

CHAPTER VIIITHE KOKATHA PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

## 8.1 SPHERE OF INTEREST

The clarity that characterises the Adnjamathanha sphere of interest (despite the individual variations) is not duplicated in the case of the Kokatha people and the Kokatha People's Committee which functions as the formal land rights group. At the individual level there is a relatively higher degree of variability in Kokatha concepts of territory. As with the Adnjamathanha, variability occurs as a result of differing criteria being used to define tribal country. The political figures of the Kokatha community have the most extensive territory concepts, reflecting their political aspirations. Younger Kokatha informants, using kin-residence as the main criterion for territory definition, also have spatially extensive territory concepts reflecting the dispersal of Kokatha people during the contact era. Older Kokatha, using criteria such as mythological tracts and ceremonial patterns of movement, hold more specific territory notions that are spatially less extensive (Map 8:1).

In general terms, the spatial extent of the Kokatha notion of territory is larger than that of the Adnjamathanha. Their more extensive concept of territory and the higher degree of individual variation are not incompatible with ethnographic details available for the Kokatha. Tindale's map of tribal boundaries (1974), although not necessarily

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MAP 8:1 Territory Concepts held by a number of  
Kokatha individuals.

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Aged Pangala woman. Lives Whyalla.  
Participates in Kokatha Land Rights  
Action.

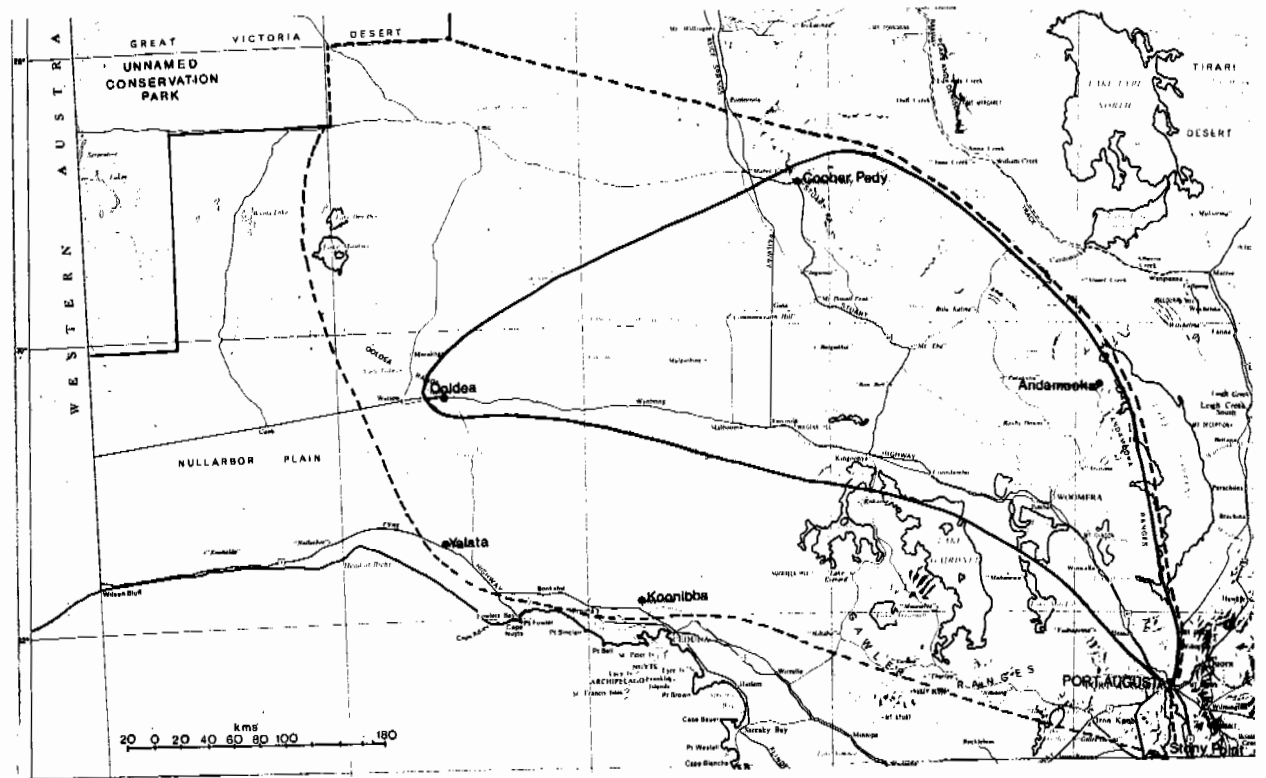
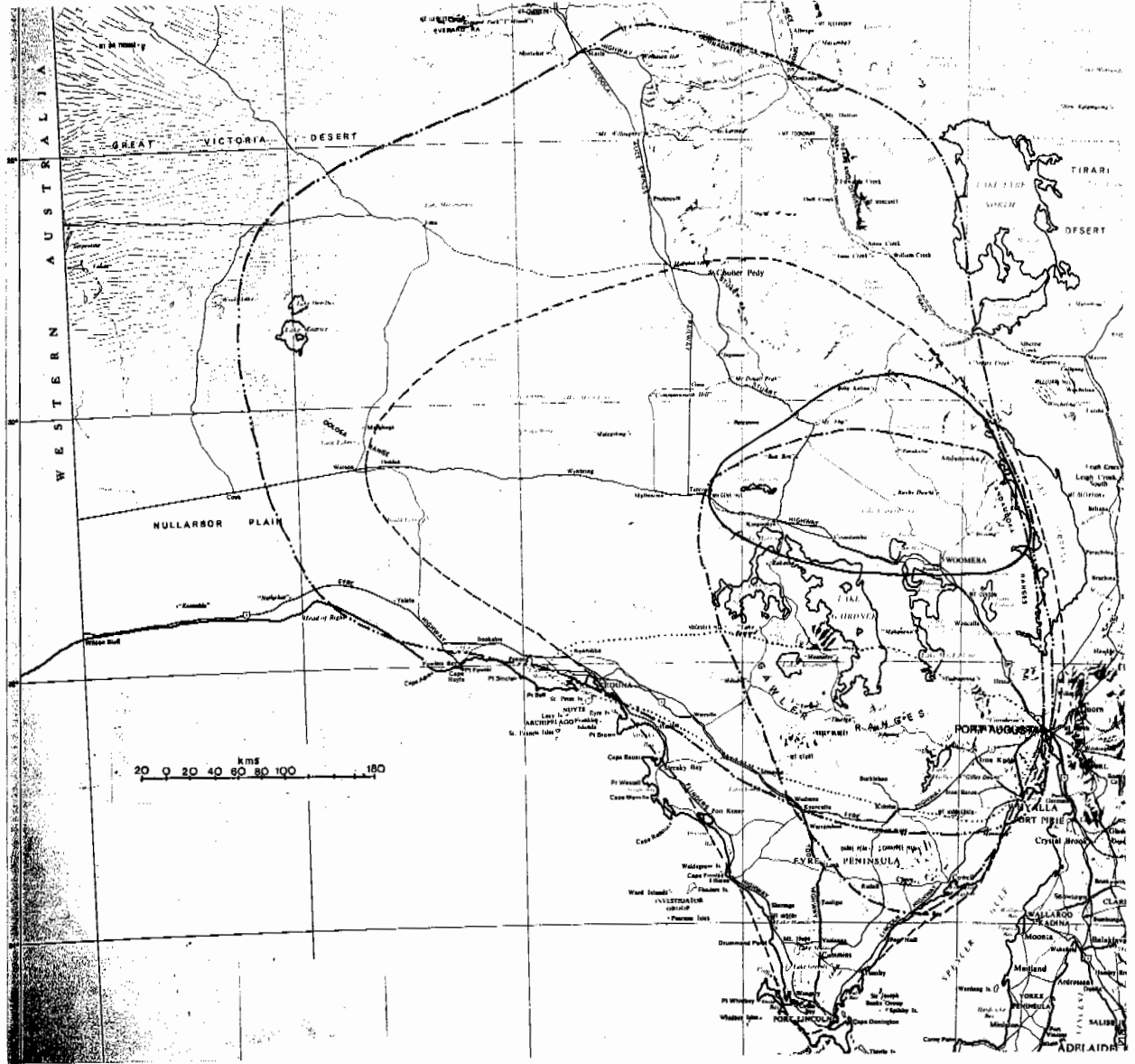
-----  
Initiated man. Chairman KPC. Lives  
Port Augusta.

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Aged Kokatha woman. Mother of KPC  
Chairman. Prime KPC informant.

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Middle aged man. Born Gawler Ranges.  
Vice-Chairman KPC. Lived at Koonibba.

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Young woman. Born Gawler Ranges.  
Taken away from parents, reared in  
Adelaide. Recently returned to  
Port Augusta.

MAP 8:2 Kokatha Territory according to Collective  
Statements issued by the KPC.



accurate, does indicate that Kokatha country was extensive. This stands in contrast to the less extensive pre-contact territory patterns suggested by Tindale for the Flinders Ranges area (see Map 5:1). The difference is no doubt due to the different physical landscapes. Moreover, the Kokatha contact experience, characterised by forced and voluntary movement, dispersal and the intrusion of the Woomera Restricted Area, has worked against the maintenance of a clear concept of Kokatha country. In this situation of dispersal and removal from the original Kokatha country, the absence of a physically distinctive environment such as the Flinders Ranges, has worked against the maintenance of a specific concept of country.

Despite the aforementioned variability, the individual notions of Kokatha territory among the Port Augusta informants do include an undisputed, if somewhat vaguely defined, core area centring on the pastoral leases of Roxby Downs, Andamooka, Mount Vivian, Bon Bon and the town of Tarcoola. The emphasis on this area is not incompatible with the current focus of land rights efforts on Roxby Downs. Of course, it is possible, and not illogical, that the heightened local publicity about Roxby Downs has changed the status of this area and placed it into a central position in both the individual and collective Kokatha concepts of territory.

One of the distinguishing features of the Kokatha concept of territory is the extent of variation in not only individual statements of territory but in the collective

notion of Kokatha territory. The Kokatha People's Committee (KPC) has made two collective statements on the extent of 'their country'. Each of these statements covers a wide area and varies in spatial details (Map 8:2). In an early KPC meeting the Kokatha country was explained as:

...extending north from Port Augusta to Stuart Range and west to Maralinga along a line running south to Woomera, Kingoonya, Tarcoola and Barton (Minutes, KPC, 1/12/79).

Early in 1981, the KPC made a formal statement of policy and in this document their 'traditional interests in land' were described as extending:

Northwestwards from Port Augusta right to the Unnamed Conservation Park and [including] Andamooka, Coober Pedy, Kingoonya, Tarcoola and down to Stony Point where our interests coincide with the Bungala peoples. (KPC Policy Statement June, 1981).

This later statement was used in most correspondence and press releases issued by the KPC. One press release elaborated on the extent of Kokatha country by suggesting that up to 1,000 Kokatha lived throughout the aforementioned area (The Advertiser, 9/4/81 and 14/8/82).

The inclusion of Yalata and the West Coast (the local name for the area including Eyre Peninsula and the coastal region extending westward to Ceduna) as part of the collective Kokatha concept of country proves problematic. The Port Augusta Kokatha, many of whom had spent time at Koonibba and have relatives still living on the West Coast, are adamant that this is part of their country and the people

living there are Kokatha people. The West Coast people also identify themselves as Kokatha. In a local West Coast Aboriginal newsletter the following public statement of identity was made:

World renown linguist Professor John Platt, who has done many years research into the languages of this general area, agrees that while there were several groups of population which traditionally lived in the area (for example the coastal Wirungu group), the group from whom most of our members are descendents are the Kukatja group who mainly occupied the lower fringes of the Western Desert (Ooldea and Westward) and who were subsequently dispersed into other areas (Koonibba, Yalata). (Kukatja Wangka, Official Newsletter of the Far West Aboriginal Progress Association, Vol. 1, No.2, Feb. 1981).

Despite identifying as Kokatha few of the West Coast group took an active part in the Port Augusta-based land rights issue. Even meetings that were widely publicised and offered the West Coast people enough time to travel to Port Augusta were not attended by this group. During a field trip to the West Coast in 1982 I interviewed an influential man from Koonibba Aboriginal reserve. When asked about the link between the West Coast Kokatha and the Port Augusta Kokatha, he remarked, 'Wayback we must have been all mixed up, but they're different to us now'. And when asked about Roxby Downs, the central issue for the Port Augusta people, he commented, 'Well they are close to that land, and that is their business now', adding that his own people's business was Davenport Creek, an area near Koonibba. The West Coast Kokatha identity is linked essentially to their Koonibba experience and their

land rights efforts are localised and congruent with their contemporary identity concept.

Of those who identify themselves as Kokatha in Port Augusta some have associations with the Koonibba group via genealogical links and a shared experience of mission life at Koonibba. However, many of the influential families in the Port Augusta land rights scene have had only limited associations with Koonibba Mission. This divergent post-contact experience, possibly coupled with the cultural distinctions suggested by Platt's linguistic work, has resulted in a contemporary distinction between the Kokatha of Port Augusta and Koonibba. The divergent land interests of the two groups reflect these differing identity concepts. The Koonibba claim is for land originally allocated to the Lutheran Mission. It is an area of historical significance to the people and, once acquired, of economic and social benefit. Because this claim is so closely linked to the Koonibba experience it is not part of the Port Augusta group's interest or business. Likewise, the Roxby Downs issue is viewed by Koonibba residents to be of little consequence to their localised needs, but for the Port Augusta group, who have maintained an interest in the area and been associated with the area through employment on local pastoral stations, the issue is of great importance.

The Port Augusta-West Coast distinction reveals an important process in contemporary Aboriginal society. Community-based social units developed during the contact era are working to create new identity concepts which are tied to localised or locally important areas of land.

Communities are creating the social basis of new divisions of land among the Kokatha by offering new spheres of association, interest and responsibility (cf Kolig, 1978; 70). This development cannot be viewed in isolation from post-1972 Government policy which stresses community self-determination. As Jones and Hill-Burnett (1982; 233-234) point out, this policy 'accentuates diversity' and, reinforced by the 'drip-feed' manipulation of funded programmes which are community-based, localised operations, stimulates factionalism along post-contact social boundaries. Thus, even at this very broad ideological level, the collective concept of identity presented by the KPC policy statements is not congruent with the localised reality which displays a far more fragmented and competitive notion of identity.

The other controversial element of the collective identity concept projected by the KPC is the Kokatha link with the Pitjantjatjara. Linguistically the two groups are similar and this has facilitated considerable contact both in the past and currently. Further, the Kokatha and a section of the Pitjantjatjara group shared an association with Ooldea and, later, Yalata. This shared association with these localities offered opportunities for mixing between the two groups. Currently the KPC stresses its association with the Pitjantjatjara, particularly those resident at Yalata. Many of the KPC's informants on land issues are brought from the Yalata area, and the Port Augusta Kokatha maintain their link with the Yalata community



through their Chairman's regular visits to the area. In addition, the KPC has recently joined with the Cundalee Aboriginal Community in Western Australia, the Anangu Pitjantjatjara and the Indulkana Community Group to endorse the Yalata Community's claim for the Maralinga lands which lie to the north of Yalata (Hiskey, 1982; Part III; 3).

