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## ROCK PAINTINGS NEAR WADEYE, NORTHERN TERRITORY: SITE MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF RESEARCH AND TOURISM

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**Abstract.** Residents of the Wadeye region, south-west of Darwin, have been developing tourism initiatives within their traditional territory with the aims of supporting themselves and sharing their cultural heritage. At the same time, they and others have been encouraging the recording of cultural heritage places in the area. We undertook a project to record and assess cultural values of places, predominantly those containing rock paintings and stone arrangements. Detailed recordings of motifs and accounts of associated cultural stories and their contemporary significances not only assist understanding of the imagery, but also are of considerable interest to visitors. We discuss these factors in relation to a tourism enterprise operating at a site, Papa Ngala, near Nganmarriyanga, in terms of various cultural heritage values, site management and aspects of education of visitors and younger community members.

Collaborative research undertaken in the Wadeye and Fitzmaurice areas of the Northern Territory over the last few years was conducted at the invitation of Traditional Owners (TOs)<sup>1</sup> in those areas, particularly those involved with the Kanamkek-Yile Ngala Museum at Wadeye, of which Mark Crocombe is the honorary curator. MC has been involved in systematically recording cultural places throughout the various countries of many of the older TOs.<sup>2</sup> GKW

1 'Traditional Owners' are defined formally by Commonwealth and Northern Territory legislation – *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cwlth); *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989* (NT).

2 A grant from the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies allowed MC to extend his survey work to include detailed recording and assessment of heritage places in a project involving Ken Mulvaney (during the fieldwork period, a research officer with the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, Darwin), and the direct-dating specialist, Alan Watchman PhD (then of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at The Australian National University in Canberra). The major fieldwork was carried out in August 2002, with visits to further sites in October 2003. MC and GKW subsequently extended the project in the Fitzmaurice area in July 2004. The project was carried out with the assistance of the relevant Traditional Owners and custodians of the sites. Sites selected for recording were determined by TOs in conjunction with the Museum; the TOs whose cultural heritage places form the basis of this presentation are acknowledged.

assisted this project during his own fieldwork in the area; he administered the AIATSIS Rock Art Protection Program, aspects of which included management of visitation and the affects of tourism at Indigenous Australian cultural heritage places (Ward 2002a).

Here we focus on the pictograms, and their visual and Indigenous cultural values, of a particular place that is the subject of tourism. These representations, and the cultural stories about its major motifs, are significant to the interpretation of the site and particularly in enhancing the educational experiences of visitors and of younger Traditional Owners.

### Cultural heritage place recording in the Wadeye area

The Daly River–Port Keats Aboriginal Lands Trust comprises a large proportion of the western part of the Top End of the Northern Territory. Much of the land area in the north and west is low-lying and riverine, with more elevated and broken landscapes in the east and south. Wadeye, the major township on the Lands, is approximately 300 km to the south-west of Darwin; Nganmarriyanga is a smaller settlement to the east of Wadeye on the road from Darwin.

A visitor needs a permit to enter Trust lands, and the duration and scope of any visit is dependant upon the invitation of the Council and individual Traditional Owners, who have control over access to their country and its cultural places in ways that are not



Figure 1. View to north-west from Papa Ngala site.

available to those whose traditional country is on land controlled by other tenure such as pastoral leasehold. This requirement, as well as the relative isolation of the region, enhances TOs' perception of their ability to control the visitor access to their country and to use their cultural heritage places to educate outsiders.

The principal aims of the Wadeye cultural project were to find, record, map and assess values of heritage places in the region, including their current cultural significances, their potential for further archaeological research, and for cultural heritage tourism. The idea for this project derived from discussions with the TOs who have been concerned to preserve their cultural heritages. We stress the two aspects of the recording work — archaeology and cultural stories. Senior TOs of cultural places were encouraged to use audio-visual resources to record their stories about sites. These provided interpretation of site components, particularly of the rock paintings, an assessment of the potential of the ethnography to enhance the experience of cultural tourism at heritage places, and valuable recordings for community use. TOs were concerned especially to have archival records for families and school children to promote inter-generational cultural

transmission in a time of rapid cultural change.

In the course of two seasons of field-work, 65 sites in thirty areas or site complexes were recorded in detail, cultural stories were recorded where these were available, and assessments were made of their archaeological potential, and of their potential for cultural tourism and community education. Here we present a discussion of one cultural complex known as Papa Ngala or the 'Sun Dreaming' place that is already the target of cultural tourism.

