



People on country, healthy landscapes and sustainable Indigenous economic futures: The Arnhem Land case

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ABSTRACT

In the early 1970s, groups of Aboriginal people in remote Arnhem Land, north Australia, moved from centralised townships back to small communities called ‘outstations’ on their traditional lands. This ‘outstations movement’ reinvigorated the customary sector of the economy, which is based on wildlife harvesting. Using a sustainability framework and data collected on wildlife harvesting by Kuninjku people during fieldwork in 1979–80 and again in 2002–03, this

paper examines three broad questions. First, when, how and why were these outstations established and what was the policy response to this re-occupation? Second, are outstations economically, socially and ecologically sustainable? Third, turning to the future, how sustainable and replicable might the Arnhem Land case examined here prove to be? Challenging recent doubts in public debates about the value of land rights and native title, I demonstrate that Indigenous people living 'on country' generate economic, social and