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Whose Lucky Country?

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Presentation by

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Thank you very much for the welcome and good morning fellow delegates. I, too, would like to begin by acknowledging the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin alliance, and also to thank Denis Moriarty and Our Community for the invitation to speak today before such a large audience.

Whose Lucky Country?

At the time Donald Horne wrote *The Lucky Country* 50 years ago, any notion of indigenous society was missing from public perception, policy thinking and academic endeavour. It was invisible.

Things started to change in the 1960s, but it was only really after 1971 that indigenous societies were rendered visible by a more comprehensive inclusion in the five-yearly Census.

More recently, from the mid-1970s, with land rights and then Native Title, cultural revival has seen forms of indigenous communities become more visible again, especially in regional and remote Australia.

In this presentation, I want to make a series of historical observations about ways of thinking about indigenous society and economy over the past 50 years, starting with Donald Horne.

My speciality is economics and anthropology, so I will focus on the mundane, everyday issue of development for livelihood. Although I am a believer and advocate of the view promoted by the economic historian, Karl Polanyi, that the economy is embedded in society.

Indeed, I would go further and argue, as ecological economists do, that while the economy is embedded in society, both are also embedded in the environment.

My argument, to signpost, is as follows. Donald Horne's brief coverage of the first Australians was of its time. But he did not seriously address the moral question of

who owned the Lucky Country? The dominance of settler colonialism back then was fait accompli. Like the historian Patrick Wolfe, he predicted the elimination of native societies and, in accordance with thinking of the time, believed that this disappearance would occur via integration or assimilation, symbolic as distinct from earlier physical frontier violence.

He did not foresee changes that would follow two events that just preceded and just followed publication of this book.

The first preceding event was the Yirrkala bark petitions of 1963, that signalled to the Australian parliament that aboriginal people in remote Australia were serious about asserting their customary, millennia-old rights in land.

These petitions, lodged just a year after indigenous people were enfranchised to vote in the federal elections, were important precursors to subsequent land rights introduced a decade later.

The second following event was the amendment of the Australian Constitution in 1967, that allowed the inclusion of aboriginal people in reckoning the population of Australia. From the 1971 Census, there's been a means to accurately estimate the indigenous population that has demographically flourished.

However, Horne's book was prescient on two grounds.

First, his brief 1964 observations show the dominant, colonial way of thinking about the indigenous economy and society has changed little since then, despite the emergence of new indigenous possibilities that I will discuss.

The central goal of policy has been to integrate – perhaps a less obnoxious term than assimilate – indigenous people into the conventional Australian economy and society.

The current articulation of this goal is the 'Closing the Gap' policy framework pursuing targets unilaterally set by the state, and measured by official statistics. These, most recently, have been called by the Abbott government indigenous advancement.

Policy is increasingly influenced by neoliberal trope, emphasising individualism, entrepreneurship, material accumulation and the free market. This is a trope anathema to many indigenous peoples, whose norms and values remain focussed on kin, community and country.

Today's policy language sounds little different from assimilation discourse of the early 1960s.

Second, Donald Horne wrote: *"Australia is a lucky country run by second class people who share its luck".* He was not referring specifically to the political and bureaucratic elites who devise and then implement monolithic indigenous policy that continues to be replicated year in, year out, even as it fails to deliver.

But he may well have been.

I'm not, for one moment, suggesting that addressing the indigenous development problem in Australia is a straightforward task. What I do believe, though, is that the dominant approach in 1964, as well as in 2014, is a mis-framing that ignores indigenous differences and diversity of aspirations and circumstances, especially in regional and remote Australia where I mainly work.

We can do better.

So I will end by turning to social justice and community based development and ask how thinking about indigenous development might be reframed to better reflect 21st century realities, commitments to human rights, and a growing plurality of livelihood forms post the land rights era. My focus will be on remote Australia where, arguably, the challenges are greatest. I want to make some

suggestions for how communities can be assisted to take control. How we can shift from governance for dependence to governance for community controlled development.

