to be devolved in 1979, their transfers regarded as vital by the CLP\(^\text{42}\) As Executive Member for Community and Social Development, Jim Robertson (CLP, Gillen) was responsible for education. The COGSO executive generally supported the CLP's position on education. The NTTF executive was asserting itself on issues beyond teaching, signalling a widening adversarial field to the embryonic NT Government.\(^\text{43}\)

Robertson set up the Education Advisory Group (EAG) to advise OJJ transferring education to Darwin, This was done in response to a submission by COGSO and the NTTF, in effect instituting the consultative planning provision previously sought from the Commonwealth. The EAG was charged with designing a system which incorporated ministerial responsibility, agency execution of policy, a hierarchy of advisory provisions involving teachers and parents and decentralised administration.\(^\text{44}\) Ministerial authority and responsibility with administrative support, involvement of teacher and parent organisations in decision-making and endorsement in principle of system flexibility and local self-management were thereby set Territory Government control of Territory education\(^\text{45}\), the reverse of the JCNT's proposal\(^\text{46}\), was assured but teachers and

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\(^{42}\) NTPR, Volume IV, September 1977–December 1977, 338. Health was devolved on 1 January 1979, 6 months earlier than education.

\(^{43}\) E.g., NTPR. Volume IV, Question Without Notice No. 7, recorded Robertson dismissing objection to NTTF members working in “uranium towns”, advising the union to “leave the governing of this (NT) to the future (NT) government”.

\(^{44}\) NTPR, Volume V, February 1978–May 1978, 1001–2

\(^{45}\) Weller, Patrick, & Sanders, Will, The Team at the Top: Ministers in the Northern Territory. North Australia Research Unit, The Australian National University, Darwin, 1982, 11, noted the need the Ministers felt to establish political authority. See also Heatley, “Where Must the Performance of the N.T. Cabinet Differ from the Regime of the Former Commonwealth Government Administration?”, in NTCLP, Focus NT Issue No. 9, August 1978; Lewis, “Northern Territory Politics and the Forthcoming Election”; and NTCLP. Platform and Constitution (c. 1978–9), Chapter 1, Section 1.

\(^{46}\) JCNT Report, Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory. 45
parents were to participate in decision-making as it had recommended\(^{47}\). Community and teacher participation in education governance as envisaged by Neal and Radford were thus to be integral to NT administration.\(^{48}\)

Robertson won general approbation in the Legislative Assembly when he tabled the EAG's report. System structure and supply of teachers were the principal areas of contention in school education. Labor maintained advocacy for an education authority, schools' autonomy and teachers' independence but it compromised, saying that the proposed Education Advisory Council (EAC) “should be an interim measure” until “a (NT) education authority” could be established. Both sides agreed that teachers' employment, by the CTS or a Territory service, was a critical and difficult issue. Labor supported the NTTF’s preference for the CTS to remain the employer, Robertson acknowledged the need for “very close liaison and coordination of administrative, financial and legislative” aspects.\(^{49}\)

Legislation to establish the NT education system was introduced in March 1979.\(^{50}\) It had been drafted from the EAG's report and subsequent comment solicited to enable the government to assess public opinion. Attention was channelled towards the major elements, the EAC, school councils, ministerial authority and responsibility and an eventual Territory teaching service. The EAC was to have an ongoing review role.\(^{51}\)

The proposals were generally endorsed. The EAC was supported and a call to extend teacher representation was defeated. There was unreserved support for school councils but some concern to ensure real involvement of parents was expressed and accepted. Caution was voiced, prophetically, against councils' becoming mandatory.\(^{52}\) The Opposition's objection to “the vast amount of power” to be given to the Minister was countered with the need for his/her authority to match the responsibility of the portfolio. The consultation involved in preparing this bill, the vitality of pressure groups and the extent of response were acknowledged.\(^{53}\)

\(^{47}\) Helyar Geoffrey, Community Involvement in Education: Observations on Trends in England, Denmark, United States of America, and Canada, report by 1976 Churchill Fellow to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, Darwin, c. 1976–7, 45–6. The arrangements which Robertson sought were consistent with “important principles” that Helyar had identified.

\(^{48}\) Marginson, Simon, Education and Public Policy in Australia, Cambridge University Press, Oakleigh, Victoria, 1993, 254, concluded that “Governments committed to the democratic approach in education (would) sustain … parent, teacher, academic and student organisations”.

\(^{49}\) NTPR, Volume VII, September 1978–November 1978,693,695,697,699, 700–1. See also ALP(NT),

\(^{50}\) “Education BUI” (Serial 264).


\(^{52}\) NTPR, Volume DC, May 1979–August 1979, 1409, recorded Pam O’Neil (ALP, Fannie Bay) observing “perhaps we should never reach the stage where we would be enforcing school councils on schools” as they would not necessarily be appropriate for all.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 1388–1427, 1559–62. CLP, Focus NT, Issue 16, June 1979, in “Profile of Jim Robertson”, recorded his emphasising the importance of community input.
The next step was to establish the NTTS. This exemplified further the consultative dimension of policy development. It was a tortuous process, resisted by the NTTF executive in the early stages. Inception of the NTTS, initially scheduled for January 1980, was postponed to July and again until after the next general election. The Opposition and the NTTF were skeptical about the Minister's rhetoric whilst he berated the union executive. The CLP was re-elected, Robertson retained education and the NTTS legislation was eventually passed.

Development of NT policy on education from September 1980 entailed extensive consultation. A draft green paper was prepared, introduced and distributed generally. The resultant Green Paper was tabled, circulated and then debated in 1981. Introduction of core curriculum was supported, qualified by the Opposition's reservations that Year 10 testing pandered to employers' demands and that it did not come to grips with Aboriginal culture. Opinion also diverged on proposals to transfer Year 7 from primary to secondary schools and to introduce secondary colleges. Everingham was ambivalent, citing a principal's observation that “the only constant thing in (NT) education (was) change”. Robertson described the diversity of the response as “typical of the humanities professions” but extending beyond educators to views held by parents, employers and students. With this material, the next task was to develop a policy which would provide “a direction for education in the 1980s”.

Next came the proposed school councils legislation. Its preparation was described as an “extremely complex legal exercise” which had involved “intensive public consultation”. The school council concept had been adopted by the NTG to realise a closer working relationship between parents and teachers of their children … (promoting greater) community involvement in the education of children and in the running of schools.

It was stressed that this legislation would give a school community the option, without compulsion, to establish an incorporated school council. With reference to the powers envisaged, the need for a council to be “aware of the fine line … between (its) control

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55 Ibid., 2908–19.
56 The work of the EAG was not acknowledged. It had laid the foundation for policy development, the design of the structure and the arrangements adopted.
57 Ibid., 749, recorded Robertson's acknowledgement of the efforts of Secretary, Geoff Spring, and “his professional assistant”, Michael Fong.
58 NTPR, Volume XIII, June 1981–December 1981, 1185–1215. Conversion of Green Paper items to policy was exemplified in the development of guidelines on student assessment by a working party comprising system officials and NTPA, NTTF and COGSO representation. NTPR Volume XV, 1116–7, Robertson commended the NTTF in this exercise.
over … the school and … the proper role of the school's teachers” was emphasised. It was similarly made clear that a council could “advise the principal and the secretary … on … professional issues”. 59

The Opposition supported this legislation. It endorsed the Minister's contention “that the greatest factor in student success (was) parent/teacher co-operation” and urged promotion of school councils on these grounds. 60 Warning against division between community and staff on councils was sounded, with recognition that legislation alone could not ensure public awareness of activity in schools, that COGSO executive views did not necessarily reflect those of all parents and that “community interest” should not interfere in routine operations. The opportunity for local adaptation of policy to cater for the individuality of a community was noted but an Opposition view was that a school council's effectiveness would be dependent on teachers' commitment. COGSO was credited with being instrumental in having school councils established under discrete legislation. The wisdom of the NTTF, enabling consensus to be reached, was also acknowledged. 61 This achievement concluded Robertson's formal involvement in establishing the NT education system.


By 1983, the NTG's control of Territory education was firmly established. The Education Act was in place, the NT had its own Teaching Service, policy directions had been determined and were being developed for implementation, incorporated school councils were formalised in legislation and provision to establish a board of studies was in train. All this had been accomplished through comprehensive consultation and negotiation with ultimate consensus amongst involved parties. Government initiative and consultation, concern for standards, wide participation in policy development and direction towards self-managing school communities were basic features.

NTG policy on education was promulgated in Direction for the Eighties. Establishment of a “framework within which schools (would) develop their own programs” was intended. 62 Self-management had been founded legally on the NTG's terms, school councils having been sanctioned to “assume quite extensive powers and responsibilities”. 63 An incorporated school council could monitor and advise with

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60 NTPR, Volume XV, October 1982–November 1982, 3309–11, recorded Bob Collins (ALP, Arnhem, Opposition Leader) attributing “much of the trouble… over education standards” to people's ignorance of “what (was) happening in their schools”, and advocating eventual strengthening of councils' role.
61 Ibid., 3316–9, 3321, 3323–5, 3327.
63 NTDE, Direction for the Eighties, 26.
substantive influence on implementation of official policy in its school.\textsuperscript{64} Regulations specified its composition with parents in the majority.\textsuperscript{65} Community authority in schooling now complemented overall political authority in policy and administration in Territory education, technically at least. An autonomous authority was off the agenda.

Direction for the Eighties outlined policy on self-management. Community involvement was to be a major aspect of management of education, school councils were encouraged, and parents' responsibility for their children's education was highlighted. Public expectations of education could now be referred to the Territory legislature, with MLAs sensitive to local issues. The document had been designed both for public information and to guide education system officials. The stated intention that “policy framework … (was) to be evolutionary” foreshadowed further development.\textsuperscript{66} The way was thus open to pursue unresolved and emergent issues. Development of guidelines for policy implementation proceeded. They were compiled with public involvement and consultation and circulated as information statements (ISs). Wide consultation in relation to policy was entrenched.\textsuperscript{67}

Formal establishment of the Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS) also supported self-management. The Board's role was to

\begin{itemize}
  \item accredit senior secondary school courses and issue certificates for … secondary courses,… (to advise) the Secretary… on curriculum policy from pre-school through to Year 12 … (and be) responsible for the quality of education offered in our schools.
\end{itemize}

It was to be independent and representative. Its independence was important, to “strengthen public confidence … (and bring) the Territory into line with the Australian states”.\textsuperscript{68} The legislation was passed with bipartisan endorsement.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{64} Education Act, 1982, Part DC, Sections 70–71.
\textsuperscript{65} NTG, Northern Territory of Australia Education (School Councils) Regulations (as in force at 1 January 1994), Darwin, (issued at) 17 January 1994, Part II, Section 4, Sub-Sections 1,3–4.
\textsuperscript{66} NTPR Volume XVI, March 1983 to June 1983. 159–60.
\textsuperscript{67} E.g., IS No. 5, on post-compulsory education, was developed with principals, COGSO, the NTTF, the Trades and Labour Council and Feppi; IS No. 3, on early childhood education, was developed with similar consultation, as was the one on education for Aborigines, IS No. 6.
\textsuperscript{68} NTPR, Volume XVII, August 1983–October 1983,1321–2, Education Amendment Bill (Serial 361).
\textsuperscript{69} NTPR. Volume XVIII, February 1984–June 1984, Education Amendment Bill (Serial 11), 93–95, 210–4, 321. Bob Collins recorded “a very high degree of co-operation between the opposition and the government … to the benefit of the Territory” during Roberts's management of the education portfolio, not experienced with his successor but hoped for with the next incumbent.
The NTG was adamant that parents should play a role in professional aspects of their children's education. It advocated their “actually (taking) part in the decisions relating to the school-based curriculum”. The Minister reminded MLAs that

(t)his Assembly has passed legislation creating school councils which provide an avenue whereby people can become involved with the education of their children … they should become more active on these councils.

School councils were to be vehicles for parents' involvement in and the exercise of their responsibility for their children's education.\(^7^0\)

Since Self-Government, the NTG had taken the lead and held the initiative on education policy development. In terms of the MPCE, the political field was the catalyst, with the other fields implementing its decisions and, with input from the polity beyond, providing and processing feedback. In the mid-1980s, a change in fiscal arrangements with the Hawke federal Labor administration, a potent volatile influence, was to result in the disruption of the relative equilibrium of the NT's education policy development to date.

**Stage 4, 1987–1991.**

In 1985, the Commonwealth had signalled its intention to abrogate the Fraser-Everingham Memorandum of Understanding as the basis for funding of the NT. The Territory's allocation in the 1986–87 Commonwealth Budget was reduced by $101M. A fundamental impact on education was that fiscal reality replaced educational and social rationale in directing policy. Planning and programming required more specific focus from that point. *Towards the 90s* was to accommodate the ‘cuts’ to the education budget in 1986–87 and 1987–88\(^7^1\).

*Towards the 90s* (1987) proposed “some quite revolutionary changes”, indicating the NTG's new priorities for education. The main elements, increased and accelerated self-management, accountability with quality return from use of public moneys and excellence in schools' academic outcomes measurable against publicly credible standards, were consistent with national trends\(^7^2\). These were supplemented with

\(^7^1\) NTPR, Volume XXIII, June 1966–November 1986, 452–3, recorded the Minister's reporting ‘cuts’ totalling $6.5M in the 1986–87 Budget, and Volume XXV, September 1987–November 1987, 1493–1, his referring to these again and outlining additional cutbacks for 1987–88.  
introduction of the Action Plan for School Improvement (APSI). School councils, COGSO and the NTTF reacted strongly, primarily at the zeal perceived in some of the measures proposed. One, that “eligible schools” which did not accept self-management with Direct Grant funding should pay the NTDE to cover the cost of administering their funds, aroused particular ire.  

Perceived heavy-handedness in the political and administrative fields generated antipathy and resistance in the operational field and the advocacy groups, mainly COGSO and the AEU(NT).

In September 1987, the Minster reported on progress with Direction for the Eighties commitments, emphasising community involvement. After outlining the impact of reduced funding from Canberra, he reported “remarkable” success with the NTG's effort “to increase the amount of school-based services” and then turned to the current Towards the 90s fracas. He stated that the document's purpose had been to “promote community discussion on areas where the … education system (could) be streamlined”. The mooted initiatives were linked to national economic austerity and related trends in education. That over-reaction in the community had been manipulated was implied.

Towards the 90s (1987) had been released just ahead of preparation for implementation of the Northern Territory Government Policy for Education 1987–91, to commence in 1987–88. Almost 80% of the Strategic Plan's objectives relevant to schools addressed the foci in the former document. The Strategic Plan programmed progressive devolution of functions. Initially, councils were to have authority in basic administration, then decision-making on school policy and ultimately “autonomous” school governance. The Plan was thus founded in essential fiscal constraint and effected through devolution of management functions, with a council's eventual involvement in all aspects of its school's program intended. It was conceded that the trigger for Towards the 90s was the need to absorb reduced funding from the Commonwealth. Improved education for children resulting from school-community partnerships was a predicted positive outcome.

School communities became cynical as the NTG employed educational merit to promote an initiative perceived as an economy measure. Relevant documentation and parliamentary statements supported this appraisal. Although Towards the 90s (1987) was introduced as a consultative measure and the Minister bemoaned “various groups
and individuals … telling the public that this document (was) a *fait accompli*”, the congruence of the measures it proposed with the intended outcomes of the Strategic Plan was inescapable. The measures proposed were defensible, having been founded in legislation and promulgated in *Direction for the Eighties*. Cynicism also stemmed from the basic change of emphasis, that where school councils’ acceptance of functions and responsibilities had been optional, their universal compliance was now intended.

Reaction to the mooted changes led to a revised discussion document, *Towards the 90s* (1988). It proposed extending policy in the areas of “excellence, accountability and devolution in education”, advancing community involvement with devolution to school councils. *Direction for the Eighties* remained current and *Towards the 90s* (1988) developed particular elements.

Devolution of functions was the principal theme. The NTG was sensitive to public perception but made clear its intention to proceed to devolve universally. A fabric of political issues influencing the policy, including industry and community expectations, enhancement of students' achievement standards using external assessment and improving student discipline, was outlined. It was linked with devolving functions; partnerships and parent and community responsibility were meshed in as well.

The NTG's devolution of design of local education services advanced the self-management concept. Community involvement in school development planning was formalised and promoted and professional educational aspects were specifically included. An approved development plan was required and would be recognised in negotiating extra-ordinary arrangements. Such provisions authorised and encouraged each school community, through its council, to accept opportunity, prerogative and responsibility for its own education service. Government involvement covered monitoring in terms of the legislation and negotiating resource provision.

Towards the 90s (1988) picked up community involvement from *Direction for the Eighties*. The NTG's expectations were reaffirmed and the direction was elaborated to accelerate momentum. A school council became a necessity, the concept of the school community gained currency and councils' acceptance of devolved functions was promoted. School development planning, staff development, financial management,

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77 NTDE’s Director of Planning and Revenue, Dennis Griffith (conversation, 9/10/95) felt it “reasonable” to assume a link between ‘cuts’ in funding from Canberra and the move to devolve, noting also that it had been a national phenomenon, not one confined the NT. Mike Higgins, Director (Management Services), (conversation, 10/10/95) was emphatic that devolution of functions was primarily driven by fiscal imperatives, but that expected enhancement of educational outcomes few children was a genuine, if subsidiary, justification.

78 NTDE, Towards the 90s: Excellence, Accountability and Devolution in Education for the Future Volume 2 (sic), Darwin, 1988, iii, 2, 3.
selection of executive staff and forging links with business were highlighted as responsibilities appropriate for school councils. The official intentions for self-management with local school governance were declared in this document, albeit toned down from the ones floated in Towards the 90s (1987). Safeguards and official limitations notwithstanding, the opportunity for school communities to develop their own services was now most constrained by their own vision, competition amongst local priorities and people's time.

Prescription of school council membership was introduced next. Its purpose was to restrict teacher membership and to ensure parental majority. Whilst it was defended as enabling increased involvement of parents in their children's education, its origin in the NTTFs threat “to take over the school councils” in response to Towards the 90s (1987) was acknowledged. The union inferred that the NTDE was retaliating to teachers' perceived involvement in school councils' negative reaction to that document.

The proposed amendments were modified. In the meantime, the issue had unsettled school communities, giving rise to extensive debate and ultimately strengthening support for the devolution of functions. A crystallising of principles was evident in the Legislative Assembly. The Opposition saw the limitation of teacher membership of school councils as the principal objection but considered it constructive for the councils to be involved in the politics of education. The NT Nationals and Independents felt the Government had handled the issue ineptly, without regard to the principles of devolution itself and generating public antagonism, and insinuated that the NTDE lacked the will “to hand over the power to school councils”. Resolution was to be found through reviewing the school council regulations and the union welcomed the result, claiming that the Minister had accepted its input.

Towards the 90s (1988) omitted devolution of staffing to school councils. The original discussion paper had proposed its phased introduction, and, in the Strategic Plan, it had been recommended that this be examined, alerting to some legal and industrial difficulties. A combination of teachers' opposition, legal and logistic complications put paid to this initiative, at least temporarily. The spirit of the strategy was

80 NTPR. Volume XXVI, February 1988–August 1988, 2737.
82 NTPR, Volume XXVI, 2741, 2889–93,2996–7, 2999, 3001.
84 NTDE, Towards the 90s, 1987,20–1.
largely realised nonetheless, with provision for community participation in selection of executive teachers and support staff.\textsuperscript{86}

The rationale for self-management assumed that educational outcomes would be improved with schools and communities working together.\textsuperscript{87} In perspective, devolving functions established a school council's foundation, preparatory to its management of public education locally. Some councils went as far as they could in administrative self-management, most selected the administrative functions they could manage, and others, mostly small schools, could accept virtually no functions. Acceptance of professional responsibility, however, was rare and limited; it was recognised that a school council was “supposed to have a role … in local curriculum development … (but that it didn't) always happen”. For schools considered effective, however, it was standard practice, manifest in parent liaison and through education or curriculum sub-committees of their councils.\textsuperscript{88}

The upheavals subsided and implementation of the self-management policy proceeded. The Minister encouraged school communities to exercise initiative, advocating use of their APSIs to open up unique opportunities and advantages through developing their own specialist areas. He had the arts in mind but saw the principle as generally applicable. At the end of the decade, he claimed that the Territory afforded “more opportunity for parental input … than anywhere else in Australia” and had the country's “most comprehensive system of devolution”.\textsuperscript{89}

This was the point reached at the NT's 1990 general election. The CLP was returned and Labor dropped the plank of an independent education authority from its platform.\textsuperscript{90} To all intents and purposes, the education policy process was resuming an even keel.

**Stage 5, 1991–92.**

The Chief Minister instituted the ERC in 1991 to examine fiscal arrangements in the public sector in order to address projected over-commitment. Deliberations were based on reports made by Ministerial Task Forces charged with investigating their respective agencies' operations. The Government's decisions were announced on 23

\textsuperscript{86} NTDE, *Towards the 90s*, 1988, 8. In practice, a school council nominee, commonly its chair, chairs promotion selection panels for its school; other members are normally the principal, the NTPA nominee and having EO responsibility, an AEU(NT) nominee, usually also from the school, and the superintendent of that region the NTDE representative.


\textsuperscript{88} Jose, Sue, “School Councils in the Northern Territory”, NTDE, Darwin, 1995.


April, ushering in the principal event, to date, in the development of self-management in NT education in the 1990s.

The effect on Education and the Arts was a 5.2% reduction. It was to be spread: a 5% cut to schools and colleges and 11–16% cuts in administration and services. Rationalisation measures affecting schools were devolution, curriculum development and advisory services, school closures and staffing formula changes. The Secretary assured that

there (would) be positive outcomes … through administrative efficiencies … The increased flexibility and decision making which will be available to schools will provide … the opportunity to minimise any impact of reduced services previously available from office-based staff.

The principles of devolution and (APSIs) will be reinforced.  

He saw local self-management as a means to satisfy ERC requirements and the ERC imperative as a means to advance self-management.

Mandatory devolution resurfaced as the most vexed issue, the situation against which caution had been sounded twelve years earlier. Implementation proceeded nonetheless, and the Devolution Symposium followed, to identify and address unresolved issues. Remaining loose ends were then tied off in follow-up, effectively making way for the system's subsequent consolidation.

Schools' obligatory acceptance of devolved administrative functions was decisive, if somewhat divisive. Although it was declared an ERC measure, it was promoted as the system's capitalising on economic circumstances to achieve desirable educational and managerial outcomes. In reality, it decreed universally most objectives of the move to devolve, from 1987 to 1991, that had not yet been realised.

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92 See Footnote 52. Jose observed that the Act stated that councils might undertake these functions. Where a council did not do so, the principal was obliged to accept the responsibility.
93 Jose's assessment was that “(s)chool governance versus school administration was an issue particularly at the time of the introduction of the (SDP), in 1992, when implementation was perhaps not as well handed as it could have been”.
also generated antipathy in the communities affected. The logic of their selection for closure did not lessen anger. Rather, as a spillover effect, resentment of compelled acceptance of devolvable functions was reinforced.

