Following the leaders: the role of non-Indigenous activism in the development and legitimation of Daguragu community (Wattie Creek), 1969-73

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Introduction: the Wave Hill walk-off and its supporters

The event known as the 'Wave Hill walk-off' occurred on the Vestey company's Wave Hill Station in the Northern Territory in August 1966. The discontent of Indigenous workers about their treatment and industrial conditions was harnessed by union activity on remote pastoral stations in the Victoria River and Barkly Tablelands regions, triggering a wave of strikes. At the Vestey company's Wave Hill Station, 200 Gurindji people walked some 24 kilometres from their place of residence and employment to a spot in the Victoria River bed next to the government ration depot known colloquially as the 'Wave Hill Welfare Settlement'.[1] They were soon met there by supportive unionists and the radical writer Frank Hardy.[2]

After six months of dialogue and deliberations, a petition was sent to the Governor-General informing the government that the strikers wished to 'regain tenure' in the form of 'leasehold' over a section of Vestey's Wave Hill Station: an area of almost 16,000 square kilometres which included the Gurindji's traditional land.[3] When this was rejected by the Governor-General, Sir Richard Casey, the strikers moved eight kilometres north of the Welfare Settlement to illegally occupy an area of the Vestey pastoral lease at Wattie Creek.

Extant scholarship on the political history of the Gurindji focuses primarily on the period described. The origins of the Wattie Creek camp and its first year are recalled by radical Australianist Frank Hardy in his well-known account, *The Unlucky Australians*.[4] Hardy, who was personally involved in the articulation of the Gurindji case, was concerned in his book with questions of agency and causality,

although his own contribution was never clearly defined. The local pro-Aboriginal, anti-communist Northern Territory Legislative Council (NTLC) member, Dr Goff Letts, accused Hardy of downplaying both his own role, and that of other non-Indigenous unionists, in allegedly directing the walk-off.[5]

Similarly, the topic of the contribution of Hardy and other unionists is critically reviewed by Bain Attwood in his article, 'The Articulation of "Land Rights" in Australia: The Case of Wave Hill' (2000).[6] In 'Articulation', Attwood is concerned to assess the role of Hardy and other non-Indigenous activists during 1966-68 in the Gurindji's walk-off, their move to Wattie Creek and the instigation of their land rights campaign.

In contrast, the 1969-75 period at Wattie Creek has received little attention from scholars. In general histories, such as Alan Powell's *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory*, the Gurindji's activity in the period is summarised as one of 'waiting'.[7] Accounts of the Gurindji struggle make mention – though little more – of the support received from union groups and students prior to their receipt of a pastoral lease from the Whitlam government in 1975.[8]

The federal response to the Gurindji claim, when it was announced by Prime Minister John Gorton in 1968, was to provide housing and services of unprecedented standards at the nearby Welfare Settlement for the Gurindji squatters and other Aboriginal people. These incentives were by and large rejected by the Gurindji, who focused on developing their illegal camp and garnering support in the southern states through union-sponsored speaking tours.[9] Prominent among the new supporters to come forward were the members of the pro-Aboriginal student group, Abschol, and unaffiliated individuals in Darwin.

Contrary to the popular impression of Gurindji passivity and their dependence on the union movement for support in the 1968-74 period, this paper extends the topical focus of Hardy and Attwood's histories to explore the contribution of these non-union activists. Specifically, I describe the non-interventionist approach or 'method' advocated by these supporters in their dealings with Gurindji people. I then turn to an examination of the different issues encountered by the activists as they attempted to assist the Gurindji to garner government support in the absence of land rights recognition – under the divergent Aboriginal affairs policy regimes prescribed by the Gorton, McMahon (Coalition) and then Whitlam (Australian Labor Party) governments in the period.

To research this exploration of the political relationships between numerous city-based activists and the Gurindji people, an oral historical approach was used. Via oral history interviewing, the topical written archive was also expanded significantly by the generosity of interviewees' with their personal records, notably those of former Abschol office holder Rob Oke, and Darwin activist and ex-public servant Rob Wesley-Smith. Similarly, this study has also drawn on the oral history

and records of individuals such as Hannah Middleton, a Marxist anthropologist who lived at Wattie Creek in 1970 and who subsequently campaigned on the Gurindji's behalf, and similar contributions of former teacher and academic, Lyn Riddett. Publicly available Abschol reports were also invaluable.[10] The research was made possible by the Northern Territory Government, via its NT History Grants program.

Abschol

Established in 1951 under the auspices of the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS), Abschol was a student-run organisation whose initial purpose was to boost Aboriginal enrolments in tertiary education.[11] Abschol's concerns expanded to encompass broader pro-Aboriginal causes throughout the 1960s and early '70s, when Abschol groups operated on many university campuses. Abschol was affiliated with the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI), the largest and most effective national pro-Aboriginal lobby group active in the 1960s.[12] The organisation co-ordinated fundraising and political support for the Gurindji in the southern states from 1969 until, due to the return of a leased portion of Wave Hill Station to the squatters by the Whitlam government in 1975, it was felt that such support was no longer needed.

When Abschol members first visited Wattie Creek in 1969, the Indigenous people of the Northern Territory – unlike those in the states – had been governed directly by the Commonwealth through its Northern Territory Administration since 1911. The Welfare Branch of the administration was responsible for their wellbeing, administering Aboriginal reserves and welfare settlements through which, under the prevailing assimilation policy, the skills and knowledge necessary for Aboriginal people to participate in mainstream institutions and lifestyles were ostensibly delivered.[13]

From 1953, citizens' rights were awarded (or not) on the basis of Aboriginal people's designation as 'wards', an administrative category that hinged on bureaucratic assessments regarding their ancestry, and conformity to prescribed 'European' behavioural norms.[14] Such were the principles guiding the Welfare Branch's service delivery under the directorship of Harry Giese between 1954 and 1970. Due to their doctrinal interpretation of such policies by NT Administration staff at the local government 'Welfare Settlement', Abschol and other Gurindji supporters encountered an obstructive stance from local authorities regarding practical assistance during their first three years at Wattie Creek: 1969-72.

As this paper describes, this regime became increasingly onerous among sections of the broader public during the period in question. When news of the Gurindji's aspirations towards self-reliance became well known nationally via the Gurindji's union-supported 'speaking tours', popular 'Save the Gurindji Committees' (SGCs) formed in Sydney and Melbourne. Gurindji elder Long Johnny

Kijngayari enunciated the ambition of the camp's leaders, to 'work ... for ourselves. Little bit of help maybe from white people, but left alone'.[15] Although public support for the Gurindji grew, their goals of establishing a village and a contract mustering business and small cattle herd on pastoral land were opposed by both the pastoral industry and the Country Party Minister for the Interior, Peter Nixon.