But first, let me starting with a grounding vignette. I'd like to say that I ran this vignette past the person who features in it most prominently last week, when I was in Maningrida in the Northern Territory. He was very pleased that I was making this presentation, in part on his behalf.

In 1979 and 1980, I lived with a Kuninjku man, John Mawurndjul and his extended family on an outstation called Mumeka in western Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

Balang, as he is generally referred to, was a young, aspiring artist, hunter, ceremony and family man who decided in the 1980s to focus much energy on painting. These are some of his early bark paintings.

By the 1990s, after the prolonged trials and tribulations normally experienced by artists, he emerged to be Australia's best known bark painter. These are examples of some of his later paintings. The mythic figure, Buluwana, from the sacred site, Dilebang, and a representation of the sacred billabong at Kakodbebuldi.

In 2003, he won the Clemenger Prize, here in Melbourne, the first indigenous artist to do so. In 2004, he was lead artist at the major retrospective "Crossing Country" at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

In 2005 and 2006, he had a major retrospective "Rarrk John Mawurndjul" at the Musee Tinguely in Basel Switzerland and at the Sprengel Museum, Hanover, Germany. He had books published about him and his arts practice. In 2006, he was heavily involved in the Musee du quai Branly commission, and was the only Australian artist to work on site. He painted the major bone pole that's at Quai

Branly, and painted the ceiling of the bookshop. At that time, he was a significant cultural ambassador for Australia, meeting the President of France, who was launching the Musee du quai Branly.

In 2009, he won the Melbourne Art Foundation Artist of the Year award – the first indigenous artist to do so.

These were happy times. Balang was at his peak, living entirely and comfortably on his arts earnings. In 2010, he was made a member in the general division of the Order of Australia. For service to the preservation of indigenous culture, as the foremost exponent of the rarrk visual art style.

But after 2009, his career nosedived as his community controlled organisation, Maningrida Arts and Culture, and its parent, then incorporated Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, got into financial difficulties.

With the global financial crisis, the demand for fine art like his declined rapidly. This rapid decline, for both Balang and for Bawinanga, has been exacerbated by changed policy circumstances that have seen a shift from a local form of self determination and community control to imposed mainstreaming and normalisation. Authoritarian neoliberalism that aims to alter people's norms and means of livelihood.

In 2010, I saw Balang in hospital in Darwin for the first time ever, unwell and psychologically distressed by his rapidly declining arts career. In 2011, he told me of his deep dissatisfaction with the new arts advisor, who was subsequently dismissed.

By 2012, he was living in an area known as side camp in the township of Maningrida, on NewStart, a social security benefit for the unemployed. Dispirited.

He had no vehicle to return to his outstation arts studio at Milmilngkan. Three years earlier, in 2009, he had three four wheel drive vehicles in excellent working order. A hunting truck, a family truck and an arts truck.

In September last year, he told me he had given up painting. There was a large stock of his art at Maningrida Arts and Culture. I watched him, aged over 60, walking to the workshop in the Maningrida industrial precinct, looking for a real job as a tyre repairer, as required by the new remote jobs and community program, if one is not to be breached and left destitute with no NewStart and no cash.

I cannot pretend that our relationship is not sadly strained. Balang imagines that I have the power to assist in the repair of his career, and to restore the fortunes of Maningrida Arts and Culture, and the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation. Institutions that I have worked with closely over many years.

I, in turn, feel deeply frustrated and angry at my inability to make a difference. I lament my powerlessness to facilitate a more secure livelihood for his retirement. There's a degree of cross-cultural tension about who is responsible for whom, and for what. This last slide is of Balang last week, sitting at side camp with his broken truck, stuck in Maningrida.

This vignette captures, metaphorically and graphically, some of what I want to talk about today.

In 1963, as Donald Horne was writing *"The Lucky Country"*, Balang, born in 1952, was transported from the bush in the Arnhem Land aboriginal reserve to Maningrida for treatment of early leprosy.

Subsequently, he lived there for a decade before returning to live on his country. He was lucky enough to get land rights.

