

CAEPR RESEARCH PLAN 2004–2006

The CAEPR Research Plan 2004–2006 was developed at a meeting in November 2003, with input provided by a range of stakeholders and all CAEPR staff. This Plan is built around three broad inter-related themes:

- Indigenous Economic and Social Circumstances: Determinants, Diversity, and Difference
- Development Options for Sustainable Indigenous Futures
- Education, Governance and Capacity Development: Tools for Strategic Engagement

This Research Plan covers the years 2004–2006, but will be updated annually. The division of the Plan into three themes is primarily undertaken for operational reasons; there is no suggestion that any of the themes stands alone—a feature of CAEPR’s interdisciplinary approach is to holistically integrate all its research. Projects are listed according to primary thematic orientation, but almost all have links to other themes. In the past the Plan has been produced on a rolling biennial basis, but the timeframe has now been extended to triennial to reflect a growing set of multi-year commitments as a result of enhanced CAEPR success in securing National Competitive Grants.

Much of CAEPR’s research effort is driven by its submission ‘Enabling sustainable communities, environments and socioeconomic development for Indigenous Australia’ developed as its input to the Commonwealth of Australia’s national research priority setting in 2002. The CAEPR submission highlighted the need for research to address the acute and persistent social and economic disadvantage of many Indigenous Australians and provide policy options to encourage development and reductions in the costs of disadvantage for Indigenous Australians and the nation.

The CAEPR Research Plan 2004–2006 is neither unidirectional in time nor space: each theme encompasses national, regional and community perspectives; general and particular issues; and historic, strategic and prognostic perspectives. In the Plan research of direct relevance to ATSI requests is marked *, while research directly linked to FACS requests is marked #.

Theme 1: Indigenous Economic and Social Circumstances: Determinants, Diversity, and Difference

Convenor: John Taylor assisted by Maggie Brady and Boyd Hunter

Statistical profiling and analysis of the social and economic circumstances of Indigenous people at national, regional and local scales using census, survey and administrative data sources forms a key component of CAEPR's research effort. Continuation of this work during 2004 will be wide ranging with an emphasis on better understanding the dynamics of regional population change, social and behavioural determinants of health status, and the links between education and labour market outcomes.

Project 1.1: Desert and savanna demography*

Following discussions in 2003 with CRCs and Indigenous organisations, CAEPR's demographers will establish measures of population change among Indigenous peoples in various ecological zones including arid and semi arid areas, the tropical savanna, and the Murray-Darling basin.

Project 1.2: Baseline profiles for good governance*

This project is an integral part of the Australian Research Council (ARC) Governance project and will be undertaken by John Taylor. It involves the construction of baseline regional profiles in the Northern Territory to support new regional governance structures.

Project 1.3: ICCP capacity building for data management#

Following on from research conducted in 2003 for the Council of Australian Governments Indigenous Community Coordination Pilot trial at Wadeye, John Taylor will further develop the Thamarrurr Region Information System and work with the Thamarrurr Regional Authority on data maintenance and dissemination.

Project 1.4: Indigenous migration and labour force status#

Yohannes Kinfu will examine the links between inter-regional migration patterns and labour force status. This will require analysis of the links between census aggregate data and census unit record files to establish the utility of sample data in exploring determinants of social and economic outcomes.

Project 1.5: Social and Economic Futures for Remote Indigenous Communities*

With the policy focus on how to manage an ageing population and hyper-growth in metropolitan areas, remote communities face a looming crisis due to population expansion and underdevelopment. In partnership with Thamarrurr Regional Council, CAEPR staff may collaborate in the conduct a national forum on *Social and Economic Futures for Remote Indigenous Communities* late in 2004.

Project 1.6: Indigenous population estimates in the Northern Territory*

John Taylor, Yohannes Kinfu and Boyd Hunter will undertake an evaluation of the adequacy of population estimates for the remote Indigenous population of the Northern Territory.

Project 1.7: Preliminary testing of health survey data

Yohannes Kinfu will undertake preliminary exploration of data quality issues in the confidentialised unit record file data from the 2001 Indigenous Health Survey for subsequent analysis of the determinants of health status.

Project 1.8: Dissemination of analysis in ABS Monograph *Indigenous People in the Contemporary Australian Labour Market**

Following the release of the ABS Monograph, 'Indigenous People in the Contemporary Australian Labour Market', scheduled for 18th January 2004, Boyd Hunter will give a series of seminars at the ABS, CAEPR and at the Australian Labour Market Research Workshop in Adelaide.