Of particular interest to the contemporary Kokatha-Pitjantjatjara link is the record of a 1981 court case involving Sydney Williams (Australian Law Reform Commission, 1981). The legal aspects of this case are not relevant but the details of the precedent-setting sentence are of note. Sydney Williams' sentence was suspended upon his entering into a bond, a condition of which was his 'return forthwith to his tribe, the Kokatha tribe' where he was to 'submit himself to the Tribal Elders'. While Sydney Williams' bond necessitated his being placed with his Kokatha Tribal Elders he was identified in the trial as being 'an initiated Pitjantjatjara' and was sent to Yalata and subsequently to the Musgrave Ranges (Pitjantjatjara country) for 'a period of training'.

The Sydney Williams' trial does little to clarify the Kokatha-Pitjantjatjara distinction, itself using two identities in relation to one individual. However, it does suggest there is a close and mutable link between the Pitjantjatjara and Kokatha identity (at least in relation to Yalata and Port Augusta). The KPC's incorporation of the Pitjantjatjara link into its projected identity concept enables it to utilise Yalata people as informants on land

issues and yet does not necessitate a permanent link or a unification of interests in relation to land. Support can be offered between the two groups but it is done in the knowledge that their land interests are separate and for the benefit of their own individual groups. As will be shown, the Kokatha-Pitjantjatjara link has had a tremendous impact on the course of the KPC's land rights action.

The preceding analysis of the ideological level of Kokatha identity suggests that it is far more divergent and controversial than that held by the Adnjamathanha. Like the Adnjamathanha, the Kokatha project to outsiders an identity concept characterised by solidarity and collective agreement. However, even at a macro-scale level of analysis there are obvious community-based divisions within this collective ideal. Both the 'who' of Kokatha identity and the 'where' of Kokatha country is less absolute than the concept held by the Adnjamathanha group in relation to their own identity and country. The varying formal statements of these concepts by the Kokatha in fact reflect the internal controversy. However, this does not mean that the Kokatha are any less sure of their responsibility to and ambitions towards certain areas of land. It is simply a case of the Kokatha having an under-developed sense of collective identity. As stated, the nature of their post-contact experience has worked to dissect rather than unify the Kokatha. Similarly, in more recent years the Kokatha have not been involved in heritage moves which might, as they have for the Adnjamathanha, <sup>have</sup> heightened the sense of collective identity.

From its inception the KPC has operated differently from the land rights group among the Adnjamathanha community. Unlike the ALRC, the KPC has been characterised by deliberate efforts to produce a 'collective' Kokatha policy on land rights. That is, a doctrine of action and philosophy to which all participants would theoretically adhere. For example, in June of 1981, in response to increasing pressure from mining company consultants investigating the anthropological facet of Environmental Impact Statements relating to Roxby Downs and Stony Point, the KPC produced its formal policy statement. This statement made clear the collective aim of the Committee to preserve Kokatha sites, to ensure unrestricted visitation to these sites by those Kokatha nominated by tribal elders, and if possible, to acquire tracts of land (KPC Policy Statement, June 1981). Particular emphasis in this statement was given to the establishment of Woomera Restricted Area. The KPC view the establishment of Woomera as the main cause of its people's current disassociation from the land.

The proclamation of the Commonwealth Prohibited Area for the defence establishment at Woomera had a drastic effect on traditional Kokatha people. Many, who as late as 20 years ago, had camped near the opal town of Andamooka were forced off the land because the traditional lands were now completely out of bounds to them. The result was a complete dispersal of the traditional people, some to Coober Pedy, some to the Northwest Reserve and further North, some to Yalata...and many to Port Augusta-Davenport Reserve, Port Pirie and Whyalla (the KPC Policy Statement, June 1981).

Interestingly, the Woomera emphasis stands in contrast to comments made by respected Kokatha elders who say that Kokatha had been living away from that country for some years prior to the establishment of Woomera (pers. com. Eva Strangways and Suzie Reid, 1981). It seems that the emphasis on Woomera is a result of it being the first example of European occupation which overtly restricted Aboriginal access to the land.

Not only is the KPC distinctive from the ALRC in its production of a policy statement but its ambitions and field of activity are broader. As stated, the ALRC operates essentially to lobby Government bodies for funds to purchase tracts of land. The KPC, while participating in similar activities, also aims to operate its own procedure of recording cultural information. This is seen as one of the fundamental tasks of the group but it has been forced to operate from the minimal funds donated by participating members (usually \$10-\$30 per meeting), and through the limited skills offered by these participants. With a view to fulfilling this ambition the KPC has made numerous applications to Government bodies for funding. It has also investigated the possibility of benefiting from funds held by the Daisy Bates Trust Fund, a move which endorses the Port Augusta Kokatha's perception of a strong West Coast/Ooldea link. Working from this same sense of shared West Coast experience the KPC also reviewed the possibility of applying to the Yalata and Koonibba Community Councils for funds.

The moves to instigate a cultural programme independent of mainstream options such as the Heritage Unit reflect the absence of a working relationship between the Unit and the Kokatha people. The options offered by the Heritage Unit have been viewed as unacceptable by the Kokatha. The Kokatha wished to maintain control of their cultural information rather than passing it over to an external body. Moreover, at no time has the Heritage Unit attempted to establish a secure clientele among the Kokatha. The Unit's limited resources and valuable commitment to the Adnjamathanha made it difficult for them to establish a similar relationship with other groups. There has been no co-opting of local Kokatha into the ranks of the Unit and no concerted effort to work consistently with the Kokatha. The absence of a secure client niche with the Unit has discouraged the Kokatha from utilising its services. The rejection of the Heritage Unit has become a crucial point of conflict for the KPC which, because of the large-scale development occurring in the region, is often involved in consultation with mining company representatives conducting Environmental Impact Statements. Conflict is often exacerbated by the Kokatha's rejection of the services offered by the Heritage Unit, which in EIS consultations can act as an effective buffer between consultants and Aboriginal groups.

The broader sphere of action adopted by the KPC (which includes attempts to acquire tracts of land, the recording of cultural information and consultation with EIS consultants), is reflected in the name of the Kokatha land rights action

group, the Kokatha People's Committee. The original Kokatha action group was, like the Adnjamathanha equivalent, called a 'Land Rights Committee'. However, soon after its formation the name was changed to the Kokatha People's Committee in a deliberate move to project its more general cultural ambitions as well as its specific land rights ambitions (pers. com. KPC member, 1981).

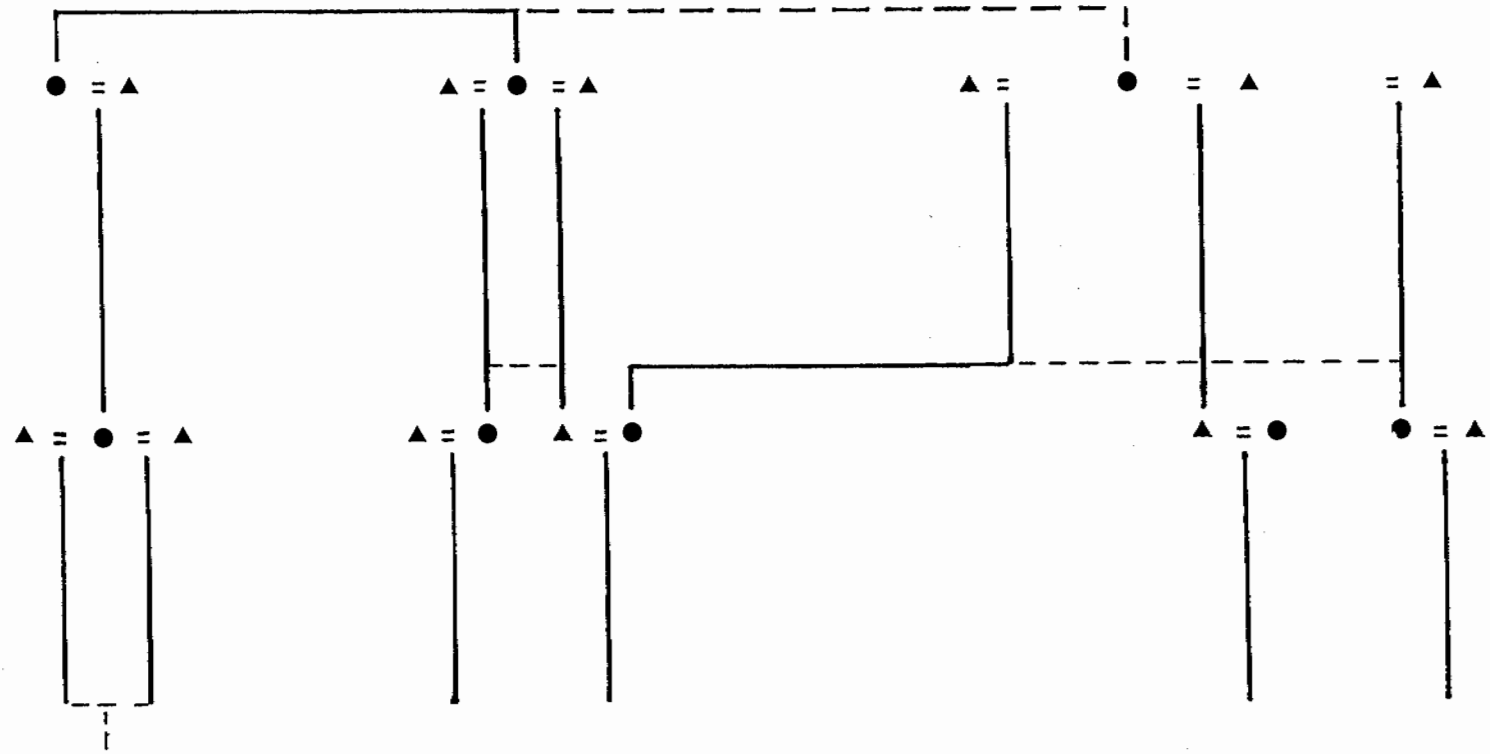
The KPC also varies from the ALRC in relation to its ambition to be an incorporated body. The ALRC discussed incorporation but never made a deliberate effort to endow its group with legal status. In contrast the KPC was in the process of incorporating its group in late 1981. The move to incorporate the KPC was in keeping with its ambitions of autonomy in relation to land business. By having legal status the group was making the necessary legal preparations to accept title to land that was successfully claimed or accept funds to enable it to operate its own heritage programme. Further, incorporation presents a far more formal and organised image to external bodies with which the KPC must deal. The ambition and final incorporation of the KPC is also a reflection of its administrative policy. As will be shown, the group initially had numerous associations with mainstream organisations dealing with Aboriginal affairs in Port Augusta. Logically, they adopted similar administrative strategies such as incorporation and a committee procedure. By way of its parabureaucratic form the KPC, at least in terms of its early development, can be seen as fitting into the mainstream organisational

hierarchy of Port Augusta more than the informal ALRC.

## 8.2 PARTICIPATION IN THE KOKATHA PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

### 8.2.1 Kin Affiliation of KPC Participants

In the case of the Adnjamathanha strong community-kin distinctions are apparent. A similar pattern exists among the Kokatha, however the autonomy and separate land interests of many of the communities identifying as Kokatha have reduced (but not erased) the competitive nature of land rights politics within the Kokatha group. The participants in the KPC are essentially Kokatha people living in Port Augusta and the nearby town of Whyalla. The Port Augusta faction of KPC participants is a closely related extended kin group which traces its origin to three women described as 'sisters' or 'cousins'. Two of these women, it seems, were sisters but the exact relationship between all three women could not be verified. In some respects, this extended kin group parallels the Kin Group 1, 2 and 3 Complex among the Adnjamathanha. Although members of this Kokatha kin complex attest to the unification of this extended network, there are important distinctions that exist within it and which influence political activity in relation to land rights. For this reason I have treated this extended kin group as five separate kin groups numbered respectively (Figure 8:1). In addition to the five kin groups associated with Port Augusta there are two genealogically distinct kin groups (Kin Group 6 and 7) which are based in Whyalla.



KIN GROUP 5

KIN GROUP 1 KIN GROUP 4

KIN GROUP 2 KIN GROUP 3



The first official KPC involved ten positions, divided into a general Committee and what was entitled a 'Special Committee', which was peopled by older Kokatha men used as referents over land issues (KPC Files, 15/11/79). Those filling the general Committee positions all resided in Port Augusta and were drawn from the 'acculturated' sector but the 'Special Committee' included men living outside of mainstream Australian life in Coober Pedy and Yalata, as well as Port Augusta. The first Committee consisted essentially of representatives from Kin Groups 1, 2 and 3, a non-Aboriginal representative from Kin Group 4, with no representatives from Kin Groups 5, 6 and 7. The representatives from the closely related Kin Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 filled six of the ten Committee positions (Figure 8:2).

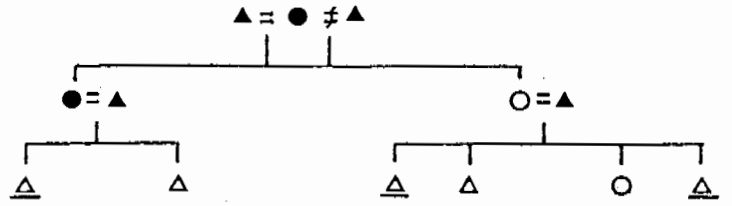
The Chairman of the KPC came from the relatively well represented Kin Group 1. It is significant that in this early Committee there was only one representative from Kin Group 4, a non-Aboriginal man married to one of the female members of this group. His formal position within the Committee was as Treasurer but he also functioned as an adviser to the Committee and in some situations assumed a brokerage role, mediating between the Committee and outside bodies. At a later stage in the development of the KPC Kin Group 4 became quite powerful and greatly influenced the activities and strategies of the Committee.

Direct or indirect kin links can be traced between all but one of the original Committee. The Secretary was the only member not directly linked to the remainder of the

KIN GROUP 1

Total

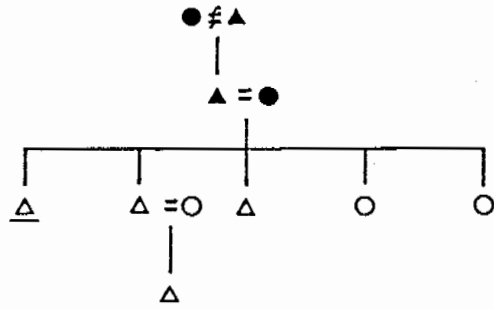
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KIN GROUP 2

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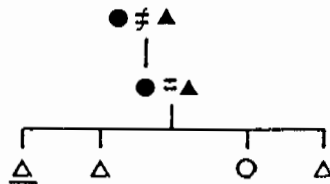
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KIN GROUP 3

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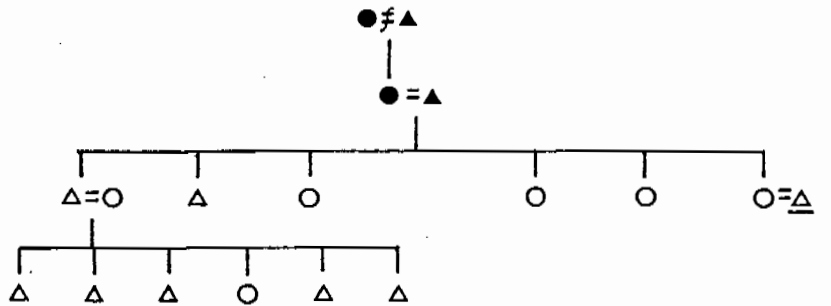
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KIN GROUP 4

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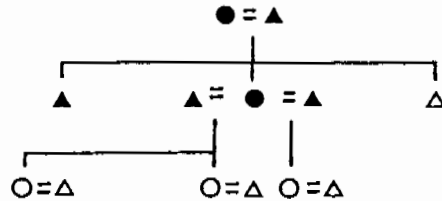
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KIN GROUP 5

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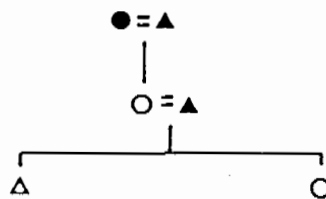
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KIN GROUP 6

Total

Representation: 0



KIN GROUP 7

Total

Representation: 0



Committee. At the time when the KPC emerged this woman had only recently retraced her Aboriginal origins, having been taken away from her family as a child and reared in Adelaide. She identified strongly as a Kokatha person, and part of her re-identification process was the seeking out of Kokatha people in Port Augusta and involvement in specifically Kokatha issues. Of equal significance to this woman's participation in the KPC was her position on the Community Affairs Panel (CAP). The CAP function of co-ordinating Aboriginal affairs in Port Augusta encouraged its head to become involved in the emerging land rights group with a view to incorporating its activities under the CAP umbrella.

