

### **Oombulgurri, Then and Now**

The Oombulgurri Human Development Project was undertaken by the Institute of Cultural Affairs in August 1975. It was part of an effort to help the Aboriginal people of northwestern Australia modernize with socio-economic development, which was starting to be a must if they were to survive. Some of the major issues faced by the Aboriginal people of Oombulgurri were the issue of isolation from the rest of Australian society, as well as the inability of the village to self-sustain due to lack of clean water and irrigation methods.

The Contradictions faced by the Institute of Cultural Affairs included:

- Absence of Support of Effective Community Operation (including untapped private funding and remoteness from the Australian government)
- Underdeveloped Approaches to Local Food Production (such as local farming inexperience and random land subdivision)
- Unclearified Procedures for Transporting Ancient Tradition (including split tribal/urban loyalties)
- Ineffective Means for Goods Supply and Distribution (partially due to narrow range of goods and low quality merchandise)
- Inadequate Systems of Transport and Communication (such as insufficient vehicles)
- Lack of Training Structures for Adult Population (partially due to limited child care structures)
- an Unsystematic Method of Water Distribution and Control (partially due to unchecked seasonal flooding and limited stock water supply)

- Lack of Facilities for Raising Local Cattle (partially due to uncontrolled breeding)
- Shortage of Practical Skills in Technical Areas (such as unqualified local bargemen and unshared domestic skills)
- Ineffective Organization of Community Action (including a small resident workforce)
- Community Building Program delays (including substandard residences).<sup>1</sup>

To address these challenges, the Institute of Cultural Affairs suggested Social Development in the form of the Village Construction, Social Structures, and Functional Training proposals; the Continental Support Lines proposal; and Economic Development through the Essential Services, Food Production, and Income Activities proposals.

The Social Development category of proposals included the following projects:

- Residential housing (including family dwellings and public services)
- Public facilities (such as education complexes and a general store)
- Utility buildings (such as vehicle garage and a slaughterhouse)
- Cultural center (including a craft shop and a heritage course)
- Village organization (including a village council and community forums)
- Community Health (such as a nutritional kitchen and a health outpost)
- Village Care (including community parks and a greenery)
- Trading co-operative (including the centralization of wholesale buying orders and formalization of external trade relations)
- Inclusive maintenance (such as a machinery workshop and supplies)

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Cultural Affairs, "Oombulgurri Human Development Project," August 1975.

The category of Continental Support Lines specialized in:

- Consultant networks (including infant care and schooling)
- Financial development (such as construction trades and agricultural skills)
- Project promotion (including development of community relations and spreading the story)
- Supply systems (such as a purchasing agency)

The Economic development proposal category suggested the following projects:

- Water reticulation (including a pumping station and well development)
- All-purpose transport (such as a boat dock and an air strip)
- Communication network (a Telephone system and local communication through intercoms, a bell and radios)
- Vegetable garden (including the development of a plant nursery, and a harvesting system)
- Tropical Orchard (including produce harvesting and pest control)
- Beehive pollination (revolving around introduction of the hives and maintaining quality)
- Milch-goat development (involved acquiring the initial herd and providing milk processing facilities)
- Local piggery (including balanced feeding for the pigs and a meat supply)
- Feed-crop farming (including crop planting and farm equipment acquisition)
- Cattle station (including range development and a meat supply)
- Horse farm (including stable facilities)

- Poultry raising (including acquisition of equipment and supplementation of the community's food supply)<sup>2</sup>

The ICA's efforts to revitalize Oombulgurri had when Robert Roberts, the village's community leader, invited them to do a Human Development Project. When they arrived, as one team member described it, the reserve was "a dump." Also, alcoholism, children suffering from starvation, and prostitution were big problems. Part of the problems the ICA faced had to do with the fact that the nearest city in Australia was 40 miles away by boat. There was often a waitlist for access to the boat by the people of Oombulgurri. Part of the efforts included attempts to get electric power and clean water to the village. The other trouble was that it was hard to get the Aboriginals motivated to get the majority of the work done and it was harder to get them to assume leadership. This was because many people living there had memories of when life was better and had desperation to return to that, but at the same time, the lack of leadership got them nowhere.

Ultimately, the ICA was asked by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to leave Oombulgurri since they were doing most of the work, not the Aboriginal people. This came after a period of worsening relations between the two organizations. The ICA and the DAA started out friendly but the difference was the DAA was to maintain, not develop, the Aboriginal villages. On the other hand, the ICA does development projects such as the attempt in Oombulgurri, and this led to what was described as "crossed purposes." Also, the DAA promised monetary assistance but never carried through with it, and even came to see the ICA as competition.

