

# The Lartelare Glanville Land Rights Movement in Adelaide:

## Through the Experiences of an Aboriginal Woman

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### Introduction

This paper clarifies the characteristics of an Aboriginal land rights movement in an urban setting through the experiences of an Aboriginal woman, Veronica Brodie, who initiated a land rights movement for her great-grandmother's land in North Western Adelaide. In South Australia there has been a prevailing attitude that the native titles can be claimed primarily by Aboriginal people in the far north and far west of the state, where the traditional culture as it existed before colonisation is still strongly maintained [Agius et al. 2002: 4]. This position is due to the fact that most land legislations such as Native Title Act 1993<sup>1)</sup> restrict claims to 'traditional Aboriginal owners' and demand that claimants demonstrate a genealogical connection between their present and past customary beliefs and prove their traditional connection with the land [Tonkinson 1998: 290].

On the other hand, the Aboriginal people who have been displaced from their ancestral lands and now live in the city and country towns in South Australia found a way of claiming their land rights through the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)<sup>2)</sup>, which aimed to protect and preserve Aboriginal sites, objects or remains<sup>3)</sup>. The occurrence of urban Aboriginal people's claims for land

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- 1) A legislation enacted as a result of the decision of the High Court in the Mabo case (*Mabo v Queensland* 1992). The main objects of the act are to provide for the recognition and protection of native title; to establish ways in which future dealings affecting native title may proceed, and to set standards for those dealings; to establish the National Native Title Tribunal to determine claims to native title; and to provide for, or permit, the validation of past acts invalidated because of the existence of native title. Native title procedures are likely to be the first mechanism native title holders, claimants or potential claimants use to protect their heritage from changes to land use (Native Title Act 1993, Evatt 1996: 24–26).
  - 2) A legislation passed by South Australia's Parliament to protect Aboriginal heritage. Under this legislation, all Aboriginal sites, objects and remains in South Australia that are of significance to Aboriginal tradition, archaeology, anthropology and/or history are protected by making it a criminal offence for any person to damage Aboriginal sites or objects without authority. The Aboriginal Heritage Branch, a branch of the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division (AARD) of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, administers the Act on behalf of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988, Evatt 1996: 321–322).
  - 3) An Aboriginal heritage agreement may, for example, restrict the use of land to which it applies; require specified work or work of a specified kind to be carried out in accordance with specified standards on the land; restrict the nature of work that may be carried out on the land; and provide for the management of ↗

rights was in parallel with the cultural revival movement initiated mainly by Aboriginal activists and elders in southern South Australia since the 1980s. For example, the Hindmarsh Island Bridge affair in the early 1990s, in which some of the Ngarrindjeri people of the lower Murray claimed the significance of their cultural heritage to prevent the construction of a bridge over sites sacred for Ngarrindjeri women drew public attention throughout Australia<sup>4</sup>) [cf. Bell 1998, Kenny 1996, Brunton 1996]. Furthermore, claims for cultural heritage made by the Aboriginal people have been increasing in Adelaide since 2000<sup>5</sup>). The case study presented in this paper is one of the prominent examples of such claims for Aboriginal cultural heritage in Adelaide.

Compared with those on native title claims in remote Australia, studies on native title claims in 'settled' Australia are limited [Keen 1999]. Moreover, little attention has been given to native title claims made by the Aboriginal people in the capital cities [e.g. Burns 2011]. It is assumed that the approach of land rights movement in urban settings is different from that in remote areas because of the more complex social circumstances in the urban areas. For example, native title claims in remote areas are generally made at a group level, but this is not always the case in the Aboriginal people in urban areas. Because of the diversity among the urban Aboriginal people in terms of birth-places, residential areas and socioeconomic conditions, their claims are more likely to be made at a family or an individual level. Given this situation, a case study of the land rights movement in Adelaide can be expected to provide new insight into the Aboriginal land rights movements.

This paper will first describe a brief history and the present-day situation of the Kaurna people, the indigenous inhabitants of the Adelaide Plains, in parts 1 and 2. In part 3, it will discuss the cases of Veronica Brodie, an Aboriginal woman of Kaurna-Ngarrindjeri descent, and her connection to her ancestors' land on the basis of her life experiences. In part 4, an overview of the land

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↘ the land, or any Aboriginal site, object or remains in accordance with a particular management plan and others (Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988).

