PIONEER WOMEN WANT OLD PRISON. ERWIN CHLANDA reports.

The National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame in Alice Springs wants to build a $3m museum on the site of the old gaol in Stuart Terrace, incorporating the historic buildings saved from demolition by a vigorous public campaign two years ago. Hall curator Pauline Cockrill says an application is now before the government, which owns the land. The hall already has a grant of $77,000 from the Federal Centenary of Federation fund for the project, and Ms Cockrill says she hopes the NT Government will support the scheme, potentially a major tourist attraction. The museum is now in the Old Court House in Hartley Street, much too small for the present exhibits, let alone proposed displays. The new building would be on the western side of the Old Gaol complex, with the option to expand into the strip of land between the gaol wall and Telegraph Terrace. The old cells and office buildings would be retained and opened up to the public.

DELAYA Territory government spokesman says there has been some delay to consideration of the application because of an objection to the site from a committee member, Molly Clark. Ms Cockrill says Mrs Clark, the president of the organisation, was the only dissenting member. She is keen to see the museum on a new site outside the town centre. However, Ms Cockrill says the decision to apply for the old gaol was made "not in haste", after a year long study by a subcommittee. "The site is next to the Flying Doctor Service, at walking distance from most hotels, it's a heritage site and we know the government is keen for us to apply," says Ms Cockrill: "It would be much harder to get support for a site outside town." Meanwhile heritage campaigners have been able to delay demolition of "The Ritz", in Parsons Street, a 1930s dwelling with a colourful history D in part because the town's first brothel was attached to it. There is also an "urban myth" associated with the site, telling of buried treasure. Demolition started on the weekend but heritage campaigners discovered that no permit had been obtained for the work. The house belonged to opal and mica miners Elsie May "Ma" Jenkins and Hector Norman "Hec" Jenkins and was home to a "fabulous gem and mineral collection, particularly opals," according to a study by the National Trust. One story claims that the collection included a yellow sapphire which the Australian Government wanted to give to Queen Mary in the Jubilee Year, but did not. When the Jenkinses attempted to give the gem to the Queen "it turned out she could not accept private gifts of that nature," according to an account by aviator Eddie Connellan. Although the trust has made a detailed study of the house, no moves have been made to list it for heritage protection.

GROG, DRUGS FOCUS FOR NEW CRIME PREVENTION.

Ntsafe, the government's new crime prevention body, will embrace alcohol and drug programs, according to Bob Fields, Police Commander for the Southern Region. He says the Ntsafe coordination committee now being formed will not "subsume or take over" programs but assess their effectiveness and examine or recommend opportunities for cooperation. Commander Fields says the committee, will act as an "umbrella to build on the good work already done by many organisations". The group, to be chaired by the Police Commissioner, will be reporting to the government. Commander Fields says Ntsafe will assist existing organisations and programs, as well as new initiatives put forward by private or government interests."Many organisations, groups and people working in the area of crime prevention have achieved good results over a number of years and deserve ongoing support." At the same time, many organisations have common goals but D through a lack of awareness or communications D seem to be working in isolation or marching in different directions," says Commander Fields."It is now more important than ever that we all work together to ensure that the resources and funding available for crime prevention are used to greatest effect and Ntsafe will be looking to coordinate this outcome." The coordinating committee is likely to receive advice from "regional crime prevention committees and working groups" to be established either by the committee itself, or as a result of community initiatives."There is no reason why Borroloola or Yuendumu, for example, couldn't have their own crime prevention committees and I would expect that to happen as Ntsafe evolves." These regional committees may be chaired by the senior police officers in towns or bush communities. Commander Fields says the membership of the main committee has not yet been determined but is likely to include senior departmental officers, representatives of non-government organisations and members of the public. He says he is confident that there will be a strong representation from Central Australia. The Alice News understands the committee will get a secretariat based in Darwin with an annual budget of $500,000.

LET'S GO JET SKIING ON THE SEWERAGE PONDS! Report by EMILY KANAAN.