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<sup>2</sup> Institute of Cultural Affairs, "Oombulgurri Human Development Project," August 1975.

Despite the efforts of the ICA and other organizations like Amnesty International, trouble continued in Oombulgurri. In 2014, the Australian government forcibly evicted the Aboriginal people in “a gradual process.”<sup>3</sup> Services, the shop and the school were closed first. Then the utilities were turned off and the few who were left were unceremoniously ejected from their homeland and demolishing the abandoned structures in the village. This was only the beginning as the Australian government had plans to shut down 150 more communities. The particular trouble for Oombulgurri stemmed from the fact that it was not part of the 2013 determination that promised Aboriginals a right to their land. Amnesty International in 2011 had found that despite the harsh conditions there were benefits for the Aboriginals that were living on ancient lands including Oombulgurri, such as:

- less substance abuse
- less violence
- better health both physically and mentally

Australian media stated that this was reversed when the Aboriginal communities started to close. The forced departure has decreased quality of life for Aboriginal people in Australia. Many have suffered great trauma over the forced abandonment of their homes, and others have resorted to alcohol.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, there is also disputed claims over what went on at Oombulgurri even with the views of Amnesty International, and there have been claims of expensive maintenance and poor choices by the Aboriginal people, such as alcoholism as it was,

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<sup>3</sup> Solonec, Tammy, “The trauma of Oombulgurri’s demolition will be repeated across Western Australia,” November 28, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Solonec, Tammy, “The trauma of Oombulgurri’s demolition will be repeated across Western Australia,” November 28, 2014.

child neglect, domestic violence and sexual abuse.<sup>5</sup> This, coupled with ICA testimony, makes one wonder if things just stayed put after the ICA was asked to leave. Even with the conflicting reports, it is debated whether it should have been closed in the first place. Regardless of the reasoning and whether it was the right or wrong response, this forced removal appears to be like what the United States government did to the Cherokees prior to the Trail of Tears in the 1830s. History repeated itself, except in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in a different country. People must make sure that history does not repeat itself again, especially towards indigenous peoples in countries around the globe.

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<sup>5</sup> Harrison, Dan, The Sydney Morning Herald, "Remote indigenous towns fear trauma and dislocation as bulldozers roll in," November 29, 2014, <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/remote-indigenous-towns-fear-trauma-and-dislocation-as-bulldozers-roll-in-20141127-11vvf9.html>

THE OOMBULGURRI HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

1973 - 1978

REPORT AND EVALUATION

The Institute of Cultural Affairs  
National Office  
Box M44, SME  
Sydney, NSW 2012

## I. HISTORY

The Institute of Cultural Affairs is a not-for-profit research, training and demonstration group concerned with the human factor in world development. The initial experiment, beginning in 1962, involved a poverty neighbourhood in Chicago known as Fifth City. Here, for 10 years, a careful programme was maintained to develop methods for rapid, comprehensive social and economic development at the local level which would be applicable in any location. The first move to test the results of this experiment in a totally different environment was the project which began in Oombulgurri, Western Australia, in 1973. Shortly thereafter a third project began in Majuro on the Marshall Islands. The experience gained in these three locations was consolidated in 1975, and in the next two years, 21 additional Human Development Projects were initiated in a band around the world. Each of these 24 is intended to be a demonstration of local initiative and vitality, and to lead to replication in other similar communities.

The village of Oombulgurri had been vacated by 1967 and its residents dispersed to Wyndham and other locations. In 1973, Oombulgurri leaders decided to re-establish the community and invited the ICA to provide a team of resident consultants to assist. People began moving back and the Oombulgurri Human Development Project began. The population during the ensuing five years has fluctuated between 60 and 200.

The Project passed through three phases. 1. September 1973 through August 1975: The village was re-established and essential services provided. 2. September 1975 through August 1977: A Consultation with volunteer outside expertise was held in August 1975 in order to create a comprehensive plan for the future of Oombulgurri. Systematic development began immediately thereafter with the establishment of working guilds, and the launching of profitable enterprises, community agriculture, health services, educational programmes, and visible environmental improvements. 3. September 1977 through September 1978: Oombulgurri residents began to take over primary management functions of major community activities, including the store, the village kitchen, the health outpost, the powerhouse, the water system and the pre-school. ICA staff were required to terminate their consultant role in the middle of this phase.

## II. METHOD

The Projects initiated by the ICA rest on several pre-suppositions relative to approach or method. 1) It is assumed that the key to human development is local community. Three arenas of activity are critical to healthy, functioning human settlements - (i) the Economic, in which the local economy is able to undergird a self-sustaining community; (ii) the Social, in which the essential services, such as education and health, are adequate to foster a posture of self-reliance; (iii) the Human, in which the infrastructure and physical environment are conducive to a spirit of self-confidence.