- 4) Hindmarsh Island is an island near the mouth of the Murray River, 70 km south-east of Adelaide. The state government and marina developers proposed the construction of a bridge linking Goolwa to the island. Some Ngarrindjeri women opposed the construction because there were secret sites on the island that the women considered sacred. This claim, however, was rejected by another group of Ngarrindjeri women who did not know about these sites. The state government established a Royal commission to investigate this matter and in 1995 concluded that the original claim had been fabricated to prevent the bridge from being built. It is generally said that this affair divided Ngarrindjeri women into groups termed as the 'proponent women' and the 'dissident women' which contested the legitimacy of the knowledge of sacred sites. Some politicians, anthropologists and local residents were also involved in the debate over the sacred sites (Bell 1998, Kenny 1996, Brunton 1996).
- 5) For example, in 2009 an Aboriginal man of Ramindjeri descent made a native title claim on land stretching from Adelaide to Kangaroo Island. Because a significant portion of the land in question had already been claimed by the Kaurna (lodged in 2000) and the Ngarrindjeri (lodged in 1998), this provoked controversy among these regional groups (*The Advertiser* 20 November, 2009). In 2010, some of the Kaurna people called on the government to halt the construction of a rail bridge over the Onkaparinga River because it would damage sacred Kaurna sites along the river (*The Messenger* 24 March, 2010).

rights movement initiated by Brodie and the Lartelare Glanville Land Action Group will be provided. Consequently, in part 5, the characteristics of the movement will be discussed, focusing on Brodie's relations with other Aboriginal and local non-Aboriginal people.

## 1. A Brief History of Kurna

According to Tindale, an anthropologist, at the time of British colonisation in South Australia in 1836, the Kurna territory extended from Crystal Brook to Cape Jervis and to the western edge of the Mount Lofty Ranges [Tindale 1974: 213]. The Kurna people were comprised of several small groups of people or 'hordes' who shared the same or a similar language. In the 1830s and 1840s, when describing Aboriginal groups, most observers used the term 'tribe' combined with European place names such as the 'Adelaide tribe', the 'Mount Barker tribe' and the 'Encounter Bay tribe' [Hemming 1990: 129]. A group this paper mainly deals with is the 'Port Adelaide tribe' who resided in the western extremity of the territory of the Wirra Kurna, northern group within the Kurna nation.

As a consequence of the destruction of the traditional social organisation by the dispossession of Kurna land and the devastation of the Kurna population due to the epidemic brought by Europeans, it is generally believed that most of the Kurna people were forced to leave Kurna Plains by the late 1840s. The remaining Kurna were absorbed into the neighbouring 'Narungga' people of York Peninsula and the 'Ngarrindjeri' people of Lower Murray. By 1850 it was believed by some Europeans that the Kurna were virtually 'extinct' [Amery 2000: 49].

From the 1850s to 1860s, fifteen missions were established in South Australia for the purposes of Christianisation and 'civilisation' of Aboriginal people. Under Aborigines Act of 1911<sup>6)</sup> jurisdiction of the missions were transferred to the state government and the Aboriginal people were segregated in government-operated reserves. After enforced to move to the missions, the Kurna intermarried with the 'Narungga' of Point Pearce or the 'Ngarrindjeri' at Point McLeay (Raukkan)<sup>7)</sup> Missions. The Ngarrindjeri people, one of the most prominent local groups of the Aboriginal people in South Australia, formed a nation which numbered approximately 3000 people at the time of European colonisation. The Ngarrindjeri were physically and culturally different from the neighbouring local groups including the Kurna, having a distinctive language and custom. For example, their language did not have one word in common with the Kurna and they did not have a custom

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6) This act was designed for protection of Aboriginal people from harmful influences of the European society such as alcohol and prostitution. Under this act the chief protector became the legal guardian of every Aboriginal child under twenty-one and was given the power to control their property, rights of movement and freedom of access.

7) When Ngarrindjeri people regained control of the area in 1972, the name was changed from Point McLeay to Raukkan. 'Raukkan' (Rauwukung) is translated to 'ancient way' (Raukkan Re-Union 1994: 5).

of circumcision in initiation ceremonies, which is also distinct from the most local groups in South Australia [Jenkin 1985: 11–17].

Aboriginal migration from the reserves to Adelaide began after World War II and by the 1950s migration rate accelerated because of the several reasons such as kinship factor, lack of employment on the reserves, and encouragement of Aboriginal migration to the wider society under the Assimilation policy [Gale 1972: 86–87, Gale and Wundersitz 1982: 45]. In the late 1960s the urban Aboriginal people throughout the country initiated the protest movements in order to gain access to social, political, economic, and educational advantages in the mainstream society, and forged pan-Aboriginal identity, Aboriginality [Jones and Hill-Burnett 1972]. The Aboriginal people in Adelaide constructed their identity as Nunga, which is a comprehensive identity for all the Aboriginal people in Adelaide and claimed themselves as such.

