

“MAKING THINGS COME GOOD”

ABORIGINES AND MINERS AT ARGYLE



Photograph Courtesy Argyle July 2003

Kim Elizabeth Doohan
(Master of Arts – Anthropology)

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Human Geography
Macquarie University

November 2006

Table of Contents

Abstract	vii
Declaration	ix
Table of Key Players	x
Timeline of Key Events	xii
Acknowledgements	xiv
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Thesis Goals and Background	12
Aborigines and Miners	22
Argyle As A Case Study	26
The Analytic Context	32
CHAPTER 2	39
ABORIGINES AND MINERS IN THE LITERATURE	39
Aborigines and Miners	41
Historical Context	44
The Impact of Mining on Aboriginal People	52
The East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project – EKIAP	56
The 1991 Crocodile Hole Meeting	60
The Legacy of Early Studies of Aborigines and Miners	63
Argyle in the Literature	65
Concluding Remarks	71
CHAPTER 3	73
RESEARCH METHODS, THEORETICAL INFLUENCES, ETHICAL ISSUES, AND SOURCES OF DATA	73
Background	75
Theoretical Influences	77
Field Work as Method	80
Ethics as Method	82
The Data	85
Archival Material	87
Argyle Archives	89
CRA/Rio Tinto Archives	96
Comalco Archives	97
Kimberley Land Council Archives	99
Warmun Community Archive Files	100
Interview Material	102
Corporate Interview Material	104
Interviews With Aboriginal People	106
CHAPTER 4	108
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THE KIMBERLEY AND THEIR POST-CONTACT HISTORY	108
The East Kimberley Region	110
Kimberley Aboriginal Cultures	115
The Concept of Country	117
The Study Area	118
Identity and the MoU of 2001	122
Contemporary Aboriginal Settlement Patterns	123
Regional Centres and Aboriginal Communities	125
The Post Contact Historical Context	130
Conclusions	137
CHAPTER 5	139
CRA LIMITED AND THE MAKING OF THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR AGREEMENT	139
The Evolution of Argyle’s Corporate Structure	141
History of Diamond Exploration in the Kimberley	141
CRA Limited – Corporate Culture & Structure	146
Background	146
CRA’s Philosophy and The Corporate View	149
Early Engagements between CRAE and Aborigines at Argyle	160
Signing the Good Neighbour Agreement	180

CHAPTER 6	183
THE ABORIGINAL CULTURAL CONTEXT	183
Anthropological Work in the Kimberley	183
Early Work	183
Phyllis Kaberry's East Kimberley Research	184
Post World War II	186
Key Cultural Practices of the Gija, Miriwoong and Malngin	190
Kinship and the Skin System	191
Descent and other Country Connections	196
Gender	200
Decision Making	204
The Dreaming	206
The Ngarranggarni	207
CHAPTER 7	210
WIRNAN, KURARA, MANTHE AND 'JOONBA'	210
The Wirnan	210
Introductory Remarks	210
Anthropological Interpretations and Descriptions of the Wirnan	213
Geographical Extent of The Wirnan	219
Cultural Capital At Argyle - Kurara, Manthe and 'Joonba'	222
Introductory Remarks	222
Kurara - "To Make More" or "Talking to Land"	229
Manthe	234
Manthe - A Funerary Rite (or 'Smoking Ceremony')	236
Manthe - the Host / Guest Relationship	237
'Joonba' - "Dreaming" the Dreaming and Dealing with Disorder	239
The Two 'Joonba': Daiwul and Fire Fire Burning Bright (Marnem, Marnem Dililib Benuwarrenji)	243
Daiwul	243
Fire Fire Burning Bright - Marnem, Marnem Dililib Benuwarrenji	244
CHAPTER 8	249
ENACTING THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR APPROACH	249
Introductory Remarks - The Good Neighbour in Context	250
Formal Articulation of the Good Neighbour at Argyle	254
The Good Neighbour Policy (1980 - 95)	257
The Good Neighbour Programme	258
Wirnan and the Good Neighbour as Practice at Argyle	260
Indigenous Accounts of Argyle and The Wirnan	268
The Good Neighbour Comes Under Attack	273
Argyle Social Impact Group (ASIG)	277
The Good Neighbour 1993 - 1996	283
Extension of Good Neighbour Funds for Other Projects	284
Daiwul Gidja Cultural Group	285
"No More Toyotas"	288
Signatories Fund	290
Concluding Remarks	292
CHAPTER 9	295
EXTENDING THE LIFE OF ARGYLE: Technological Innovation and Ceremonial Performance	295
Ceremonial Performances at Argyle	302
Manthe	305
Manthe as a Welcome to the Argyle Mine	306
What the Welcome Manthe Looks Like	309
Manthe as a Funerary Ceremony	319
The Meaning of Manthe	321
Alternative Interpretations of the Continued Productivity of the Mine	322
The 'Ground Breaking' and 'Underground' Manthe	324
CHAPTER 10	336
BEYOND ICONIC SIMPLICITY	336
BIBLIOGRAPHY	352
APPENDICES	399

