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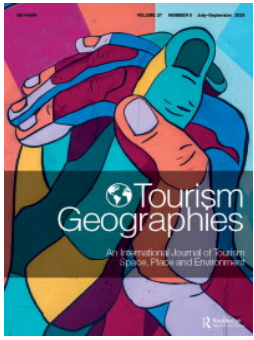
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Indigenous-settler relations at work in Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park's tourism industry

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ABSTRACT

The Australian settler government has repeatedly promised Indigenous peoples (Anangu) of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park that they will benefit from settler government's use of their lands as a significant tourism destination, yet the Anangu community of Uluru remains one of the poorest communities in Australia. This article utilises historical analysis and qualitative interviews with Anangu, Parks staff, and tourism staff to chart key dynamics in the relationship between the tourism industry and Anangu over 39 years of Joint Management in the Park. We show how the prioritisation of settler logics of tourism and work over Anangu benefit is not just an arbitrary cultural decision meted out in day-to-day interpersonal relations but is built into the geographies and temporalities of work in the Park. Highlighting how Anangu benefit is deferred through settler logics of work draws attention to the possibility for alternatives that are founded on Indigenous lifeworlds. This article's analytic focus on quotidian, relational dynamics in intercultural contexts brings insights from Indigenous and settler colonial studies into tourism research and demonstrates a new way of identifying opportunities for transformation in Indigenous tourism industries in settler colonies. From a practical perspective, these insights underscore the importance of developing shared understandings of what meaningful and good "work" is in intercultural industries and highlights possible interventions into entrenched dynamics between Indigenous and settler peoples in these contexts.

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Introduction

Indigenous peoples (Anangu) of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (UKTNP) have repeatedly expressed an expectation to benefit from the settler Australian government's use of their lands as a significant national heritage symbol and tourism destination since negotiations began over the Park in the 1970s. Yet, the Aboriginal community of UKTNP, Mutitjulu, remains one of the poorest communities in Australia despite the international tourism industry on their doorstep. All UKTNP Management Plans produced since National Park listing reiterate a commitment to prioritising Anangu benefit from the

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Park and tourism industry. These Plans are counterpointed by Reviews of Management highlighting the failure to fulfil these commitments. Held together, these repetitious documents demonstrate that the resultant 'state of deferral' (Stoler, 2008, p. 193) of Anangu benefit is not an exception to the operations of the Park but constitutive of them. As this article shows, the industries of UKTNP maintain an expectation that a particular kind of tourism and tourism work, which prioritises the needs of guests, is the unchangeable factor around which other aspects, such as Anangu lifeworlds, must bend. While the Park's joint managers (Parks Australia) and tourism operators are committed on paper to Anangu benefit and many non-Anangu and Anangu staff work hard to realise this, in practice Anangu benefit is dependent on what activities the Park's industries are willing to modify to accommodate Anangu lifeworlds. The conditions imposed on achieving a better future are rarely controlled by Anangu.

That tourism seldom delivers promised benefits to so-called 'host' communities is well documented in critical tourism studies literature (Aramberri, 2001; Nash, 1989; Williams & Gonzalez, 2017). While insights into the asymmetries between 'hosts' and 'guests' provides important context to the elusiveness of Anangu benefit from tourism, Anangu have expressed interest in continuing to welcome visitors to UKTNP (Wilson, 2017) and in increasing their control of, and involvement in, tourism. Indeed, the Australian Research Council grant *Incentivising On Country Aboriginal Employment: Anangu Futures* that funds this research into possibilities for Anangu tourism was co-constructed with Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation. Thus, while the potential for tourism to provide just outcomes for Anangu might be limited, there is a desire for more beneficial models of tourism. Anangu have known for many decades that to benefit they need to be in control of tourism. As a 1987 review of Anangu tourism stated, 'the Community's ability to determine its relationship with tourists has depended and still depends on government's willingness to recognise the hosts' claim to autonomy, in particular, their right to control access to, and development of, their land' (Central Land Council et al., 1987, p. ix).