At the same time, some of the Kurna people started to pursue their connections with the Kurna ancestors based on oral history passed down within their families after they returned to the Adelaide Plains<sup>8)</sup>. Among those who explored their Kurna identity, connections with sites of significance and Kurna dreaming, Tjilbruke Dreaming<sup>9)</sup> were considered to be important in addition to genealogical connections with Kurna ancestors. In 1981 a Kurna woman, Georgina Williams, was employed as a member of the Tjilbruke Track Committee<sup>10)</sup> in South Australian Museum where she worked with a researcher to determine the appropriate places for markers along the trail. Other Kurna descendants were also involved in the committee and the power of decision making on the committee was given to them. Tjilbruke Track Committee was reconstituted as the Kurna Heritage Committee, which later changed its name to the Kurna Aboriginal Community and Heritage Association (KACHA) [Amery 2000: 8–9, Hemming 1990: 135]. In 2010 there were approximately twenty members in KACHA<sup>11)</sup>.

In recent years, the significance of Kurna cultural heritage in Port Adelaide area has been acknowledged. In 2006, the Port Adelaide Enfield Council<sup>12)</sup> provided the representatives of the local Kurna descendants with the opportunity 'to paint their own historical picture of the Port Adelaide

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8) Among these are Georgina Williams and Lewis O'Brien. Georgina Williams was the first to actively pursue and voice her Kurna identity after exploring her father's links to Kurna country by taking him to places he had been taken as a boy. Also, Lewis O'Brien, who was grown up with Narungga, actively pursued his connection with Kurna country by research in archives (Amery 2000: 7).

9) A creation story of numerous sites along the coast to the south as far as Cape Jervis

10) Tjilbruke Track Committee grew out of the Tjilbruke Monuments Committee established in 1971 to mark the track created by the Dreaming ancestor 'Tjir: buki'. In the early 1970s the committee was made up of Europeans, but in the 1980s Kurna descendants started to be invited to take part in the project of the committee [Hemming 1990: 134–135].

11) Lewis O'Brien, Interview with the author, 15 September, 2010.

12) A council established in 1996, which administrates the area extending from the River Torrens to Outer Harbour. City of Port Adelaide and Enfield includes Enfield, Klemzig, Northfield, Outer Harbour, Parks, Port Adelaide and Semaphore Wards. The council has set heritage conservation guidelines and has a local heritage incentives scheme to protect and conserve the historical heritages in the Port Adelaide area.

area based on their memories, cultural stories and histories and their spiritual connections to the family and ‘country’. The council combined the cultural, spiritual and historical knowledge of the local Kurna people with the documented knowledge of European historians, and published an information booklet which contains an account of Kurna cultural heritage. In this booklet fifty one locations are acknowledged as Kurna sites of cultural heritage significance in Port Adelaide area<sup>13</sup>).

## 2. The Kurna Community Today

According to 2006 census, the population of Aboriginal people in Adelaide is approximately 12,000 people, which accounts for 1.2 percent of the total Adelaide population<sup>14</sup>). Although the Aboriginal people originally from Point Pearce and Raukkan has constituted the two largest groups in Adelaide since the 1950s [Gale and Wundersitz 1982: 39], the population of those from West Coast<sup>15</sup>) and other states is growing. Thus the cultural background of the Aboriginal people in Adelaide is diverse. The percentage of intermarriage between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is 86.1 percent in Adelaide [Peterson and Taylor 2003: 111].

Of the Aboriginal population in Adelaide, the number of those who claim themselves to be Kurna reaches nearly 300 today. Kartinyeri, who formally recorded genealogies of Aboriginal people in Raukkan and Point Pearce, identify the following five ‘full blood’ Kurna ancestors from whom a number of families are descended; 1. Kurna woman (of Clare region) married to John Armstrong (white man), 2. Rebecca Lartelare (Kurna-Ngarrindjeri) married to George Spender, 3. Kurna woman married to John Wilkins (Russian Finn), 4. Kudnarto (Kurna woman from Crystal Brook) married to Tom Adams, 5. Rathoola (Kurna woman from Rapid Bay) married George Solomon. Of these five women, four women married to white men while one married a Nagarrindjeri man, George Spender [Amery 2000: 7 (extracted from Kartinyeri 1989)].