Project 1.9: Mapping access to Indigenous education and labour Market*

Boyd Hunter, Jerry Schwab, Nick Biddle will provide a census-based analysis of education, and labour market that links Indigenous and non-Indigenous outcomes within regions used in the Atlas Project. Student attendance, labour force status, and mobility-related issues will all be examined.

Project 1.10: Labour market discrimination and Indigenous Australians

Boyd Hunter will work on a substantial paper on labour market discrimination experienced by Indigenous Australians.

Project 1.11: Changes in Indigenous socioeconomic status between NATSIS and ISS*

Boyd Hunter and Nick Biddle will examine changes in the major dimensions of Indigenous socioeconomic status provided on a comparable basis between NATSIS and ISS.

Project 1.12: The future of Indigenous work*

Boyd Hunter, Yohannes Kinfu and John Taylor will re-submit the updated *Job Still Ahead* for peer-reviewed publication in *Agenda*.

Project 1.13: Estimating reliability of Indigenous population estimates

Boyd Hunter, and Mardi Dungey (RSPAS, ANU), will finalise the re-submission of Discussion Paper No. 244 as journal article for *Journal of Population Research*.

Project 1.14: Pathways to improved educational attainment for Indigenous Australians

Nick Biddle will commence ARC Linkage research 2003–2006 that provides an economic analysis of social, environmental and institutional factors associated with educational participation of Indigenous and other Australian youth.

Project 1.15: Age standardisation, selective mortality and selectivity bias: Comparing Indigenous and non-Indigenous health status

Matthew Gray and Boyd Hunter will undertake a critical analysis of the validity of age standardisation when comparing the health outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. This work will be derived from the work done in CAEPR Monograph 21.

Project 1.16: Housing Tenure and Indigenous Australians*#

Will Sanders will continue to explore issues relating to housing tenure and Indigenous Australians using the 2001 Census. This work will focus on the different housing tenure patterns of discrete Indigenous communities in sparsely settled Australia and more interspersed Indigenous communities in more densely settled Australia.

Project 1.17: Indigenous people in Alice Springs: Making Sense of 2001 Census data*

This work analyses 2001 Census data relating to Indigenous people in the Alice Springs town camps compared with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Alice Springs and Indigenous people in the surrounding ATSIC region of Apatula.

Project 1.18: The Indigenous Enumeration Strategy for the 2001 and 2006 Census*

Frances Morphy will follow up on the research into the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy for the 2001 and 2006 Census. She intends to take up a Visiting Fellowship at Emory University in Atlanta and will deliver a joint paper (with Howard Morphy) on 'cultural translation', which draws on the 2001 Census research.

Project 1.19: Learning to Drink Then and Now

Maggie Brady will continue work on her ARC Discovery grant 2003–2006 on the social and historical determinants of Indigenous alcohol and tobacco use. This work examines the diversity of historical experiences with, and responses to, these substances by Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Theme 2: Development Options for Sustainable Indigenous Futures

Convener: Jon Altman, assisted by David Martin and Robert Levitus

Most policy assumes the centrality of economic development in addressing Indigenous disadvantage. Research under this theme will continue to explore options for attaining sustainable economic development for Indigenous people, including the viability and benefits of commercial enterprise, expanded participation in the customary economy, appropriate forms of state support, and options for Indigenous people to engage with new and innovative opportunities. However, economic development may entail dilemmas for Indigenous people about consequent changes in their distinctive social and cultural values. Research under this theme therefore will engage with expanded

conceptions of development, consider the diverse attitudes that Indigenous people may adopt towards conventional developmental prescriptions, and examine a range of creative mechanisms being adopted by Indigenous groups and communities to develop sustainable futures.

Project 2.1: Indigenous Community Organisations and Miners: Partnering Sustainable Regional Development?*

This ARC Linkage project with Rio Tinto and the Committee for the Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) as Industry Partners will continue to 2006. The CAEPR team consists of Jon Altman, David Martin, Sarah Holcombe and Australian Post-Graduate Award (Industry) students (APAI) Benedict Scambary and Katherine Trebeck. The team will be joined from 2004 by Robert Levitus and 1–2 new regions will be included in the project's scope.

Project 2.2: Timber harvest management for the Aboriginal Arts Industry.

This ARC Linkage project between Jon Altman and Tony Griffiths and APAI Jennifer Koenig (ARC Key Centre for Tropical Wildlife Management (KCTWM), Charles Darwin University) and Maningrida Arts and Culture continues will continue till 2005. This is a multidisciplinary project that examines socioeconomic, cultural and economic determinants of sustainability.