Turning the Ilparpa sewerage ponds into a man-made lake for jet skiing was one suggestion when I spoke to some Year Eight students about how to make Alice Springs a more "fun" place for teenagers. They had quite a few not-so-practical
ALICE HAS MELBOURNE CUP OF CAMEL RACING: LOCAL SUPPORTERS. Report by

kicking the footy around.

their music. But despite the seriousness of their mission, they say they enjoy a beer like any other bloke, and like

music they composed and performed, but resisted being signed by "labels" because they didn't want to lose control over

they hosted Music TV shows seen by more than 90 million people across Europe. They sold 20,000 CDs and tapes of


the body with the purest water possible. "Despite their youth the brothers have an impressive record in television and

contaminates the cells in the body and they cannot reproduce in a healthy way. "It is of critical importance to provide

drinking enough water and drinking poisoned water causes premature aging and disease. "Contaminated water

heightened awareness". An example of their style is a message about water on their web site. One page says: "Not

solutions." We shouldn't judge people, point the finger. "Above all, they're seeking to generate a "sense of fulfilment and

to be fun." There is no right or wrong. All are right. We need to listen to each other and come up with positive global

with the knowledge they're getting at the Earth Sanctuary, and that they get a "feeling of belonging". They say: "It's got

eyes of the mainstream scientific community doesn't seem to be as important as ensuring that people are comfortable

with the knowledge they're getting at the Earth Sanctuary, and that they get a "feeling of belonging". They say: "It's got

from earthquakes. Safety is a preoccupation for the three: they are storing enough food and water to be self-sufficient

for at least eight months, and they have installed a water purification plant developed by the US space agency, NASA. "It's like wearing a seat belt," they say. "You do it not because you expect an accident to happen, but in case it
does." While their message to the public will be entertaining, it will urge active involvement in issues of the

environment, "to do it rather than just pay for it" through such organisations as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife

Fund." The world is a super organism," they say. "Humans are just one of at least 30 million species of plants and

animals. "We all breathe the same air." The brothers have a relaxed attitude towards their "research": being right in the

eyes of the mainstream scientific community doesn't seem to be as important as ensuring that people are comfortable

with the knowledge they're getting at the Earth Sanctuary, and that they get a "feeling of belonging". They say: "It's got

to be fun." There is no right or wrong. All are right. We need to listen to each other and come up with positive global

solutions. "We shouldn't judge people, point the finger." Above all, they're seeking to generate a "sense of fulfilment and

heightened awareness". An example of their style is a message about water on their web site. One page says: "Not

drinking enough water and drinking poisoned water causes premature aging and disease. "Contaminated water

contains the cells in the body and they cannot reproduce in a healthy way. "It is of critical importance to provide

the body with the purest water possible." Despite their youth the brothers have an impressive record in television and


they hosted Music TV shows seen by more than 90 million people across Europe. They sold 20,000 CDs and tapes of

music they composed and performed, but resisted being signed by "labels" because they didn't want to lose control over

their music. But despite the seriousness of their mission, they say they enjoy a beer like any other bloke, and like

kicking the footy around.

HOLIDAY ON THE PLANET!

Three brothers from Melbourne who made their mark in European show business, and one of whom was a star for

three years in the Australian soapie Neighbours, are launching a tourism venture in The Alice with a strong slant

towards environmental activism. Ben Falzon, 27, Dan, 25 and Tom, 24, have set up a complex on 40 hectares of land

leased from the operators of the airport, in Colonel Rose Drive, including a house, open air theatre and a "hybrid"

power station producing electricity with solar, wind and diesel generators. The outdoor entertainment on the top of a hill

area affords a spectacular view of bushland, the Todd River valley and the eastern MacDonnell Ranges. Their brochure

says "Welcome to Earth Sanctuary - world nature centre" and their letterhead proclaims Milikom Pty Ltd, the operating

company, as an "Environmental Defence Network". The brothers say they will get their message across in three-hour

tours of the site ($69 adults, $37 children), including talks and Aboriginal dancing, but also through "info-tainment" on

videos and in music. A feature film, Contact, is nearing completion, and a web site Ð www.milikom.com Ð is in

development. They say Central Australia is ideal for their venture because it is has a "vibrant atmosphere" and

proximity to Aboriginals whose "powerful ancient knowledge" of the environment can be combined with modern

information and wisdom from other cultures around the world. The brothers say the region is geologically stable, safe

from earthquakes. Safety is a preoccupation for the three: they are storing enough food and water to be self-sufficient

for at least eight months, and they have installed a water purification plant developed by the US space agency, NASA. "It's like wearing a seat belt," they say. "You do it not because you expect an accident to happen, but in case it
does." While their message to the public will be entertaining, it will urge active involvement in issues of the

environment, "to do it rather than just pay for it" through such organisations as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife

Fund." The world is a super organism," they say. "Humans are just one of at least 30 million species of plants and

animals. "We all breathe the same air." The brothers have a relaxed attitude towards their "research": being right in the

eyes of the mainstream scientific community doesn't seem to be as important as ensuring that people are comfortable

with the knowledge they're getting at the Earth Sanctuary, and that they get a "feeling of belonging". They say: "It's got

to be fun." There is no right or wrong. All are right. We need to listen to each other and come up with positive global

solutions. "We shouldn't judge people, point the finger." Above all, they're seeking to generate a "sense of fulfilment and

heightened awareness". An example of their style is a message about water on their web site. One page says: "Not

drinking enough water and drinking poisoned water causes premature aging and disease. "Contaminated water

contains the cells in the body and they cannot reproduce in a healthy way. "It is of critical importance to provide

the body with the purest water possible." Despite their youth the brothers have an impressive record in television and


they hosted Music TV shows seen by more than 90 million people across Europe. They sold 20,000 CDs and tapes of

music they composed and performed, but resisted being signed by "labels" because they didn't want to lose control over

their music. But despite the seriousness of their mission, they say they enjoy a beer like any other bloke, and like

kicking the footy around.

HOLIDAY ON THE PLANET!

Three brothers from Melbourne who made their mark in European show business, and one of whom was a star for

three years in the Australian soapie Neighbours, are launching a tourism venture in The Alice with a strong slant

towards environmental activism. Ben Falzon, 27, Dan, 25 and Tom, 24, have set up a complex on 40 hectares of land

leased from the operators of the airport, in Colonel Rose Drive, including a house, open air theatre and a "hybrid"

power station producing electricity with solar, wind and diesel generators. The outdoor entertainment on the top of a hill

area affords a spectacular view of bushland, the Todd River valley and the eastern MacDonnell Ranges. Their brochure

says "Welcome to Earth Sanctuary - world nature centre" and their letterhead proclaims Milikom Pty Ltd, the operating

company, as an "Environmental Defence Network". The brothers say they will get their message across in three-hour

tours of the site ($69 adults, $37 children), including talks and Aboriginal dancing, but also through "info-tainment" on

videos and in music. A feature film, Contact, is nearing completion, and a web site Ð www.milikom.com Ð is in

development. They say Central Australia is ideal for their venture because it is has a "vibrant atmosphere" and

proximity to Aboriginals whose "powerful ancient knowledge" of the environment can be combined with modern

information and wisdom from other cultures around the world. The brothers say the region is geologically stable, safe

from earthquakes. Safety is a preoccupation for the three: they are storing enough food and water to be self-sufficient

for at least eight months, and they have installed a water purification plant developed by the US space agency, NASA. "It's like wearing a seat belt," they say. "You do it not because you expect an accident to happen, but in case it
does." While their message to the public will be entertaining, it will urge active involvement in issues of the

environment, "to do it rather than just pay for it" through such organisations as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife

Fund." The world is a super organism," they say. "Humans are just one of at least 30 million species of plants and

animals. "We all breathe the same air." The brothers have a relaxed attitude towards their "research": being right in the

eyes of the mainstream scientific community doesn't seem to be as important as ensuring that people are comfortable

with the knowledge they're getting at the Earth Sanctuary, and that they get a "feeling of belonging". They say: "It's got

to be fun." There is no right or wrong. All are right. We need to listen to each other and come up with positive global

solutions. "We shouldn't judge people, point the finger." Above all, they're seeking to generate a "sense of fulfilment and

heightened awareness". An example of their style is a message about water on their web site. One page says: "Not

drinking enough water and drinking poisoned water causes premature aging and disease. "Contaminated water

contains the cells in the body and they cannot reproduce in a healthy way. "It is of critical importance to provide

the body with the purest water possible." Despite their youth the brothers have an impressive record in television and


they hosted Music TV shows seen by more than 90 million people across Europe. They sold 20,000 CDs and tapes of

music they composed and performed, but resisted being signed by "labels" because they didn't want to lose control over

their music. But despite the seriousness of their mission, they say they enjoy a beer like any other bloke, and like

