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A Special Issue, dedicated to:

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN
NORTH AUSTRALIA**

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Editorial

This project grew out of a strong feeling, on our part, that there is currently something of a hiatus between remote and rural practitioners of "community development" on the one hand, and the field of "community psychology" on the other. In the Northern Territory of Australia, where we live and work, there seems to us to be a tremendous breadth of work going on at the level of community. Yet despite this huge diversity, and potential for cross-fertilisation, there did not seem to be a forum for these activities to be gathered under one roof. In its own small way, this special issue aims to take one step towards bridging that gap. In the process, the various and many contributors to this special issue are creating a unique opportunity for future developments both in practice and in theory.

Definitions of community development abound, and, being advocates of pluralism, we would never pretend to reduce these to some kind of "one truth." Instead, we prefer to view community development as any improvement in the quality of community life that is generated and evaluated from within the community itself. All communities are developing, and any community development is about flexing community voice and the group and individual empowerment that this brings.

This overview gives us a concise linkage with community psychology. Once again, we would not pretend to offer a single definition of this entire and diverse field of inquiry, but perhaps we can say that its ethos is community empowerment. Community psychology is all about applying the principles and theories of psychology to real community development issues. Logically therefore, there should be a mutually fruitful point of intersection between community development on the one hand, and community psychology on the other.

In the contributions that follow, you are about to meet a very diverse range of practice and social science. Given our arguments above, we see this as a major strength of the gathering. At the same time however, we believe there is a unifying force that binds all of these wonderful contributions together. This force is the power of community voices, and what we would like to do now is to let you hear them resonate.

Darwin
June 2000

Table of Contents
Volume 11(2), 1999

<i>Articles</i>	Pages
Social Context Theory Leon Earle & Tony Earle	1 - 12
Male Indigenous and non-Indigenous ageing: A new millenium community development challenge Richard Earle & Leon Earle	13 - 23
Remote rural community perceptions of ethical psychological practice Justine Weier & Graham Davidson	24 - 47
The Illicit Drug Reporting System (IRDS): Northern Territory drug patterns and trends Bridie O'Reilly, Paul Rysavy, & Chris Moon	48 - 61
 <i>Qualitative Research</i>	
Enterprise development: A model for Aboriginal entrepreneurs Bill Ivory	62 - 71
 <i>Case Studies</i>	
Development of community-based alcohol and other drug workers in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory Carol Atkinson & Janice Jessen	72 - 80
 <i>Short papers</i>	
When the desert floods: Military relief work, attributing clean-up responsibility, & future helping intentions following the Katherine flood Tracey Tann	81 - 84
Aid adverts that juxtapose rich and poor: A preliminary test of their efficacy in North Australia Kylie Griffiths	85 - 88
Collective guilt and pro-social behaviour: Implications for Indigenous and non-Indigenous reconciliation in Australia Michelle S. B. Roger	89 - 94
 <i>Regional Reviews</i>	
Indigenous suicide in cross-cultural context: An overview Joseph P. Reser	95 - 111
Global community psychology in the Northern Territory Tony J. Marsella	112 - 113