This figure is presented in the Plan as an 'example of how the Board discussed and approved major items in the preparation of this management plan' (Director of National Parks and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Board of Management, 2021, p. 28), yet ironically, nowhere in the Plan is this desire to own tourism directly addressed. Instead, continually increasing tourism is justified under the guise of benefiting Anangu without reconsidering how Anangu are involved. This statement is echoed by Anangu in the 2021 UKTNP Plan of Management in a figure showing brainstorm responses to the question 'What would you want tourism to look like?'. The responses list: '1. Owned by Anangu; 2. Anangu managing tourism and telling their stories! 3. Next generation / younger people taking on the stories/work from senior people'.

As Salazar (2017) emphasises, 'rather than attacking 'the tourism industry' or 'the authorities' for everything that goes wrong, we need fine-grained empirical analyses that disentangle who exactly is doing what, how it is being done, for what reason, and what can be done about it' (p. 706). This article responds to this call by turning attention to quotidian relations between Anangu and settler workers in UKTNP. We use the term 'settler' in this article as a reductive yet necessary 'political signifier' (Maddison & Nakata, 2020, p. 4) that conveys power relations that concrete certain rights and privileges in non-Indigenous peoples occupying Indigenous land. We show how barriers

to Indigenous involvement and control of tourism are often created by settler assumptions about how work and tourism should be done. In particular, we examine the pervasive prioritisation of settler logics of work over Anangu benefit in the industries of UKTNP and situate these in their geographical and historical context. In doing so, this article shows that the prioritisation of settler logics of tourism and work is not just an arbitrary cultural decision meted out in day-to-day interpersonal relations but has become entrenched over time in the geographies and temporalities of work in UKTNP. These geographies and temporalities are exemplars of settler colonial modes of power that operate in so-called Australia and are structured by colonial assumptions about Indigenous peoples concerning values, work, and economic and cultural priorities. Our analysis of settler logics of work resonates with scholarship (Altman, 2019; Dyer et al., 2003; Klein, 2021) examining settler unwillingness to recognise Indigenous forms of labour in Aboriginal communities, indicating the intersection of neoliberalism and settler colonial formations of power. In this article highlighting how Anangu benefit is deferred through settler logics of work draws attention to the possibility for alternatives that are founded on Indigenous lifeworlds. We argue that transforming Indigenous participation in tourism in settler colonial contexts may involve more reflexivity on the part of non-Indigenous tourism actors, rather than placing the burden of change on Indigenous peoples. This article's focus on the relational dynamics of tourism work in intercultural contexts demonstrates a new way of analysing opportunities for transformation in Indigenous tourism industries in settler colonies.

Literature review

Altman (1989) distinguishes between places where tourism is invited or imposed, such as Uluru, arguing that it is harder for Indigenous peoples to have agency over tourism in the latter context. Circumstances in the mid-1900s in which tour operators protested against mandatory permits to enter Uluru-Kata Tjuta led to its establishment as first a 'tourist and wildlife reserve' (Layton, 1986, p. 76) in 1958 and then National Park in 1977. These decisions were made largely without Anangu consultation and initially obliterated Anangu rights—enabling tourist access to cultural sites in contravention of Anangu law—until title was transferred back to Anangu on 25 October 1985 under the condition they sign a 99-year lease to Parks Australia with a Joint Management arrangement. Thus, tenure changes in the area were primarily about securing tourism access.

Williams and Gonzalez (2017) have found that tourism presents limited options for facilitating just outcomes for Indigenous peoples. Indeed, Büscher and Fletcher (2017) show that the process that converts tourism into capital 'not only provokes various forms of material violence but can become a form of (structural) violence in its own right' producing inequalities (p. 1). As Grimwood et al. (2024) state, tourism and its actors 'are often complicit in the circulation and accumulation of settler colonial power' (p. 901). Research (Adams, 2014; Power, 2002) has documented the ongoing power imbalances between Anangu and Parks Australia in UKTNP, particularly around the prolonged campaign to close the Uluru climb which remained a famous tourist attraction for many years despite Traditional Owners' request for visitors not to climb for safety and cultural reasons (James, 2007). As Everingham et al. (2021) argue, the refusal to close the climb exemplified the colonial violence inherent in tourism

commodification, illuminating the ways in which tourists put their 'desire to "consume" Uluru in Australia, by climbing it against the wishes of the Aboriginal custodians' (p. 2). With the climb closure on 26 October 2019 significant potential exists for reforming tourism in UKTNP so that it is led by, and benefits, Anangu (Judd et al., 2019). However various factors, including COVID19 impacts on tourism, have prevented this thus far.