kicking the footy around.
"Alice Springs is the Melbourne Cup of camel racing and always will be," says Private Shorty Smith, who has won major races throughout Australia. "Everyone would like to have the Alice Springs Camel Cup on their mantle piece. "It's the only meet in Australia without prize money and I'd hate it to become a money event." It's doing so much for the community. "I'm very pleased to see that the Lions Clubs are keeping it as a charity meet. "The entertainment is good, it's a great spectator venue, everybody can see what's going on." Pte Smith, a past winner of Cup races in Alice Springs, Bouria, Marree, Pt Augusta and Albury, was responding to claims by Paddy McHugh, the president of the Bouria camel racing club, that its three-day carnival is set to become the nation's prime camel racing event. The Bouria and Alice Springs fixtures next month will be on the same weekend, and Mr McHugh has claimed that owners throughout Australia will be favouring western Queensland event because of the prize money on offer. Local camel racer Crispin Gargan, son-in-law of legendary camel man Noel Fullerton, has poured cold water on Mr McHugh's claims and the standards of racing in Bouria: "I've raced there," he says. "Our camels have won and lost there and we are going to Alice." They have standing starts, where three out of every six handlers get run over at the start. "They grade the track out of the bush a week before the event." They put up plastic paper as side rails. "They only have six camels in each race, due to horse rules, and competitors face changing rules, racing conditions and distances on the day of the race. "Smoke from the burning pit next to the track covers it at the 250m mark." There is no insurance for owners or handlers and riders and the race is started by a bloke waving a flag 20 metres away. "Is this professional? I don't think so." Mr Gargan says Mr McHugh "has talked the Queensland government into putting in the prize money." "There is no local sponsorship. "Never have I seen more than 1000 people there at a race. "Alice gets 4000 to 5000. "There are six camels in each race against our 15, five races a day against our 11. "It costs $6 to get into ours, $25 to get into theirs." Mr Gargan says this year's Alice Camel Cup had to be delayed because "the Show Society of Alice Springs was not prepared to allow for both events [the Show and the Camel Cup] to be run together. "Nor would they allow the Cup to be run the weekend before that because of a pony event. "The trustees created the conflict of dates [between Bouria and Alice Springs], not the Lions Club." Gargan says there will be a shortfall of competitors in Alice Springs this year, "but that just shows where peoples' principles lie." If they want to chase money, so be it. "But [Noel Fullerton's Camel] farm has always guaranteed the Lions Club as many camels as required. "The very minimum we have ever taken in is 20. "This year it will be 24. We do it for charity. Not for money." Let's state why they are bypassing Alice: they are sick of getting beaten. "This farm has won the Cup 25 times. "McHugh has been here and lost. "Only Bob Kettle and Shorty from the Army from Victoria have won it. "Alice Springs has the only purpose built racetrack in the country and the only race meet which has full insurance for everyone. "We have the fastest times ever recorded and the largest crowd attendances. "We have the most races, the most camels and the safest race rules. "No one has been seriously injured racing camels in Alice Springs. "It is Alice Springs which is professional, not Bouria." Mr McHugh's claims of opportunities for exporting racing camels to the Arab world, Mr Gargan says: "I can tell you from experience that no Australian camel will ever come against an Arab camel and win. "Nor would I like to see it happen. "Australians, and indeed most countries other than the UAE, see camel racing as a spectator sport. "They don't bet on it and they don't care who wins. "They care about who comes last, who goes backwards, who doesn't start and which camel runs halfway around then turns about. "The day an Australian camel matches it with an Arab is the day the spectacular and popular event of the Alice Springs Camel Cup is made defunct."

MONEY MAY RUN OUT AT CRUCIAL TIME FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS. Report by KIERAN FINNANE.