Within the public service, the Council of Aboriginal Affairs (CAA), a policy advisory body established in 1966 and headed by Dr H. C. 'Nugget' Coombs, pushed consistently for the government to purchase land for Aboriginal companies as a prelude to land rights recognition.[16] Due in large part to the influence of the CAA, during the late 1960s and early '70s, Coalition governments devised policies of limited appeasement on issues of Aboriginal independence. In 1970 Peter Nixon approved the issuing of 'special purpose leases' to Aborigines on reserves for 'productive purposes as a business', and even, in limited circumstances, the purchase of land for Aboriginal groups with viable enterprise plans.[17]

When the Coalition government replaced John Gorton with William McMahon as its leader in March 1971, Coombs and the CAA immediately took advantage of the new prime minister's relative open-mindedness on Indigenous issues, wishfully drafting speeches for him to deliver.[18]

On 23 April 1971, McMahon made a statement in absentia that channelled something of the CAA's vision and loosened the grip of assimilationist orthodoxy on government policy in the process. State Aboriginal affairs ministers assembled in Cairns were told that as well as helping to preserve and develop their culture, the government wished to assure 'continuing Aboriginal groups [on reserves] effective access to land for ceremonial [and] recreational purposes as well as the development of new enterprises'.[19]

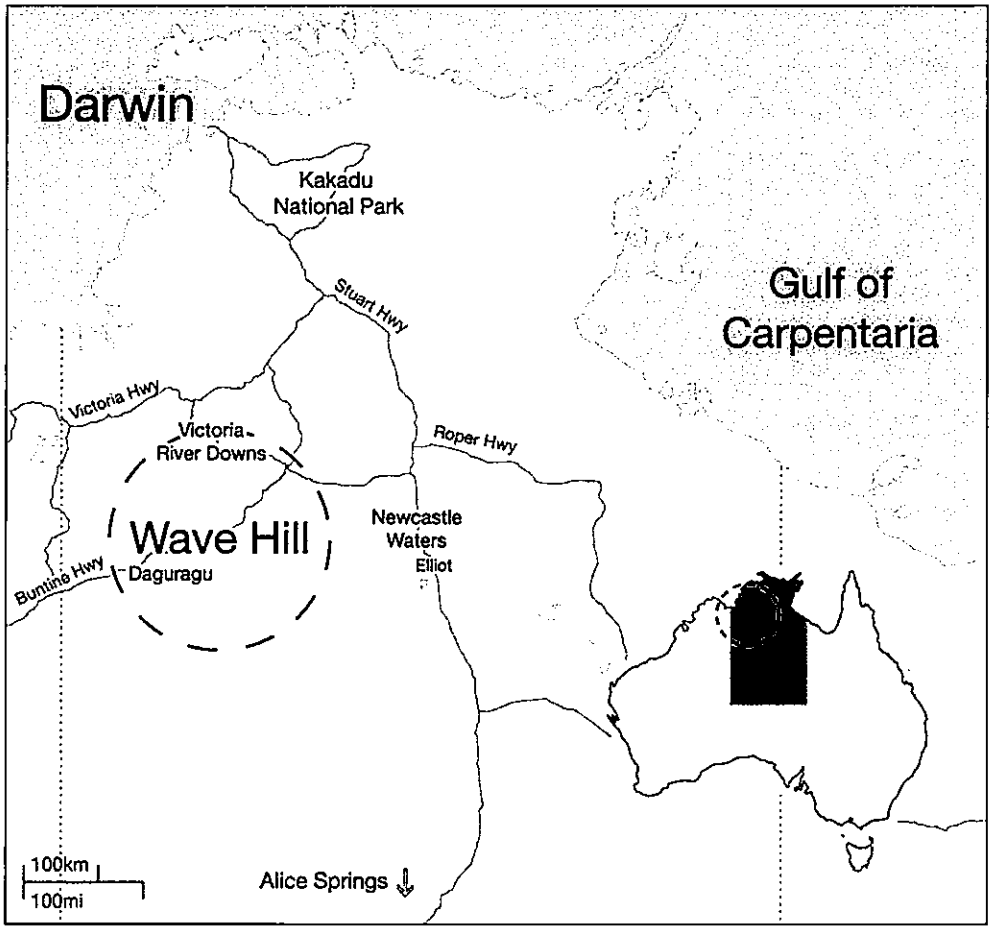
The 'Cairns Statement', as it was dubbed, was a rhetorical step away from the 'one society' doctrine of Coalition conservatives, and caused considerable consternation. The CAA's Barrie Dexter believed that 'McMahon didn't really understand what he was saying' in his statement.[20] The McMahon government also announced its intention to consider setting up an Aboriginal land fund.[21] Sixty of the Coalition government's leases were issued nationally by the new Minister for the Interior, Ralph Hunt, in the latter part 1971, although such initiatives were highly contingent and fell far short of the changes demanded by activists.[22]

Prime Minister Gorton's previous paralysis on the ill-defined status of Aborigines on cattle stations – and the Wattie Creek squatters in particular – had also forced him to seek considered independent opinion.[23] To that end he asked psychologist Cecil Gibb of the Australian National University (ANU) to chair a committee to provide advice to the government. H. C. 'Nugget' Coombs, Ted Milliken (another psychologist, and Harry Giese's assistant director in the Welfare Branch), anthropologist John Taylor and cattle industry representative Bill de Vos

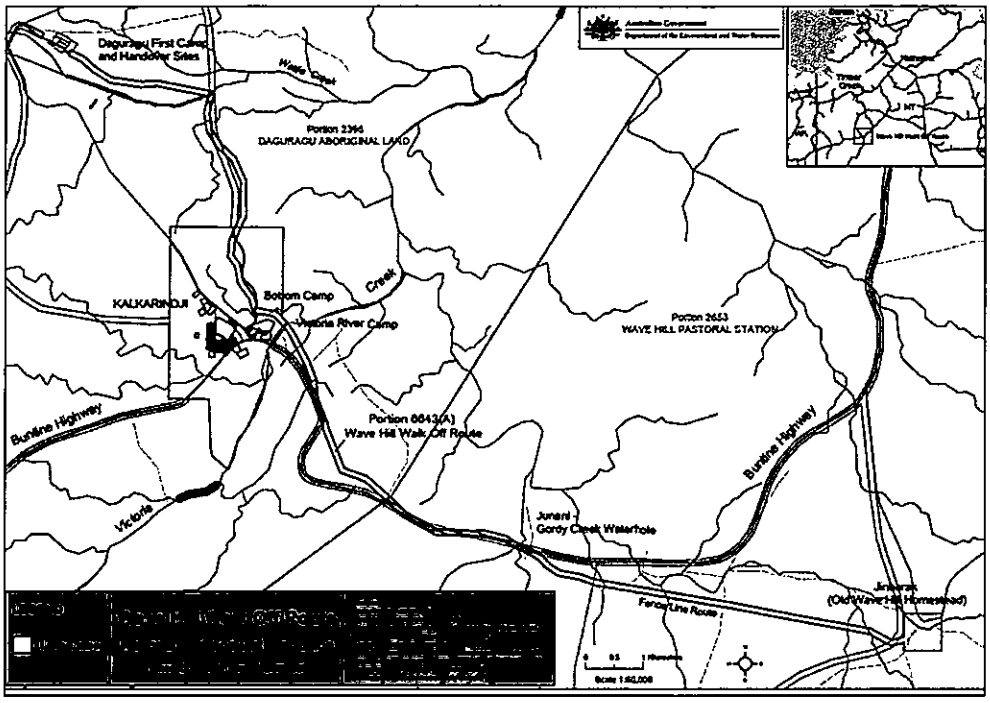
were members. Unlike previous 'fact-finding' parties commissioned by government, a pastoral industry-experienced Indigenous man, Clancy Roberts, was also on board.