Plates, Maps and Figures

PLATES

Plate 1: Barramundi Gap before Mining	1
Plates 2(a), (b) & (c): First Load of Ore Crushed from AKI	10
Plates 3a (1981),b,c & d (1985): The continuing transformations of Barramundi Gap	11
Plate 4: Argyle Diamond Mine (2003)	12
Plate 5: Warehouse at Argyle Mine Site	89
Plate 6: Wandarrrie Community Relations Office (2002)	93
Plate 7: Brendan Hammond (Argyle) and Tom Birch (Chair KLC) Signing the MoU – 27 September 2001	94
Plate 8: The Bungle Bungles	113
Plate 9: Majestic Mountains	113
Plate 10: Rugged Ranges	113
Plate 11 Desert Regions	113
Plate 12: Different Wurranggu	223
Plate 13: Men singing with Didgeridoo	227
Plate 14: Men and Women Singing Together	228
Plate 15: Water Manthe	238
Plates 16, 17 and 18 Daiwul Gidja Culture Group Activities	286
Plate 19 : Welcoming the Rio Tinto Board 24 April 2003	306
Plate 20: Women Welcoming Miners	308
Plate 21: Miners Showing Respect	309
Plates 22a & b: Placing Gathered Leaves in Central Location	310
Plate 23: Making a Smoky Fire	310
Plate 24: Making Music and Singing the Welcome Song	311
Plate 25 : Women Dancing Around Smoky Fire	312
Plate 26: Coming to the Smoky Fire	312
Plates 27a & b: The Dancing Women Welcome the Miners	313
Plate 28: Going Through the Smoke	313
Plate 29: Brushing With Warmed Leaves	314
Plate 30: Showing Respect	314
Plate 31: Explaining Manthe	315
Plate 32: Neminuwarlin Dance Group Members Preparing to Perform	319
Plate 33 : Commencing the Smoking Ceremony	320
Plate 34 : Smoking the Vehicle and Workers in the Open Pit	320
Plate 35: Performing Kurara	323
Plate 36: Prior to Construction (left)	326
Plate 37: The Commencement of Construction (right)	326
Plate 38: Daiwul Joonba	326
Plate 39: Fire Fire Burning Bright	327
Plate 40: Reviewing Images	328
Plate 41: 'The Drill'	329
Plate 42: Talking to the Barramundi	330
Plate 43: Indicative Smoke Underground Welcoming Ceremony	331
Plate 44: The Smoke is the Barramundi	331
Plate 45: Smoke Fills the Tunnel, further evidence of the Barramundi	332
Plate 46: Water Manthe	333
Plate 47: Smoke Manthe	333

MAPS

Map 1: The Kimberley	2
Map 2: Argyle Mine Lease	3
Map 3: Argyle Good Neighbour Communities (1980-2004)	17
Map 4: Kimberley Region Local Government Boundaries	109
Map 5: Argyle Good Neighbour Communities (2004 -)	124
Map 6: Wirnan Routes 1 & 2	221