### Papa Ngala

Papa Ngala is an enormous boulder formation sitting high on the western margin of the Macadam Range. Being 100 m higher than the surrounding plain, it can be seen from many kilometres away and provides spectacular views from the shelter (Fig. 1). The Papa Ngala shelter has an area of approximately fifty square metres and less than two metres of ceiling height. The floor is a patchwork of rubble fill, small boulders and exposed bedrock, some of which is marked. Flaked stone artefacts are present throughout this area. At the eastern end of the shelter is a flaking floor comprising initial reduction flakes of a poor-quality quartzite. There are several smaller rockshelters present in the general area, many of which contain rock paintings.

Painted markings densely cover the ceiling of Papa Ngala shelter. There are several hundred red-with-white bifurcating linear painted markings. They are of fairly uniform lengths — approximately 100, 500, and 2000 to 2500 millimetres. There are also a few figurative images within the shelter, a 'reptile' form in white pigment, and an anthropomorphous figure in red. A rare yellow pigment has been used to form a circle with rays and longer lines, positioned within a natural concavity in the ceiling (Fig. 2). Along the south-western side of the shelter, on the vertical face of three adjacent boulders is a meandering red-painted line, extending for more than five metres. On the eastern-most boulder are a series of vertical lines positioned either side of the meandering line.

Watchman (Watchman et al. 2010) sampled the paints at Papa Ngala and obtained AMS determinations. The central motif — the rayed circle image of the 'Sun Dreaming' is about 600 years old. Results from oxalate-rich salts covering red paint near the elongate red 'meander' indicate that the visible and partly-faded paintings are approximately 1000 years old. A sample of the base of an oxalate crust provides an estimate of the start of oxalate formation and of the antiquity of stable rock surfaces



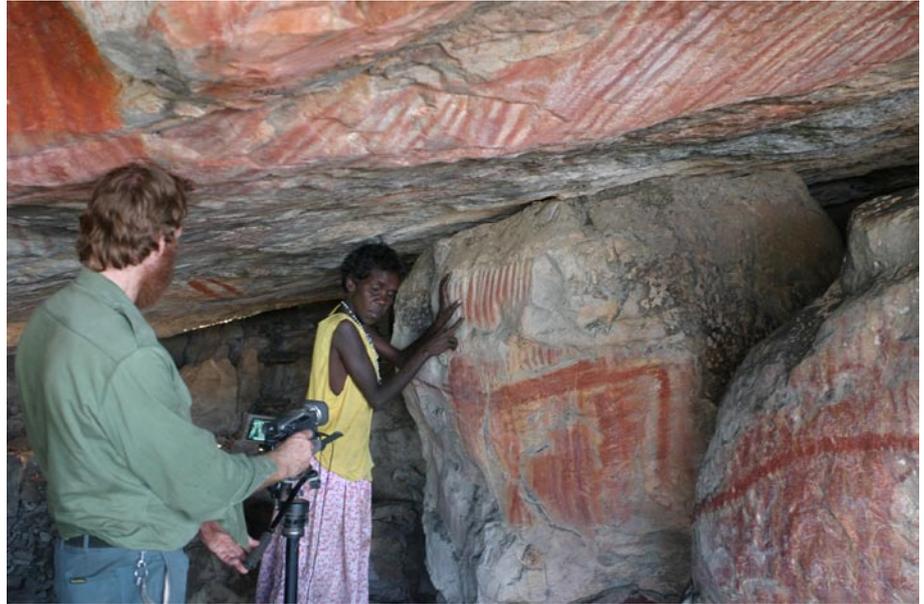
Figure 2. Papa Ngala rock paintings: 'Sun Dreaming' motif.

of more than 13 000 years.

### Educative values of the Papa Ngala site

The Traditional Owners of Papa Ngala reside about one half-hour's four-wheel-drive distance at a settlement to the east of Wadeye, known as Nganmariyanga. In common with many other residents of Wadeye and its various outstations, TOs resident in Nganmariyanga have an intimate knowledge of their Country. Their interpretation of the rock markings at Papa Ngala was noted by Teresa Ward (1983:10-11), and we have recorded the cultural stories in detail (Fig. 3). According to the TOs, the linear motifs on the ceiling form part of one associated design that includes the rayed circle image, the 'Sun Dreaming'. This complex motif is related to the major clan origin story for the area. The combination of images comprising the long red-painted line that extends along the south-western side of the shelter, and the series of vertical lines positioned either side of it, holds particular significance to the custodians of Papa Ngala. The meandering line represents a particular creek running through the traditional estate, and it defines important places within the clan's territory. The vertical lines signify named family groups located in particular areas along the creek (Fig. 4).