The Aboriginal community including Kurna is dispersed throughout Adelaide, but the Aboriginal population is relatively concentrated in Adelaide’s northern and north-western suburbs where less expensive government housings are available [Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006: 18]. Dispersion of their residential area has not necessarily resulted in social isolation of the Aboriginal people. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, all-Aboriginal voluntary associations as well as kinship ties played an important role in connecting Aboriginal people who had similar problems such as poor housing and limited opportunities for employment and discrimination in the wider society by

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13) Kurna Cultural Heritage Survey July 2007

14) See Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008

15) It refers to west coast of Ere Peninsula, which includes Koonibba Aboriginal Community, the former Koonibba Lutheran Mission.

providing them with economic, social and political resources [Pierson 1977].

Today, however, such voluntary associations or self-help organisations are replaced by governmental or non-governmental Aboriginal organisations. These organisations provide recreational activities for the local Aboriginal people so that they can interact with each other regularly, yet opportunities for the whole Aboriginal population to gather are limited, for example, to events held in NAIDOC Week celebration and the Sorry Day Service. The socialisation among the Aboriginal people is seen at each family level rather than group level, and thus Aboriginal community in Adelaide today is virtually divided by families. In addition, it can be said that the introduction of social security benefits including unemployment benefits, single parent benefits and pensions caused further individualisation of the Aboriginal people.

There are some organisations exclusively for the Kurna people. The criteria for Kurna vary depending on organisations. For example, anyone who can prove their descent as Kurna is virtually accepted as a member of the organisation which aims to maintain and manage Kurna language (Kurna Warra Pintyandi), whereas such a proof of Kurna descent does not automatically lead to the approval of membership in the organisation which deals with Kurna land rights and cultural heritage, KACHA described above. In the latter case a membership may be rejected when an individual who also belongs to other regional groups such as Ngarrindjeri emphasises his or her affiliation to Kurna in an attempt to receive benefits which may be brought by native title claims.

### **3. Life Experiences of Veronica Brodie and Her Relation to the Land at Glanville**

Veronica Brodie was born at Raukkan in 1941. She was of Ngarrindjeri and Kurna descent. She was Kurna through her matrilineal descent line. Brodie's great-grandmother, Lartelare, was one of the 'full blood' Kurna ancestors identified by Kartinyeri as mentioned in part 2. Lartelare was born in 1851 at a Kurna camp on the waterfront of the Port River at Glanville and married to George Spender, who was born at a ration station near the Coorong. Her daughter (Brodie's grandmother), Laura, was born in 1876 in Glanville and moved to Raukkan with her mother after marrying an Ngarrindjeri man.

Growing up at Raukkan, Brodie realised that her grandmother, Laura, was different from other Ngarrindjeri women at Raukkan in physical appearance and cultural traits. Although Brodie often questioned Laura where she came from, she was not willing to tell her about it. When Brodie was about eleven, Laura finally took her to Lartelare's old campsite at Glanville where Colonial Sugar Refinery factory (CSR Company) was built and explained that she and her mother were forced to leave their land since the government sold or leased the land where Lartelare camped. Laura also

told Brodie that she and her mother had resentment against the factory for many years and pleaded with her to fight to regain their land when the factory was demolished [Brodie 2002: 1–17].

Brodie moved out to Adelaide at the age of fourteen to receive a secondary education with the assistance from the Aborigines Protection Board<sup>16)</sup>. After she finished the secondary education, she remained in Adelaide and worked as a cleaner, nurse, domestic and others. She married to an Aboriginal man from West Coast and had five children. Spending most of her life in Port Adelaide, Brodie engaged in various activities for the local Aboriginal community. Around 1970 she became an Aboriginal Education Worker<sup>17)</sup> for a local primary school and initiated Aboriginal cultural

