

# Indigenous Socioeconomic Outcomes: Assessing the Evidence

A CAEPR Conference to be held at The Shine Dome,  
The Australian National University, on 11th and 12th August 2005

## Conference Presenters

**Jon Altman** has a disciplinary background in economics and anthropology. He has been involved in research on Indigenous Australians since the late 1970s. In 1977, he participated in the research project *The Economic Status of Australian Aborigines* that was among the first to use statistical information from the 1971 Census to document socioeconomic difference between Indigenous and other Australians, as well as diversity within the Indigenous population. In 1990 he became the inaugural director of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University, where he is still located. In 1992 he convened a workshop prior to NATSIS 1994 and in 1996 co-convened a workshop with John Taylor that analysed outcomes from that survey. Jon divides his research effort between a focus on national economic and policy issues and a specific regional focus on western Arnhem Land and the Kuninjku community with whom he has worked for 26 years.

**Bill Arthur** began researching Indigenous affairs in the 1980s. Much of his initial work was land-related and was carried out for Indigenous organisations such as the Kimberley Land Council. Since 1990 his research has focused more in issues of economic development for Torres Strait Islanders. During the preparation of this paper he was a Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.

**Larissa Behrendt** is a Professor of Law and Indigenous Studies and Director of the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at University of Technology Sydney and also Director of Ngija, the National Institute of Indigenous Law, Policy and Practice. She has a Doctorate of Laws from Harvard University, and is admitted to the ACT Supreme Court as a Barrister-of-Law. Larissa has worked as a practicing lawyer in the areas of Aboriginal land claims and family law, has taught at the University of New South Wales and Australian National University Law Schools, and worked in Canada and at the United Nations with First Nations organisations. She is currently undertaking research on regional authority models, and has published on property law, indigenous rights, dispute resolution and Aboriginal women's issues. Her book *Achieving Social Justice: Indigenous Rights and Australia's Future* was published by The Federation Press in 2003.

**Nicholas Biddle** is currently a PhD student at the CAEPR, where he is researching education outcomes for Indigenous Australians as part of a linkage grant between CAEPR and the ABS. Nicholas has a Bachelor of Economics (Hons) from the University of Sydney and has completed the requirements for a Graduate Diploma in Education from Monash University. He is on study leave from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, where he has worked since 2001, focusing his research on neighbourhood income inequality, the measurement of Indigenous poverty, and health patterns of Australian migrants.

**Maggie Brady** is a social anthropologist with a longstanding research background in Indigenous health and substance abuse. She has held positions with Flinders University Medical School, the Northern Land Council, the Human Rights Commission, AIATSIS and ANU, and published extensively for both academic and community-based audiences. Her books include an account of drinking in Tennant Creek (*Where the Beer Truck Stopped*, 1988), an anthropological study of petrol sniffing (*Heavy Metal*, 1992), Indigenous accounts of drinking and abstinence (*Giving Away the Grog*, 1995), a study of Indigenous alcohol policy and practice (*Indigenous Australia and Alcohol Policy*, 2004), and community-directed alcohol action books (*The Grog Book*, 1998, 2005; *Tackling Alcohol Problems. Strengthening*

*Community Action in South Africa 2005*). Maggie is an ARC Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research.

**Geoff Buchanan** is a Graduate Research Assistant with the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. Geoff has a multidisciplinary background covering environmental policy and economics, social policy and development, Indigenous Australian studies and commerce. His primary research focus is on Indigenous involvement in natural and cultural resource management.

**Tom Calma** is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and acting Race Discrimination Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. He is an Aboriginal elder from the Kungarakan tribal group and the Iwaidja tribal group whose traditional lands are south west of Darwin and on the Coburg Peninsula in Northern Territory, respectively. Tom has been involved in Indigenous affairs at a local, community, state, national and international level and worked in the public sector for over 30 years. He has extensive experience in public administration, particularly in Indigenous education programs and in developing employment and training programs for Indigenous people from both a national policy and program perspective. He has served as a diplomat, as a Director of Aboriginal Hostels, in ATSYS, DEETYA, and as a Senior Adviser to the Minister of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

**Bruce Chapman** is a Professor and Head of the Economics Program in the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University. He has a PhD from Yale University and is a labour and education economist having published over a hundred and forty articles in the areas of training, wage determination, student loans and higher education financing, unemployment, labour market program evaluation, the economics of crime, economic analyses of cricket and the role of income contingent loans in public policy. He has had extensive direct policy experience, including the motivation and design of HECS in 1988, as a senior economic adviser to Prime Minister Paul Keating from 1994-1996, and as a consultant to the OECD, the World Bank, and the governments of around 12 countries (mostly in the area of student loans and university financing). In 2001 he was awarded the Order of Australia for 'contributions to the development of economics, labour market and social policy'. He is currently writing a book on the application of income contingent loans to a host of public policies, including for the financing of: tertiary student income support; elite athletes; low level criminal offences; drought relief; housing loans; and community investment projects.