It was late in 1971 when the 'Gibb Committee' released its report. The committee found that small Indigenous groups on or near cattle stations should be encouraged to develop their own communities through incorporation, education, grants, special purpose leases and excisions.[24] The committee considered the situation at Wattie Creek in particular and recommended that:

- The co-existence of the Wave Hill township and the Wattie Creek Camp should be accepted.
- There would be a continuing need for a place of refuge for older and incapacitated Aborigines, a centre for ceremonial activities and the Aboriginal choice for these purposes was Wattie Creek.



Wave Hill area, Northern Territory. (Courtesy Colin Salter.)



Start of the journey: Wave Hill walk-off route. (Courtesy Department of the Environment and Water Resources.)

- The management of Wattie Creek ... should, as far as possible, be in Aboriginal hands.[25]

The report helped to ensure that the rights of Indigenous people to independence and their traditional land were issues that would not sleep. It seemed that dispassionate analysis was showing that the long-standing assimilationist policy of successive governments required urgent reassessment. This sentiment would eventually be harnessed by the Australian Labor Party, when it came to power in December 1972 under the leadership of E. G. (Gough) Whitlam. The new Prime Minister distinguished his approach to Aboriginal affairs from that of his predecessors by pledging to allow Aborigines the right to 'self-determination', in part through developing a positive Commonwealth response to Aboriginal land rights.[26]

The strategy of Abschol

Based on Gurindji statements and a reconnaissance trip taken by students to Wattie Creek in 1969, Abschol's aim in relation to the Gurindji was to provide a careful mix of in-kind support, facilitative and advisory assistance. They were

concerned to avoid making the heavy-handed blunders (as they saw it) of the prevailing Hasluckian policy-makers and missionaries. Rather than creating programs by which – with varying degrees of coercion – Aboriginal people were encouraged to adopt European habits, Abschol were among those willing to attempt a radical reconfiguration of the relationship between Aborigines and Europeans in the rural Northern Territory.

Across the region's pastoral stations and government settlements, white people had been 'boss' since first contact.[27] For Europeans to accept roles as subordinates of Indigenous people was unheard of. Abschol secretary and activist Rob Oke spoke to a meeting at Wattie Creek in March 1971, and laid out the organisation's position clearly: 'We are trying to stand behind you – not to tell you what to do. When you make your decisions ... on what you will do, the South will back you all they can.'[28]

Abschol director Bryan Havenhand referred to a 26 square kilometre horse paddock fenced off by the Gurindji using union-donated materials as an example of the new approach, saying that '[the Aboriginal] initiative was always there but could not be mobilised until finance was available'.[29] The students believed that the support required from Abschol and other groups would lessen as government funding increased.[30]

In practice, Abschol's stance was a fine balancing act, and correspondence shows that those working with the Gurindji both at Wattie Creek and interstate were constantly concerned not to 'cross the line', by either assuming to know the Aboriginal squatters' minds or pressuring them to take a particular course of action.[31] They had good reason for caution: the most common charge made by the squatters' antagonists was that they were merely the pawns of their leftist European allies. A notable example of this occurred when the member of the NT Legislative Council ostensibly representing the residents of Wattie Creek, Dr Goff Letts, publicly accused 'communist stirrers, aided by politicians, university groups and other well-meaning but ill-informed people' of making all the major decisions on behalf of the Gurindji.[32]

As well as wishing to avoid fulfilling such accusations, the activists were concerned not to overlook the aspirations of Wattie Creek's residents. Melbourne SGC member Jim Edgerton spoke at a seminar after his return from Wattie Creek in late 1971, he reminded those present of questions underpinning Frank Hardy's book *The Unlucky Australians*, three years earlier:[33]

- Should we have white personal [sic] permanently resident at Wattie Creek?
- Are we racing ahead of Gurindji initiative in our plans for building, fencing, mining, and agriculture [sic] development?
- Do we encourage the Gurindji to make important policy and management decisions? Or have we smothered the Gurindji voice and independence by injecting our influence or even leadership?[34]

Maintaining the fine lines between advising and following their Gurindji leaders and unwittingly leading from the front required a constant process of self-assessment and consultation, usually by proxy, particularly for those actively lobbying in the south, who were at a greater distance from the campaign's Aboriginal protagonists. As this paper describes, these issues continued to arise during the engagement of the activists, and at times would assume troubling dimensions.

The work of activists at Wattie Creek

The key task for Abschol was the placement of a practically skilled, literate assistant at Wattie Creek. The Gurindji had articulated this desire in 1969, when after a visit from Nugget Coombs and other officers from the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, they had decided to ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, W. C. Wentworth – previously sympathetic to their cause – to provide them with departmental assistants.[35] As this had failed, they decided to accept the offer of Abschol to provide free assistance made during the contact between that organisation and the squatters in the same year.[36] As supportive Europeans were useful in a myriad of ways, the Gurindji were keen to have a small number of their 'friends from down south' living with them if it was clear that they, the Gurindji, were in charge.[37]

Abschol and the SGCs in Sydney and Melbourne organised recruiting drives to identify people with the right combination of political nous, humility and practical skills to fulfil the support role envisaged by the squatters.[38] After a group of tradesmen went to Wattie Creek for periods of several weeks in mid-1970 to assist with building and other projects, Jean Culley, an Abschol-supported nurse, lapidarist and activist became the first of several mid- to long-term resident assistants.

The ongoing demands from both the squatters and Abschol on the succession of people who held this role were varied. At the least, the resident assistants performed an important though little recognised function as cultural guides. Prior levels of isolation and ignorance about much of mainstream culture among the Gurindji may be gauged by the fact that 'Little' Blanche Jingaya, Vincent Lingiari's wife, had never visited a town, let alone seen the ocean, before 1971.[39] The activist/assistants were also required to transcribe, read and interpret correspondence to and from the Gurindji leadership – anything from important government correspondence to radio requests for Slim Dusty; to train the Gurindji in horticultural, mechanical, building, nursing or any other skills they possessed; and to act as a type of circuit-breaker during conflicts caused by transgressions of the kinship system during love affairs conducted by the camp's youth.[40]

The activist/assistants helped with many tasks – anything from government correspondence to the music of Slim Dusty; Wattie Creek, 1970. (Photo: Rob Oke, Oke Personal Collection.)