The Papa Ngala site was seen to have educative potential, especially for cultural heritage tourism,



*Figure 3. Papa Ngala: MC recording 'creek' story with assistance of Margaret Minjin, a relative of the senior female TO, Camilla Lewin.*

because of:

- Accessibility of site for active tour groups;
- presence of rock paintings that are well-preserved and relatively visually satisfying;
- known cultural stories available for interpretation of rock paintings;
- interest of Traditional Owners in promoting the site, and educating visitors;
- availability of research results to add value to interpretation and to contribute to visitor education;
- availability of impact assessment to mitigate visitor impact factors.



*Figure 4. Papa Ngala rock paintings: ceiling and western wall 'meander'.*

Among these, the major factors were the TOs' knowledge of the significance of the place. Potential negatives included:

- The difficulty of access to site for some visitors and older Traditional Owners;
- limited range and visual impact of motifs in terms of potential expectations of tourists;
- susceptibility of aspects of the site to damage;
- possible unavailability of traditional custodians to speak knowledgeably about the site.

The continuing cultural significance of places and knowledge of their accompanying stories particularly have potential to enhance visitors' experiences at those places. The tourism enterprise centred on Papa Ngala and initiated by Nganmarriyanga residents has been outlined elsewhere (Ward 2008). It was a joint venture with a Darwin-based 'adventure tour' operator specialising in small-group four-wheel-drive tours who was responsive to collaboration with the TOs. Tours, which had begun in the dry season of 2002, involved groups of six to nine persons. The tour company handled logistic arrangements, and the Nganmarriyanga family provided the cultural component of the tour. This arrangement was based in practicalities, and valued by both parties. A visit to Papa Ngala was followed by a one- or two-night camp in a nearby area adjacent to a billabong, and included visits to scenic attractions and trips with members of the Nganmarriyanga family to learn about bush foods and other cultural activities. In interviews conducted by GWK in 2002 and 2004, tour participants confirmed that the opportunity of a visit to an Aboriginal cultural place in the company of Traditional Owners was a major attraction of the tour.

Members of the tour group were made to feel welcome at Nganmarriyanga and involved in the cultural landscape through which they were conducted. The Nganmarriyanga family representative conducting the tour received a wage and the family was paid according to the number of persons on the tour. Family members welcomed the income but the Traditional Owners stated that the opportunity to educate visitors to their country was as important.

The Papa Ngala site is relatively accessible. Access to the main site is limited by a relatively long climb over broken ground, followed by a steep ascent, but this did not provide an obstacle to visitors during the periods of observation. The steep climb is of greater deterrent to elderly Traditional Owners. The small space adjacent to painted surfaces limits numbers that can be accommodated at the shelter, but this was not a problem for tour groups of the size observed. There are other potential adverse impacts on the site's fabric, but these are amenable to mitigation (Ward 2008).

Papa Ngala lacks variety and range of painted motifs. A large proportion of tour participants had seen rock paintings in other areas. In evaluating their experience at Papa Ngala, they considered that the willingness of the Traditional Owners to share stories

of the imagery there more than compensated for this limitation. The stories told to visitors are intrinsically interesting and tour participants gained insights into cultural activities and the significances of the place.

The results of recent research also are available to custodians to use. These include dating of the imagery and analysis of other site functions. Such materials have potential to add to visitors' interest and to prompt discussions about the place.

### Discussion – tourism potential

The potential for low-key cultural tourism of other cultural heritage places in the vicinity of Wadeye, including sites with rock paintings more varied than those of Papa Ngala has been raised, emphasising the roles of the three main parties involved: Traditional Owners, visitors and tour operators (Ward 2008). In discussing factors relating to the potential for cultural heritage tourism in the region, we drew upon observations of visitor behaviour at various Indigenous Australian heritage places, discussions with Indigenous custodians about their expectations of tourism ventures, and with various groups of visitors regarding their expectations and the extent to which these were met by their tourism experience.<sup>3</sup>

Traditional Owners' rights and interests are primary, and are recognised by native title decisions and the statutes of the various Australian jurisdictions: access to and use of their cultural heritage places should only be made with their concurrence, and there are many examples of appropriate management agreements (Baker et al. 2001; Hyams et al. 2008). Some TOs do not wish to be involved in cultural tourism, to have to deal with outsiders, or to have their own use and enjoyment of their Country affected in any way. In the Wadeye area, many have considered the potential benefits of cultural tourism, and eco-tourism. These are perceived initially in terms of providing income and remunerative employment, especially for younger members of the clan. Such are important in remote district centres and outstations where employment opportunities are severely limited and especially following the recent demise of the Community Employment Development Program. Appropriate cultural tourism is seen as having potential to address these limitations.