Perception of devolution as synonymous with ERC cost rationalisation persists. The suggestion that it was poor timing and that the two should not be associated but distinguished as separate but coincident developments may be sustained to a degree. Self-management in NT school communities had been evolving from 1973, and was officially acknowledged as doing so from 1979.

Imposition of devolved functions in 1991–2 may be defended as logical progression in self-management at that stage. Spring himself invalidated such a stance, however, identifying devolution as an ERC measure in a related directive. A long-serving member of the SEG, committed to self-management, continues to rue its consequent association with the ERC and the irony of its proving less than economical. The Director of Management Services, who has been integral to the devolution of functions to NT schools from 1975, unequivocally acknowledged that acceleration of the policy’s implementation functions at this stage was one of the NTDE’s economy measures. He saw self-management as conceived primarily to improve fiscal and managerial efficiency but firmly believed that it also offered manifold educational benefits.

The Minister justified introduction of the SDP as an ERC measure to improve efficiency in management of education and to reduce the bureaucracy. The result, he held, would be positive, equipping Territory schools well “to respond effectively and flexibly to … changing educational needs”. Labor supported the devolution concept but objected in the ERC context to the manner of implementation of the SDR. The Opposition then changed tack, accusing the NTG of using devolution to shed responsibility for public education and to foist responsibility for efficiency upon

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96 The closure of Tiwi and Rapid Creek Primary Schools in Darwin, Karguru Primary School in Tennant Creek and Traeger Park Primary School in Alice Springs continue to rankle, the more so where they have re-opened as private schools, at Rapid Creek and Traeger Park.

97 “Editorial”, Northern Territory News, Darwin, 20 April 1992, criticised Stone’s management of the ERC measures but acknowledged that the schools closed “should have” been closed.


99 Spring, ‘Rationalisation of Expenditure’ & ‘Executive Summary” of “Rationalisation of Expenditure on Northern Territory Education”, in NTDE, Rationalisation of Expenditure Document 1991. Spring was always at pains to ensure that any restraint in NTDE was absorbed “beyond the school fence”. This time, prompt provision of detailed information to the ERC obviated more severe imposition (confirmed by Higgins, 10 October 1995).

100 Conversations with David Cairns, Deputy Secretary (SPOND), 1995–96.

101 Conversation with Mike Higgins, 10 October 1995.

schools. Notably, it was accepted that devolution was not new and the SDP was not in dispute, either of itself or as an ERC outcome.

This issue received extensive media coverage. A Gray School councillor rejected the rhetoric, dismissing the Minister's claim that “education (was) the focus of (the) changes” as “a blatant lie” and declaring that money was his real concern. An Opposition MLA reportedly accused the NTG of being “undemocratic and educationally irresponsible … forcing school councils … to save (it) money” but asserted that Labor's opposition was not “to devolution but to compulsory devolution”. The Minister's reported counter was that Labor was really opposed to allowing “schools to develop a unique identity, complementing individuality and a positive outlook”. One journalist saw industrial strife looming with devolution of an employment function, an area of concern also to the Opposition. Editorial comment at the time was also scornful. In one instance, it was observed that “the ERC cuts” had had no effect on “the large education overhead” and that COGSO was being unhelpful “with its dog-in-the-manger attitude to almost anything that (smacked) of reform”. Generally, public comment concentrated on the motivation behind the initiative and the manner of its instigation, its economic value was questioned and school councils' employment of staff emerged as contentious. The initiative itself, however, was not in dispute.

A school principal's appreciation of the post-ERC developments linked acceleration of devolution of functions to the so-called economic rationalism of the time. In his view (s)elf management offers the chance to determine processes and priorities at school level …against a background of fewer dollars, requiring school communities to prioritise expenditure preferences.

The urgency to devolve functions was attributed to economic scarcity, to be accepted as inevitable and a challenge to be grasped.

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103 NTPR. Volume XXXIV, 3038,3040–1.
The SDP was an operational manual to assist school communities to perform the functions devolved.\textsuperscript{110} In an endeavour to steer perception of its introduction away from economic purposes, children's education was re-introduced as the focus of devolution of decision-making and management. The APSI document was included, to guide school councils in planning the development of their schools.\textsuperscript{111} The Secretary declared that “the education of NT students (was) now very much in the hands of schools, parents and school communities”.\textsuperscript{112}

Implementation of the ERC measures reflected the theoretical policy process. They had derived from political decisions, were designed in the administrative field and were implemented in the operational field. Their introduction was made through a hierarchy of briefings: the heads of the operational divisions inducted the superintendents who repeated the process with their RCPs and principals in turn led briefing and implementation within their respective school communities. A Corporate Services Resource Team provided expert support throughout.

The Devolution Symposium in November 1992 was convened at the Minister's behest. Its main stated purpose was to review the implementation of devolution with the view to identifying unresolved concerns and future directions. There were three underlying purposes: to move the focus from mandatory devolution to its educational outcomes; to develop appreciation of the process and the support available; and to consider development of school management practices to accommodate the changes.\textsuperscript{113} Effectively it was retroactive damage-control staged as an education-oriented developmental measure.\textsuperscript{114}

The view of NTPA President Henry Gray on devolution at the time acknowledged that “benefits” depended

largely on the degree of cooperation … within schools (and) between them and their communities. … (T)he degree depends on the outlook (in) each school and its community. … (T)here have been differences in … degree and acceptance on the part of Principals, other Executive Staff, classroom teachers, support staff, parent members of (councils) and members of the community.

\textsuperscript{110} NTDE, SDP, plus Rationalisation of Expenditure Document, Standard Devolution Inservice Resource Package (all 1991), and You, Your School & Devolution (1992), detailed the official process and substance of ‘devolution’ as it was conceived at the time.
\textsuperscript{111} NTDE, SDP Appendix 10.2–3; NTDE. Towards the 90s (1968), 2
\textsuperscript{112} NTDE. SDP. iii.
\textsuperscript{114} Cf. …, Jose's assessment of the introduction of the SDP, in Footnote 93.
The principal causes of antipathy were identified:

(d)evolution was perceived to grow from the … (ERC) cuts … (and) has been viewed with some concern … Another reason is that processes were put into place … before an understanding of how they were to work was offered … (without) Councils and Principals being educated toward the change.

The briefing in introducing the SDP and the support provided were not acknowledged. Regardless of facts, however, as Fong is wont to observe, “perception is reality!”.

Gray had a grasp of his colleagues' views. It was recognised that school communities were deriving benefits but that negative perceptions were hindering effectiveness. He acknowledged that the concept was not new and felt that principals should accept that the package of devolved functions was their responsibility. The symposium, he hoped, would provide comprehensive educational perspective and direction.\(^{115}\)

Participation in the symposium covered the players in the devolution initiative. Heads of schools with councils and representatives of their councils formed the majority. The Minister, the Secretary and members of SEG and Management Group were involved, as were the co-ordinators of the group management councils with representation from their areas\(^{116}\). COGSO, Feppi and AEU(NT) executives were invited participants.\(^{117}\) In fact, with the exception of the Commonwealth, the main elements in the overall policy process, as they are represented in the MPCE, were formally involved.

The principal presentations focussed on devolution, educational outcomes and school administration. You, Your School and Devolution had been distributed to stimulate and inform participants' thinking, encouraging a Territory perspective. Workshops followed the key addresses, and outcomes were recorded, assembled and circulated\(^{118}\). A consolidated set of responses to the matters raised\(^{119}\) and a status report on items being


\(^{116}\) Group management councils were established to enable small schools to perform devolved functions so that they could avail themselves of the benefits offered. In the East Arnhem Region several CECs, whose numbers generate administrative infrastructure, have opted for their finances to be managed by the regional Group Management Council. In each case, the CEC has an Aboriginal principal for whom executive responsibility, perceivable as discretionary authority, places her in an untenable situation when pressures born of kinship obligations are brought to bear.

\(^{117}\) There was no formal involvement of professional associations, such as NTISEO, NTCEA and NTPA, but they were represented by members attending ex officio.

\(^{118}\) NTDE, “Outcomes of Syndicate Group Discussions”, Devolution Symposium, Darwin, 1992

addressed\textsuperscript{120} were immediate formal symposium outcomes and provided feedback for the participants and their education communities.

The symposium marked the end of major development of the self-management policy. The SDP's introduction had concluded phasing in devolution of functions to school councils. Subsequent related developments were operational adjustments, not policy changes. In terms of the MPCE, particularly the dynamo, the activity and interaction of involved personnel continued routinely. With implementation complete, system attention would subsequently concentrate, most appropriately, on the feedback provided and the responses able to be made.

\textbf{Stage 6, 1993—…}

Early in 1993, information from the symposium was distributed to personnel responsible to lead, monitor and support local self-management. The issues raised had indicated aspects of concern to school heads and school councils; the responses conveyed the central administration's perspective and expectations with respect to implementing the policy. Matters which had not attracted attention were also telling.

There is some overlap between the categories into which issues were sorted. The most numerous were administrative ones, concentrating on funding, facilities and quasi-legal aspects of school councils' operations. Others included linkage of devolution of functions and educational outcomes, clarification of roles and responsibilities, consolidation, support for school communities in managing devolved functions and equitable distribution of resources. Matters raised in the context of Aboriginal communities generally showed pre-occupation with flexibility and equity. The major single need identified was an overall system plan in which devolution was integrated.

The responses revealed two common threads, both positive. One was affirmation that opportunity and flexibility existed for school communities to exercise initiative and individuality in accord with their local needs, aspirations and resources to a much greater extent than was generally recognised. The other was acceptance and commitment to effect remedy, in system administration, where existent shortcomings or need for new provisions were identified. Schools' and councils' responsibility to exercise initiative was also highlighted. The paramount need for a system strategic plan was accepted, to provide a framework for application in schools and the non-institutional units of the system in individual planning and operation. Commencement of a parent participation policy was reported and there was commitment to

\textsuperscript{120} Cairns, D. J., ``Status of Remaining Self-Management Issues'', NTDE, Darwin, 16 March 1993, distributed to SEG and most Management Group members.
consolidation. The collation and distribution of these responses was important, providing useful feedback for participants and others throughout the system with responsibility in self-management.\textsuperscript{121}

Several notable matters were not raised. There was no reference to societal needs and priorities that might affect or be affected by self-management. This forum would have been appropriate for exploration of opportunities available to school communities to promote social cohesion, to cater for the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of the population and to support economic development Formal sharing of experience in successful collaborative and entrepreneurial management was conspicuously missing. Such gaps may have resulted from pre-occupation with administrative functions to the exclusion of the prime purpose of the educational service. They may also indicate local self-management's potential for parochialism.

The status report on progress with individual issues was similarly positive feedback. Some were “ongoing” but most were to be completed during 1993, with the exception of “notional staffing” which was shelved and has remained so. Follow-up to technical issues, including attention to relief teacher provisions, anomalies in conditions of service and industrial relations aspects of devolved functions and a formula funding model for equitable distribution, was reported. Initiatives included development of a parent participation policy, inservice training packages for operational personnel, consolidation of the group management councils and definition of relevant roles and responsibilities. The last included consultation with COGSO and the NTPA. The launch of Partners in Education, incorporating roles and responsibilities, was an important, publicly tangible outcome which earned Opposition endorsement\textsuperscript{122}.

System consolidation is less tangible. However, it was the principal development in the wake of the ERC It may constitute the most critical stage of development since self-government, potentially having also the most enduring influence. The system in the mid-1990s, until the eruption of the EBA dispute, has been running smoothly with the constant fine-tuning that is possible when there are no major changes or new directions. Corporate development, integrating planning and refinement of operation with comprehensive involvement of personnel, provided the main impetus. Formalisation and justification of planning, with review of implementation, initially at system, divisional and regional levels, was developing the foundation of the

\textsuperscript{121} Fong, “Devolution Symposium Questions and Answers”, 1–31.
\textsuperscript{122} NTPR No. 2.23–25 August 1994, 765.
consolidated system. The devolution symposium may claim some credit for triggering such a vital initiative.\textsuperscript{123}

Since the symposium, debate on devolution has dwindled. Where related matters have arisen in parliament, the views of parents and council members are commonly cited, with reference to Aboriginal communities as well as in the urban centres. MLAs of all persuasions commonly refer to the activities of school councils in their electorates during the adjournment debates.\textsuperscript{124}

Implementation of Partners in Education exemplified the consolidation phase. Partners in Education conferences with participation from across the Territory were held in 1994; the valuable ideas that emerged from sessions on challenges and solutions as envisaged by parents and teachers were collated for circulation.\textsuperscript{125} A localised exercise led to putting theory into practice jointly at home and in classrooms with follow-up workshops. Parental participation in co-ordination reportedly increased and a preliminary action plan was developed.\textsuperscript{126} COGSO's focus on educational outcomes from school-community partnerships was highlighted in recognition of the implications of the ever-increasing range of basic skills with which schools are expected to equip students, A punch line read “teachers cannot meet this challenge without the cooperation of parents”.\textsuperscript{127}

The COGSO President recently put the partnerships in education in perspective. Referring to (then) current television advertisements encouraging parents' participation in their children's school programs, he observed that they represented

\begin{quote}
a progression along the path this organisation has been walking for almost 25 years. … Since the advent of self-managing schools, they've been asked to take part in the administration and direction of schools. … The collaboration between NT COGSO and the (NTDE) to produce (the advertisements)... represents a similar partnership to that which we (advocate) for parents in their schools.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{123} NTDE corporate planning is no new phenomenon. In this instance, however, the whole system is involved, with local, sectional and system priorities and values identified and goals, strategies and plans formulated, ‘bottom-up’, from individual contexts to the overall one, with discipline and cohesion.
\textsuperscript{127} “Good Education Means More Than the Three Rs”, in Parent, Vol 14, No. 4, Darwin, November 1994.
He voiced belief that COGSO was in the unique position of having “good access to the decision-makers”, thereby giving parents opportunity for input and participation that was exceptional in Australia.\(^\text{128}\)

These positive developments do not necessarily reflect general public perception of self-management in practice, nor that the issue of compulsory devolution has been buried. In 1994 the AEU launched Decentralisation and Recentralisation: The Structure of Schooling in Australia, which included a chapter on the NT experience contributed by the AEU(NT) President. He was reported to have highlighted teachers' and parents' joint criticism of the legislation.\(^\text{129}\) A subsequent editorial comment in the Darwin media dismissed his contribution as trivial, primarily on the grounds that he appeared “to have avoided the main problem with devolution - it (was) not working”. It also rued the survival intact of “the monolith we call the Education Department” and declared that “there (was) no reform worth a handful of beans going on in Territory schools”. The writer was evidently not enamoured of either Territory public education or the teachers' union.\(^\text{130}\)

The review of the SDP is relevant. It exemplifies consolidation through fine-tuning an existing provision and demonstrates the evolutionary quality of the policy and its implementation. Before commissioning the review, the SEG renamed it the School Management Handbook. Membership of the Review Group comprises Management Services and Schools Policy personnel, operational finance managers and NTPA and COGSO representation. It is required to consult with the relevant stakeholders and the revised document is to provide clear and comprehensive guidelines on all aspects of school self-management for school communities and administrators. Identification of deficiencies in the original document and inconsistencies between related regulations, infrastructure and procedures and the legislation, with recommended remediation, was required. The concluding instruction, that the Review Group should not concern itself with the policy or the philosophy of local self management, indicates the SEG's intention: the policy is set and the Review Group is to concentrate on the integrity of instruction and support for its implementation.\(^\text{131}\)

The Australasian Association of Senior Educational Administrators (AASEA) conference, Towards the New Millennium - Partners in Educational Futures, may

influence future direction. It was intended to refine direction and add stimulus for self-management in education communities from a system perspective. The priority was set with alignment of “responsibility, authority and accountability at the local level” identified as the key direction, with “the school … the focus of (a system's) energy and support”. Three Vision for the Future panels, respectively, of CEOs, school principals and senior administrators, then speculated on developments from 200QAD. Lead presentations and workshops followed, on Teamwork and Values, Leadership in the New Millennium, Managing Change, Quality Assurance and Curriculum Support to Schools. The conference was staged by a systems-oriented association for its own members but participants included primary and secondary school principals, some directors of TAFE institutions and four of Australia's education CEOs. It was designed to produce educationally useful outcomes.

It is too soon to assess the effect of the conference in NT education. Likely directions, however, arose from the rapporteur's report. Three dominant features stood out in the perspective that was developed: strong political control of education in Australia had grown over the last two decades; the power in education was to be moved from the two big entrenched players, the unions and the bureaucracy, to the school principals as a matter of priority; and it was emphasised that education systems' core business was quality learning. Senior administrators were challenged to be exemplary themselves in promoting improvement in schools, to be constructive and to raise awareness of, confidence in and regard for the extent and quality of teachers' work. The fundamental needs for the rhetoric to match the reality, operations to be values-based and people to be valued featured throughout.

Participants' deliberations were directed towards the place of values in their education systems. The message here was that the people involved and the values they practised mattered in the work environment. The rapporteur observed that “the match of rhetoric and reality develops the trust needed between stakeholders in our education systems”. The importance of senior system personnel's recognition of the implications of local self-management in education for themselves, their roles and responsibilities, was affirmed. This consortium of professional associations, potentially influential in

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132 6–12 July, in Alice Springs, hosted by the NT Institute of Senior Education Officers (NTISEO), whose executive is the AASEA Executive, 1994–6.
134 Michael Fong prepared his presentation from his record and observation of development and implementation of the NT education corporate plan since this was triggered by the devolution symposium in 1992.
development and implementation of education policy in Australia, thereby made a commitment to local self-management.\textsuperscript{135}

This chapter has considered the policy and its development in Territory education, making reference to the theoretically-based MPCE. Several broad patterns have emerged. Chronologically, development started with the Commonwealth, moving through Territory-specific design at Self-Government and implementation with adjustment to accommodate constrained circumstances to conclude in consolidation. Prominent influences have been Minister Robertson, who established the policy direction from Self-Government, Secretary Spring, who controlled its implementation and adjustment over a decade which saw frequent ministerial changes, and, at a lower key, Secretary Fong, who instituted consolidation. Partnerships and comprehensive consultation have been basic to development since Self-Government but the NTG has retained the initiative. Public disputation over austerity measures and the way they were handled in the mid-1980s and the early 1990s marred the process prior to its settling down towards the mid-1990s.

The parents' and teachers' organisations moved from being partners in the enterprise to their assuming scrutinising roles. Relative harmony prevailed during the first two Stages of the process, the second of which was constructive and educationally and socially oriented, to deteriorate in the next three when economic factors were in control but beginning to recover with consolidation and resumption of a human service orientation in the sixth. Both patterns reflect a transition from education-based rhetoric to fiscal reality in the mid-1980s to the early 1990s and the associated trauma experienced by the players. With reference to the MPCE, the process has been active from 1978, starting in the political field, moving in turn to the administrative and operational fields and creating feedback throughout. The activity has been intense in periods of change, tensions registering as volatile influences in the policy environment as well as in the dynamo. The has been little adjustment amongst the stable influences.

The activity in the individual fields can hardly be quantified. It may be compared, however, in terms of prominence. In Stage 2, with determination of policy direction, development and passage of legislation and regulations and the sustained initiative and leadership of Robertson, the political field was clearly calling the tune. It could be argued, however, that whilst the spadework was being performed in the administrative field at the time, Spring was influencing the detail of the policy as well. In the next three Stages, the policy direction was being developed and implemented, financial

difficulties intruded, there was a high turnover of Ministers and Spring provided continuity. The political field retained authority and responsibility but Spring and the administrative field under his direction in practice fashioned specific policies and designed strategies for their implementation. In the current Stage, the administrative field remains the most influential, leading, directing and supporting. Principals and their councils may argue, with reason, that they now exert most influence in their locally as they have accepted devolved functions and responsibility.

People in all fields should now redirect their attention from the administrative aspects of the policy's implementation to its outcomes in schools and their communities. In terms of the MPCE, this could share the influential activity between the fields: there should be vital interaction between classrooms in the operational field and the ERA section of the administrative field with feedback to the political field; the advisory bodies should convey feedback from the polity to the Minister and the Secretary; the MLAs should receive feedback from their constituents to relay to their respective political organisations and to the parliament; and the political field could be expected to respond to its various sources of input accordingly, with redirection of the NTDE. The process to date has been more concerned with conception, development and implementation than with impact. Noting that the process with any policy should start in the political field and that its implementation is then mainly the responsibility of the administrative and operational fields, it is necessary also for the policy's effect to be appraised. This could be instigated by any of the fields; it is more likely to be of constructive value if it is an internal initiative rather than a reaction to an external force.

Now that the policy and its development in the Territory, have been explored, its impact may be assessed. A start will be made in two remote Aboriginal communities. Public education in such locations, however, must first be introduced.
Chapter 5

Education In NT Aboriginal Communities

The thesis has two broad areas of enquiry. Local self-management in education and its development as a NTG policy has been completed. This chapter introduces the policy's implementation in Aboriginal communities. Specifically relevant official documents are listed in Table 5.1.

**TABLE 5.1 DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO NORTHERN TERRITORY PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ABORIGINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DOCUMENT</th>
<th>ORIGIN</th>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>An Investigation into the Curriculum and Teaching Methods used in Aboriginal Schools in the Northern Territory</td>
<td>Watts &amp; Gallacher, for Australian Government (Watts-Gallacher Report).</td>
<td>Review of formal education of Aboriginal children in rural/remote NT, with recommendations for subsequent policy and practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Information Statement No. 6: Education for Aborigines: Strategies for Improving the Academic Performance of Aboriginal Students in Primary and Secondary Education</td>
<td>NTDE.</td>
<td>Elaborated policy (from Direction for the Eighties) on education for Aborigines, formulated and promulgated jointly by the NT AECG, Feppi, and NTDE, providing direction in this area in self-governing NT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy</td>
<td>DEET</td>
<td>Stated comprehensive national policy aimed at realising involvement of Aborigines in education-related decision-making and equity for Aboriginal students, vis-à-vis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The documents listed in Table 4.4 related to NT public education in toto, and therefore applied to Aboriginal students as to all other students. In some instances (e.g. Direction for the Eighties) specific reference was also made to provisions for Aboriginal students. The documents listed in Table 5.1 are additional ones dedicated to education for Aborigines.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>“Talkina is not Enough”: a Review of the Education of Traditionally Oriented Aboriginal People in the Northern Territory</td>
<td>Harris, Hon. Tom, MLA, Minister for Education, the Arts and Cultural Affairs</td>
<td>Recorded the (then) retiring minister's personal assessment of provisions and needs in education for traditionally-oriented Aborigines in NT, with recommendations on directions to be taken, many of which have been heeded and implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>National Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Education Policy in the Northern Territory</td>
<td>NTDE.</td>
<td>Provided strategic and operational plans for implementation of AEP in the Territory in the first triennium, 1990–92.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody National Report</td>
<td>Johnston, Commissioner Elliott, QC.</td>
<td>Full report of RCIADIC, exerted significant influence on government agencies and their Aboriginal-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The documents listed in Table 4.4 related to NT public education in toto, and therefore applied to Aboriginal students as to all other students. In some instances (*e.g.* Direction for the Eighties) specific reference was also made to provisions for Aboriginal students. The documents listed in Table 5.1 are additional ones dedicated to education for Aborigines.
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Northern Territory of Australia Education (School Councils). Regulations (as in force at 7 June 1994)</td>
<td>NTG</td>
<td>Current, detailed role, powers, responsibilities and operations of school councils, supplemented with ‘1991 Ministerial Guidelines to School Councils’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The documents listed in Table 4.4 related to NT public education in toto, and therefore applied to Aboriginal students as to all other students. In some instances (e.g. Direction for the Eighties) specific reference was also made to provisions for Aboriginal students. The documents listed in Table 5.1 are additional ones dedicated to education for Aborigines.
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>National Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Education Policy: the Northern Territory Strategic Plan Report, 1990–92.</td>
<td>NTDE</td>
<td>Reported implementation of AEP in NT during its first triennium.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The documents listed in Table 4.4 related to NT public education *in toto*, and therefore applied to Aboriginal students as to all other students. In some instances (e.g. *Direction for the Eighties*) specific reference was also made to provisions for Aboriginal students. The documents listed in Table 5.1 are additional ones dedicated to education for Aborigines.