FIGURES

Figure 1: Indicative Headlines of 'Noonkanbah Dispute' (late 1970s and early 1980s)	7
Figure 2: Indicative Headlines of Argyle Agreement Making	9
Figure 3: Media Responses to the Development of Argyle	27
Figure 4: Indicative Media Headlines	48
Figure 5: Ideal Marriage Partners and Offspring (Gija)	194
Figure 6: Summary of East Kimberley Public Performative Styles	229

Appendices

Appendix 1:	Good Neighbour Agreement
Appendix 2:	Argyle Participation Agreement of 2004 (CD-ROM)
Appendix 3:	Leon Davis 1995 speeches (1995a, 1995b)
Appendix 4:	Kimberley Land Council Research Agreement
Appendix 5:	Rio Tinto Research Agreement
Appendix 6:	Argyle Letter
Appendix 7:	Comalco Letter
Appendix 8:	Macquarie University Ethics Clearance
Appendix 9:	Summary of Argyle / CRA Corporate Structure

Abbreviations

ADM	Argyle Diamond Mine
AIAS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AJV	Ashton Joint Venture
ALRA	Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act (1976)
ASIG	Argyle Social Impact Group
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CEDP	Community Development Employment Programme
CRA	Conzinc Riotinto Australia
CRAE	Conzinc Riotinto Australia Exploration
EKIAP	East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project
KLC	Kimberley Land Council

ABSTRACT

In 1980, in the East Kimberley region of Western Australian, a major diamond-bearing lamproite source was found in the southern end of the Ragged Range. The Miners later named this site AK1 (Argyle Kimberlite No. 1). This place was also of particular significance to local Aboriginal people. It is one of the numerous resting places of the female Barramundi creative Dreaming being and the site where some Dreamtime Women attempted to capture her with a spinifex fish trap. Following this discovery, of diamonds *and* the Barramundi, the transnational mining company, CRA Ltd, signed an agreement with five known Aboriginal traditional owners. The agreement provided for a range of benefits to flow to Aboriginal people and for local Aboriginal opposition to a foreshadowed diamond mine to be withdrawn, giving CRA secure tenure over the resource and what became known as the Argyle Diamond Mine. This action, on the part of the company and the Aboriginal people, became a contentious and contested political situation. The thesis uses the Argyle Diamond Mine as a case study of relations between 'Aborigines' and 'Miners.'

The aim of the study is both theoretical and practical: to investigate the relationships that exist (or might exist) between 'Aborigines and Miners' at Argyle (or any where else) as a situation of dispossession and exploitation or political oppression reduces Aboriginal agency to virtual invisibility. Representation of the relationships in terms of a simple binary between dispossessed Aboriginal victims and powerful corporate actors fails to tell us what it is that is happening at the site of engagement. To try to measure success or failure in terms of percentages of profit, numbers of employees or other 'tangible' indicators would obscure the humanity of the relationships that are formed and reformed at such sites. Nor does it gives us any insight as to how particular 'Aborigines' or 'Miners' see themselves and each other, or how they maintain their boundaries and identity with each other as situated co-residents within a transformed and transforming landscape, the very contextualised and activated 'space' generated by mining. Contextualised because there are at least two world views operating on, within and around the landscape; a western scientific epistemological framework located within a 'corporate culture' directed to mining and making a profit and, for Aboriginal people, the Dreaming which demands an essential reciprocity of relationships to ensure continuity of life and connection to country.

At Argyle, this co-location of a sacred place and a diamond resource has come to represent a major challenge to the worldviews of the local Aboriginal people, senior Argyle managers and various non-indigenous commentators. This thesis examines, in ethnographic detail what matters to the local Aboriginal people and to Argyle. It considers how they have attempted to make sense of this 'co-location' and how they engage with each other. In particular the thesis is concerned with how these engagements have been approached both by Aboriginal people and by Argyle and it explores the kinds of strategies both have deployed as

negotiations have unfolded within this context of co-location and cultural difference using unimpeded access to corporate archival material, extensive interviews with corporate decision-makers, and ethnographic engagement with local Gija people of more than twenty years as the empirical foundation of its analysis. In the process of untangling the web of relationships and events that have taken place since the establishment of the Argyle mine, the thesis provides an account of the history of Argyle since the initial discovery of diamonds in 1979. A major focus of this historical account is the Good Neighbour Agreement, how and why it came into being, how it was enacted and transformed through time, and, importantly, how it was understood both by the Argyle Miners and by local Aboriginal people. The thesis uses the window of engaged performance to examine what matters to the local Aboriginal people and to Argyle by providing a "thick description" of the Aboriginal cultural domain, most particularly ritual performance, and the corporate cultural domain, most particularly formal agreement making and implementation. In presenting this data my analysis suggests that the iconic simplicity that dominates the representation of Aborigines and Miners is neither accurate nor adequate.

