



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

This article was originally published in printed form. The journal began in 1973 and was titled *The Aboriginal Child at School*. In 1996 the journal was transformed to an internationally peer-reviewed publication and renamed *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

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it seems to be a mishmash of events and people and at other times an exercise in recall.

US, TR (*For further comments see p.54 of Reviewpoint 56*)

The Tasmanian Story. By Lloyd Robson. Oxford University Press, 1987. Paper \$12.95.

This is a short historical account of Tasmania from pre-contact to the present time.

The author emphasises the importance of the past in determining the present day Tasmanian culture. In doing this the author has attempted to cover significant events and periods in Tasmania's history.

Once again, Aborigines are relegated to a small section which looks at the pre-contact and early post-contact period which saw conflict between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal invaders. Throughout the remainder of the publication Aborigines are given only a cursory mention.

The invasion of Tasmania by non-Aboriginal people had a devastating effect on the Aboriginal owners and their culture. This important fact is not recognised sufficiently by the author.

The author claims to have illustrated how important periods/events in Tasmania's past determine the Tasmanian psyche of today. Yet he largely ignores how each new development in the 'new colony' adversely affected Aboriginal people and culture.

Surely the racist policies imposed on Aboriginal people, and their treatment in Tasmania's past, have also been important in determining present-day Tasmania's attitude and thinking towards Aboriginal people? Other anomalies include:

- The spelling of 'Trugernanna'. This is not the common/popular spelling of this Aboriginal identity's name.
- The claim that Dutch explorer Abel Tasman discovered and named Van Diemen's Land in 1642. Surely Aborigines discovered Tasmania.
- The statement 'The black people fought back for the land over which they had moved for so long' does not recognise Aboriginal ownership of the land. It suggests that Aboriginal

people had the same relationship with the land as the animals which roamed over it.

Overall, Aboriginal perspectives have been ignored. Surely the sections Religion; Government policy; Health; Land settlement; Work; New political and social ideas; War; Education; Cultural change; The Great Depression and others should have explored the Aboriginal situation.

Another unbalanced view of Tasmania's history.

NOT RECOMMENDED US (For further comments see p.54 of Reviewpoint 56)

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Flinders Ranges Dreaming: The Adnyamathanha Storytellers of South Australia and Dorothy Tunbridge. Aboriginal Studies Press, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, GPO Box 533, Canberra, ACT 2601.

Most people working in the area of Aboriginal health are aware that it concerns a lot more than just good diet and exercise. A definition of health includes many things such as care and respect for one's self as an individual, the family, the community, history, traditional culture and the future directions of all of these. Traditionally, physical health, culture, spirituality and society were all considered to be connected aspects of a total well being. Modern Western medicine has been slow in seeing the obvious value of this wider view of health.

The physical condition of Aboriginal people has been declining for as long as their culture has been under threat. Realising that this situation could mean the loss of their identity, Aboriginal people have been working to preserve the language and history of their tribal lands. But they must work quickly. Modern Western technology has spread so quickly and so far that it has made it difficult for oral traditions to survive alone. That is why people have begun to write things down, in their own way, so that future generations will have knowledge of the importance of the past.

The Adnyamathanha storytellers of South Australia have done just that in their new book *Flinders Ranges Dreaming*. Two