From the late 1970s, for 30 years, Balang engaged successfully with global capitalism and the state, only to see everything in his world come crashing down after the Northern Territory intervention and the global financial crisis.

While the vagaries of the market cannot be controlled by arts price takers in remote Arnhem Land, it does seem that Balang's career was on a sounder footing when communities were in control.

Our conference theme.

Prior to the latest round of paternalistic state intervention.

I'll return to Balang and his prospects briefly in my conclusion.

Where were we in 1964? In 1961, the government belatedly released a definition of the policy of assimilation that stated *"all aborigines and part-aborigines are expected to attain the same manner of living as other Australians, and to live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges; accepting the same responsibilities; observing the same customs; and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians"*.

This definition fitted well with the then emerging modernisation paradigm in development thinking. There was no conceivable alternative to joining the mainstream economy and society.

This idea of assimilation accords well with Patrick Wolfe's theorisation that settler colonial society was premised on displacing indigenous people from their land and their elimination.

While settler colonialism's negative dimension was, and remains, the goal to dissolve native societies, an option emerges from the logic of elimination – that is, the possibility of integration of indigenous people as citizens of the Australian nation. As the assimilation policy statement implies.

In 1964, Donald Horne's *"The Lucky Country"* was published. Horne only devoted a few pages to aborigines in a discussion of racism in a chapter "Living with Asia". Horne noted that all the governments concerned with aborigines – and I use his language here, by the way – and he excluded Tasmania because he suggested that they were all killed there, are now committed to assimilation.

He also noted that, while there are still some aborigines leading tribal lives, the possibility of preserving their civilisation; either museum pieces or in respect of their wishes, seemed small. Quoting the words of Peter Coleman of *The Observer*, he noted:

> *"Assimilation ultimately means absorption and that means extinction. As a nation with its own way of life, and even as a race, the aborigines are still destined to disappear. It is one of the ironies of our history that the only recompense we're able to give this race for what we have done is to help it disappear."*

Such was progressive thinking at the time.

Altered thinking in the 1960s

In 1963, just as Donald Horne was penning *"The Lucky Country"*, an important research project, "Aborigines in Australian Society", headed by Charles Rowley and funded in large measure by the Myer Foundation and auspiced by the Social Science Research Council began.

A series of books over a decade documented the diversity of indigenous participation in the settler colonial society. In particular, Rowley's work fundamentally altered understandings about indigenous involvement in a settler economy.

He clearly distinguished *Outcasts in White Australia*, a book published in 1970, from *The Remote Aborigines*, a book published in 1971, establishing an enduring

binary of the continent that persists today. Remote and non-remote. And, most recently, northern Australia and the rest.

This distinction, as I will show, has a quite new significance in the era of land rights and native title.

A number of volumes in the Rowley series made aboriginal economic participation far more visible in contexts as diverse as *Urban Adelaide* by Fay Gale, *The Northern Territory Cattle Industry* by Frank Stevens, *Government Settlements in New South Wales* by Jeremy Long, and *Aboriginal Advancement to Integration in Western Australia* by Henry Schapper.

The 1960s was a time when the exclusions of indigenous people from the benefits of the social democratic welfare state were being rapidly dismantled. But there was little sense of the significance of the indigenous component of the Australian economy, or even of its population, because of an absence of statistics rendering indigenous people invisible.

As recently as in 1973, sociologist Frank Jones was able to observe – and I quote:

> "The absence of reliable demographic data on the aboriginal population of Australia reflects their unequal status in contemporary Australian society. Under the criteria applied until recently by Australian immigration authorities to screen potential migrants, most Aborigines would have been denied the right to settle in their own country."

One wonders how much things have changed 40 years on.

Indigenous people rendered statistically visible.

The overwhelming 'yes' vote to the 1967 referendum deleting Section 127 of the Constitution meant that all indigenous people were to be included, for the first time, in reckoning the number of people of the Commonwealth.