The prospect of employment is only one aspect of TOs' desire to be involved in tourism, however. Further into our conversations TOs mentioned their desires

<sup>3</sup> Relevant literature is not discussed here. Aboriginal Tourism Australia <<http://atc.australia.com/research.asp?>> (accessed August 2004) has provided 'guiding principles for the tourism industry to operate in ways that respect and enhance the cultural heritage and living cultures of Aboriginal communities'. The Australian Heritage Commission produced a guide to protection of Indigenous heritage places from planning and development decisions that is relevant to tourism initiatives (Anon. 2002). Relevant discussions are provided by, inter alia, Pearson and Sullivan (1995), Ward (2002b), Bennett (2005).

'to share Country' with visitors. They were proud of their knowledge of their traditional landscapes. They wished to share his knowledge with outsiders, and to have Whitefellas understand that they retained this knowledge about places and resources, were caring for their Country, and passing on knowledge to younger generations.

These concerns accord with the interests of many intending visitors: it is known that tourists, particularly overseas visitors to Australia, seeking a cultural heritage experience highly value traditional knowledge about Country, and this was a point made frequently in interviews conducted with participants in the Nganmariyanga tours. While tourists might want to experience the 'outback', to camp under clear skies and to photograph rock paintings, they mostly want to share experiences of Indigenous cultural landscapes. Furthermore, they want this experience mediated not by an outsider (including an Indigenous Australian tour guide), but by the traditional owners of that Country. It is the perception of authenticity, inclusiveness and generosity on the part of the TOs that is central to visitor appreciation.

The cultural heritage tourism operator is a necessary third party to many Indigenous tourism enterprises where potential visitors lack the time or knowledge to contact and make suitable practical and financial arrangements with TOs, and when TOs in remote areas lack the resources to handle formalities of arrangements with visitors. The resources needed by the tour operator are varied: they are entrepreneurial, financial and managerial, and those other attributes necessary for making a business success of cultural heritage tourism. The operator must know his market, pitch his product competitively, and be aware of the value of 'word-of-mouth' advertising. The operator needs a wide range of practical skills, including the ability to navigate a packed four-wheel-drive vehicle, or to choose and manage reliable and capable others to do so; to provide for and manage the interests of a perhaps disparate group of tourists. Importantly, he must be able to manage sometimes demanding relationships with the TOs who provide the essential focus of the tour.

When the various interests of each of these groups are realised, there is not only increased likelihood of a successful visitor experience but also reduced opportunity for adverse impact upon physical and cultural significances of a place. The potential for visitation to have adverse impact on the fabric of a site has been discussed widely and various controls suggested. (Classic Australian accounts include those of Rosenfeld [1988], and Jacobs and Gale [1994]). It appears that control of potential adverse visitor impact could best be achieved by supervision of visitor behaviour by a guide, particularly one leading a small group, and by a person with a direct and proprietorial interest in protection of the place. Given certain assumptions, a guided tour should negate the need for other visitor-control measures such as barriers, walkways or even

the use of signage.

Visitors need to be educated about the potential impact of their visit and at the appropriate time if a place is not to suffer from increased visitation. To be guided away from areas of a site where they may brush painted walls, walk across petroglyphs before noticing that they exist, or to crush stone tools beneath their feet. A large group in a partially enclosed space can change the atmosphere and encourage growth over rock paintings of unwanted organisms.

Visitor impacts upon the fabric of a place can be discussed and suggestions made for monitoring these and implementing ways of mitigating any such impacts. Beyond the need for preservation of the fabric of a site, Traditional Owners and custodians need to be aware — before irreversible changes take place — that visitation might affect the sustainability of the cultural significance of that place to them. Will the passing on of traditional knowledge about a place somehow diminish its significance to the Traditional Owners? Custodians need to consider that once stories are told and photographs taken, use of these materials may be beyond their control. This is something that only they will be able to assess and need to monitor.