Project 2.3: Managing endangered banteng in a jointly-managed national park.

This ARC Linkage project will run 2004–2007, with CAEPR input focused on economic and cultural issues associated with banteng. Jon Altman will collaborate with a number of bio-physical scientists at the ARC KCTWM and Territory Parks and Wildlife.

Project 2.4: Learning from the development and implementation of Australia's National Indigenous Forestry Strategy*

This multi-year ARC Linkage project proposal could see Jon Altman assisted by Natane Halasz from CAEPR collaborate with Richard Baker and Peter Kanowski from the ANU School of Resources, Environment and Society and an APAI and the Department of Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry. The project proposes to undertake a multi-disciplinary study of the National Indigenous Forest Strategy in the native title era.

Project 2.5: The eastern Kuninjku customary economy in the 21st Century*

This ongoing project funded in part by the Natural Heritage Trust will see ongoing collaborations between Jon Altman, assisted by Natane Halasz and Michelle Cochrane, Tony Griffiths and Peter Whitehead (KCTWM) and the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation in writing up material on the economic impact of the customary sector and its sustainability.

Project 2.6: Indigenous business as a development driver*

The Indigenous Business Review, completed in 2003, will be publicly available in 2004. Jon Altman, Boyd Hunter, Bill Arthur and others will critically evaluate its recommendations from academic perspectives and the potential of small business growth to influence Indigenous development futures.

Project 2.7: Measuring changes in social and economic well-being#

Opportunity may arise from 2004 and beyond for Jon Altman and Robert Levitus and the ARC Mining Project team to research the development of appropriate indicators to measure change in social and economic well-being. It is anticipated that this project will be undertaken at a regional level to gauge in large part the potential match between Indigenous aspirations and the means available to measure the extent to which they are met. This work will be linked to the Productivity Commission Report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003*.

Project 2.8: Aborigines, Culture and Economy ASSA Workshop

Diane Austin-Broos and Gaynor MacDonald have proposed a workshop on this topic to the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia for late in 2004. Jon Altman and Nicolas Peterson have assisted in the development of the proposal and a number of CAEPR staff including John Taylor, Diane Smith, David Martin and Robert Levitus are likely to participate.

Project 2.9: Refining the CDEP scheme for community and regional development*#

Reform to ATSIC and ATSI, combined with welfare reform and comments on the CDEP scheme in the recently released Productivity Commission Report *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2003*, are likely to result in a renewed focus on the CDEP scheme as a policy tool to facilitate employment and development. CAEPR staff including Jon Altman, Matthew Gray, Robert Levitus, Will Sanders and others are likely to continue research on reform options that has been ongoing since 2000.

Project 2.10: Commercial and customary fisheries as a development driver*

ATSIC and IBA have recently committed resources to buy back commercial fishing quota for Indigenous people. There has also been considerable media attention on factors affecting the sustainability of dugong and turtle populations. A number of researchers at CAEPR including Jon Altman, Zoe Cozens, Bill Arthur and Matthew Gray are looking to explore the potential of this sector and the institutional arrangements that will be needed to make property right buy-backs commercially effective.

Project 2.11: Factors impacting on populations of turtle and dugong*

In this project, Bill Arthur will seek funding to explore the interaction between factors affecting the populations of turtle and dugong in Australian and nearby waters. Factors considered will include environmental degradation, (commercial) by-catch and harvesting. These two species will be treated separately to highlight any differences between them and consideration will be given to how impacts may vary with geography.

Project 2.12: Making a living from fishing?*

Very little is known about Indigenous involvement in commercial fishing. In this project proposal, Bill Arthur will take two approaches. Using baseline data from 1989–90, the size and shape of the Torres Strait commercial fishery will be detailed and explained. The interaction between this, the customary sector and between Indigenous property and

access rights will be discussed. Consideration will be given to how similar data might be collected in other regions of the country with the aim of presenting a national picture.

Project 2.13: The Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (ALFA) project

CAEPR is a member of a consortium that includes the Northern Land Council, Tropical Savannas Management CRC and NT Bushfires Council that has a proposal for the ALFA project before the Australian Greenhouse Office. If successful, CAEPR will look to appoint a specialist resource or institutional economist to work on business governance and institutional aspects of the proposal that covers 60,000 sq kms of Arnhem Land.