2) It is assumed that engagement by the entire community in both planning and actuation is essential to community re-development, and that visible physical changes are necessary to maintaining motivation.

3) It is assumed that a developing community needs to be actively related to the larger society through both the public and private sectors. It needs to understand its efforts as a contribution to the well-being of other communities.



### III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The people of Oombulgurri returned to the ruins of the abandoned Forrest River Mission in 1973 and over the next five years were able to create a community and quality of life far beyond what they had experienced on the Reserve in Wyndham. The following lists some of their accomplishments, as assessed by the ICA.

1) The Oombulgurri people saved the Government and taxpayers \$903,000 over a four year period. During that time the residents invested \$84,000 of their own money in the community through the community's "Wunan" fund. They also made marginal profits from several of their industries, a \$12,000 profit from their store in a single year (1976) and became self-sufficient in beef, pork, chickens and eggs.

2) The Oombulgurri people achieved dramatic improvement in their health. There was no infant mortality at Oombulgurri. Anaemia was overcome with a record gain from 7.5 grammes to 12 grammes blood haemoglobin average among children in a single year. Trachoma was insignificant. The incidence of venereal disease lowered. Nutrition was greatly upgraded through a community kitchen operated, financed and run by community women which served two good meals a day. Two women were trained as camp nurses.

3) The Oombulgurri people advanced community education by having 36 members undertake training outside Oombulgurri, 8 of whom went overseas. Ten high school students studied in schools in the South. Out of this, community members were able to generate much of their own planning, manage their store, do payrolls, food processing and most of the maintenance of community machinery. A Primary School was established with seven teacher aides and an average daily attendance of 50. An Early Learning Centre was also established, with 4 community workers trained, and an enrolment of 22.

4) The Oombulgurri people developed a high degree of community organisation. Using their own heritage they assigned all adults to working guilds, such as the store, poultry, etc., along kinship lines. They rebuilt their sharing system by assigning themselves to neighbourhood groups to look after the cleanliness and orderliness of their community. They developed their heritage toward the future by using their sharing system (wunan) to build a community fund for development. They also reinstated initiation rites, regular corroborees and assisted other Aboriginal communities in re-establishing their heritage practices and adapting them to the present times.

5) The Oombulgurri people assumed responsibility for their community. They held regular work days and refuse pick-ups to keep their community clean. They ran their store, community kitchen and supplied labour for all guild work and construction. They built 10 community buildings, rehabilitated 7 others including 5 houses, and were beginning to build 12 houses in August, 1978. They continually sought to preserve order and to deal with the problems of sly grog and violence with little or no outside assistance. In the face of repeated external intrusion which interrupted their regular water supply and left them open to physical attack, they persisted in their resolve to remain on their land to build their community.

### IV. IMPACT

The ICA has discerned five points at which the Oombulgurri demonstration has impacted the larger society.

composed of Oombulgurri residents and ICA staff went on a national "Walkabout" visiting 70 Aboriginal Communities. In each, the story of the Project was told, and in 35 towns a community meeting was held to assist residents to begin an improvements programme. In addition, Oombulgurri hosted the Human Development Training School at which 30 Aborigines from other places spent six weeks being trained in community development methods. Seven Oombulgurri residents participated in the consultation which launched the second project in Australia at Murrin Bridge, New South Wales, where two have remained to continue working with the Murrin Bridge community.

2) The people of Australia: Representatives of Oombulgurri have travelled to more than 20 cities and towns to describe the reconstruction of their village. They have addressed service clubs and churches and visited with Government officials and business leaders. Periodic issues of the Oombulgurri report have circulated to a list of over 200 people.

3) The private sector: The Oombulgurri Project story, based on self help and local initiative, has been shared with literally hundreds of representatives of the business community. Over 100 companies have made a direct contribution to the Project. At least 132 individuals, the majority being business and professional people, have visited Oombulgurri and worked shoulder to shoulder with residents in practical tasks for the benefit of the community.

4) The public sector: Relationships with elected officers and Government agency staff have involved both visits to Oombulgurri and visits by community residents to Government Offices. In 1975 a presentation was made in Canberra to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs explaining the Project methods. In short the Oombulgurri Human Development Project has contributed notably to the continuing discussion which is shaping the Government policy for Aboriginal development.

5) The world: The Oombulgurri Project is one of the original 24 such projects around the world. This band has now expanded to over 100. Oombulgurri has maintained a close relationship to these communities through exchange visits, and has stood as a pioneer village in this world-wide effort. Oombulgurri leaders have visited in Kenya, Malaysia, India and the United States to share their experience and to assist other developing communities.