In addition, there were the jobs of managing finances and purchasing for projects; acting as gatekeepers facilitating or blocking contact between the Gurindji and the media, officials, station staff and well-wishers visiting the camp; and providing detailed reports to the Abschol and Save the Gurindji groups in Melbourne and Sydney on a regular basis. All of the above was often done in 40-degree heat without the comfort of housing, an office, or, when it was requested, the co-operation or support of the police and Welfare Branch staff at the resource-rich government settlement five miles away.[41]

Not surprisingly, those who survived for any length of time were tenacious. Among those residing at Wattie Creek for years, rather than weeks or months, were David Quin, Dr Philip Nitschke – who has since proved he can withstand sustained political pressure as a euthanasia advocate – and Jean Culley, who on two occasions drove from the Top End to Melbourne with broken bones. One of her injuries was caused by Cyclone Tracy, the other by a rock thrown at her ankle by her inebriated Gurindji de facto husband.[42] Despite occasional interpersonal feuding and the displays of emotional insensitivity (towards each other) among the culturally isolated activists, the Gurindji maintained an attitude of hospitality towards their 'friends'; no assistants were ever evicted from the camp.

The squatters were not impervious to the strain on their assistants. After

observing the discrimination directed towards their *kartiya* (non-Aboriginal) friends by pastoralists and public servants for several years, Pincher Nyurrmiarri, an outspoken leader, stuck up for the activists: 'People in Darwin, welfare at Wave Hill, always making it hard for our friends coming in here to live with we ... We been working hard for white man all over Australia; so why them whites making it hard for any white man working under we?'[43]

Legitimation: incorporation, a brand, and a lease – or land rights?

Through dialogue with their supporters, a clear program of the Gurindji's goals was developed. Anthropologist Hannah Middleton, who spent most of 1970 living with a family of squatters, summarised: 'Basically they see their future as building a cattle station. They want to have their own cattle station on their own land with their own [cattle] brand.'[44] The squatters, whom it should also be remembered were pre-literate, ascribed great significance to the proprietary inscriptions of the industry they wished to join. Their request to Frank Hardy to make a sign for them with the words 'Gurindji Mining Lease and Cattle Station' came in April 1967, very soon after their walk-off – years, in fact, before either of the livelihoods inscribed on their behalf were realised.[45]

A cattle brand of their own was highly significant to the Gurindji in their quest to achieve social and corporate equality in the regional pastoral industry. Gurindji and Ngarinyman men build stockyards at Wattie Creek, 1974.
(Photo: Don Atkinson, courtesy Atkinson Family Collection.)

That a cattle brand of their own was of such significance to the Gurindji is indicative of their agenda to achieve social and corporate equality in the regional pastoral industry. In under-developed country with incomplete fencing, the marking of cattle with a unique government-issued brand, consisting of three letters, was the only reliable means of preventing disputes over ownership and theft.[46] The Gurindji would also have known full well that should they be caught branding cleanskins (unmarked cattle belonging to another lease-holder, an illegitimate but not unusual practice in the industry to that time) they would lose any rights to claim the legitimacy they sought.

Legitimising inscriptions: Gurindji Mining Lease Cattle Station, 1977.
(Photo: Rob Wesley-Smith, courtesy Wesley-Smith Collection.)

This and the related issue of incorporating their prospective cattle business were fundamental to the legitimation of the Gurindji's proposed activities in terms recognised by the conservative government of the time. In late 1970, the Muramulla Gurindji Cattle Company was incorporated under the Companies Act, 1961 (Victoria), with the assistance of Melbourne-based barrister Michael Roet, who was commissioned on behalf of the activists by the Smorgons, a wealthy family of Melbourne developers.[47] The Muramulla Company's pre-incorporation process was characterised by difficulties in translating terms of corporate governance to the Wattie Creek squatters, and seeking their nominations for board members,

shareholders, directors and the like.[48] The first board members of the Muramulla Company were Vincent Lingiari, 'Long Johnny' Kijngayari, Pincher Nyurrmiarri, 'Hoppy' Mick Rangiari, 'Captain Major' (Lupgnagiari), Jerry Rinyngayarri, George Manyo and Donald Nangiari.[49]

As an incorporated entity, if Vestey was now to concede an area of Wave Hill Station for the government to issue a special purpose lease to the Gurindji (with the Muramulla Company as the lessee), it was thought that the company could potentially receive government funds. These could then be put to use in accordance with the charter of the company at the will of its Gurindji directors. The pragmatism of Darwin-based supporters such as the agronomist Robert Wesley-Smith and unionist Moira Gibbs led to a meeting between Lingiari and his local member of the NTLC, Dr Goff Letts.[50] Letts also impressed upon the Gurindji leader that some type of lease was a doorway to government assistance.

View from the south: activists David Twitt (second from left), Rob and Kay Oke (fourth and fifth from left) at a Gurindji supporters meeting in Melbourne. (Photo courtesy Oke Family Collection.)

At this point a schism began between the Gurindji's southern supporters, including Abschol, and those in the north. The activists based in the Northern Territory – who were perhaps attuned more to the constant hardship at Wattie Creek – promoted the merits of a special purpose lease as a short-term compromise. They saw that an indefinite wait for land rights would do little to alleviate the harsh conditions in which the Gurindji were living at Wattie Creek, and the title that a lease provided would allow the Gurindji to occupy the land legally. This in turn

would give them a secure footing from which to brand their own cattle, apply for services, business funding and infrastructure.[51] Among the supporting arguments they put forward was that a special purpose lease had to be *offered* by the current lessee (Vestey), and this would not cast the squatters as supplicating tenants in the way that their active *request* for a lease would.[52]

To its detractors – mostly the Melbourne-based activists organising the campaign – the concept of leasing was an expedient sell-out. Since the ALP had adopted a pro-land rights policy at its Hobart conference in 1971, it was more likely that Aborigines' land rights would be recognised with a change of government. The Abschol leadership – who were probably more in touch with the growing anti-Coalition mood in the south, believed that leasing the land was a humiliating contradiction of what they understood to be the basic request that the Gurindji had made five years previously – for the legal recognition of their customary rights to 'about 500 square miles' (1300 sq km) of their land.[53] They held that a small special purpose lease contradicted the Gurindji's claim to land ownership. Melbourne Abschol were also 'very worried' that a lease application over a tiny area would provide a victory for the government and would undermine the Gurindji's future chances of gaining control over an area sufficient to establish a cattle operation.[54]

On 30 March 1971, Tony Lawson, the Abschol director of NUAUS, sent a letter to Abschol representatives at Wattie Creek. In it he asked for the Gurindji to meet and make a decision on the lease issue:

> Can it be explained to the Gurindji the full significance to themselves and the Land Rights movement [of a lease application]? They should be told that if a lease is offered, this will [undermine] their claim for Land Rights *and the claims by other Aboriginal groups*. It is important to make them conscious of the implications of the situation.[55] [author's emphasis]

Lawson was resolute:

> If the Gurindji accept any sort of lease they will have lost their bargaining strength with the government. They will become like any of the dispossessed Aboriginal groups. To propose the idea of a lease is to propose the ending of the Gurindji Land Rights cause'.[56]

Hannah Middleton was unequivocal: '[a lease] is not victory but fraud.'[57]

Nonetheless, by mid-1971, the male leaders at Wattie Creek had decided that they would consider a lease application with special conditions. Paperwork was sent for final drafting by Abschol, who sat on it – presumably in a state of disquiet – for several months.[58] Debate grew within the organisation. Abschol member Jim Edgerton rhetorically questioned a large gathering of supporters whether their inaction was appropriate, and told them that:

> It is important to recognise that the primary concern for Abschol [at] Wattie Creek must be for the Gurindji people and their aims – not for our particular concept of Land Rights or our political inclinations.[59]

By year's end the student leaders were sufficiently troubled to send seasoned Aboriginal rights campaigner Stan Davey to Wattie Creek to assess the situation and get the Gurindji's 'final word' on the issue. Davey found Rob Wesley-Smith presenting what he described as a very 'one-sided' case to the Gurindji, 'pressurising' the Gurindji to make an application for a lease.[60] Ken Newcombe, the incoming NUAUS president, was also at Wattie Creek, advocating the opposing point of view. Davey called a closed meeting – without Wesley-Smith or Newcombe – and told the squatters that they had the full support of Abschol whatever they chose.