The opinions of Anangu on tourism are absent from much existing research on UKTNP, which largely draws on desktop research (Calvin et al., 2024; Everingham et al., 2021) or interviews tourists (Hueneke & Baker, 2009; Waitt et al., 2007; Whittington & Waterton, 2021). To understand and address the asymmetric burden of adjustment borne by Indigenous peoples we suggest that tourism research in settler colonial contexts can learn from attending to the quotidian *relations between* Indigenous peoples and guests, understood here as both tourists and non-local workers. Our emphasis on relations brings insights from Indigenous and settler colonial studies on the importance of relational methodologies (Brigg, 2020; Moreton-Robinson, 2017; Snelgrove et al., 2014) into tourism research, contributing to significant tourism studies scholarship seeking to unsettle tourism research (Chambers & Buzinde, 2015; Grimwood et al., 2019; Lee, 2017).

In examining relations we are wary of perpetuating binary, colonialist thinking about 'cultural difference' in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews are presented as internally homogenous oppositional groups (Simpson, 2007). Instead, our attentiveness to relations emerges from an insistence that difference is 'incommensurable' (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 4) and this forms the grounds of relation—difference only comes into being through its interaction with other sets of difference. Thus, we understand the differences we document as emerging 'out of the multiplicities of social forces coursing through the region' (Povinelli et al., 2017, p. 182) such that our explanations attend to multiple contextual factors, for example geographic and temporal arrangements, that reify some dynamics as differences that matter in limiting Anangu benefit from tourism.

Methods

Our research design assumes all knowledge is inherently situated (Haraway, 1988) such that we cannot provide a complete, impartial perspective. Instead, we have integrated multiple methods to allow for 'multi-faceted and multi-scalar explanations' (Elwood, 2018, p. 96), necessary to approach the complex issue of Anangu employment in UKTNP. Methods were selected for their usefulness in 'understanding the "everyday" in the experience of the political' (Ghoddousi & Page, 2020). We read archival documents from UKTNP through contemporary geographies and the relations they perpetuate to show how 'multiple historical tenses' (Stoler, 2008, p. 194) permeate present circumstances. We approached the interpretation and integration of materials through a 'non-representational' perspective that emphasises that 'the root of action is to be conceived less in terms of willpower or cognitive deliberation and more *via* embodied and environmental affordances, dispositions and habits' (B. Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 7).

We analysed Landscape Management Plans, lease agreements, and Reviews of Management from 1977 to 2023. We also undertook twenty-three semi-structured qualitative interviews with Anangu, Parks staff, and other employees as part of Anna's

PhD project. Eleven participants were Anangu, one participant was a non-Anangu Aboriginal resident of Mutitjulu, and eleven participants identified as non-Indigenous. Indigenous participants were paid for their time. Interviews took one to two and a half hours. Twenty-two interviews were recorded and transcribed by Anna. One interviewee requested note-taking only. All participants have been de-identified. The researchers also undertook ethnographic methods, including participation in tourism offerings, bush trips with Anangu, and involvement in daily Park life, which Anna accessed by residing in Mutitjulu throughout 2021. We conducted recursive analysis of data, involving iteratively spiralling between inductive and deductive analysis enabling our explanatory theories about patterns and contradictions to remain responsive to information from the field (LeCompte & Schensul, 2012).

