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Towards a decolonizing practice:

a qualitative inquiry informed by non-Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders working together.

Thesis

submitted by

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ABSTRACT

From 1788, the colonization of Australia meant forcibly imposed white Westminster knowledges, systems, values, beliefs, rules and regulations. The knowledges, values, beliefs and Lores of the Indigenous inhabitants were overturned, ignored and denied. Dominant western narratives of white 'settlement' provided the foundations for non-Indigenous practices ranging from 'control' and the assimilative 'stolen generations', to the criminal atrocities that supported non-Indigenous people's 'acquisition' of Aboriginal Land. As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews became pushed into the background, and white western ways became entrenched, establishing the context for current relationships between many Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Consequently, various systems of service delivery in Australia including social services, education and health services have been infused with invisible power and privilege at their core. This is the 'inheritance' of non-Indigenous practitioners in Australia, to the detriment of many Indigenous peoples and communities.

Methodologically, the inquiry has been guided Martin (2008) and her Quampie methodology. Critical race theory and whiteness studies were found to provide an appropriate lens for the study. Data was narratively contributed during sixteen

interviews that were conducted with Indigenous and non-Indigenous professionals. Locations included the remote settings of Northeast Arnhemland, Cape York and Torres Straits, and the urban settings of Cairns and Darwin. Many of the Cairns participants also lived and worked in Cape York.

These contributors have described the core elements that frame a culturally-secure practice paradigm. The findings reveal that decolonizing practices would be made up of a number of processes underpinned by respect for Indigenous sovereignty, and responsibility and accountability for one's own engagement. For non-Indigenous practitioners this would require active interrogation of their own standpoint, worldview and practice framework, and deep critical reflection on questions of 'what they do, how they do it and why they do it that way'. Such reflexivity has the potential to inform other Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing.

During this research I have sought to demonstrate, create and enact the space required for a practice grounded in relatedness with Indigenous worldviews. The processes described here represent my respect, responsibilities and accountabilities to many Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders who contributed to this research and to my own deep reflections as a practitioner. This research demonstrates the journey and the decolonizing standpoint needed for improved non-Indigenous social work practice and related health services in areas of service provision, social policy, and community work. It is framed by critical, ethical and socially-just ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Ph.D.

PLEASE NOTE:

As suggested by the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health in their Indigenous Research Reform Agenda document, I will not use the word 'Indigenous' in a generic disrespectful way. I always use capital letters for the words 'Aboriginal', 'Torres Strait Islanders' and Indigenous. I also use the capitalized version of a word when it applies to an Entity or Being, as a mark of respect far greater than words and language can express.

Part 1:   THE RESEARCH: what, why, and how?

Chapter 1:   KNOWING

Introduction

> …you know, I've never been able to talk this way… hmm, I'd forgotten
>
> that I have these things (George, personal communication, 2002).

As a very Senior Man in a remote Aboriginal Community, George was part of a conversation about what qualities the community would contribute towards the wellbeing of children. After several emotional attempts to speak, this was his response. For George, it was the clear articulation of his experiences as an Aboriginal man in Australia.

I acknowledge this research is deeply woven with my journey as researcher and community worker. 'Critical events' such as this one have prompted my deep reflection on the impacts of colonization in Australia, the manifestation of systemic privilege, and the ways in which alternative knowledges and worldviews have been excluded from dominant discourses (Martin, 2001; Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Nakata, 2008; Larkin, personal communication, May 8th, 2012). I had become increasingly conscious of the impacts of practices and decisions by those in positions of power, and I recognized that these were structurally similar to colonization behaviours. My growing awareness promoted reflection, reading and yarning with like-minded people to understand more about these dynamics.

Tucker's (1994) book *Too Many Captain Cooks* has graphically described the sea-born arrival of various European explorers from 1606 through until 30th April

1770 when Cook's men stepped ashore at Botany Bay. The Europeans chose to name the People of this Country by a single generalizing word – 'Aborigine', from the Latin *ab origine*, meaning 'from the beginning' (Tucker, 1994). These new arrivals disregarded the reality, or even the possibility that there were over two hundred language groups or nations across this continent of original inhabitants.

For Indigenous Peoples, the Lores that had guided their ways from ancestral times became violated and disrupted by the white-man's arrival and occupation of Australia. Colonization sought to disregard, disenfranchise and subjugate Indigenous People and their knowledges and practices (Martin, 2001; Pearson, 2000; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

Basing the title of his book on a 1987 painting by Northern Territory Aboriginal man, Paddy Wainburranga: *One Captain Cook: all different places*, Tucker (1994) described the range of early non-Indigenous encounters that provided a framework for race relations in Australia. A more reconciled, harmonious future would only be achieved when non-Indigenous Australians owned their history and acknowledged past attitudes and actions (Tucker, 1994).

Wainburranga noted: "...I paint history for everybody else. Enjoy your history: makes you look straight'' - dryly inviting the non-Indigenous person to reflect deeply on whether they really are 'straight' (in Tucker, 1994, p. 7). An eminent contributor to this research spoke similarly from her worldview: "...whitefellas 'trucked us over' ... we've told you enough - it's now up to whitefellas to work out how to fix it up..." (Martin, personal communication, May 5th, 2007).

It is true that subsequent Australian governments have provided ongoing resources towards addressing Indigenous disadvantage. However, a range of official reports have criticized the complete absence of trusting relationships between bureaucracies, social service providers, and Aboriginal stakeholders, and the way that those services have been *imposed* on Indigenous Australians (Altman & Hinkson, 2007; Anderson & Wild, 2007; Gordon, Hallahan, & Henry, 2002; Law Reform Commission of Western Australia, 2006).

Research topic

...I believe in the importance of history in informing one's sense of identity in the present, and in the relationship to shaping one's perceptions for the future, both on an individual and on a national level, since any nation is a collection of individuals (Bennett, cited in Tucker, 1994, p. 8).

Relationships between non-Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Australians have been constructed on and dominated by white law from 1770 and 1788 onwards (Martin, 2001; Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Nakata, 2008). White 'settlement' of Australia has been based on the colonizers' assumptions that this Country did not belong to anyone prior to their arrival – that it was 'available for the taking' and they were at liberty to claim it as their own. Just as their standpoint informed the colonization of Australia, the white legal system reinforced their sense of entitlement to acquire the Land (Martin, 2001; Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Nakata, 2008). This legacy continued. It was not until 1992 that

the Mabo Decision overturned the concept of Terra Nullius. Over two hundred years post-settlement, the Australian non-Indigenous legal system judged, granted and 'attributed' Indigenous Peoples with 'Rights of entitlement' over their Traditional Lands (Martin, 2001; Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Nakata, 2008).

From the time of Cook's ownership proclamation in the name of Great Britain, a white worldview positioned Indigenous Peoples as being inferior, 'other' and 'less than' the white settlers. The original inhabitants were viewed as subjects to be administered, managed, removed, colonized, physically and culturally debased, and 'bred out' (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2007; Nakata, 2008). This has been fully recorded in non-Indigenous policies and Indigenous Stories since colonization. Cootamundra man, Bob Glanville pointed to the entrenched worldview that underpinned such decision-making:

> ...that assimilation policy was such a terrible thing...it was act white, be white and think white... a strong and beautiful culture... ignored and tried to be pushed aside over the years, the genocide of a beautiful culture (Glanville, 2012).

Clearly dispossession, colonial rule and racism have shaped the lives of Indigenous peoples in Australia from those times and continued to manifest through differential access to employment, housing, and education:

> ...the opportunities and comfortable lifestyle available to most Australians have been denied to generations of Indigenous people. As

a result some of Australia's original inhabitants suffer from what has been described as Fourth World standards of health. This is out of place in a country that prides itself on egalitarianism and a fair go for all (Carson, Dunbar, Chenhall & Bailie, 2007, p. 1).

Research is a means of taking action through knowledge. When we are more informed, we are better positioned to ask the right questions and to take positive action (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Martin, 2008; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Developing knowledge from practice wisdom provides an opportunity to contribute to a culture of thoughtful and reflective responses in complex social contexts (Fook, 2002; Young & Zubrzycki, 2011). For social welfare workers knowledge of context is imperative.

Research questions and aims

In Australia, various non-Indigenous social systems have articulated their assumptions and intentions regarding 'good practice'. These include the Federal and State Government systems, education systems, child protection systems, and health, mental health and legal systems.

Such systems have all been informed and inculcated with knowledge from a number of sources. Formal education, life experience, professional codes of ethical conduct, practice wisdom, and research all contribute to the knowledge from which social and health practices are drawn. However, from a pedagogical perspective, Freire (1973) was clear that life experiences and the environment around us shape how we think, behave and act, and impact on how we learn.

There has been wide documentation on the excesses of institutional power based on, and created through the centring of dominant knowledges. So too have been the debates about social work and its search for meaning (Fook, 2002; Ife, 2001; Young & Zubrzycki, 2011; Young, Zubrzycki, Green, Jones, Stratton & Bessarab, 2013). For Fook, the practitioner has a responsibility to test and document practice in ways that are accessible to the wider profession but "...often we do not talk about it because we do not have the frameworks with which to discuss it" (2002).

Calma and Priday (2011) provided an extensive analysis of the role of social work in addressing and advocating for Indigenous Human Rights. They stated that the rights to development and self-determination: "...intersect perfectly with the social work practice of community development ... a way of working with, rather than for, communities" (2011, p. 148).

The first Indigenous school principal in the Northern Territory similarly stressed the importance of focused partnerships and better practice frameworks. For Yunupingu, these should be explicit about purpose, and inclusive of other knowledges, strengths and expertise. He stated that there needs to be:

> ...balance between different points of view… Governments and institutions need to see, and find ways of working with different knowledges. Non-Aboriginal people need to take time and make the effort to understand the logic of Aboriginal knowledge (Yunupingu, 1994).

Freire further stated that the acquisition of knowledge and skills strengthens one's capacity to influence change: "...the future isn't something hidden in a corner. The future is something we build in the present" (1972, p. 21). For this research there were two key issues in relation to knowledges and discourses. These were: what do non-Indigenous stakeholders need to know, and what are some of the barriers to this knowledge? The primary research question guiding this inquiry was 'what do non-Indigenous practitioners need to do to demonstrate commitment to a de-colonising practice approach?

Therefore this research was based on two broad aims. First, to explore what is considered by Indigenous stakeholders to be 'better ways of working', and second, to develop a decentred and culturally-informed framework to inform non-Indigenous practices, including social work and community welfare practice.

This study is a contribution towards greater awareness, reflection and enactment of practices and dialogues for non-Indigenous practitioners. Such stakeholders may be primarily engaged in the domains of social work or primary health, but the practical application of these research findings will have relevance in the macro-context of relations between non-Indigenous people and First Nation Peoples of Australia.

For Lomas (1997) a lack of communication and cultural differences between researchers and research users has created major barriers to the application and transfer of research outcomes. He suggested that research should be presented in formats that are applicable and appropriate to a range of practitioners, policy

makers and managers. For him, research ought to contain main messages that are concise, easy to read, with a definite emphasis on potential practical implications (Lomas, 1997).

Structure of this document

> ...in making our self-representations public we are aware that our different voices may be heard again only in the language of the alien tongue... (Dodson 1994).

This document has been put together as a story. It is a narrative of the research journey, the literature review, an exploration of the contributed knowledges on decolonizing practices, and most importantly, stories of possibilities.