**Tanya Chikritzhs** is a Research Fellow at the National Drug Research Institute. One of her main responsibilities is to co-ordinate the National Alcohol Indicators Project (NAIP), the aim of which is to track and report on trends in indicators of alcohol-related harm at national, state and local levels. The NAIP has recently been expanded to include specific alcohol indicators relevant to Indigenous communities with an emphasis on providing information which is relevant at local levels. Other recent research projects include an evaluation of the Northern Territory's Living With Alcohol Program and a current investigation into the efficacy of liquor restrictions throughout Australia and internationally.

**Mick Dodson** is a member of the Yawuru peoples, the traditional Aboriginal owners of land and waters in the Broome area of the southern Kimberley region of Western Australia. He is currently Director of the ANU's National Centre for Indigenous Studies. Professor Dodson was Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. He completed a Bachelor of Jurisprudence and a Bachelor of Laws at Monash University, and has been awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Technology Sydney and an honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of NSW.

From August 1988 to October 1990 Mick was Counsel assisting the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. He is a member and the current Chairman of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. He is also a board member of the Reconciliation Australia and Lingjari Foundations. Throughout his career, has been a prominent advocate on land rights and other issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

**Matthew Gray** is the Deputy Director (Research) at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. He has undertaken research on a wide range of economic and social policy issues, including those relating to Indigenous Australians.

**R. G. Gregory** is Professor of Economics at the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. His current research interests focus mainly on Australian labour markets and welfare support. He has held academic appointments at the University of Melbourne, London School of Economics, Northwestern University, Harvard and the University of Chicago. He has also been a member of the Board of the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Institute of Family Studies, and a member of the Australian Science and Technology Council and Expert Panel of the Australian Research Council. In 1996 he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal.

**Sarah Holcombe** is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. She is currently working on two ARC projects. These are 'Indigenous Community Organisations and Miners: Partnering Sustainable Regional Development?' with the linkage partner Rio Tinto, and an 'Indigenous Community Governance' project with the linkage partner Reconciliation Australia. The research in the later project is also supported by the Desert Knowledge CRC and is part of the core project 'viable desert settlements'. Doctor Holcombe's previous research focused on applied anthropology in the Northern Territory as a staff member for the Central and Northern Land Councils. Her PhD research in social anthropology was undertaken in the Central Australian Luritja community of Mt Liebig (Amunturrngu), on the processes by which this settlement evolved into an Indigenous community.

**Boyd Hunter** is a Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. He specialises in labour market analysis, racial discrimination, social economics, crime and justice statistics, neighbourhood inequality, poverty research, and coordinated the first longitudinal analysis of indigenous job seekers for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. He contributes to many government committees and inquiries, including, the Design sub-Committee of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children. Until recently, he was a Ronald Henderson Fellow and visiting Fellow with the New Zealand Treasury in Wellington. In 2003, he held a Australian Census Analytic Program Fellow that resulted in the ABS monograph, *Indigenous People in the Contemporary Australian Labour Market*.

**Yohannes Kinfu** is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. His major research interests are in the area of statistical and mathematical modelling of population processes and dynamics, and he lectures on these areas in the Demography and Sociology Program at the ANU. He has worked for the UN-Regional Institute for Population Studies in Ghana and has held a visiting scientist position at the South African Medical Research Council, working on issues related to the measurement of mortality in Africa. In recent times, his research has focused on the demographic components of Indigenous population change in Australia. He has published on these issues in Australia and internationally.

**Inge Kral** has worked in education in remote Aboriginal Australia for some 20 years across a range of sectors including Aboriginal community schools, adult education and training, and as an education consultant. Her areas of expertise include language and literacy (in Aboriginal languages and English), curriculum development and education policy. As a language and literacy consultant she has worked on education policy in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in Western Australia and VET sector training and Aboriginal Health Workers in the Northern Territory. Recent publications include a (2004) NCVET Report *What is all that learning for? Indigenous adult literacy practices, training, community capacity and health* and the co-compilation of the *Ngaanyatjarra Picture Dictionary* (IAD Press 2005). Inge has an MA in applied linguistics through the University of Melbourne in which she researched the development literacy in Arrernte, a Central Australian Aboriginal language. She is currently a PhD student at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. Her thesis is in anthropology, where she is conducting ethnographic research on social literacy practices in a remote Aboriginal community in the Western Desert.

**Frances Morphy** is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. She is an anthropologist and linguist whose research has focused mainly on the Top End of the Northern Territory, with interests in Australian Indigenous languages, the problem of inter-cultural translation, land rights and native title and the governance of Indigenous organisations. With other CAEPR colleagues she was an official observer of the 2001 Census enumeration in selected Indigenous communities in remote Australia. The results of this research were published in a CAEPR Research Monograph (Martin et al. 2002, *Making Sense of the Census: Observations of the 2001 Enumeration in Remote Aboriginal Australia*) and in a CAEPR Working Paper, 'Indigenous household structures and ABS definitions of the family: What happens when systems collide, and does it matter?' She was a member of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2006 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy Working Group. She is co-editor (with Bill Arthur) of the Macquarie Atlas of Indigenous Australia (forthcoming, November 2005).