The following chart documents the changing size of the indigenous population count from 116,000 in 1971 to 548,000 in 2011, the latest Census. This is a growth of almost 500% – reflecting both a growing willingness and pride to identify, as well as rapid natural increase. These are not disappearing peoples.

The availability of social indicator data from the five-yearly Census has also made it possible to look at socioeconomic outcomes for the indigenous population in areas such as employment, education, housing and health, and to compare these outcomes with the general population.

There is a long subsequent and escalating history of such analyses in academia and in government, and the associated adoption of the notion of statistical convergence of outcomes for indigenous and non-indigenous Australians as a paramount national priority, at least at the level of discourse.

In policy terms, the convergence approach was first explicitly proposed by the progressive and managerialist government of Bob Hawke. His government's Aboriginal Employment Development Policy, launched in 1987, had a goal of statistical equality by the year 2000.

Very obviously, that goal failed. In part because of over-reach.

More recently, there's been a rapid escalation, almost a policy obsession, with statistical measurement of key indicators for indigenous and other Australians. Especially since the Productivity Commission started producing its massive *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage* reports from 2002.

Most recently, from 2008, we've seen the hegemonic dominance of the Closing the Gap policy framework introduced, ironically, as an element of the national apology, and including economic variables like a goal to halve the employment gap between indigenous and other Australians by the year 2018.

Now, in the next couple of busy tables, I just want to very briefly present some information about absolute changes across a few socioeconomic variables.

And really, you can see there's just a bit of a glimpse – I'm sorry that I can't produce this in more detail, but I will make this available on the website.

You can see different Census' from '71 to 2001, and variables like unemployment, employment, private sector employment, labour force participation, median weekly income. Also, you can see other variables like participation in education, post-school qualifications, life expectancy and population aged over 55.

Most of these variables, in absolute terms, have improved, but very, very slowly.

But Closing the Gap is not about absolute change, but change in relative terms. Which is what gap reduction seeks to measure. So what I want to do in a few charts is show you, in fact, what's happening in terms of the ratio of indigenous to non-indigenous outcomes using a scale of zero to one, with one representing equality in statistical terms on the vertical axis.

You can see here, for example, when we look at some of those absolute change variables in relative terms, things have barely changed. In some cases, they've actually gone backwards in relation to relative indigenous employment compared to non-indigenous Australians. It's a better news story in relation to educational outcomes, but we are still far short of that parity that's represented by the one.

And very worrying in relation to life expectancy and people aged over 55. You can see, if anything, things might be going backwards. Although unfortunately, from 2001, we changed the way we measure these things. So long term trends aren't possible.

So as I said, while in some areas there is long term improvement, in others there is intractability and even decline. Elsewhere, colleagues and I have suggested,

rather unpopularly with a number of governments since John Howard's, that it will take decades to eliminate statistical disparities where there is convergence.

Bearing in mind that in some areas, there's long term divergence of outcomes. It is important to note, in all the statistical talk, that data derived from the Census, or even from special surveys like the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey are often quite disconnected from the form that indigenous household economy might take.

Not only do such collection instruments ignore situations where there might be a significant customary or non-market sector, but they also struggle to capture the reality of mixed household formations. Statistics tell you something about individuals, but individuals, especially indigenous ones, rarely live in isolation from family, household or community.

It goes almost without saying too that, from an indigenous standpoint, talk about deficiencies, gaps, disparities are demeaning and focus on the negatives. There is little focus on indigenous assets or positives in such deficit focussed statistical picturing.

But such shortcomings do not deter many interest groups and political actors from using them. Indeed, it is hard to avoid the ubiquity of the term 'closing the gap' in policy and public discourse in a manner reminiscent of political scientist Murray Edelman's renowned commentary about words that succeed and policies that fail.

Indigenous lands rendered spatially visible

Henry Reynolds in *"Forgotten War"* has recently described the colonial land grab in Australia from 1788 as one of the greatest illegal appropriations of land in world history.

This has been partially countered, in the past 40 years, by an extraordinary transfer of land back to traditional owners that I've terms a 'land titling revolution'. Perhaps the greatest restitution of land without warfare in recent times anywhere in the world.