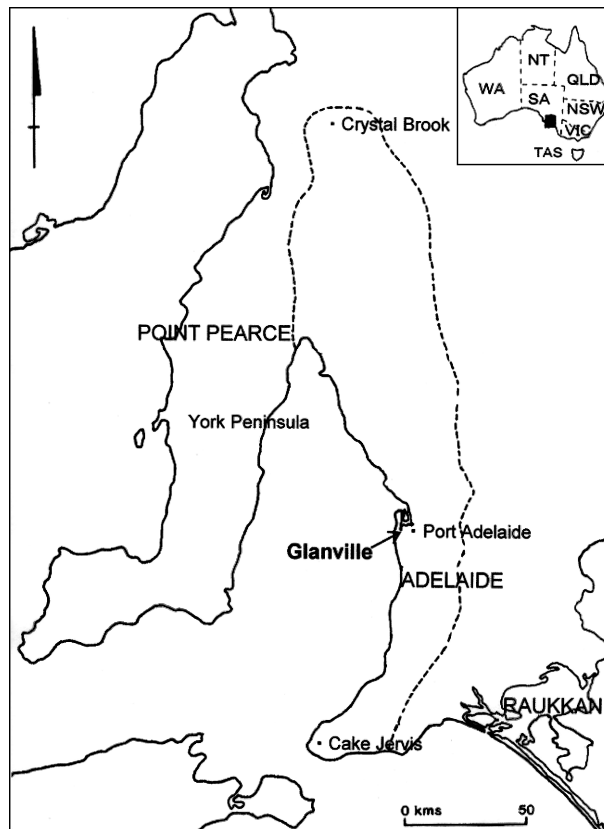


Figure 1

(Source: Amery 2000, revised by the author)

- 16) The Aborigines Protection Board was established in 1940 when legislation was passed abolishing the office of chief protector of Aborigines under the Aborigines Act of 1911. The board consisted of the Commissioner of Public Works and six members [Mattingley 1992: 57–58]. Under the Assimilation policy adopted in the mid–1950s in South Australia, the Aborigines Protection Board encouraged the migration of Aboriginal people from reserves to the city to promote their assimilation into the mainstream society.
- 17) Aboriginal Education Worker assumes a role as a liaison between school and Aboriginal families. For example, when an Aboriginal student is absent for a long period of time without any notice or when he or she causes troubles with other students, an Aboriginal Education Worker contacts or visits their family to discuss the problems, and mediate the interaction between teachers and parents.

classes in which she taught both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal students Aboriginal art and crafts. She was also employed as a staff of the Aboriginal sobriety group and worked for Aboriginal people who had alcohol problems.

Since the early 1990s she started to be actively involved in two main Aboriginal land rights movements in southern South Australia, the Hindmarsh Island Bridge affair and the Lartelare Glanville land rights movement, until she passed away in 2007. For example, in the Hindmarsh Island Bridge affair, she fought against the government as one of the representatives of Ngarrindjeri women to prevent the construction of the bridge over the sacred sites for Ngarrindjeri women since she was passed down the knowledge of the sites from her elder sister.

Around the same period, she started to fight against the government and developers to protect Lartelare's camp site at Glanville, fulfilling the wishes of her grandmother. These two land right movements attracted widespread attention of both national and local media and non-Aboriginal people in the mainstream society, and are characterised as prominent land right movements in urban areas in South Australia. In the following part, how she initiated the land rights movement at Glanville site will be described in detail focusing on her relation with the local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

#### **4. The Lartelare Glanville Land Rights Movement**

After the CSR factory was destroyed by fire in the early 1990s, Brodie made a claim for the 4.4 ha land in Glanville where her ancestors, Lartelare and Laura, had once lived, attempting to register it as a Kaurna heritage site under State Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988. She also had a vision of establishing an Aboriginal elders village, which would also accommodate non-Aboriginal people in the Port Adelaide, and an interpretive centre, where local residents could learn the Kaurna language and culture, on the site. Brodie submitted to the Aboriginal Heritage Section of the state government a genealogy of her ancestors complete with the supporting documentation including birth and death certifications, notations made by N.B. Tindale and photographs for registration. Although the State Minister of Aboriginal Affairs acknowledged the historical significance of the Glanville river-bank, Brodie's demand was virtually rejected mainly for two reasons: first, the uncertainty of the exact location of the site where Lartelare had actually resided, and second, a redevelopment plan which was already in progress at Glanville.

The government had a redevelopment plan for the Port Adelaide area, including Glanville, and intended to sell the land Brodie was claiming to a government-owned corporation, the Land Management Corporation (LMC), which would later sell it to a developer. The developer planned to construct high-cost apartments, a marina for tourists, and restaurants and cafés around the area. To prevent the commencement of the redevelopment, Brodie sought information about the land from



her Ngarrindjeri relatives at Raukkan and formed the Lartelare Homeland Association in the mid-1990s. She also attempted to prove the relation of Lartelare to the land at Glanville with the help of a local anthropologist.

Yet, none of her efforts to identify the exact location of the site and negotiate with the government led to any revisions in the government's plan. Although she asked for cooperation from local Aboriginal organisations including the KACHA and individuals to fight for the land, she hardly gained any support except from her relatives and some Ngarrindjeri elders. An Aboriginal elder who supported Brodie stated that the lack of support from the Aboriginal people was due to the division among the Ngarrindjeri people caused by the Hindmarsh Island Bridge affair.