In many parts of this document, the reader will notice the use of capitalization when referring to some Things, People, Places, and Concepts. This shows respect for an ontologically specific relationship, and is consistent with an Indigenous perspective on the relatedness of all Things (Martin, 2008).

Within this thesis, I have made purposeful use of the term 'white' as well as 'non-Indigenous'. Most Australians who are descended from the colonizing settlers, do not think of themselves in terms of 'race'. However, sole referencing as non-Indigenous, would render their whiteness invisible (Moreton-Robinson, 2004). Thus the term 'white' will be used when referring to groups and their behaviours of 'whiteness', and 'non-Indigenous' when referring to an individual person.

Following Martin (2001), this document has been structured to reflect ways of knowing, being, and doing. It commences in Part One with an explanation of intent, an overview of the literature, and an introduction to the researcher. The latter positions the researcher in context culturally and relationally, and makes explicit the things that have framed and formed my worldview. At the same time, as researcher I do not have the right to speak for others.

The research participants have been co-contributors. Each has provided their explicit endorsement for me to include their words, their knowledges, and their experiences. The deep relatedness that underpins this research has informed my methodological decision that their communications with me as researcher would be referenced within this document as 'personal communications' as different to 'reference material'. This is further supported by the University APA referencing style guide (page 3) that states: "...cite personal communications in text only". Furthermore, their contributions have been structured narratively into this research as a crucial part of the inquiry processes and the content. In this way, the depth and breadth of their knowledge will remain 'of their voice' and the reader will be invited into relatedness with the participants and their worldviews. Consistent with the principles of reciprocity, this 'giving it back' ensures that their voices are fore-grounded. Their contributions and conversations are present in Part 2.

In Part 3 the themes are generated by the participants' narratives, and framed into an overarching analysis. This is furthered in Part 4 by discussions on how

the research knowledges and knowings, worldviews and perspectives coalesce and harmonize to inform 'better ways of doing'.

Reflexivity has been a critical component within the research process, just as it is within a social work practice context. Throughout this document, the self of the researcher is present with the inclusion of ethnographic reflections. Presence of 'self' demonstrates respect and reciprocity, and at the same time transparently represents the researcher's own learnings and analytical reflections. Thus the self is a subject within the research endeavour.

This is not 'a writing about' Indigenous people. It is an exploration and a narrative of the interface between non-Indigenous practice and Indigenous people's experience of this practice. Within the structure of this document, including the titles and ordering of the chapters and headings, Indigenous epistemologies are co-located alongside mainstream academic frameworks. This approach will demonstrate collaboration with the worldviews of Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders for mutual benefit.

Significance of this approach

As far as possible and practicable, this thesis has been structured, styled and presented in a format to facilitate a sharing of knowledges and a breadth of accessibility. The beginning stages were marked by many discussions – initially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with whom I had existing relatedness, and then others with whom relationships became established through the primary participants. In this way the research planning became

collaboratively informed. For example, my original intent was to interview only Indigenous stakeholders. However an Indigenous colleague highlighted that it would be important to invite non-Indigenous people to participate, stating: "...Indigenous people would want to hear what non-Indigenous people thought about the research question..." (Muller, personal communication, September 9th 2006). Subsequent conversations with a range of other Indigenous stakeholders affirmed this, and as a result directed the research content and processes.

In these ways this inquiry became participant directed. Whenever issues or struggles were experienced, referring back to participants and Indigenous mentors provided valuable reflective yarning time. Such discussions usually contained key learnings. For instance, they confirmed the value of metaphor and entity-identification to facilitate the expression of knowledge in addition to non-Indigenous language and discourses of knowledge. Symbol and imagery similarly provided a pathway for becoming 'unstuck' when I felt restricted or constrained by language. These ways of thinking, being and doing constructed fundamental grounding, and positioned my researcher-self in deep connectedness with People, Stories and Places.

Inquiry processes together with the structure of this thesis, represent ways of doing, being and gathering knowledges. Sources of knowledge have been drawn from several primary domains. These have included relevant literature sources, taking part in a number of significant workshops, issues discussed by non-Indigenous research participants, and knowledges contributed by Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander research participants. Ways of doing have similarly evolved through frequent engagement with Indigenous colleagues, academics, authors and friends.

In taking this approach I sought to preserve and honour the integrity of viewpoints, knowledges, and ethical and cultural requirements. Transparency, authenticity, reciprocity, relatedness, and a genuine presence with the research stakeholders have all guided this inquiry (Tuiwahi-Smith, 1999; Martin, 2008). As researcher, my responsibility and accountability has been to the Academy, the participant contributors, and the eminent Indigenous academics who have provided guidance and support along the pathway – particularly Dr Karen Martin, Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson and Professor Yvonne Cadet-James.

In being guided by these principles, this research has featured many cyclical processes. Divergence, convergence, sorting, clarifying, crystallizing, sourcing, referencing, writing, thinking, and re-sorting all populated the research domain (Martin, 2008). Sometimes my anxiety was high. However, these cycles consistently and reassuringly evolved into further learnings. Similar to the heuristic indwelling described by Hiles (2002, cited in Martin, 2008) this is noticeable as the ways that researcher reflections, selected literature references, and methodological discussions have become woven throughout this thesis. For Martin (2008), these processes are fundamental to an inquiry practice that is mediated and maintained by respectful relatednesses – one that results in a transformative 'coming alongside' the various research contexts (2008, p. 99).

Significance of outcomes

Over time, it became apparent that the ways of doing this research have been strongly allied with practices related to another way of knowing. It has been essential to recognize other knowledges, and to bring these alongside my own ways of knowing. From this collaborative sharing of knowledges, other continuities and evolutions have been developed, tested and progressed into this thesis.

However, within these ways of doing, the risk of inadvertent appropriation of knowledge remained ever-present. I responded to this risk in two main ways. Deep reflectivity kept me in touch with an awareness of my positionality, reminding me of the associated privilege, opportunity, benefit, and structural advantage that I have been able to access. Secondly, at these times I sought discussions with critical support people. They provided me with reliable grounding and signposts to inform my ways of doing. Cycles of learning happened across all phases of this research and needs to be illustrated here.

The following dialogue provides one example of this support. One morning I was driving my *Märi* or Cultural Grandmother, Dhanggal Gurruwiwi to the airport. For some reason that I cannot fathom, we usually had 'deep and meaningfuls' at such times. She had been telling me a story about some cross-cultural training that she had done with the staff of a Government Agency the day before – and I had been telling her about the Oodgeroo (1993) story that I had read in Martin (2008, p. 89). This had touched me very deeply, on many levels. Like many times

before, we began talking about the 'Right Way' of doing work – 'both-ways work'. Our conversation went like this:

> *Dhanggal: ...*use of metaphor and story is very important. Ngapaki (white people) should take off their blinkers and instead of looking so narrowly, begin to look out of their eyes sideways (peripheral) vision – in addition to what is in front of them. Ngapaki get too linear and think it's the only way to do their work – there are other views and Ways that they need to take into account. Too quickly they get 'straight to the point' – this seems disrespectful and doesn't give People time to think. They need to start with a Story.

> *Self as guthurra (grandchild), friend, Outsider and researcher: ...*hmm... how can ngapaki start with a story when they don't have Stories with a metaphor like Aboriginal and Yolngu do?

> *Dhanggal: ...*they need to start with their Hearts and say something – not their Heads.

> *Self: ...*sort of like an introduction but in a relaxed way, telling about what's important to them – so that others can get an idea of what they want to talk about and help them to get 'on track' instead of being confronted?

> *Dhanggal: ...*because when you start with a story, it gives others a bit of time to think and work out how the right way of doing it is...

Self: ...do you think that starting with a story also makes a bit of a surprise giving people an 'oh, OK' sort of feeling, and that helps them to then sort out 'right way' of Being...

Dhanggal: ...yo, yo... exactly!! (yo = yes)

(personal communication, June 11th 2013, Northeast Arnhemland).

Here Dhanggal was giving me another snapshot of knowledge about 'right way practice'. For her, this meant that non-Indigenous workers need to get better at 'knowing for being' before 'doing'. In reflecting on this conversation here, I both honour Dhanggal, and seek to enact and demonstrate a way of working differently by being with her words from the beginning.

To summarize, this research has set out to collaboratively produce new understandings and enlarged practice boundaries to go beyond those defined by the dominant culture (White, Fook & Gardner, 2006). The 'doing' of this inquiry has been informed from 'knowing' and 'being' in relatedness to and with, a number of other knowledge sources. Martin (2001) framed these dynamic processes as *Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being* and *Ways of Doing*.

Chapter 2:   Literature overview.

Consistent with the reflexive ways of knowing that underpin this inquiry, references to the literature are present throughout this thesis. A focus on existing texts and knowledges is important here, so that new emerging knowledges can be located in relatedness to them. Thus current ways of knowing are located as fundamental to the evolution of additional understandings. This approach is consistent with the importance of beginning with what one knows already and how have we come to know it. From such a standpoint, the reflective practitioner has the opportunity to integrate other ways of knowing (Martin, 2008).

In order to contextualize this literature review, the research question can be temporarily reframed as: "...is there a link between colonization and current non-Indigenous practices with Indigenous Australians? ... if so, according to the current literature, what are some of the main considerations?".

Through white colonization, 'whiteness' has continued to shape the lives and experiences of Indigenous Peoples in this Country. Lack of awareness within systemic processes and structures, has entrenched ideological positions. For Moreton-Robinson (2010) these remain invisible to a worldview informed from *being* 'white', and structurally aligned with *whiteness*. However, it is this white race privilege that influences Indigenous Peoples' life chances every day. Within this research, Betty W. was several times drawn to anger when recounting her daily experiences of racism. She described waiting to be served in a shop, the white person being served first, while she continued to wait. She told of being

denied private rental, even through she had a 'good Government job' (personal communication, July 7, 2009).

According to Grande (2008), it is necessary to acquire the knowledge and skills that will assist to negotiate and dismantle the continuance of colonization. She particularly discussed the ways that the discourses and knowledges of dominance and oppression are reinforced: "...knowledge is related historically, culturally and institutionally - just as language was central to the colonisation project, it must be central to the project of decolonisation". For her, a re-thinking of: "...perspectives on power, justice and relationships (is) essential ... to build against further co-optation... to build intellectual solidarity (and)... to connect with sovereignty as a restorative process" (2008, p. 244).

Important considerations include what epistemologies and information do non-Indigenous people take forward in their enactment of social justice principles with Indigenous peoples in Australia. At a practice level, scores of people are working to address issues of reconciliation, however there are many non-Indigenous workers who are not sure about "...where to start and how to go about it" (Jill, personal communication, May 26th, 2009; Margaret, personal communication, May 19th, 2009). Several writers have suggested that a critical awareness of the settler society's impact on Indigenous people is part of the solution in the current day. For Frankenberg (1993), the "conscious racialization of the white self" is a pre-requisite for understanding the 'starting places'. This includes a

deconstruction of one's own epistemological and ontological bases for practice (Moreton-Robinson, 2007, p. 51).

Within this, a discussion on the issue of race is crucial. Carbado stated that: "... 'race' is not something 'out there' and involving 'other' people" (2002, p. 181). For Knowles (2003, p. 12) 'race-making' is produced through use of 'language' and 'description', and for Augoustinos and Riggs racialised discourses construct deficit assumptions (2007, p. 475). Each of these authors was clear that non-Indigenous people need to look at how 'race is done' in everyday ways, and how racism works in the interest of whiteness. Moreton-Robinson (2007) extended this to include how power and identity are enacted and performed, and the ways in which these discursively contribute to 'knowledge'.

