

(a) In Indigenous Australian life today, power and authority, among other things, is greatly affected by social class, ethnicity and prejudice. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have had their land and culture invaded upon, and all the ~~above~~ <sup>above</sup> mentioned issues come into play in creating the unequal society we live in.

Indigenous Australians make up approximately 2.1% of the population according to the 1996 census, yet make up a much larger percentage of those with a lower socioeconomic status, ~~the~~ those involved in crime, drug and alcohol abuse and those with poor health and educational levels. These statistics show serious inequalities and differences between Indigenous Australians and the rest of the population, the reason for this stems back to early days in Australian history. When the English began to colonise Australian territory, they did so with much disregard to the initial ~~owners~~ dwellers on the land, taking over and enforcing their

own laws and ~~and~~ culture upon the new country which had in fact been inhabited for ~~centuries~~ thousands of years. Because of their peaceful nature and curiosity, Indigenous Australians fell victim to ~~the~~ the foreign authorities and were deemed a race to be conquered. Today, true reconciliation for such an unjustified past has yet to be made. The present government hesitated to apologise ~~the~~ <sup>in</sup> fear that <sup>that</sup> would be taking the blame for embarrassing racist actions taken by past leaders, actions like <sup>the</sup> ones which caused the stolen generation, fostering out Aboriginal children into white families directly from their competent natural parents. Enforcing such cruel and demoralising throws of power by whites on Aboriginals has had lasting effects. Feelings ~~of~~ of resentment and contempt when forced to live in western society leads to lower socio-economic status in that not only is it difficult to conform to societies expectations, but perhaps some Aboriginal Australians feel they don't want to. Although crime usually comes from need, and need is caused by poverty and abuse of

illicit substances and ~~and~~ alcohol, it is a catch-22 cycle. This is why some means of positive prejudice have been installed in the form of Indigenous support groups and government benefits, and also the allocation of job positions for Aboriginal persons.

Yet another conflict has arisen involving power and authority and Indigenous Australians, and it is just that - who holds the power and authority over Aboriginal citizens - white law or traditional law?

In areas where tribes continue to live in a more traditional lifestyle on communities and reserves, tribal law still exists. Spearing, lashing and in some severe cases death, are all part of tribal law, and police and white justice systems are in turmoil over what to do concerning what should happen to criminals convicted in these areas. Many have suffered both white penalties, gaol or charges, and tribal law, and this is an obvious inequality. It is in question at this moment what the future may hold, yet whilst this proceeds, some criminals, from petty thieves

to murderers are being punished twice, and white police do not know how to respond.

With Indigenous Australians living in different societies all over Australia, with varying degrees of their traditional culture left in their life, power and authority remain issues affected in different ways.