Unlike the ALRC the KPC did not undergo dramatic and frequent changes in its Committee structure. By 1981 the formal Committee had altered only slightly. The genealogically distinct Secretary had been replaced by a woman, closely related to the other Committee members, from Kin Group 2. Also, Kin Group 4 which was largely unrepresented on the Committee gained increased power within the KPC via the participation of one of its male members. Although this new participant was not incorporated into the formal Committee structure, his position as the DAA Field Officer and his accompanying administrative skills and access to some DAA resources, gave him considerable status and influence within the Committee.

The KPC, not unlike the ALRC, has had a number of regular participants. Like the Adnjamathanha, the 'regulars'

constituted only a small portion of the total population. Out of a pool of potential participants, estimated by the Kokatha to be about 1,000 (The Advertiser, 9/4/81), only fifty-nine different individuals are recorded as having attended KPC meetings between 1979 and December 1981. This is only 5.9% of the 'total' Kokatha population. Of these participants, the majority live in Port Augusta or in nearby Whyalla. Considering the community autonomy of the West Coast faction of the Kokatha group, it is perhaps more accurate to assume that the pool of potential participants is smaller than suggested by the probably inflated figure given in the aforementioned KPC press statement. In real terms the KPC pool of participants is essentially those Kokatha resident in Port Augusta or Whyalla, and thus the proportion of the relevant population having attended KPC meetings may in fact be much larger.

Of those Kokatha people recorded as participating in KPC meetings, only seven individuals attended near to half of the recorded meetings (Table 8:1). The most significant feature of this kin breakdown of 'regulars' is that Kin Group 4, largely unrepresented on the formal Committee, constitute the majority of regular participants. Those participants from the other kin groups are formal Committee members with the position of Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary (Figure 8:3).

The kin affiliation diagrams which are based on the formal Committee and on regular meeting attendance fail to show participation by a number of kin groups which in fact

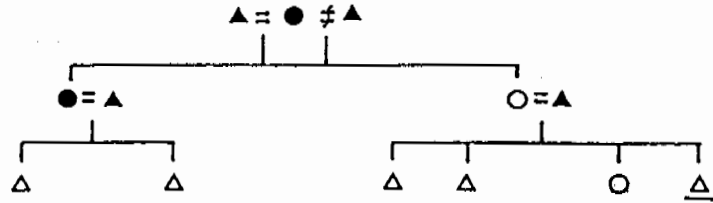
TABLE 8:1 REGULAR PARTICIPANTS IN KPC MEETINGS  
1979 - DECEMBER 1981 (SEVENTEEN RECORDED  
MEETINGS)

<u>Individual by Kin Group</u>	<u>Residence</u>	<u>No. of Meetings</u>
Kin Group 1	Port Augusta	13
Kin Group 2	Port Augusta	10
Kin Group 4	Port Augusta	9
Kin Group 4	Port Augusta	9
Kin Group 4	Port Augusta	8
Kin Group 4	Port Augusta	8
Kin Group 2	Port Augusta	8

KIN GROUP 1

Total

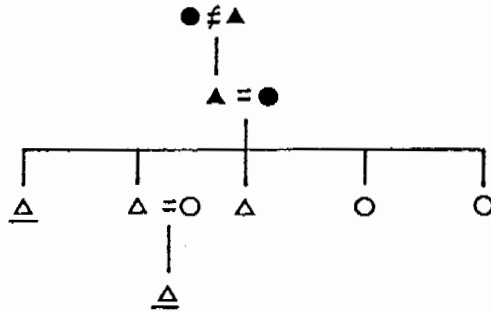
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KIN GROUP 2

Total

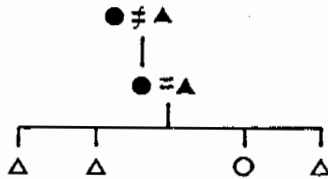
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KIN GROUP 3

Total

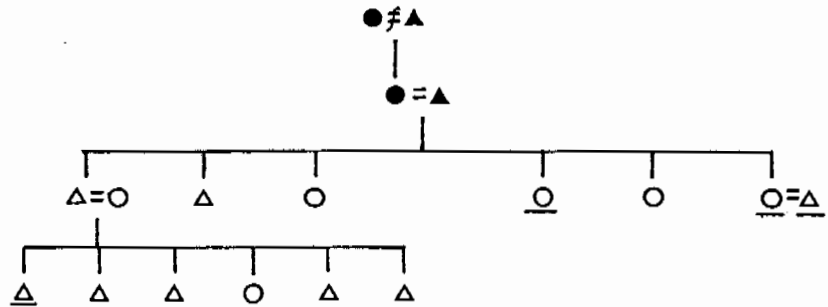
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KIN GROUP 4

Total

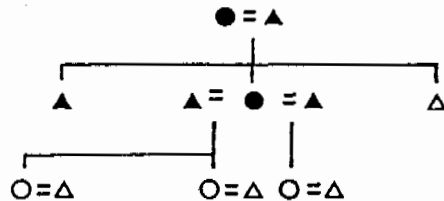
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KIN GROUP 5

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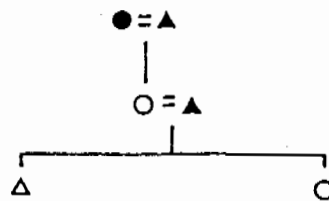
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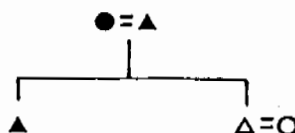
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KIN GROUP 7

Total

Representation: 0



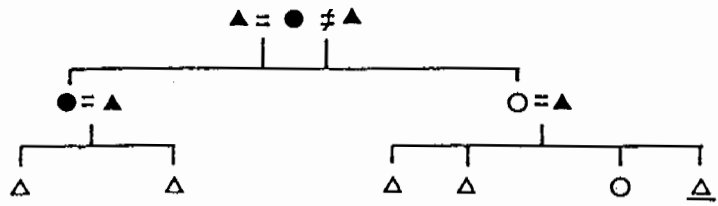
have an important input to the land rights scene. For this reason these less regular, but often influential, participants have been presented by kin affiliation in Figure 8:4 .

The extended participation analysis illustrates the input from Kin Groups 3 and 5 which are closely linked to Kin Groups 1,2 and 4 but do not attend meetings regularly. In the case of Kin Group 3, the participating members reside outside of Port Augusta and do not attend meetings unless in town visiting relatives. The single representative from Kin Group 5 resides in Port Augusta but has a large family and finds it difficult to attend most meetings because of her family commitments. Only when important business is to be discussed does she make an effort to attend meetings. More significantly, the extended analysis illustrates the input from Kin Groups 6 and 7. As has been shown, these two groups are genealogically distinct and not a part of the Kokatha kin complex dominating Port Augusta. Compounding this genealogical distinctiveness is the fact that all participating representatives from these groups reside in Whyalla. The Whyalla Kin Groups participate in their own Community Group as well as the KPC. Often their community aspirations and alliances diverge from the aims and aspirations of the KPC which is Port Augusta based and dominated by Port Augusta residents. The analysis of Kokatha land rights action exposes numerous examples of the tension that results from the convergence of these discrete community-based interests.

KIN GROUP 1

Total

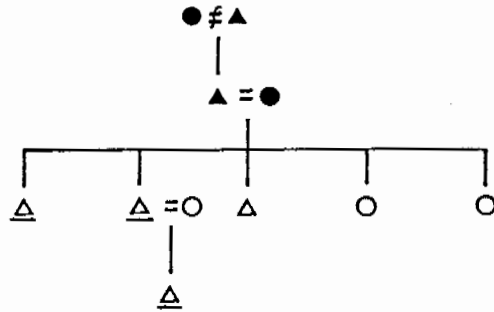
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KIN GROUP 2

Total

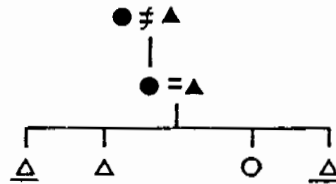
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KIN GROUP 3

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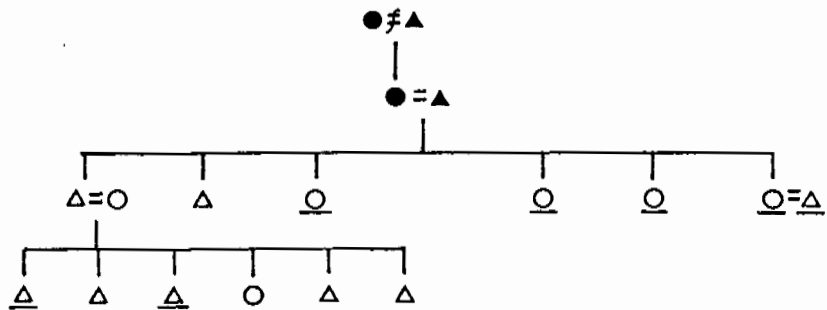
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KIN GROUP 4

Total

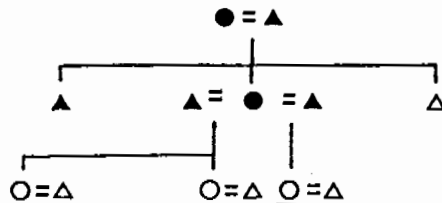
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KIN GROUP 5

Total

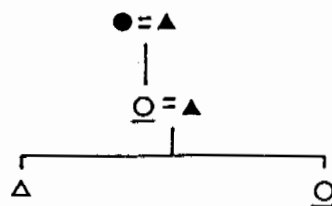
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KIN GROUP 6

Total

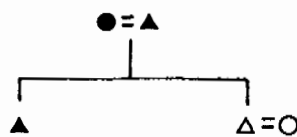
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KIN GROUP 7

Total

Representation: 2





Another significant aspect of the KPC-Whyalla distinction is the tribal identification of Whyalla participants. Kin Group 6 identifies itself not as Kokatha but as Pangkala. The members of this group have interests in the same area of land as the Kokatha, which testifies to the link between these two groups suggested by the ethnographic data. This convergent interest has drawn the distinct Kin Group 6 into the operations of the KPC. However, this convergence of interest coupled with the discrete tribal and community affiliations which has ultimately resulted in inter-group tension and factionalism. Kin Group 7 identifies, somewhat tentatively, as Kokatha. Both the participants from this latter group can trace their origins to areas outside of Kokatha country but both have spent most of their lives in Kokatha country, as have their parents or adopted parents. This long association with Kokatha country and people has facilitated their identification with this tribal group. However, the nature of their association was not always amicable as it was the father and brother of one of these participants who were involved in inviting police intrusion into Kokatha ceremonial activity. Often this aspect of their association with the Kokatha re-emerges and creates tension and factionalism between Kin Group 7 and the core group of Kokatha participants.

In summary, the kin analysis of participation in the KPC reveals a pattern not dissimilar to that displayed in the Adnjamathanha case. Collective Kokatha identity exists only at an ideological level, as displayed in the policy

statements. From a micro-scale perspective the Kokatha display similar patterns of kin-community distinction.

The autonomy and separate land interests of many of the communities identifying as Kokatha have reduced the potential for competition between these existing factions. However, in the case of the Whyalla faction, the convergence of their land interests and, to a degree, their land rights activities, with that of the KPC establishes the basis for competition and conflict between the two groups.

#### 8.2.2 Traditional Status and KPC Participation

As with the Adnjamathanha, the KPC place considerable emphasis on the 'traditional' aspect of the land rights issue. The emphasis placed upon 'traditional' land interest at a policy level has been translated into the structure of the KPC. Like the Adnjamathanha equivalent, the KPC has bestowed the position of Chairman upon an individual with initiated status. The establishment of a 'Special Committee' reflects a similar reverence for the 'traditional' facet of association with the land. The incorporation of what the Kokatha view as 'traditional' men into the formal structure of the KPC reflects the lack of informal contact between the Europeanised Port Augusta group and those individuals who still hold much knowledge of the cultural aspects of Kokatha life. For the majority of participants in the KPC, contact with this aspect of their heritage occurs sporadically through the 'Special Committee' rather than through close kin as with the ALRC. The Chairman plays an important mediating role in the connection between the majority of participants in the KPC and the 'Special

Committee'. Logically, the initiated status which enabled him to assume the role as Chairman has also allowed him to act as a mediator. His role as mediator has placed him in control of the inflow of cultural information and the frequency of contact between the 'Special Committee' and the others. This power has worked to maintain his status within the KPC despite threats to his power from Kin Group 4 which dominates participation.

### 8.2.3 Organisation Affiliations of KPC Participants

As stated when analysing organisational affiliations among the Adnjamathanha, the Kokatha display relatively more links to external Government agencies. These external affiliations are essentially through employment or participation in alternative committees associated with locally-based Government departments (Table 8:2). The KPC has 67% of its extended core group affiliated to eight different external organisations. (This is to be compared with the ALRC, which has 50% of its core group essentially associated with the Heritage Unit or associated organisations). The relatively greater prevalence of joint affiliation among KPC members is a reflection of the extent to which the Port Augusta-based Kin Group Complex has been incorporated into local Government agencies. The comparatively longer association the Kokatha have had with Port Augusta and their assimilation into the European way of life has made them prime candidates for incorporation into Government ranks. As with the Adnjamathanha, the heightened political awareness

TABLE 8:2 GOVERNMENT AFFILIATION AMONG AN EXTENDED LIST OF KPC PARTICIPANTS, 1979 TO DECEMBER 1981

<u>Participation by Kin Group</u>	<u>Major Government Affiliation</u>	<u>Nature of Affiliation</u>
Kin Group 1	Woma, NAC	Employee, candidate
Kin Group 2	Pryti-Yatha Sand Co (DAA funded/CAP controlled)	Employee
Kin Group 2	ADC	Employee
Kin Group 3	None	N.A.
Kin Group 3	None	N.A.
Kin Group 4	Kokatha Fostering Committee (DCW)	Committee member
Kin Group 4	DAA	Employee
Kin Group 4	Education	Employee
Kin Group 4	Pryti-Yatha Sand Co (DAA funded/CAP controlled)	Employee
Kin Group 5	Kokatha Fostering Committee (DCW)	Committee member
Kin Group 6	Whyalla Community Group	Committee member
Kin Group 7	Whyalla Community Group	Committee member

that accompanies these affiliations has assisted in the formation of the KPC. Again, however, these external affiliations have had a dramatic impact on land rights among the Kokatha by establishing often conflicting alliances which lead to compromise, factionalism and tension.