As the recipients of contradictory advice from their supporters, the Gurindji found themselves in a difficult position. What followed was a display of their leaders' characteristic statesmanship. Vincent Lingiari spoke candidly to the meeting against the leasing concept – if not the actuality – saying, 'If I had come from Big England then I should carry the lease, but I am on my own land.'[61] While Lingiari recognised the injustice of leasing, such sentiments were aired partly for the benefit of Abschol's Newcombe and, to an extent, Davey. When Davey had left the camp, the Gurindji elders turned immediately to Wesley-Smith, requesting that a lease application be sent to the Vestey company.[62]

After time spent accommodating the Gurindji's decision and delays encountered in engaging Darwin lawyer Dick Ward, the southern activists reached an agreement with the squatters and they moved forward in accord. As a result, a final lease application was sent from Wattie Creek to Vesteys in March 1972. The rationale provided by the Gurindji and Abschol to the press highlighted the importance that the squatters attached to the acquisition of a cattle brand. With Abschol they promoted the line that no rent would be paid; that the lease was specifically sought for the purpose of obtaining a brand for Gurindji cattle; and that they did not support the government's policy of leasing to Aboriginal groups.[63] Abschol quoted Lingiari as saying that without a brand, the lease was not wanted.[64] Through the complex negotiations behind these statements, the Gurindji had identified the means to achieve their goal without disrespecting either faction of their supporters.

By mid-1971, sustained negative publicity courtesy of the protesters had forced Vesteys to distance themselves from the recalcitrance of the Federal Government. Vesteys issued a statement that left no doubt regarding their position: if Canberra decided to grant the Gurindji a tiny 500-acre portion of the Wave Hill lease – about 1000th of the holding – they would willingly concede it.[65] In October 1972, two months before losing office, Prime Minister McMahon announced a 'gift' or grant – not a lease – of 10 square miles (26 sq km)to the squatters at Wattie Creek, and 25

square miles (65 sq km) for the expansion of the Wave Hill Welfare Settlement.[66] The government's agenda – to entice the Wattie Creek squatters into the Welfare Settlement by developing its assets – was still evident. The squatters' gratitude – if they felt any – was well disguised. Demonstrating their aspirations as pastoralists rather than Welfare Branch trainees, their response was that rights to 500 square miles (1300 sq km) of their country was still required.

Policy change and revisionism

From this discussion of the Gurindji's response to the policies of the Gorton and McMahon Coalition governments, I will now turn to analysis of the issues that confronted their supporters when Gough Whitlam – touting a radical shift in Indigenous policy – was elected to office in December 1972. The new policy regime of the Australian Labor Party was dubbed 'self-determination'. Under this new approach, the new Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Gordon Bryant, envisaged that Aborigines would manage – as much as possible – their own affairs. The policy was heavily influenced by recommendations of the CAA – and was also akin to the Wattie Creek model developed by the Gurindji and their supporters.[67]

Until this point, the government's welfare settlements such as that near Wattie Creek were semi-institutional operations administered by white 'superintendents', a part of whose role was to impart ideals of European industry and domesticity. Many had experience in Papua New Guinea or Britain's former colonies. Some, including even Coombs' CAA and a number of former Welfare Branch superintendents, found aspects of the proposed transition difficult. Many superintendents were unwilling to accept the prospect of their less authoritative station, and wondered if the Aborigines were up to the task.

Those amenable to the transition were required to attend training explaining the new paradigm at the Australian School of Pacific Administration (ASOPA) in Sydney, New South Wales. In the words of one student, the purpose of the course was to 'have [our] heads reset'.[68] As a result some 'settlement superintendents' of 1972 emerged as the Department of Aboriginal Affairs' 'community advisers' of 1973. In private, some public servants began calling self-determination 'self-destruction'.[69]

Although they were developing a political allegiance to the ALP, and the DAA had formally delivered an eight square mile (21 sq km) special purpose 'homestead' lease to the Gurindji in March 1973, the activists did not accept the new Department of Aboriginal Affairs' policy prescriptions without question.[70] By mid-1973, they had had more than three years to road-test their 'hands-off' strategy with the Gurindji.

Jean Leu, head of the Sydney SGC, had consistently defended the activists from all suggestions they may be influencing the squatters' decision-making processes or

undermining the development of their independence through donations.[71] After spending two weeks at Wattie Creek and much reflection on the policy in action, she began to reassess the strategy the activists had pursued, arguing that there was a need for advice and intervention to be increased. During her stay she had found that the primitive amenities in the squatters' camp trapped dirty water, creating a haven for disease. She also found that some of the Gurindji's precious horses had escaped through a broken fence and the local pythons had developed an appetite for – and access to – the camp's chickens. Writing to Abschol's Rob Oke, she said that 'communicating ideas, advocating certain lines of action and explaining there is a better way of achieving goals' was not 'interfering with people, waving the authoritarian stick, or robbing them of initiative'.[72] She went on:

> The present popular cliché is to let Aborigines 'do their own thing' and 'run their own affairs' – fine, if they know what they are doing. How can people make a valid choice, or aspire to become a self-supporting community, when their own experiences are so limited, or when they know very little of available alternatives?
>
> If people like the Gurindji aspire to certain things, they must understand there are inherent responsibilities which must be accepted, if their aspirations are to be fulfilled. It's their choice. Less intellectual theorising and more plain damn common sense is needed.[73]

Abschol's strategy had been far more encouraging of the squatters' autonomy than that of the NT Administration, but now some of the activists were finding that they were less confident in the Gurindji's abilities than the ALP Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Writing to the new Minister, Jim Cavanagh, a year later, Leu summarised her thinking:

> The current vogue concept [is] that to have someone permanently resident with an Aboriginal group could encourage an attitude of dependency. While I accept the principle, the Aboriginal scene is too complex for it to be applied indiscriminately. To remain inflexible on this point is to be naively idealistic. Standards of progress and needs can vary greatly from group to group.[74]

Leu went on to remind the minister of the social isolation and economic deprivation on Wave Hill Station from which the Gurindji had recently emerged, arguing that if such groups requested assistance then it should be granted to them.[75] The issues raised by Leu preoccupied Aboriginal affairs bureaucrats until the late 1970s, and foreshadowed growing concerns and criticism in response to the new era of self-determination policy.[76]

Cultural exchange

To this point, I have been discussing issues arising from the physical developmental needs identified by the Gurindji in relation to government policy. Of

significance and less well-known is the fact that the Gurindji leadership were not only asking mainstream Australia for practical assistance, they were also offering something in return: an agenda of cultural education – potentially national in its scope – which they sought to implement through their children and *kartiya* (non-Indigenous) assistants. This has come to light subsequently through original records and the commentary of the activists themselves.