## V. REFLECTIONS

The ICA would like to offer the following statements as thoughtful reflections based on the experience gained from the people of Oombulgurri.

1) It is quite possible for Aboriginal communities to transpose traditional practices into a sound foundation for a contemporary community. The most relevant example of this seen in Oombulgurri was the revival of the Wunan system as a basis for initiating and managing businesses, and accumulating and dispersing money.

2) When plans for a community's future are created by and with the whole population, and when development is carried on as a corporate activity with mutually shared responsibility, then the people will save money and re-invest it in the community. At Oombulgurri, this amounted to \$84,000. Further, they will invest labour and individually owned goods in various efforts.

At Oombulgurri people sought and received training in order to perform the tasks required in the development of their economic and social structures.

4) The private sector is prepared to assist in the development of Aboriginal communities when such work is undertaken in the interest of self-reliance and self-management. One hundred companies supported the Oombulgurri Project. Businessmen are clear that a vigorous and self-sustaining Aboriginal population will be of benefit to Australia.

5) The word spreads rapidly among Aboriginal communities about places that are a sign of hope. The Walkabout team was surprised and pleased by the response of most places in which specific interest was manifested in doing a similar effort. A sustained programme could, in a relatively short time, create a major difference in the future form of Aboriginal life in Australia.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ICA recommends the following four items for consideration by those responsible for developing programmes with and for Aboriginal people.

1) That a fund be created to assist economic development in Aboriginal communities. Such a fund would have the option of making "seed money" grants for small businesses, or extending long-term, low-interest loans. It should be established and administered in accordance with accepted business practices, and in time could become a revolving fund requiring no additional outside capital. It could be designed to receive money from both private and public sources.

2) That the private sector be encouraged through incentives policies established by the Government to assist Aboriginal communities in the development of profitable enterprises. This should include investments in community based businesses, management and skills training, and marketing assistance.

3) That the special Works Programme which the Government is initiating in some communities be encouraged to break the deep dependency mindset and foster human dignity through wages and achievement.

4) That a series of at least six demonstration communities be established across the nation in locations central to major concentrations of Aboriginal population. These communities need to be jointly assisted by Government and private agencies, and initiated as long-term examples of self-management. A high degree of autonomy and stability must be assured.

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OTTO



*A People breaking free*

**OOMBULGURRI**



KEN OTTO

PHOTO: OCT '75 DURING HUMAN DEV. CONSULT

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## SPECIAL EDITION

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## OOMBULGURRI AND MOWUMJUM REVISITED

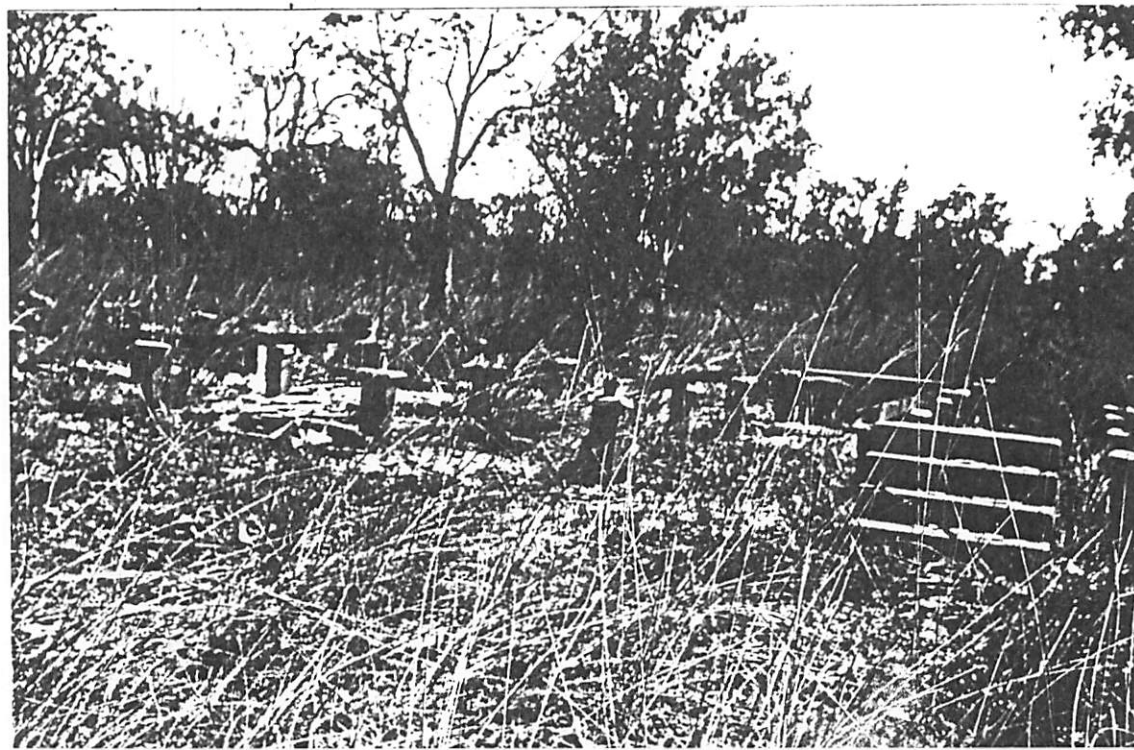
We thought there would probably be some people around who would be interested to know that Phillip Dowsett with Carol and Robin Borovic took a driving trip across the North West for two weeks over Christmas and New Year in Phil's comfortable, air-conditioned Bundera 4 WD.