This restitution has occurred for social justice and legal reasons, responding in large measure to prolonged aboriginal activism in this area. From the 1938 Day of Mourning, the 1963 Yikkala bark petitions, the 1966 Gurindji walk off from Wave Hill, and the establishment of the tent embassy in Canberra in 1972. All iconic moments in a long political struggle.

From the 1970s first progressive government, and then from the 1990s, a progressive judiciary in the aftermath of the Mabo High Court judgement, sought to bring Australia in lock step with other affluent settler colonial societies globally to recognise indigenous rights to land.

The impact of these changes continentally can be seen in the following map. You can see there that, of course, in 1788, Australia was owned entirely by indigenous nations. In 1964, when *"The Lucky Country"* was launched, there was no legally recognised indigenous land interest. Hence my question. Whose lucky country?

Today, in marked contrast, 33% of Australia is under some form of indigenous title. Although property rights for much of this land remain very weak, despite the use of terms like 'exclusive possession' in relation to native title that do not, in fact, confer any right to exclude.

This next map provides a bit more detail on indigenous land interest, differentiating three forms of title. Land rights, mainly from the 1970s and 1980s. Then post-Mabo determination of exclusive and non-exclusive possession under native title law. You can see the land rights is the orange. Native title exclusive is in the blue. Native title non-exclusive is in the yellow.

What this map shows very clearly is that most indigenous land is in remote Australia. What this map does not show is that property rights are highly variable by form of tenure, with the strongest – free, prior and informed consent, the right to exclude or veto being vested only in Commonwealth land rights laws for the Northern Territory.

Native title exclusive possession only provides landholders with a right to negotiate, while non-exclusive possession – that which is shared with others – confers minimal property rights. As native title encroaches on the more densely populated and predominantly non-indigenous southeast and southwest, the weaker, I suspect, indigenous rights and interests will become.

In the next two slides, I want to overlay some demographic information over those slides – over the land rights slide. This slide shows the distribution of the indigenous population from the 2011 Census. It is clear from this map that only a small proportion of the indigenous population are lucky enough to live on their reclaimed ancestral lands. Although it is important to note that the distribution is of population, not land owners. Most indigenous people have not had the luck, as yet, to reclaim their land.

The next map shows the distribution of what the Australian Bureau of Statistics terms discrete indigenous communities, although many of these larger communities have non-indigenous residents.

There are nearly 1,200 so-called discrete indigenous communities in Australia, with a total population of less than 100,000. Nearly 1,000 of these communities are either on or within one kilometre of indigenous land, and these communities are tiny. A thousand of them have populations of less than 100 people each.

I'll make two observations here. First, in the next map, I provide some information on registered land claims and population. I'll do that in the following table. While most of the land rights native title action, to date, has been in very

remote regions, there is possibility that determinations almost entirely of non-exclusive possession will cover more and more of Australia.

Possibly, as an outside possibility, 70% where up to 40% of the indigenous population currently resides. You can see that a little bit more clearly in this rather busy table. Second, in places where land is held under exclusive possession and the indigenous share of the population is greater than 80% - and you can see that in the first two rows in this table. There is potential for radical reframing of the economic development question, well beyond seeing integration and closing the gap as the answer.

Paradoxically perhaps, there is a policy expectation that with land rights and native title, gap closing will magically follow, with politicians and their spokespeople, like Warren Mundine, increasingly bemoaning that indigenous people are land rich but dirt poor.

Such discourse fails to acknowledge that the very reason that remote lands were available for claim was that they were unalienated Crown lands with no or little commercial value. That is, unless groups today strike it lucky with mining.

From the Lucky Country to too much luck

I began this paper by raising the question "Whose Lucky Country" to signal that Australia's luck was predicated on the dispossession of the original inhabitants: the unlucky.

More recently, Paul Cleary has described Australia as a country with too much luck, referring to the mining boom, and it's a minefield, referring to the dark side of Australia's resources rush. Again, one might ask too much luck for whom? And a minefield for whom?