On the other hand, Brodie obtained more understanding and support from the local non-Aboriginal people. In response to the commencement of the construction of the luxury apartments and marina berths in 2005, the Lartelare Glanville Land Action Group (LGLAG) was formed to take up the tasks outlined by the Lartelare Homeland Association. The group composed of Brodie, her family members and local non-Aboriginal people, and it conducted various activities around the heritage site in the Glanville area to raise public awareness of the issues while continuing negotiations with the government and developers.

For instance, LGLAG members distributed leaflets containing Brodie's alternative vision, the construction of the Aboriginal elders village and interpretive centre, to commuters boarding buses and trains at Glanville. Flags saying 'No ghettos for the rich' were hung from the developers' giant billboard. Stickers with the slogan 'Tokenism will not strengthen our community' were produced. In November 2005, about 80 supporters of the alternative development held a public meeting at the site. Brodie's daughters and volunteers then drove stakes decorated with ribbons in the Aboriginal colours of red, yellow and black into the ground. LGLAG members also organised a fundraising BBQ and an information stall. The group succeeded in attracting widespread attention. Local TV stations and newspapers covered their activities<sup>18)</sup>. After the issue became publicly known, LGLAG received letters and phone calls from local residents who supported Brodie's claim and were willing to assist her.

One of the key members of LGLAG was Bob Briton, a journalist working for a newspaper, 'The Guardian'. He had become acquainted with Brodie through an interview about the Aboriginal land rights movement for a newspaper article in 1993, which was the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. He became a spokesperson for Brodie, who was very sick during the final stage of the movement, and played an important role in the negotiations with the government and the developers.

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18) (1) *The Guardian* 26 February, 2003, (2) *Messenger* 28 September, 2005, (2) *Messenger* 5 October, 2005, (3) *Campaign News*, Volume 1 Issue 1, December, 2005, (4) *Campaign News*, Volume 1 Issue 2, January 2005, (5) Mardawi Kilawi Thangwilin yunti 2005.

The government later proposed a plan to establish a small park commemorating the Kurna heritage of the land in the middle of the apartments. Brodie and the LGLAG members were dissatisfied with the plan and regarded it as 'tokenism'. They also resented the fact that the area identified as the heritage site by the government-appointed anthropologist was exactly where the government intended to establish the park. The LGLAG members claimed to have obtained a different result regarding the campsite at Glanville from another anthropologist who worked with them.

Sheridah Melvin, who prepared a report on the heritage site at the request of LGLAG, attempted to clarify the relationship between Lartelare and the campsite at Glanville on the basis of the oral history provided by Brodie and information obtained from interviews with the Aboriginal elders who knew Laura and the non-Aboriginal elders who had lived at Glanville for many years [Melvin 1994: 6]. According to Melvin's report, the 'Port River tribe (Port Adelaide tribe)' of Kurna, to which Lartelare belonged, resided on the western bank of the Port River, which stretched north from the West Lakes area to the tip of the Le Fevre Peninsula, and west from the Glanville waterfront to the sea along Semaphore and Semaphore South. This meant that the residential area of 'the Port River tribe' was not limited to underneath the Jervois Bridge, as the government suggested, but extended up to the Port River. Before colonisation, the Port River was the natural boundary separating the 'Port River tribe' from other Kurna clan members [Melvin 1994: 2]. Findings from Melvin's report conflicted with the popular perception of the mainstream society that the Kurna people had disappeared entirely from the Glanville and Port Adelaide areas after about 1860. It became clear from Brodie's oral history that the 'Port River tribe' had resided in the Glanville area until about the 1890s.

During the 1850s, when the development of the western shore of the Port River started, including the construction of wharves, the first Port Bridge and a road to Semaphore, the government forced the 'Port Adelaide tribe' to move to Willunga, around fifty kilometres south of the present-day Adelaide's centre. Although some of them moved to Willunga, others refused to 'sit down' permanently in an unfamiliar place. The latter remained in the Port River area, relocating their campsite sixty metres southwest to avoid the development activities taking place at Glanville. Lartelare was one of those who moved south of their original campsite. The population at Glanville in the time of Lartelare's parents' (1820s–1850s) was approximately 100. The remaining 'Port Adelaide tribe' chose to live in a dense mangrove area which European settlers were unwilling to approach [Melvin 1994: 20].