#### 8.2.4 Gender Analysis of KPC Participants

The final aspect of the KPC's structure which links it to that of the ALRC is the role of women. The male domination of the 'Special Committee' and the general Committee attests to an apparent reverence for males, and particularly initiated males, similar to that displayed among the ALRC. Certainly the initiated men play an important part in the formulation of the KPC's public image, fitting well the widely held concept of the political organisation of Aboriginal society. In a significant variation to the pattern of male domination of meeting attendance among the ALRC, the KPC was regularly supported by a number of women (Plate 8:1). None of the KPC meetings were male-dominated and of the seventeen KPC meetings recorded, nine had female representation of 50% or more. Four of these meetings had a female majority. The Kokatha women constituted a silent majority, supporting the Kokatha land rights lobby by swelling the numbers. They rarely spoke in meetings, leaving the meeting in the hands of the male members. In some meetings where issues were called to vote they were able to demonstrate their presence but usually they voted with the leading men of their own Kin Groups.

The non-vocal nature of female participation in Kokatha

PLATE 8:1 A group of regular female supporters at  
a KPC meeting.



land rights was clearly displayed in a meeting in which women accounted for all of the attendance (7/11/81). The meeting was called by the Legal Rights lawyer to gain a community directive in relation to a letter received from the company involved in the development of Roxby Downs. Although an immediate decision was called for by the lawyer, the women would not discuss the issue and directed the lawyer to talk to the male members of the Committee and especially the Chairman. Instead the women used the meeting to discuss issues such as fund raising.

In many of the KPC meetings it was evident that decisions had already been made by the Chairman and a few of his close male supporters and the formal meeting was simply a way of testing reaction to the decision and soliciting support. In this respect the Kokatha women play an important role in the land rights process. Within the meetings they are a reliable pool of support for the male decision-makers. Outside of the meetings they convey land rights business to those who do not participate regularly in the formal meetings. In this role the women are crucial to the Kokatha process of soliciting support for decisions outside the regular and usually supportive participants. However, as with the ALRC it has been difficult for the KPC to establish consistent and reliable support outside of the already participating Kin Groups. Thus, the women usually work only to incite interest in KPC activities within their own extended Kin Groups.

As stated, the quiet nature of female participation in



the land rights area is a reflection of their view of traditional Aboriginal society. They view land issues as being closely linked with a distant social order in which men are seen as the bosses. Because land is the issue, and because so much emphasis is placed on the secret or sacred nature of the land, their opportunity to participate has been seriously diminished. The dominant male figures in the committee have done little to dispel this belief amongst the women, for maintenance of this idea has worked towards securing their status within the land rights group and the community. In fact, when a land issue related to a female site emerged the male members reluctantly incorporated it into the essentially male-orientated ambitions of the KPC.

### 8.3 THE KOKATHA PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE IN ACTION

#### 8.3.1 The Stony Point Environmental Impact Statement

##### a) The consultation period.

Kokatha land rights action varies dramatically from that of the ALRC in that they have not assumed a strong patron-client link with the Heritage Unit. The absence of this patron has had considerable influence on Kokatha land rights action. In essence it has meant that the Kokatha are not obligated to the expectations or norms of the Unit and, as a result, their land rights ambitions have extended into the realm of site recording which, in the Adnjamathanha case, is clearly designated as the responsibility of the Unit. Thus while the ALRC focuses its activities essentially on the acquisition of pastoral leases, leaving EIS consultations to be managed by the Unit, the KPC has attempted to control

EIS consultations in its own area. Logically, it is EIS consultations which offer the climaxes of KPC action from which it is possible to understand the intra- and inter-ethnic political spheres.

Although the KPC formed in response to the mining developments occurring at Roxby Downs some 250 kilometres north of Port Augusta, the Stony Point EIS was the first direct confrontation between the KPC and an external interest group seeking to exploit land in which the KPC had an interest. The Stony Point development involved the Santos Company building fractionating and shipping facilities to handle liquid gas from the Cooper Basin development in the far north east of the State. Two consultants were sent into the area on behalf of Santos by the consulting firm, Social and Ecological Assessment, to assess the local Aboriginal interest in the development site.

At the time of the Stony Point EIS the KPC had only a tentative and ill-formed notion of how it wished to deal with EIS's. A minimal amount of negotiation had thus far occurred between the developers at Roxby Downs and the KPC, and this issue had established only a few basic principles yet to be tested. Essentially the KPC was developing a strategy which incorporated direct negotiations, control of secret and sacred information and the right to use an anthropologist who would be in its employ. When the Stony Point consultants entered the area in March of 1981 they were told that this was the KPC's preferred mode of consultation; however, the KPC eventually agreed to deal with the consultants

providing no secret or sacred information was disclosed. The apparent contradiction in the KPC's stand over the Stony Point consultation is very much a reflection of its affiliations at the time and the inability to gain access to resources such as its own anthropologist.

At the time of the Stony Point EIS the KPC was taking directives from essentially two patrons. The first of these patrons was a non-Aboriginal man married into the Kokatha group. In essence he was the type of isolated sympathetic patron/broker that Howard (1981; 60) notes operated in early Nyoongah inter-ethnic politics. He was sympathetic to the Kokatha cause, knew the group well, and had a reasonable knowledge of the language and cultural information. He was Treasurer of the KPC and held this position because of his ability to deal with financial matters. In the early KPC efforts relating to Stony Point this man acted as an important cultural broker. Most of the operations of the EIS consultants were conducted in his presence and he assisted them in seeking interviews with the KPC Chairman and other members of its Special Committee. In this sense he was of considerable value to the consultants and his brokerage role in fact assisted their access to the Kokatha rather than supporting his client's stand of non-consultation. Significantly, this broker stressed to the consultants the reluctance of the KPC to deal with them; however, his ultimate action was to facilitate consultation rather than stop it. Thus he was acting both as patron and as broker. As a broker it was important that he satisfy both his Aboriginal clientele, by giving the impression he was

controlling their activities, and his non-Aboriginal clientele, by leading them to the people and information they sought (cf Howard 1981; 61).

The patron/broker role assumed by this man had been long standing and in the years prior to intensive Government involvement in Aboriginal affairs his skills in translating or interpreting the needs and behaviour of his clients was used by both local non-Aboriginals and the Kokatha. However, with the advent of extensive Government involvement in Aboriginal affairs and the introduction of new Government affiliated patrons/brokers (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) his role was seriously threatened. The increasing complexity of the inter-ethnic political sphere meant that he was increasingly unqualified to fulfil the needs of his Kokatha clients, particularly in land rights issues. The Stony Point issue, and the Roxby Downs issue to follow, show a gradual decline in the influence of this patron/broker as new, more sophisticated non-Aboriginals entered the Kokatha scene. His status within the community was maintained only via his position as manager of the Kokatha dominated Pryti-Yatha Sand Company and even this position was finally eroded by pressure from another local body seeking to control Kokatha land rights.

As stated, the KPC was initially affiliated with the Community Affairs Panel, a DAA funded organisation which operated to co-ordinate all organisations in Port Augusta dealing with Aboriginal issues. The outcome of the Stony Point EIS and indeed the demise of the KPC's long-standing

patron/broker was closely linked to the CAP. The CAP head identified as Kokatha and attended most of the early KPC meetings. On the Committee she held the position of Secretary. The CAP, in keeping with its co-ordinating role, was no doubt eager to secure a clientele amongst the Kokatha and thereby enter into the expanding political sphere of land rights. The KPC was initially quite willing to operate under the auspices of the CAP as it was keen to have access to the secretarial facilities it offered. Additionally, it was hoped that CAP support would assist the Committee in acquiring funds so that it might employ its own anthropologist. The links between the CAP and the funding body of the DAA were particularly relevant to this impression. Indeed the CAP did attempt to acquire funds for the KPC but was unsuccessful.

At the time of the Stony Point EIS the CAP patronage role was at its strongest. The link was endorsed by the Kokatha DAA Field Officer who regularly attended meetings and whose Kin Group (Kin Group 4) dominated meeting attendance. Further, the CAP ran the accounts of the DAA funded Pryti-Yatha Sand Company and its influence in this area cemented the support of the Kokatha. The CAP was instrumental in the KPC agreeing to deal with the consultants for the Stony Point EIS. As the CAP operated as the administrative 'headquarters' for the KPC all mail went directly to the CAP head/KPC Secretary. The first contact point between the consultants and the KPC was, therefore, via the CAP. On receipt of the consultant's letter of introduction, which sought KPC co-operation, the CAP head

wrote to the KPC advising its members to co-operate with the consultants (KPC Files, 20/3/81). The patronage role of the CAP and the multifaceted reliance of the Kokatha people on the Panel ensured their cooperation. With no other viable alternative in sight the KPC, somewhat reluctantly, cooperated with the EIS consultants. By the KPC cooperating the CAP had successfully infiltrated and controlled one facet of the land rights sphere in Port Augusta. However, this position was short-lived as the details of the Stony Point issue will illustrate.

b) Community ramifications of the Stony Point EIS

The resulting EIS document presented the Aboriginal interest in the development site according to the self-identification of informants, resulting in three distinct 'perspectives': the Adnjamathanha, the Pangkala and the Kokatha (Social and Ecological Assessment Ltd., 1981; 46-72). According to the evidence presented in the EIS document and a supplementary paper each group had varying interests in the development site, and although each case was presented with equal emphasis the Kokatha were less than happy with the resulting documentation. The source of this dissatisfaction arose out of the presentation of the results of the consultation and, in particular, the distinction made between the Pangkala and Kokatha 'perspectives'. As the participation breakdown revealed, prior to and during the period of EIS consultation the Port Augusta-based Kokatha and the Whyalla-based Pangkala group had combined their political efforts with regard to land rights. Both groups shared a cultural interest in Roxby Downs, the essential issue to which the

KPC directed its attention, and had operated jointly to seek recognition of this interest. Thus, the presentation in the EIS of the Pangkala and Kokatha perspectives as separate interests conflicted with the KPC's projected image of unity, and its political strategy of combined land rights efforts. The EIS presented the Pangkala interest as competing with that of the Kokatha. The fact that the Pangkala informant was female and the Kokatha informants male added to the distinction by presenting two very different perspectives of the same site.

In fact, the Pangkala informant was very keen to have her interest in the area distinguished from that of the Kokatha (pers. com. 1981). Part of the procedure by which she validated her separate right to speak for the Stony Point area was to defame the Kokatha by suggesting they were speaking about country over which they had no right. She defined the area around Whyalla and Iron Knob, including Stony Point, as Pangkala land and suggested that the 'aggressive' Kokatha had moved south and pressured out the Pangkala. Her proof of this was acquired from stories told to her by her elders and her husband but she illustrated the point by referring to Tindale's map of tribal boundaries, of which she had her own personal copy. Referral to Tindale's map as proof of land affiliation is not an uncommon procedure among the Aboriginal people in the study area. Generally the map does not tell its users anything new (although in some cases it does) but it does put what they know about their tribal origins on to

paper. It is usually presented to non-Aboriginals in the logic of, 'well if you don't believe what I say, here it is on paper'. The main difficulty with the use of Tindale's map, and other anthropological material for that matter, is that as direct, internal links with the past are severed these external, interpretive accounts are becoming the means by which Aboriginal groups define identity, culture and even country.

The procedure noted in the Stony Point issue of the Pangkala trying to assert their rights in the area over that of the Kokatha parallels the competitive processes apparent in the Adnjamathanha. In the Kokatha situation it is also a case of smaller internal groups trying to secure some control over, and benefit from, the scarce resource of land. By defaming a competing group or questioning their right to speak about a particular area these smaller groups try to assert their interests above those of the others. As with the Adnjamathanha conflicts, the Stony Point conflict occurred along kin-community lines. The Whyalla-Kin Group 6 were pitting their interests against the Port Augusta-Kin Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The separation of the Pangkala and Kokatha perspectives in the Stony Point issue made it increasingly difficult for the Port Augusta-dominated KPC to incorporate the Whyalla-Pangkala group into their political unit. In July of that year, when the pressure of increased confrontation with mining groups motivated the KPC to write a policy statement defining its interests and aims, the Committee acknowledged a separation of interest by stating that Kokatha territory



continued south to Stony Point where their interests 'coincided' with those of the Pangkala people (KPC Policy Statement, 2/7/81). The EIS consultation that accompanied the Stony Point development had forced both the Pangkala and Kokatha to make decisions about who had the greatest right to speak for that area. If the site had not become the focus of development and consultation then the Pangkala-Kokatha overlap of interest might have co-existed without community ramifications. And, it is certainly this conflict that made Stony Point an important boundary point in the contemporary land perception illustrated in the KPC Policy Statement. It is obvious from the Stony Point example that the rigid procedures and expectations of EIS consultations are incompatible with Aboriginal views of land and land 'ownership'.

The community-based nature of the factionalism that resulted from the EIS procedure was most clearly manifested in a KPC meeting held in May of 1981. At this meeting the well-represented Whyalla contingent, which included three members of the Pangkala Kin Group 6 as well as two members of Kin Group 2 resident in Whyalla, suggested a second land rights group be started in Whyalla. Significantly, the suggestion came not from a Pangkala person, but from one of the Kokatha Kin Group 2 representatives whose brother was on the Committee of the KPC. This man, although having close genealogical connections with the Port Augusta-based Kin Group 2, was an important local leader among the Whyalla community and headed their informal community group. In speaking at this meeting and suggesting his community

have its own land rights group he was going against the commitments of the majority of his kin and the ambitions of the KPC. The move was not agreed to by the rest of the KPC, however, it remains that it was a community motivated move which recognised the separate interest of the spokesman's local supporters. In so doing he was strengthening his ties with the Whyalla group at the expense of his acceptance by the KPC and, particularly, his own Kin Group who were important participants in the KPC (Figure 8:5). The emergence of community-based moves for land rights action suggests that land is being conceptualised via new social forms more compatible with economic and social based land aspirations.

The Stony Point consultation was viewed by the KPC as a complete failure. Not only had it created tension between existing factions within the KPC, it had also failed to produce any tangible benefits, as Santos, the company involved in the development, did not acknowledge a large number of the requests made by the KPC. The outcome of the Stony Point issue resulted in the KPC losing confidence in its CAP patron who had committed it to a consultation procedure with which it did not agree.

The growing rift between the KPC and the CAP was brought to a climax in an incident involving the Pryti-Yatha Sand Company. The conflict which emerged between the CAP and Pryti-Yatha was particularly influential for it was this relationship which originally helped ratify the KPC-CAP link. As noted earlier, Pryti-Yatha is run by the Kokatha group (although ostensibly it is a Port Augusta community project). Kokatha involvement in the operations of the company

FIGURE 8:5 Affiliation shift for Whyalla representative at KPC meeting post Stony Point EIS, 1981.

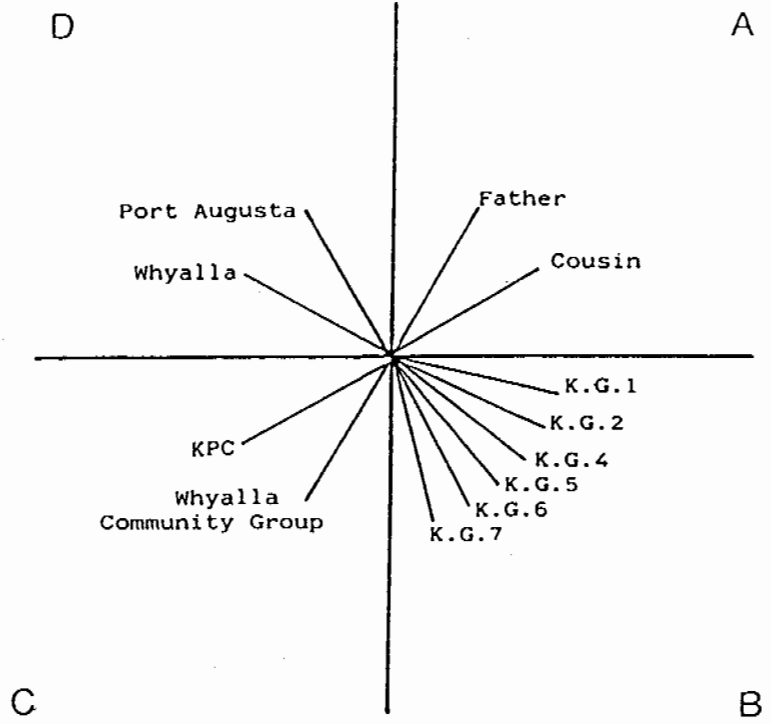
QUADRANT A - Cultural Links

QUADRANT C - Organisation Links.