Music and horse-riding are the "carrots" used to get a group of young boys to come to school. If they do their lessons in the morning, they get to play music in the afternoon, from Monday to Thursday, and on Fridays they go horse-riding. By dint of turning up almost every day, they are starting to make leaps and bounds in learning to read and write. Their attendance has gone from irregular or non-existent to very good. One boy received a special award at the end of the semester for having missed only one day in the last term. Five boys had missed no more than 10 days in the last six months. These are gratifying "runs on the board" for the imaginative and flexible approach to learning taken at the Irrkerlantye Learning Centre. Hailed by the Collins Review as an example of good practice in Indigenous education yet in need of material support, Irrkerlantye is once again struggling to find funds to maintain essential parts of its program. These are the elements funded by Tangentyere Council out of a grant drawing on the Northern Territory Government's Wine Cask Levy, the resources of which have shrunk following a High Court ruling limiting its application. The grant of $76,000 last financial year was used to pay the wages of Community Development Officer, Peter Brown, to top up the wages of a cook and a bus driver, and to fund the operational costs of the learning centre's two 14 seater busses. The funding problem had been flagged well in advance, according to Tangentyere's Community Development Manager, Mike Bowden, but by the end of term no other sources of funding had been identified. It looked like Mr Brown would have no job to come back to, a personally difficult situation, and a disaster for the program. Irrkerlantye advocates an "intergenerational approach to education through a holistic model of community development". This means that it involves whole families, not just the children, in learning, and in working towards fulfilling their aspirations. Helping the families to define what they want and need to do to have a better life, and to plan
spent the next three years. In that time all of the families who had escaped with them were sent back to Vietnam. "Only
the rain and wind and the huge waves. Once they reached Hong Kong, they were detained in a refugee camp where they
one to two months. Even so, he describes the journey as very dangerous, and at times he thought they would all die in
bad, in some boats there were 200," says Tinh. Their sons were just eight and ten years old. They were at sea for 11
days, surviving on rice and dried fish. Again, Tinh feels that they were lucky as he knows of boats remaining at sea for
before and since, they risked everything, putting to sea in a small wooden boat with 50 to 60 others. "That wasn't so
It's a bit like an intensive care unit in a hospital. We are dealing with people whose lives have been fractured, but they are growing in strength all the time in terms of being able to deal with their families' problems." Mr Bowden says the current funding crisis, delayed for two months by juggling with funds from another part of the program, is a problem for the NT Government, and more particularly for the Education Department. "The department knows these partnerships are worthwhile. "Tangentyere has been like an introduction agency, providing them with the way to enter into an effective working relationship with this sector of the community." But the money has to come from somewhere, and we've no longer got it. The department needs to take responsibility for the funding." The Department of Education had not responded to a request for comment at the time of going to press.

VEGIES TAKE LAN FROM 'NAM TO NEW HOME. Report by KIERAN FINNANE.

These frosty Saturday mornings, as you arrive at the organic market garden off Heffernan Road, there are fires burning in shallow metal dishes at either side of the shed from where an always cheerful if sometimes shivering Lan sells her produce. The emblematic fire dishes and the image as you drive past on any evening towards sunset, of Lan D her real name is Dung Thi Le D and her husband, Tinh Duy Nguyen, bent over their crops may tempt you to imagine this couple in smooth transition from the time-honoured peasant culture of Vietnam. In fact, the path that has led them to Alice has been anything but smooth and neither of them had previous farming experience in their adult lives. In the port city of Haiphong in North Vietnam, Lan ran her own business as a hairdresser and dressmaker; Tinh worked as a dockside crane-operator. They were teenagers in the war years of 1966 to 1974 which they describe as "very terrible". Tinh recalls the "big fighting" which started on April 16, 1972 and lasted for about 11 days, with bombs dropping from "many B52s and F111s." "We never forget the time," says Lan, "when we walked past many people dying on the road, many dead animals, all the houses gone." "In my mind that time makes me not like Americans." "Not American people, the American government," Tinh quietly suggests. The end of the war, however, was not the end of their troubles. Lan and Tinh married and their sons Tuan and Zung were born. Under the communist regime, they found it difficult to do well unless you were a supporter of the government. Lan says: "If you see big houses in Vietnam, the people who live in them work for the government." Nonetheless, Lan's business prospered. Then in 1988, the communist authorities sent her on a supposed study trip to Czechoslovakia D "to help" her business, they said. When she got there, she was put to work in a factory that had nothing to do with her line of business and kept there against her will for two years. When she was finally allowed to return, she and Tinh resolved to leave Vietnam. Like so many before and since, they risked everything, putting to sea in a small wooden boat with 50 to 60 others. "That wasn't so bad, in some boats there were 200," says Tinh. Their sons were just eight and ten years old. They were at sea for 11 days, surviving on rice and dried fish. Again, Tinh feels that they were lucky as he knows of boats remaining at sea for one to two months. Even so, he describes the journey as very dangerous, and at times he thought they would all die in the rain and wind and the huge waves. Once they reached Hong Kong, they were detained in a refugee camp where they spent the next three years. In that time all of the families who had escaped with them were sent back to Vietnam." Only
JOURNEY BACK TO MONGREL DOWNS. Book Review by KIERAN FINNANE.