Moreton-Robinson stated that in order to avoid racialised narratives, it is necessary to take a first-person reflexive approach in exploring one's own subjective position (personal communication, June 24, 2010). For the non-Indigenous practitioner, this reflection from the 'white racialised position' creates a challenge. It requires a decentring of the self, to deconstruct: "...what do I know about Aboriginal Peoples' experiences of white settlement in Australia?", and to position their own self in relatedness to these experiences.

Noongar health academic and author Kim Scott clearly articulated this when he accepted the 2011 Miles Franklin Award for his book *That Deadman Dance*. He said that he was uncomfortable with his novel being described as a 'post-reconciliation narrative' by one of the (non-Indigenous) judges. Scott explained:

"...there is a lot of reconciling – particularly reconciling ourselves, all of us, to our shared history – that is yet to happen" (June 2011). He went on to provide some straightforward advice to politicians - that they: "...listen more – get yourself into a bit of silence and just listen... we still have a long way to go" (in Wyndham, 2011).

In the following excerpt, Lynch (2011, p. 19) described a 'learning moment' as a non-Indigenous legal student, who in 2007 aspired to become a commercial lawyer with a comfortable western lifestyle. She undertook a six-week student internship with Reconciliation Australia and 'discovered' that:

> ...there is nothing comfortable about learning that Australia's Constitution did not recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as people until 1967. There is nothing comfortable about learning that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were forced off their homelands and stolen from their families. There is nothing comfortable about learning that in our 'lucky' country there are still Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living out the dire consequences of oppressed and destroyed cultures. These revelations hit me hard and I found myself questioning how we as a nation can even consider ourselves to be an open society.

Two points are relevant here. It is clearly unhelpful to define all non-Indigenous people as oppressors. This denies possibilities for exceptions and change. However, whiteness continues to remain embedded in power relations and is

clearly evident as differential advantage (Frankenberg, 1993; Moreton-Robinson, 2004).

For Moreton-Robinson (2004, p. 83), 'mainstream society' remains characterized by an unnamed, and aspirational 'whiteness' that has prioritized: "...the knowledge of things and their order". For her, the lens of 'whiteness' remains as a "colonial inscribed position" that legitimizes power and: "...makes people and unmakes groups" (2004, p. 83).

A difference of world-view persists as a fundamental problem within practice, according to a number of writers (Berman, 2006; Burford & Hudson, 2000; Martin, 2001; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Likewise, Indigenous Australians state that the mainstream deficits approach continues to overlook the importance of dignity, self esteem and social justice. For them, their concept of health and well-being is predicated on family and community well-being (Gordon, Hallahan, & Henry, 2002; Lynn, 2001; Miller & Shinn, 2005; Taylor, 2003).

The non-Indigenous meta-narratives remain evident within current Government policies and practices. For example, the June 2007 Northern Territory 'intervention' continues to function as an instrument of the Australian Government in Indigenous communities that have been identified by Government as being 'a focus'.

Calma & Priday critiqued this 'intervention' making reference to the principles contained within the United Nations (2007) *Declaration on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples* stating:

> ...while welcoming the Government's intention to finally do something... and provide protection for Indigenous women and children, there have also been very serious concerns about *how* they have gone about implementing their policy (2011, p. 150).

These writers identified two specific violations of human rights. Firstly, the top-down approach of 'the intervention' did not: "...actually ask communities what they want and how they think the problems should be solved". Secondly, the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act (1975) had abandoned Indigenous peoples' human right to non-discrimination (Calma & Priday, 2011, p. 151). Expedience displaced genuine consultation and participation with Indigenous peoples (Calma & Priday, 2011).

Colonization - systemic power, whiteness and racism

Any discussion of current relationships between Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians must necessarily be inclusive of, and acknowledge, the history of that relationship.

From the beginning, settler freedom was based on the subjugation of 'other' and their loss of sovereignty – the convicts and the Indigenous Peoples. The original inhabitants thus became colonized by non-Indigenous people from elsewhere,

namely the British Empire. As colonizers they imposed their systems of knowledge and their entitlement to possess. These ways provided the foundations for white 'settlement' (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). Contested spaces had been created, and as will be explored, continue to the present time.

Ferguson (2003) similarly discussed colonization. He described the ways that: "...British rule encouraged the formation of collaborating elites". These included English forms of land tenure, rights of private property and rights of contract, language, banking systems and Common Law (2003, p. 371).

He further stated that: "...the first official response to the discovery of New South Wales by Captain Cook in 1770 was to identify it as an ideal dumping ground for criminals." (2003, p. 102). However for the Indigenous peoples:

> ...if convict re-offenders were brutalised... it was nothing compared to the way the Indigenous or Aboriginal people of Australia... were treated... they were victims of the white plague... contamination in the form of infectious diseases... exclusion from their ancestral hunting grounds... hunted down and confined (Ferguson, 2003, pp. 108-109).

Reynolds (2005) described Darwinism and the eugenic use of race as the epistemological background for white settlement in Australia. Experts and scholars of the time framed the worldview that racial extinction was the determined, predestined fate of 'tribal' people (Reynolds, 2005, p. 78). This was assumed and accepted to be an inevitable outcome that would position "white

man's civilization" as superior intellectually, physically and morally (Reynolds, 2005, p. 78). Reynolds noted that while "the humane" amongst the colonizers "...might lament the fate that awaited savage races like the Australians... (it was believed that)... the process by which it was underway was beyond human control... the end result was inevitable" (2005, p. 77).

In these ways: "...theories about race, human equality and the origins of human society" functioned as *a priori knowledges* to underpin British colonization and occupation, continuing throughout the nineteenth century (Reynolds, 2005, p. 67). Here the phrase, *a priori*, is used to refer to assumed knowledges derived by reason alone, from deductions of possibilities, or "...true by virtue of meanings and independently of fact" as different to being proven through experience (Moreton-Robinson, 2010).

Similarly, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates (1901) recorded the future High Court judge and Governor-General, Isaac Isaacs as stating that Australia was engaged in a struggle:

> ...for that higher and fuller life that all progressive nations must feel and share in... it is that struggle for victory over adverse circumstances which is the pride and glory of all advancing civilizations. It is a white man's war that we must face, and I would not suffer any black or tinted man to come in and block the path of progress (cited in Reynolds, 2005, p. 86).

It was the narrative of heroic settlers 'advancing' society. These discourses demonstrate that the settler Australian Nation was philosophically constructed upon the defensiveness of whiteness through racism, privilege and entitlement. Colonizing policies became enacted from a position of structural dominance (Moreton-Robinson, 2010).

In January 1898, the *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act* came into force in Queensland, and similar legislation was subsequently introduced by Commonwealth ordinances in 1912 and 1918. With broad powers, this provided the structure for the 'management of' Aboriginal people and issues across Australia until the 1960's (Reynolds, 2005). Such powers included that the Minister, the Government and its officials could:

> ...cause every Aboriginal within any District to be removed to, and kept within the limits of any reserve. Authority was also conferred to make regulations providing for the care, custody and education of Aboriginal children and for the transfer of any deserted or orphaned half-caste child to an orphanage (Reynolds, 2005, p. 134).

In this way, white entitlement engaged three primary strategies to control 'the other' of Indigenous people. First, colonial authorities determined *where* (author emphasis) Indigenous people were 'allowed' to live and accordingly established missions and government reserves (Foundation for Aboriginal & Islander Research Action, 1997; Martin, 2008). Second, *how* (author emphasis) Indigenous people lived was managed through policies of assimilation and

controlling movement and marriage (Huggins & Huggins, 1994; Martin, 2008; Wearne, 1980). Third, whiteness decided '*who* was family' (author emphasis) by taking the children away to dormitories and separating families to differing reserves (Hegarty, 1999; Martin, 2008; Reynolds, 2005).

Whiteness had established the freedom and authority to possess land, systems of law, reasoning and decision-making affecting 'others'. Records of the South Australian 'Royal Commission on the Aborigines' (1913) stated:

> ...if you take a child, practically white, from the centre of Australia and bring it down here and train it, it will not go back, because it will not know anything about it... (and) ...if they were caught young, they were far less inclined to go back to the ways of the natives (1913, pp. 7-12).

The 'grand narratives' had been created politically, economically, and socially. According to Moreton-Robinson (2010), subsequent power structures within mainstream Australia have reinforced these 'ways of knowing'.

For the reflective practitioner, these racialised discourses invite deep thought in relation to their engagement with Australian Indigenous peoples. This is particularly important in the contexts of research and practice knowledge, as it inextricably links with an agenda for change (Creswell, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2000).

However, accessing our position and privilege within the 'grand narrative' can risk collaborating with oppression if one does not look at whiteness with integrity

and honesty. If we have lived an unreflected white privileged life, we risk damage to spirit and relatedness with Indigenous peoples (Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007). In order to avoid generalisations within whiteness, we need to deeply reflect on how we have implemented whiteness, and what we do with our knowledge and privilege within institutions, systems and relationships. In these ways, we can begin to claim white identity with dignity and respectful relatedness (Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007).

From the domain of music, Lou Bennett from the Indigenous band Tiddas, described her experiences of whiteness from the mainstream music industry who: "…wanted to make us (into) a band that fitted with mainstream… they did not understand us… they asked us to lose weight… (and) to change our songs". She advised that established musicians can contribute to change by mentoring and fostering the next generation and:

> …stay strong and true to yourself because that is what is going to drive
> you, and that is what is going to give you the passion, and that is what
> is going to give you the energy to tell the truth and tell a story that has
> not been told (cited in Griffiths, 2010, p. 10).

While invisible to whiteness, an epistemological perspective enacted by structural dominance remains readily apparent to Indigenous stakeholders (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). These constructions functioned to support the colonization agenda, and continue structurally and behaviourally in the present as neo-

colonial ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing (Moreton-Robinson, 2010).

Post-colonialism

For a number of writers, 'post-colonialism' is a structural perspective that positions current Australia as 'beyond colonialism', with this standpoint being framed from a position of privilege. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, (in Heiss, 2003) discussed 'post-colonialism' as:

> …a term generally used to describe all cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonisation to the present day. It is also considered as the most appropriate term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has merged in recent years and for the discourse through which it is constituted (cited in Heiss, 2003, p. 43).

However Heiss (2003) remained concerned that this phrase could imply that decolonization has taken place, with colonialism being a thing of the past, "…which of course is not the case". She stated that 'post-colonial' is: "…largely meaningless to Aboriginal people, bearing in mind the lived experiences of those who have been subjected to colonizing processes, practices, systems, and institutions (Heiss, 2003, p. 43).

Equally 'post-colonialism' does not focus on the self-determination, agency and capacity of Indigenous peoples (Heiss, 2003; Trees, 1993). It fails to seek, and

find, solutions at the local level where practice impacts on Indigenous knowledges and world-views. Trees reflected:

> ...does post-colonial suggest that colonialism has passed? For whom is it 'post'? Surely not for Australian Aboriginal people at least, when land rights, social justice, respect and equal opportunity for most does not exist because of the internalized racism of many Australians. In countries such as Australia where Aboriginal sovereignty, in forms appropriate to Aboriginal people, is not legally recognized, post-colonialism is not merely a fiction, but a linguistic manoeuvre on the part of some 'white' theorists who find this a comfortable zone that precludes the necessity for political action. Post-colonialism is a 'white' concept that has come to the fore in… theory in the last five years as western nations attempt to define and represent themselves in non-imperialist terms (1993, pp. 264-265).