Cleary highlights that, despite the expansion of the aboriginal land base, there is little evidence that indigenous people are actually benefitting from the mining boom upon which the nation is becoming more and more dependent.

This puts his views in opposition to those of Marcia Langton, who in the 2012 Boyer Lecture, describes a quiet revolution where indigenous people were benefiting from the resources boom. I do not want to take sides in this debate today, but merely want to note that mineral mapping indicates that some indigenous owned lands may be highly prospective, so there may be opportunities for direct and indirect benefit to be leveraged from mining.

You can see this in the following map, which shows operational mines in Australia. It also shows mineral prospects. This is not a dot painting. It's not a painting at all. It's a slide that shows all the mineral prospects and some very extraordinarily rich mineral provinces in Australia.

The question with mining – and the proviso has to be that it should only occur if and only if aboriginal people want to have their lands opened up to such industrial extraction developmental option. What that means in reality is having massive mines on your country, like this mine. The Ranger uranium mine encapsulated within Kakadu National Park.

At the same time, because much indigenous owned land today was historically remote and of low commercial value, it has experienced relatively little environmental disturbance, and has retained high biodiversity and associated conservation values.

I'll just show you this with one slide, which gives you an idea of some of the unmodified vegetation in Australia compared with some of what's called removed or replaced vegetation. You can basically see where you've had a commercial agriculture and development, and high populations, you've had massive impacts on the condition of vegetation.

And where you've got indigenous lands, it just so happens, because of their low commercial value, that lands are in great environmental condition. This raises the possibility for new development thinking about the production of ecological commodities: fresh air, high quality fresh water, carbon abatement and sequestration, and biodiversity, which will become tradable.

Increasingly, there are indigenous protected areas, and aspirations expressed by those tiny remote communities located on indigenous lands to play a leading role in the conservation economy.

In a recent book *Scales of Justice*, Nancy Fraser uses the notion of mis-framing to refer to type of injustice that arises when first audit questions of justice are framed in a way that wrongly excludes some from consideration.

Fraser gives the example of how national framing of distributive issues forecloses the claims of the global poor. In Australia, in my view, thinking about indigenous economic development has been mis-framed because of a preoccupation with integration and statistical equality, which forecloses the claims of indigenous people who may want something very different.

I advocate for one possible reframing of indigenous economy, with a concept of economic hybridity that depicts market, state and customary sectors delivering livelihood, and acknowledges the mix of capitalist and non-capitalist relations of production in many contemporary indigenous contexts.

Economic hybridity proposes that, especially where people have new found rights and lands based on custom, it is likely that custom looms large and can make important contributions to livelihoods.

Not just in the conservation economy, but also in the arts and tourism, and in forms of wildlife utilisation for livelihood and for sale. It involves a broadening of

the economic base beyond the narrow notion of the real economy, which is absent in much of remote Australia.

Let me, very briefly, make some concluding comments.

Fifty years ago, it was suggested that integration would result in disappearance. What Patrick Wolfe referred to as the elimination of the native.

There is no doubt that some powerful indigenous and non-indigenous political actors in Australia today would like to see any notion of indigenous economy and society disappear. To be thought of no differently from a late capitalist economy, discursively envisaged as neoliberal or free market.

But in reality, as I've shown, the indigenous population is not disappearing. There is a mismatch between policy goals and the ways of living and being of indigenous people and their aspirations. Most clearly evident at remote communities on indigenous land.

So I want to ask how we might break the hegemonic and monolithic developmental approach that has become increasingly intolerant of pluralistic forms of economy and being.

As the Native American scholar, Vine Deloria Jr warned in *And Custer Died for our Sins* way back in 1969, equality must not be conflated or confused with sameness.

He also noted that civil rights is a function of man's desire for self-respect, not for equality.

Similarly, a re-framing of thinking about indigenous development might require less emphasis on equality, closing the gap, and more on unconventional alternatives that may not eliminate disparity, but may accord with the aspirations of many indigenous people.