At the end of her memoir, Craft for a dry lake, Kim Mahood D daughter of the Mahoods formerly of Mongrel Downs in the Tanami D asks herself what is the story she is trying to tell.She answers:"It is in part the story of a place ... It began with an Aboriginal story, of which I know a little, but not much. [The explorer] Davidson's journey opened up the Granites and the Tanami goldmines. My father's journey established a stock route and a cattle station. My own journey affects nothing but my own life."Not true. Her journey has led to the writing of a thoughtful and moving book, until after 9pm, but "I'm happy," says this indomitable spirit."If I make people happy, then I'm happy." She starts in summer at 5.30am and works till 11; after that she goes inside to do her books, but returns to the garden at 4.30 and then works till 8pm. The family don't have dinner until after 9pm, but "I'm happy," says this indomitable spirit.'If I make people happy, then I'm happy.'
He pursues her university-educated mother D she cuts a very appealing figure, a fearless journalist with motorbike and camera D and they marry in circumstances that rise to the occasion of the best Outback folklore. Then with the birth of Kim and the start of her own memories these characters, Joe and Marie, seem to step out of their own skins and be perceived "through a glass darkly". The glass is twofold: it is Mahood's art making D the kind of writing she wants to achieve, mixed genre, layer woven into layer D coupled with her analytical thinking; and it is her sense of delicacy vis a vis her parents, perhaps more particularly her mother, who is still very much alive. The book is haunted by pain that is more than the pain of grief over her father's death. Mahood names it D it is her father's alcoholism and all that flows from it; she circles around it at times, for example, in the passage where her father takes her out of school and they drive together from pub to pub between Perth and Albany; she describes it and analyses it, but she never takes us to meet it, to become more intimately acquainted with it. Similarly her parents' love story and marriage shadow the book, as does her own personal life as an adult. One could almost imagine, on the basis of what is written, that the distance and degree of stress that grows in her and her father's relationship arise because of her artistic choices alone. This guardedness, honourable as it may be, disappoints an expectation of the strand of her book that is family and personal history, yet there is much else on offer, and the whole makes for a rich reading experience. Mahood makes many interesting characterisations of Outback culture. An early example is her passage on its men: "There were men scattered all through the country whose lives seemed forever on the verge of being overtaken by fate ... They seemed always to be injuring themselves. Bits of windmills fell on them, horses kicked them, bad food and too much rum poisoned them, minor extremities were torn off by ropes and machinery. They lost their swags and their dogs and their jobs. They got stranded in Queensland with no money and broken-down cars and pregnant girlfriends. They walked into brawls without looking ... They seemed unbearably foolish and fragile, and my child's heart suffered torment that they seemed always in such danger." There are equally interesting reflections about women, interspersed with her experience of attending, during the journey after her father's death, a "big women's business ceremony", across the border in Western Australia: "I cannot imagine such an event in the years when I lived in this country. Then, the notion that Aboriginal women had any sort of power would have been an absurdity. Now I am travelling towards an occasion which has been made possible through government funding and the involvement of white women coordinators (city girls for the most part, drawn by dreams and political ideals)." She remarks on the invisibility of women's lives in the lore of the Outback, an exception being Olive Pink, whom she remembers as "the town witch" of childhood, and, of course, Daisy Bates. She wonders "whether the only women who could exist on their own terms in the country were eccentric and mad" or whether "it was the other way around. Maybe the Outback allowed room for a personality like Miss Pink's to expand in all its cranky formidable visionary uniqueness. She pushed a little wider the gap opened by Daisy Bates, into which white women have continued to infiltrate in growing numbers." These observations are matched with well-observed snapshot portraits of the host of individuals that gave rise to them: from the exotic Ferdie of her father's stock camp, who at age 10 had "abandoned his parents" and walked with his older brother and sister along the railway line to Alice; to a number of the contemporary white women associated with "the burgeoning industry of Aboriginal culture". By tracking her father's cryptical station diary, filled out by her own memories, and by pondering the explorer Davidson's journal, Mahood also tells some great stories of white men and their relationship to the land. Although she is determined to go beyond the anecdotal character of classic Outback literature, she nonetheless has her own good store, including that of the thirst-crazed cattle stampeding a mission's communal shower block: "They crammed into it, licking at the taps and leaking shower roses, until the walls of the building burst apart..." However, the passages that leave the most lasting impression are those that gave the book its title, her beautifully written encounters with the dry (sometimes wet) lakes of the Tanami, as "the girl" of memory and as the grieving woman of the book's present. The dry lake passages hold the book's many strands together, captivatingly, just as she herself felt held by Monkarrurpa (Lake Ruth), "this old, still place ... like a cupped palm."