For Martin, a summative definition such as post-colonization "...is concerned with constructing generalizations" and does not centre the "...everyday needs of People" (2008, p. 55). When I was exploring the research question with potential participants, both 'post-colonial' and 'decolonizing' were proposed for inclusion in the title of the project. Without exception, all stakeholders chose 'decolonizing' as the preferred term to be used. Part of my learning was that I came to understand the difference.

De-colonizing

Conversely, the term 'de-colonizing' has notions of 'doing' change and difference at the macro, micro and local levels of practice (Martin, 2008). For Martin (2008) it is a strengths-based approach with a primary focus on the experiences of individuals, families and the communities in which they live.

Martin stated that Indigenous scholars most often define decolonization in terms of its purpose, processes and contexts – that is the 'doing' of decolonization is prioritized (2008, p. 53). For Findlay (2003):

> ...decolonizing is important for all of us because colonization is what has taught us negative strategies of difference, habits of hierarchy and deference, and patterns of commodifying and compartmentalizing that rationalize the most irrational of practices (cited in Martin, 2008, p. 54).

Coates, Gray and Hetherington (2006) agreed, stating that much tension is generated at the local level by the "...inappropriateness of Western, universalising and globalising approaches" to practice (p.385). Similarly, McDonald and Coleman (1999), Ruwhiu (1999), and Kalantzis (2001) referred to a 'wall of silence' that has often surrounded issues associated with the colonization of Aboriginal people. For them, open and honest dialogue is required in order to achieve a truly shared future.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2014) named the failure to recognize the different ways of knowing as 'cognitive injustice'. For him such ways of knowing, being

and doing function to deny recognition and valorisation of the knowledge, the epistemology that informs the way people worldwide understand their worldview and very being. run their lives and provide meaning to their existence. Santos (2014) presents the argument that global social justice is not possible without a global epistemological justice that recognizes the fundamental impacts of colonialism and subsequent capitalism. Thus colonizing worldviews were underpinned by power and supported by the devaluing of the cultural knowledges and wisdoms of those being colonized (de Sousa Santos, 2014).

Colonization and identity

In line with these views, colonization provided the context for white worldviews to displace Indigenous people in Australia. The policy of Terra Nullius defined Indigenous peoples as 'incapable of ownership' reinforcing the white colonizing sense of entitlement to acquire and own land (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). This overruled the worldview of Indigenous peoples that their Being is *of* the Land and Country. Terra Nullius thus predicated that the non-Indigenous social order would dominate (Moreton-Robinson, 2010).

Maldonado Torres (2007, p. 251) provided a historical scaffolding of what he referred to as "the coloniality of being". For him, this is conceptually constructed on the earlier works of other thinkers such as Mignolo (1995) and Levinas (1969) who wrote on the relationship between ontology and power. Later Mignolo (2003, p. 669) expand on this to state: "…the coloniality of power and of knowledge engendered the coloniality of being" (cited in Maldonado Torres 2007, p. 242).

Likewise within an Australian context, an assumptive whiteness worldview had positioned Indigenous people as 'others' needing to be 'protected', as incapable of functioning as social subjects. The Aborigines Protection Act 1909-1943 established the Welfare Board. White-settler policy-makers enacted 'protection' by the construction of legal requirements. Indigenous people were prohibited from entering Government institutions and public hotels (Reynolds, 2005). Neither could they marry or move freely unless a 'protector' representative deemed them "a good sort of Aborigine" who could have an 'exemption' certificate. This point, backed by oral knowledge was conveyed to me during this research by Wymara's personal communication, on June 20th 2003 in Cairns.

Furthermore, the colonisers attributed value-loaded, eugenic categorizations to define Aboriginal status as 'full-bloods', 'half-caste', or 'quarter-caste'. Acceptance into the social order was enhanced by an increased proximity to whiteness. The 'stolen-generations' policies were a definitive structural attempt by the colonizers to diminish and extinguish Aboriginality (Martin, 2008; Reynolds, 2005).

For Grieves, within the Australian context Indigenous identity is "not even on the page" of policy development because:

> ...the difference between Aboriginal people and settlers is expressed as a LACK... that we have lost culture, no longer a pure race, are not getting educated, have little or no leadership... settler culture is normal and taken for granted as moral and ethical, ours is deviant and

inauthentic... that we are essentially dysfunctional. These are the constructions that rationalise the dominance of the settler colonial (2011, p. 8).

In his 1994 Wentworth Lecture, Dodson similarly discussed the politics of definition:

...why are particular types of definition (of 'Aboriginality') created, reproduced and embraced by the states and non-Indigenous peoples at particular times? If the images of Aboriginality do not actually reflect us, it is not actually about us, what purpose have they served for those who constructed and adopted them? ...the short answer is that they have served to meet the various and changing interests and aspirations of those who constructed them, the colonizing or 'modern' state... in other words, 'Aboriginality' becomes part of the ideology that legitimises and supports the policies and practices of the state (Dodson, 1994).

An analysis of the literature on 'whiteness' has highlighted firstly the ways that white people benefit from being white, and secondly that Indigenous experience of colonization is not relegated to the past. It remains in the present within the evidence of health and disadvantage data, and in our daily media representations of Indigenous 'problems' (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). In Part 2, the contributors to this research will explore and contextualise their present-day experiences of this 'grand narrative' (Frankenberg, 1993; Moreton-Robinson, 2010).

For Parker:

> ...the critical centring of race (together with other areas of difference) at the location where research is conducted and discussions are held, can serve as a major link between fully understanding the historical vestiges of discrimination and the present-day racial manifestations of that discrimination (1998, p. 46).

The history of policies, 'management' and control of Indigenous peoples in this country has very specific relevance here. These inherited frameworks, world-views, and discourses have informed and reinforced the dominance of whiteness in this country.

For Moreton-Robinson (2010), understanding and deconstructing the 'grand narrative' means speaking into the space of 'in-between'. Therefore this research is presented as another narrative to develop the understandings, tools, and language for challenging race privilege.

Knowing ones 'place' is crucial for those acculturated as non-Indigenous Australians. Critical race theorists such as Westcott (2004) advocate for practices that explore, unpack and articulate the white 'grand narrative'. As researcher, the following ethnographic 'insertion of self' in Chapter 3, is consistent with this standpoint and with decolonizing research practices that seek to: "...disrupt processes of othering" (Sonn, 2012, p. 3).

Chapter 3: KNOWING and BEING: the researcher in context, and on ways of Being.

This introduction to the researcher-self explains some of the experiences, circumstances and family milieu informing the worldview that I bring to this inquiry. As researcher, it is important that I 'know my place'. Martin described this as "starting out in relatedness" to work through the social, emotional, physical, historical, and spiritual relatednesses of the self, before beginning to work with the stories of other people (2008, p. 93).

Being within the research in this way presents an account of my standpoint or 'social positioning', and explicitly frames how I have come to know things (Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Nakata, 2008). A range of situations, contexts and circumstances, social relations and experiences have culturally constructed my knowledges and my ways of knowing.

Of dominance, privilege, identity and unknowns

Raised within the structures of dominance in Australia, I became a member of those systems. However our family sat 'on the outside of things' no matter how hard my mother strove to create a perception of status. Any reference to my father's background was extremely rare. He passed away suddenly one month after his fifty-fourth birthday, and with him went much knowledge. For many years I just 'got on with life'. However of recent years I have experienced an intense 'need to know'. I need to know who I am and where I came from, notwithstanding the all-enveloping secret of his background. This had always been a deep

'unspoken', one that only as an adult, have I felt powerful enough to question – and even then, only at a point in time determined to be safe to do so. I knew that my biological paternal grandfather was an 'unknown'. Family processes had strongly conspired to ensure that this remained that way. Three generations of family had hidden something. Only as an adult when I went to work in Far North Queensland, did some information start to surface. Some colleagues became intrigued by photos of my father, my son and my grandson, asking me if I 'have Aboriginal background'. I began to reflect on a space that I'd previously been unable to – firstly, my father was always connected to a particular part of coastal Central Queensland. Secondly, I was only ever most comfortable when I was on the coast in this same area, and Being a 'salt-water person'.

Together with my two brothers and sister, we grew up with an invisible and unspoken understanding that we 'didn't fit' for reasons that were vague and unmentionable. However as adults we are now beginning to confront our 'not quite' status, and tentatively ask exploratory questions of each other.

I tell this story in acknowledgement of my father, whatever happened before he was born, and the legacies of that 'not knowing'. What was the reason that my father's birth was not registered until he was 17yrs old and presumably wanting to get some sort of official registration, perhaps a driver's license? Why were his brothers unable to find his registration at a school reunion – each wondering what name he could have been registered under? Why was he raised in the bush by his maternal grandmother until he was 'allowed' to live with his mother who

had then married and had several other children? Why did he have a darker skin colour than his half-brothers and half-sister? Why does my younger brother ask me if I knew 'what Dad couldn't talk about'? Why did my father have such a close and caring relationship with the old man who lived alone on a hill in the country that my father knew as his own – the man that the old-timers now tell me: "...had a dark skin, but wasn't a 'full-blood' " (personal communication, Bororen, September 15th 2011).

My father was born in 1929, at a time when Australia was obsessed with race. Reynolds quoted an article in the Sydney Morning Herald of that time that declared children born of white and Aboriginal parentage as being 'better not to be' (2005, p. 88). While functioning within the parameters of whiteness, the reality is that part of my ancestry has been enveloped in secrecy and non-being.

In conspiring to deny knowledge, family processes have disrupted many connections – to each other, and to stories and knowledges about people, places, relationships, culture, and our responsibilities that go with these things. However, my life has been sprinkled with and grounded by, many experiences, glimpses of knowledge, and partial snapshots of information.

My mother was born from white colonial lineage. One maternal ancestor was a surveyor in Lawson, Blaxland and Wentworth's exploration of the Blue Mountains west of Sydney. My memories of her side of the family are of strained relationships. In fact when she and my father married, it was in a neighbouring town over two hundred kilometres away. I never understood why they did not

marry in the family church that my maternal grandmother occasionally took me to. I was not born until two years after their marriage, so wedding discretion was not related to pregnancy. There was some other reason that was never questioned nor discussed.

As an adult I became brave enough to pick at those socially imposed shadows. In 2013, in the last six months of my Mother's life, I decided to ask her if the man I knew as 'old Bill' could have been Dad's father. Three times I asked, and three times she avoided answering the question. Again, this is similar to the experience of Henry Reynolds in his 2005 book *Nowhere People*. In her old age, his mother declined or was unable to answer such questions when put to her.

In late 2013 my mother passed away. In the preparations for her funeral and wake, my brothers and I came across an old photo album that none of us knew existed. I uncovered some wedding photos that I had never seen. One photo was of my parents on their honeymoon. They are both dressed in light-coloured clothing with their arms around each others' waists. On my father's left hand side he has his hand over that of my mother. I gasped out loud when I saw it. His hand was so very, very dark and hers so very light. I was seeing a little more of the puzzle of my father's unspoken and denied background.