In the present, there is much rhetoric about getting communities back in control. Empowering communities. But so little policy or practice that will actually facilitate this. Policy focuses, instead, on utopian notions of real or mainstream economy for remote indigenous Australia. We need to radically reform our approach.

So let me end with some comment on community based development.

This conference is about communities in control. I'm sure that many delegates here work with indigenous, community based organisations. I know that the conference convenor OurCommunity.com.au assists many – including the company Karrkad-Kanjdji Trust where I'm a foundation director.

I appeal to the community sector to engage with indigenous development because, at the heart of your approach, are some bread and butter principles that are increasingly ignored in indigenous policy making in Canberra.

These include the following seven principles.

First, indigenous development needs to be owned and driven by communities. Participatory and bottom-up, not imposed and top-down. There is no evidence that coercive paternalism works anywhere.

Second, any effective notion of development needs to be holistic and whole of community. A negotiated process to improve wellbeing. Not an imposed process to address largely abstract statistical disparities.

Third, development needs to recognise the diversity of indigenous circumstances. From here in Melbourne to the remotest parts of the continent. The value of customary activity needs recognition, as does the inevitable intercultural mix of norms that will inform indigenous decision making and governance.

Fourth, to be effective, development assistance will need to be targeted, take into account the reality of indigenous demographics and patterns of residence. Remote indigenous communities are more discrete and easier to identify. Targeting an urban and metropolitan context is far more difficult. Which is why community based approaches are so important in both contexts, not just in remote Australia.

Fifth, any development strategy needs to acknowledge that poverty is a symptom of powerlessness. The politico-economic and structural sources of deep inequality need to be addressed.

Sixth, the proper role of the state is to get institutional settings right for development in all its diverse forms, not to promote a preconceived notion, like closing the gap, of what form development might take.

And finally, policy making processes must get beyond tokenistic consultation and the appointment of like minded advisors, co-opted to state project, that has and continues to fail. We need to look for more competition of ideas, a wider set of perspectives.

I'm sure Donald Horne would concur with many of these principles. The issue of indigenous development is far too important to leave to political and bureaucratic processes, especially as these processes are becoming subject to levels of political manipulation that have been unimagined in Horne's lucky country.

I want to end by returning to Balang and the Gunwinggu community to which he belongs, living between outstations and the township of Maningrida in western Arnhem Land.

This is a group who are among the most vulnerable in Australian society today, especially in terms of representation, but also because of their high dependence on the state.

As I mentioned earlier, I visited this group last week, and discussed much of this presentation with them.

Fifty years ago, as the Gunwinggu moved into Maningrida and out of the bush, they were written off as a distinct group or community. Destined to be sedentarised and civilised and assimilated. To disappear. That experiment failed.

But like all indigenous Australians, they have never ceded sovereignty to the colonisers. From the 1970s, they combined their hunting and artist skills as a lifeline to reassert who they are, their rights and land, and their distinct, relatively autonomous form of livelihood. For several decades, this strategy, promoted by many, including myself, worked, at least in regional terms. What will now emerge after 2014, as the imagined hope and future for the children and grandchildren of John Mawurndjul, many already fine artists?

It should not, I think, just be a choice between the risk of being an artist and the mundaneness of being a tyre fixer. In today's uncertain late capitalist world, there have to be other less risky alternatives and mixtures. Including caring for country, in this case, with early dry season burning. Hunting, in this case, for magpie geese. And arts production.

I end with this picture of Milmilngkan, Mawurndjul's sacred waterhole. A key theme in his now past repertoire. Visually documenting his rights and land.

In contrast to my earlier western cadastral mapping, this is his lucky country that garnered him a respectable livelihood and regional, national and global respect as an artist.

We need to consider how combining his agency with our community based developmental expertise and advocacy might, if not restore his personal fortunes, at least ensure that others are not exposed to the high risk, precariousness and

deep poverty that he has, unfortunately, experienced and endured, and continues to experience and endure in today's lucky country.

Thank you.