Phil is now Katherine manager for FACTS which body has recently appointed a new store manager to Oombulgurri, Paul Logan, who undertakes trouble shooting projects in communities for FACTS. Apparently Oombulgurri was once again needing a peck of trouble "shot" owing to some notorious loss of funds by a former store manager.

At Oombulgurri it was very much a case of stepping back into the familiar despite several changes.

The large new store with good stocks, ceiling fans, video games and reading area is not far from the old store; some accident has happened to one of the large boabs in the boab avenue and it is crashed down; the schools are in good shape with new fenced enclosure and air-conditioning. The old church and some of the houses are the same, but there are some new attractive houses; the old gudia house was down to some broken stone work of the old half wall and has become a bamboo stand.

The most pleasant thing was that the community remembers us and remembers us with delight. Phillip was more remembered than I and was embraced warmly by such people as Sam Alberts, Alan Gore, Alan Meehan, Crispin Mitchell. Neil and Mary Taylor were at Wyndham airport when we arrived there and recognised Phillip and reminiscing about all the various people began right there and then.





We thought that the community is still not in control but still at the mercy of external forces as shown by the embezzlement of funds by former store manager. The repercussions from that scandal had caused so much down grading of the store by loss of credit that the community was reduced to a very small number.

The new store manager is a good man intent on making the store an integral part of community life with very firm rules reinforced by wall notices about "no book-up allowed" etc. A real "movement" man interested in a comprehensive approach to community and trying to take steps to break the welfare mentality habit. The people are now returning to Oombulgurri and they expect the numbers to continue to come up.

Our impression was however that we did create a strong understanding of local community which survives. This is still most evident among the women.

We also drove to Derby and visited the old site of Mowumjum as known to the ICA and which had to be shifted to allow for expansion of the airport. Nothing remains there except the ruins of the gudja house. Seeing the spot again was an emotional moment for Phil, it being his cradle in the order.

He visited the new Mowumjum and had a little time with Mowaljarli but he was in the middle of some initiations and did not have much time. Mowumjum still operates out of a strong cultural base as seen by the keeping up of the ceremonial. The strength of Mowaljarli's leadership is still evident. Our strategy of working with the key leadership there has lasted through Mowaljarli. It has enabled him to combine the traditional Aboriginal experience with, through the more missionary approach of those early days, the Christian theological grounding.

Our return to other times would not have been complete without visiting in Broome and Kununnurra with Anita and Bob Harvey and Dorla and Dana. Our conversations often took on the character of reflection on the Order's experiences. Bob and Anita are highly respected in their community respectively as a builder often involved in building projects in Aboriginal communities and as a senior person in Aboriginal Health Services. We all agreed we are marked forever by our association with the Institute and will always have something of the stance of the Institute as our modus operandi. We reflected that there are a great number of people now across this globe who are not so much members of "the invisible college" as maybe a "partially forgotten college".

Anita reported she recently employed Grace Umbagai for a period in the Health Service. Grace talked of her father and said how the coming of the I.C.A. had changed his life. Anita also mentioned her feeling of affrontery when attending a training conference in Hedland where the leader announced a new way of doing things and proceeded to lay out a very recognisable ICA workshop method. Anita challenged him afterwards and said this was the method we were kicked out of Oombulgurri for and she was able to put straight some of his misconceptions about what happened then. None of us are too sure who exactly he is.

Our homeward journey was a time of reflection. We talked again of the continuing dependancy of Aboriginal Communities on Government handouts and of their development sinking or swimming depending on how the Government winds blow.