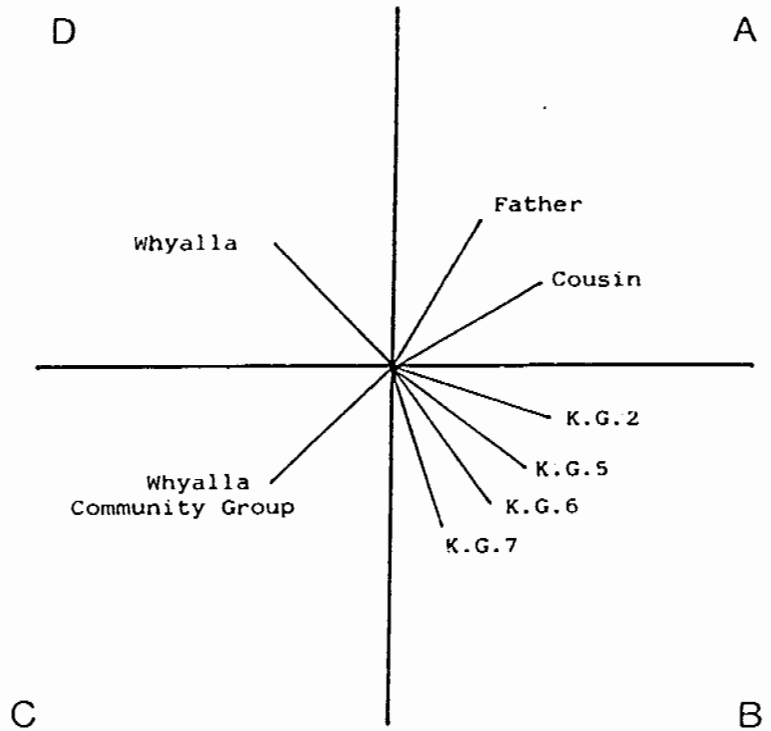
QUADRANT B - Kin Links

QUADRANT D - Local Community Links.

ALLIANCE A  
(Pre Stony Point)



ALLIANCE B  
(Post Stony Point)



is intensified by the fact that the creeks that are worked contain important Kokatha sites. By participating in and monopolising the operations of Pryti-Yatha the Kokatha have been able to ensure that areas of cultural importance are not mined. Most of the men working for Pryti-Yatha participated in the KPC and the manager of the company was the non-Aboriginal patron/broker linked to the group by marriage.

Two inter-related issues emerged as controversial in relation to the CAP/KPC/Pryti-Yatha alliance. To begin with, the CAP again acted on behalf of the KPC in a mining company-Kokatha consultation. The issue involved the Readymix sand mining company which had taken out mining leases on the same creek as Pryti-Yatha worked. When consultation began with the Kokatha as to their cultural interest in the area the informants demarcated one of the Readymix leases as being an area of cultural significance. Readymix assumed this was simply a case of the Kokatha protecting their own mining interests in the area. Indeed the CAP also expressed doubt as to the genuineness of the KPC's claim and, in order to 'sort out' the issue, arranged a meeting between Readymix, the pastoralist on whose land the leases were located, and the KPC. The meeting was a complete failure. The attendance was exceptionally low (only five) and four of the five participants were women which, by Kokatha standards, meant no action could be taken.

The Chairman of the KPC was the only male present. All the regular male participants who were associated with Pryti-Yatha failed to attend the meeting. The absence of those

associated with Pryti-Yatha reflected the difficult position in which the consultation had placed them. As operators of a sand company they needed to retain workable relationships with both Readymix (a large buyer of sand) and with the local pastoralist from whom Readymix had successfully solicited support. The issue placed these jointly affiliated members of the KPC into a very difficult position resulting in their temporary withdrawal. The loss of support at this meeting placed the KPC in a very embarrassing position. Those members from which it so desperately needed support had been forced into acquiescence, and the CAP was seen as being directly responsible (Figure 8:6). The deteriorating CAP/KPC/Pryti-Yatha link reached its final breaking point when the CAP, in response to a DAA directive, began a review of the company's viability. The conclusion of this review was that some of the Pryti-Yatha mining leases be sold. Again the CAP was playing an instrumental role in threatening Kokatha control of a creek which they worked at considerable economic benefit and without conflict with their cultural interests in the creek. The review placed the CAP head and the manager of Pryti-Yatha, the long-standing patron of the Kokatha, in direct conflict.

The CAP's behaviour in relation to Pryti-Yatha consolidated Kokatha opposition to the CAP and their representative on the Committee. Again it had committed the KPC to negotiating procedures it felt were unacceptable, again it had caused community division, again it had placed the genuineness of its interest in the land in question.

FIGURE 8:6. Affiliation shift for a Pryti-Yatha Employee/KPC participant during KPC/CAP conflict.

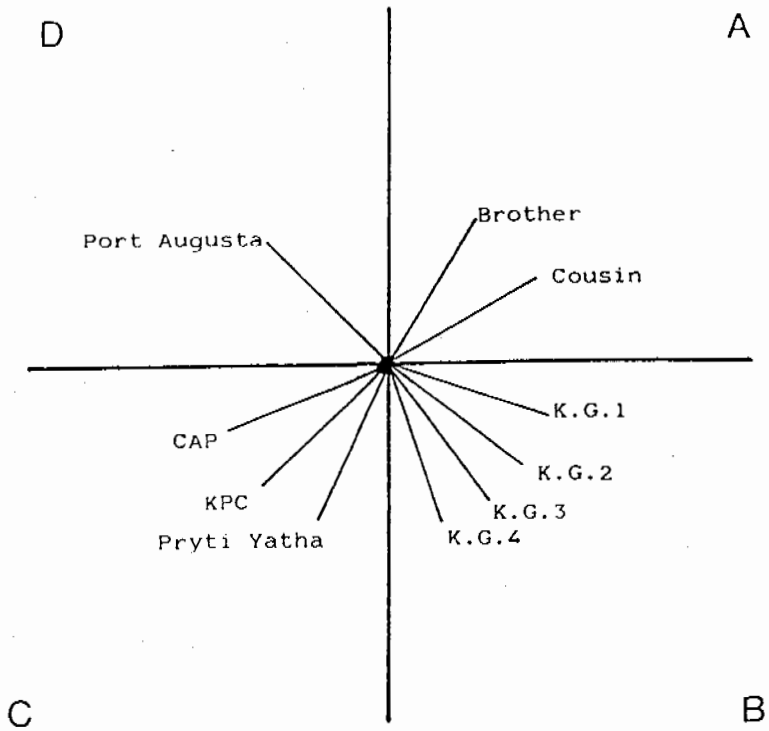
QUADRANT A - Cultural Links.

QUADRANT C - Organisational Links.

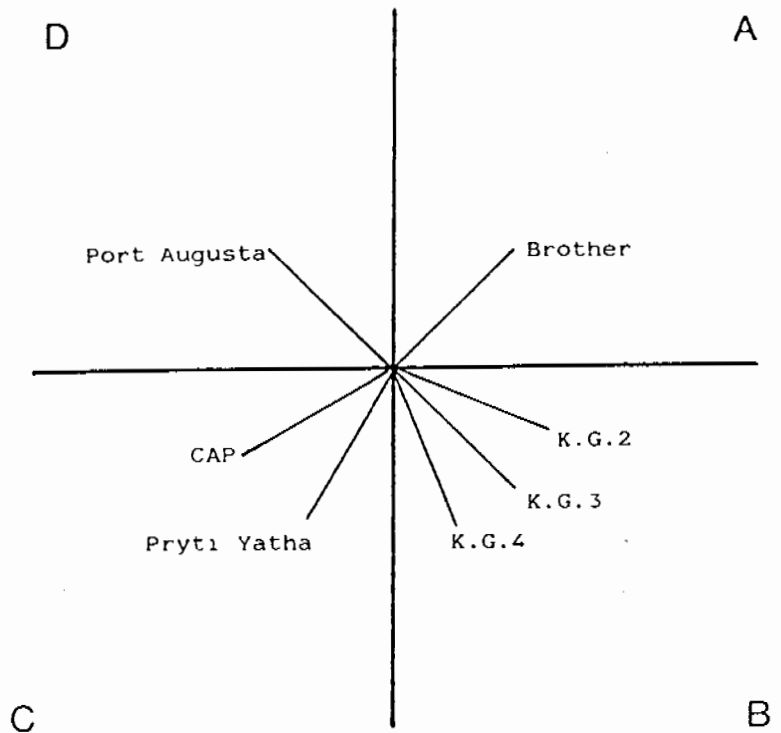
QUADRANT B - Kin Links.

QUADRANT D - Local Community Links.

ALLIANCE A  
(Pre Pryti-Yatha  
Conflict).



ALLIANCE B  
(Post Pryti-Yatha  
Conflict).





Throughout the issue the CAP representative lost the support of the KPC as alliances strengthened with its long-standing patron, the non-Aboriginal treasurer. Gradually the KPC severed its ties with the CAP. The rift was justified, by both the CAP head and the KPC, in terms of tribal identity. The initial involvement of the CAP head in the KPC was ratified by the Ooldea/Koonibba experience she shared with a number of other KPC participants. In contrast, after her withdrawal from the Committee, both she and the Committee stated that she was not really Kokatha but Pitjantjatjara. Thus, while a general identification based on a common Ooldea/Koonibba experience was able to substantiate this woman's original participation in the KPC and the group's subsequent functioning under the auspices of the CAP, a more specific identification was able to justify both the KPC's rejection of her and her own withdrawal.

The rejection of the CAP cannot be seen in isolation from the existence of a viable alternative and the growing KPC alliance with this alternative. The Legal Rights lawyer had, during the Stony Point struggle, advocated that the KPC not enter into the consulting relationship but hold off and try to get its own anthropologist. Already the lawyer's advice was being used in formulating the Roxby Downs strategy along these lines. A failure for the Kokatha under CAP patronage was a victory for his strategy and cemented the growing alliance between the KPC and Legal Rights. The events which followed, involving the Roxby Downs issue and the formation of the Southern Lands Council,

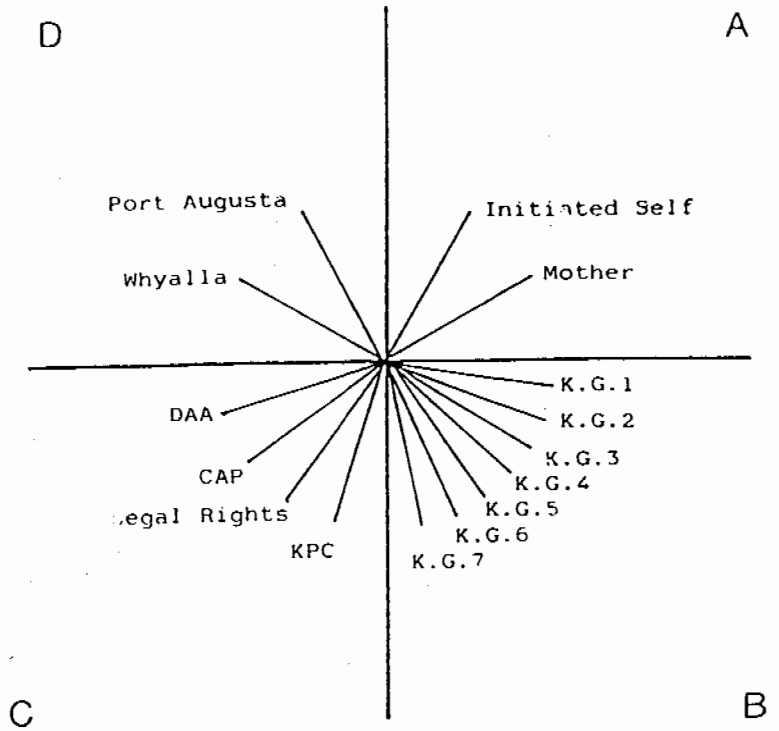
further secured the role of the lawyer in Kokatha land rights (Figure 8:7).

Another important ramification of the CAP-KPC split and the consequent shift towards the Legal Rights lawyer was the increase in non-Aboriginal input to the Kokatha land rights struggle. When the KPC left the patronage of the CAP it forfeited its access to CAP secretarial and administrative skills. Another Kokatha woman, more closely linked to the remainder of the Committee, was asked to assume the role of secretary. The new secretary worked for the ADC, and only a short time after her commitment to the KPC her employers asked her to withdraw her services to the group on the grounds that this commitment affected her impartiality as a community worker servicing all Aboriginal people. The ADC woman withdrew, keen to maintain a good relationship with her employer. Similarly, the DAA-affiliated member found his involvement with the KPC increasingly contradictory to his obligations to his employers and his maintenance of a broad clientele among the Port Augusta community. In particular the CAP-KPC conflict placed him into a difficult position for it was DAA which funded Pryti-Yatha and had instigated the CAP. As an employee of DAA it was to his advantage to stay on good terms with those bodies sponsored by his employer. Again, the DAA representative eventually withdrew from the KPC. The resultant withdrawal of the DAA and ADC affiliated members deprived the KPC of the only secretarial and administrative skills it had after the CAP rift. With these

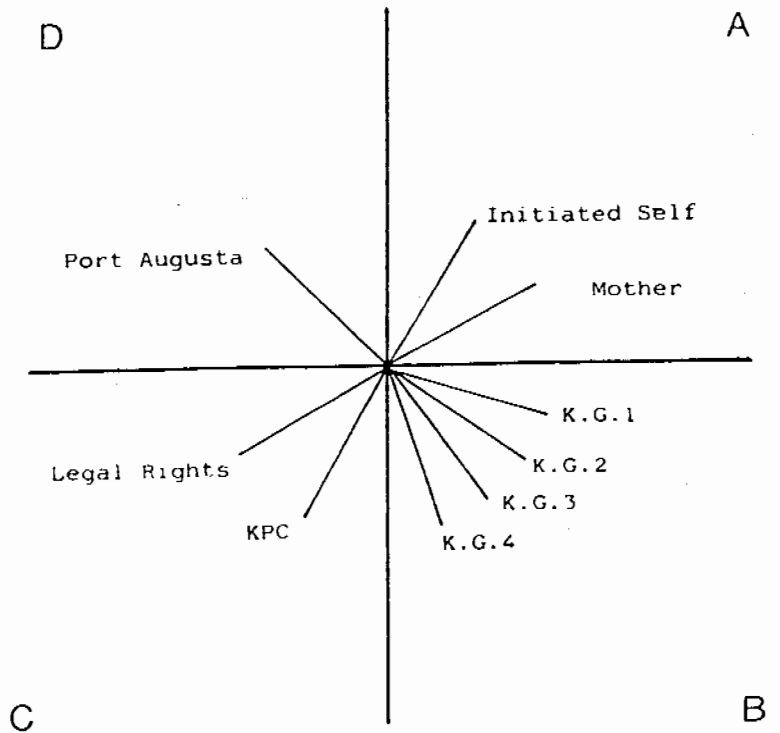
FIGURE 8:7 Example of Affiliation shift within KPC post CAP conflict showing the singling out of the Legal Rights lawyer.