Territory public education complies with national guidelines.¹ It thus derives from western, predominantly Anglo-Celtic, traditions. English language literacy is essential and the design of the service, though adaptable, is primarily geared to the needs and expectations of white middle-class and commercial Australia. The policies and provisions are intended to cater for the needs of its total clientele-Local self-management in the delivery of the service therefore applies in Aboriginal communities as in others. This seems bizarre, in view of the social, cultural, economic, philosophic and linguistic differences which exist. The priority that Aboriginal opinion leaders accord ‘whitefella education’ for their youth, however, is exceptional in the consistency of its expression throughout the Territory.² One needs to appreciate this strand of NT education to understand its implications for self-management.

Public education in NT Aboriginal communities will be explained in five segments: contemporary directions in Aboriginal development; Aboriginal community development; the provision of the education service against this background; an exposition of conceptual relationships; and a consideration of what formal education is expected to contribute in an Aboriginal community. The approach, so outlined, is adopted to introduce the socio-cultural setting, to add the logistic and economic elements, to show how the NTG’s policy on education is implemented, to integrate these elements in a conceptual whole in the community context and to indicate the education perspective. The case studies may then proceed.

² The author has been soliciting directly Aborigines’ expectations of formal education throughout the Territory (other than the Katherine Region) and elsewhere from 1977 to 1996.
THEMES AND CONCEPTS IN ABORIGINAL DEVELOPMENT

Aboriginal authority in community management is becoming the norm. Nationally, the mid-1960s saw Aboriginal affairs politicised, with a growth in public concern for their circumstances and events staged to attract attention. There was a move in policy from assimilation towards integration and the 1967 referendum gave the Commonwealth, concurrently with the states and territories, responsibility in the area. Successive Liberal-Country Party federal administrations increasingly advocated Aborigines' right and responsibility regarding their own affairs, their equitable participation in the broader society and the preservation of their culture. This direction was carried further and given greater impetus under the Whitlam Government's policy of “self-determination”.

The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs portrayed Aboriginal appreciation of community development

as part of a process by which communities can make their own decisions about their long-term social, economic, physical and cultural objectives and be in a position to give effect to those objects.

It was seen as closely connected with self-determination and self-management. Peter Jull perceived a trend amongst indigenous peoples to merge the old with the new, effectively accommodating their heritage to the contemporary world on their own terms and to accord with their own priorities. Tim Rowse cited John von Stunner's delineation of the Aboriginal domain as a human context

in which the dominant social life and culture are Aboriginal, where the major language or languages are Aboriginal, where the system of knowledge is Aboriginal; in short, where the resident Aboriginal population constitutes the public.

Rowse referred to Stephen Harris's development of the domains concept in the ordering of use of different languages in multilingual communities and in “apportioning of powers of management (between balanda and yolgnu within such communities”. He also referred to David Trigger's use of the concept when discussing Doomadgee

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3 Powell, 234–39; Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Our Future Our Selves. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1990, 2–4; and Benn, 86–92.
4 Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 13.
6 In the Top End balanda and yolgnu have come to be generic terms to distinguish, respectively, non–indigenous and indigenous.
Aborigines' efforts to separate “Blackfella space, thought and behaviour from the White domain”. These observations serve to indicate an evolutionary move amongst Aborigines, termed “socio-cultural resurgence” by Jull, in the contemporary NT.

Aborigines' management of their communities, as understood by these commentators, is generally consistent with the purpose of the Commonwealth's policy on Aboriginal Affairs since the latter 1970s. It distinguished “self-management and self-sufficiency” from “self-determination”. Aboriginal Australians right, held in common with all others, to plan and develop their cultures and lifestyles, was stressed. It was to be exercised from within their own resources but assistance could be provided where these proved insufficient. They were therefore not independent to the extent that self-determination suggests. These principles underlie self-management and development for Aborigines in the Territory today.

There are many implications for the provision of human services. Human and cultural sensitivity, local participation and decision-making and the appropriateness of services, their delivery and their relevance to community aspirations are particularly important. Providers in the communities, amongst whom the NTDE is normally one of the most prominent in terms of continuity, numerically, physically and as an employer, need to heed the principles of self-management to be effective.

Community dynamics, generated by cultural and logistic factors, influence the delivery of education services for Aborigines in outlying NT localities. Policymakers, service providers and commentators tend to generalise about Aborigines and Aboriginal communities. Caution is necessary here, just as when generalising about any other aspect of Territory society. Raymattja Marika-Munungirritj explained that, in her view, there was no one Aboriginal people in Australia but many Aboriginal peoples, distinguishable as language groups, with often considerable cultural differences between them. David McClay observed, regarding local curriculum development, the need to “start where the pupil is - back in his own family, his own culture, his own unique way of life, different from that clan only fifty miles away”. Marika and McClay appreciated cultural differences amongst Aborigines in East Arnhemland where traditional culture was largely preserved and maintained. The differences they acknowledged are evident in those relatively adjacent communities of largely similar

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7 Rowse, Tim, Remote Possibilities: the Aboriginal Domain and the Administration Imagination, North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University, Darwin, 1992,19–20
8 Jull, Northern Frontiers, 73.
9 NTTF, Newsletter, March 1979, “Self-Management for Aboriginal Communities”.
10 Marika made these points to the author at Yirrkala in 1990. She added that in some cases cultural differences amongst Aboriginal peoples could be greater than some between her own culture and his.
11 NTTF, Newsletter No. 11 November 1976, “An Alternative Policy”.
geography and history. Differences are greater farther afield, as noted by Betty Watts and Jim Gallacher\textsuperscript{12}.

Aborigines' own views about their indigenous culture vary greatly. They are affected by relatively recent experience, which is often evident in the distinct character of each community. Contributing influences include the timing and intensity of European contact, the trappings of western society, government policies and practices, inter-tribal dynamics, commitment to traditional cultural observation, the homeland movement and the logistics of transport and communication. Local geography alone ensures substantial difference from location to location.

Watts and Gallacher acknowledged the fallibility of generalising about life in Aboriginal communities; each one had its own characteristics. They identified several factors and their interaction that impacted upon community dynamics in settlements and missions, including in particular the persistence of traditional lore and practice in tandem with Aborigines' acceptance of western ways. They were looking at change influences, resistance to them and their adoption or accommodation\textsuperscript{13}.

Both the relevant extraneous influences and the social areas potentially affected were identified. The principal change factors included the period and type of contact, community location and its proximity to concentrations of Europeans and the training and employment available. Watts and Gallacher dwelt on aspects of Aborigines' traditional lore, such as social structure, rearing and education of children, beliefs and philosophy, independence and responsibility, male/female relationships, authority and bases for status that were susceptible to impact from alien influences. Aborigines' views on work, time, the future, their settlements and formal education and their use of the English language were also examined. They drew the general conclusion that, although there was substantial variation from group to group and despite an increasing trend to adopt western ways, there was a general desire to retain the traditional culture, especially amongst the older people.

The same factors applied to groups on pastoral properties at the time. Whereas settlements and missions tended to be composite and comparatively stable, regulated either by the Government or a religious organisation, pastoral property camps had in common only that they were small, located on cattle stations and individually tended to be homogenous. Life and livelihood varied, with the degree of their incorporation in

\textsuperscript{12} Watts, B.H., & Gallacher, J.D., \textit{Report on an Investigation into the Curriculum and Teaching Methods Used in Aboriginal Schools in the Northern Territory}. Department of Territories, Australian Government, Darwin, 1964,8.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid}, 12–25
station activity, company policy and station management practice and the Aborigines' own view of their relationship with the stations, in addition to the factors identified by Watts and Gallacher. Their size and homogeneity tended to make for greater cohesion than that experienced in settlements and missions.

Potential for social conflict amongst Aborigines was thus clearly evident thirty years ago and applied throughout the NT. They also had in common the efforts of benevolent western-oriented agents who sought to regulate community life, were committed to assimilation of Aborigines into mainstream Australia and convinced that formal education of school-aged children afforded the prime means to that end. With the increasing western predominance in the NT, social conflict amongst Aborigines was bound to escalate, bearing myriad implications for their schooling.

In the 1990s, circumstances in Aboriginal communities are even more complex. The advent of self-determination as a concept, the change of policy from assimilation to self-management and the introduction of community government have exacerbated both potential and real social conflict in the context of community regulation. Other developments, including land rights, welfare provisions, royalties from mineral resource exploitation, social justice and affirmative action programs, with broadening worldly awareness, political involvement and technological advances reducing isolation and increasing mobility, have contributed to social volatility. Such measures have accomplished little in addressing difficulties, however, and the expectation that formal education will provide the universal panacea is yet to be realised.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

An Aboriginal community is conceived, in this analysis, as a locality whose residents are exclusively or predominantly Aborigines, in a rural environment and distinct, regardless of distance, from any commercial centre. The social and organisational cohesion often taken for granted by authorities is rare other than where, as in the homelands, community roots are embedded in traditional affiliation with and commitment to the location. In the context of monetary support for community management, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs recognised fallacies in some assumptions made about Aboriginal communities. It recognised that inequitable delivery of services and representation of interests arising from such misconceptions, the limited status and inefficient operation of community organisations and intra-community conflict were likely to hinder effective realisation of self-determination and self-management. The homeland movement, on the other hand, was considered likely

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to reinforce the authority of local councils and organisations by making for community cohesion. The irony of Aboriginal communities “being asked to accept non-Aboriginal structures in order to have greater control over their own affairs” was noted.  

A joint National Aboriginal Education Committee/National Aboriginal Council (NAEC/NAC) workshop discussed ATSI development. It resolved that “the social, political and economic structure of the present indigenous Australian society” needed to be upgraded.  

David Lea and Jackie Wolfe, looking at Aboriginal communities in northern Australia, insisted that a community must own its developmental plan and be largely autonomous for it to be implemented successfully. They saw a goal of “self-determination, some sort of sovereignty and autonomy”, embodied in the objectives of the official community development planning (CDP) process to enable “choice and Aboriginal dignity (to) have expression outside mainstream Australian society”. Self-determination appears frequently in the rhetoric on ATSI development, commonly ill-defined, variously conceived and bearing emotive connotations.

The context of development in Aboriginal communities needs clarification. Jull regarded application of sovereignty, self-determination, self-government and self-management (as having) bedevilled indigenous peoples’ progress … (having) been introduced (in Australia) by governments in ways which (promised) more than they (delivered).

He saw Aboriginal sovereignty in the sense of internal national independence as unrealistic but feasible in a limited form for individual communities or community clusters under local government or some such third tier of government. Self-determination for Aborigines, embodying right and ability, at one extreme, to forge for themselves a sovereign state, or, at the other, to elect to preserve the status quo of inclusion in the “existing … constitutional order”, in his view, was beyond their grasp, with no such decision-making capacity available. The prerogative and autonomy implied in the rhetoric cannot exist where accountability for use of public moneys is a fundamental requirement.

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15 Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 16–8,25.
17 Lea David, & wolf, Jackie, Community Development Planning and Aboriginal Community control North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University, Darwin, 1993, 1, 7–30.
Governments support and promote local management in the maintenance and development of Aboriginal communities. Where communities manage their own affairs with functions devolved from and monitored by governments, self-management is the applicable term, denoting local, largely indigenous, agencies working within the guidelines of a higher administrative authority. In the Territory, they are regulated by the Commonwealth and the NTG. Increasingly, NT Aboriginal communities also have the third tier, termed “community government”, a form of local government designed for local decision-making and responsibility in municipal management and development. They are heavily dependent upon the governments, however, for resources and services funded from public coffers. Under these circumstances, and with accountability in particular, they can exercise self-management at most. This situation is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

Planning, implementing and reviewing development in any human context give due consideration to its social and cultural dimensions as well as the economic one. All three are inextricably inter-related and mutually dependent but, as Elspeth Young noted, Australian governments tend to be most concerned with the economic aspects. Young advocated an holistic approach, describing development for Australian Aborigines as a change process improving people's circumstances and making for an improved lifestyle. In her conception, such advance increased a community's economic independence and social stability, strengthened its political influence and enabled it to maintain its cultural identity.

Young detected a hierarchy in the ways Aboriginal land and resource development were approached. Commercial exploitation of resources in the national interest, in her view, was predominant at the national level, giving way to emphasis of social, cultural and environmental considerations at the local community level and compromise occurring in the middle at the state/regional level. She saw a need to integrate these approaches and to take into account both Aborigines' reverence for the social importance of land and consideration of the ecological environment. She concluded that, immediately and in the long term, “land management must form a vital part of the basis for Aboriginal development”.

19 Lea & Wolfe (1993), 6, record a similar conception of “development”. (Few of the writers on development for Aborigines specify their intention in their use of the term and its application in this context).
Some communities derive substantial income from commercial mineral exploitation. Chris Marshall discussed its impact and potential import. He considered payment of royalties to afford tangible long-term development for Aborigines' livelihood and lifestyle but requiring clear-sighted economic planning and responsible exercise of the discretion available under the Land Rights Act for disposal of these moneys.\textsuperscript{21} H. C. Coombs felt such payments to traditional landowners had had, initially at least, a socially disruptive impact in central Australia and outlined subsequent measures taken to address the issue by the Central Land Council. The resultant plan regulated use and conservation of this revenue. Coombs observed that conflict remained, however: between the urgent real and present needs and “those of the hypothetical future”; and between government programs and management, devolution of local service delivery to communities and Aborigines' traditional management of natural resources.\textsuperscript{22} Marshall effectively advocated management of royalties for development amongst Aborigines in the NT similar to the strategies evolving in central Australia as described by Coombs. Coombs expressed concern that governments might reduce funding where communities received income related to mining; Marshall was adamant that this should not happen.

There is an anomaly in the disposal of moneys generated by exploitation of mineral resources. General consensus is evident amongst recipients, that substantial proportions should be devoted to development and that they need formal organisation to manage it. Community government is also concerned with development and financial management is one of its functions but there is no suggestion of any local policy or operational nexus between the association receiving the royalties and the community council. It is logical that there should be none; the council is elected and is supposedly representative of and concerned with the whole community, whereas the association may exclusively comprise the traditional owners of the land where the mineral deposit lies. Membership of the two may overlap but is rarely congruent. This scenario demonstrates the difficulties confronting NT and Commonwealth Governments and Aboriginal communities, organisations and language groups alike in devising and implementing developmental programs. It also highlights the fallacy of conceiving of Aborigines as comprising a monolithic element of the NT population.

As Marcia Langton observed, it is widely assumed, amongst Aborigines as well as others, that entrepreneurial success, enhancing self-sufficient and dignified existence for Aborigines, can overcome their disadvantage in contemporary Australia. She dismissed

\textsuperscript{21} Marshall, Chris. “The Impact of Royalty Payments on Aboriginal Communities in the Northern Territory”, \textit{Surviving Columbus}, 123–8
this view as essentially European thinking and advocated instead that Aborigines think strategically and plan to win control of the natural resources. Tim Rowse perceived social and cultural complications in endeavours to enable Aboriginal communities to become economically independent of the Governments, noting that traditional aspects of their society could be jeopardised. He cited Jon Altaian's identification of a political problem confronting Aboriginal leaders in promotion of economic activity: they were obliged to account to their relatives and clan members as well as to the source of funding and might be inclined to accord immediate local commitment higher priority than official accountability.

Diversification of influence in traditional Aboriginal society, dubbed “dispersed governance” by Wolfe, was highlighted as a hindrance for community government and local economic development initiatives which relied on central or cohesive authority in a community. Rowse also echoed others' recognition of difference amongst Aboriginal peoples, stressing that autonomy referred to relationships amongst their groups as well as with non-Aboriginal Australia. Persistence of the fragmentary nature of Aboriginal society in Australia understood to have obtained prior to European settlement was evident.

The RCIADIC provided direction for development in Aboriginal communities. Aborigines' high rate of representation in custody was attributed to their disadvantage in Australian society. Commissioner Elliott Johnston QC considered “empowerment of Aboriginal society - and associated with it the right to self-determination” critical to remedying their lot, enabling them to take charge of their affairs. In his opinion their commitment and ability to effect redress with governments' assistance, popularly endorsed and provided so as to obviate welfare dependency, were prerequisites for such a transformation. He conceived ultimate self-determination to be concerned with rights to decision-making on personal and community matters and to the retention and development of culture.

Despite Johnston's focus on transformation of “Aboriginal society”, he did not generalise other than on overarching issues. His reference to individual lives,

24 Rowse, Remote Possibilities. 81–3.
25 Ibid., 88–90. Rowse noted that “autonomy” amongst Aboriginal peoples prevents “means of political representation” from being either “culturally (or) politically neutral”, describing this as an “axiom of political analysis”.
26 Powell, Far Country. 16–9.
communities, local organisations and individual exemplars suggests recognition of the fragmented nature of Aboriginal Australia. The real and potential contributions of local Aboriginal organisations were acknowledged, indicating an underlying direction to promote strategies in individual communities in accordance with local needs and aspirations rather than with blanket programs. He was effectively advocating remediation in communities individually, with the communities themselves responsible for and managing their own development. He was therefore encouraging local self-management, not self-determination.

The RCIADIC Report has authoritative status for governments' policies on ATSI affairs. It received joint official endorsement from all legislatures other than the Tasmanian Government. Australia was thereby committed to devise and implement positively discriminatory programs to address the predicament of ATSI people “in relation to the criminal justice system” and the underlying causes of this condition. Effectively, the RCIADIC recommendations gave direction to policy, identified specific areas for priority attention and indicated the nature of that attention. They were therefore decisive in determining priorities for Aboriginal social justice initiatives and consequently for public funding at national and state/territory levels. It follows that they should have a major impact on development in NT Aboriginal communities, with Commonwealth and Territory Governments, separately and jointly, responsible to develop and support programs to realise the RCIADIC’s priority goals. There are many implications for public education in Aboriginal communities.

EDUCATION SERVICES IN NT ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The NT Government provides for formal education in Aboriginal communities on the same bases as elsewhere. Hence, where numbers of school-aged students justify an education program, provision is made for pre-school and primary school children and for those of secondary age as practicable. Adult education may also be provided, depending upon demand and feasibility. Facility for local governance in relation to education is also the same as for other communities; only the context differs.

The NTDE provides education services in these communities, with the exception of those served by Catholic missions. The Standing Committee on Aboriginal Education is integral to the network of committees and sub-committees supporting and advising

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28 Ibid., Reducing the Number of Aboriginal People in Custody—the Fundamental Question—Empowerment and Self-Determination”, 15–23.
30 Mission schools, administered by the Catholic Education Office, are funded by the NT Government and work closely with the NTDE.
the NTBOS and expediting the policy it generates. The NTBOS is bound by its prime commitment to ensure a consistent and cohesive education provision through pre-school and the compulsory years of schooling, blending common essential learning and response to special needs and local priorities. It includes student assessment to monitor standards of attainment and to gather and analyse pertinent data, findings from which are given to schools and school councils for use in reviewing their programs, operation and planning. As elsewhere, the principal is responsible locally and reports to the superintendent of the region.

Support services are standard across the system. The exigencies of delivery in remote Aboriginal communities often require exercise of discretion to a greater extent than in the urban setting. In a region, the superintendent is responsible for the monitoring of these services for efficiency and effectiveness, modifying, remedying, negotiating and procuring additional resources as required. This is done in liaison with school/CEC heads and councils and support unit heads.

Post-school education and training service in Aboriginal communities is less standardised. Whereas provision for school-age children is mandatory, adult education is provided on proven need and demand and tailored to specified community requirements as resources permit. The Act authorises the Minister to cater for adult Territorians' education (including training). Dual purposes were evident to Peter Loveday and Young when they traced the evolution of Aboriginal adult education. They were to support and promote community development and to develop literacy, numeracy and life, vocational and recreational skills for adults individually.

From 1988, schools in larger communities were upgraded to community education centres (CECs) incorporating programs for secondary-aged students and adults. The operational divisions were responsible for programs and resources for school-aged students in CECs; TAFE Division, through the Open College of TAFE (NTOC), catered for adult education, with an adult educator operationally responsible to the principal in the CEC.

The advent of the Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority (NTETA) changed the provision for adult education in Aboriginal communities. The Minister for Education became the Minister for Education and Training. Non-tertiary post-school

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33 Education Act. PART II, 6 (1) (a) & (b), (2), (3) (iii), (4) (j) & (k), and (5), esp. (f); PART III, Division 2, esp. 18D(e).
policy and operational responsibility transferred to the NTETA in 1994, and the NTOC and most elements of the TAFE Division of the NTDE were phased out. The result in the field is that responsibility for adult education and training is separated from school-age education (other than as may be arranged locally). The role of the adult educator has disappeared and provision is made as required and feasible under arrangements negotiated between the community and the NTETA. The onus now rests with the community to identify adult education and training needs and to initiate negotiation with the NTETA for their fulfilment. Some rue this development but it is a move towards self-management wherein communities identify their own priorities and needs and have authority over and responsibility for the services negotiated.

Public education for Aborigines is a complex and controversial field. This was exacerbated by the 1972 amalgamation of the Territory's education services. The demand for equity for Aborigines in education has been constant since that step was taken. Curriculum materials, entitlement staffing and resources generally were allocated at minimum on the same basis as for urban schools and teacher qualification requirements were the same for both. Such common provisions were seen to give Aboriginal students in outlying localities opportunity in education on a par with their urban counterparts.

The ministerial statement, “Education for Aborigines”, of March 1984, derived from the NTG's policy and consultation with Feppi. It acknowledged that, despite the efforts of the education system, there remained the problem of many young Aborigines reaching Year 10 without having achieved functional literacy and numeracy. Changes to improve educational outcomes for Aborigines were proposed, emphasising the importance of positive community contribution:

if standards are to be raised at the primary level, greater community support is necessary; (i)f programs in Aboriginal communities are to succeed at the secondary level, strong community support is absolutely essential.