We were cautious of the potentially extractive nature of ethnographic research (I. Anderson, 2012; Clifford & Marcus, 1986), strictly limiting what we documented, and being clear with participants about the limits of social research (see Tuck, 2009). We have a long-term commitment to working with Anangu, having built relationships over many years in our capacities as Mutitjulu resident (Anna), family member (Barry), and research collaborators. Anna is a white settler scholar of British and Scottish ancestry. Barry is a descendent of Pitjantjatjara-speaking peoples, Afghan cameleers, and British immigrants. This article discusses just one aspect of the activities we conduct with Mutitjulu Community. We are wary that attending to settler logics risks reinscribing their power. Our intention here is to expose 'how tourism naturalizes settler colonial power' (Grimwood et al., 2024) and to highlight some opportunities for transformation of the tourism industry in accordance with Anangu desires.

Results

'Money mantjilpai anyani (get money and go), Anangu nguranka nyinani (Anangu will always be here)'

The *Report of the Evaluation of the Community Liaison Function at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park* (Sovereign Health Care Australia, 2001) found one of the main challenges to effective Joint Management was difficulties in building good working relationships due to frequent turnover of piranpa (meaning 'white', from Yankunytjatjara for 'moon') staff. In our interviews in 2022 Anangu and non-Anangu interviewees also cited the high turnover of piranpa staff as one of the biggest barriers to doing good work. A piranpa tourism employee lamented, 'we lose that respect from Anangu because we are seen as just another whitefella that comes in. Because it is such a huge turnover. People [whitefellas] come for a few days and leave, few weeks and leave. It's very difficult' (fieldwork interview, 17 October 2022). An Anangu Parks officer highlighted that not only do these staffing changes bring new employees who may know little about Anangu and speak no Pitjantjatjara, but they also often come with new ideas and a determination to enact them:

[Newcomers say] No, we're gonna stop and change.

[Anangu respond] No, just continue from the last bloke. How we do it, how Anangu are trying to tell you to do it.

[Newcomers say] No we want to change it.

Clash of cultures again! (fieldwork interview, 15 March 2023)

Between the short-lived attention to this issue ignited by decadal Reviews, in UKTNP this peripatetic pattern is normalised rather than seen as a nomadic settler behaviour that is an impediment to working well together. Speaking about the high turnover of non-Anangu staff one piranpa Parks officer told us:

People [non-Anangu staff] come in with the intention of staying for a few years but they might only stay one or two... we'd be wasting our time banging our heads against the wall trying to fix that... In terms of establishing rapport with Anangu... the biggest issue is that... people [non-Anangu] don't stay in the role longer than a few years and that's very problematic because ultimately if you had community members in those roles then you wouldn't have an issue. But the big issue is getting them [Anangu] into the roles. So, the big issue then is establishing rapport [between Anangu and non-Anangu]—you can't do it in a couple of years. (fieldwork interview, 18 October 2022)

This interviewee describes a circuitous logic where employing Anangu relies on retaining piranpa staff, however they also state that piranpa retention rates are unfixable. Thus, this interviewee perceives a dead-end problem that the transience of settler staff leads to an inability to hire Anangu staff. The 2021 *Senior Advisory Group on Joint Management Arrangements for Commonwealth National Parks* report (SAG Report) found that many Anangu are either in positions at a low classification or in casual or part-time roles as a result (Senior Advisory Group, 2021).

While high turnover of nomadic piranpa is rationalised within UKTNP staffing, the temporal patterns of Anangu staff are often considered challenging to accommodate within the workplace. These temporalities of movement are a foundational aspect of Anangu cultural practice and tradition (Judd & Ellinghaus, 2023; Standfield & Stevens, 2019). Anangu travel for many reasons including funerals, seasonal ceremonial commitments, visiting family, and meetings (Musharbash, 2008). These obligations can be last minute and often require travel for indefinite periods, sometimes delayed by broken down cars or rescheduled bush bus services. While there is a commitment in the UKTNP lease agreement (Northern Territory of Australia, 1994) between Parks Australia and the Uluru-Kata Tjuta Aboriginal Land Trust to make jobs flexible for Anangu, as the SAG Report notes, some of these provisions are 'unlikely to cover cases of multi-day ceremonies such as initiations or for individuals such as Elders who may be called upon to attend multiple ceremonies' (Senior Advisory Group, 2021, p. 25).