DECLARATION

I, Kim Elizabeth Doohan, certify that the research embodied in this thesis is original; that the ideas of others used in the research have been duly cited; and that this thesis (and parts thereof) have not been used towards a degree at other institutions of tertiary education. Ethics approval for this research was obtained from the Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee 29JUN2001-D036.

(Kim Elizabeth Doohan)

23 October 2006

Key Players In The Argyle Case

Name	Role (Corporate)
Atkinson, Warren	Group Geologist CRA Exploration Pty Ltd, responsible for CRA's Western Region Exploration Division 1970s/80s
Bates, Rod	Involvement with Argyle started at the commissioning phase, he was part of the team headed by George Gauci. Initially Administration Manager he then became Mine Manager after Gauci and later General Manager Operations at Argyle (1987 – 1994).
Bell, Mike	Community Liaison Officer, Melbourne
Butcher, Neil	First Manager Community Relations Argyle with other responsibilities over time (1980 - 1997) (informal interview)
Collier, John	Exploration Director, CRA Limited responsible for exploration at CRA Group Executive level 1970s/80s CRA
Davis, Leon	CEO CRA (1994 - 1996) and Rio Tinto (1997 - 2000) (formal interview)
Gauci, George (dec)	Commissioning Mine Manager Argyle and later General Manager Operations (1980 - 1987) (formal interview)
Graham Guinness	Argyle General Manager Operations (1996 - 1998)
Hammond, Brendan	Argyle General Manager Operations (1998 - 2002), Managing Director Argyle Diamonds (2002 - 2005) (informal interview/conversations)
Hughes, Frank (dec)	Senior Geologist CRAE/AJV 1976-1980, signatory to the Good Neighbour Agreement for CRAE (formal interviews)
Lesley, Jonathon	Rio Tinto Group Executive Diamond Division (formal interview)
O'Leary, Mick	General Manager Ashton Joint Venture, later Managing Director Argyle (1979 - 1985) and signatory to the Good Neighbour Agreement for CRAE, O'Leary was an Argyle board member in 1995
Sir Roderick Carnegie	CEO CRA (1972 - 1986) (formal interview)
Wand, Paul	Vice President Aboriginal Relations 1995 - 2000 Rio Tinto (formal interview)

Name	Role (Local Aboriginal People)
Barrett, Goody	Senior Aboriginal Law woman (group interview and informal conversations)
Dixon, George	Senior Aboriginal Law man and signatory to the Good Neighbour Agreement
Hall, Evelyn	Senior Aboriginal Law woman and signatory to the Good Neighbour Agreement
Nocketta, Nora	Senior Aboriginal Law woman (group interview)
Nyadbi, Lena	Senior Aboriginal Law woman (group interview and informal conversations)
Patrick, Peggy	Senior Aboriginal Law woman and signatory to the Good Neighbour Agreement (group interview and informal conversations)

Name	Role (Local Aboriginal People) (continued)
Ramsey, Mona	Senior Aboriginal Law woman (group interview and informal conversations)
Thomas, Chocolate	Senior Aboriginal Law man (group interview and informal conversations)
Thomas, Phyllis	Senior Aboriginal Law woman (group interview)
Timms, Tim (dec)	Senior Aboriginal Law man, brother to Peggy Patrick also father in law to John Toby in 1980 and witness to John Toby's signature on the Good Neighbour Agreement
Toby, John (dec)	Senior Aboriginal Law man and signatory to the Good Neighbour Agreement; Key player in negotiations with Frank Hughes