The principle of parental and community responsibility for children's education was considered to apply in Aboriginal communities just as in the urban context.36

“The Aboriginal Education in Homeland Centres” followed, late in 1985. The Minister acknowledged that, whilst the Government supported the movement, the problems it posed for children's schooling were “enormous”. In his view, the mooted nationalisation

36 NTPR. Volume XVIII. 276–8.
of education for Aborigines as inappropriate because of the differences between groups and locations and unworkable if Aborigines were to decide on their own future for themselves. Feppi was recognised for its efforts to make ATSI parents' views known to the authorities in the NT and to local and national advisory groups. The mooted national policy on education for Aborigines was branded “separatist”.37

Homeland education involves community initiative, authority and responsibility. The homelands movement of the last twenty years or so has posed challenges for the education system. Normally, when a homeland centre is established, the community wants formal schooling provided. It initiates proceedings with a request, triggering negotiation preparatory to establishing a homeland learning centre (HLC). Local expectation may be that a small school will result but logistics and community commitment are such that a more flexible, less permanent and less expensive provision is more appropriate in the initial stages. The standard provision comprises a local assistant teacher identified by the community, a facility made available by the community and a visiting teacher to provide professional supervision and guidance and generally to perform a resource function. If and when viability and local commitment are established, the system provides basic resources.

The philosophy and expectations underlying provisions in Aboriginal schools and CECs are similar to those applying elsewhere. Where special programs are offered or exceptional circumstances prevail extra-ordinary arrangements may be made. The main purposes of the AEP are to realise involvement of Aborigines in education-related decision-making and equity for Aboriginal students with their non-Aboriginal counterparts in access to, participation in and outcomes from formal education programs. They are fundamental to the service and its delivery. Expectations for curriculum outcomes are the same as those in the mainstream, although means of their realisation may differ, both in curriculum and the support materials used.38 Similarly, resources are provided using the common formulae but additional provision is made for bilingual programs39 and homeland education services. Education complexes in Aboriginal communities vary physically; individual facilities are often recognisable for the era of their installation. Recently, design, location and construction of facilities have been determined in consultation with school/CEC councils.40 Essentially, provisions for

38 E.g. The CEC Certificate Courses, introduced in 1990, enable secondary-aged students with limited academic achievement to move into secondary studies.
39 NTDE, Handbook for Aboriginal Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory. 1986, elaborated policy, provision, practice and support.
40 E.g. The Maningrida CEC complex reflects the stages of development of education facilities to the point where the CEC Council has responsibility with concept, design and construction of new facilities.
education service delivery in Aboriginal communities are similar to those made in other locations. They may be made differently, however, to accord with local expectations and conditions.

School group management councils were conceived for small schools that lacked the support infrastructure to manage devolved functions. The Act was amended to enable their education communities to have the involvement in policy development, priority-setting, decision-making and planning in relation to their schools' programs that was afforded larger ones and to have their financial management processed by an officer located in the respective regional or divisional office. This gave each school community the education-related priority-setting and decision-making aspects of self-management, with supply processed by a finance officer dedicated to that function. A valuable spin-off benefit is that people in isolated locations gain a contact in the urban centre and a strong advocate there.

The arrangement has also proven useful for larger schools and CECs. In 1995, in East Arnhem (EA), the supply aspects of the non-urban schools' and CECs' operations were managed as outlined above and processed in Nhulunbuy. Such a measure was taken to resolve the predicament of local Aboriginal principals in CECs, wherein relatives and others in the community to whom they were traditionally obliged sought through them access to finance for which they were responsible. The outcome is that policy, priority-setting, decision-making and planning are the prerogative of the individual education community but the disposal of finance is processed in the regional office. It is an adaptation of self-management to make the interface between traditional cultural practice and contemporary formal education service delivery functional. It also highlights the discretion available in local and regional management.

The AEP is important to Aborigines' formal education. It is a positively discriminatory national policy conceived to promote equity and participation for Aborigines. The policy is implemented, predominantly with federal funding, through partnerships between the Commonwealth, individual state and territory governments and the Aboriginal clientele through the systems' triennially-based plans to address agreed priority issues. The plans are composed of initiatives which are negotiated and conducted in urban and rural education communities in accordance with guidelines established by the AEP and in strategic and operational planning.

42 Cairns outlined the EAR development of the school group management council concept in conversation, April, 1995.
Most of the AEP projects incorporated in the NTDE's overall policy and service provision arrangements in the first two triennia related directly to schools and CECs in Aboriginal communities. Some projects were common across urban, rural and remote settings; others were conceived specifically for outlying communities. Increases in access to and service in pre-school, primary, secondary-aged and adult education in remote localities were the main priorities in the first triennium. There was some overlap and mutual reinforcement between projects: some involved delivery with contemporary information technology; liaison between the school/CEC, the home and the system featured commonly; there were assessment of students' achievement and support for Aboriginal teacher trainees and for Aborigines' career advancement in the system; appropriate professional support and development was provided for teachers of Aboriginal children; particular attention was paid to ear health in schools; and appropriate curriculum and materials were developed. The main initial emphases were maintained in the second triennium, extending, combining and capitalising upon previous achievement. Priorities and emphases were adjusted and practices modified, both with the benefit of experience and in the light of findings by the RCIADIC. Development of curriculum and materials advanced to include implementation and new foci included support for Aboriginal languages, increased paraprofessional involvement and participation in decision-making. The AEP outcomes were monitored and reporting was geared to informing the clientele as well as satisfying accountability for commitment of public finance. Reports on implementation and achievement complemented the extensive, increasingly co-operative and constructive consultative process through which the plans were developed and the projects conceived.

Educational provision in Aboriginal communities in rural, remote and often very isolated locations in the NT is complex, sensitive, challenging and politically volatile. It involves teaching with potential and expectation to realise outcomes on a par with those achievable in a relatively conventional urban setting but doing so with children whose academic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds distinguish them from a substantial majority of their mainstream counterparts. In their endeavours, teachers work with curriculum and materials increasingly adapted to suit the educational needs and learning processes of a particular clientele in a social, cultural and physical environment that is alien to the conceptual base of the overall service. Commitment to the principle of equity of educational opportunity is honoured through applying

44 AEP News, Issue No. 1.
45 Aboriginal Education News, Issue No.2. Links between AEP initiatives and RCIADIC recommendations were identified where they existed.
resourcing formulae that are at least the same as those used in the urban setting. In some instances, in practice, they are more generous.\textsuperscript{47} Children's erratic attendance hinders optimum effectiveness of educational programs and will be borne out in the case studies; distraction also results from local events, incidents and cultural observances. Provision for community involvement is similar to that in the urban setting but effective realisation of local governance and concomitant acceptance of responsibility tend to be less ready. There is inconsistency here, in view of Aboriginal activists' often strident criticism of the existing education services alongside their conviction that formal education holds the key to their self-realisation. Reluctance to change the current provision persists, just as elsewhere in society.

Public expectation of formal education services in the Aboriginal community context is distinct from that in the mainstream. School programs are generally expected to produce students who are literate and numerate, equipped to proceed to and participate in post-school education and training and adult life and work, aware of the world around them. Aboriginal communities, implicitly at least, expect them also to remedy the deficiencies they perceive in society. They therefore expect conventional outcomes from the formal education service and that it will perform both social and community development functions as well. The rationale for the AEP and the findings and recommendations of the RCIADIC reinforce such expectation and it is supported also by the partnership between the NT education system, the Commonwealth and the Aboriginal clientele. Here, the NT makes the recurrent essential service and resource provision and, jointly with the Commonwealth, negotiates with Aboriginal bodies the substance of supplementary service and provides and resources that service. Consequently, regardless of whether the expectation is reasonable, desirable or realistic, both levels of government are at least committed to strive for its fulfilment.

The perspective was developed by the National Reference Group (NRG) in reviewing the AEP's effectiveness. Its report presented research findings to stimulate debate on the policy’s direction and priorities and invited submissions in response. In the NRG’s perception,

the debate about education … (was) also a debate about much broader issues … (including Aborigines') self-determination, self-management, autonomy and control over their own affairs and about the nature of the relationship between indigenous people and government.

\textsuperscript{47}E.g. Staffing provision is weighted in favour of small secondary-aged components in CECs.
It noted that, in overseas experience, education was characteristically “one of the first areas in which indigenous people … tested the limits of their autonomy”.

Dramatic change was acknowledged by the NRG in the delivery of education in schools and in post-compulsory education in Australia from 1988 to 1994. It recorded some progress, from the ATSI point of view, but registered also persistence in discrepancies in outcomes in comparison with those for the mainstream, some narrowing, others increasing. The data gathered was seen to indicate “the extent of what (was) still not known about education for (ATSI) people” and inferred a consequent need to continue to collect and collate information. A particular gap in the debate on education for ATSI people was detected in the

analysis of the tension between depending on government funding (and all the public accountability that entails) and developing community controlled education which embraces a consistent educational philosophy with its own terms of reference.

Given the inevitability of dependence and accountability in use of public moneys, understanding and coping with such tension is an important aspect of developing self-management in education. Self-sufficiency, whereby dependence upon government is obviated and accountability is localised, is a pertinent ultimate goal in education.48

The NRG suggested means to improve education for ATSI people further through their participation in related decision-making. Roles, independence and the representative capacities of AECGs were considered in relation to governments and systems. It also dwelt on how to improve the management of the Aboriginal Education Strategic Initiatives Program (AESIP) and National Priority (Reserve) Fund moneys. With reference to local policy-making and service delivery, the effectiveness of Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committees in promoting parents' participation in school activities was acknowledged# Priorities identified were influence on or control over staff education, selection of personnel and the development and application of “appropriate curricula and pedagogy”. These were similar to the direction of the joint statement by Feppi and the NTDE over ten years earlier.49

During the research, a model for demand and supply for education in NT Aboriginal communities has taken shape. Two levels of government jointly provide the service,

49 NTDE, Information Statement No. 6, 6–7 and throughout.
designed and synchronised for delivery in partnership with self-managing education communities and geared to provide opportunity and to achieve outcomes that are equitable with those for other Australians. The clientele needs the service, both for students individually and for each community as a whole. There is congruence between the needs and the provision and between the commitment of the provider and the aspiration of the clientele.

Figure 5.1 represents a partnership forming where the Aboriginal education community, in practice its school or CEC council, and the agencies of the Commonwealth and the NTG meet and intersect. Both Governments are driven by their respective legislation and policies; the Territory provides the standard service and recurrent resources and has the infrastructure to provide professional and administrative support; and the Commonwealth offers special programs from which supplementary resources may be sought to support extra-ordinary initiatives devised to address particular aspects of educational disadvantage. The third partner, the local community, is in some degree self-managing, has some demands, or needs, stemming from its aspirations and expectations and can also contribute from its own resources. The partnerships thus formed vary considerably from community to community. They have in common, however, their commitment to work for Aborigines' participation with responsibility in related decision-making and for opportunity and benefit for Aboriginal students that is equitable with those for other Australians.
FIGURE 5.1. PARTNERSHIPS IN DELIVERY OF EDUCATION IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Commonwealth, as shown above and evident with a glance at Table 5.1, is a serious player in education for Aborigines. With reference to Figure 4.1, it is an additional element in each field. It has political involvement by virtue of its broad responsibility for Aboriginal affairs at the national level; its agency under Labor from 1987 to 1996, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET), was an administrative instrument which engaged with the NTDE in the management of its special purpose programs in the Territory and the individual communities where they are implemented; and operationally, DEET field officers worked with school/CEC councils and NTDE staff in the individual communities. The Commonwealth has thus been involved throughout the policy process and has brought into play an additional set of relationships with the NTG, the NTDE and the polity. The potential for complication in practice is considerable.

The Commonwealth's participation can be seen with reference to the MPCE (Figure 4.2). As a stable influence in the policy environment, it contributes national policy, personnel to support its programs and the resources that they provide. There, as outlined above, they combine with the NT elements to generate outputs. The outcomes

50 This situation also occurs in the mainstream but there the Commonwealth is less prominent
feedback, joining with other relatively volatile influences in the policy environment. The recent change in government in Canberra is an example of the latter: if that leads to modification of policy and priorities with respect to education for Aborigines, the resources available and the conditions guiding their use could change as a result. The impact of such an adjustment would be felt immediately in the policy dynamo and would eventually be evident in the policy outcomes. In such circumstances, the extent of change is restrained by the stable influences of the policy environment, the national constitution in particular. The existing national policy can also exert some restraint but, as already indicated, it is itself subject to change.

When considering public education in the Territory, one normally thinks of the NT polity and the local political, administrative and operational aspects of the service and its delivery. In the Aboriginal community context, the Commonwealth is clearly involved as well. This effectively adds three potential complications: national factors related to development and education for Aborigines are brought to bear in NT communities; NT Aborigines are reminded of their membership of the national ATSI population and of the Commonwealth's responsibility at this level; and, where tensions occur, they are provided with an additional set of 'umpires'. Similar circumstances apply to non-indigenous Territorians but the Commonwealth is more prominent in Aboriginal communities than in the mainstream. For Aborigines' education, beneficial arrangements can, and have, resulted. The situation is nonetheless fraught with the potential for confusion and manipulation.

Formal education providers are concerned with dedicated service and its delivery. The expectation that education will function also as an agent in community development in Aboriginal communities is exceptional. Relationships between formal education, the self-managing education community and community development must therefore be examined. This is particularly important in view of the Governments' joint acceptance, tacit or otherwise, of a community development component in the education function.

**LOCALLY MANAGED EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Expectations that formal education will perform a developmental role in Aboriginal communities have been recorded in relevant documents for more than thirty years (see Table 5.1). Agreed Aims of Aboriginal Education saw school learning and community living as having mutual relevance. The Aboriginal community was to be involved in planning and implementing the education program and social functions of the service were to close the generation gap and to equip the people to operate effectively. These aims had been derived from those developed by Watts and Gallacher and
are fundamental to current policy. They fit readily with the emphases and goals of the national AEP and its implementation in the Territory and also with the priorities identified by the NRG. The RCIADIC documentation explicitly advocated the community focus of, involvement in and ownership of education.

In Eedle's view in the 1970s there was a clear link between schooling and dynamics in society. Referring specifically to the impact of the modern world on Aborigines, he felt they were best advised to retain their identity and to accommodate with European Australia. He viewed education as important to comprehensive development, favouring “an overall development plan for Aboriginal people, with an education development plan” integral to it, applicable in their communities. In this context, he exhorted educators to be realistic about what education could accomplish.

Eedle advocated integration of formal education in the social structure of the community so as to reinforce traditional authority and cultural mores and to promote community development. In particular, he focussed on adult education, encouraging development of

- animateurs … who can influence and support the traditional leaders and
- those with traditional status, and work largely through them … to help
- the people to move in the direction that they would wish to go,

and to reduce generation gap problems. He also urged that education be integrated with development, with “joint planning and operation … which (did) not expire strangled by red tape and bogged in bureaucracy”. Formal education was clearly a major element of community development in his world view, at the least for societies in transition.

The human and logistic factors which impeded quick change in education in the NT were acknowledged in Eedle's appraisal. He saw reconciliation of Aborigines, needs with those of mainstream Australia as a necessity and he questioned the suitability of contemporary schools, education services and priorities in education to contribute. Canvassing alternatives, he saw local initiative and flexible curriculum implementation as likely to be useful. He regarded Aboriginal teachers in Aboriginal communities as holding the key. There remained the reality that “education (was) essentially a political

\[51\] NTDE, Information Statement No. 6, 6–7.
\[52\] DEET, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy: Summary, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1989.
\[56\] Ibid…
matter and a function of government, needing co-ordination, requiring aims, objectives and a plan”.  

The NT Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), Feppi, was established at Self-Government. As in the states and the ACT, its function is to advise the Minister and the education agency on the provision of education for ATS1 people. Policy on education for Aborigines was stated in Direction for the Eighties and elaborated in an Information Statement (IS) compiled jointly by Feppi and the NTDE, outlining the NTG’s strategies to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. Further refinement occurred through consultation and the “Feppi 12-Point Plan” for implementation resulted.

The subsequent community education centre (CEC) proposal addressed Aims 2 and 3 of Feppi’s plan. They were concerned with education, training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal youth after Year 7 in the primary school. As conceived, CECs effectively embodied the notion of education in community development that Eedle had advocated. The concept integrated education and training services such that they could address a community’s needs and prepare Aboriginal adults and young people for the realisation of their individual potential and the fulfilment of cultural, personal and employment aspirations … (and for) self-sufficiency and self-management.

Community education was to be a vital element of community development, responding to local priorities and expectations. A CEC would co-ordinate the local education, training and other support agencies. It was envisaged as central to such services, integrating education and training with community development.

An effort was made, in 1990–94, to re-orientate thinking from CECs as institutions to community education as a service. It was to be geared to respond to its community’s needs, expectations and aspirations, to stimulate prioritising and planning and to use

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57 Ibid... 140. See also 131–140, 145–152.
58 Feppi, “Feppi: Northern Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Group”. NTDE, Darwin, c, 1994 Feppi is a Ngamarriyanga term meaning “rock” or “foundation” It was previously understood to be a Murrin-patha term.
59 NTDE, Information Statement No. 6. 1.
60 Technical and Further Education Division, Further Education Beyond Year 7 in Aboriginal Communities a Planning Proposal, the Cameron–Thiele Report) NTDE, 1986. “Appendix 1”
61 Cameron and Thiele interviewed Eedle in this exercise but were not aware of his “Aboriginal Education and Development” papers - the coincidence of the proposal with the views he had expressed in them was largely fortuitous.
62 Cameron & Thiele. Further Education. “Executive Summar”.
63 Cameron & Coutts, “Community Education Centres”
local resources. The service was to draw together “traditional school-teaching, … vocational training, tertiary study and other preparation for livelihood” and to cater for social, cultural and economic development as well as personal fulfilment. Community education was expected to evolve as integral and fundamental to local development.\textsuperscript{64}

Three intended developments were considered important in this process, both as ingredients and as outcomes: the community would accept responsibility for its own education and training services; it would participate in related planning, development of policy and promotion of public awareness; and it would supply the leaders, managers, decision-makers and practitioners as well as the support personnel. It was noted that the concept contained “nothing new”.\textsuperscript{65}

The basic rationale was that community education could assist people to participate actively in the wider Australian society, promote local development and impart learning for its own intrinsic value. Its function in community development was regarded as an important aspect in allocation of resources to education and training services for Aborigines in the NT. The principles of community education were shown to be aligned with those underlying the AEP. In the spirit of that policy, it was stressed that community education required local planning that led to “negotiated agreement … between the community and the NT Government”. Principals were encouraged to think of their CECs in relation to industry and enterprise, local government and municipal services, tourism, cottage industries and public relations as well as to their clientele.\textsuperscript{66} There was obviously a high degree of congruence between the concepts of community self-management, local management in education, community education and the purposes of the AEP. Local authority with responsibility was fundamental.

In the overview of the RCIADIC recommendations, the AEP was classed “a good policy”. The control given to Aboriginal communities in negotiating initiatives was endorsed as realising its first main purpose, Aboriginal involvement in education-related decision-making.\textsuperscript{67} It pertains to education services in individual communities as it does at system level. There is also consistency with the NT's policy of local self-management of education.

Dr. H.C (Nugget) Coombs disapproved of the AEP. He considered it “essentially assimilationist” and potentially destructive of Aboriginal culture and society. He decried the Western orientation of the policy, “based upon the needs, the standards and

\textsuperscript{64} Cameron, “Community Education”, NTDE, Darwin, 1990.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid...
\textsuperscript{67} Johnston, RCIADIC National Report: Overview and Recommendations. 27.
the values of contemporary, acquisitive, materialist corporate white society”. 68 His reservations notwithstanding, the reality is that the AEP is an officially endorsed policy, now approaching its third triennium.

The role of PEO (CECs) was introduced in 1992. The incumbent officer coordinates and monitors CECs, leading and expediting policy implementation and development of curriculum and support materials for CEC Certificate Courses and managing the pertinent AEP initiative. 69 His work with principals, staff, councils and community members comprises professional leadership, development and support, consultation, negotiation and public relations. His tasks include curriculum implementation with emphasis on expectations and standards of achievement, accountability, management and community participation with responsibility.

A draft CEC handbook, developed with practitioners and communities, supports implementation of policy on CECs. It documents approved, recommended and exemplary practices and procedures. It outlines their potential to develop the educational background that most communities need for effective self-management, including improved health and extended lifestyle options. CECs are to include negotiation of employment and placement in their management of education and training provisions. Beyond formal education and training co-ordination and delivery, they are expected to stimulate local entrepreneurial activity and to contribute to community planning. It has been noted that CECs are prominent as local employers: the fact that Aboriginal staff employed in CECs outnumbered non-Aboriginal staff in 1994 was an indicator of successful policy implementation. The handbook specifies that designing development of education is a matter of communication and parent participation and that an APSI is consequently community property since everybody has responsibility in this area. Perspective-setting segments emphasise flexibility and local adaptation, with community participation, responsibility and ownership, in policy development and implementation. 70

The principles embodied in the CEC concept are prominent in policy and practice in bilingual education in Aboriginal communities. Bilingual programs operate mostly

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69 In this role, John Rattigan, erstwhile principal of Maningrida CEC, as project officer, reported to the author who was the CEC project supervisor, 1992–94.
70 Rattigan, John, A Handbook for Community Education Centres (draft), NTDE, Darwin, 1994. Rattigan advised, August 1995, that this document was still in draft form, pending a decision on perseverance with CECs in the wake of the demise of the adult education element.
in communities professing commitment to maintenance of the traditional culture.\textsuperscript{71} “Bilingual/biculturar education was formally introduced in Territory Aboriginal community schools in 1973, justified on social development as well as educational grounds.\textsuperscript{72} Its beginnings were considered inauspicious but, by the end of the decade, it was judged to be potentially beneficial in education for Aborigines.\textsuperscript{73} A perceived measure of the success of this innovation was that it had been “instrumental in creating job opportunities for many Aboriginal people in isolated communities”.\textsuperscript{74}

Facts and perceptions such as those by which bilingual education is assessed are pertinent to evaluating self-managing CECs. The case studies will take particular note of the contribution individual CECs make in their respective communities, in the sense of their providing community-oriented education services which promote, support and consolidate community development. The expectations of the formal education service in NT Aboriginal communities may now be canvassed, to finalise the foundation for the case studies.