As is well documented by Ann McGrath, Deborah Bird-Rose and others, the Gurindji had accommodated the habits and culture of non-Indigenous Australians, largely to their own detriment, for many decades in the pastoral industry.[77] Part of the agenda envisaged by Vincent Lingiari during the period under review was a resultant counteraction; the transmission of *Ngumpit* (regional Aboriginal) knowledge to the broader mainstream of the country.[78] This they hoped to achieve by 'learning' their non-Indigenous friends in non-restricted traditional culture, who would then spread their knowledge among the broader community.[79] It was also envisaged that younger Gurindji would teach Gurindji language in the southern cities.[80] The value of cultural exchange, and equality, was deeply held. Thirty years later, strike leaders still espoused its principles: 'Yes, you learn from *kartiya* and *Ngumpit* way. Don't matter where you from in the world ... Very hard, but gradually we understand one another.'[81]

Cultural exchange: dancers at Wattie Creek, 1972.
(Photo: Don Atkinson, courtesy Atkinson Family Collection.)

Abschol's leadership recognised the importance of this agenda to the Gurindji.[82] Although few supporters made the extraordinary commitment to seriously understand and take on *Ngumpit* law, many were affected profoundly and lastingly by their interaction with the older Gurindji.[83] Those who attempted to 'go the extra mile' – to follow *Ngumpit* cultural prescriptions – in the mainstream faced discrimination exceeding the already vitriolic levels experienced by supportive Europeans for merely associating with Aborigines in the rural NT.[84]

The reality was that such an agenda was beyond the scope of the activists and no large organised program was developed for the dissemination of *Ngumpit* knowledge. No doubt the enormous undertaking of supporting the Gurindji's land rights battle and other agendas consumed all the activists' time and resources. In hindsight we can question whether significant progress towards the Gurindji's desired cultural rebalancing could have been achieved by *kartiya* at all. Unfortunately the Gurindji who espoused the vision were of advanced years by the 1970s and assumedly had limited energy for the work they undertook on their southern tours and engagements. But from a different perspective, it can be said that the cross-cultural encounter at Wattie Creek was a pronounced success, playing a significant part in the remarkable popularisation of Australian Aboriginal culture and feeding the development of 'Aboriginal studies' and 'Aboriginal history' disciplines throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

Conclusion

It is beyond the scope of this paper to assess the final outcomes of the Gurindji supporters' net contribution to the development of Wattie Creek (Daguragu). During the years under discussion, the role of Abschol and other Gurindji supporters in bolstering the Gurindji's community development, generating cross-cultural knowledge transfer and influencing the land rights platform adopted by the Australian Labor Party during its years in opposition was significant and well-sustained, although this has been obscured by subsequent events.

Several factors have overshadowed the alliance between the Gurindji and the activist groups and individuals I have described. The popular narrative of the walk-off known to later generations (as articulated in, for instance, the popular song *From Little Things Big Things Grow*) reduces the period between the union-supported strike of 1966 and the iconic 'handback' by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in 1975 to a time of 'waiting' and passivity.[85] The contribution of union groups to the Gurindji cause is more widely recognised than the activist groups I have discussed. This is due to Frank Hardy's close association with the walk-off and the fact that unions and unionists publicly supported the strike immediately, and played a key role in its timing, if not its conception.[86] Although NAWU, the WWF and others have been absorbed into larger contemporary bodies, some of the unionists

themselves have remained in the Northern Territory and have been involved in the subsequent commemoration of the strike.[87]

In contrast, the Gurindji's student and other southern supporters stayed in or returned to New South Wales and Victoria. In the early 1970s there was also a general fall from grace of non-Indigenous pro-Aboriginal groups due to the political radicalisation of Aboriginal activists, during which Abschol itself was disbanded.[88] Similarly, a certain 'politics of silence' is a factor. After conversations with many non-Indigenous former activists and staff active at Wattie Creek, I can report that a number have chosen not to comment publicly on their experience in subsequent years, due in part to their wish not to highlight the contribution of non-Indigenous workers at the expense of Gurindji achievements.[89]

Furthermore, of the projects, services and infrastructure sought by the Gurindji that *were* delivered at Wattie Creek (Daguragu), the bulk were in nascent form during Abschol's involvement, their developmental phase during the Whitlam era, and were finally realised under the Fraser government. Finally, after talking to many later Gurindji leaders I believe that their subsequent herculean struggles with government have also dwarfed – to them – the period of their relationship with Abschol. In my experience, the residents of Daguragu have more interest in discussing the walk-off and conditions preceding it than subsequent developments.[90]

Despite this, the office-bearers of both Abschol and the Save the Gurindji Committees and others were highly committed over a long period and were – given their youthful inexperience – surprisingly effective lobbyists. This is perhaps best borne out by the private assessment of their early antagonist, the management of Vestey's Australian interests:

> We are dealing with a very well organised opposition who cannot be underestimated: their publicity is good; they are both articulate and vociferous and they are astute enough to pick up any variance in statements or policies ...[91]

The efforts made by the Gurindji and their supporters to legitimate the concerns of the group at Wattie Creek – and the acceptance of this legitimation by the Gorton and McMahon Coalition governments – is little recognised, and forms a significant part of the Gurindji land rights campaign story.

Regarding the strategy of Abschol that I term 'following the leader', it was only during the lease controversy of 1971-72 that the activists' strategy of non-interference in the Gurindji decision-making process was significantly challenged. It is not surprising that this aberration occurred; the student leaders' occasional repression of their political knowledge and ideology to promote the Gurindji's campaign choices would have its eventual limits. Similarly, due to the small number of Indigenous squatters and *kartiya* supporters involved, the prospects of the Australian population's adoption of the Gurindji's '*Ngumpit* way' was never great.

It was however, only the decisions of committed individuals to 'follow the leader' that created conditions conducive to its expression. Its articulation represents a high point of Gurindji agency.

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Notes

1 Gurindji is the Aboriginal language group whose country centres around the headwaters of the Victoria River in the Northern Territory of Australia. The name 'Gurindji' is often now used to include neighbouring groups such as the *Bilinara*, *Ngining*, *Mudbra*, *Malngin* and *Ngarinman*, people, whose intermarriage and close relations with the Gurindji have increased since European settlement. For the sake of simplicity, in the text the term 'Gurindji' is used to refer to all the Aboriginal people who lived on Wave Hill Station and subsequently went on strike, although this group includes all of the above, and a proportion of *Warlpiri* people from the south.

2 For detailed descriptions of these events, see: Frank Hardy, *The Unlucky Australians*, Nelson Publishing, Melbourne, 1968; Bain Atwood, 'The Articulation of "Land Rights" in Australia: The Case of Wave Hill', *Social Analysis*, vol. 44 (1) 2000, pp. 3-39.