Name	Role (Advisors/Anthropologists)
Akerman, Kim	anthropologist working for the Kimberley Land Council during the Argyle dispute, prepared reports re-site damage due to AJV exploration (1979 with Randolph; 1980(a))
Coombs, Nugget (dec)	an eminent Australian public servant and academic with a particular interest in Aboriginal rights and public policy (see also Rowse 2000)
Dillon, Michael	community advisor at Warmun community during the negotiation of the Good Neighbour Agreement
Dixon, Rod	worker and advisor to Aboriginal people and local groups during the negotiation period of the Good Neighbour Agreement
Palmer, Kingsley	prepared report with Williams on Aboriginal land tenure in the Argyle region (Palmer and Williams 1980 (edited and published in 1990))
Randolf, Peter	anthropologist working for Western Australian Museum Aboriginal heritage - conducted first heritage site survey with Akerman in relation to the AJV exploration programme (West Australian Museum 1979)
Stephens, Tom	book-keeper for Aboriginal community groups during the negotiations of the Good Neighbour Agreement and subsequent Good Neighbour Programme, and ASIG
Williams, Nancy	prepared report with Palmer on Aboriginal land tenure in the Argyle region (Palmer and Williams 1980 (edited and published in 1990)), key figure in EKIAP

Timeline of Events

1960	The Anthropological Society of Western Australia formed and developed a register of known Aboriginal sites (Dillon 1990a: 40).
1962	Western Australian Government considers protection of Aboriginal sites and relics (Dillon 1990a: 40).
1972	Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 enacted to protect Aboriginal heritage.
1976	Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Northern Territory) (1976) enacted.
1976	CRAE enters Kimberley to explore for diamonds.
1978 (May)	The Kimberley Land Council is formed during a bush meeting at Noonkanbah Station.
1978 (Nov)	Aboriginal people take concerns re-exploration licences at Noonkanbah to Warden's Court in Broome (Hawke and Gallagher 1989:20).
1979	Disputation between AMAX exploration company, the Western Australian State Government and Aboriginal people at Noonkanbah begins to escalate.
1979 (Aug)	Diamonds found in Smoke Creek on Lissadell Station.
1979 (Nov)	Aboriginal people discover the presence of explorers and damage to sites of significance to them on Lissadell Station.
1979 (Nov)	Akerman and Randolph conduct initial Aboriginal heritage survey in vicinity of diamond discovery on Lissadell Station (Western Australian Museum 1979 – December).
1980	Aboriginal people, their advisors and CRA engage in a range of heated discussions and debates.
1980 (Mar)	Akerman completes further investigations into extent of sacred sites on Argyle lease area (Akerman 1980c).
1980 (May - June)	Palmer and Williams conduct further research into the local Aboriginal land tenure system and heritage issues in the face of proposed mining (1980 – released in June).
1980 (May 27th)	Formal complaint against CRAE made by John Toby, withdrawn 7 July 1980.
1980 (July)	Good Neighbour Agreement signed by CRAE and five Aboriginal people 26 July in Perth.
1981 (June)	Formulation of the Argyle Good Neighbour Policy.
1981 (July)	Offers of assistance to Warmun and Woolah Aboriginal communities.
1982	Environmental Review and Management Plan (Dames and Moore 1982).
1982	Diamond (Ashton Joint Venture) Agreement enacted.
1982	Change of government in Western Australian.
1983	Labor Government reviews ERMP and adds further conditions on Argyle mine project development.
1983	Seaman Land Inquiry commences and takes Aboriginal submissions.
1983	ERMP approved and Argyle mine commences operation with alluvial mining and development of AKI, Barramundi Gap.
1984	Seaman Land Inquiry report produced.
1985	First load of ore extracted and crushed from AKI.
1985	The Australian Labor Party under Prime Minister Hawke re-opens the national land rights debate.
1985	Argyle Social Impact Group (ASIG) commences operation following two years of negotiation between Western Australian Government and Argyle.
1985	East Kimberley Impact Assessment Project (EKIAP) commences.
1989	ASIG comes to an end, EKIAP completes research undertakings.
1990	Argyle reverts to the Good Neighbour approach in community relations.
1991 (Sept)	Crocodile Hole meeting held 11 – 13 September.
1992	Mabo Decision is made challenging the concept of <i>terra nullius</i> .
1993	Argyle invites local Aboriginal communities to apply for funds and assistance for projects other than those covered by the Good Neighbour approach - Daiwul Gidja Culture Group comes from this initiative.
1993	<i>Commonwealth Native Title Act (1993)</i> enacted.
1994	Miriuwung Gajerrong Native Title Claim first lodged, amended and became <i>Ward & Ors No WAG 6001 of 1995</i> .
1995 (Feb)	Argyle refuses to allow Good Neighbour funding to be spent on 'private' vehicles.
1995 (Mar)	Leon Davis delivers his headland speech stating that CRA will negotiate with Aboriginal people.