**WHAT IS EXPECTED OF EDUCATION IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES?**

Popular perception holds that, despite the policies and practices and services and recurrent and extra-ordinary resources referred to in this and the preceding chapters, formal education is failing ATSI people. In the national context, the NRG noted that although some improvement was evident,

\begin{quote}
(i)n all sectors there are still gaps in educational outcomes between (ATSI) people and other Australians … a matter for continuing concern for all Australians.\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

The value of the affirmative action initiatives intended to close the gaps is occasionally questioned. Difficulty occurs in the efficient delivery of programs for Aboriginal people with particular needs, whether they be of social, cultural, linguistic, physical, intellectual, mental, emotional or health-related origins. This stems in part from the logistics of the dichotomy of funding for education programs in the NT generally, where both Territory and Commonwealth sources are involved. Whereas recurrent

\textsuperscript{71} The author, leading evaluation of three bilingual programs in 1992, found that in each case the principal justification for retention of the program, according to Aboriginal opinion-leaders, was to support cultural maintenance, as distinct from individual children's educational development.

\textsuperscript{72} Handbook for Aboriginal Bilingual Education in the Northern Territory. NTDE Darwin, 1989,2–3,7–9.

\textsuperscript{73} Urvett, Heatley & Alcorta, 92.

\textsuperscript{74} NTDE, Information Statement No. 6, 21–3.

\textsuperscript{75} NRG, A Discussion Paper, 5.
funding by the NT is programmed on the fiscal year, Canberra's special purpose programs work on the calendar year and are not assured from year to year. Cohesion in consultation, planning and sustained service, so important for optimum effect and credibility, are difficult to achieve with such uncertainty and restriction.

That Aborigines do not succeed in formal education on a par with their non-Aboriginal counterparts should not be surprising. The services are western-oriented, the curriculum develops and depends on English literacy for overall achievement and the delivery of the service is founded in the concept of the conventional Australian urban school and assumes an associated school culture. The majority of Aboriginal students are ESL learners and experience hearing impairment that further hinders their schooling. They also have difficulty in reconciling the expectations of western school cultures with the demands inherent in their own backgrounds and they reside in locations and under circumstances quite different from mainstream Australia. Considerable time, money, manpower and sincere talented effort have been devoted to adapting and delivering education services for Aborigines but more often than not they are perceived to have had limited tangible effect. Certainly, the return has not been commensurate with the resources invested if it is measured in terms of equity in academic outcomes with those for other Australians.

Watts reviewed progress in Aborigines' education, from 1968 to 1978, finding conviction amongst ATSI people that formal education was critically important for their future. Education, in her view, was charged by society to enable everyone to experience personal fulfilment and cultural enrichment. She added that the society and its political institutions were responsible to foster the physical, economic and emotional well-being of the populace. It followed that Australian society was responsible to support Aborigines' social welfare. By the same token, Aboriginal parents had responsibility, with schools, for their children's education but special provisions by governments were necessary for its optimum effectiveness. She saw these principles as basic Aborigines' education for the rest of the twentieth century.76

The NAEC/NAC workshop rated education as crucial to ATSI development. This applied to social, political and economic advance and to retention and maintenance of culture. Education was considered a socialisation process in communities individually, to be influenced by the whole community. Participants were unanimous in their belief that formal education was paramount for the wellbeing of succeeding generations of

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Aborigines. They were similarly unequivocal about their prerogative and responsibility regarding its substance and management.\footnote{NAEC/NAC Workshop, 22, 15.}

The South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee (SAAECC) adopted and adapted the principles considered during the NAEC/NAC workshop. They were evident throughout its policy statement. The rationale, in particular, justified the policy on members’ “intense personal interest in the future of (their) society”. SAAECC looked to appropriate formal education to develop and promote positive attitudes and pride in Aborigines’ cultural heritage and identity, their ability to participate successfully in the mainstream and their capacity to live “with dignity as the original inhabitants” of SA and Australia. Implicitly, formal education was thus declared able and responsible to preserve Aboriginal culture and to equip Aborigines for equitable participation in contemporary Australia.\footnote{South Australian Aboriginal Education Consultative Committee, Rationale, Aims and objectives for Aboriginal education in South Australia Adelaide, 1983. 3.}

Feppi is the SAAECC’s counterpart in the Territory. Policy on education for Aborigines in the NT emphasised recognition of difference in the background and needs of Aboriginal students on the one hand and the need for substantial improvement in their academic achievement on the other, committing the education system to provide appropriate support with dedicated strategies and resources.\footnote{NTDE, Direction for the Eighties, 8–9, 22–3, 54–7, and Information Statement No. 6.} As has been noted, policy for community involvement in public education promoted self-management with participation and responsibility in Aboriginal school communities just as in others. A progressive increase of Aboriginal teaching staff in schools was also advocated.\footnote{NTDE. Direction for the eighties 23. 54–7, 62–4.}

Specific commitments for implementing the policy were made. The need for appropriate curriculum generally was recognised, with emphasis in Life and Work Skills for secondary-aged students and stipulated provision for communities’ individual requirements. Aims highlighted equity in opportunity, recognition and sensitive accommodation of traditional culture, integration of the community and the education service, with provision for all ages to promote community cohesion. As with the SAAECC statement, they were consistent with the NAEC/NAC priorities. The NTDE undertook to support realisation of each aim and response to the challenge of homeland education received particular attention. Feppi’s contribution in this instance was acknowledged and commitment was made to promote ‘informed Aboriginal opinion and input (to) future policies and programs in Aboriginal education’.\footnote{NTDE, Information Statement No.6. 5, 6–7, 16–9, 37.}
Self-management in education in Aboriginal communities was advocated strongly.

It is essential that Aboriginal communities recognise educational needs, become involved in the development of education programs and support them in operation if both their relevance and quality are to be of such a standard as to ensure that Aboriginal children have equal access to appropriate educational opportunities.\(^{82}\)

Feppi detailed strategies for implementation of agreed policy in its 12-Point Plan. CECs were an immediate outcome. The CEC Planning Proposal acknowledged the difficulty experienced by Aboriginal people in accommodating their traditional ways with modern society since the beginning of European settlement. It was considered that a self-managing community needed to be able “to handle the complexities of modern society and the inroads it (made into) traditional lifestyles”. A CEC program should be geared to fulfil this need.\(^{83}\)

Towards the 90s had universal application. It made no reference to provisions specifically for Aborigines but its coverage was as relevant to Aboriginal schools as it was to all others. Self-management placed the onus upon communities to examine their expectations of education, to identify their priorities, to plan their realisation and to negotiate their official endorsement and resourced implementation. The quest for excellence, the requirement of accountability and the authority to make decisions and perform functions related to the substance and delivery of education services locally were similarly applicable.\(^{84}\) Subsequent relevant policy documents were similarly all-embracing, making no reference to Aborigines but generally making universal inclusion clear with judiciously selected photographs.\(^{85}\)

The RCIADIC identified education as “one of the principal means by which culture and knowledge (were) transmitted from one generation to the next”. A correlation was found between Aboriginal detainees' unsuccessful experience in formal education and their unsuccessful participation in society generally. It was accepted, however, that education itself could not remedy the predicament of Aborigines in Australia.\(^{86}\)

\(^{82}\) Ibid., Information Statement No 6, 37.

\(^{83}\) NTDE, Further Education Beyond Year 7, Appendix 1, 6.1. 1–3. See also Cameron & Coutts, “Community Education Centres” and Cameron, “Community Education” and “Education for Aborigines for What?”.

\(^{84}\) NTDE, Towards the 90s (1988), 1,2,3,4,7,8,9.


\(^{86}\) Johnston, Commissioner Elliott, QC, Royal Commission into Aboriginal deaths in Custody National Report, Volume 2, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1991 130–1, 140–1., 335–75.
The Commissioners' findings, conclusions and recommendations regarding Aborigines' circumstances pointed consistently to formal education's being a contributing cause and the potential cure. It was not perceived as the sole cause and the problem was acknowledged as the Australian society's responsibility but, in both perspectives, education was a major integral factor. Education was clearly identified as responsible and able to contribute to resolving the problem.\(^87\)

The sources considered reveal a consistency in expectations of education for Aborigines and, in the Territory, of the NTG. The perceived importance of education is highlighted constantly: for their long term wellbeing; for their equity with others in educational opportunity and outcomes; and to recognise Aboriginal culture and community needs, making appropriate provision in the curriculum and involving the community with responsibility in related decision-making and service delivery. It is appropriate that local self-management in education should be challenged to accommodate these expectations.

The AEP had highlighted the issue of educational outcomes for Aboriginal students and its significance in Australian society. The RCIADIC report reinforced it. The AEP was intended to generate Commonwealth funding over four triennia to enable identified and agreed affirmative action initiatives in education to proceed.\(^88\) The RCIADIC's report, highlighting education and training as an underlying cause of deaths in custody\(^89\) and making recommendations accordingly, generated further funding. The expectations of public education to contribute to the resolution of entrenched problems were also extended and, implicitly, accepted.\(^90\)

Governments, education systems, AECGs and DEET were given direction on education for Aborigines by the AEP. Systems' planning flowed from it, strategic planning setting priorities and linkages and directing providers' operational planning. Its purposes, goals and immediate foci provided guidelines for planning and negotiation. The NT's first Strategic Plan directed activity in the 1990–1992 triennium, the agreed stratagems

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\(^87\) The author observed, during the RCIADIC hearing in 1990, that the Commissioners, official witnesses, vested interests and general public in attendance, educators included, shared the view that formal education was a cause and had responsibility as a key to the solution.

\(^88\) DEET. AEP: Joint Policy Statement 8.

\(^89\) RCIADIC. Discussion Paper on Issues and Outline of Issues. Underlying Issues Conference Sessions, Northern Territory, 20–31 August 1990. The author (supported by a QC) was the NTDE representative at the hearing on education and training in Darwin on 22 August.

\(^90\) Power, Colin N., “Reflections on Manageable Realities in Education”, SEAPREAMS, Auckland, NZ, 1995. Prof. Power urged participants to be realistic about what education could and could not cope with and convey same to their political masters, including in particular the problems deeply entrenched in society. Cf. Eedle's exhortation to teachers to be realistic about what education can accomplish.
addressing the purposes of the policy. The resultant Operational Plan, detailing use of the additional funding provided by the Commonwealth, was then agreed upon, with mutual commitment, by the NT Education and DEET Ministers. It was stressed that the AEP projects being implemented by the NTDE in 1990–92 were additional to the programs routinely operated for Aboriginal students and funded by the NTG. The implementation of first triennium AEP projects was reported as having been consistent with and incorporated in NTDE policy and operation.93

The planning process was repeated for the second triennium. It had the benefit of experience and built on momentum developed during the first triennium; it was consequently better informed, more perceptive, more efficient and less contentious.94 The Operational Plan for the second triennium highlighted the partnership between Feppi, DEET and the NTDE. This plan included two initiatives designed to enable individual Aboriginal school groups to address local priorities, thereby encouraging self-management in Aboriginal education communities.95

This chapter introduced formal education in Aboriginal communities as a major component of the NTDE’s mandate and operation. The foregoing reveals wide acceptance that ATSI people generally are experiencing serious social dislocation, that Australian society has responsibility to address this, that education has an important role to play and that local self-management of education is expected to contribute towards the resolution of the problem. The expectations of formal education in Aboriginal communities underlines the complexity of delivering the service in such locations. It is evident that there are three levels of expectation: that conventional schooling and training will be provided effectively; that they contribute to social, cultural and economic development in the individual communities; and that they will address the social and cultural dislocation that has been developing since 1788. Considered individually, each seems reasonable and appropriate. Viewed together, however, they are daunting, the more so when it is remembered that commitment has been made to their fulfilment.

91 NTDE, National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education Policy: the Northern Territory Strategic Plan. NT Department of Education, Darwin, 1991, vi. Spring pronounced the development of this plan “a fine example of collaboration by the many education interest groups in the (NT)”, albeit “a sensitive and sometimes contentious exercise”.  
93 AEP Management Unit, AEP News Issue No. 1.  
94 Difficulty with funding for endorsed plans persisted through both triennia, the consequence of asynchronous fiscal scheduling in Darwin and Canberra.  
95 AEP Support Unit, Aboriginal Education News Issue No.2, 1993, 2, 5, with details of progress reported in Issue No. 4, 1994,3–6, 10–12 & 14.
The challenge is obviously formidable, but it has been accepted and is being tackled. The relative homogeneity of school enrolments in some Aboriginal communities makes it possible for programs to be tailored quite readily to local needs and priorities. Given also the requirement for Aboriginal participation in decision-making and service delivery, resounding through the rhetoric, endorsed in policy and founded in legislation, the onus is largely upon Aborigines to exercise their authority and responsibility in their young people's education. It is no less so upon education agencies to support and encourage their doing so. In the NT, the education system and the Aboriginal consultative group on education jointly advocated this direction a decade ago. It is timely for progress with the challenge to be explored.
Chapter 6
Lessons From Maningrida And Gapuwiyak

Any appraisal of education service delivery in the Territory requires comprehensive research. The diversity of the prevailing circumstances and the expectations of what the service may contribute, outlined in the preceding chapter, dictates investigation in a wide and representative range of operations. Public education in the NT, the policy of local self-management in education and the complexity of its implementation in Aboriginal communities have been introduced. A model against which the policy may be analysed has been developed from theoretical bases, most importantly Ostrom's institutional analysis and Sabatier's advocacy coalitions model. This chapter reports on two exploratory case studies conducted to establish a basis for evaluation of the policy's implementation in Aboriginal communities.

The effectiveness of the policy initiative needs to be ascertained for accountability and to inform direction and planning. Response to the challenge of self-management and resultant impact was investigated at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak in November 1995. The communities were selected for their proximity to each other, the physical similarity of their respective environments in Arnhemland, their human and historical similarities and contrasts and the considerable but differing complexity that they offer. David Benn explained the social and linguistic disparity of Maningrida and Galiwin'ku in terms of “two separate cultural blocks sharing a common border”\(^1\) which extends south from Cape Stewart, immediately to the west of Millingimbi and the Crocodile Islands and coincides approximately with the ABS division between East and West Arnhem Aboriginal population sub-regions\(^2\). This is germane in view of contemporary Gapuwiyak's origins as a homeland centre, established, populated and serviced from Galiwin'ku and the associated social and cultural links.

Cultural, historic and geographic factors influence the conduct of research in remote Aboriginal communities. Research involving Aboriginal people is in itself especially sensitive because so much has been conducted in recent years\(^3\). It can be difficult to gain a real appreciation of the Aborigines' real perceptions and expectations, either if the researcher is not a known quantity or if there are non-Aborigines involved or nearby; there is a distinct possibility that interviewees, individually or in small

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3 Approximately June 1996, the author raised the issue of research with the chair of Feppi, the NT Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, to be told “It's all been done” and that Aborigines were the most researched people in th
groups, will provide the answers they think the interviewer wants to hear; in the group situation, there is often a tendency for a single articulate and forthright person with influence to hold the floor, purporting to speak for the group but in fact presenting an individual view without being gainsaid by others; and it is not unknown for non-Aborigines with vested interests in a forthcoming investigation to influence the people to be interviewed to support their cause. There is also the fact that Aborigines, traditionally-orientated people in particular, tend to be ill-at-ease in formal arrangements; they often prefer to discuss matters out of doors and can be deterred from actual participation by the making of an appointment for discussion.

At Maningrida and Gapuwiyak, the researcher made sure that the appropriate protocol was observed locally as well as officially through the education system. At Maningrida, the principal and the chair of the CEC Council were contacted well in advance and again just prior to the visit. A similar procedure was adopted for Gapuwiyak but, as there was no CEC council and the principal was a traditional authority figure in the community, only the one point of contact was necessary. The principal at Gapuwiyak and the chair of the CEC council were asked to identify and brief indigenous members of the staff and of the community whom they felt the researcher should consult and to make any arrangements they considered appropriate. Consistent with the principles of self-management, the researcher's intention was that once he was identified, what he wished to investigate and for what purpose were known and the project had been given local sanction, the local authority would make the arrangements it felt necessary and he would comply with them. Such an approach is conceived both to promote some local ownership of the research and to recognise the local authority; it also means that the researcher is thereby bound, morally at the least, to abide by the arrangements made. On the one hand, they are likely to be different from the ones he would make for himself; on the other, if the people being consulted do not feel some control and responsibility they may be less likely and willing to participate, either frankly or constructively or at all.

Table 6.3 summarises the findings from the interviews, organised so that similarities and differences between the two CECs may be identified readily. The case study reports will provide insight into what actually happens in the operational field in the bush. Each will comprise an introduction to the community, the findings of the investigation and the conclusions drawn.

**MANINGRIDA COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE**

Maningrida is relatively large, by NT Aboriginal community standards- Situated on the eastern shore of the Liverpool River estuary on the central Arnhemland coast,
it lies 360 km. east of Darwin, is serviced by air and sea from Darwin and is accessible by road from Darwin and Gove in the dry season. In 1994, the indigenous population of Maningrida and the 34 homeland centres it services, between the Goomadeer and Goyder Rivers, was estimated at approximately 1,800, living in an area of some 10,000 sq. km. Twelve distinct language groups are represented. Historically, as outlined in Chapter 1, the people here have been subject to various alien influences: first there were the Macassans, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth; they overlapped with European exploration and missionary and colonial development; and government regulation followed. Benn traced the political dynamics of Maningrida from 1939 to 1978, noting in particular the conflict which bedevilled the community from its inception as a settlement in 1957. Of the four language groups most strongly represented in Maningrida itself, Kunibidji clans are the traditional landowners but Burarra tend to hold sway, politically and numerically. There is a strong balanda presence, involved in service delivery, including education, health, community government, police and technical support and in commercial enterprise. With such diversity, the development of community government, with governments’ direction and support, is inevitably difficult and potentially volatile.

Self-management of education services was accepted in practice at Maningrida in 1990. The Maningrida CEC’s core services combine pre-school and primary education, homeland education, CEC Certificate Courses and Burarra and Ndjebbana bilingual education programs for approximately 500 predominantly Aboriginal school-aged students. It also supports studies through the Secondary Correspondence School, adult education and tertiary studies, predominantly in teacher training. Yolngu staff outnumber balanda but the latter perform most of the teaching, leadership and management functions. The CEC council membership is mainly Aboriginal.

Community Participation

The Maningrida CEC Council was established and incorporated in 1990. Its membership, determined with local discretion but satisfying the regulations, ensures yolgnu predominance; balanda are limited in practice to two of up-to-nineteen members, the principal and the teachers' representative. Formal community participation with authority and responsibility in policy and management in the local education

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4 Fitzpatrick, Lorraine, & West, Margie, “Maningrida, the Language of Weaving”, Australian Exhibitions Touring Agency (AETA), South Melbourne, Victoria, C1994 (specifically the material contributed by linguist Carolyn Coleman).
5 Powell, 33, explained that the term, “Macassans” covers both the Macassarese of SW Sulawesi, the most prominent of the “seaborne” traders who visited Arnhemland, and the other visitors from that island as well.
6 Benn, 1–9.
service is thus possible. The community's fragmentary nature is reflected in the Council's composition, so the cohesion claimed by members is remarkable.

The Aboriginal people consulted believed that the Council was strong. They considered it a genuine and effective decision-making body whose determination of local policy influenced the principal in his leadership and management. The working relationship between the staff and the CEC Council was seen as a partnership, the two bodies working together as a team. Meetings of the Council, known as Yúya-bol, are convened weekly with contemporary issues, policy matters and local initiatives on its agenda. Minutes of the meetings were held in the staff room for general perusal. The non-Aboriginal principal observed that Yúya-bol was well organised and that its members were self-motivated and sincere about its functions.

The Council was seen to have made important contributions in developing and delivering education services in the area, as is evident throughout the Maningrida columns of Table 6.3. Involvement in selection of staff, encouragement of suitable adults to train as teachers, advice to balanda teachers on relevant indigenous cultural considerations for incorporation in their programs and classroom practices and support for and involvement in the conception and implementation of innovative educational programs were but a few. In staff development, advice and encouragement were provided for balanda new to the area, to adjust their lifestyles to blend with the local environment and local Aboriginal staff were encouraged to understand the balanda culture. ‘Two-way learning’ for staff was considered just as valuable to support and promote teamwork in the CEC's operation as for the children's education.

Parental involvement was a strong aspect of community participation. Attendance at CEC Council meetings and contribution to debate, visits to the CEC to observe and discuss schooling matters and informal discussions with Council members were mentioned. The level of parent participation, indicated in more detail in the first and last segments of Table 6.3, was considered proof of the Council's effectiveness in local decision-making, policy-development and influence on behalf of the public.

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7 Four Aboriginal people were consulted. They were members of the CEC Council and the CEC staff, people of standing locally and knowledgeable. One, the CEC Council chair, was a liaison officer and a long-term public servant, another was the CEC Council secretary and the receptionist/telephonist and the others were Batchelor-trained teachers who had previously been assistant teachers Two were male, two were female.

8 The principal and the Council chair advised separately that the governance of the CEC was under review, with improved homelands involvement, an enduring concern, a priority.
Decision-Making

Yúya-bol has a role in selecting staff, considered by the members consulted to be a decisive one. The principal normally sought and heeded the Council chair's advice, and that of others, on suitable people interested and available to fill base level support vacancies. The chair or another nominee automatically presided over local selection panels convened to recommend appointments to executive teacher and other public sector promotional vacancies. A panel's recommendations were made only when consensus was reached. Local preferences and expectations were prominent criteria for selection in principle and in practice. From the inception of this process in 1992 to the end of 1994, the Secretary of the NTDE had accepted and confirmed all such recommendations and all were able to withstand appeal.

Selection of staff emerged as important and tangible local decision-making. (In Table 63, it is located under “administrative efficiency”.). Recruitment of casual and base level support staff was a matter of local convention; the promotional selection process was formally required under the relevant legislation and was honoured to the letter. The provisions for and practices in staff selection gave the CEC Council real authority (other than in selecting teachers on recruitment or transfer).

The Council can make decisions on the commitment of CEC funding and negotiate exceptional fiscal arrangements. There are two principal sources of finance, the NTDE and DEET. The former provides recurrent operational funding and project funding for developmental work as negotiated with the CEC Council. Construction of the Wurdeja HLC and refurbishment of the facility for secondary-aged students are examples of the Council's management of building projects in 1993. The DEET provision is made on successful submission of proposals under Commonwealth Equity and other such schemes. The Land and Learning Project, for example, was initiated at Maningrida, involved Maningrida and its HLCs and several small schools in the area and was funded under the Country Areas element. Notably, the people who were consulted concentrated on the policy aspects and the substance of the activities rather than upon their authority to negotiate arrangements, approve expenditure and sign cheques. In practice, a member of staff would conceive a project and present it to the Council for consideration. Where it was endorsed, the initiator became the project co-ordinator and

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9 The Education Act and the Public Sector Employment and Management Act.
10 The author reports on staff selection at Maningrida from first-hand experience, having had responsibility for Maningrida during 1990–94 and as such ex officio the NTDE representative on local selection panels.
executive officer, reporting as appropriate on progress in development, implementation and achievement to the principal and to the Council.  