Further to their own stories about a place, the results of archaeological research might be a useful extra discussion point for custodians; it can add to the visitor experience, and might assist in addressing a frequently asked question — that of the age of rock paintings. Some visitors are satisfied with the advice that 'images were made in the Dreaming'; others are pleased to incorporate archaeological results, including dating and regional comparisons, into their appreciation of the imagery.

Many tourists have already had experience of Indigenous cultural places with a wide range of apparently self-interpretable rock paintings. However, they appreciate the extra dimension to the involvement when TOs are present and prepared to interpret the imagery at their sites. Even where the range and intensity of visual imagery is limited, the provision of interpretation can engage and educate visitors. Stories told about the place do not have to be limited to traditional accounts of the significance of the imagery. The passing on of research results is likely to be appreciated. A discussion of how markings were added recently by a TO might prompt discussion of rights of ownership of places and intellectual property that can contribute further to the education of outsiders about things of importance to Indigenous Australians.

There is a further aspect of the opportunities for education to be considered here, that of succeeding generations of TOs. Nowhere does anyone live a fully 'traditional' life any more. In the Daly-Fitzmaurice Rivers region, the centralisation of settlement, through the establishment of the mission in 1935, to the current government unwillingness to support outstations, few clan members have the opportunity to live on their traditional Country. Accommodation of the broader



*Figure 5. Nganmariyanga children interacting with visitor.*

society, the constraints of formal schooling, desire for Western goods, attraction of alcohol and enticements of the wider world for older clan members, mean that children spend much less time in the footsteps of their elders. Parents have implemented various school and 'bush holiday' programs to counter the effects of acculturation. These, however, often depend upon personnel and resources that are not available.

The example of the Nganmariyanga tourism initiative is refreshing. The provision of infrastructure and occasion have allowed and encouraged children to join their elders on trips to at least that part of their traditional country to be visited by the tourists. When visitors arrive at Nganmariyanga the children are immediately engaged with them (Fig. 5). After a while, many persons are packed into available vehicles to set off for the wet-lands en route to Papa Ngala where tables can be set up and lunch laid out for both guests and hosts to enjoy, which occasion gives the opportunity for visitors and TOs to interact (Fig. 6). When the vehicles are parked at the base of the climb to Papa Ngala, younger members of the party might accompany the visitors to the site, or go off elsewhere with their cohort or with their elders to explore, and to gather various bush foods including the desired 'bush honey'. At the overnight camp site they can hear traditional stories; next day they can participate in the education of their visitors about bush foods and medicines, show them how to make or utilise various resources, and themselves broaden their exposure to traditional knowledge.

In the Papa Ngala context, tourism provides an opportunity for cross-generation transmission of

knowledge that would otherwise not exist or be extremely limited.

### **Discussion – problems with the model**

The Nganmariyanga tourism initiative clearly had the potential to provide satisfactory outcomes for all three categories of participants. The tour-operator's business was extended; the tourists enjoyed a cross-cultural experience that they desired; the Traditional Owners' expectations were largely met in terms of reimbursement for their time, their desire to share their traditional knowledge and educate outsiders, and perhaps less expected, increased opportunity for educating the next generation of Traditional Owners.

We observed the development of the Nganmariyanga initiative over the three seasons that it ran. There were some problems, and it is worthwhile exploring these here.

#### *Visitor access*

The potential of cultural places to inform and educate outsiders is limited by difficulty of access, lack of infrastructure for visitors and, perhaps, ability of community members to interact instructively with visitors.

At Papa Ngala, site access was difficult for those not physically fit. This was no problem for the tour groups that we observed, since they were self-selected for a predominantly young person's 'backpacker' experience. The walk to the site from the vehicle parking area was over rough ground, complicated by lack of a path, and required the visitor to clamber over rocks at several points en route. A path could have been formed and made safe relatively readily. But this was not seen as important by tour operator or TOs.

The duration of the tour in the Papa Ngala area was limited to one or two nights' stay in a camping area near the site. The tour group was explicitly a camping one and participants were prepared to 'rough it' in order to visit remote areas. It was the responsibility of the TOs to maintain this area but, in our observation, this was not always up to the basic expectations of the visitors.