A piranpa tourism employee cited different reasons for Anangu transience in the workforce: 'a lot of the times people from community [Anangu] will come and work. They wanna work. But they'll work until they've got the money to buy a car and then they'll go well now I've got my car, I don't need to work no more' (fieldwork interview, 17 October 2022). Ironically, in interviews Anangu also told us that the length of some piranpa working stints were dictated by the time required to save for a car. One Anangu interviewee said, 'they'll [piranpa] make their money, buy a car and then leave' (fieldwork interview, 15 March 2023).

While frustration about these discordant rhythms of work may feel new to settlers every time they are experienced or documented in Reviews, Anangu retain the memory of these temporal habits of work. Two Pitjantjatjara phrases heard around the rock summarise these patterns. The phrase 'money mantjilpai anyi' refers to piranpa employees and translates to 'get money and go'. It contrasts with the phrase 'Anangu nguranka nyinani' which means 'Anangu will always be here'. This latter phrase

emphasises that despite the occasional unreliability of Anangu travel schedules Anangu will always return. While Anangu are misrepresented as nomadic and thus impossible to accommodate within staffing structures, the real nomads—the piranpa—are put in charge of work, including hiring and training Anangu, that is hard to do well without relationships with, and the expertise of, Anangu.

Read together, ‘money mantjilpai ananyi’ and ‘Anangu nguranka nyinani’ capture the core temporal dynamics that trouble working relations in UKTNP: piranpa who work for a short time and never return, and Anangu who work intermittently but always return. The current structure of work in UKTNP is not designed to accommodate either pattern. While for Anangu this leads to unemployment, for piranpa this leads to more urgent hires of piranpa and decadal Reviews documenting the poor relationships this causes. While these patterns are temporal they are intimately connected to geographic relationships: UKTNP repeatedly draws Anangu home, while Australia’s seaboard calls to piranpa who largely come from these places. As of 2023 Parks Australia were working to implement SAG Report recommendations, including greater flexibility for Anangu employment. It remains to be seen what the outcomes will be, but one hopes that the strategy is not based again on the reliability of piranpa staff.

Negotiating differences between the personal and professional

Over the last decade Mahood’s (2012) essay ‘*Kartiya are like Toyotas: white workers on Australia’s cultural frontier*’ has been provided by managers to fresh-faced white employees as an informal manual on what not to do in working relationships with Central Australian Aboriginal peoples and other white workers. The essay depicts a caricature of white workers (or ‘kartiya’ in Warlpiri) employed in remote Indigenous communities and the relational dynamics that ensue, described by our interviewees as a ‘co-dependency culture’ where the personal and professional blur. The unprepared worker arrives enthusiastic about their abilities to ‘improve’ Aboriginal people’s lives, exemplifying a modernised incarnation of the missionary. Over time menial daily personal tasks, such as making tea or giving lifts to the shop, trump other appointed tasks for which white workers are paid and create the false pretence that they operate under Aboriginal peoples’ direction. It is critical to emphasise that menial tasks are not outside the remit of white workers: working in remote communities requires multi-tasking; acknowledging where University skills are less valuable than cultural skills and lived experience; and building relationships through everyday caring acts (Judd & Ellinghaus, 2023). However, Mahood demonstrates how relations that begin as caring often become perverse as pressures increase over time. The employee quickly finds the personal and professional blurring as they try to reconcile local peoples’ daily priorities with organisational priorities and determine how to do ‘good work’ in the context of radical difference. Fellow white workers offer little support as they too encapsulate the development trope of ‘missionaries, mercenaries, and misfits’. Mahood describes how white workers burn out under the competing pressures of community life and workplace expectations, leaving a legacy that may be far from caring. Mahood’s essay is widely circulated due to the truth of its depiction: white workers are often like Toyotas—‘when they break down we get another one’ (quoted in Mahood, 2012, p. 43).

This essay was raised by many interviewees as a shorthand way to discuss local issues in working relations between piranpa and Anangu staff in UKTNP. They emphasised that, far from providing the intended care, this pathological relation where piranpa get involved in personal business without setting boundaries was destructive for both parties. A piranpa interviewee said this relational trope does both parties a disservice: ‘the white person should just communicate that they don’t have time to make tea right now or that they are burning out’ (fieldwork interview, 15 March 2023). As one Anangu interviewee said, this co-dependency culture is bad for everyone and ‘is used by white people as a justification to get more involved rather than to let Anangu be in control’ (fieldwork interview, 12 March 2023). Another Anangu interviewee concurred, ‘yeah caring in a different way, in a downgrading way’ (fieldwork interview, 13 March 2023).