Yúya-bol members expressed a desire to exert influence beyond the local scene. They particularly wanted to be able to convey their needs and expectations to other education entities, notably St. John's and Kormilda Colleges in Darwin and Batchelor College, through their respective governing bodies. The chairman felt the CEC Council should be involved in selecting prospective Batchelor trainees, in aspects of their training and in their placement on graduation. He was also keen for members of the other institutions' governing bodies to visit Maningrida and to observe the local operation so that their deliberations might be better informed. In his opinion, they would benefit from such observation and could make useful suggestions for Maningrida's development. In the same vein, Batchelor College had been approached, jointly with the Maningrida Community Council, requesting improved provision for its Remote Area Teacher Education (RATE) program at Maningrida. The CEC Council saw itself as having both a right and a responsibility to inform and influence other institutions' operations in the interests of the people of this area.

Revamping governance of education and training in the area was an aspect of the CEC Council review. Two members stressed a need, in Yúya-bol's view, to bring different local organisations together to form a board to oversee the CEC's operation and adult education and training. They envisaged the rationalisation and synthesis of community aspirations, formal education, adult education and training and enterprise, employment or other livelihood, similar to the vision behind the Cameron Thiele Report. A need to address also the issue of greater continuity in teaching staff and Council membership was voiced. It was felt that Yúya-bol should develop policy on such matters.

The principal had asked the manager of adult education in the area, a respected balanda teacher who was knowledgeable and experienced in the area, to co-ordinate the review. Yúya-bol members clearly assumed responsibility for the matter, however, and were addressing it seriously and realistically as a priority, recognising and accepting the local policy decision-making aspect of self-management.

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11 CEC Council involvement in fiscal management bears further consideration. In the author's observation of enterprising management at Maningrida CEC, the Council's influence on the principles underlying the administration is not in question but its grasp of the CEC's finances, beyond decision-making, may be limited.

12 Brown, Patrick, & Wuridjal, Reggie, “Kala nanbirringabbaba barralakaláya yinjirra / Gunardiya galiya apula / Djinitjining marmgirre nibila (Listen carefully to us)”, Maningrida CEC Council & Maningrida Community Council, Maningrida, 1995. Brown chaired the CEC Council and Wuridjal chaired the Community Council and was a traditional landowner. This appeared to have been a yolgnu initiative.
Educational Outcomes

Maningrida statistics, summarised in Table 6.1, typify the fluctuation of Aboriginal student enrolments and attendances. From 1983 to 1995, enrolments doubled and attendance improved. Growth steadied from the mid-1980s and then resumed at the end of the decade to plateau again in the mid-1990s. The second growth period showed marked improvement in attendance, the unexplained slump in 1995 notwithstanding. These developments coincided first with the proliferation of HLCs and then with increased support for them.

TABLE 6.1 MANINGRIDA SCHOOL/CEC: ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE, 1983–95

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>INITIAL ENROLMENT</th>
<th>AVERAGE ATTENDANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995(Feb-Aug)</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also several policy initiatives: the school was upgraded to CEC status in 1988; CEC Certificate Courses for secondary-aged students were introduced from 1989, accompanied by an increased expectation of academic performance; and self-management began with the Maningrida CEC Council established in 1990. The growth was largely in the HLCs, catering for some children not previously enrolled, and at the secondary-aged level. Improved attendance is less readily explained. The growth of secondary-aged enrolments from less than 30 to steady at over 100 no doubt contributed to stability in the upper primary area. Since the inception of the CEC Council, members' efforts to promote attendance and punctuality, to oversee homework and conduct and to advise on cultural considerations in curriculum, methodology and management can be assumed to have counted. It is clear that enrolments grew and attendance improved in tandem with increased Aboriginal influence and involvement in policy and operations at Maningrida. Such community authority and responsibility in education is no doubt an important factor.

Maningrida's secondary-aged enrolment in 1994 exemplified the effective provision at this level in terms of participation. There were 38 in Intensive English (then Pre-
Foundation Studies), 35 in Foundation Studies, 21 in General Studies and 18 in TAFE Access Studies (in the distance mode).\textsuperscript{14} In 1995, 5 students were receiving junior secondary studies through electronic classroom delivery from the NT Secondary Correspondence School.\textsuperscript{15}

The community regarded the outcomes from formal education services favourably. The people consulted viewed the CEC jointly with St. John's and Kormilda Colleges and Batchelor College which, by virtue of Maningrida students' participation in their programs, were also seen to contribute to local education, even as integral to it. An increasingly high correlation was perceived between training and employment in the area and educational experience in the CEC's provision for secondary-aged students, St. John's or Kormilda and Batchelor. It was considered evidence that their respective programs were successful.

A staff in-service training program in 1992, influenced by the CEC Council, was deemed to have been beneficial for the community. Council members had identified the traditional performing arts, music in particular, as an area of priority for attention at the CEC. CASU made a music consultant available and a program was negotiated and implemented over a term. It involved staff and students working together to develop skill and confidence in incorporating and promoting traditional arts in the curriculum, with the consultant acting as an expert resource in successive intensive workshops. The participants rated it a most successful professional support and development exercise. The councillors recalled it enthusiastically as a Council-initiated project which successfully advanced integration of the indigenous culture into the formal education program and thereby benefitted the community.

Contrasting perceptions of educational outcomes and the criteria applied, as illustrated in Figure 6.1, indicates that the CEC's operation may be appraised from two distinct but overlapping perspectives. Students' measurable participation, academic achievement, progress through the system and placement on graduation, individually and collectively, broadly comprise the conventional, official, means. At Maningrida, the perceived benefit of the services to the students personally and to the community, socially, culturally and economically, immediately and in the longer term, appeared to be the main criterion applied. The two sets of criteria have in common employment and/or livelihood. Comparison of the two is inappropriate, because the first is objective and


\textsuperscript{15} Rattigan, John, “Report Draft” (on secondary-aged non-urban Aboriginal students throughout the NT), 1995.
system-based whereas the second is subjective and belongs to the clients. Their co-existence and the distinction between them, however, should be noted.

**FIGURE 6.1 APPRAISAL FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES**

**Administrative Efficiency**

Enterprising principals at Maningrida have used the discretion in institutional management offered by the devolution of administrative functions to incorporated councils. A Maningrida principal has wide-ranging roles and responsibilities. The position involves concurrently professional leadership and administrative management of a comparatively large and diverse institution in the delivery of a comprehensive array of education services under physically, socially and culturally challenging circumstances. Being the executive officer of the governing body is an *ex officio* duty. The responsibility, workload and wisdom required are daunting but self-management provides commensurate opportunity for lateral thought, initiative, enterprise and discretion. The extent to which it has been exploited can be seen throughout the Maningrida columns of Table 6.3, especially under “administrative efficiency”.

Maningrida CEC administration has developed some distinctive features that are appropriate for the prevailing circumstances and advantageous to its operations. They include a high level of support for professional and curriculum development, local payment of industrial staff, development of the printing facility and management of construction projects. None is exceptional or particularly innovative. Together, in the Aboriginal community context, however, they embody the intention behind devolving administrative functions. The principal and others with delegated responsibility may be the prime movers but at Maningrida their development and implementation of ventures
is the execution of CEC Council decisions with accountability to that body (as well as to line supervisors and the employer).

Enterprise that generates finance is important. Effective management of construction projects, such as those mentioned above, has given the CEC revenue enabling it to undertake activities that are beyond the scope and capacity of routine funding by the Governments. Most such self-generated finance is directed towards costs incurred in the professional support and development needs of the staff. A recent health education curriculum and teaching workshop is an example. It was funded jointly by CASU and the CEC, the former providing the consultant and covering the cost of her involvement and the latter arranging for release of staff to participate. Less enterprising institutions do not have this sort of facility.

Additional finance has also been directed to the development of the Literature Production Centre (LPC). It is now a printery of good quality, cost-effective and reliable, attracting work from afar and thereby generating income, as well as producing excellent curriculum support materials for local use and supporting community activities without charge. The LPC earned professional recognition from a chance contact in the USA in 1995.

Arrangement for on-site payment of industrial staff proved to be a boon. Pays had previously been handled in Darwin, based on the time sheets submitted. In 1993, under the Council's auspices, local payment by cheque was trialled. It proved viable and successful and became standard practice at Maningrida. In addition to overcoming the problems inherent in the interval between performance and payment in the standard procedure, this arrangement allows the flexibility and discretion necessary to be able to pay only for the time worked, to share employment and to replace absentees without reference for approval. In the Maningrida perspective, such employment is clearly a local matter, implicitly giving the CEC Council and its executive officer tangible authority and responsibility.

These and other such arrangements, well-managed, epitomise the rationale for devolution of administrative functions to the individual education communities. Administrative responsibility and practice are localised; initiative and entrepreneurial management are encouraged and rewarded with local educational priorities able to be addressed without total dependence upon central resourcing; and official processing is minimised. Accountability for use of public moneys may thus be maintained, and likely enhanced, with the efficiency possible in the common sense practices that can be employed with localised processing. Suitable personnel in key positions, however, are essential for the system to work.
Re-ordering Priorities

It was evident that the CEC Council has some influence over the curriculum. Its role in the development and implementation of extra-ordinary programs has been outlined and the Council's policy direction in staff development, cultural inclusion and environmental awareness were mentioned. Three examples serve to illustrate the nature of its actual influence on the local program in practice.

The Land and Learning project was a local initiative involving field research on flora and fauna. ‘Two-way learning’ was emphasised in developing an environmental data base, assembling and collating scientific information and traditional knowledge. The Council also endorsed and contributed to planning an acclaimed ground-breaking cultural and educational venture in 1994. A group of Kunibidji students visited Indonesia for cultural and language exchange and renewing links with the Macassans after a break of about 200 years. The contact established has subsequently been maintained and follow-up exchanges occurred in 1995. On one occasion in 1994, the Council was instrumental in deciding on and taking measures to remedy tensions and disruption amongst secondary-aged students. Outcomes included the improved attendance and conduct of the students and the expectation that the teachers involved would adjust their programs to accommodate a gender-based reorganisation. The example is mundane but it made clear the priority accorded avoidance obligations vis-à-vis program expedience. The authority of the Council in this issue was evident, as was the priority it accorded cultural and local environmental dimensions in formal education in the two projects.

The Council members outlined a general plan for the CEC. It includes promoting community awareness and confidence, identifying perceived priority needs and expectations and developing policy for education accordingly. They conveyed some broad ideal goals. One is to make the CEC attractive to community members, through familiarising them with the program and its operation. Another aims to achieve a balance between European and traditional culture, progress towards which was perceived as real but gradual. In particular, they saw formal education as having an important function in developing amongst children a better understanding of themselves. Consultation on the place of indigenous languages and culture in the CEC curriculum was to involve the Community Council as well as the community generally.

16 Identification of some 30–40 terms, mostly nautical, common to Macassan and the Ndjebbana language of the Kunibidji people and a recent, reciprocal, visit to Maningrida by women from Sulawesi arranged with the Bawananga Arts Centre were regarded as valuable.

17 The Council chair and a teacher who was also a Council member were due to talk on the need for western-traditional balance and languages and culture in education at a public meeting soon after this consultation took place.
The general direction, although not identified precisely, was to meet the community's perceived social and cultural needs through young people's formal education.

There was consensus on priorities in curriculum. The CEC Council members considered English literacy and numeracy should be mandatory for all students, that Aboriginal cultural education should be woven into the curriculum and that the existing bilingual programs were essential for cultural maintenance\(^{18}\). Post-school education and training was an area of concern. Two members regarded integration of adult education and the CEC's operation as essential, to align formal school-age education with adult training, tertiary study and employment. Planning such integration, by the end of 1995, was predicted to prove a landmark in the development of the community. They intended to promote the idea, and, having won public confidence, to identify priority needs and expectations and to develop appropriate policy.

An Aboriginal staff for the CEC was identified as a high developmental priority. One member said that the Council sought “to reconstruct self-management towards Aboriginalisation” with AD 2 000 the notional target date.\(^{19}\) Council members thought the NTDE was the largest employer of Aboriginal staff in the district. In Maningrida alone, 20–25 Aborigines, approximately half the community-based education staff, were employed at the CEC at the time. With the exception of the Literature Production Supervisor and a part-time book-keeper, who maintained the accounts for devolved financial management and other funding, all public sector support staff were Aboriginal. As mentioned previously, industrial staff were employed under the auspices of the CEC Council on a relatively flexible basis. \(Yùya-bol\) had been encouraging Aboriginal adults to train as teachers, increasing local participation in the RATE program. Whereas there were no Aborigines amongst the professional staff in 1990, Maningrida now had three Aboriginal teachers who had graduated from Batchelor College and another was employed as head teacher at nearby Gochan Jiny-Jirra School with support provided by a Maningrida-based mentor. In addition, as vacancies become available, several students in pre-service training at Batchelor are expected to be employed as teachers in the CEC on graduation. The importance of appropriate on-the-job training for Aboriginal teachers aspiring to leadership and management positions was acknowledged, especially as their classroom teaching experience is limited and the year 2000 was looming.

\(^{18}\) The author has found that English literacy and numeracy are commonly the top priorities in Aborigines' expectations of formal education services whereas views on traditional culture in the school's program vary.

\(^{19}\) Although George Pascoe (teacher and \(Yùya-bol\) member) was the person who raised Aboriginalisation by AD 2000, he was endorsed strongly by Rita Djitmu at the time and the others subsequently.
The CEC Council members expected education to support community living. It was considered important to combine preparation for vocational training and employment with English literacy, numeracy and culture. Attainment of academic excellence, as understood by western-orientated educators, and entry to tertiary education, other than where it is community-orientated and is available at Batchelor College, were not mentioned. Expectations of formal education were more for functional effectiveness.20 These locally identified priorities are not formally declared in an education development plan but they are prominent features of the service in practice.

Community Awareness and Confidence

The CEC Council prides itself in its constructive role and responsibility across the community. Members felt it had effective communication with the Community Council and that good mutual support, with consultation on policy issues, existed between the two bodies. The joint approach to Batchelor College, mentioned previously, exemplified this. Other areas of co-operation are efforts to counter drugs and alcohol and to tackle the housing shortage issue as community management matters.21 Such co-operation was seen to have arisen partly from a link between the bodies made by a long-term NTDE employee, also a CEC Council member, whose employment is now split between the CEC and the Community Council.

Some overlap of de facto functions of the respective bodies is evident. One member considered the CEC Council should be active in “(bringing) the community together”. Its communication with the public at large was considered effective, its influence spreading and having the effect of widening people’s world view. As mentioned above, members regard promotion of community awareness of the CEC’s program and confidence in its operation and the service it provides as an important Council function. In pursuing this end they professed intention to identify popularly perceived priority needs and general expectations of education and to develop CEC policy accordingly. They claimed that Yūya-bol itself enjoyed good community confidence.

Progress at Maningrida

There is substantial community participation in the NTDE institution at Maningrida. Local Aboriginal membership dominates the CEC Council. The small but growing

20 Rattigan suggested (20 November 1995) that the perspective of the persons consulted may not have embraced academic excellence in its western conception, their predisposition towards education and their own respective schooling achievement

21 Maningrida CEC had been the focal point in revitalisation and redevelopment of the Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education (DARE) program for Aboriginal communities, led by an assistant principal, managed under the auspices of the CEC Council locally and initiated by the superintendent and the RCP.
Aboriginal membership of the teaching staff is expected to be sustained and to extend into leadership roles. Full Aboriginalisation of the staff is notionally set for the turn of the century, and ancillary functions are already performed mainly by locally engaged Aboriginal personnel. Some human and physical elements of the environment have been incorporated in the education program and the CEC is increasingly recognised as a major resource and an integral element of the community (including the homelands). Such momentum has been growing since the inception of the CEC Council.

Localised decision-making is wide-ranging and increasing with the CEC Council's involvement and acceptance of responsibility. Initiatives have been taken with educational ventures, including some recognition of traditional culture in programs and operations. Projects to enrich schooling largely reflect an orientation towards local historic, linguistic, cultural and environmental elements of the indigenous heritage. Other exercises seek to address issues of local concern; progress in bringing the CEC and the community closer together with active mutual involvement is evident.

The principles underlying the decisions on directions being taken appear consistent but they are being taken ad hoc, on individual projects rather than in accordance with a coherent plan. Voiced intentions and aspirations indicate the potential to realise effective community direction of the local education services in partnership with the NTG. Commitment to education services appropriate for local needs is clearly a prime motivation. Local politics, desire for power and the opportunity for individual personal aspiration or gratification are not evident.

Educational outcomes are viewed locally from a functionally-orientated perspective. Perceived benefit to the students and to the community is evidently the principal criterion applied, with the latter given priority. Contributions of this nature by education are valued, seemingly more than scholastic achievement.

Provision for and participation by secondary-aged students is an important area of development. This has resulted from a separate initiative but has involved community consultation at the outset and benefitted considerably from CEC Council support and promotion. Outcomes, in terms of livelihood after graduation, lack data but are perceived favourably. On balance, it is likely that any local Aboriginal employee is a product of the Maningrida education services, or largely so. It is worthy of note that the CEC and St. John's, Kormilda and Batchelor are seen as a composite and perceived favourably as leading to participation in the workforce. The importance the

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22 Major excursions had previously tended to focus largely upon western-based icons, processes, practices and cultures in Australia. Whether the change of emphasis to the indigenous heritage was a conscious one initiated by balanda staffer by yolgnu Council members was not clear. However, such ventures could not have proceeded without CEC Council endorsement.
community reportedly attaches to the link between formal education, training and adult livelihood is also notable.

Since self-management was accepted at Maningrida, data on educational outcomes show increased participation. Secondary-aged students' access to services have increased considerably. There is active community involvement and the clientele is considered favourably disposed, especially in the overall community development context. Evidence that any advances are attributable directly to self-management of Maningrida CEC is not conclusive but the Aboriginal CEC Council members, individually and collectively, have certainly accepted responsibility and are actively and constructively contributive.

Administration has become more complex with self-management as it has developed at Maningrida. Routine processes with support personnel and services, supplies and financial management, handled locally, are performed according to local requirements, with accountability at the regional level. Enterprising management has increased the administrative roles of the principal and his delegates, in turn increasing the pressure on them to maintain their professional roles and responsibilities but also making for more responsive services. Local public relations and liaison are essential to effective performance of devolved administrative functions and advocacy of public participation and responsibility. The opportunity to exercise such initiative, judgement, discretion and responsibility locally derive directly from self-management. Its effectiveness nonetheless depends upon the calibre of the key personnel, their teamwork, their initiative and judgement and the working relationships they forge with the CEC Council and relevant local, regional and central personnel.

GAPUWIYAK COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE

Gapuwiyak is in north-eastern Arnhemland, by Lake Evella. The majority of its population (est. 357 in 1991)\(^23\) came from Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island, to the north.\(^24\) As with other coastal Arnhemland communities, the Aborigines of this area had experienced contact with Dutch explorers, Macassan seafaring traders and Australian-based European explorers. Most recently, missionaries and government officials have provided further external influence.\(^25\)


\(^24\) Nirrprandji, Shirley, in “Aboriginal Educational Leadership - the NT Experience”, International Conference of Indigenous Peoples, Wollongong, NSW, 1993, 6, said that her father was instrumental in establishing Gapuwiyak “as an outstation of the mission at Elcho Island”.

\(^25\) Powell, 30–4, 64. Benn, 12, found that contact with another Asian culture, referred to as the Bayini, may have preceded the Macassans in ME Arnhemland.
Gapuwiyak is now a community in its own right, with an elected community council and supporting two homeland centres. The populace is homogenous, with Djambarrpuynugu its common tongue. It is serviced regularly by air, from Darwin, 530 km. to the west, and Nhulunbuy, the East Arnhem regional centre, 110 km. to the ENE. Barges land nearby, and movement by air between Gapuwiyak and Galiwin'ku, 60 km. to the NNW, is frequent. During the dry season, roads to Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Darwin are trafficable. Gapuwiyak CEC started as a HLC serviced from Galiwin'ku and it was upgraded to a school in the early 1970s and then to a CEC in 1992. Self-management in formal education has been developing from 1990.

**Community Participation**

Community participation in education at Gapuwiyak is less formalised than in some other bush locations. There is no CEC Council, and two of the people consulted²⁶ separately stated that the CEC was not self-managing and had no Aboriginalisation program. An Aboriginal teacher stressed, however, that there was constant and effective liaison between the CEC and the community council, extensive community consultation and a good flow of information. The Gapuwiyak columns of Table 6.3 record how these were borne out in several operational features and the evident extent of active community participation in practice.

Despite there being no governing body, Gapuwiyak CEC is self-managing in a technical sense. It had opted for its finances to be managed through the regional group management council;²⁷ decisions on commitment of moneys were therefore made in the education community, with orders and payments processed by a designated officer in the regional office in Nhulunbuy. As there was no CEC council, however, the principal made the finance-related decisions, consulting as she saw fit.

Aboriginalisation was also a reality. All support staff were Aboriginal, as had long been the case. Almost a third of the professional staff was Aboriginal. One was the principal, Shirley Nirrpurandji. She had trained on-the-job in a mentor program during 1991–2 and had subsequently been appointed substantively. Another Aboriginal teacher was a likely contender for an executive teacher position in 1996 and another was the HLC visiting teacher. At a recent international conference of indigenous peoples, Nirrpurandji stated that, at Gapuwiyak, they were committed to Aboriginalisation and that *balanda*

²⁶ The people consulted were an Aboriginal teacher (expected to be promoted soon), the Aboriginal janitor and an Indian teacher (nominated by the Aboriginal teacher as having the Aboriginal perspective). The principal, an Aboriginal person, was unavailable, due to a recent death, and reference to her recent writings and conversations since 1990 is substituted.

²⁷ The financial management function of the group management council in East Arnhem was extended to include institutions with Aboriginal principals.
and yolgnu “were to (share) this commitment”\textsuperscript{28}. Her non-Aboriginal teachers with NT experience clearly supported this direction; those in their first year in the Territory appeared merely to accept it.

For Nirrpurandji, Aboriginalisation went beyond the replacement of balanda staff. She saw it as integral to and arching over the whole Gapuwiyak approach, wherein yolgnu should be responsible for their children's education. Balanda were expected to value and respect yolgnu teachers as colleagues, to recognise their styles and practices and to support local teacher trainees. In her mind, Aboriginalisation incorporated spirit, operation, responsibility and program orientation as well as staffing\textsuperscript{29}. Progress towards the realisation of her vision was evident in the use of both Djambarrpuyngu and English, practised by all staff, routinely for instructional purposes and in conversation (and not in a bilingual program).

There was a pronounced dichotomy in Nirrpurandji's role at Gapuwiya. She was simultaneously a professional leader employed by the NTDE and a leader amongst her people. This made for extensive and potentially fruitful community participation in education and for mutual contribution and impact. It also placed her in an exciting but complex and demanding position. As she described her situation,

\begin{quote}
I am an educational leader in my own community … torn between two cultures that are just beginning to understand each other. … I often find myself interpreting between the community and the (NTDE). … I see myself as a Yolgnu Principal, a Yolgnu role model, a Yolgnu who will make sure that our children are being offered a decent education… (and I work to bring) the community and (the CEC) together.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
(A)s the eldest daughter of my father … I have responsibilities to my Dhalwangu people to participate in all aspects of ceremonies. These often compete with my responsibilities to the (NTDE) and my (CEC). On the other hand these traditional responsibilities have equipped me to take on the leadership role (as) a Principal…
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
(Having) a local and qualified person in charge … has also meant that some problems have emerged as the demands of the two cultures conflict. … (A)ll the Yolgnu on staff are related and we are all members of the one community. With the demands of the extended
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{28} Nirrpurandji, Shirley, “Aboriginal Educational Leadership”, Part 2 (i), 6.