Notwithstanding these 'bits of knowledge', I have been acculturated as a non-Indigenous person and have had unchallenged access to the attributed privileges associated with the systems of dominance in this country. I have not been structurally excluded by the systems that have discriminated against Indigenous

Peoples. The White Australia Policy provided an explicit marker of the power of 'whiteness'. Within this, the lighter colour of my skin has ascribed me as having right of entry to schools, the rental housing market, and to citizenship. My world-view has been grounded in relative access to non-Indigenous systems - education, good job opportunities, good health, and enough financial and material security, albeit while always wondering if I was 'good enough'. I understand now, that such access was (and is), made available to me through a perception of who I was (and am) based on skin colour. This attributed entitlement was denied structurally and socially to people perceived as 'other' by the dominant and normative whiteness. For me, whiteness was achieved at a cost – the denial of my Father's (Bapa's) paternity. As a result, I was not pursued or persecuted by the imposition of Laws constructed within a colonizing, dominating worldview – one that declared Aboriginal people in this country to be 'other' than that on which Australia was constructed. Green and Sonn (2016, p. 390) similarly reflected that white racism ensures that: "...white skin is privileged by institutions and practices and provides material and psychological entitlements".

To briefly summarize to this point, I was raised as part of a white family, while also deeply immersed in my father's strong relatedness to the salt-water and Gureng Gureng country of Central Queensland – Red Rock, Turkey Beach, Bustard Head, and Pancake Creek. Similar to Russell (in Fee & Russell, 2007, p.20), I now view myself as being 'in-between'. In the future, if sufficient

information comes to hand that definitively links me to 'old Bill', then that will trigger a re-positioning of Self. However, at the moment I remain who I am, located where I am, with knowledges and a sense of Being what I have become. My upbringing has imbued me with knowledge, experiences, and a sense of social justice that fits comfortably with a critical whiteness perspective in the present. My father modelled these values in his words and actions. At the same time he always carried a dictionary with him so that his lack of formal education would not show. His way of Being has ensured that I have access to a privileged space. Likewise, his resignation as chairperson of a social club that refused to assist an Aboriginal family, helped me to understand race and racism as "...a way of life which...colours all social interaction" (Cowlishaw, 2000) with "...profound consequences for daily life, identity... and the ways in which most groups are seen as 'other'" (Fine & Weiss, 2002, p. 274).

Of immersion, embeddedness and adoption

As an adult, I lived and worked in Far North Queensland, Cape York and Torres Straits for many years, experiencing deep connections with many Indigenous people. During this time, I enjoyed deeply trusting and respectful relationships with many Senior Indigenous women. When I was contemplating whether or not to undertake this research, I contacted these ladies to talk with them about the usefulness of such a project. Without exception they passionately voiced their support, reminding me of "...the good work we've done". They are present in this document both in words and spirit, with many participating as contributors. In this

way, I began to move into the role of a facilitative researcher assembling a framework for the gathering of their stories of wisdom, knowledge and experience. The relationships developed during this time have been sustained and maintained even as I worked interstate.

In 2005, I began living in Northeast Arnhemland, and was adopted into the Yolngu kinship system. My yapa (sister) gave me the Yolngu name of Wuywuy Wanambi. This means that I belong to the Dhuwa moiety, with the skin name of Gamadjan, as a member of the Marrakulu tribe. Through the Yolngu gurrutu kinship system, I am culturally located within multiple family relationships. I am related in some way, to most Yolngu across the communities of Arnhemland. On meeting a Yolngu person for the first time, it is expected that I understand my 'place' within the kinship system or 'where I fit' - that I ask "...what do I call you?"

This is more than politeness. It is an essential question that locates me in relatedness to those around me, before anything else. From this, I am then introduced to, taught about and embedded within, multiple layers of relationships and associated responsibilities. I am defined in this location by these relatednesses. How I behave towards particular People and my responsibilities to them, is determined by our relationship. For example, a 'gurrung' or avoidance relationship involves very particular protocols, ways of being and doing, in order to maintain respectful relatedness. It is expected that I will continuously and consistently demonstrate a willingness to learn and know my relatedness with others. There are sanctions if, after a very tolerant period of learning, I get this

wrong. This experience has permanently transformed certain aspects of my Self and my way of Being. Even when far from this geographical place, I find myself thinking, relating and using certain ways of behaving and engaging. Through deep relatedness, I have integrated Yolngu cultural norms and am imbued with definitive responsibilities. These are guided by the primacy of relatedness and interconnectedness between all things and People. My cultural responsibilities endow me with particular imperatives as granddaughter, and other relationships including as sister, aunty, mother, husband, and wife. Embedded within this system, I also have obligations of stewardship towards Entities, and particularly those associated with my language name.

This immersion between and within two cultural contexts has provided me with an honoured space to observe and reflect on the personal, the practice and the political. The complexity of this in-between space that is bounded by overlapping cultural interfaces, convergences and sometimes divergences, will be explored and discussed in depth in Part 4. However, at this point it is important to be explicit regarding the risks, rewards, behaviours and flexibility that populate this dynamic environment. Fee and Russell described it this way:

> ...the challenge here is to resist binaries, admit a hybrid identity and
> finally to undertake the patient, difficult yet enjoyable process of
> understanding other ways of knowing the world. Such knowing is based
> on the need to unpack privilege, for it is a form... which has stood in the
> way of understanding each other. Knowing begins with a conversation...

the creation of 'an enunciative space', a chance to explore the third

space and move meaningfully beyond the black-white divide (2007, p.

202).

While deep embeddedness invites my self into a position of insider-ship, I also

remain of the 'outsider' status. Such fluxing in relation to the 'insider / outsider'

position has consumed a very significant amount of energy. I found that this

could only be addressed through deep and critical reflection, and conversations

within spaces of shared relatednesses. At these times, I would sit with Dhanggal,

my Märi or cultural Grandmother, and talk about what was worrying me. This is

similar to Martin's (2008) discussion of Another, as different to an 'outsider'. She

described a 'continuum of relatedness' that evolves as one develops deeper

relationship (2008, p. 128). Over time, this became more apparent. I became

aware of a transition from feeling somewhat of an 'outsider', to a position of

deeper relatedness on a number of levels – intellectually, emotionally, spiritually,

socially, culturally and physically. Martin defined this movement as 'Another'

coming alongside an Other where identity is "...not replaced but expanded'"

(2008, p. 128).

On ways of doing

It is clear that my standpoint positions me in relation to, and in engagement with,

the kinds of questions implicit within this research. For me, it has been, and

continues to be, informed from multiple realities and ways of being. While I am in

relatedness to non-Indigenous knowledges through a purposefully white

upbringing, I also am imbued with a limited amount of Indigenous knowledges through cultural influences of both my upbringing and my adult relationships. As a result, my practice and practice relationships are ontologically connected to multiple ways of knowing and being based on a continual exchange between head, heart, hands, and spirit (Gurruwiwi, personal communication, 2010).

As a practitioner, I had been strongly influenced by the principles of community development practice, and the work of Kelly and Sewell (1988). In my work with Indigenous stakeholders I had evolved the head, heart and hands concepts of Kelly and Sewell to include a notion of 'spirit'. My Indigenous colleagues had confirmed that within our work, a combination of head, heart, hands and Spirit resulted in culturally secure practice. They said it 'felt right' to them. When I worked in Arnhemland, I discussed this further with my Yolngu friends, family and colleagues. As a result, my Märi Dhanggal Gurruwiwi and I framed a practice model based on Indigenous ways of knowing, and being and doing (see p. 383).

In summary, a number of parallel processes have been at play. Firstly, while not intentional at the outset, my personal journey has become inextricably intertwined, and inseparable from the politics of practice and research. This research undertaking holds responsibility and accountability to explore, reflect and re-search using mechanisms and processes that are based on and congruent with, Aboriginal terms of reference. I also hold another form of responsibility to concurrently create a blend with the expectations and requirements of the Academic institution and its stakeholders.

The above story has been shared with the reader as a critical component of the ontology of my Self. This unpacking has not been an ethnographic indulgence. It has required courage. It would have been very much easier to avoid or circumvent this exploration of self. Indeed, I have struggled through the writing of this section as it has created a significant amount of internal, intrapersonal turmoil and much emotional chaos. The reflexivity involved has amplified the incompleteness of who I am. However participating in the research journey obliged me to move beyond ignoring that I was 'of uncertain belonging', to integrate and own more possibilities and probabilities, and to *be what I am*.

Moreover, an ethnographic epistemological explication of my Self has been crucial in order to acknowledge my own presence as a participant within the research milieu. This approach has provided a framework for reflecting on the impacts of my own socialisation, together with an awareness of how those things continue to influence my actions, discourses, decisions, and positionalities.

Likewise, my values and beliefs have become explicit and unambiguously affirmed. While challenging and somewhat confronting, this process of relatedness-to-Self has facilitated clarity and focus within the research journey and the various knowledge interfaces. The ethnographic lens has positioned my researcher-self within the inquiry. However, these tasks have been supported and guided by enduring relatednesses with the participant contributors. Through many shared discussions, a fundamental vigour and robustness has sustained and nurtured this research undertaking.

Collectively, these processes have fulfilled a role similar to Martin's (2008) description of the Filters within her First Story of Worldview. For her, the Filters function to support relatedness by filtering out the elements harmful to Self, and at the same time cultivating the potential for transformative changes (2008, p. 69).

As previously discussed, a 'knowing of self' and 'knowing of one's place' is an essential requirement to understanding one's 'ways of knowing' (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2010). Reflexivity and reflection have provided a 'looking glass' with which to explore my own socially conditioned responses and behaviours. In this way, the research task and methodology have been guided by the underpinning principles of relatedness and reciprocity, and in turn have informed, and been informed from, my ways of Knowing, ways of Being and ways of Doing.

Chapter 4:   DOING: methodology and a way to gather the knowledges.

At this time I must re-introduce Dhanggal Gurruwiwi, my Märi, my Yolngu grandmother. She has constantly guided and supported me through this research by immersing me in cultural narratives. I always listen closely when she speaks - invariably there are many layers in her words. She told me that the research should:

> …tell a *story*, let people *hear* and *work out* the message - help them to *engage* with the message. After that they will work out where they fit with it.

She continued:

> …there are two streams of water… one is doing the same, going too fast, not 'looking around' to think about other ways… getting the same result when there are others there to help them – just *doing*… *doing*…

> The other stream gives an opportunity to do it differently – these waters mix and include *other* ways… and *both* ways of doing it…

> Ngapaki (non-Indigenous people) *do* have a choice – you can keep doing it the same way, or you can look to see if there are *other* ways of doing it.

> Opportunity is precious - *choose wisely* (personal communication, April, 2012).

In this way, my Mari highlighted the importance of reflection, reflexivity, and the development of other ways and knowledges.

While qualitative methodologies provide the framework for studies that focus on lived experience., for Gibbs and Memmon (1999) methodological decisions need to be: "... congruent with the worldview of the culture of the research participants" (cited in Martin, 2008, p. 91). This chapter now explains the ways of doing and the ways of knowing that have informed the research.

What form of inquiry would be best, what is important and why?

> ...the ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst
> excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for
> many of the world's colonized peoples (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999, p. 1).