QUADRANT A - Cultural Links.	QUADRANT C - Organisation Links.
QUADRANT B - Kin Links.	QUADRANT D - Local Community Links.

ALLIANCE A  
(CAP)



ALLIANCE B  
(Post CAP, Legal  
Rights).



skills gone the KPC began to utilise the secretarial and administrative skills offered by a number of non-Aboriginals. I was incorporated as secretary, the Legal Rights lawyer again had his advisory role secured, and the KPC began to seek administrative assistance from an ex-community adviser who had his own consulting company and who was willing to advise the KPC in its strategies.

The involvement of the last of these non-Aboriginals is of particular interest. This consultant had been a long time friend of the DAA affiliated participant. Prior to this member's withdrawal from the KPC, he began to establish the involvement of this consultant to fill the administrative gap his withdrawal would create. The consultant's initial involvement was tentative as the KPC had no finances with which to secure his services. However, the consultant assisted the KPC in securing finances from a National Heritage Grant, for the purpose of running its own heritage programme, and consequently his role with the KPC became formalised as he entered into its employ. Thus, the involvement of the aforementioned KPC participants in Government organisations has enabled these agencies to control its skills and dramatically alter the structure of Kokatha Land Rights efforts. The Government has thus, consciously or inadvertently, further secured non-Aboriginal control of the KPC. The reliance upon non-Aboriginal advisers characterised the later land rights efforts of the KPC, especially the Roxby Downs and SLC developments.

### 8.3.2 Roxby Downs and the Southern Lands Council

#### a) The early phase of negotiation

The Roxby Downs issue is, as yet (August 1983), unresolved for the Kokatha group. What is presented in this analysis is simply a small fragment of a continuing struggle. Due to the sensitivity of the issue, no information of a confidential nature will be quoted or cited in the following discussion. Despite these limitations, my observations of Kokatha behaviour during the field period and their public statements of intent, reveal processes of external intervention and manipulation and internal shifts in affiliation similar to those observed in the other case studies. Despite the existence of these similar processes there is a marked variation in the land rights strategy chosen by the Kokatha in comparison to their Stony Point strategy and, particularly, in relation to the strategies chosen by the Adnjamathanha.

Exploratory drilling for copper and uranium began at Roxby Downs (Olympic Dam) in 1975. In 1979, as stated, the KPC was formed in an effort to ensure that Kokatha interests in the area were recognised. Throughout 1979 and 1980 little direct action was taken by the KPC to realise its aims. Essentially this was a period of policy formation and recruitment of supporters for the Kokatha. They did not contact the companies involved in the venture. 'Direct' contact between the KPC and Roxby Management Services (RMS), the company involved in the development, occurred via an EIS consulting company, Kinhill-Stearns, some six years

after exploratory drilling had begun (March 1981). In the period preceding direct contact, only limited efforts were made by RMS to establish the Aboriginal interest in the area under exploration. In 1977 Western Mining Company, one of the Joint Venturers involved in the development, approached the Curator of Relics of the South Australian Museum in order to establish a general idea of the Aboriginal interest in the area. In the Olympic Dam Draft EIS it is stated that the Museum suggested that the Kokatha had been 'rendered a "non-viable" group by various historical events since 1850' and that sites within their area were largely 'dead' sites of archaeological interest only (Kinhill-Stearns, 1982; 5). The Heritage Unit was also approached and it suggested that, to the best of its knowledge, the area did not contain any significant Aboriginal sites (Kinhill-Stearns, 1982; 5). This early evidence did not establish a convincing case for the existence of Kokatha interests in the area.

The Kokatha responded to the initial contact with Kinhill by releasing a press statement outlining their preferred procedure of consultation. The statement was made only a few weeks after the Stony Point consultation had concluded and it reveals their intensified concern for direct control of the consultation by way of employing their own anthropologist.

We [the Kokatha] want to have the general location of the sites recorded on a map so that the mining companies can avoid them, and so that our descendants will know where they are. We would like the elders to go through the entire area with a properly qualified anthropologist and mark all the sites on a map.

That way the mining companies will know exactly where the sites are and the sites will be established if more mineral deposits are found in the future. Then the people would know if Aboriginals protested about it, it was because of a genuine threat to a sacred site and not just because they wanted to make money. Mr. Reid said it was important that any anthropological work be carried out by a person employed by the Kokatha people and not by any of the mining companies involved in the Roxby Downs Project. This was because it would be too easy for such a person to be influenced by the mining companies. (The Advertiser, 9/4/81).

The Government's response to this statement rejected the KPC's proposal to work only with an anthropologist in its employ. It stressed that Aboriginal sites on Roxby Downs would be recorded and protected through an anthropological survey conducted with the assistance of the Heritage Unit. In essence, the Government's statement simply re-iterated the directives laid down in the EIS guidelines which the Department of Environment issue. According to these Guidelines all sites located during an EIS should be recorded with the Heritage Unit, thereby placing them under the protection of the State's Heritage legislation (Department of Environment and Planning, 1981a). As has already been noted, the Kokatha did not have a good working relationship with the Heritage Unit and the Government's response implied Heritage Unit involvement. When questioned further by the Press about the possible role of the Heritage Unit the KPC Chairman stated that the Committee:

would not like any such work to be conducted by the Aboriginal and



Historical Relics [Heritage] Unit. The Unit's practice of mapping sites did not properly take into account the interests of traditional Aboriginal owners. And the Unit was already unable to keep up its work with the expanding mineral exploration industry (The Advertiser, 9/4/81).

Despite the Kokatha's objection to Heritage Unit involvement one of the first surveys of the Roxby Downs area was by the Unit. This was a purely archaeological survey but it resulted in a recommendation to RMS that they conduct a full ethnographic survey of the area. The Unit then acted as an intermediary at the first meeting between the KPC and the anthropological consultant from Kinhill. From the Unit's perspective, it had assisted in ensuring the Aboriginal interest in Roxby Downs was given due consideration. In the eyes of the Kokatha, the Unit had colluded with the 'enemy' (RMS), and had placed them into a consultation arrangement which conflicted with their policies. The tenuous position held by the Heritage Unit in the Roxby Downs negotiations was exacerbated when an independent field trip by the KPC to the development site revealed that a site had been damaged. The KPC regarded this violation of a site as a reflection on the inadequacies of the Unit's procedures, which have an archaeological emphasis, and their inappropriateness to 'the contemporary Aboriginal interest' (The Advertiser, 9/ 4/81).

According to the Olympic Dam EIS, Kinhill proposed an approach to consultation which gave the Kokatha 'control over who should act as their informants, the sites visited

and recorded, and the extent to which information was divulged to: the anthropologist, the EIS consultant, the Joint Venturers, the government, [and] the general public' (Kinhill-Stearns, 1982; 7). The proposal also gave the Kokatha the right to review the reports compiled, amend any sections seen as inaccurate and exclude sensitive or sacred information from publication. They were also offered the rights of authorship and shared copyright over the resulting reports. And, as an added extra, they were offered a separate ethnographic report over which they would hold the copyright (Kinhill-Stearns, 1981; 8).

The basis for this approach rested in arrangements established with the KPC in relation to an earlier EIS consultation involving Kinhill-Stearns and related to the Moomba-Stony Point Gas Pipeline. On the basis of the KPC's cooperation in the earlier EIS (which occurred prior to the CAP/KPC rift) Kinhill-Stearns assumed there would be little difficulty in resecuring a satisfactory consulting relationship along the same lines in relation to Roxby Downs. This assumption was insensitive to the severe community ramifications and consequent changes in Kokatha allegiances that resulted from the Stony Point and associated Environmental Impact Statements. The Stony Point issue, as has been shown, consolidated the KPC's association with the Legal Rights lawyer and strengthened its conviction that a satisfactory EIS could only result if the anthropologist was in its employ, the information under its control, and talks were held directly between the Kokatha and the company involved

in the development. It is obvious from their press statement that the Kokatha concept of satisfactory consultation varied considerably from that proposed by the EIS consultants and that which was followed in the earlier Stony Point and associated pipeline consultations. In this early policy statement the main point at which the Kokatha procedure deviated from that of the Kinhill proposition was the issue of control of the anthropologist. Kinhill were willing to operate with restrictions upon the access to information contained within the EIS but, were not willing to let the Kokatha provide their own anthropologist. In contrast, the Kokatha policy emphasised their control of the anthropologist as being the only sure way of protecting their cultural information. This remained and continues to be a basic point of controversy throughout negotiations over the EIS procedure.

An important point of agreement at this stage between the Kokatha and Kinhill's proposed procedure was that of the mapping of cultural sites. The Kinhill consultation package pointed out that 'if positive action to protect sites is to be incorporated in the proposed development, certain information about sites and their locations is necessary' (Kinhill-Stearns, 1982; 8). Similarly, the Kokatha indicated their desire to have sites clearly demarcated so that mining companies would know their exact location during current and future developments and, as a result, the Kokatha would not be suspected of exploiting mining developments by belatedly saying they had

sites in the area. As will be shown, this point of the Kokatha consultation model changed dramatically at a later stage.

b) The Pitjantjatjara link and the development of the Southern Lands Council

The Kinhill consultants and the Joint Venturers did not agree to the Kokatha proposal of having the anthropologist under their control. The negotiations over the consultation procedure had reached its first of many deadlocks. In an effort to seek experienced advice outside of Government options the Kokatha wrote to the Pitjantjatjara Council. This marked the first stage in the development of what was to become an important political alliance. The Pitjantjatjara advice reinforced the Kokatha's emergent policy of using their own anthropologist as a means of retaining control over their cultural information. The Pitjantjatjara also advised that their own strategy included direct negotiations between the Council and mining companies in which the companies were only told where they could work, not the location of Aboriginal sites (pers. com. KPC Representative). The advice from the Pitjantjatjara reinforced the advice already being offered to the KPC by the Legal Rights lawyer and, in effect, consolidated its association with him. Not only had the lawyer's predictions about the Stony Point outcome proven correct, his strategy was endorsed and practised by the much respected and successful Pitjantjatjara. In essence, this marked the beginning of a patron-client link between the Pitjantjatjara and the Kokatha which was later consolidated by the formation of the SLC.

In July of 1981, in an effort to clarify its amended position, the KPC wrote its policy statement (2/7/81). A complete section of this document was devoted to the mining issue. In it the KPC emphasised its concern with the recent expansion of mining in the region and the threat this placed upon its land. In the statement the general lack of previous consultation over Roxby Downs was stressed and it was argued that this was why the public thought 'that Aboriginals only claim sacred sites when mining interests come into the area' (KPC Policy Statement, 2/7/81). Moreover, the statement reiterated its stand on a community-employed anthropologist as a necessary measure to ensure its land interests were protected and that its cultural information remained under its control. Although not overtly stated, the emphasis that was given to the issue of controlling cultural information, suggests that the Kokatha were moving towards the Pitjantjatjara stance on information restriction which involved not disclosing the location of Aboriginal sites to external bodies.

The emergent relationship between the Pitjantjatjara and the KPC was ratified and strengthened by the emergence of the SLC. Although the SLC involved commitments from a number of Aboriginal groups (the Pitjantjatjara, the Adnjamathanha, and the Yalata and Oodnadatta communities) it was dominated by the Kokatha and utilised to its fullest by this group in relation to the Roxby Downs issue. To understand fully the Roxby Downs issue it is therefore necessary to examine in detail the emergence of the SLC and

KPC participation in it.

The idea of forming a collective political body to deal with land rights issues belonged to a young Oodnadatta leader. However, it was only after collaboration with the Chairman of the KPC that moves began, early in 1981, to bring this idea to fruition. The first step in the KPC's involvement in the formation of the SLC was a letter from the KPC to the Pitjantjatjara Council seeking advice on policy and action. Its previous success in land rights issues had established it as a knowledgeable group on such issues in the eyes of the more southerly Aboriginal groups. The result of this move was an invitation from the Pitjantjatjara for the Kokatha to attend one of their Council meetings, to be held on September the first and second at Indulkana. Invitations were also extended to the Yalata and Oodnadatta people. The meeting was held to discuss the problems facing these southern groups and to explain to them how the Pitjantjatjara successfully achieved their land rights ambitions. At this meeting, the Oodnadatta and Yalata groups had relatively large representations of about twenty people each. In contrast, the Port Augusta representation consisted of only two members of the KPC. The logistics of Port Augusta residents, most of whom are committed to jobs, attending the distant Indulkana meeting worked to reduce representation considerably. Further, the Adnjamathanha were not involved in this early phase of the SLC and representation was only being drawn from the Kokatha people.

The cultural and genealogical connectedness of the three participating groups with the Pitjantjatjara was an important factor in their move for political unification and assistance. It was set comfortably into a framework of reciprocal assistance by the Pitjantjatjara; 'these people helped us with our land, now we'll help them get theirs' (Pitjantjatjara Council Representative, 1/9/81).

Significantly, the Kokatha representatives included their two most influential men, their tradition-oriented Chairman and their influential DAA-employed member. Together these two men directed the decision-making of the KPC and it was logical that they should represent their community at this auspicious meeting. It was also to their advantage, as leading figures in Kokatha land rights, to monopolise attendance of the Pitjantjatjara meeting and thereby maintain their positions of power within the Committee (Plate 8:2).

The two day meeting with the Pitjantjatjara became a major turning point in the land rights process in Port Augusta. It marked the first point of formal dialogue between the Oodnadatta, Kokatha and Yalata people and acted as the formative stage of the unified political body that was to develop later. This meeting also resulted in the singling out of the Roxby Downs problem as the most urgent and important issue of the many issues brought to the attention of the Pitjantjatjara Council. In support of the Kokatha struggle with Roxby Downs the Pitjantjatjara Council voted to offer the services of its own anthropologist to the KPC for the purpose of conducting a Kokatha-controlled anthropological survey of the Olympic Dam site.

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PLATE 8:2 Kokatha representatives at the Pitjantjatjara  
Council Meeting.





As a result of discussions at the Indulkana meeting the Kokatha and Oodnadatta groups set about arranging a two day regional land rights meeting to be held at Port Augusta. Because the meeting was located at Port Augusta the Kokatha took the main organisational role. They invited representatives from Yalata, Oodnadatta, Coober Pedy and, for the first time, the Adnjamathanha group were involved. As arranged, the Pitjantjatjara Council sent representatives and their legal and anthropological advisers.

The Port Augusta meeting was an historic coming together of Aboriginal people representing a vast area of the State. The meeting became a forum for the various Aboriginal groups to discuss their specific land problems and ambitions. It was a chance to be advised by the Pitjantjatjara's professionals and to talk about developing a single strategy for land rights action.