\textsuperscript{29} Nirrpurandji, Shirley, Gapuwiyak CEC - Not Just a School…” Gapuwiyak CEC, Gapuwiyak, c. 1995.
family, coming to work can be hard. A lot of tact and care (has) to be taken so as not to offend Yolgnu traditions related to brother and sister relationships, avoidance relationships or contact with some parents. Also the (disciplining) and directing of staff can … cause … difficulties.

In the past, balanda have had the excuse that they are dhungu, that they don't know. We Yolgnu of course, do know. And so we keep juggling the demands of the two systems, and it is worth it. They are our children, it is our (CEC), and it is our community, and we are in control.30

Gapuwiyak is a discrete traditionally-orientated community in which she has an important role. She is also a public sector employee with authority and responsibility deriving from the principalship that she has won through western-based education, training, experience and selection processes. Such a situation seems ideal for meshing education services with community needs and aspirations but, in her understatement, she experiences “other pressures on top of the actual job”31. Conflict between requirements of the education system and parental and cultural demands are potentially overwhelming. Community participation is real and natural at Gapuwiyak but expectations of Nirrpurandji, by virtue of her standing, her own professionalism, the dichotomy of her functions and the lack of a council to assist her, demand great wisdom and fortitude.

**Decision-Making**

Gapuwiyak CEC is self-managing in that much decision-making is localised, as can be seen in both the relevant section and elsewhere in Table 6.3, again despite there being no CEC council. Decisions on commitment of finance have been mentioned as being essentially the principal's prerogative. A CEC handbook is under preparation. It outlines the educational philosophy underlying its operation and the policies to realise the philosophy. The handbook's yolgnu compilation and its conception largely for the benefit of balanda staff, in view of its high rate of turnover, were stressed.

The assumption of control and responsibility for the children's education includes localised decision-making on the CEC's curriculum. The Shared Program exemplifies local curriculum-related initiative. It commenced in 1993 and is integral to the CEC's overall education program. The program was instituted to satisfy concurrently the

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31 Ibid., 6.
community's expectation that traditional culture and knowledge would be recognised and advanced through formal education and the system's Languages Other Than English and Social and Cultural Education requirements. In the principal's summation, it was a *yolgnu* initiative that emphasised *yolgnu* knowledge, requiring a team effort to plan, program and develop understanding of *yolgnu* culture.\(^{32}\) This was seen as an important step. It represented both local acceptance of responsibility for some of the children's learning and the perception and ability to align system and community expectations for their mutual fulfilment.

A recent excursion to Melbourne, led by Nirrpurandji, was another instance of local initiative. Given Gapuwiyak's size, cohesion and the homogeneity of its population, such a venture could only be undertaken with community awareness, endorsement, responsibility and active support. Its success was evident in the newspaper article (complete with a photograph of the group at the Melbourne Cricket Ground) on the staff notice-board as well as in the fact that it was accomplished without mishap. The salient point here is that in education-related decision-making there is, at least implicitly, recognition that familiarity with the cultural heritage must be balanced with knowledge of the ‘outside world’.

Gapuwiyak CEC policy emphasises students' health and welfare. A hygiene program features collaboration with the local clinic and voluntary involvement of community members. Student welfare and discipline are acknowledged as the province of Aboriginal members of staff. The principal's statement to this effect added that their “counselling … (reinforced) family relationship systems and appropriate ways of relating to others”\(^{33}\). There is evidence here, as in the instances cited above, of a local Aboriginal perspective influencing development of an education service that is responsive to community needs and expectations.

**Educational Outcomes**

Gapuwiyak CECs enrolment and attendance fluctuate as they do in other NT Aboriginal institutions. As shown in see Table 6.2, there has been steady overall growth since 1983 and the level of attendance has generally ranged from 45% to 75%. The initial enrolment in 1995 represents maintenance of the level realised in a dramatic increase during 1990–91 and indicates that the overall increase since 1983 has plateaued.\(^{34}\) Whilst the 1990–91 increase coincided with the expectation that devolved

\(^{32}\) Nirrpurandji, “Gapuwiyak CEC”.
\(^{33}\) *Ibid*...
\(^{34}\) The 25% increase in enrolment at Gapuwiyak, 1990–91, is understood to be attributable to inclusion of homeland centre enrolments and acceptance of secondary-aged students prior to conferral of CEC status to the school
functions would be accepted by the education community, there is no evidence to attribute growth to self-management nor to dissociate them. It is worthy of note that improvement in annual average attendance, from 1993 to 1995, sustained at a level above any achieved in the preceding ten years, coincided with the tenure of an indigenous principal and with early consolidation of self-management in practice.\textsuperscript{35}

\textbf{TABLE 6.2 GAPUWIYAK SCHOOL/CEC: ENROLMENT AND ATTENDANCE, 1983–95}\textsuperscript{36}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>INITIAL ENROLMENT</th>
<th>ANNUAL ATTENDANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995 (Feb.–Aug.)</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 1983 was selected for the commencement of the statistical record used as being the earliest date from which details were readily available

Perception of the CEC's program varied from its being beneficial to the community to the system's failing the clientele. At one extreme, a teacher working with secondary-aged students considered that the approved curriculum had become increasingly relevant to the students' educational needs in recent years.\textsuperscript{37} At the other, a consultant reported that East Arnhem education personnel generally perceived the NTDE's curriculum and support materials provision to be inadequate and inappropriate.\textsuperscript{38} Reported community perceptions support the first view, whereas official test results are understood generally to bear out the second. This suggests use of differing sets of criteria to appraise the effectiveness of education programs in Aboriginal communities.

In the first instance, the teacher attributed increased relevance of the CECs education program to the disciplined development of courses for secondary-aged students during

\textsuperscript{35} Statistics & Demography Unit (S&DU), “Selected Schools Enrolment Statistics”, NTDE, Darwin, 1995, records the highest attendance levels prior to 1993 as 64.1% in 1987, 63.6% in 1983 and 62.8% in 1989.
\textsuperscript{37} The teacher of secondary-aged students was the Indian woman referred to previously, nominated for consultation by an Aboriginal teacher as having full grasp of the Aboriginal perspective and local community perceptions and expectations.
\textsuperscript{38} Sharp, Gienda, “East Amhem Literacy Issues Consultation Report to Teachers” (initial draft), NTDE, Darwin, 1994, 2. This report was written by a non-Aboriginal principal of an urban primary school (seconded to research English literacy issues in East Arnhem) but she is experienced as a teacher and as a principal in a predominantly Aboriginal community. In the instance cited, she was reporting perceptions of personnel in schools and CECs.
the last five years.\textsuperscript{39} She felt students were also encouraged to pursue further studies as a consequence of the implementation of these courses. In 1994, there were twenty-two secondary-aged students enrolled in Intensive English (then Pre-Foundation Studies) and three in Foundation Studies,\textsuperscript{40} and in 1995 four were doing JSS courses through electronic classroom delivery. Some connection between education, training and employment was perceived but was qualified with the reality that such perception was severely limited by the paucity of employment opportunity at Gapuwiyak.

Progress in Aboriginalisation of the staff, referred to above, was seen as an outcome of the CECs education program and operation. There were ten professional staff members, of whom the principal and two of the teachers were Aboriginal. All support staff were Aboriginal, as already noted. There was also strong local encouragement for assistant teachers to advance their qualifications and training and support for Batchelor students from Gapuwiyak. Such employment opportunity as the CEC offers, currently and anticipated, is in itself seen as beneficial to the community.

The people consulted enthused about the enmeshing, albeit largely informal, of the indigenous culture in the CEC program. It was considered particularly important that it was evolving from yolgnu initiative and that it gave the community the opportunity to influence the substance of its children's learning. The Shared Program and use of both English and Djambarrpuyngu by staff and students have already been mentioned. Development of a data base in which Aboriginal knowledge and scientific detail on local flora and fauna were being collated in an environmental studies project was seen as another successful and productive venture.\textsuperscript{41} Pride was evident in the belief that yolgnu direct policy and practice at Gapuwiyak CEC.

Appraisal of the education program from two different perspectives, detected at Maningrida (see Figure 6.1), has a distinct form at Gapuwiyak. The local focus is on what the program embodies rather than what it achieves in tangible outcomes. Benefit from the services to the students personally and to the community, socially and culturally, both immediately and in the longer term, appears to be the principal criterion applied; positive effects are assumed. Economic benefit, other than in occasional placement in employment, barely rated mention.

\textsuperscript{39} The CEC Certificate Courses, Foundation Studies, Vocational Studies, General Studies and Initial Secondary Studies, were developed from 1989 as bridging courses to give secondary-aged Aboriginal students so inclined access to Junior Secondary Studies (JSS).

\textsuperscript{40} Rattigan, “Course Enrolments of Secondary-Aged Students in CECs - March 1994”.

\textsuperscript{41} The Gapuwiyak environmental studies project was initially inspired by the much-acclaimed NT Plants and Animals Project and subsequently acted as a catalyst itself, for the Maningrida-based Land and Learning Project.
Administrative Efficiency

Administrative self-management in Gapuwiyak CEC is developing its own character. Reference has already been made to financial decisions being made locally and processed through the East Arnhem regional office. The exacting demands upon the principal and her wide-ranging professional, social and cultural responsibilities have also been discussed. The leadership and administrative support infrastructure generated by an education institution of Gapuwiyak's size is another factor.\(^{42}\) It was exacerbated by the non-availability of a suitable person to fill the position of CEC secretary. A senior teacher was assigned to the day-to-day business administration of the CEC as a substantial part of the designated workload. The involvement of an experienced teacher in implementing the CEC's educational program was thus reduced. On the credit side, it gave a professional perspective to the administration and enabled the principal to concentrate on the major commitments of her role with minimal distraction by routine administrative matters.

Self-management of education at Gapuwiyak features other administrative assets, such as the liaison with the clinic and the community council and community participation. Local people indicated consistently that there is strong mutual support for and contribution to programs and activities generally. In particular, it is noteworthy that relationships involving the CEC are with the staff and not with the principal only, implying that an education community in its ideal conception is evolving and that the operation of the institution is becoming integral to the community and responsive to its dynamics. That in turn indicates local acceptance of authority over education in community activity and of the associated responsibility.

Re-ordering Priorities

The related concepts of Aboriginalisation of promotion positions and the role of a CEC council were introduced officially at Gapuwiyak in 1990.\(^{43}\) Nirrpurandji, when she was a principal-in-training and upgrading her qualifications, advocated an action group as a means to realise an Aboriginal community's influence in its education program.\(^{44}\) As the substantive principal of Gapuwiyak CEC from 1993, she has claimed that the CEC's curriculum recognises “the aspirations of yolgnu students and their community”. This has clearly been so in The Shared Program. Themes in this element, each of a term's

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\(^{42}\) ET4 principals in urban primary schools similarly experience difficulty with their leadership and administrative responsibilities until they qualify for an ET3 assistant principal.

\(^{43}\) The author and the East Arnhem Superintendent. Frank Stewart, introduced Aboriginalisation of promotional positions through the (then) embryonic mentor scheme and local governance of education with a school council to a meeting of community leaders at Gapuwiyak in 1990.

duration, have included communication, health, local history and the environment and have involved Aboriginal knowledge and local resources in the formal curriculum. Teachers' use of English and Djambarrpuynngu with their classes is standard practice.

An Aboriginal teacher asserted that English literacy and numeracy are regarded by the community as essential in its children's education. Another teacher separately endorsed this, adding that Aboriginalisation, including community involvement, is also a top priority. Nirrpurandji's conception of Aboriginalisation, as already discussed, is the most comprehensive, but she kept it in perspective in relation to mainstream Australia and the place of the conventional mainstream curriculum:

The parents of our students want them to grow up to be strong and capable Yolgnu adults. … The cultural background, languages, knowledge and experiences of students and their community (are recognised and valued) as part of (their) Education for life. … (O)ur main role is to provide sound literacy and numeracy training and a deeper understanding of Western culture for our students.

Reflecting on policy development at Gapuwiyak, she highlighted four principles:

• (making) difference between Yolgnu and Balanda knowledge explicit;
• (making) the similarities (e.g. human needs and wants) clear;
• (recognising that) in modern times, … Yolgnu are choosing to use and practice certain Balanda cultural things as well as (maintaining) traditional ways;
• (maintaining that) Yolgnu knowledge is to be treated with respect.46

There is consistency between the traditional cultural dimension of these principles and her earlier exposition of her conception of formal education in the context of Aboriginality. Referring to an earlier project in East Arnhem, she wrote that

Rom Nbenpanamirr Mala is a Yolgnu Matha phrase meaning ‘Law Makers’. It refers to the process of Yolgnu taking control of decision-making about their children's education and developing a pedagogy that bases Yolgnu knowledge in the curriculum. The purpose of the project… was to help the community develop its own Yolgnu pedagogy based on Yolgnu knowledge and values, Yolgnu Rom.47

45 Nirrpurandji, “Gapuwiyak CEC”.
46 Ibid.
47 Nirrpurandji, “Yolgnu Rom” 86.
Tangible progress towards realisation of many of the ultimate humanity-related ideals of self-management in education at Gapuwiyak has been made. It is ironic that this should have been achieved with involvement of neither an action group nor a CEC council. It is a laudable accomplishment.

Desire for effective adult education was stressed by the people consulted. The community and individual people would benefit most, it was felt, from vocational programs for young men and women in the twelve to twenty-five years age range. It was observed that this would be consistent with their traditionally being expected to contribute and to accept responsibility at the corresponding stage of their maturation.

**Community Awareness and Confidence**

Nirrpurandji stated that her people were “pleased to have a trained and qualified Aboriginal Principal from their own community”. It was evident, from discussions and from perusal of materials that Nirrpurandji had compiled, that the needs and expectations of this community in contemporary Australia were well to the fore in the development of the CEC's program and in its operation. That the community council and community members generally were both aware of and confident in their education services and the way they were managed was also clear. Nirrpurandji's ideal, of aligning CEC policy, management, curriculum and teaching with the knowledge, values and cultural heritage of the indigenous clientele and its needs in contemporary society, with local community control, stands out as the principal direction being taken. Belief that authority and responsibility were localised was evident, as were pride that this should be so and confidence in effective management.

Nirrpurandji's own status, as a community member and as the principal of the CEC, contribute to community confidence. Although she had stated publicly that she was respected locally in her traditional role and as the principal, she seemed less assured, privately, asking herself how she could be effective “as a manager within the expectations of 2 systems”, the NTDE and her society. As in other Aboriginal communities, local political machinations can disrupt the formal education program at Gapuwiyak. She felt that people should be able to disregard such intrigues where their children's education was concerned. The improved average attendance rate suggests that some headway has been made. She shared with colleagues elsewhere, no doubt the world over, frustration at what she saw as the limited community input she was able

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49 ibid...
to obtain. She can take heart from the extent to which her staff believe that she is successful in this respect.

Progress at Gapuwiyak

As shown throughout the impacts of self-management items listed in Table 6.3, effective community participation in formal education is evolving at Gapuwiyak. It is manifest in virtually all aspects of the CEC's operation and depends on active support from the staff, the community council, the community and public education administration. Ultimately, the catalyst is Nirrpurandji, the principal. She does not have a council to support, advise and assist her practically to promote community participation, so the extent and effectiveness of such local involvement are determined largely by her energy, personality and charisma and the level of support she can win. In such a situation, there is potential for a principal to be overwhelmed by the volume, diversity and intensity of the expectations of the involved parties and the contradictions they inevitably present. Nirrpurandji's own commitment and verve could also make the current momentum vulnerable if she were over-extended. The high level of community participation at Gapuwiyak is therefore fragile, owing to its dependence upon the calibre, status and personal qualities of this key player. Table 63 does not convey such a factor, other than in identifying that governance is vested in the office of principal, which is filled on appointment by the education agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>MANINGRIDAND IMPACT</th>
<th>GAPUWIYAK IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Participation</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>CEC Council, fragmentary.</td>
<td>Principal, cohesive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Substantial local influence on policy, program and operation.</td>
<td>Substantial local determination of policy, program and operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginalisation of Support Staff</td>
<td>Almost complete</td>
<td>Significant level of employment and use of</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant level of employment and use of local human resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. It is evident, from perusal of the text and Table 6.3, that there was considerable overlap in practice between sections and items as they were drawn up in the checklist, that some items would have been more appropriately located under different headings, and that some proved to be of limited value. With the benefit of this trial, the checklist can be revised, to loosen it and focus it more specifically for future application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>MANINGRIDA IMPACT</th>
<th>GAPUWIYAK IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginalisation of Professional Staff</td>
<td>Commenced.</td>
<td>Stimulating vision and aspirations.</td>
<td>Well advanced. Progress in realising vision and aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Casual Employment.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Additional employment and use of local human resources.</td>
<td>No. N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in Education Programs.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Beginning to link schooling and community living.</td>
<td>Yes. Linking schooling and community living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Resources in Education Programs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Beginning to link schooling and community living.</td>
<td>Yes. Linking schooling and community living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC-Community Projects.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>1 Linking schooling, traditional lore and the natural environment.</td>
<td>Yes. Linking schooling, traditional lore and the natural environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Welfare Initiatives.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>1 Priority for health in program and operation.</td>
<td>Yes. Highlighting health in operation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Culture in Programs.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Beginning to integrate culture</td>
<td>Yes. Integrating culture into formal schooling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>MANINGRIDA</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>GAPUWUYAK</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiatives to Mesh CEC &amp; Community.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Developing recognition as a community asset.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Recognition as integral to the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiatives in Routine Schedule</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Outcomes Participation.</td>
<td>Increased &amp; improved.</td>
<td>Increasing recognition and credibility.</td>
<td>increased &amp; improved</td>
<td>Valued and respected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAP indications.</td>
<td>(Not accessed).</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>(Not accessed).</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC Certification.</td>
<td>Established &amp; increasing.</td>
<td>Extended opportunity and prospects, increased retention.</td>
<td>Developing.</td>
<td>Extending opportunity and prospects modestly, increasing retention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>Principally Darwin, developing locally via DE</td>
<td>Valued, local access likely to develop and increase local retention &amp; overall stability.</td>
<td>Limited to Darwin, beginning locally via DE</td>
<td>Valued, local access may develop and increase local retention &amp; overall stability.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**ASPECT**  | **OUTCOME**  | **MANINGRIDA**  | **IMPACT**  | **GAPUWIYAK**  | **IMPACT**  
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---  
Administrative Efficiency  | Supply  | Management devolved  | Total control, accountable for public moneys allocated.  | Commitment with group management council.  | Decision-making, disposal with accountability, public moneys not handled.  
Assets.  | Management devolved.  | Local involvement in works projects, control of R A M.  | Liaison with group management council.  | Local priority-setting & advice re works, R&M.  
General administration.  | Self-sufficient.  | Expedient, efficient, but demanding.  | Liaison with group management council.  | expedient, efficient, accommodates local complications.  
Extra-ordinary resources.  | Entrepreneurial + Commonwealth Equity Programs.  | Substantial increase in resources.  | Commonwealth Modest increase in resources.  
Principal's accountability.  | Technically, to CEC Council, education system & employer  | Ready articulation with CEC Council chair & superintendent, formal & informal.  | Technically, Ready to articulation with superintendent & employer, morally to community, formal & informal.  

N.B. It is evident, from perusal of the text and Table 6.3, that there was considerable overlap in practice between sections and items as they were drawn up in the checklist, that some items would have been more appropriately located under different headings, and that some proved to be of limited value. With the benefit of this trial, the checklist can be revised, to loosen it and focus it more specifically for future application.
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<tr>
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<th>GAPUWIIYAK</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEC Council's accountability</td>
<td>Technically, to community &amp; education system</td>
<td>Effected informally locally, by chair &amp; members individually, and officially by Drincioal.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Emphases</td>
<td>English literacy, numeracy, indigenous languages &amp; culture &amp; mainstream Australian culture,</td>
<td>Public credibility of education program, cohesion of education community.</td>
<td>English literacy, Public credibility of education program, cohesion of mainstream Australian culture.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations of education &amp; training</td>
<td>To support community development &amp; participation in mainstream Australia</td>
<td>Promotes value of program to community, stimulates vision, aspirations and planning.</td>
<td>To realise community participation in mainstream Australia</td>
<td>Promotes value of program to community, stimulates vision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. It is evident, from perusal of the text and Table 6.3, that there was considerable overlap in practice between sections and items as they were drawn up in the checklist, that some items would have been more appropriately located under different headings, and that some proved to be of limited value. With the benefit of this trial, the checklist can be revised, to loosen it and focus it more specifically for future application.
### ASPECT | OUTCOME | MANINGRIDA | IMPACT | GAPUWIIYAK | IMPACT
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Community awareness & confidence in CEC | CEC council | Perceived positively | Developing integration of education in community development. | MA | N/A

Education service delivery. | Perceived positively, with concern for future of adult education & training registered. | Acceptance of authority and responsibility, increasingly respected and valued service. | Perceived positively, with need for adult education & training registered. | Assumption of authority and responsibility, respected and valued service.

Staff perception of community attitude toward CEC. | Ranges from apathetic to positive. | Distance between CEC and community remains. | Positive | Degree of integration of CEC and community.

Community perception of Aboriginalisation | Greater progress required. | Participation and planning stimulated, some impatience. | Pleased with progress. | Community supportive of what it observes.

N.B. It is evident, from perusal of the text and Table 6.3, that there was considerable overlap in practice between sections and items as they were drawn up in the checklist, that some items would have been more appropriately located under different headings, and that some proved to be of limited value. With the benefit of this trial, the checklist can be revised, to loosen it and focus it more specifically for future application.

Some staff perceptions of Aboriginalisation are disconcerting. That any Aboriginal members of staff should perceive that there is no such development whilst it is happening and involving themselves suggests poor awareness of either the policy or the process. The disinterest, in this area, of recently recruited non-Aboriginal staff indicates a lack of sensitivity and awareness and highlights the importance of stringent selection and preparation of personnel for individual Aboriginal communities. Official consideration is advisable.\(^{52}\)

The absence of a CEC council may be seen to restrict community input to decision-making. Conversely, it may be that since the principal, three teachers and all support staff are indigenous members of the community and related to each other, there is very real community input into decision-making without the formality of a council.

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\(^{52}\) Recruitment of teachers to work in remote Aboriginal communities and their subsequent induction and deployment is an area of difficulty, given the competing priorities of suitability and immediate availability when required.
Such a view would be valid but it leaves the onus upon the principal individually to consult, to decide, to implement her decisions and to field reactions. Given her particular standing, she needs support in the areas of policy and community relations to alleviate the pressures on her. The issue of stress for the principal under the prevailing circumstances warrants attention.