Navigating alternatives to these co-dependent relations, however, is complex in practice. As some interviewees explained, navigating these tricky relations involves learning to recognise the difference between acts that facilitate co-dependency culture and those that enable inter-cultural collaboration. As we sat with a piranpa in their office they received a stream of Anangu visitors delivering news of Men’s Business moving along the Park’s border—important contextual information for Park work—and requesting assistance with administrative tasks. The first visitor needed their bank details, another wanted a government letter translated, and a third visitor needed a deceased relative’s birth date for funeral paperwork. While these tasks may seem similar to personal ‘co-dependency culture’ tasks, they have a crucial difference when situated in their inter-cultural context. Although these are not the stated activities of this officer’s role, they emphasised ‘they are asking you for assistance with the whitefella stuff that is necessary for them to work in a white world’ (fieldwork interview, 15 March 2023).

While these tasks may be categorised as personal business in Western work culture, they are professionally necessary for Anangu to engage in Western administration. These examples point to the culturally specific lines between the personal and professional in UKTNP. Conversely, Anangu often willingly provide significant cultural information, such as the whereabouts of Men’s Business, essential to doing good collaborative work on Park and to keeping the uninitiated safe. This work is often unpaid as it is deemed informal by Western delineations of the personal and professional. In sum, identifying what perpetuates co-dependency culture and what supports the kind of self-determination and respect for distinctiveness required to do good work together depends not only on awareness of the cultural dynamics of the other but also an awareness of one’s own cultural tendencies. Helping one another to navigate each other’s cultural landscapes in ways that are necessary for performing good work increases autonomy and successful collaboration.

Be cultural without being cultural

Any account of working relations in UKTNP requires consideration of the circumstances of Yulara, UKTNP’s tourist town. The development of Yulara on the northern Park border established a colonial outpost from which to financially exploit UKTNP

without compensating Anangu for use of their lands. The tourism industry has developed in Yulara to lock Anangu out of involvement and economic benefit, imploring Anangu to 'be cultural without being cultural' (Anangu participant, fieldwork interview, 13 March 2023). Our data shows how the determination of Anangu to continue to be Anangu is posed as an inability for Anangu to walk in two worlds, rather than an opportunity for non-Anangu to understand a different way of living and working.

Yulara is a gazetted town dominated by the Ayers Rock Resort, run by Voyages Australia, which has held onto its colonial name despite the Park's official change to Uluru-Kata Tjuta three decades ago. The Resort is situated on an in-holding of privately owned land. In 1997 Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara applicants, who have inalienable freehold rights for surrounding land through the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (Cth), led the first Native Title extinguishment compensation claim over the land occupied by the Resort and Connellan airport. The claim was unsuccessful due to evidentiary issues (Sansom, 2007). Had the claim succeeded, Anangu would have received significant financial compensation for their economic and cultural loss. Yulara's monopoly on tourism allows it to be maintained as a 'space of exception' (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017; Ong, 2006), exempting tourists from the normal rules that apply in the landscape. In this space tourists are shielded from the structural violence tourism causes (Büscher & Fletcher, 2017). For example, in Yulara lawns are watered abundantly and hotel rooms have large showerheads, with little consideration for reports of dwindling groundwater in Central Australia. Tourists drink water treated by a reverse osmosis plant, while surrounding communities are often hesitant to drink their water due to unreliable water treatment options or irregular water quality reports (Judd, 2019), as in Mutitjulu.

Not only do all tourists stay in Yulara as it is the only option for accommodation near UKTNP, but many tourism offerings take place within Yulara's private property borders. For tourism operators this exempts them from the need to possess a UKTNP licence for Park entry, which would require them to comply with Anangu protocols and provide a percentage of earnings and jobs to Anangu. Thus, Anangu receive little money from activities undertaken within Yulara, despite tourists' presence being solely contingent on its proximity to UKTNP.