3 'Gurindji Petition to Lord Casey, Governor General, 19 April 1967', in Bain Attwood and Andrew Markus, *The Struggle for Aboriginal Rights: A Documentary History*, Andrew Markus (ed), Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1999, pp. 223-225.

4 Frank Hardy, *The Unlucky Australians*.

5 Goff Letts, 'Hardy admitted he engineered Gurindji land claim', *Northern Territory News (NTN)*, 23 November, 1971. In light of Hardy's ambivalence in print, Letts' querying of Hardy's contribution was not without justification.

6 Bain Attwood, 'The Articulation of "Land Rights" in Australia: The Case of Wave Hill', *Social Analysis*, vol. 44, 1, 2000, pp. 3-39.

7 Alan Powell, *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1982, p. 235.

8 Jeremy Long, 'Frank Hardy and the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off', *Northern Perspective* 192, 1996, 1-9, p. 7; Ted Egan, *Sitdown Up North: An Autobiography*, Kerr Publishing, Sydney, 1997, p. 251; Heritage Conservation Services, *Gurindji Wave Hill Walk-off Route Heritage Assessment Report*, March 2006, p. 27.

9 'Historic Debate', *Aboriginal Quarterly*, Abschol, Australian National University, Canberra, 1 (3) 1968, p. 5; Julie Rigg, 'Support swells for Gurindji land claim', *The Australian*, 20 August 1970. Unions, notably the Waterside Workers Federation, the North Australian Workers Union (NAWU) and the Meatworkers Union also provided significant support during the period. The NAWU formed in 1927 as a subsidiary of the Australian Workers Union and represented Aboriginal workers in the equal wages hearings in the 1960s, although it had few Aboriginal members in the cattle industry.

10 Rob and Kay Oke, Paul Fox, David Twitt, *Wattie Creek: Present and Future – Report of the Abschol Field Team*, National Union of Australian Students, Melbourne, December 1969; Abschol, *What Now at Wattie Creek: Report of the Abschol Field Team which Visited Wattie Creek in May-June 1970*, Abschol, Australian National University, Canberra, 1970.

11 The National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) was formed in 1937 at Adelaide University to protect the rights and represent the shared interests of university students.

12 The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginals was established in 1958 in Adelaide,

merging a number of organisations lobbying for Aboriginal rights. In 1964 it changed its name to the 'Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders'. From its inception until its demise in 1978, FCAA/FCAATSI was comprised of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal activists working together for the improvement of conditions for Aboriginal people.

13 See Rani Kerin, 'Charles Duguid and Aboriginal Assimilation in Adelaide, 1950-1960: The Nebulous "Assimilation" Goal', *History Australia*, 2 (3) 2005, pp. 85.1-85.17; Paul Hasluck, *Shades of Darkness: Aboriginal Affairs 1925-1965*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988, pp. 66-71.

14 Julie T. Wells, 'The Long March: Assimilation Policy and Practice in Darwin, the Northern Territory, 1939-1967', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Queensland, 1995, pp. 3, 92.

15 Long Johnny Kijngayari, cited in Cecil Holmes, 'Wattie Creek', *Aboriginal Quarterly*, Abschol, Australian National University, Canberra, March 1969.

16 Barrie G. Dexter, Interview Recorded by Charlie Ward, 2010, in possession of the author. Tim Rowse, *Obliged to be Difficult: Nugget Coombs' Legacy in Indigenous Affairs*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 34-52.

17 Ian Palmer, *Buying Back the Land: Organisational Struggle and the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1988, pp. 15-22; Minister for the Interior Peter Nixon, press release: 'Land Leases for Northern Territory Aboriginals', 21 July 1970, Oke Personal Collection.

18 Rowse, *Obliged to be Difficult*, pp. 53-54.

19 Rowse, *Obliged to be Difficult*, pp. 53-54.

20 Darwin, NTAS, Barrie Dexter, interview recorded by Charlie Ward, February 2010, NTRS 3609/BWF 25.

21 Rowse, *Obliged to be Difficult*, pp. 53-54.

22 'Sixty leases for Aboriginals on reserves', *Northern Territory News*, 14 February 1972.

23 See Jeremy Long, 'Frank Hardy and the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-Off', *Northern Perspective* 192, 199, 1-9 (p. 7).

24 Cecil Gibb et al, *The Report of the Committee to Review the Situation of Aborigines on Pastoral Properties in the Northern Territory*, Commonwealth Government Printer's Office, Canberra, 1973, pp. 72-76.

25 Gibb et al, pp. 87-88.

26 McMahon, cited in Palmer, *Buying Back the Land*, p. 18.

27 See Ann McGrath, *Born In the Cattle*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1987, pp. 95-121; Lyn Riddett, *Kine, Kin and Country: the Victoria River District of the Northern Territory, 1911-1966*, North Australian Research Unit, Darwin, 1990, pp. 84-85.

28 Wattie Creek Meeting Notes, Oke Personal Collection, 13 March 1971.

29 Barbara James, 'Abschol: A Look at its Aims', *Northern Territory News* (*NTN*), 8 July 1972.

30 James, 'Abschol: A Look at its Aims', *NTN*, 8 July 1972..

31 Much Abschol correspondence supports this; see Oke Personal Collection.

32 See National Archives of Australia (NAA), Canberra, William C. Wentworth, 'Petition by Gurindji People to Governor-General re Wave Hill Pastoral Land, Northern Territory', A1734, NT 1968/2509, pp. 50-55; 'Stirrers not behind our claim: Lingiari', *NTN*, 18 November 1971.

33 Hardy, *The Unlucky Australians*.

34 Jim Edgerton, *The Role of Abschol at Wattie Creek*, Oke Personal Collection, undated, although presented at Wattie Creek Seminar, 30 October 1971.