1995 (Dec)	Argyle offers an annual cash payment to each of the Good Neighbour Agreement signatories.
1996	Graham Gunness arrives as new mine manager. Aboriginal people informed that the mine will close in the near future. Manthe performed at the Argyle mine site for the first time. Aboriginal people perform kurara at mine site.
1997 - 1998	Evidence heard for Ward & Ors.
1998	Arrival of new Argyle mine manager, Brendan Hammond. Lee J hands down decision on <i>Ward</i> .
1999 (Mar)	Mediated meeting between Warmun community and Argyle senior management – ‘The Future Relations’ meeting 1999.
1999	Western wall cut back extends life of open pit mine to 2008.
1999 (July)	Jeff Wilkie (Rio Tinto Exploration Darwin) advises Argyle to update their ethnography of mine lease area including genealogical information.
2000	Argyle contracts Langton and Doohan to review Argyle Community Relations operations and provide advice for future directions (Langton and Doohan 2000).
2001	Argyle and Kimberley Land Council sign a MoU to negotiate a new agreement between Argyle and the local Aboriginal people.
2001 - 2004	Approximately twenty negotiation meetings including informal local community and more formal and structured meetings toward the new agreement undertaken.
2002	Manthe conducted at Argyle mine site as a regular practice.
2002	Social and environmental impact assessments and processes initiated and developed and review of Argyle for feasibility study of underground mine.
2002	High Court Decision on challenges to findings in <i>Ward</i> -- no mineral rights for Aboriginal traditional owners but co-existence between mining and Aboriginal interests.
2002 (April)	Rio Tinto board meeting held at Argyle mine site, welcoming manthe given, board members share a meal with the local Aboriginal people.
2003	Ground Breaking Manthe 31 July Underground Tunnel Manthe 3 December
2004 (Sept)	Argyle Participation Agreement - ILUA and Management Plans endorsed by relevant parties (Argyle Participation Agreement 2004) 23 September.
2005	Argyle Participation Agreement registered with National Native Title Tribunal on 7 April. Argyle Participation Agreement registration celebration 8 June.
2005 (Dec)	Underground mining approved – funds granted by Rio Tinto and relevant Government regulations met enabling the underground mining to progress and extending the life of mine to 2017.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe an enormous gratitude to all of those Aboriginal men and women who have, over the years, given so generously of their time and knowledge to teach me about themselves, their country and guide me through the transformative process of engaged practice with people and place. Sadly, many of those great intellectuals and friends are now deceased. However, I feel that I would like to honour some of them here, they are the late Milner Sturt, Wilfred Goonack, William Bunjuck, Jampat Gordon, Nora Harry, Tim Timms, Jack Brittain and Gracie Long. I would also like to thank those old, and not so old, Aboriginal people who continue to inspire and surprise me with their capacity to keep going in the face of all kinds of apparent difficulties and compromises. They are Goody Barrett, Mona Ramsay, Chocolate Thomas, Lena Nyadbi, Louis Karadata, May Smith, Dolores Cheinmora, Darryl Smith, Paddy Bedford, Rammey Ramsay, Maggie Long, Nora Nocketta, Phyllis Thomas, Larikan Munmun, Ethel McLennon and many many others.

In particular I have to give great credit and thanks to my supervisor, Richie Howitt, for giving me the intellectual space to prepare this thesis by assisting me to find the scholar within, a task that seemed impossible at times. A friend of mine, who was watching my passage through this PhD, once suggested that I must have “the best supervisor in the world,” I must agree. I would also like to thank my co-supervisor, Professor Marcia Langton, for providing invaluable inspiration, stimulation and encouragement to continue in my field of study and interest.