**Nicolas Peterson** lectures in anthropology in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology at the Australian National University. He has carried out fieldwork in northeast Arnhem Land with Yolngu speakers on ecological issues and in central Australia with Warlpiri speakers on religious life and territorial organisation. He has a long standing interest in land and sea tenure and has worked on twelve major native title and land claims. Recently he has compiled and introduced *Donald Thomson in Arnhem Land* (2003, MUP), and co-edited *Photography's other histories* (2003, Duke) with Chris Pinney and *Citizenship and Indigenous Australians* (1998, Cambridge) with Will Saunders.

**Peter Radoll** is an Aboriginal doctoral candidate and an Associate Lecturer in Information Systems at the Australian National University's Faculty of Economics and Commerce. Peter's PhD research focuses on Information Communication Technology use in remote, rural and urban Aboriginal Communities. His research has been presented to the Community Informatics Research Network at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. He currently holds several competitive scholarships.

**Russell Ross** is an associate professor of economics at the University of Sydney. He has written extensively on the Australian labour market. His research interests centre on the under-utilisation of labour, with particular focus on labour market status of Indigenous Australians, participation of married women, labour market aspects of childcare availability, and labour market policy to improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups in the labour market. He was a member of the Employment Issues Technical Reference Group, advising the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the implementation and analysis of NATSIS 1994. He has authored reports for governments on the Indigenous labour market (NSW Government) and work-related childcare provision (Federal government, and the ABC). He and his co-author are currently in the process of preparing the third edition of their textbook *The Australian Labour Market*.

**Tim Rowse** is in the History Program, Research School of Social Sciences, at the Australian National University. He has been researching Indigenous affairs since the early 1980s, publishing on public policy, public health and frontier history. From 1989 to 1994 he worked in the Menzies School of Health Research and produced *Remote Possibilities* (1992) and *Traditions for Health* (1996). In 2000-1, he wrote a critical synthesis of CAEPR's first ten years of work: *Indigenous futures: choice and development for Aboriginal and Islander Australia* (2002). Working with CAEPR awakened his interest in the political determinants and political effects of the Indigenous statistical archive, and that has become his new research interest.

**Will Sanders** has been researching Australian Indigenous affairs policy since 1981. He has worked in four departments of the Australian National University during that time: the North Australia Research Unity in Darwin and the Urban Research Unit/ Program, the Department of Political Science and the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research in Canberra. He first published on housing policy for Indigenous people in 1990 in the *Australian Journal of Public Administration* and has been returning to the topic regularly since.

**Jerry Schwab** is Deputy Director and Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. He is one of a very small number of anthropologists in Australia with research experience in the area of Indigenous education and training. He has been involved with educational research and development in both Australia and overseas (USA, United Arab Emirates and Egypt) since the mid-1980s. He has worked in the fields of literacy (especially

early literacy), educational development (in schools and for academic staff in higher education) and program planning and evaluation. Since joining CAEPR in 1995, he has carried out primary and secondary research on issues as diverse as Aboriginal community-controlled schools, notions of educational 'failure' and 'success' among Indigenous students, Indigenous workforce development and Indigenous education outcomes at the primary, secondary and post-compulsory levels. He has long standing research interests in Indigenous school retention, the relationship between schools and communities and adult literacy. His current research is focused on land and resource management programs as an avenue for the educational and social re-engagement of Indigenous youth in remote regions

**David Stanton** is a former Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies. David is currently a Consultant Social Security Planner and Policy Analyst. He has undertaken a wide range of consultancy work in the social policy area. Since August 2004, he has been the Deputy Chair of a Ministerial Taskforce on Child Support. He is also a visiting Fellow at the Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government (APSEG) at the Australian National University.

**John Taylor** is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and a member of the Australian Population Association. For the past twenty years his major research interests have focussed on the measurement and policy implications of demographic and economic change among Indigenous peoples. He has published widely on these issues in Australian and international books and journals, and his work has informed government, industry, and Indigenous agencies, most recently in relation to the COAG trial site at Wadeye. He is co-editor (with Martin Bell) of the seminal volume on Indigenous population mobility, *Indigenous Peoples and Population Mobility in Australasia and North America*, published by Routledge in London and New York.

**Andrew Webster** works in the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics in the Australian Bureau of Statistics. He has managed the data output and dissemination program for the 2002 NATSISS. During the development phase of the survey, Andrew was out-posted to the then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, where he assisted with liaison between ABS and ATSIC on survey content. Andrew has worked in the ABS for 12 years, in demography, family statistics and Indigenous statistics.

**Ruth Weston** is a Principal Research Fellow at the Australian Institute of Family Studies. Ruth has published extensively on such issues as quality of life, couple formation and stability, fertility decision-making, parent-adolescent relationships, and divorce.