The rationale for the meeting was twofold. Firstly, the main feature of the Port Augusta regional meeting was the emphasis given to the Pitjantjatjara procedure of political action. From its inception the idea of a regional meeting was linked to the Pitjantjatjara. As the meeting progressed it became clearer that the collective concept and the invitation extended to the Pitjantjatjara was part of a general desire to model land rights action in this region on what was seen to be the 'tested and proven' land rights strategies of the Pitjantjatjara. The second dimension of the rationale for the Port Augusta regional meeting also became clearer as the meeting progressed. The Aboriginal

communities represented were drawn together by a common experience of dispossession, deprivation, and continued neglect of their land interest by the Government and other corporate interest groups such as mining companies. Their land interests were spatially distinct but they shared common difficulties in having these land interests recognised and common threats to their land by mining companies and other interest groups. Thus the wider loyalty suggested by the Port Augusta meeting was an externally induced process. It was not desired or intended for a collective land interest to develop. Throughout the meeting those attending listened with respect to the various groups' land problems. There was no discussion of overlapping interests or moves to develop collective land interests incorporating all the groups represented at the meeting. In fact, the meeting was characterised by the emphasis given to the spatial distinctiveness of each group's land interest. The collectivity of the Port Augusta meeting emerged from shared difficulties in the inter-ethnic political sphere. It is the same rationale noted by Kolig (1977; 49) in relation to the 'supra' identities he observed, and which Jones and Hill-Burnett (1982; 217) noted when they discussed the development of wider loyalties among Aboriginal people.

Although the Port Augusta regional meeting was attended by all groups represented at the Indulkana meeting, as well as the Adnjamathanha, the dominant groups in terms of numbers and participation, were the Kokatha, the Adnjamathanha and the Oodnadatta people (Plates 8:3, 8:4, 8:5). The

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PLATE 8:3     The Kokatha Contingent at the First  
SLC Meeting.

PLATE 8:4     The Adnjamathanha Contingent at the  
First SLC Meeting.

PLATE 8:5     The Oodnadatta Contingent at the  
First SLC Meeting.



Pitjantjatjara attended only in an advisory capacity and the Yalata community, which was well advanced in its negotiations over the Maralinga lands, attended essentially to observe and give support. The noted dominance of the Kokatha, Adnjamathanha and Oodnadatta groups cannot be divorced from their common affiliation with and utilisation of the Port Augusta Legal Rights lawyer. His region of operation coincided with the origins of the most vociferous groups. This is not to suggest that the Legal Rights lawyer was responsible for the collective meeting, but he did offer a communication link between these three groups on land rights issues.

The role of the Kokatha in this first meeting was particularly powerful. They acted as hosts and organisers of the meeting and they took great efforts to make the meeting a 'blackfella' meeting. It was held outside, whereas most Kokatha meetings were held in the Social Club. Also, it was located at Davenport Reserve rather than in the Port Augusta township. This was the first time that the Kokatha had given consideration to the Davenport Reserve people (who were often reluctant to go into town) in the locating of a meeting. The Kokatha also provided kangaroo for food which was cooked in a large communal fire. Thus, the very location and procedures of the meeting displayed many of the symbols of a Pitjantjatjara type meeting rather than a normal Kokatha meeting.

In looking at the attendance figures for this first SLC meeting it is apparent that the dominant groups were the

Kokatha and the Adnjamathanha. Out of a total attendance of fifty people on the first day of this two day meeting the Kokatha and Adnjamathanha accounted for 54% of the attendance. The Kokatha constituted 28% of attendance, the Adnjamathanha a slightly lower 26%. As was the case with the Adnjamathanha, the Kokatha attendance of the SLC did not transcend established patterns of land rights participation (Table 8:3). Kin Group 4 remained dominant in terms of numbers, the Whyalla contingent was represented but the predominant community affiliation was with Port Augusta.

An important aspect of the attendance of this first SLC meeting was the number of non-Aboriginals present. Non-Aboriginals accounted for 22% of attendance (excluding myself). Two of this group were non-Aboriginals married into the Aboriginal groups, the rest, however, functioned as formal advisers. All communities represented were accompanied by at least one non-Aboriginal. The Pitjantjatjara group brought their anthropologist and lawyer, the Yalata group their anthropologist and a researcher working with them at the time, the Oodnadatta group their community adviser, and the Adnjamathanha shared the Legal Rights lawyer with the Kokatha. The Kokatha also invited the consultant from whom they had recently been receiving administrative advice. The presence of these non-Aboriginals at the meeting and their function in the meeting had a considerable impact on the form of the SLC and Aboriginal attitudes to it. (Plate 8:6).

TABLE 8:3 KIN AND COMMUNITY AFFILIATION FOR KOKATHA PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST SOUTHERN LANDS COUNCIL MEETING, PORT AUGUSTA, 3-4/10/81.

<u>Kin Affiliation</u>	<u>Community Affiliation</u>	<u>Number Represented</u>
Kin Group 1	Port Augusta	2
Kin Group 2	Port Augusta	2
Kin Group 4	Port Augusta/Andamooka	8
Kin Group 7	Whyalla	2
<hr/>		
TOTAL		14
<hr/>		



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PLATE 8:6 Non-Aboriginal Adviser at the First  
SLC Meeting.



Of particular significance were the advisers associated with the Pitjantjatjara contingent. They were called upon by the meeting to explain how the Pitjantjatjara achieved land rights and the Pitjantjatjara Council's current policies towards outsiders seeking to use Pitjantjatjara land. In relation to the Pitjantjatjara's success in achieving land rights recognition the lawyer and anthropologist emphasised the formation of the Anangu-Pitjantjatjaraku collective (cf Vachon, 1982). This joining together of all Aboriginals who belonged to and held interest in the north-west area, they argued, was instrumental in the final success of Pitjantjatjara land rights efforts. Within this model of collective action, as was stressed by the anthropologist and lawyer, each discrete group maintained its separate interest in and control over the land that was its traditionally. The distinction was being made between the collective Anangu-Pitjantjatjaraku, a political unit to fight large external groups, and the separate interests within this unit which derived from traditional patterns of land 'ownership'.

The advice given by the lawyer and anthropologist affiliated with the Pitjantjatjara on this issue was immediately accepted. There was little need for discussion or debate over this issue for by coming together in Port Augusta the various community groups had already made the decision to form into a regional collective. The meeting was in many ways a symbolic gesture of this predetermined move. The Chairman of the Port Augusta meeting

stated:

Seems like most people are screaming out for help, looking to protect their sites, get compensation. Certainly the groups here in Port Augusta are disjointed, not helping one another...We need to look at working together. Like the Pitjantjatjara... that's the sort of cooperation we need, but it's not happening. So we need to look at how we can organise ourselves, how we can help each other but not get in each other's road. If we get help then people won't get in our country. This is probably the first time we have sat down among ourselves and let each other know what is going on, we should do it more often. (Kokatha Representative SLC Meeting, 3/10/81).

This was the first formal statement regarding unification from the participating Aboriginals. The idea of unification was reiterated a number of times by representatives of the three main groups: the Kokatha, Oodnadatta and Adnjamathanha people. After consensus was overtly established the meeting voted on the formation of a collective body which would be called the Southern Lands Council and include the Kokatha, Adnjamathanha, Yalata and Oodnadatta communities. The vote was unanimously in favour of the move. The formation of the SLC was an overt move to model land rights activity in this region on the precedents set by the Land Councils in the Northern Territory and, particularly, the Pitjantjatjara collective.

The second form of advice given by the Pitjantjatjara Council's advisers was in relation to the strategy taken by the Pitjantjatjara when dealing with mining companies. In summary, the SLC accepted that its dealings over land should follow the Pitjantjatjara model and released a press

statement outlining its formation and policy. In the press statement it summarised its policy as focusing on the following basic considerations: 1) that Aboriginals have a primary interest in the land on the basis of their prior occupation and permanent spiritual attachment, 2) that miners and other Europeans have a temporary and secondary interest based only on the economic value of the land, 3) that Aboriginal law is secret and sacred and Aboriginals are the only experts, 4) that Aboriginal secret sites can never be disclosed to the mining industry or the Government, 5) that miners must enter into direct negotiations with Aboriginal people for the protection of land, and 6) that the Aboriginal groups employ their own anthropologists and lawyers to help them talk to the companies (The Advertiser, 14/10/81). The strategies were designed to ensure continued and direct consultation between Aboriginal groups and external interest groups. (In some ways this type of strategy alludes to the patterns of inter-ethnic politics established during the early phase of contact when deals were based on personal association which were renegotiable if the situation altered). The strategies adopted also stressed Aboriginal control of their knowledge of the land on the grounds that this was the source of their political and bargaining power when dealing with external groups.

In practice, the SLC did not function as the first meeting or the subsequent press release suggested. As a collective unit the SLC met only two more times after the initial meeting. The second meeting was held at Coober Pedy

the following month (6/11/81). The attendance of this meeting was half that of the first meeting (twenty-three in total). For many of the Port Augusta people the distance acted as a deterrent. Only seven Kokatha attended the meeting and only two Adnjamathanha. Again these representatives were from the pool of regular land rights participants. The remainder of the meeting consisted of local Coober Pedy residents and an Oodnadatta contingent. The third, and final, SLC meeting held at Port Augusta (27/2/82) had an even smaller attendance of only nineteen. This meeting was dominated by local Adnjamathanha and Kokatha representatives (Table 8:4).

The decline in attendance of the SLC meetings reflected the general loss of interest in the Council by many of the initial participants. The causes of the Adnjamathanha withdrawal have already been analysed. In the case of the Yalata group it was, as stated, at an advanced stage of negotiations over the Maralinga lands. Their already established entanglements and obligations were too deep for them to alter their strategy dramatically. The acknowledged link between the Yalata people and the North West Reserve Pitjantjatjara, which was re-established at the Indulkana meeting, gave them a strong political alignment. The establishment of a link with yet another political unit, the SLC, may have worked to dissipate and confuse their strategy rather than strengthen it. Beyond their attendance at the Indulkana meeting and the first SLC meeting at Port Augusta, the Yalata group did not participate in the Council.

TABLE 8:4 SUMMARY OF SLC MEETING ATTENDANCE BY TRIBAL AFFILIATION

<u>Meeting Date and Location</u>	<u>Community/Tribal Affiliation</u>	<u>Representation</u>
3-4/10/81, Port Augusta	Kokatha	14
	Adnjamathanha	13
	Pitjantjatjara	3
	Yalata	8
	Oodnadatta	7
	Others	5
TOTAL		50
6/11/81, Cooper Pedy	Kokatha	7
	Adnjamathanha	2
	Cooper Pedy	10
	Oodnadatta	4
TOTAL		23
27/2/82, Port Augusta	Kokatha	7
	Adnjamathanha	7
	Others	5
TOTAL		19

The Oodnadatta group, which played an integral part in the formulation of the collective political unit idea, and had one of their representatives elected as the Acting Chairman of the SLC, also withdrew interest by the third meeting. Again local commitments worked against a continued commitment by this group. Coincident with the formation of the SLC was an internal controversy between the DCW and the Oodnadatta community. The Oodnadatta representative who was the Acting Chairman of the SLC was a leading figure in this local struggle. The commitments demanded by this local power struggle distracted his interest, and that of his supporters, away from the SLC. As the breakdown of attendance for the last meeting reveals, the SLC had become essentially a Port Augusta political unit used by the Kokatha and, to a lesser extent, the Adnjamathanha. By this stage, and indeed earlier in the operations of the SLC, it became apparent that the Kokatha and the Roxby Downs issue were dominating this new political unit. For example, the first press release of the SLC not only outlined SLC policy, which was specifically tailored to the EIS/mining issue, but made specific reference to Roxby Downs. The statement called for a moratorium on the Roxby Downs development so that negotiations could be re-opened on the basis of the policies of the SLC. Further, discussion at the first and the two subsequent SLC meetings was monopolised by the Roxby Downs issue.

The Kokatha monopoly of the SLC was, in part, due to the urgency of the Roxby Downs issue. Kinhill had been trying for six months to secure KPC cooperation and the EIS draft



was due to be lodged before the end of 1981. However, Kokatha domination was also related to the attitudes and ambitions of the non-Aboriginal advisers involved in the meeting.

From the time of the Indulkana meeting the Pitjantjatjara Council's advisers had isolated the Roxby Downs issue as exceptional. It was clear at this, and later meetings, that they viewed the issue as having the potential to set an important precedent; the right of Aboriginal groups not owning land to negotiate with mining companies in the same way as the Pitjantjatjara. The Pitjantjatjara Council's offering of the services of its anthropologist and lawyer attests to this view of the Roxby Downs issue. In fact, it was the Kokatha's role in soliciting assistance from the Pitjantjatjara that enabled them to assume the role of hosts at the first SLC meeting. They had secured the assistance of the Pitjantjatjara and it was their responsibility to share (or not to share) this assistance with the other groups involved in the SLC. In essence, the SLC established another patronage system. Included as patrons were those non-Aboriginals with the legal and anthropological skills necessary to realise the SLC policy: the Pitjantjatjara Council's lawyer and anthropologist, the Legal Rights lawyer and, to a lesser extent, the administrative adviser assisting the KPC. Their assumption of a patronage role was facilitated by their overt commitment to and knowledge of the Pitjantjatjara model. In the case of the anthropologist and the KPC's administrative adviser, their unique position as non-Aboriginals with initiated status among the Pitjantjatjara,

worked to their advantage. The fact that these men had been accepted into the secret and sacred world of Pitjantjatjara initiation proved their worthiness as reliable and trustworthy advisers. They were as Aboriginal as a non-Aboriginal could be.

Ostensibly the clientele of these new patrons included all groups who had committed themselves to the SLC. However, as shown, they serviced only the Kokatha. KPC monopolisation of the patronage system established by the SLC no doubt encouraged other groups, who viewed their land issues as equally important but were unable to compete with the Kokatha for the attention of the advisers, to lose interest in the Council and revert to their original patron/client niches (as in the Adnjamathanha case). Further, the nature of these advisers' link with the Council did not present them as a secure option for those groups outside of the Kokatha. For example, the Pitjantjatjara Council's lawyer and anthropologist were really 'on loan' to the SLC or, more specifically, the Kokatha. In the first meeting of the SLC their presence and advice encouraged widespread support for the Council but in subsequent meetings it became clear to the participants in the Council (including the Kokatha) that these advisers were committed to their employers, the Pitjantjatjara Council, above the SLC.

The Legal Rights lawyer was the only patron established by the development of the SLC who could offer advice on a permanent basis. The three main groups involved in the SLC already had access to and used his services in relation to land rights. In fact, the participating groups had a greater

chance of securing his advice and attentions as individual groups rather than competing for his attention within the multi-interest SLC meetings. Thus, for all groups apart from the Kokatha (the 'chosen' clients of the SLC patronage system) the lack of professional help offered by the SLC made it little more than an emotive unification of Aboriginal communities which shared a common dissatisfaction with the options available to them through the Government. It did not offer a realistic alternative.

For the Kokatha group the SLC formation had a massive impact on the Roxby Downs struggle. As has been indicated, the KPC adopted the strategy of the SLC and began operating through this organisation. Statements no longer were made by the KPC but by the 'SLC on behalf of the Kokatha people'. After their request for a moratorium on the Roxby Downs development, which was rejected by the Government, the Kokatha embarked on their first independent survey trip with the Pitjantjatjara Council anthropologist (late October, 1981). The first field trip revealed that a sacred site had been damaged. A press statement was issued in which the SLC, on behalf of the Kokatha, called for the Government to act against Roxby Management Services for a breach of the conditions accompanying the issue of exploration licences (that is, due consideration of other interests in the development area). Later in the statement the SLC spokesman is quoted as saying that the Council:

is confident it will have enough information to serve as the basis for direct negotiations with the mining companies in order that further site damage will not occur and the

exploration can proceed without unnecessary and costly delays. (The Advertiser, 19/10/81).

The press statement that followed the first field trip was a bid by the Kokatha to gain control of the negotiations over Roxby Downs. By giving evidence of a damaged site the Kokatha were attempting to illustrate the incompetence of the mining company and its consultants, as opposed to their own competence in adequately assessing their own interest in the area. The Government again did not act on the behalf of the Aboriginal interest and the deadlock continued.