In working for breakthroughs in Aboriginal Community development it is more necessary than ever to find a basis of commitment within the community to build on. No amount of consultations, programmes or proposals can get anywhere unless there is that small core of one or two people who act out their care and take responsibility for what happens out of a knowledge of their own situation.

There are communities around the Top End who are beginning to get good reputations in the public view. The mission is to keep on enabling I.E.R.D. Phase III so that decision can be assisted forth from the grass roots.

Some other not-to-be-forgotten highlights of our great North Western Trek are:

- our homing instincts towards the waters of Kununnurra's diversion dam during a couple of days rest there both coming and going,
- cruise on beautiful Lake Argyle, the fish, euros and wallabies trained to take food from the people on the boat,
- spectacular Wyndjana Gorge with its crystal clear echos
- down to underdaks for a dip in the icy waterhole inside Tunnel Creek tunnel when temperature was about 45° outside,
- surfing in the very blue waters of the Indian Ocean at Cable Beach, Broome,
- a trip to the settlement of Beagle Bay where we stayed in the clinic, saw the beautiful pearl shell encrusted Catholic Church built by community labour and fishing in the traditional way with Cyril, as local guide,
- experiencing the motels and local flavour of the little township's over Christmas and the New Year period,
- Christmas Day in Kununnurra - no petrol to go, nothing at all open - had to eat the tinned ham and biscuits we had packed for Anita.

All in all a great experience.

EDITOR - CAROL BOROVIC



Global Research Assembly

Chicago Nexus

July 19, 1976

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN OOMBULGURRI

Oombulgurri is in the Kimberly in the northwest of Australia, covering about three and a half million acres of territory. That is one/six hundred and fortieth of the land area of Australia. It is about 200 miles southwest of Darwin, about 40 miles northwest of Wyndam, across the gulf and up the river. People say we are isolated, but if you look on a map we are closer to Singapore, to Kelapa Dua and the Sudtonggan than Sydney is. We like to point out that Sydney is isolated and we are right in the middle of things.

The Anglican Church founded the Forest River Mission in the 1910's. Almost all of the Aboriginal people within a 150200 mile radius moved onto the Mission. The Mission operated until the 60's when they ran into some trouble with the water supply, supplies, and finances. That was a time when the Church globally was getting weakkneed about its engagement and the Mission was closed in 1967. The 200 or so people who lived on the Mission were moved into the town of Wyndam and lived on a reserve on the outskirts. That Reserve was like any other in northern Australia. Almost everybody was unemployed. Housing amounted to a few tin shacks. Malnutrition, alcoholism' and prostitution ran rampant. The Elders of Oombulgurri moved about 12 miles away from Wyndam to another small camp and decided to stay and die there, letting the memory of their people die with them. They saw no possibility of passing on that memory or that heritage to the future.

In 1972, several of the Elders who had stayed with the community decided that the future lay with moving back to Oombulgurri to reclaim the land that was theirs. Three old couples and a few youth that the parole officer in Wyndam had agreed to release on good behavior to these old men and women, founded the settlement of Oombulgurri. The population grew to about 30, then 50, then 100, and then 140, and finally to 200. during a year and a half. As the story was heard and told, the vision of the possibility of rebuilding a settlement at that place caught on.

The Consult, signaling the launching of the Oombulgurri Human Development Project, in August of 1975, marks for the Elders the time when they were finished getting the community established. The primary issue had been simply surviving with such an exploding population providing the services for survival. The Consult marked a turn to concentrating on buildup, or development. The Consult focused on two key issues: self-sufficiency and selfreliance. For Oombulgurri, selfsufficiency meant, first of all, basic food production, providing the things that the community needed to eat. You should see the garden today. An acre and a half of vegetables zucchini and pumpkins, tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, Chinese cabbages, kohlrabi row after row of vegetables, all in straight rows, with signs that say what the vegetables are.

Numa Horace is the leader of the garden guild. Numa is also the rainmaker of the community. That is helpful, if you are a gardener. Early last December it was 115° and so dry we just withered. There was not a cloud in the sky. The sun was burning down. Numa went out of his house and looked up and said, "Well, we better plant." We all said, "You're crazy! You can't plan now, you gotta wait for the rain." He says, "It's coming." We went out and planted melons, about an acre, and sure enough, the next day the clouds gathered and it started to rain. The rains last from December to March; after March, you don't see rain again until December.