Local initiative and discretion are exercised in practice. Official sanction and formal elaboration would be advantageous, locally and at the system level. Alternatively, it may be appropriate for such development to be acknowledged, allowed, supported and encouraged with sensitive monitoring rather than swamping it with formality. The spirit of the policy seems most likely to be achieved through supporting this natural evolution of self-management; the handbook would become an operational manual on the completion of policy statements and a planning component would be a necessary addition. Effectively, some professional responsibilities and functions are accepted by the Aboriginal staff and the community, in practice if not always under regulation, within the structures in place.

The people who provided input were all members of the CEC staff. Since, with the exception of one teacher, they were relatively well-educated (in the formal sense), parents and community members of notable standing, their appreciation of the community's views of the education service and its delivery may taken as well-informed. Nirrpurandji's own ethic, the model she provides and her influence would also ensure honest representation.

The Gapuwiyak populace is evidently positive about its formal education service. The community is reported to be aware, supportive and confident with regard to the CEC's operation. In the local perception, it is the substance of the program that counts; it is endorsed. An effective adult education and training service is also considered necessary, as part of the services to be expected of the CEC.

Stability is evident in self-management of education at Gapuwiyak. Local acceptance of authority and discharge of the responsibility that accrues to such power are evolving naturally more than in response to central direction. Whether the positive and distinctive developments in administration of education services at Gapuwiyak are attributable to an acceptance of devolved functions under the system's policy of self-management may be debated. It could be argued that they would have happened in some form or another, given local circumstances, regardless of system policy. Another stance could be that this policy, to enable realisation of the potential benefit of local management of education services, was succeeding at Gapuwiyak. A cynical view could be that, faced with the prospect of compulsory devolution of administrative
functions, the principal decided to tackle the task positively. Each, and any other such rationalisation, is likely to be too simplistic. The facts are that the system's policy includes local self-management of education in Aboriginal communities and that this is evolving at Gapuwiyak, quite distinctively and attuned to local circumstances. It therefore warrants recognition, support and constructive guidance.

CONCLUSIONS FROM MANINGRIDA AND GAPUWIYAK

Maningrida and Gapuwiyak are predominantly indigenous communities in remote localities on the Arnhemland coast of northern Australia. Their physical environments are similar as are their histories of contact with alien influences. Otherwise they are distinct entities.

Self-management in education has been able to evolve in these communities rather than their being required to adopt and conform to a centrally-determined stereotypical model. With their individuality and relative insularity, self-managed education is evolving in each in accordance with their respective circumstances. Some similarities and differences, both relevant to and inherent in local self-management of education, can be identified.

Analysis of these case studies, summarised in Table 6.3, is instructive. Some impact is detected or deduced in most instances from observation. Comparison in terms of quality and effectiveness, other than on solid data, however, would be essentially subjective. Given demographic and socio-economic differences, even with such information, comparison would need to be approached cautiously; they are distinct groups of people living and working in differing circumstances. Some features potentially of interest have emerged. They stand out in several instances for their congruence, in others for their incongruence. They differ from those one might expect to find in mainstream urban primary and secondary education institutions.

The communities had similar views on priorities in curriculum and in the basis of their assessment of formal education programs. English literacy, numeracy and familiarity with both traditional culture and mainstream Australia to meet local needs were seen as the priority requirements of formal education programs; local perceptions of effectiveness of formal education programs were based on what they comprise rather than on what they achieve. In the latter, the evident focus on substance rather than on results may reflect a view of what matters in an education service that differs from the mainstream convention. Alternatively, it may be a concern to have a program that is regarded locally as appropriate before worrying about outcomes. One way or the other, it indicates a need for ‘two-way’ education, for both the clientele and the providers,
on appraising programs and assessing teaching and learning in Aboriginal communities. From a system perspective, these common features are related, embracing in the self-management context the curriculum and assessment, human resource development, community relations and operational ranges of functions.

Divergence was just as clear in the perceived value of formal education to the economic activity of the area and in the adoption of formal structures under self-management in education. Maningrida rated formal education highly in relation to the local economy whereas Gapuwiyak acknowledged only a link. On structures, there is a well-established CEC council at Maningrida to which functions have been devolved and which plays the major role in local policy development whereas at Gapuwiyak the combination of the principal and the regional group management council largely achieves the same ends without the formality of a local CEC council. Such differences may be grasped in terms of essential differences between the communities. Considerable disparity on the perceived economic potential of education is consistent with the relative levels of economic activity and aspiration, comparatively high at Maningrida and low at Gapuwiyak. The presence or absence of a CEC council may similarly reflect relative needs. Maningrida, a "'melting pot' of varying languages, 'tribes' and clans"53 may require a formal structure for local decision-making, whilst the homogeneity of the Gapuwiyak people may render that unnecessary. It seems that community dynamics influence the direction and form of self-management of education, given the opportunity to evolve. From an operational point of view, such evolution should be allowed to proceed, with safeguards in the interests both of genuine self-management and of locally appropriate provisions.

A further feature emerges, common to both communities and distinguishing their approach to self-management in education from their mainstream counterparts. Inevitably, the wish for local authority stems from a natural desire for power over a human service and this appears common across communities accepting devolved functions. Beyond politics, however, divergence in motivation is evident. At Maningrida and Gapuwiyak, the wish to make education services more relevant was stressed whereas urban school communities are more concerned to improve the effectiveness of the existing services. This is consistent with the difference in criteria for appraisal of programs, wherein the Aboriginal clientele, in these communities at least, focusses on substance, in contrast with the preoccupation with results evinced by the system and mainstream clients generally.

53 Benn, 14.
There are several other pertinent points. In the Aboriginalisation of school staff, leadership and responsibility roles tend to fall to people who have authority in their own respective rights in their communities. Regardless of these people's commitments to formal education, however, their traditional community and family obligations remain paramount. Commitment to mourning and funeral arrangements generally take precedence over all other matters. Consequent disruption of attendance and routines, with its adverse impact on the effectiveness of formal education, has long been contentious for balanda involved in and responsible for education. This will be a general issue in self-management in Aboriginal education communities across the NT.

It is apparent from the instances considered that self-management in education in Aboriginal communities differs from that in the urban centres. Difference is similarly evident in its evolution from one community to another and, superficially at least, more markedly so than amongst urban communities. Such differences are instructive for systemic management of the policy, especially with respect to its implementation in Aboriginal communities generally. Substantially more research is required to validate (or disprove) the conclusions drawn here and subsequently to develop strategies; one cannot generalise from observations in two Arnhemland communities.

54 The impact of recent deaths on the research is worthy of note. Cultural commitment of Aboriginal people who bore responsibility and authority both in the communities involved and in education meant that two important sources of evidence could not be consulted directly.
Chapter 7

The Shape Of Self-Management In NT Education

The study has explored the controversial issue of local self-management in education as an analysis of a public policy in the Territory. It also looked at the policy's implementation and its impact in two Top End Aboriginal communities. The thesis records the study and its findings, thereby providing some feedback for interested parties and, as a side benefit, addressing the paucity of research in the area in Australia noted by Sharpe. The principal findings, including some directions for further research and system activity, will now be reviewed.

Four broad characteristics of the policy have come to the fore. Consistency and durability, over almost a quarter of a century, are clearly evident in the conception, development and implementation of an initially radical policy. It began as an innovative scheme of governance in public education conceived for progressive Canberra in the early 1970s and has been grasped, adapted and applied with effect in the NT, including traditionally-oriented remote Aboriginal communities in the Top End. A high degree of congruence has emerged, between policy process theory and the dynamics of the processes through which this policy has been developed and implemented, revealed with reference to the model (MPCE) derived from Ostrom and Sabatier. Less remarkable but potentially more important, implementation has advanced and consolidated to the point where overall review would be timely. In view of the controversy that has erupted during the process, the NTDE would be well-advised to initiate such an exercise as a constructive measure rather than having it imposed from an external, most likely negatively critical, source. The NTG would then be placed in a strong position to account for this major policy direction.

CONSISTENCY AND DURABILITY

The NT has been in the vanguard of self-management, a widespread contemporary direction in the administration of public education. The policy whereby Territory education communities are given authority and responsibility, in partnership with the NTG, to manage their own services has been traced from its origins to its current implementation. The essence of the policy itself, the opportunities it offers and the means by which its goals may be realised in practice have also been canvassed.

1 Professor Wally Neal told the author, in Alice Springs, c. 1976–8, of his surprise and gratification at the extent to which the recommendations of the Neal Radford Report had been implemented, especially the more ambitious ones on peer assessment and community involvement.

2 Community involvement in governance in public education was innovative in Australia at the time (1972–73) but had been implemented throughout PNG, from 1986–69.
The genesis of community-based education governance in the NT was its conception by Neal and Radford with a Commonwealth system perspective and a Canberra focus. It was promoted in the NT under CDE administration. The fundamental principles were formally adopted for the Territory from Self-Government, founded in legislation, promulgated in policy and practised under regulation. Comprehensive consultation in policy development is entrenched, the ideal of such practice tarnished by publicly perceived predetermination of its outcomes in some instances. The credibility of the system was eroded by inconsistency evident in the education-oriented rhetoric of the policy's promotion when viewed alongside the economic imperative that became its real driving force. Optimum efficiency and effectiveness in implementation of the policy was consequently hampered. Nonetheless, the NTG persisted. Some cynicism lingers but the vision for the ACT is very largely realised in the NT.

Hindsight indicates that the NTG and the NTDE would have been wise to acknowledge in 1986 that the revision of management of Territory education was economically driven. There would have been public outcry but there would have been credit for candidness. Perceived subterfuge and heavy-handedness eroded trust and aroused cynicism and resentment, deepening the gap between school communities and the system's central administration. It would also have helped if MLAs had been better informed about the evolution of self-management in education in the NT at the time, although the NTPR shows that issue was rarely taken over inaccurate assertions. The restoration of the trust and confidence lost over the requirement that schools accept devolved functions still poses a long-term challenge, likely to be amplified by the current enterprise bargaining dispute between the AEU(NT) and the NTG.

Two other anomalies were identified in the research. First, although the policy embodies the democratic principles of public participation, the process has been one of ‘top down’ imposition by the Government. Secondly, apart from the political and official rhetoric and educators' and academics' supportive philosophical views, there was a dearth of substantial evidence to justify parents' involvement in a school's program in the interests of their children's education. There was some indication that it was irrelevant but none that it was harmful. General public acceptance of the policy and parents' participation in its effective implementation under these circumstances could therefore constitute a third anomaly. Alternatively, it could indicate public recognition of the NTG's wisdom or apathy about children's education or resignation to the inevitable.

Despite rhetoric-reality gaps and other such distractions and the lack of evidence to support it on educational grounds, the policy is not necessarily a bad one. On the contrary, there are instances where it appears to be working effectively, with the
opportunities it offers valued by people involved even with the heavy demands they believe it makes of them. They are inclined, however, to concentrate principally on administrative functions. Ironically, success tends to be experienced most commonly where the policy has been grasped and applied both in the spirit of the rhetoric and with the pragmatism of the underlying reality. There remains a reservation, that even in instances of clearly evident success, school communities do not appear to have turned to full account, or even recognised, the extent of the leeway available to them.

The education system is now mainly in consolidation mode, in contrast with the hectic developmental period from Self-Government to the implementation of the ERC measures. Local self-management of education was a major and radical policy direction taken by the NTG and aspects of its implementation were at the centre of most of the education-related public debate and controversy throughout that era. As the system has settled, it is important to monitor and fine-tune the policy in action. Development of school group management councils and conversion of the SDP to the School Management Handbook are evidence that this is happening. Further work in education communities, to extend appreciation of the authority and responsibility devolved and the flexibility available under local self-management in the professional domain, would enhance realisation of the policy's ideals.

**EFFECT IN REMOTE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

Exploratory appraisal of the policy in action was made at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak. The purpose was to make an indicative assessment of its implementation and impact in two communities which differed in several respects. These exercises were instructive but the findings were by no means conclusive from a system perspective.

Local acceptance of the policy and involvement in its implementation were confirmed in each instance. Awareness and commitment, to the point of adaptation to local circumstances and active and constructive local participation, were evident. Although not necessarily attributable directly to self-management, student participation had improved in both cases. Increased community awareness of and confidence in their education institutions and in the local relevance of their respective programs and operations could reasonably be attributed, partially at least, to self-management. There was no evidence of any associated improvement in scholastic achievement but considerable increase in provision for secondary-aged students, from another initiative, augured well and was embraced by the communities. The general indications were that self-management was having a positive impact in social and cultural terms and for the public credibility of the education services and institutions. This confidence was
based on programs and operations, not on academic outcomes, but it was qualified by a commonly felt need for adequate post-school education and training service.

Maningrida and Gapuwiyak have much in common. Their differences, however, in history, size and composition especially, appear to be major factors in their management of education locally. Ancillary provision, policy advice, development of structure and planning were emphasised in the larger, longer established, relatively entrepreneurial and more complex community, whereas co-ordinated comprehensive Aboriginalisation of the education services was progressing in the other. That the principal of the smaller unit was an Aboriginal woman of traditional standing in the community was another contributing factor. The potential for quite distinct implementation of self-management in individual Aboriginal education communities throughout the Territory was evident.

Such distinction has two dimensions. One is in implementation of self-management in education amongst Aboriginal communities across the Territory. Some of the characteristics shared by Maningrida and Gapuwiyak may be found elsewhere, others may not. Marked divergence in common characteristics and numerous differing ones may be anticipated, in view of the extent to which these neighbouring Arahemland communities differ from each other. More specific research across the Territory should reveal common trends, divergences and differences. The other area of distinction likely to emerge is in trends in Aboriginal communities in comparison with those in urban locations. Political reality gives priority for attention to the former but the two cannot be separated in terms of importance.

The research at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak has indicated similarities and differences which could provide the basis for further research. Strengths and weaknesses may be extrapolated from data gathered in a representative sample of communities, the former to be collated for reference and the latter to enable remedial action to be taken. In this way, children's best educational interests may be safeguarded and enhanced, successes may be acknowledged and capitalised upon, areas of need may be addressed and the NTG would be able to defend the policy and account for its implementation. The AEP is now proceeding to its third triennium-A demand for evidence of realisation of its purposes and of lasting benefit from commitment of considerable sums of public finance may be anticipated in the lead-up to the fourth and (supposedly) final triennium. In the same vein, implementation of the RCIADIC's recommendations is under constant scrutiny for evidence of results. The Howard Coalition Government is yet to reveal its attitude towards these Labor-instigated programs but their outcomes need to be known regardless of the prognosis for their future. Without substantial evidence, it is difficult to withstand the destructive criticism of activists, interest groups and opportunists that bedevils services for the Aboriginal clientele and their delivery.
The information gleaned at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak also highlighted some philosophic issues that need to be addressed in further research. Some contention between program substance and delivery that are considered appropriate locally and the NTG's responsibility for the formal academic education of school-aged students, with self-management an over-arching policy, is a critical one. Whether functional levels of English literacy and numeracy amount to educational standards commensurate with those envisaged under the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia, to which the NT is a signatory, is another. Feppi and the AEP priorities highlight educational outcomes for Aboriginal children on a par with those for non-Aboriginal children and the RCIADIC identified lack of success in the formal education process as an underlying cause of the incidence of Aboriginal deaths in custody. Comparatively low Aboriginal participation in tertiary education has long been used by critics to berate public education systems. Whilst there is no doubt that English literacy and numeracy are the top priorities at Maningrida and Gapuwiyak, with cultural relevance a close rival, scholastic accomplishment is not. If this represents Aborigines' expectations generally, as is likely, judicious promotion of academic achievement amongst field staff and school and CEC councillors is needed. It would be appropriate to manage this in association with the PAP feedback and the moderation of the CEC Certificate Courses.

THE CONGRUENCE OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

The development and implementation of the policy, mainly from Self-Government, were clarified with reference to theory-based policy analysis models. Ostrom's models of Institutional Analysis and Sabatier's Competing Advocacy Coalitions model proved most useful. Ostrom's models led to delineation of the fields of process (see Figure 1.1). The iterative activity throughout the process and within each field was illustrated with adaptation of her Working Parts model (see Figure 1.2) and between the fields with reference to her Three Levels model (see Figures 1.3-5). The overall model developed for the study (MPCE) was a simple derivative of Sabatier's GM (see Figure 1.2). In Dye's classification, it was a descriptive process model.

The model and its components, derived from Ostrom and Sabatier, were developed for closer consideration of this policy process. Interaction between one field and another and between the fields and the clientele was illustrated, with their interfaces defined (see Figure 4.1). This brought together the elements of the policy dynamo, reflecting Sabatier's Policy Sub-System, its Advocacy Coalitions and Policy Brokers components in particular. The policy dynamo was then located in the MPCE (see Figure 4.2), a further modification of Sabatier's GM.
The theoretical models lent themselves readily to studying policy development in Territory education. Ostrom's Levels, Constitutional Choice, Collective Choice and Operational Choice, converted almost directly to the political, administrative and operational fields in which policy in the education system is actually conceived and developed, expedited and implemented. Her two models together illustrated the iteration involved and were adapted to show the high level of interaction typical of the Territory education policy process within each of the fields and between them. In the MPCE, COGSO and the AEU(NT) were identifiable in the policy dynamo as the principal advocacy groups and NTDE officials, with Spring most prominent, as the main policy brokers. The high degree of congruence between the theoretical models of Ostrom and Sabatier and the NT education policy process enabled development of a rational conceptual framework for the latter and helped understanding of the dynamics involved. An efficiency audit of the process could be based on the model developed.

REVIEW TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS

Feedback is an essential element of a policy process. Its integral vitality is illustrated in the theoretical models and in their adaptation to the NT education situation. The theory has worked in practice with local self-management in public education, from conception through to implementation. Feedback from the policy's implementation appears to have received less attention than the other elements. Implementation in the field needed to be allowed time to evolve, one could argue, in the wake of the ERC measures. This would be valid; over three years have elapsed, however, since the Devolution Symposium. The policy is important and sensitive: it is an overarching one directing delivery of a major human service; it was promulgated as having been designed to improve educational outcomes for children; and it was conceived, in the latter 1980s and early 1990s, as an economy measure in a costly industry yielding a return that defies quantification. It is therefore necessary and timely that the impact of the policy's implementation be appraised without undue delay.

Some feedback is obviously occurring and being heeded. As new input, it is generating further activity. This is evident within institutions and their communities generally, as they adjust to improve the efficiency of their operations, and within the system, which is similarly modifying with the benefit of experience. The conception of school group management councils, the passage of enabling legislation and their subsequent evolution is an example of feedback in action: data from implementation in the

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3 Cf. Urvet, Heatley and Alcorta (1980), who observed that “bureaucratic inertia and community apathy (were) pervading the new structures” and predicted that “the traditional actors - educational administrators, teachers and parent organizations … - (would) again be the dominant force in policy-making”, have been proven correct.
operational field is fed through the administrative field to the political field, policy is refined in response and is then converted through administrative activity into operation. The preparation of the School Management Handbook is another example; it is a refinement of policy implementation, effected in the light of the controversy resulting from mandatory devolution, recognition that self-management is the policy and devolution a means to that end and from practical experience in expedition and execution. Both illustrate the iteration in the process; implementation generates feedback which converts to input and in turn generates further activity. It is all part of the fine-tuning that is essential in consolidating the system and its services. These examples differ in the iteration respectively involved; in the first it occurred entirely within the policy dynamo and involved all three fields and in the second there was no need for reference to the political field in responding to the feedback. It should be noted, however, that both examples are primarily administrative, as distinct from educational, in substance.

An active, responsive and fine-tuned system is critical to effective service delivery. Since the system exists to provide the service and so to fulfil the society's educational needs, outcomes are the priority concern. In public education in the Territory, the policy of local self-management directs service delivery, which, in turn, must be accounted for in terms of its outcomes. A rejuxtaposition of priorities emerges. The rhetoric enshrouding promulgation and promotion of the policy was oriented towards children's educational benefit but its real justification became fiscal necessity. In a review, evaluation in terms of educational outcomes for children is paramount, since that is the area of need for which the services are required, yet the imperative of economic efficiency is a reality that must also be accommodated. Consequently, accountability must be in terms both of beneficial educational impact and of appropriate and responsible resource acquisition and management. Comprehensive review of the policy, then, would involve evaluation of the professional and administrative dimensions of its implementation and an analysis of the findings. Such a review would provide substantial feedback as input to the process as a whole and to its individual fields for information and appropriate action.

WHAT NEXT?

The direction the study in hand could, or should, now take is evident. Further research through case studies, more focussed with the benefit of the two exploratory ones, is needed to develop an appreciation of the impact of local self-management of education services in Aboriginal communities across the Territory. Two potentially important projects could follow: the development of a set of strategies to capitalise upon strengths and to address weaknesses and the crafting of a process for promoting and monitoring
academic achievement in self-managing Aboriginal education communities without impinging upon local prerogative and responsibility. The latter obviously anticipates one finding, that in order for outcomes for Aboriginal students to improve, as envisaged by the NAC, the NAEC and the RCIADIC, a greater emphasis upon students' scholastic accomplishment in local management of formal education is essential. Positive outcomes from these proposals would be advantageous to both the Aboriginal clientele and the NTG.  

Three ultimate outcomes are envisaged: academic standards for Aboriginal students of school age in rural and remote communities should improve, eventually to be equitable with those for non-Aboriginal Australians, with responsibility retained in the communities individually; solid data with which to enhance the NTDE's accountability, in terms of educational outcomes and the commitment of resources, would be assembled and analysed; and the NTG would be given evidence potentially vindicating the policy and its implementation and indicating future directions. Ideally, educational, social, fiscal and political interests would all be satisfied!

Whilst the immediate priorities of educational outcomes and accountability tend to demand priority attention, the broader developmental perspective should be maintained. The concept of development is taken to incorporate its integral and mutually dependent social, cultural and economic elements. The devolution of priority-setting and decision-making affords the community opportunity to assume and exercise authority and responsibility with respect to the substance and the delivery of its education and training services. If it is accepted that education and training are fundamental to development, in this case self-management in Aboriginal communities, it follows that education and training services are integral and essential to planning, implementing, evaluating and reviewing community development. A review of self-management in education in Aboriginal communities must take this dimension into account.

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4 The author contends that, whilst the need for research and follow-up is acute in Aboriginal communities, the same vital need applies universally.
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Most of the classification of references that follows is straightforward. In some instances, the sorting of documents into primary and secondary sources may seem arbitrary but it is determined deliberately by the principal use made of the individual items. The rule of thumb applied is that, where a document is part of the process, it is a primary reference and, where it reports or comments on the process, it is a secondary one. The need for fine distinction arises where an item is commentary initially and becomes integral to subsequent development; if its relevance to the study lies in its comment, it is secondary and if it contributes to the process it is primary; if both criteria apply, it is listed as a primary source.

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