Project 2.14: Development options in remote contexts*

Jon Altman is proposing to develop a major project that will seek to examine economic development options in a number of remote community contexts in savanna and desert Australia. This project will mesh with a number of case studies being undertaken or proposed by CAEPR staff and will link with research to be undertaken with Desert Knowledge and Tropical Savannas CRCs.

Project 2.15: Monitoring the impact of e-commerce

Jon Altman and John Hughes will collaborate with Maningrida Arts and Culture to attempt an assessment of the commercial impact of the new e-commerce Maningrida.com site 12 months after launch in May 2003.

Project 2.16: Development Dilemmas for Indigenous Australians*

Robert Levitus will convene a new teaching stream under this title as an optional unit within the Masters of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development, the Masters of Anthropology and the Graduate Diploma in Anthropology, within the School of Archaeology and Anthropology. All teaching will be done by CAEPR staff.

Project 2.17: Monograph: Aboriginal Development and Self-Determination

Robert Levitus plans to revisit and expand the text already prepared for this monograph both from the literature and using the outcomes of other research activities this year.

Project 2.18: Book on welfare, alcohol and governance in a remote community

David Martin will continue reworking his doctoral thesis for publication as a book. This provides a detailed ethnographically-based account of the challenges posed over the past two decades by the welfare economy, alcohol, new forms of community governance and other factors to the sustainability of a remote Aboriginal community.

Project 2.19: DCDSCA—Policy research advice.

Diane Smith is contracted through CAEPR to provide policy research advice to the Northern Territory Department of Community Development, Sports and Cultural Affairs (DCDSCA). In 2004–2005 this will include research advice on the policy and practical challenges of Indigenous regional and community development; strategic issues for the evaluation of the NT Government's *Building Stronger Regions, Stronger Futures* policy; and contemporary issues for Indigenous economic development in the NT.

Project 2.20: Philanthropy, non-government organisations and Indigenous development

Jerry Schwab will continue research into the roles philanthropic foundations and Non-Government Organisations can play in Indigenous community development.

Project 2.21: Aboriginal outcomes from land claims, transfers and purchases in Central Cape York Peninsula

Benjamin Smith will continue his ARC research on Aboriginal outcomes from land claims, transfers and purchases in Central Cape York Peninsula. In 2004 and 2005, the project will see the production of a series of journal articles and book chapters and work on a book manuscript. Fieldwork will be undertaken in central Cape York Peninsula, the Cairns region and Palm Island/Townsville.

Project 2.22: FNQSNG project

Benjamin Smith will continue collaboration with Colin Filer (RMAP, ANU) and other stakeholders on the Far North Queensland, (Torres) Strait and New Guinea (FNQSNG) project. The project remains at a preliminary stage, investigating the potential to develop a series of linked research projects on the interactions between local/Indigenous communities and the natural environment across the Far North Queensland/Southern New Guinea eco-region.

Project 2.23: Revisiting reconciliation

Depending on other commitments, Melissa Johns will analyse current developments in government attitudes to reconciliation, especially regarding structural and legal/constitutional issues, by tracking responses to the Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee's report entitled 'Reconciliation: Off Track'.

Theme 3. Education, Governance and Capacity Development: Tools for Strategic Engagement

Convener: Jerry Schwab, assisted by Will Sanders and Diane Smith

Theme 3 investigates and facilitates the development of tools for strategic engagement among and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The research aims to support Indigenous self-determination through improved processes and outcomes. One strand of the theme highlights the importance of education and capacity development for individual, family and community well being. This research focuses on the effective delivery of education, the development of education policy, the role of human capital and community contexts for literacy and life long learning. Indigenous public policy discussions highlight the need for robust governance and related capacity as a precursor for Indigenous futures. This strand of the theme explores the organisation, processes and institutional conditions for collective action in Indigenous communities, including the nature of representation, autonomy, accountability and leadership. Capacity development, as expressed in both strands of this theme, is conceived of as a multi-level engagement between and among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Project 3.1: Junior Rangers: Indigenous school to work transitions in remote Australia#

Jerry Schwab will undertake research into school to work transition options for Indigenous youth in remote areas. Initially, the work will involve an exploratory study of an Aboriginal Junior Ranger program that provides education and training for land management and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Project 3.2: The nature of Indigenous adult literacy in remote Australia

This ongoing research, started by Jerry Schwab and Inge Kral in 2003, addresses the nature of adult literacy in remote Australia. Jerry Schwab will be extending the analysis of his field data and focusing on the implications of his findings for educators and policy makers.