Another aspect of site access is the necessity of taking family members from Nganmariyanga to Papa Ngala. For this, the tour-operator had provided, sequentially, two four-wheel-drive vehicles. Their unavailability would limit the participation of family members, an important aspect of the experience as far as visitors were concerned. Vehicles in remote communities tend to be a pervading source of intra- and inter-community problems. If one was taken and wrecked by a newly dissolute younger TO, or confiscated by police when it was found to be carrying illegal supplies, then the tourism venture would be unable to function fully.

The walk was also difficult for older family members. The most senior and knowledgeable TO



*Figure 6. Tour group at lunch with Traditional Owners; note 4WD with trailer-kitchen.*

on one occasion decided not to make the walk. That left a younger TO leading the visiting group to the site. Regrettably that person was unable to relate the traditional stories about the place. The visitors were left waiting as the younger person hoped that the more senior would appear, but ultimately they were uninformed and disappointed.

#### *Visitor impact*

Given the orientation of our research, matters relating to maintenance of the integrity of the fabric and of the traditional knowledge were initial concerns. Having observed tourism in process in various contexts we anticipated that any impact of visitation might best be mitigated by limitation of group size and the presence of a tour guide. This, however, assumes that guides — and the TOs, as in the Papa Ngala instance — have a commitment to longer-term sustainability of the resource and knowledge of the potential adverse impacts of visitation at the cultural heritage place to which visitors are being guided. This was not necessarily the case at Papa Ngala. On the last occasion, the TO guiding the group failed to warn its members of the opportunities for walking over or brushing against the imagery and thus adversely affecting it. Shown a stone tool from the shelter floor, he failed to recognise it as such, and used it to scrape the painted surface, without explanation.

If the custodians guiding the group don't ensure that visitors are aware, or if they don't set the example, or don't recognise the stone tool, then damage is likely to occur. Not all custodians involved will be aware of some of the pitfalls in tourism at their cultural sites and, moreover, some might be reluctant to tell visitors what is necessary. Training could enhance learning

and provide the increased confidence necessary, and those providing training in tourism for custodians need to be aware of this as well as other aspects of visitor management and site conservation.

#### *Visitor education*

We have stressed the potential for a satisfying visitor experience through the provision of cultural knowledge about a place. That this is particularly important where, for the experienced tourist, the visual aspects of the site might be less than engaging. On the occasion of our last visit to Papa Ngala, the visitors sat and waited for twenty minutes for the TO to talk to them about the site's attributes. This was not forthcoming. The TO wandered off in search of the senior person, because, it transpired, he did not know the stories associated with the site.

On the occasion of our first visit, discussion had been led by the senior TO, an elderly woman, and a younger, knowledgeable, male TO. On the last occasion, the younger male TO, who had lived in the community all his life, and in our earlier observation was an excellent guide and informed presenter, was no longer participating in the tourism venture. The senior woman, who did not feel able to make the climb to the site, took herself off to collect bush honey. (This was a saving grace for this particular tour group, as it was able to share the honey, despite their disappointment about the pictogram site.) The senior male TO did not know stories associated with the site because he had, from a young age, lived away from the community.

We noted that custodians were not comfortable discussing data provided by researchers, and implementation of another medium (e.g. pamphlets) for transmitting research results might be preferable.

### *Guide training*

Some of these problems might be overcome by the training of younger Traditional Owners who are committed to the venture. Such training is available at Charles Darwin University (CDU). It is problematic whether training opportunities would be taken up by younger community members that required extended residence away from their communities. Tourist guide training had been provided by CDU in Wadeye several years ago, but no person who received that training is working in this field.

There is support available for Indigenous tourism enterprises from the Northern Territory's tourism office. We brought to the attention of members of that office some of the problems with the Nganmariyanga venture that we had observed. The Indigenous tourism officer held a workshop on tourism potential in the region.

### *End of the Papa Ngala venture*

The Nganmariyanga cultural heritage tourism venture ended when the Darwin-based company providing the organisation ceased to exist. The Nganmariyanga family wished for the venture to be continued but were unable to effect this on its own.

### *Potential for other cultural tourism ventures in the region*

Our research has identified many major cultural places — especially those with rock paintings — that have the potential to be the focus of tourism in the region. Most were to the south and west of the Papa Ngala area. Many were able to be accessed readily; others, such as those along the Fitzmaurice River, were only approachable overland by long and difficult drives or would be best accessed by boat or helicopter.