A history of exploitation has marked non-Indigenous research involving Indigenous Australians (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2010; Nakata, 2008; Rigney, 1999). In addition to the humanity violations inferred by Tuhiwai-Smith above, researchers are often perceived as taking from Indigenous communities in order to benefit themselves academically, with little or no benefit being returned to Indigenous peoples. Without methodological reciprocity, collecting information in this way is perceived as stealing, because the knowledge is used to benefit the researcher who took it (Brands & Gooda, 2006; de Crespigny, Emden, Kowanko & Murray, 2004; Fredericks 2006; Kenny, 2004; Porsanger, 2004; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Equally, deficits-focussed white-centred research has located Indigenous people as passive 'objects' of research, lacking agency,

capacity, or power (Donovan & Spark, 1997; Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2010; Rigney, 1999; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

For Said (1978, p. 2) "...institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, bureaucracies and styles" are some of the mechanisms that support Western discourses within research and practice. Thus, while the academic agenda of research is to contribute to a body of knowledge, methodological approaches and discourses are likely to replicate processes of colonization if they fail to address questions of power, ideology and subjective meaning.

Clearly, the power associated with Western scholarship risks being perceived as a marker of colonial privilege if methodologies do not demonstrate that they are working towards the decolonization of knowledge (Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Rigney, 1999; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). As a way forward Martin provided some guidance stating that while research has been used as another mechanism of colonization: "...used effectively, it can be a tool to counter the ongoing forms of Aboriginal dispossession" (2008, p. 28). Even though the power of Western scholarship is very significant (Moreton-Robinson, 2005; Nakata, 2008;Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999), decolonizing research has the potential to build scaffolds from which policy-makers and practitioners can develop and engage approaches specifically focussed towards reconciliation. This was extended by Martin who stated that: "...decolonization tackles the political contexts of research as part and parcel of a transformative agenda" (2008, p. 58).

For Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), an Indigenist research project should be explored primarily in relation to Indigenous Peoples' needs and interests, as different to being singularly a contribution to a body of knowledge. She highlighted that:

> ...methods need to be chosen in respect to Indigenous ethics... and the considered impact on Indigenous People... (including)... reporting back and sharing of knowledge (1999, p. 15).

It is unambiguous that the decolonization of knowledge requires epistemological shifts. Ways of 'doing' are needed that can demonstrate enduring and respectful dialogue with Indigenous stakeholders, incorporate Indigenous worldviews, and amplify Indigenous voices within non-Indigenous frameworks. Collaborative partnerships and reciprocity must underpin such ways of working. These ways of knowing, being and doing have the potential to ameliorate the destructive processes of colonial privilege that are often overlooked, unnoticed or disregarded by non-Indigenous stakeholders (Rigney, 1999; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

In the early stages of this inquiry, the development of a respectful methodology became my primary task, albeit a challenging one. Being educated and socialised as a non-Indigenous Australian, it was not a decision of simply choosing an Indigenist methodology in order to demonstrate cultural appropriateness. A review of the literature on research methodologies was crucial to determine a process congruent with a decolonizing approach. Considerations included accountability to Indigenous knowledges, together with

demonstrated responsibility and respect towards Indigenous sovereignty. Analysis of the range of potential methodologies distilled a process that would guide and support the research undertaking. However my commitment to respectful relationship in all its forms remained the primary reference point for choices and decisions regarding methodology.

Importantly, Moreton-Robinson (2010) compared a number of Indigenous and Western methodological philosophical underpinnings. For her: "...Indigenous knowledge is revealed and belongs to the group. It can be used, shared but not owned". However, within a non-Indigenous worldview: "... knowledge is discovered, invented and owned by individual knower or pursued and gained" (Moreton-Robinson, 2010, p. 4). Secondly, from an Indigenous perspective: "... valued knowledge is communicated, generated and re-generated..." (2010, p. 5). Conversely, non-Indigenous "...knowers of valued knowledge are 'experts' and knowledge is owned" (Moreton-Robinson, 2010, p. 5).

As I continued reading and reflecting, I remained focussed on some key thoughts – what *sorts* of frameworks would provide the information I sought, and what would be the right way of exploring for this knowledge? After much thinking, I found equanimity and guidance in a number of fundamental principles drawn from critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 2000), whiteness studies (Moreton-Robinson, 2004), relatedness theory (Martin, 2008) and narrative story-working (Archibald, 2001; Martin, 2008).

Bishop (2007) stated that within qualitative investigations it is important to first identify the chosen context, then the questions and finally the methods. For me, this was consistent with prioritizing the processes of relatedness (context), then the epistemologies (knowledge questions) and finally the doing (methods). He contrasted this with processes that are founded on "...apriorilly decided theoretical issues", stating that three significant research considerations are important to reflect on (Bishop, 2007, p. 9). These are issues of ethics, clarifying researcher value systems, and situating the research within the macro social milieu (Bishop, 2007). His worldview approach was intrinsic to this inquiry, assisting me with focus, and supporting my researcher-self to be guided by complex questions, without needing to know the potential outcomes.

However Rigney (1999, p. 636) took these discussions further stating a number of principles are crucial to ensure cultural safety and respect within research. These include that research with Indigenous stakeholders should: "...support the personal, community, cultural and political struggles of Indigenous Australians".

As a result, my struggle to identify a 'research methodology' was moderated to a significant degree, by deep reflection and clarification of the values and practices that would stay core to this inquiry process. These included to ensure intellectual property rights, to tell People's stories in their own voices, to credit the participants as the true owners of their knowledges and experiences, and to communicate the content back to the true owners of the Stories. In doing so, it was crucial to respect absolutely Peoples' identity and sovereignty. Again, this is

consistent with Martin's perspective that within Indigenous paradigms, all knowledge is relational (2008).

Martin (2008) provided considerable reassurance at this time. She stated that the decisions made within research discussions: "...too often begin with methodology and methods...". However, from an Indigenist research paradigm, the location for these decisions is more like "...one third into the research program" (2008, p. 82). This provided further affirmation of my need to thoroughly understand and integrate knowledge of Indigenist methodological processes as part of a decolonizing approach to the research undertaking.

Here it is important to recognize the work of Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1999). For him, Indigenist research as referred to by Martin (2008) above, is research that is conducted by Indigenous Australians, whose primary informants are Indigenous Australians, to benefit Indigenous Australians (1999, p. 637). While for myself as researcher, I have been unable to formally demonstrate patrilineal heritage, I have been socialized with strong connections to Gureng Gureng land and sea country (see Chapter 3, page 35), Our family does deeply know some things, but like many others with parents born in the early 1900's, we are unable to trace family connections. More recently, through adoption I am have become profoundly embedded within deep relationships with Northeast Arnhemland Yolngu People. From discussions on this matter with my Märi, Yolngu grandmother, I have been advised that, within this gurrutu system she attributes me with the associated authority to speak. So to be clear, while as researcher I

do not satisfy this criterion as defined by Rigney (1999), I most certainly do represent the other important principles for Indigenist research as defined by him. These include that this research should ensure that Indigenous peoples "...interests, experiences and knowledges must remain at the centre of research methodologies..." through "...de-racialisation and decolonization..." of dominant research methodologies (1999, p. 637). Therefore, consistent with Rigney (1999, p. 637) this research is committed to "...countering racism" and "...including Indigenous knowledges and experiences for Indigenous emancipation".

Thus I was significantly influenced by the authors who discussed critical race theory and the way this provides a macro-lens to interrogate the values, knowledges, methods and techniques of practices, policies and research so that they do not function as 'tools of colonization' (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Martin, 2008; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). In addressing inequality and power inequity, Tuhiwai-Smith similarly highlighted the importance of a "...critical understanding of the conceptual tools of research" (1999, p. 40). For her, this further requires the researcher to explore "uncomfortable concepts" by delving, probing and investigating their own standpoint or positionality. When the researcher is from a non-Indigenous background, existential discomfort must be reflected upon intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, culturally and spiritually.

Dutch researcher and academic Dvora Yanow (2009) focused on race-ethnic category making and the importance of 'passionate humility' and reflective practice to counter commonly accepted narratives of expertise. For her,

practitioners are at risk of foregrounding their own standpoint through: "...paternalistic attitudes that deny ...both agency and intelligence" of others (2009, p. 593). In her view, this can be addressed by engaging with "passionate humility" that facilitates the recognition of contexts wherein: "...one's expertise is limited... or not applicable at all... because a different framing of the problem is called for" (2009, p. 594). Goldstein (2006) too referred to the: "...powerful tendency... toward developing a view of truth that favours the circumstances into which we happened to have been born" (cited in Yanow, 2009, p. 594).

Thus an understanding of standpoint , together with Critical Race Theory both informs the dominant culture about its responsibility to listen to the knowledges of 'others', and invites non-Indigenous stakeholders to develop ways that make those experiences matter within practice, policy and research (Bernal, 2002). In focusing on the social inequalities that arise through race and racism, critical race theory deconstructs the national narratives and the privileged structural location of whiteness (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). Therefore the field of whiteness studies provides theoretical frameworks that facilitate an examination of power and systemic privilege.

A number of writers, for example Frankenberg (1993) and Moreton-Robinson (2002; 2004) explored subjectivity and ways of knowing, and its relationship with power. For Moreton-Robinson (2004, pp. viii & 2) one's location within race informs assumptions and thus: "... influences social practice...(together with) ...ways of knowing, acting and producing knowledge. Therefore as a theoretical

concept, 'whiteness' assists the practitioner to: "...uncover the authority of the invisible" and name the lived realities of racism (Wadham, 2004, cited in Moreton-Robinson 2004, p. 194).

Hence, it was important to deconstruct the standpoint of the researcher-self to ensure that race remained present and did not become a taken-for-granted factor within the research activities (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Moreton-Robinson 2000). Critical deep reflection on processes and methods provided the mechanism to avoid any patriarchal ownership, entitlement or possession of key discourses. Rather, inquiry methods included the use of systems and ways consistent with an Indigenous worldview. Ways of knowing and ways of doing were underpinned by respect for incommensurabilities and the sovereignty of knowledge for Indigenous peoples (Martin, 2008; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

For Martin (2008), the contributions of critical race theory informed new relationships to self and knowledge, and provide another paradigm for research and practice. However in relation to racialised knowledge, a self-reflexive, dialogic approach that is: "...solidly grounded in relatedness is needed to move beyond...deconstruction alone" (Martin, 2008, p. 51). For her: "...ways of knowing (knowing ways of relatedness) serve as an intellectual reference point for the project of critique to be undertaken", and then knowings evolve to Ways of Being (2008, p. 85). Additionally for Martin, this reconceptualises the emerging information by building spaces for the additional, most recent stories from Indigenous Knowledges. In these ways both the problem, and the best way to

solve it, become re-defined (Martin, 2008; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). Martin's

Relatedness Theory posits that reframing requires respect for, and maintenance

of relatedness throughout and within all research process and contexts (2008, p.

85). Importantly, according to Martin (2008, p. 85), this is sustained by an

enduring position of "...dialogic self-reflexivity..." so that the research-practitioner

can remain mindful of ways of thinking or doing that could "...disconnect,

disengage or dislocate..." or damage relatedness. In these ways, this research

has been explicitly framed by a methodological lens of respect, responsibility,

accountability and information gathering processes grounded in relatednesses.

Martin (2008) additionally looked at the relational theory of Gergen, (1990, in

Bishop, 2007) and Hosking and Ramsey (2000). While she supported this focus

on relationships with People, she argued that it fails to connect 'relationship' with

responsibility, accountability, and all Things, unlike her Relatedness Theory

(2008, p.82). Secondly, this humanist relational construct calls for a "dialogic

engagement" between People, however for Martin it does not emphasize the

self-reflexivity that underpins researcher autonomy (2008, p. 82).