While Anangu possess cultural knowledge that should provide an advantage in tourism, the current geographic arrangement means Anangu must compete with non-Anangu operations located closer to tourists and run in ways which are inflexible to Anangu lifeworlds. As one Parks staff interviewee said, 'it's Anangu modifying to suit the European cultural norms and tourism not the other way around' (fieldwork interview, 20 October 2023). Anangu are acutely aware of these power dynamics. As one Anangu interviewee said, 'we need to control the business otherwise we're just the product' (fieldwork interview, 21 September 2022). At present, this tourism product often involves non-Anangu sharing Anangu knowledge.

As a 1987 review of Anangu tourism noted, 'at Uluru tourists possess far greater power through money, sheer numbers, the historical circumstances leading to the construction of Yulara, and the political power of the tourist industry lobby' (Central Land Council et al., 1987, p. 2). This dynamic continues today, perpetuating a tendency

for the tourism industry to emphasise Anangu need to accommodate and learn guests' ways rather than vice versa. This is evident in a Parks interviewee's comments:

It's not a great fit! You've spent time with Anangu [speaking to interviewer], they don't feel comfortable talking about culture constantly. Tourism involves dealing with aggressive customers, being quite overt and animated, either giving a tour or dealing with issues and being quite forward. And Anangu... that's not Anangu way. (fieldwork interview, 23 March 2023)

In this argument, tourism is taken as the normative object and Anangu the abnormal subject different in relation to it. Yet the interviewee refers not just to cultural differences, but relational dynamics. For example, while Anangu may feel uncomfortable talking about culture due to epistemological differences in knowledge-sharing, there are also relational dynamics with settler tourists rooted in ongoing colonisation and racism that may make knowledge-sharing an uncomfortable experience. Further, many Anangu speak several languages including English such that translating concepts can be challenging. While these are all necessary considerations for making tourism roles successful for some Anangu, by using these relational dynamics to scope the 'fit' of tourism the burden is placed on Anangu to change rather than managing tourist behaviour. Citing 'Anangu way' as the reason for tourism not being a great fit ignores that it is *also* Anangu way to successfully engage in tourism while remaining true to Anangu protocols and epistemologies (for example, the Wilson family runs successful tours adjacent to the Park) and that Anangu have a long history of welcoming visitors in culturally appropriate ways. In highlighting that Anangu bring unique ways of being to the workplace our intention is not to essentialise or homogenise Anangu, but rather to highlight how this difference only comes to matter when tourists' cultural difference is taken as the norm.

Discussion

Examples in this article demonstrate that 'work' is not a shared concept between Anangu and piranpa. As Carty (2011) notes, 'as with the use of terms such as Business, or Law in Aboriginal English, work is not a word we can assume to be just an approximation or passive appropriation of English usage' (p. 68). Our results highlight the need for developing shared understandings between Anangu and piranpa about what meaningful and good 'work' is in inter-cultural settings. While administrative barriers to Anangu employment, such as Australian Public Service hiring requirements, are documented by the SAG Report (Senior Advisory Group, 2021) and Parks Australia is currently responding to these, the issues we document operate at the more insidious level of structurally entrenched ontological and epistemological clashes.

There is a recent successful Central Australian precedent for the kind of inter-cultural understanding, requiring settler reflexivity and adjustment, that we suggest needs to be developed concerning 'work' in inter-cultural tourism destinations. The Uti Kulintjaku project, translating to 'listen properly and understand clearly' (NPY Women's Council, 2023), is well-known and beloved in Central Australia. The Anangu-led project drew upon skilled interpreters, Anangu leaders and healers, and Western medical professionals to develop a shared language and strategies for addressing mental health and wellbeing

in Anangu communities. The project was ‘a framework for a conversation about the underlying psychological forces that drive human behaviours’ (Mahood, 2019). Dudgeon and Togni’s (2017) evaluation of the project found the model had significant potential to be of use in other contexts. Developing a framework for a clear conversation about some of the factors underlying working behaviours may provide greater insight into the repetitious dynamics between Anangu and piranpa in UKTNP. It also might furnish insights into avenues for developing ‘both ways capital’ (Samuel et al., 2022)—workers’ ability to walk competently in both worlds. Other scholars have raised the need for non-Indigenous tourism actors to be more active in undoing colonial power relations and have devised strategies to facilitate this which could also be useful here (see for example Fortin et al., 2021; Stinson, 2024; Tucker, 2009).