A year ago they put in an acre of irrigation in the garden. Before then old Horey had watered the whole thing by hand. With his little pump and a hose, he wouldgo out and walk up and down the rows watering the vegetables. He was able to handle about half an acre that way. We didn't realize what a revolution irrigation would be. Of course, it was new technology, but what it meant for Horey was that instead of spending about 90% of his time walking around the garden watering his vegetables and a little bit of time picking a weed out here and there, with the irrigation system he only had to spend about ten minutes every morning turning on the pump, but he also spent all day weeding to try to keep up with the grass and weeds that came up with all that water. It meant that his whole style of farming was just turned upside down. What a struggle that was for him! All year long it was "Your irrigation system." Many times we wondered whether that had been the right move or not. This year on the first of April Horey and his sons announced that it was time to install the irrigation system again for the dry. He and those young men together, laid the pipes out and the runners and got a training session on how to run the pumps. Now, every morning it is Horey who starts the pump and who keeps the system operating. The irrigation system is "My irrigation system." Is he ever proud! You can watch him straighten up just as the vegetables go up out of that garden. That's the kind of change that every one of the Oombulgurri people are internalizing as they do their eighteen programs.

Geoffrey Mitchell is the gun of the small stock enterprises in Oombulgurri and Geoffrey has eleven pigs. He has two sows that were ready for a boar a few months ago. Since he didn't know where to find a boar he put an announcement out over the "flying doctor" radio service asking whether any of the stations in the area had a boar that he could borrow. One of the station owners telegraphed back that he had a great big boar, about 450 pounds, that he would be glad to loan Oombulgurri any time. That sounded pretty good because Geoffrey's sows are both pretty big sows both about 400 pound sows. Geoffrey and one of the auxiliary went out on the barge to Wyndam and managed to find themselves a truck and a trailer. Karunge Station, where they were going, is about 100 miles away over a dirt track. It is hard to distinguish where the dirt track ends and the desert starts. With truck and trailer, they headed off over this road and about twelve hours later arrived at Karunge Station.

Karunge Station is managed by an old bush wrangler who came out of his homestead and said, "Oh, yeah, the boar. Well, let's go find him." It turned out that this man's piggery is just his property and that all of his pigs run wild in the bush. The way he finds a boar on his property is to go off down the road a little way, call "Piggy, piggy, piggy, piggy," and the pigs come out of the bushes. The day Geoffrey and Bill were Olive Evans and Mark Mitchell were in Chicago for the Fifth City Consult. The first thing Mark said when he came back was, "You go in that building and there are pictures of Oombulgurri all over the place. Everybody knows about us. And they think about us all the time. People asked me, one after the other, 'How's Oombulgurri? What's happening in Oombulgurri? What's going on at Oombulgurri?' Everybody knows what we're doing!" When the Bulletins come from Fifth City, Mark is the one that grabs them out of the mail. He will take them around and make sure that everybody reads them. "And here's what's going on in Fifth City right now." Olive sent a gift to Ruth Carter for the Fifth City Preschool, a bright orange Oombulgurri School tee shirt with a great big crocodile on it. When Olive came back, the first thing she did was grab Jo Richardson and say, "Now, listen, I want you to buy me four yards of dark navy blue material. I want to make myself a blue dress." She knows what that means. That kind of participation has given the globe to Oombulgurri and has allowed Oombulgurri people to see that the decision they are making is to give themselves to the globe.

Just a few weeks ago, Norman Horace from the garden guild and Jennifer Eura, one of the school teachers, went to the ITI in Kuala Lumpur. Jennifer was ecstatic over the intellectual methods spent hours charting papers and was able to get up and star in pedagogy. She has come back now to that school with a brand new grasp after what it is going to mean to do education, not only of the children in Oombulgurri, but of the whole community.

Every Thursday night between twenty and thirty people gather at the House in Oombulgurri for what they call Guild Night. Guild night means great singing, and great meals and reporting what is happening in the guilds, that week, hearing the report on what is happening around the world and celebrating it all. They do a workshop, sometimes on "ridding, or studying the document, or grounding the principles of economic and social development. It is always a great celebration. One week, when Rob Duffy came to visit from Sydney, he was to be there on a Saturday night. So we said, "Well, what shall we do to celebrate Rob's being here?" The council said with one voice, "Let's have a guild night." They grasp that form as a significant way to gather and celebrate. Olive Evans and Sam Albert led it. I have never heard such singing. They sang "Building with Demonstration" for twenty minutes. That was the first night after we had changed the wall sign from Trastevere to Lapu Lapu. (We did not know then it was Sudtonggan). They had a brand new set of names to learn, and they sang that song for twenty minutes.