Several were in the vicinity of Wadeye, the district centre. Expansion of any tourism venture in the region — for stays of longer duration and the opportunity to visit more places and to enhance the visitor experience — would require accommodation for visitors. This is notoriously lacking in the region. At the main centre, Wadeye, the land-owning clan does not want further residential accommodation constructed as it considers there are too many outsiders — both Indigenous and non-Indigenous — living there already. (Many non-local clan residents would like to live on their traditional lands beyond Wadeye but are denied the opportunity because of lack of vehicle access and other infrastructure, which is concentrated at Wadeye.) Apart from a few very basic and expensive units, there is no visitor accommodation available.

### **Conclusion**

Tour-operators and tourists desiring new cultural experiences are targeting remote regions of northern Australia. In some places, this is matched by the desire of Traditional Owners and family groups to share the

perceived advantages of cultural tourism, not only for its economic opportunities, but also to educate outsiders in the cultural values of the community. TOs of cultural sites on reserved lands benefit by having effective control of their lands and thus, to some extent, of visitor behaviour. Our observation of the implementation of joint ventures between local communities and tour companies shows that such initiatives can benefit all parties, and particularly in contributing to both cross-cultural and trans-generational education. However, there continue to exist concerns regarding the sustainability of Indigenous cultural heritage tourism. The results of research across various aspects of cultural heritage tourism management can provide a substantial basis for protection and management advice. While there is wider appreciation that such places need to be properly managed and conserved in order to sustain continuing visitation, it is also necessary that TOs receive advice and training better to protect their long-term interests, and not only in developing awareness of the impact of tourism upon the physical fabric of heritage places, but also of the potential of visitation to affect the cultural significances of places.

It is useful to be aware of the interests of visitors to cultural heritage places. Those seeking to see Indigenous Australian rock paintings often have expectations of seeing spectacular images, such as those known from places in Arnhem Land, the Kimberley and Cape York Peninsula. Where rock paintings are not as visually engaging, a different and better experience is needed to satisfy visitors. Such an experience can be provided by a well-interpreted tour that educates the visitor in a cross-cultural appreciation and enhances understanding beyond that of the merely aesthetic. Our discussions with tourists in the Daly-Fitzmaurice region and elsewhere suggests that Traditional Owners who have the authority and ability to speak for a place will best meet this expectation, especially for better educated tourists who are prepared to pay for the experience. This interaction would be valued more highly than the type of image seen, and would overcome difficulties of site access.

With appropriate safeguards and training, guided tourism would not only provide a more desired visitor experience and provide the opportunity for Traditional Owners to educate outsiders about their culture, but would also be preferable in terms of site management. Little or no physical site protection should be necessary where access to a place is restricted to a guided tour. Furthermore, the relating of cultural stories by traditional knowledge-holders, when they control access and are custodians of their knowledge, need not threaten the socio-cultural significances of that place if the visitor experience is appropriately handled. Traditional knowledge-holders can gain the economic benefits that they desire, while protecting the integrity of the fabric of a place, retaining its socio-

cultural significance, and educating both visitors and members of the younger generation in the values of their cultural landscapes.

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## The IFRAO Code of Ethics

(approved 14 July 2000)

### 1. Preamble

1(1). This Code of Ethics describes general guidelines which IFRAO recommends to its members.

1(2). Rock art provides a window to our collective past, helps us make sense of the present and contributes to our future. Some of it has been handed down to us by many generations preceding us, to safeguard it for many generations to follow us. Unless we can trace our lineage directly to those who created the rock art and have retained aspects of its original cultural context, it does not belong to us in any way.

1(3). The cultural significance of a rock art site is embodied in the entire fabric of the site, in addition to the actual art present; in the traditional use of the place and the activities

that occurred there; and in the meanings and intangible qualities of the place.

1(4). Understanding the cultural significance of a place is fundamental to its care, and where such understanding is inadequate, any interference may be regarded as inappropriate.

1(5). The 'patina of history' apparent in the fabric of a rock art site is important evidence and forms an integral part of that fabric. It includes natural or artificial changes or traces.

### 2. Definitions

Not included here.

### 3. Issues of Ownership

3(1). Traditional owners and indigenous cultural custodians: In areas where indigenous peoples live whose lifestyles and beliefs continue traditions associated with rock art, members recognise their ownership of the sites, and all research, conservation or management of such sites are subject to the full approval of the traditional owners. In areas where such indigenous peoples and traditions are no longer present, members shall endeavour to understand and promote management practices consistent with such beliefs in so far as they are known from ethnographic or archaeological evidence. In the absence of such evidence to the contrary, provisional concepts of such beliefs (e.g. non-human sources of authority, nature of the sacred, non-linear time/space) should be projected from similar societies and traditions elsewhere.