A second Kokatha-instigated field trip into the area was conducted in November of 1981 and, on the basis of information collected, the KPC, through the SLC, arranged a meeting with the State Government and RMS for the following month. According to the Olympic Dam Draft EIS, the Pitjantjatjara Council's anthropologist advised the meeting that there were no ethnographic sites of interest to the Kokatha at Olympic Dam (Kinhill-Stearns, 1982; 20). The outcome of the association of the Pitjantjatjara Council's anthropologist with the Kokatha was not what they expected or desired. When the KPC committed itself to this man it had exceptionally high expectations. The relatively unsuccessful field trips and the final 'betrayal' of this adviser in the meeting with the Government and the RMS resulted in the anthropologist losing considerable support among the members of the KPC.

The anthropologist's involvement with the Kokatha had not been without internal controversy. The controversy

was based upon the known female sites in the area but manifested itself in a community-based division. From the very first meeting between the Kokatha and the anthropologist there was mention of the female sites known to exist in the area. The anthropologist was keen to organise the women to go into the area but was unwilling, being a male, to accompany them. The women also expressed the desire to have their own separate field trip and wanted me to accompany them. Despite this enthusiasm the women did not go into the field, they were waiting for the agreement of the male sector of the KPC. It was never given. The male-controlled KPC opposed the involvement of the women in the survey they had instigated but this was less an issue of sexism than an issue related to the existing community tensions between Whyalla and Port Augusta.

Although the KPC Chairman's mother knew of sites in the area her health prevented her from travelling. The alternative female informant was the Pangkala woman from Whyalla who spoke over the Stony Point development. On the basis of the factionalism that developed over this issue the male Kokatha did not encourage the female field trip. Their opposition indicated their desire to maintain the undisputed Port Augusta-based Kokatha interest in the area, rather than incorporate the Pangkala group which had so recently defamed their interest in Stony Point. In an exclusively Kokatha meeting held to choose the people to accompany the Pitjantjatjara anthropologist on the first field trip community factionalism was further illustrated.

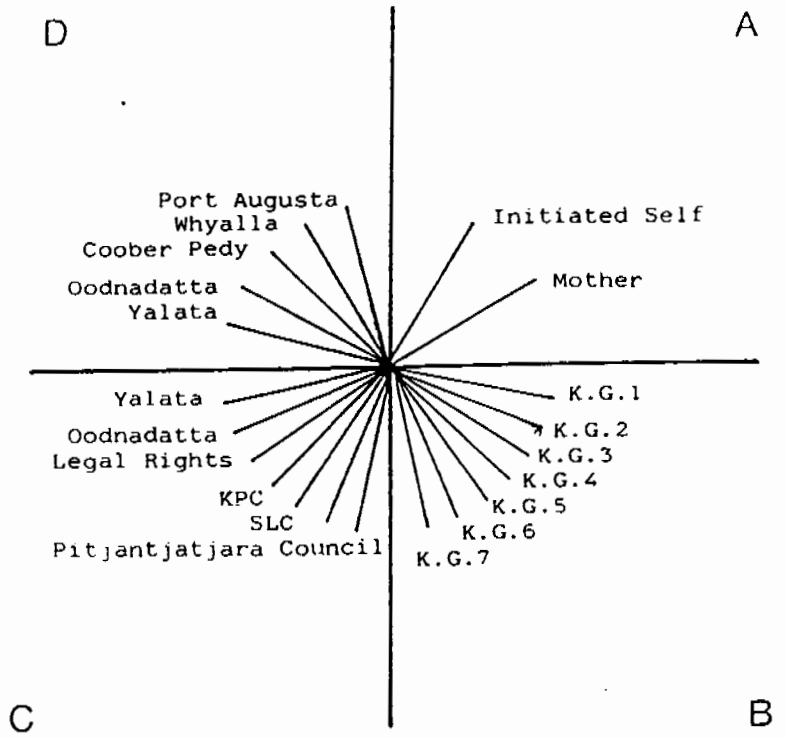
A Whyalla-based Kokatha man who had worked on Roxby Downs for most of his life was not chosen to accompany the others. His outrage at being excluded resulted in his walking out of the meeting. The exclusion of this man again ensured Port Augusta control of the Roxby Downs consultation and, more specifically, the skills offered by the anthropologist, worked to guarantee their primary interest.

The unsatisfactory results of the first two field trips, their failure to verify a substantial Kokatha interest in Roxby Downs, and the internal conflict which arose out of the distinction between the anthropologist's aims and those of the dominant faction of the KPC, seriously affected the stability of this patron's role. Again, it was a case of a patron not fulfilling the expectations of his clients, that is, not offering the agreed exchange for Aboriginal acceptance of the relationship. Furthermore, it was becoming increasingly clear to the Kokatha that this adviser's commitment to the KPC was only temporary and that, if they were to continue with their stand in relation to Roxby Downs, it needed to secure another adviser.

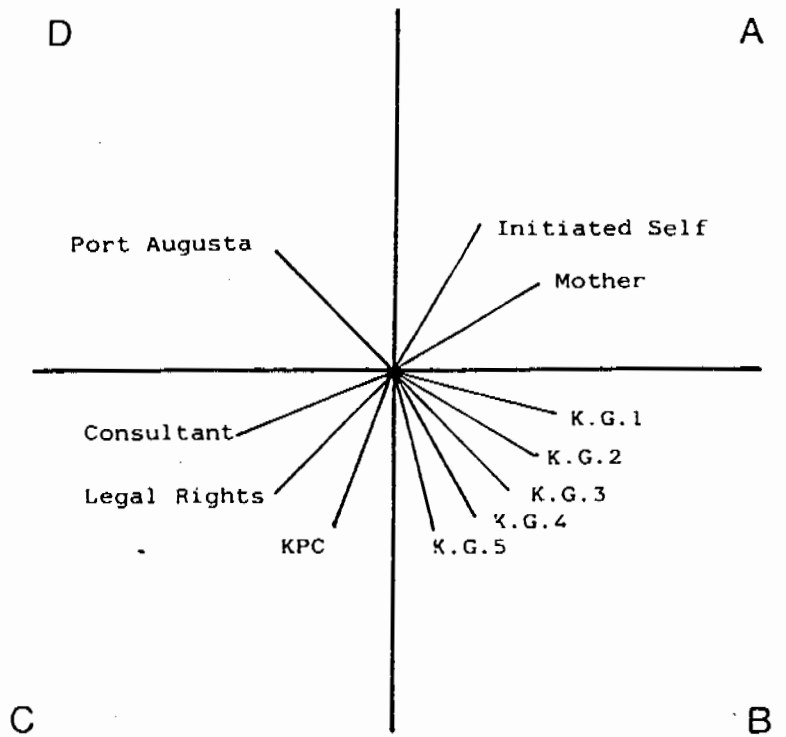
Throughout this phase of the Roxby Downs struggle the consultant with whom the KPC had made a tentative commitment prior to the formation of the SLC, had had minimal involvement. However, with the increasing dissatisfaction the KPC were feeling towards the Pitjantjatjara Council's anthropologist he was able to gain added support. As with the Pitjantjatjara anthropologist this adviser had all the right 'credentials'. He had initiated status with the Pitjantjatjara (with whom he had worked as a community

adviser), spoke Pitjantjatjara (which the Kokatha elders could understand) and was committed to the Pitjantjatjara model of political action in relation to land rights. Moreover, this man was a better long-term option for the Kokatha. Firstly, he was not committed to another group and so the Kokatha did not have to compete for his attentions as they did with the Pitjantjatjara Council's anthropologist. Secondly, he was willing to make a long-term commitment to the Kokatha whereas the Pitjantjatjara Council's anthropologist was obligated to return to his employers. Finally, he had a long-standing relationship with one of the KPC members and this was an important factor in endorsing his suitability as an adviser. After the abortive KPC/Government/RMS meeting and the retreat (and rejection) of the Pitjantjatjara Council's anthropologist the KPC formalised its relationship with this adviser. He was asked to seek funds for the Committee so that it could employ an anthropologist and was given the responsibility of overseeing my own research, the activities of the Legal Rights lawyer and the activities of any other outside organisation or group seeking consultation with the KPC. In the course of the withdrawal of the Pitjantjatjara Council's anthropologist the KPC reverted to acting as an independent unit rather than as a group affiliated with the SLC (Figure 8:8). In essence the SLC had dissipated and each of the participating groups had withdrawn to their smaller political units and pre-existing patron/client niches. Significantly, in the final stages of the SLC the dominant Kokatha group

ALLIANCE A  
(SLC)



ALLIANCE B  
(post SLC)





gave the role of 'Acting Chairman' to a local Aboriginal man who was from N.S.W. but was recently seeking power within the town. In so doing the original groups were able to disassociate themselves from the abortive SLC yet not dispense with it completely. Lying fallow in the control of a local man with little or no power base, it remained at the disposal of the KPC but not its responsibility.

The joining of the KPC with the SLC and the subsequent demise of this association, and the SLC itself, is but one moment in the on-going struggle over the Kokatha interest in Roxby Downs. However, within this observed time, processes similar to those observed in the other examples are apparent. Throughout the Roxby Downs struggle they appeared to, and did, change their stand on the consultation arrangement numerous times. Each change was accompanied by a shift in patronage. As relations with original patrons became untenable in relation to the ambitions of the KPC, it sought new patrons with resources better suited to its land rights ambitions. In the ensuing time the Roxby Downs negotiation has moved far from its original starting point. The EIS document has been produced without Kinhill's anthropologist having been able to consult directly with the Kokatha. The KPC has become incorporated and is operating with the financial assistance of a National Heritage Grant which has enabled it to employ an administrator and a male and female anthropologist to assist it in conducting its own surveys of Roxby Downs and other areas. Still the Government will not listen (Appendix XII).

#### 8.4 CONCLUSION

The Stony Point and Roxby Downs issues reveal, in detail, the community ramifications of the EIS procedure. Basic to the difficulties arising from the EIS procedure are the guidelines used for the content of the reports. The guidelines are dictated by the Department of Environment and, as well as a set of generic guidelines, a more specific set is drafted for each new EIS project. Special directives on the anthropological aspect of the EIS appear within each set of guidelines. For example, in the Roxby Downs EIS the anthropological guidelines demanded that the EIS produce;

- a literature search,
- an evaluation of the level of traditional knowledge amongst informants and the relevant Aboriginal groups,
- summary of the historical and social history of the relevant Aboriginal groups,
- evaluation of the attitudes of relevant Aboriginals towards sites of significance in the area,
- a location description and site evaluation of identified sites, including
  - i) creation sites
    - secular - male and female
    - non secular - male and female
  - ii) increase sites
  - iii) initiation sites
    - male - adult and juvenile
    - female - adult and juvenile
  - iv) other ceremonial sites
  - v) mortuary sites
  - vi) storage sites
- information on jural links to the land,
- the relative significance of sites,
- Aboriginal useage of the land (Department of Environment and Planning, 1981b;13-15).

Such requirements, which the KPC was pressured to meet even in its independent field work, indicate well the expectations of the Government and mining companies (and their consultants) when dealing with the Aboriginal interest

in land. This model of evaluation is characterised by the same stringent axioms of the Northern Territory legislation and the same conceptual assumptions about Aboriginality and 'genuine' interest in the land which motivated both the Northern Territory and Pitjantjatjara legislation. The guidelines make certain assumptions about what constitutes an authentic and recognisable Aboriginal land interest. The emphasis remains on sites, particularly sites with a sacred status, and on continued Aboriginal usage of the land. The requirements are especially insensitive to the post-contact experiences of groups such as the Kokatha which have faced forced and voluntary movement. The guidelines do not offer the conceptual freedom to investigate other manifestations of land interest that rest outside of the sacred site/usage model. The requirements are such that any deviation from them, or failure to meet them, reflects upon the significance of the land interest and consequently the mitigation measures required by the Government or the mining companies (cf. Sutton, 1981; 6-10).

The limited nature of the EIS structure, and its predisposition to evaluate and gauge sites as being more or less significant, is placing new pressures upon the Aboriginal land interest. In order to have their land interest recognised and respected Aboriginal groups are being encouraged to view their land in accordance with the expectations of the Government and the mining company consultants. For example, tracks of known cultural significance are being reduced to isolated sites of

significance. Similarly, as increasing emphasis is placed upon sacred sites, more general cultural sites are undergoing re-evaluation and deemed as sacred. This is not simply a process of opportunism, it is in many ways simply a reflection of the wide use of the term sacred site. 'Sacred site' is often used interchangeably with the term 'Aboriginal site' and to a degree the term is gaining secular application. However, in some cases sites have actually undergone re-evaluation. For example, in 1982 the Kokatha were the focus of a Saturday Review feature in The Advertiser, (14/8/82). The article was about the Emu Dreaming painting site near Port Augusta. Although locally this site is well known and has been visited by many local Aboriginal people, in the article its secret and sacred status was emphasised and its exact location was not disclosed. The public labelling of this site as secret and sacred involved the restatement of a status that had essentially lapsed in the last fifty years. This type of re-evaluation and publicity is an important part of Aboriginal verification of their land interest. By stressing the existence of these sites the Kokatha are in fact engaging in a similar form of 'advertising' to that which the Adnjamathanha undertook in their association with the Heritage Unit. By stressing the existence of secret and sacred sites the Kokatha have evidenced their continuing Aboriginality and justified their concern for areas such as Roxby Downs.

In summary, Stony Point and Roxby Downs illustrate some of the internal pressures and internal survival mechanisms

used to cope with the expectations and procedures of EIS consultation. During the observed phase of continuing negotiation over preferred consultation procedures, the Kokatha strategy altered considerably. Unsatisfactory consultations resulted in the Kokatha creating new alliances in order to establish access to preferred or necessary resources. Each new alliance reshaped the KPC's strategy and it was hoped by the KPC would result in satisfactory results. The studies thus illustrate that what is seen by the Government and mining companies as irregular, haphazard and unreliable behaviour on the part of Aboriginal groups is actually a deliberate attempt to seek out a satisfactory procedure by shifting from one patron to another.

As with the Adnjamathanha examples of land rights action, the Kokatha situation is characterised by internal factionalism being aggravated by the combined circumstances of a scarcity in the resource of land and external intervention. Discrete groups within the Kokatha, themselves often a result of varying patronage niches, are often in competition over available opportunities to state and hopefully have recognised, their interest in the land. Moreover, in the EIS situation new agents are penetrating the land rights scene. Consultants, working on behalf of corporate interest groups, are presenting new, but largely unsatisfactory options to the Kokatha. The Government, which has a vested interest in seeing new large-scale development proceed unhindered, is largely unsympathetic to the Aboriginal interest, particularly, as with the Kokatha, if the relevant Aboriginals

fail to allow Government penetration by rejecting the brokerage role of the Heritage Unit.

The Kokatha example also illustrates the preference among Aboriginal groups for 'non-affiliated' advisers who are usually non-Aboriginals who work for Aboriginal groups rather than the Government or other non-Aboriginal bodies. Most Aboriginal groups like the Kokatha, view this new breed of advisers, which essentially act in a patron/broker role in that they control legal, anthropological, or administrative skills and act as mediators in consultation with outside bodies, as preferable. However, as the Kokatha case shows they do not automatically suit the ambitions of their clients and can cause conflict and internal factionalism. They too are vulnerable to their Aboriginal clients shifting their affiliations to seek a more satisfactory service. Although they are essentially relied upon to assist relations in the inter-ethnic political field, it may be argued that, in some cases, these patrons/brokers have a vested interest in creating and maintaining conflict situations between their Aboriginal clients and the external bodies with which they deal.