The worldview, assumptions and ontology of my researcher-self have therefore

provided the foundations for all of my decisions regarding theory and

methodology (Martin, 2008). Such clarification emerged from reading Martin's

Relatedness Theory (2008, p. 80). Her description of the three bands of

knowledge: Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being, and Ways of Doing as the

theoretical foundations of an Indigenist research paradigm provided definition,

clarity and methodological direction. From this foundation, Relatedness Theory and reflexivity have informed the mechanisms and frameworks that ensure my researcher-self remains grounded in processes underpinned by respect for relatedness, agency and sovereignty.

A number of authors discussed the key significance of narrative strategies and story-working to identify strengths and capacities, to show values and beliefs, and to build on the past towards a strong future (Archibald, 2001; Martin, 2008). These methodological processes are consistent with Indigenous values, practices and beliefs, and function to reinforce sovereignty and relatedness within research participation (Martin, 2008; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). As Indigenous autonomy and agency has remained a fundamental touchstone within this investigation, 'yarning', or 'storyworking', was chosen to facilitate the ordinary ebb and flow of sharing knowledges. In this way, the participants remained positioned as experts regarding the research question. Martin (2008, p.95) described 'storyworking' as a respectful technique of inquiry that prioritizes relatedness over knowledge acquisition, and a: "... culturally relevant and respectful set of processes for sharing experiences, meaning-making and learning". For Bessarab and Ng'andu, 'yarning' is: "...one of the many tools enabling the application of Indigenous Methodologies" (2010, p. 47). Epistemologically, the narrative approach respects that all knowledge is socially situated, grounded in subjectivities and experiences, and partial (Moreton-Robinson, 2010).

Therefore, narrative story-working satisfied my requirement for relatedness within data gathering. Martin described this approach as "...a process of immersion, of coming alongside, and then of coming amongst the research contexts" (2008, p.95). A process of inquiry (Doing) conducted in this way is embedded in relationship (Being) and results in a culturally relevant and respectful way of sharing experiences, knowledges, learnings and meaning-making (Knowledges) (Martin, 2008).

Clearly, a review of the literature on research methodologies has been crucial to determine a process congruent with a decolonizing approach. However, sustained reflection and persistent analysis of the values and principles underpinning relatedness continually returned me to Indigenous Methodologies (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2010; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

In 'coming alongside' Indigenist methodologies, this research engaged processes and ways of doing based on respect, responsibility and accountability to Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews (Martin, 2008). Yet this is not to discount the incommensurabilities that exist within both. As reference points for choices and decisions, the above principles would guide and scaffold the research undertaking. For Martin (2008, p. 83) respect, responsibility and accountability are moral and ethical obligations that frame: "...relatedness...the tenet by which all research decisions are made and activities are undertaken".

Ethics - respect, responsibility and accountability

Various professional organisations such as the Australian Association of Social Workers, medical associations, and educational systems have established parameters, ethics, codes, policies and procedures with regard to culturally appropriate and culturally secure practices. However while these frameworks exist, it is the way they are operationalized that has ultimate impact and influence. How power is experienced within practices will determine the existence or absence of relatedness (Martin, 2008).

The practice of research is similarly linked to power and control. Questions of who does what to whom, with whom, how and why, who benefits, whose interests are being served all require serious consideration.

For Porsanger (2004) research purpose, responsibility, accountability, representation, authority and epistemology are all intrinsic to an approach based on Indigenous Ethics. Porsanger stated:

> ...although an ethics application is... an essential part of the initiation of any research project on Indigenous issues, research ethics should not be considered purely in this narrow sense (2004, p. 11).

Likewise for Tuhiwai-Smith, a methodology underpinned by Indigenous cultural and ethical protocols, behaviours and values, has these qualities and elements:

> ...built into the research explicitly... thought about reflexively... declared openly as part of research design... discussed as part of final results...

(and) ... disseminated back to people in culturally appropriate ways...

and language (1999, p. 15).

Mick Dodson further highlighted the imperative of Indigenous ethics:

...in the world of real-politic, neither the existence, nor the legal

recognition of a right are sufficient to guarantee its enjoyment

(Wentworth Lecture, 1994).

In recognizing the traps of a deficit western academic approach, this inquiry has

maintained a focus on solutions informed from an Indigenous sense of

wholeness. Processes of 'listening and thinking with the heart' became the

compass for negotiating boundaries and ethics, relationships and relatednesses,

and for dealing with the intellectual struggles intrinsic to the study. Energetic and

passionate discussions within the dialogic space shared with Indigenous

stakeholders, provided significant affirmation and trust to sustain my research

journey.

Initially I believed that ethical appropriateness would involve seeking permission

from Indigenous stakeholders. However, I was gently admonished by a Senior

Indigenous academic that, in relation to the research, 'permission' was not likely

to be provided. At first I interpreted this as a form of rebuff. Nonetheless her

advice invited much deep reflection on what this concept actually meant, and led

to tentative dialogue with some close Indigenous colleagues about the related

notion of trust. These discussions evolved two core understandings: firstly that of

'accountability through relationship', and secondly that trustworthiness would be verified through the actual enactment of responsibility and respect. Tuhiwai-Smith similarly discussed the power of such relatedness and its applied ethics:

> ...I found that people entrusted me with information about themselves which was highly personal. I felt honoured by that trust, and somewhat obligated as well – in the sense of having to be very careful and very respectful about how I handled such information (1999, p. 197).

Therefore, consistent with an Indigenous ethical standpoint, this research project has been underpinned by processes that acknowledge, respect and uphold sovereignty and agency for Indigenous stakeholders. Likewise relationship, inter-relatedness and intra-relatedness have played a crucial role within this inquiry process (Martin, 2008).

Equally, quality assurance mechanisms included the application of University ethics processes, together with the engagement of research processes and methods that are consistent with Indigenist research principles and Indigenous perspectives (Aboriginal Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2000; Brands & Gooda 2006; National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003) . It was important that this study should avoid becoming a product filtered through non-Indigenous interpretation, as can occur when outsiders undertake research with Indigenous peoples and communities (Gordon, Hallahan & Henry, 2002, Fredericks, 2006; Martin, 2001; Tuhiwai-Smith,1999; Yunupingu, 1994).

Therefore two additional strategies were undertaken. My participation in the Indigenous Research Methodologies Module Masterclass (June 2010) provided an opportunity for peer review of the research project through engagement with Indigenous academics and peer researchers (Moreton-Robinson & Walter, 2010). Five days of discussions on critical race theory, whiteness studies and Indigenous methodologies immersed me in deep reflection in relation to this research project. Invitation to this limited attendance workshop was a significant recognition of the importance of the research topic.

Secondly, the establishment of an external eminent reference group early in the research process provided another mechanism to ensure academic and cultural rigour. This group was made up of five academics external to the formal academic frameworks of the University – two Indigenous females, one Indigenous male, and two non-Indigenous males. I approached these people because of their enactment of values consistent with decolonizing practices. They generously accepted the role to sit at the edge of, and just beyond the firelight to observe and provide critical feedback on the integrity of research processes and content.

The 'interview'

> ...the shortest way from experience to knowledge is through stories
>
> (Johansson, 2004, p. 273).

Information sharing, relationships and respectful processes such as narrative story-working were identified as essential to the research methodology (Martin,

2008, Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). According to Witz (2006), a number of 'ways of being' facilitate, maintain and sustain a narrative experience. These include natural deep listening and the use of normal cues, visual and verbal acknowledgment, expressions of understanding, encouragement, empathy and interacting with genuine presence. For me as researcher-in-relatedness, these behaviours and ways of being, were a natural demonstration of respectful relatedness towards the contributor and their subjective experiences.

Initially I approached the interview stage with some trepidation, anxious to avoid any way of Doing that resembled an interrogative taking of information from the participants. I wanted to create a space that facilitated narrative explorations of the issues the participants identified as relevant and important for them. In order to facilitate a beginning to the sharing of information, I composed and provided a short list of open-ended prompt questions relating to good practice by non-Indigenous stakeholders (Johansson, 2004). Martin (2008, p. 95) described similar processes as "fishing for information". She was clear that even semi-structured interviewing is an inadequate process for two significant reasons. First, direct questioning risks disrespect and damage to relatedness, and second, such processes are not part of an Indigenous way of knowing or learning (Martin, 2008, p. 95). However, as previously mentioned if a comfortable, respectful opportunity arose, I posed a broad question regarding the notion of 'head, heart, hands and Spirit' in practice (see p. 43).

In these ways yarnings about the research question evolved into narrative data-gathering conversations. Easy rapport and deep relatednesses became evident as the participants commenced a strong focus on the issues that they identified from within the research question. Each person participated as and when most convenient for them, and to the degree that they were most comfortable with. Therefore the interviews became transformed into a collection of stories put together by the contributors as a group.

A process of returning or bringing back the stories to the relevant participant for authentication had three significant purposes. It ensured the accuracy of content, it was consistent with the principle of reciprocity, and it facilitated ongoing dialogues with participants, including reflections about learnings.

Therefore, while the research has been facilitated by the researcher, it remains owned by all, and may be used by all. Benefit for participants is guaranteed through the collaborative ownership of outcomes and conclusions. A number of writers supported this notion of collective ownership as being consistent with an Indigenous worldview (Martin, 2008, Moreton-Robinson, 2010). For Wilson the process of 'telling the story' is more important than the outcome:

> ...an Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that
> knowledge is relational... it goes beyond the idea of individual
> knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge (2001, p. 176).

Weber-Pillwax (2001, cited in Martin, 2008) similarly highlighted the power of storyworking and stories:

> ...they are to be listened to, remembered, thought about, meditated on. Stories are not frivolous or meaningless; no one tells a story without intent or purpose. A person's word belongs to that person and in some instances can be viewed as spoken (2008, p. 96).

Participants

For Bishop (2007, p. 15) ethical research should be framed by fundamental reflections such as: "...why (am I) engaging in this research? How will this research benefit those who participate? Does the research maintain or recreate dominant social structures?"

Participant involvement has been closely linked to my responsibility and accountability as researcher. This inquiry has been underpinned by the narrated experiences and knowledges of many Indigenous people and their clear descriptions of the social, emotional, cultural and spiritual impacts of colonization practices. Alongside these narratives, a number of non-Indigenous practitioners have reflected on the challenges they have faced within their personal and professional locations of self and practice.

Methodologically, the ongoing presence and support of all participants has woven and guided this inquiry. Their contributions have been coupled with knowledges from other literature resources to inform the key outcomes. As the

principal data source their stories have constructed and informed new knowledges on better practice by non-Indigenous stakeholders.

An understanding of the demographic context underpinning the research endeavour is important for some ways of knowing. Sixteen interviews were conducted with Indigenous and non-Indigenous professionals across the remote settings of Northeast Arnhemland, Cape York and Torres Straits, and the urban settings of Cairns and Darwin. Many of the Cairns participants also lived and worked in Cape York.

All stakeholders were explicit that their contributions were offered for the growth of knowledge in environments beyond this undertaking. The participants and their narratives now are present in Part 2. Their collaborative participation, knowledges and experiences are located at the core of this research, as fundamental to ways of knowing (Martin, 2008, p. 72). Being embedded within this inquiry guarantees that they own a place in this document, in the research journey and in the outcomes. Here each person's presence invites the reader into deep connectivity with their knowledges, their experiences and their relatednesses with the research question.

PART 2: KNOWING the Knowers and BEING: listening, thinking, reflecting, linking and remembering.