3(2). Local antiquities and cultural heritage laws: Members shall abide by all local, state or national laws protecting archaeological sites and monuments, and comply with heritage protection laws generally.

3(3). Non-traditional ownership of sites: Members shall respect the rules, laws or requests of any individuals or organisations possessing legal ownership of the land rock art sites are located on, or the land that must be traversed in order to reach the sites.

3(4). Copyright and ownership of records: In regions where traditional indigenous owners exist, they possess copyright of the rock art designs. Members wishing to reproduce such designs shall make appropriate applications. Records made of rock art remain the cultural property of the rock artists, or collectively of the societies these lived amongst.

### 4. Recording of Rock Art

4(1). Methods of recording: Members shall not physically interfere with rock art except as provided in Clauses 5(2) and 6. No substances shall be applied to rock art for recording purposes, except substances that are regularly applied to individual panels by natural processes (e.g. water at open air sites).

4(2). Coverage of recording: All recordings of rock art are incomplete. Therefore rock art recordings need to be as comprehensive as possible, and by multi-disciplinary means.

4(3). Conduct at sites: New uses of sites, including for purposes of research, shall not change the fabric of a site, and shall respect associations and meanings of the site and its contents.

4(4). Conduct in foreign countries: In addition to other requirements listed herein, researchers working in foreign countries shall do so in consultation with the region's rock art organisation, and shall provide copies of reports and publications to that organisation.

### 5. Removal of Samples

5(1). Archaeological research: No excavation shall be undertaken at a rock art site unless it forms part of an appropriately authorised archaeological research project. This includes the removal of any sediment to uncover rock art images. Similarly, no archaeological surface remains shall be removed or relocated.

5(2). Sampling of rock art and adjacent geomorphic exposures: No samples shall be removed of paint residue, accretionary deposits of any kind, or of the support rock, except

after the following requirements have been satisfied:

(a) The sample removal is to form part of a larger and specific research design that has peer approval;

(b) The sample removal has been approved in writing by two peer researchers (i.e. scientists specialising in the analytical study of rock art);

(c) The funds necessary for the best possible analytical laboratory support have been secured;

(d) The analyst has extensive first-hand experience in sampling geomorphic surfaces;

(e) Traditional indigenous custodians, where they have jurisdiction, have approved the sample removal;

(f) The relevant local or national authorities have approved the sample removal;

5(3). Excavation: No excavations shall be undertaken at a rock art site unless the expertise of identifying rock art-making tools is available to the researchers proposing such excavation.

### 6. Conservation

6(1). Setting: The area around a rock art site, its setting, may contain features associated with the rock art and other evidence of its history. The visual, historical and other relationships between a site and its setting which contribute to its significance shall be retained in all conservation or preservation work.

6(2). Site fabric: In all conservation, preservation or management work at and near rock art sites, the visual, historical and scientific significance of the site fabric shall be retained. The removal or palliation of 'graffiti' shall be undertaken only after approval of the relevant authorities, and be effected only under the guidance of qualified rock art conservators. Massive intervention is to be reserved for situations of extreme threats to rock art, and shall be undertaken only after extensive peer review and approval.

6(3). Protection: Members will not disclose the locations of non-public and unprotected rock art sites to the general public. Ultimately, the best protection will depend on the awareness of the general public of the value of rock art. Part of any conservation effort should include the education of the public towards respect for rock art wherever it occurs.

### 7. Disputes

7(1). Conduct: Members shall endeavour to treat other members in a courteous manner. In regions where traditional indigenous owners exist, members shall ensure that they are kept informed about all aspects of research work, and that copies of completed reports are made available to them. Where such reports appear in technical jargon, ordinary-language versions are to be made available.

7(2). Plagiarism: Members shall acknowledge the use of other researcher's recordings, published comments and ideas.

7(3). Dispute settlement: Members shall make every endeavour to settle disputes among themselves, as IFRAO is reluctant to settle disputes among its members. Where a dispute cannot be settled and threatens the integrity of IFRAO, application for arbitration shall be made to the President of IFRAO, providing the relevant documentation. The dispute will then be arbitrated by the Triumvirate of IFRAO if its resolution is urgent, but preferably at the subsequent General Meeting of IFRAO.