According to another report prepared by a consultant anthropologist, Simone Dennis for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation (S.A.), the Kurna people had served Captain Hart, who owned much of Glanville, since the 1850s until Hart's land at Glanville was sold to the CSR Company in 1890. Hart employed the Kurna people as labour for his business and provided clothing, tea, flour and tobacco in return. The 'Port River tribe' survived until the 1890s on the

land at Glanville where they had a spiritual tie with their ancestors, while adapting to European land use and practices [Dennis 2005: 20–21].

In 2006, with the rapid progress of the redevelopment, LGLAG put pressure on the state government, the LMC and the developers; however this again did not result in any changes to the government's plan. LGLAG did not take any further actions because Brodie's health condition had worsened by then and thus they finally agreed to the government's plan to establish a park. The park was completed in 2009, two years after Brodie passed away. Before the park was officially open, Brodie's daughters and their families planted Kaurna native plants and seedlings there.

### **5. The Characteristics of the Land Rights Movement by LGLAG**

Brodie's case presents two important points to note regarding the characteristics of the land rights movement in an urban setting. The first point concerns the division within the Aboriginal community, and the second relates to the solidarity between the local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The fact that Brodie obtained more cooperation and assistance from the non-Aboriginal people rather than the Aboriginal people reflects the complicated social conditions of the Aboriginal community in the present-day Adelaide. As stated in part 1, most of the Kaurna people are also descendents of other regional groups. They tend to emphasise the commonality of cultural traits and identities among these regional groups in their everyday lives. However, when a particular person or family group claims the land rights as Kaurna, distinctions among regional groups surface and disputes often arise over the exact definition of Kaurna. Further, because Kaurna individuals and groups have strong ancestral links to particular areas of the large Kaurna territory, identification of the representative of a specific local region or area becomes a sensitive issue. Thus, there are cases in which some people are not comfortable with only one family group speaking about the Kaurna heritage for the whole Kaurna people, particularly when that group may not be qualified to represent the whole people. As Dennis stated, 'the overarching term "Kaurna", which implies a political homogeneity' may not reflect the lived experiences of the Aboriginal people in Adelaide [Dennis 2005: 8].

In addition, the majority of the members of KACHA are originally from Point Pearce and have a stronger sense of belonging as Narungga than as Kaurna. There is a major line of cleavage within the Kaurna community between those with strong ties to Raukkan and those who relate more to Point Pearce, and the former is often seen by the latter as belonging to the Ngarrindjeri [Amery 2000: 226]. Thus it is likely that one of the reasons Brodie could not obtain formal assistance from KACHA was that around the same time, she was also involved in the Hindmarsh Island Bridge affair as an Ngarrindjeri elder and thus was regarded by KACHA as Ngarrindjeri. The fact that the Aboriginal people may shift their affiliation to the regional or family groups depending on

the benefits they receive including those gained from a native title can sometimes become the object of criticism among the Aboriginal people, as is reported in the case of the urban Aboriginal people in other states [cf. Babidge 2010: 122].

Another issue which prevented the solidarity of the Aboriginal people was the distrust of the ordinary Aboriginal people for those known as the 'middle class Aborigines' employed by the government. In the process of arguing with the government about who was involved in the decision to sell the land to the developer without consulting with the traditional owners of the land, Brodie found out that it was an Aboriginal official who had worked with the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs. Brodie also felt insulted by the manner in which the government conducted archaeological survey with Aboriginal monitors of non-Kaurna descent accompanying the archaeologist. She wrote a letter to the state government criticising its failure to recognise the cultural and historical background of the land. What was at issue here was that some Aboriginal government officials having no knowledge about the Kaurna culture were involved in the judgment of land issues on behalf of local Kaurna people. Brodie's niece, who supported the activities of LGLAG, criticised Aboriginal government officials for forgetting the Aboriginal communities to which they had belonged and working for the benefit of the government and their own interest.

While Brodie had difficulty in gaining support from her people, it is noteworthy that she acquired strong non-Aboriginal supporters. The interactive relationship between the Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people with diverse backgrounds in the native title process may also be observed in the Aboriginal land rights movement in country towns in other states [cf. Tomonaga 2010]. The non-Aboriginal people involved in the protest against redevelopment included those with whom Brodie had been friends for many years and local working-class citizens as well as intellectuals and humanitarian activists in the city.

