

**'Indigenous' sense of place and community in a
small island: Norfolk Island and the Pitcairn-
descendant population**

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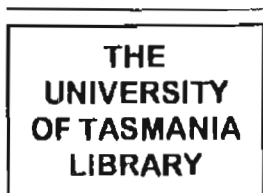
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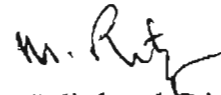
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Statement of Authenticity

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution and to the best of my knowledge and belief the thesis contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by other persons except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Ritzau', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Abstract

This qualitative research project has highlighted a number of issues about islandness relating to identity, place, and belonging. The research examined how certain Pitcairn-descendants mobilise a claim that they are the indigenous population of Norfolk Island. The claim is mobilised from three main positions: they are the first (or is that last?) whole people to settle Norfolk island as a permanent, inter-generational ‘homeland’; they have a surviving culture, based on that developed on Pitcairn by their forebears, a culture that continues and evolves; and they maintain their own language.

The claim of indigeneity being made manifests in two main sub-communities of Pitcairn-descendant Norfolk Islanders; those making explicit political statements of an ‘indigenous identity’; and those making claims implicit in a lived and performed lifestyle – an ‘indigenous cultural life’. Both are people ‘at home’ and engaged with their environment. It is noteworthy that only among the first does the political claim to this particular identity appear to require an opponent (in this case the Australian government) to legitimate the claim for indigenous identity; equally the claim cannot exist without that opponent.

The claim implied by those descendants living and performing an ‘indigenous cultural life’ does not require or contest anything from such a political opposition and so is not engaged in the same political debate.

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