There is a new human quality to life in Oombulgurri when people can sit down like that and share a meal and a celebration. The eighteen programs in the book have become a symbol to the whole community of the new resolve, the new decision, the new determination that they have as a people to move into the future and to build. We get a perverse kind of pleasure from listening to some bureaucrat tell us that eighteen programs are just impossibly complicated, that Aboriginal people would never be able to read them, let alone understand them. Then to have him walk out of the house and bump into Chrispin Mitchell, who grabbed him by the arm and took him over, showed him the chart of the eighteen programs, went through each one, told him what they were doing in each one and how they interrelate explained how you cannot do one unless you do them all. You begin to see the power of the sign that a community like Oombulgurri is;

You and I have colleagues in Australia that I don't think he knows about yet. The consult was really the occasion for the Guardians to come to their feet, but their followup from the Consult happened all over Australia. They showed slides, told stories, to spread the word about what was happening. Vanne Trompf who was there at the consult is an architect; he came back in >larch to spend a week with the community and work through their housing plans with them, seeing to it that the housing program got off the ground.

Sr. Liz Callen came from Newcastle and spent a week working with the Education Guild on school curriculum. She has so excited her Order about demonstrations that they have said that any member of the Order who wants to be assigned to a Social remonstrance anywhere in the world can have the assignment. Sr. Liz is first on the list and has asked to be assigned to Oombulgurri next year.

One guardian from Brisbane had a rough time: he is a churchman and an old movement colleague. He was billed as a mechanic. We had been without a mechanic for a couple of months, and held a little backlog of mechanical work that needed doing. He was anticipated as the mechanic from Brisbane. It turned out that he is a school teacher. He did do a little

electrical work on his own house one time. But he is great. He took it all in stride went into the shop and did fantastic work. He got a Toyota running again, and the generator for the power plant fixed. His comment when he got back to Brisbane was, "You know, that was the most painful three weeks I've ever spent." Then he added, "But you know, somehow, when you're there working with those people, you get the sense that you are changing, history." Now that is the kind of thing that is happening to people in Australia.

We elected a new government in Australia last December. That meant that several of the friends we had made earlier are no longer there. The job had to be done again, with the new government. When the community got the word that the new minister for Aboriginal Affairs was coming to visit in early June, they sat down and did a lot of thinking about what he needed to see. One of the things they had noticed about politician's visits to Oombulgurri was that they came with a speech, got off the planes and immediately gave their speech. The people of Oombulgurri decided that that was not what he needed to do; he needed to see the place first. The second thing they decided he needed to see was people working, not standing around listening to him. All the guilds got themselves organized and had their plans for his visit. When his plane came, nobody quit working: everybody was still on the job. A couple of people went out with the Toyota and picked him up. Instead of taking him into the center of town where he could give his speech, they took him straight to the stockyards where men were breaking horses. Then they drove him down the road to the goat dairy, around to the school, where he saw the construction guild. Young men were working to finish the night school building. He saw a preschool class going on, the brand new preschool. Over in the market garden, the Minister of Lands who was a member of the party, commented that it was the finest garden he had ever seen in the Kimberly. They went to the store and bought a coke. They saw the town plan that the consultants and the construction guild together had laid out on the ground during the consult, showing where all the new houses and new buildings were going to go. They saw the workshop where all the vehicles were lined up in straight rows. Finally after all of that, they took him to the dining room where he was served tea. One of the men rang the bell and everybody came in from where they had been working with their guilds and met with him. He was profoundly impacted by what he had seen and his speech was totally different from the kind of speech he would have given had he been fresh out of his plane. His evaluation was that Oombulgurri was the kind of project that the Australian government can and must support.

There is another. He is our local member of Parliament. About every week now we get a letter from him with a copy of a letter he has written to someone, the post office department or a bank or the Department of Agriculture, trying to find some other way he can help Oombulgurri. Some of you know another friend of ours in Wyndham. He is a plumber, shopkeeper, and member of the Shire Council. He went with Olive and Mark to Guardians meeting in Sydney in April. His comment after that meeting was, "Well, now, my lease on the shop is up in six months. You wouldn't have one of these communities where you need a plumber, would you?"

The local meat inspector at the Wyndam Meat Works, who has never had a word to say for us, flew in on a plane and said, "Well, I have heard you are doing a cattle muster. If you need any help, you just let me know. I will come out for a couple of days and give you a hand." The local men from the Department of Agriculture and the Public Works department have bent over backwards to see those guilds and industries get off the ground.

Global Social Demonstration is not plans, or vision, but it is seeing. It is seeing Georgie Mitchell go around town at 7:30 in the morning and roll his mates out of bed, so they'll be on time at the construction site. Or hearing Hilton Gove start up the Toyota at 5 a.m. so that the stockmen can get out early and get a full day's fencing before the sun sets too hot. It is seeing. It is seeing the transformation in the place and in the people.