35 Cecil Holmes, *One Man's Way*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, Victoria, 1986, p. 94.

36 Oke, Fox and Twitt, *Wattie Creek: Present and Future*, December 1969; Tony Scott, NTAS,

Darwin, interview recorded by Charlie Ward, November 2013, NTRS 3609/BWF 50.
37 Oke, Fox and Twitt, *Wattie Creek*; Tony Scott, NTAS, Darwin, interview.
38 See Oke Personal Collection.
39 'First time in a town', *NTN*, 6 January, 1971; Northern Territory Archives Service (NTAS), Darwin, Robert Wesley-Smith, interview recorded by Charlie Ward, September 2010, NTRS 3609, BWF 15.
40 NTAS, Darwin, Hannah Middleton, interview recorded by Charlie Ward, November 2009, NTRS 3609 BWF 2.
41 See Frank Hardy, *The Australian*: 'Wattie Creek revisited', 13 June 1970; 'Tug of war in the wilderness', 15 June 1970; 'A dream denied becomes a nightmare', 16 June 1970.
42 Paddy Zakaria (daughter of Jean Culley), personal communication, 27 April 2011.
43 Pincher Numiari, open letter, Oke Personal Collection, 5 June 1974.
44 Hannah Middleton, 'The Gurindji at Wattie Creek', Abschol and the Anthropological Society of Victoria, conference proceedings, Melbourne, 9 December 1970, Oke Personal Collection, p. 14.
45 According to Frank Hardy, Vincent Lingiari and Pincher Nyurrmiarri proclaimed: 'We want a sign, Vestey's got a sign, Welfare got a sign, the policeman's got a sign, everybody's got a signboard. Gurindji got to have a signboard.' Newsbeat TV program transcript, 8 August 1968, NTAS, NTRS 3548 C1–5J.
46 John Goldschmidt (director), *The Unlucky Australians* (film), Associated Television (ATV), 1973.
47 NTAS, Darwin, interview with Tony Lawson recorded by Charlie Ward, February 2013, NTRS 3609, BWF 51.
48 See NTAS, Darwin, Robert Wesley-Smith, NTRS 3609, BWF 15; Tony Lawson, letter to Hugo Haigh, 29 October 1970, Oke Personal Collection; Hannah Middleton, letter to Michael Roet, 30 December 1970, Oke Personal Collection.
49 See 'Memorandum of Association, Muramulla Gurindji P/L', 12 October 1970, Oke Personal Collection.
50 Tony Lawson to Goff Letts, 30 October 1970, Oke Personal Collection; Rob Wesley-Smith, letter to Tony Lawson, 11 March 1972, Oke Personal Collection.
51 Robert Wesley-Smith, personal communication, 12 December 2011; Brian Manning to Norm Docker (Waterside Workers Federation), 10 September 1971, Oke Personal Collection.
52 'Wesley-Smith to Lawson', 14 March 1972, Oke Personal Collection; Wesley-Smith, personal communication, 12 December 2011.
53 Quoted in Edward G. Whitlam, *Abiding Interests*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1997, p. 297.
54 Tony Lawson to Rob Wesley-Smith, Oke Personal Collection, 9 March 1972.
55 Letter from Tony Lawson to Alan Thorpe (misaddressed as Alan T. Harpe), Oke Personal Collection, 30 March 1971.
56 Lawson to Harpe, Oke Personal Collection, 30 March 1971.
57 Hannah Middleton, *But Now We Want the Land Back: A History of the Australian Aboriginal People*, New Age Publishers, Sydney, 1977, p. 173.
58 Jim Edgerton, *The Role of Abschol at Wattie Creek*, Oke Personal Collection, undated, although presented at Wattie Creek Seminar, 30 October 1971.
59 Edgerton, *The Role of Abschol at Wattie Creek*.
60 Stan Davey, *Report Prepared for National Abschol Director*, Oke Personal Collection, 28 December 1971.

61 Davey, *Report Prepared for National Abschol Director*.
62 Rob Wesley-Smith, *Diary: 1971*, Wesley-Smith Personal Collection.
63 Abschol press release, Oke Personal Collection, 17 April 1972.
64 Abschol press release, 17 April 1972.
65 'Vestey's ready to hand over 500 acres to the Gurindji', *NTN*, 16 May 1971.
66 'Land grant doesn't impress Gurindji's', *NTN*, 14 October 1972.
67 Rowse, *Obliged to be Difficult*, pp. 110-113.
68 NTAS, Darwin, Len Richardson, oral history interview recorded with Charlie Ward, January 2010, NTRS 3609 BWF 8.
69 Norm Faint (former DAA staffer), personal communication, 24 September 2010.
70 'Gurindjis given lease', *The Australian*, 19 March 1973; David Quin to Rob Oke, 2 April 1973, Oke Personal Collection.
71 'Letter from the Secretary', *Gurindji Campaign Newsletter*, no. 3, , November 1970, Oke Personal Collection.
72 Jean Leu to Rob Oke, Oke Personal Collection, 2 June 1973.
73 Leu to Rob Oke, 2 June 1973.
74 Jean Leu to Senator Cavanagh, Oke Personal Collection, 22 May 1974.
75 Leu to Cavanagh, 22 May 1974.
76 D. Hay, 'DAA Staff Notice 1978/90', November 1978, cited in John Cooke, *Departure From Disaster: Self-Management Options For Aboriginal Communities*, unpublished, 1985; NTAS, Darwin, Ray Hempel, oral history interview recorded by Charlie Ward, January 2010, NTRS 3609, BWF 7; N. Faint, personal communication, 24 September 2010.
77 McGrath, *Born In the Cattle*, pp. 49-121; Deborah Bird-Rose, *Hidden Histories: Black Stories from Victoria River Downs, Humbert River and Wave Hill Stations*, Aboriginal Studies Press, Canberra, 1991, pp. 149-157.
78 *Ngumpit* (Gurindji): The Gurindji's name for themselves and neighbouring Aboriginal groups. Vincent Lingiari, cited in Lyn Riddett, 'The Strike That Became a Land Rights Movement: A Southern Do-Gooder Reflects on Wattie Creek 1966-74', *Labour History*, 72, 1997, p. 58.
79 See NAA, Darwin, 'Wattie Creek Proposed Development Project', F985, 1973/141; Riddett, 'The Strike That Became a Land Rights Movement, *Labour History*, 72, 1997, pp. 60-61; 'Getting "Grown-Up" at Wattie Creek', *Overland*, 146, 1997, pp. 68-71.
80 Donald Nangiari to Tony Lawson, Oke Personal Collection, 23 August 1971.
81 Mick Rangiari cited in Minoru Hokari, *Gurindji Journey: A Japanese Historian in the Outback*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2011, p. 242.
82 T. Lawson to D. Nangiari, Oke Personal Collection, 8 January 1972; Barbara James, 'Abschol: A look at its aims', *NTN*, 8 July 1972.
83 NTAS, Darwin, Essie Warmuth, interview recorded by Charlie Ward, January 2010, NTRS 3609, BWF 11; Rod Williams, interview recorded by Charlie Ward, November 2009, NTRS 3609, BWF1; H. Middleton, interview recorded by Charlie Ward, November 2009, NTRS 3609 BWF 2.
84 NTAS, Darwin, L. Riddett and H. Middleton, NTRS 3609 BWF 3.
85 Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody, *From Little Things Big Things Grow*, Universal Music Publishing P/L, Sydney, 1991 (all rights reserved).
86 See Bain Attwood, 'The Articulation of "Land Rights" in Australia: The Case of Wave Hill', *Social Analysis*, 44 (1); Jeremy Long, 'Frank Hardy and the 1966 Wave Hill Walk-off', *Northern Perspective*, 19 (2), 1996; Hardy, *The Unlucky Australians*.
87 See Brian Manning, 'A Blast from the Past: An Activist's Account of the Wave Hill Walk-

off', The Sixth Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture, Northern Territory University, 23 August 2002, published in *Vintage Reds: Australian Stories of Rank and File Organising*, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Canberra. (http://roughreds.com/index.html, 2003, accessed 6 December 2010.)

88 Bryan Havenhand (former Abschol director), personal communication, 4 November 2011. For an excellent account of the racial politics at play in this period, see Sue Taffe, *Black and White Together – FCAATSI: The Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders 1958-1973*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2005.

89 These individuals shall remain anonymous at their request.

90 A point also noted by Hokari in *Gurindji Journey*, p. 226.

91 R. Bell, Wattie Creek: Notes for Northern Territory Cattle Producers' Council Meeting, NTAS, NTRS 3548, C1-5K, 7 November 1970.