Brodie and her family, in seeking support from the local non-Aboriginal people, attempted to link the significance of the land rights movement to universal values in western societies such as peace, equity and democracy. These values were believed to be easily acceptable by liberal and humanitarian people in the city and thus effective to attract public interest to indigenous issues. In the brochure distributed to the commuters, the past conduct of the Australian government towards the Aboriginal people including the dispossession of land and the separation of families was compared to 'genocide', and the activities of LGLAG were positioned as a protest against such injustices. This suggests that, although the original goal of LGLAG was to assist Brodie in getting her ancestors' land back and building an elders village, it later assumed the character of a civil movement for democracy, justice and peace. Brodie emphasised that the movement was not only for Aboriginal people but also for all Australian citizens fighting for justice.

The activities of LGLAG, however, cannot be characterised merely in terms of a civil movement. The elements which united the Aboriginal people with the local non-Aboriginal people were

the sharing of experiences of poverty, social exclusion and a consequent suffering caused by the social situation unique to Port Adelaide. There is a relatively high concentration of a low socio-economic population and working-class residents in Port Adelaide<sup>19</sup>). The slogan, 'No ghettos for the rich' was devised by LGLAG to generate empathy about Aboriginal issues among the working-class residents in this area. It can thus be said that the similarities in class between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals played a more important part than did their cultural difference. Poverty is a concept that anyone can understand no matter which cultural groups he or she belongs to.

Moreover, among the non-Aboriginal people who supported Brodie as key members of LGLAG were those who perceived themselves a 'minority' in Australian society. For example, Briton, who was in his sixties, expressed his alienation from the society by joining various protest activities against the government after being denied the right to express his opinions during the major part of his life. He had spent ten days in a maximum security detention centre in New South Wales, after having participated in a protest against the dismantlement of a low-cost accommodation by the government in Canberra. There he met many Aboriginal people who had been arrested without proper grounds. Since then he had become concerned about social problems which the Aboriginal people faced and sought ways to change their adverse circumstances. He stated that some Aboriginal people had rejected his offer to help because he was white, but Brodie had accepted his support and fought in partnership with him<sup>20</sup>).

Another non-Aboriginal woman who assisted Brodie and her family had participated in the protests against mining development and supported the Aboriginal people in their land rights movements in various South Australian regions. As an immigrant from Ireland, she expressed mixed feelings towards British Australians in general because her Irish ancestors had historically had bad experiences with the British police. She stated that now that she could not go back to Ireland and restore her ancestors' culture, she wanted to contribute to the preservation of the Aboriginal culture<sup>21</sup>). The solidarity between the Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people, both marginalised by the broader society, provides a glimpse into the unity mediated by the resistance to authority.

Through the activities of LGLAG Brodie also incorporated phrases used by non-Aboriginal supporters in their representation of Aboriginal people. For instance, Aboriginal people were described as 'oppressed people' who had faced injustices under colonialism, including the dispossession of their land. Further, the Kaurna culture was depicted as a 'rich culture' as acknowledged by

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19) Compared with Metropolitan Adelaide, the city of Port Adelaide has a considerably higher proportion of public housing and the average household income of its population is significantly lower. For example, the proportion of people whose weekly household income is less than \$500 was 35.9% in Port Adelaide, compared with 21% in Adelaide (Profile of Port Adelaide, based on the 2001 and 2006 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing).

20) Briton, Interview with the author, 16 June, 2010

21) Ms. N, Interview with the author, 13 September, 2010

the Australian society which was threatened by redevelopment. By representing the Aboriginal people as victims who deserved sympathy from society, Brodie newly defined them as 'those to be most respected in the society' or 'the keepers of the oldest living culture on earth'.

## 6. Conclusion

The case of the Lartelare Glanville land action reflects the complex social circumstances of an Aboriginal community in an urban setting. It can be said that multiple identities held by the Kaurna people and the differences in the political and social positions among the Aboriginal people made the solidarity among the Aboriginal people in Adelaide difficult to achieve. Under these circumstances, unity with the local non-Aboriginal people who shared the experiences of poverty and social exclusion was easier to build. It appears that the solidarity between these different cultural groups was mediated by their will to oppose the authority and power.

Brodie applied the strategy of presenting Aboriginal land issues to the public as problems not only for the Aboriginal people but also for Australians. She associated these issues with the universal values generally accepted in the western society including 'democracy', 'social justice' and 'human rights'. In the process of fighting in partnership with the non-Aboriginal people, she also incorporated the identity of the Aboriginal people which had been assigned to them by the non-Aboriginal people, and the Aboriginal people started to define themselves as 'victims of historical injustices'. This provides a glimpse into the agency of the Aboriginal people to turn adverse circumstances to their advantage, arousing the sympathy of the liberal non-Aboriginal people in an urban setting.

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