Other avenues for change involve modifying tourism offerings to educate tourists about Anangu lifeworlds. In UKTNP there are demonstrated alternatives to settler logics of work that utilise Anangu distinctiveness as part of the offering rather than an impediment. When booking tours with the Wilson family—the only Anangu-run tourism offering currently available in UKTNP—guest information warns that Traditional Owners may be unavailable last minute due to cultural obligations. This warning sets culturally appropriate expectations with tourists before arrival and invites them to reflect on the priorities and temporalities of Anangu lifeworlds. Similar expectation-setting from Yulara could create conditions in which tourists learn not only about culture but learn in culturally appropriate ways. There are international precedents for First Nations groups redefining the cultural protocols that govern tourism activities on their country (see Holmes et al., 2016; Pereiro, 2016). In the Australian context, Curtin and Bird (2022) document examples in which Indigenous peoples set the terms of engagement in tourism operations and Ngurra et al. (2024) show how, through centring cultural protocols and the responsibility of guests, tourism offerings can be reframed around prioritising respectful encounters.

Finally, acknowledging that aspects of the tourism industry may not be modifiable to local ways, Anangu must be able to pursue other means of economic development on their lands. This is currently significantly inhibited by the Park service’s control under the lease arrangement. For example, the researchers heard of Anangu’ interest in creating a solar farm which apparently was rejected by the Park due to environmental impacts. Meanwhile, a proposal from a non-Indigenous company to build a walking trail near Kata Tjuta was greenlit despite some Anangu concerns about cultural heritage impacts.

Conclusion

From the perspective of some piranpa employees, the current generation of Anangu is unemployable and thus the future of Anangu to succeed financially is deferred. A Parks interviewee lamented, ‘what you can do, is the goal we now all want, is to get Anangu into these roles. But that’s 20 or 30 years away’ (fieldwork interview, 18 October 2023). Other interviewees similarly suggested time as the primary factor that may increase Anangu employment, presuming that ‘convergence’ (Altman, 2014, p. 115) will eventually eliminate Indigenous difference enabling Anangu to participate in mainstream ways in the market. While piranpa can participate in UKTNP’s workforce without

proven cultural competencies or Pitjantjatjara skills, Anangu are posited as needing decades to develop the competency to participate. This assumption of Anangu operating at different timescales from non-Anangu perpetuates a 'temporal iteration of orientalism' (Kowal, 2015, p. 94) in which Indigenous peoples are always becoming modern rather than already distinctively occupying modernity. The analytical focus of this research on relations has revealed the necessity of guests' adapting to Indigenous peoples' ways in Indigenous tourism industries in settler colonial contexts rather than vice versa and the potential of these adjustments to enhance tourism offerings. Instead of attempting to ameliorate incommensurable difference we have shown that incommensurability must inform what 'work' is taken to be in UKTNP. In other words, if Anangu are to control and fully participate in tourism industries then Anangu lifeworlds should inform not just the content but the structure of work. This is in recognition that culture is not 'a matter of individual choice, the kind of activity people might participate in after they have secured an education, a job and a mortgage, as a lifestyle option rather than a form of ontological anchorage' (Altman & Hinkson, 2010, p. 191). Indeed, the real bottom line in UKTNP is that without Anangu culture enlivening cultural heritage values, the significance of UKTNP is greatly diminished. Through analysing relations, this article contributes insight into the importance of fine-grained analysis at a quotidian, relational scale of the interactions between Indigenous peoples and guests in settler colonial tourism contexts in order to plot alternative tourism futures.

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Author contributions

CRedit: **Anna Dunn**: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing; **Barry Judd**: Funding acquisition, Investigation, Project administration, Supervision, Writing – review & editing.

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