Special thanks are due to Emeritus Professors Valda Blundell and to her husband John Harp who both reminded me that there is no point in writing a PhD unless one has something to say! This haunted me for many years and yet made me even more conscious of the need to be mindful of what one, as a scholar, did (in the field) and what one said (in the text) and ultimately why one undertook such a study. Valda encouraged me to ‘do a PhD’ and has continued to offer critical support and guidance throughout the entire process all of which I am very grateful for. My good friend, and colleague, Cath Elderton, encouraged me to write about what I wanted to say – advice that has held me in good stead throughout this endeavour to write. I was also encouraged to take the time to think about what I might write about. These critical bits of advice were seemingly simple things but often lost in the mire of my everyday working life and yet advice that held me to the processes of thinking and writing my way through my field experiences and observations.

I would like to thank Frances Kofod for her generous assistance with spelling of various Miriwoong and Gija words and providing me with wonderful insights into the complexities of language, ‘joonba’ and land based relationships in the East Kimberley. I would also like to thank Eileen Bray of Turkey Creek for assisting me with translation as well as spelling of Gija words.

I would also like to thank my mother, Margaret Doohan, for her patient assistance, checking of typing and finding of files and Daniel Vachon for his encouragement and belief in my ability to complete this thesis. I would also like to thank Judy Davis for assisting in the creation of some of the plates. I offer special thanks to all of my mates for their support and encouragement in helping me sustain myself during the preparation of this thesis including David Legge whose acupuncture skills made it physically possible.

A very heart felt and special thank you to my partner, Joh Bornman, for his companionship over many years in often deeply challenging and confronting fieldwork and his unobtrusive tolerance of this thesis in our lives and making wonderful maps for me.

I owe particular thanks to the past and present members the Kimberley Land Council and the workers in their organisation for the opportunity to work with them over the past twenty-five years. This has been a rare and privileged experience and one that had informed much of my thinking and writing in preparing this thesis.

I would also like to thank Argyle for their participation and logistical support in this thesis and for allowing me to use material from their photographic collection. In particular I would like to thank Fred Murray and Brendan Hammond for their faith in my abilities to undertake fieldwork in a new and different context. I would also like to thank David Rose for his interest in the project and David Milne of Comalco in Brisbane. I would like to thank Diavik Diamonds in Northern Canada for their generosity of time and effort, and warm clothes, in showing me the Diavik Diamond Mine and introducing me to some of the local First Nation communities that they have agreements with.

The late Frank Hughes and George Gauci were both enthusiastic participants in the research topic and I am grateful for their full and frank discussions. I would also like to thank both men for their generosity in taking the time, late in their lives, to talk to me and to correct interview transcripts.

I would like to thank Rio Tinto for providing the Rio Tinto Scholarship to the Macquarie University and for the opportunity to undertake fieldwork within their company. In particular I would like to thank Bruce Harvey and Paul Wand for their encouragement and support.

Finally I would like to give a very special thank you to Peggy Patrick for her tireless enthusiasm for life, her generosity in teaching and her astounding capacity to be so profoundly aware of the importance of the here and now and yet so intimately connected to, and located in, the continuous past, present, future continuum and sacredness of her everyday life.

I came to the title of the thesis comes as a response to a common sentiment that was expressed by Aboriginal people to me throughout the past six years of discussion with them about their relationships with each other and Argyle. And, although I had read and re-read the work of Rod Dixon in relation to the Argyle case it was not until after I had confirmed the title of the thesis that I realised that it was also, co-incidentally, a heading used by Rod Dixon when he reported in his own interviews with Aboriginal people in the mid 1980s. I feel that it is appropriate to acknowledge here the value of Rod's work and the consistency of concerns expressed by local Aboriginal people to make good relationships among themselves and with Argyle.

The photographs presented in this thesis have been sourced from either Argyle or consenting individuals who had created them. Where there is no acknowledgement of source then they are photographs that I have made whilst undertaking consultancy work with the Kimberley Land Council or Argyle.