Project 3.3: Community engagement in literacy – implications for education, training, employment and governance in a remote Indigenous community#

Inge Kral will undertake fieldwork for her PhD (2003–2006) in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia. Her research will include observing everyday literacy practices and analysing a skills audit of 600 CDEP recipients to determine education, training and employment history and school to work aspirations.

Project 3.4: Indigenous Community Governance*

This is multi-year (2004–2006) ARC Linkage Project with the subtitle ‘Understanding, Building and Sustaining Effective Governance in Rural, Remote and Urban Indigenous Australia’ and will be undertaken with Industry Partner, Reconciliation Australia (RA). Project chief investigators are Will Sanders, Diane Smith and Mick Dodson. A number of other researchers including John Taylor, Sarah Holcombe, Frances Morphy and Ben Smith from CAEPR, as well as researchers from Charles Darwin University; Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the University of Western Australia will participate.

Project 3.5: The potential for regional governance in sparsely settled desert areas*#

This project involves the development of background literature-based papers on governance combined with field-based case study investigation by Will Sanders and Sarah Holcombe in Central Australia, probably in the Luritja/ Pintupi region. It is part of the CAEPR-RA Governance project and CAEPR’s contribution to the Desert Knowledge CRC. It will examine existing governance arrangements focused on single remote communities and the potential for moves towards larger scale multiple locality more regional community governance arrangements.

Project 3.6: Torres Strait governance and the 2004 Torres Strait elections*

Bill Arthur and Will Sanders will examine recent governance developments in Torres Strait in relation to the 2004 Torres Strait elections. It will observe whether recent governance developments become issues in these elections and from this, and other information, assess likely future developments in Torres Strait governance arrangements. It is part of the CAEPR-RA Governance project 2004–2006.

Project 3.7: Governance and economic development: A best-practice case study

Diane Smith will undertake a short period of work with an urban Indigenous corporation to explore best-practice governance and identify linkages between governance and sustained economic development. It is part of the CAEPR-RA Governance project 2004–2006.

Project 3.8: Book on ‘Indigenous Australian Governance: Culture match and community practice in the 21st Century’

Diane Smith will work on existing and new research to be conducted under the CAEPR-RA Governance Project, to produce a book for publication. It will focus on the policy, institutional, cultural and practical challenges faced by Indigenous people in building and sustaining effective community and regional governance in Australia. It will examine best-practice, and factors influencing the development of new forms of governance which seek to marry cultural match with contemporary structures.

Project 3.9: The ACT Indigenous Community Coordination Pilot*#

The ACT Indigenous community is participating as one of the 10 Council of Australian Governments Indigenous Community Coordination Pilot trials. This research by Dale Sutherland will encompass the progress and nature of the trial. Agreement and support has already been requested and received from the ACT Indigenous Working Group, the formal mechanism for facilitating the community component in the Shared Responsibility Trial.

Project 3.10: Conceptualising an urban Indigenous education philosophy

This project by Dale Sutherland is subject to a successful outcome for an Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies grant application. The project will develop discussions around Indigenous education issues, specifically relating to conceptualising an urban Indigenous education philosophy, and may include a workshop with Indigenous teachers working in schools across the ACT/NSW. This research would be very timely given reviews of Indigenous education both in the ACT and NSW.

Project 3.11: Governance and decentralisation in central Cape York Peninsula#

Benjamin Smith will analyse the role played by a local Aboriginal corporation in supporting and frustrating the decentralisation aspirations of local Aboriginal families in central Cape York Peninsula. The project forms part of the CAEPR-RA ARC Linkage project on Indigenous community governance. Its main aim is to develop an analysis of the match between particular aspirations of local Aboriginal groups and the formal structures and processes through which these aspirations are supported. It will also review the increasing trend towards regional and sub-regional approaches to Indigenous governance and their ‘fit’ with local Aboriginal practice.

Project 3.12: Monitoring an alcohol intervention tool for health professionals

Maggie Brady will develop a proposal for, and subsequently undertake an evaluation of, the use of an alcohol intervention tool for health professionals as a Commonwealth

Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health consultancy (possible sites in Aboriginal health services in northern NSW and Queensland).

Project 3.13: Government responses to substance misuse

Maggie Brady will collaborate with Peter d'Abbs (James Cook University) on finalising outputs from the NHMRC project 'Government responses to petrol sniffing'.

Project 3.14: Resourcing communities to manage substance abuse

Maggie Brady has been nominated as an evaluator in a project proposal from the Far West Area Health Service (Broken Hill, NSW) to the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation. The project would assess resourcing to communities to manage substance misuse.

Professor Jon Altman
November 2003