Introduction:

> Alongside the colonial discourses we have always had our own
> Aboriginal discourses in which we have continued to create our own
> representations, and to recreate identities which escaped the policing of
> the authorised versions. They are Aboriginalities which arise from our
> experience of ourselves and our communities. They draw creatively
> from the past, including the experience of colonisation and false
> representation. But they are embedded in our entire history, a history
> which goes back a long time before colonisation was even an issue.
> Those Aboriginalities have been and continue to be a private source of
> spiritual sustenance (Dodson, 1994).

This Part presents another context and another layer of Story within the macro-story of the research. Here, the transcribed Knowledges of the participants are foregrounded and embedded as central to this inquiry. Each contributor is a person who is not to be objectified as a 'source of data', but rather exists in relatedness within the research ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of doing.

It is fundamental to this inquiry that the contributing participants remain present, with their lived experiences, knowledges and wisdoms giving voice to the research question. Here their passionate involvement and unconditional gifting of

knowledges and experiences provides rich foundations for reflection and analysis. In this way, my research is both grounded in, and enfolded by their knowledges. As Martin stated:

> ...an Indigenist research paradigm is served by an ontology that anchors all experiences to relatedness, no matter what the contexts (Martin, 2008, p. 81).

In participating, they have attributed both my personal-self and researcher-self with the trust and responsibility to sustain our relatednesses, and to choose wisely. In this space, their relatednesses within this research project are made transparent, as is their connectedness to its outcomes. Likewise this section reflects their direct entitlement to use this information in their interactions with those who have power over their lives. Such an approach is consistent with the human rights and social justice work of Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman who stated that research should promote "...an ethical understanding of *subjects* as *participants* in and *beneficiaries* of such research (2010, p. 10). In addition, a decolonizing Indigenist framework draws attention to the imperative of collaborative partnerships within research (AIATSIS, 2000; International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2004; Martin, 2008; NHMRC, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Inclusion of the participants' knowledges in this way is fundamentally consistent with three key paradigms, or ways of knowing, that underpin this inquiry.

Relatedness:

Firstly, Martin's (2008) relatedness theory stresses connectivity between all elements and contexts. Participants have been active, collaborative contributors to this research, generating much crucial information. The structure and processes engaged within this section demonstrate a respectful, responsible, and accountable documentation of their narratives. Martin (2008) further described the importance of 'making spaces' for emerging information. For her, conscious decisions about how to present these 'latest Stories' should ensure that Indigenous thoughts and knowledges remain centred, and that relatednesses remain entrenched (2008, p. 85). In this way, Indigenous agency and terms of reference are honoured and maintained (Martin, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Critical race theory and whiteness studies:

Secondly, critical race theory and whiteness studies caution against strategies, practices and processes that foreground the researcher's expertise by backgrounding Indigenous knowledges (Riggs, 2004). To place these valuable contributions as an 'appendix' to the primary study writings, would be a colonizing of their knowledges to benefit the researcher, of the un-reflexive centring of whiteness, and of disrespect for the milieu of relatedness from which they spoke (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2007).

As defined by a number of Indigenous writers, including Nakata (2008), Martin (2008), Moreton-Robinson (2007) and Tuhiwai Smith (1999), 'taking pieces' from each of the contributed narratives as 'data' would remove and displace the knowledges of the participants from the contextual wholeness of their Story. Any 'relocation' of such 'segments' to augment the researcher's own context of the research, would constitute a neo-colonial intellectual appropriation.

In addition, the centring of participant knowledges reveals the similarities, differences and incommensurabilities between the worldviews of participants. This provides the reader with a crucial opportunity for reflection on one's own practices. Martin supported this, stating that critical race theory "...compels researchers to work out of new relationships to self (and) to knowledge" and thus ways of doing (2008, p. 52).

Storyworking:

Thirdly, narrative story-working involves the presence of the speaker, and a foregrounding of their dialogue of 'thick, rich description' from which 'data' is drawn (Byrne, 2001; Kvale, 1996; McCashen, 2005). The dialogues of each contributor have provided crucial knowledges and learnings throughout the research. It has been a collaborative journey. Each has told of their experiences and hopes, most often with significant emotion, and so each has an entitlement to their unique space within the thesis. However, over time it became apparent to me that some degree of tension existed between an academically acceptable word-count on one hand, and the imperatives of ensuring respect, responsibility

and accountability to each contributor. Clearly, the task of documentation precluded an all-inclusive record of transcripts. With much reflection, a 'both and' solution evolved. Thus, while each contributor is presented here, their interview conversation has been condensed by excluding some of the dialogue of relatedness between the researcher and the participant. However, the full conversational transcripts are being collated into a book of Stories to be passed back to the participants when this thesis has been submitted.

A number of research tensions were mediated by the dual strategies of significant reflexivity on the inquiry methodology and deep immersion with the participants' knowledges. Consistent with a perspective framed by the lens of an Indigenist methodology, each of the following points informed my ways of doing the research, and ways of being in relation to the research.

Narratives as 'data' sources:

To maintain honour and respect, the contributors' presence here is situated prior to the thematic analysis. This also responds to an academic convention. It shows the early phases of a thematic coding system using an inductive approach similar to the evolvement of data described by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 12) wherein the themes are strongly linked to the data itself. Likewise, these transcribed narratives reveal three important strategies that demonstrate validity within a narrative, story-telling approach. These include: showing the multiple sources of information as evidence, the establishment of a chain of evidence, and thirdly,

validation through a transparent representation of participants' contributions (Gorman & Toombs, 2009, p. 6).

However, each Story is far greater than facts, figures or numbers. It is the participant's presentation of their worldview and lived experience. Their narratives provide the foundation and the source of Knowledge that is structurally classified as 'data' within the worldview of academia.

Researcher standpoint:

The presentation of these transcriptions from each contributor fulfils another important role. Within these texts, the researcher-self remains present in continued relatedness with each participant. I do not sit apart as researcher, but rather remain accountably engaged in a continuing relationship with each person and their story. In some instances, the participant's narrative has been followed by an ethnographic reflection from the researcher.

Operating from a standpoint of Whiteness would involve looking for the 'powerful discourses in order to develop 'conclusions'. However this would be a demonstration of White desire to lead or initiate a transformation. This research journey has not been about 'being an expert', but rather collating (and gathering) stories so that Relatednesses may evolve in ways that others can become connected with. For me this resonates with a line in Oodgeroo's Story (1993, in Martin, 2008, p.89) where she journeys to "...remember the old stories, so that through them she might find her tribe" (Oodgeroo, 1993, p.80, in Martin 2008,

p.89). Dadds too referred to 'empathetic validity' within research as its inherent capacity to have an impact upon, change, influence or transform others beyond the research domain itself. As a result, "caring and empathetic spaces" are found to "...discuss and reflect upon competing values" (2008, p. 283).

Academic responsibilities:

The inclusion of these transcribed contributions equally attends to two key academic responsibilities and accountabilities. Firstly, it acts in response to the view of Fine (2002, p. 218) who stated that even a 'giving voice' approach uses: "...pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments". The transparent inclusion of these slightly abridged transcriptions is thus methodologically responsive to the risk of researcher bias within the later task of analysis. For Braun and Clarke accountability, rigour and thoroughness is crucial within the thematic analysis of conversational transcripts. Otherwise significant levels of both verbal and non-verbal information can be at risk of being 'not recognized' (2006, p. 17).

Secondly, procedural authenticity is demonstrated by providing the context from which the data analysis is later conducted. In line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) description of thematic analysis as method, these transcripts reveal both the identification of initial themes, and linkages between the themes. A close reading of these narratives shows the development of repeated patterns across the 'data set' of participant contributions, and within each contribution as a data item (2006, pp. 5-6). Representation of their narratives in this way guarantees the

presence of themes that perhaps only one contributor spoke to. A particular example is where Deb spoke passionately about the incommensurability of worldviews. As Braun and Clarke stated: "...the 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but in terms of whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (2006, p. 10). Thus this incorporation of the transcribed narratives functions to build relatedness, adds transparency, and leads into the later task of analysis.

Ethics:

Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman (2010, p. 1) provided an in-depth consideration of the question: 'where does knowledge about the story come from and how is it passed on?'. These writers explored the ethics of doing research with vulnerable groups, and stated that: "...ethics should inform all aspects of the discursive interactions between people". They remind us that the interests and wellbeing of vulnerable stakeholders must be promoted in ways that: "...make sense for the research subjects, as well as for the researchers, and their academic institutions" (2010, pp. 9-10). For Martin too, being in an ethical relatedness with knowledge is fundamental to practices that demonstrate respect for Indigenous agency, sovereignty and relatedness with "...all things material and non-material" (2008, p. 53).

Cultural security:

While each person's story has been integrated within this inquiry as a discrete entity, collectively they have created a 'group story'. Culturally, story is the mechanism whereby Indigenous Peoples acquire and share knowledges (Gorman & Toombs, 2009; Martin, 2008; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Therefore this section is consistent with a cultural imperative for the participants' stories to be presented within the body of this research.

Transformation:

Throughout this research journey, knowledge has evolved. As described by Martin (2008), expanded and transformed understandings offer opportunity for the evolvement of ways of Being:

> ...the more Stories of relatedness are known, respected and lived, the stronger and clearer the capacity of an Entity to achieve the depths of physical and spiritual immersion to come alongside these Stories. It is complex, dynamic, demanding and necessary to ensure relatedness is protected and respected and then lived (Martin, 2008, pp. 79-80).

My cultural grandmother (Märi) Dhänggal Gurruwiwi told me this way: "…tell them a story and let them work out where they fit with it" (personal communication, 2013). In this, she was clear that the responsibility for learning is located with the recipient of the story – they may choose to hear and listen, or they may just see it as a 'story'. In this way, hearing these narrative directly from

the Speakers places the reader in relatedness with each contributor as a person, and offers an invitation to connect with the head, heart, hands and spirit in relation to ways of Knowing, Being and Doing (Gurruwiwi, personal communication, 2010).

Martin (2008) similarly described storyworking as being consistent with Indigenous ways of teaching, and of "…knowing what is known, what is being known and what is yet to be known" (2008, p. 21). Thus the inclusion of these Stories has been a purposeful strategy towards two significant objectives. Firstly, to explore for ways of knowing, being and doing so that opportunities for transformative practices may be evolved and informed from a de-centered value-base of respect, responsibility and accountability. This is in line with Martin's Relatedness Theory, and with her view that the scholarship and exploration of an Indigenist paradigm has application to "…personal and professional development programs" (2008, p. 147).

Secondly, as researcher I maintained a firm commitment that this study should remain completely accessible for participants to use in their own advocacy for better practices within the contested spaces between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. This is consistent with my responsibility, accountability and respect towards the participant contributors and their Stories of knowledges, experiences and agency.

This next chapter now presents each contributor as a portrait within the panorama of this inquiry, their knowledges adding focus, dimension, robustness,

intensity, breadth and uniqueness to the dual canvases of research and practice. Each presents their worldview as a practitioner responding to the research question. Each has participated because they wanted to contribute to Knowledge about a decolonizing practice paradigm. Here, they provide ebb and flow, in and across the spaces where academic, Indigenous and non-Indigenous frameworks and narratives coalesce, dialogue and sometimes stand in incommensurability.

Chapter 5: Narratives: Co-authoring the Data – stories from the contributing participants.

Now the participants introduce themselves. Each is indexed so that the reader can readily find their way back to every story within the corpus of this research document. Italics and bold print have been used to demonstrate the particular tonal emphases expressed within the dialogues. In a limited number of instances, some researcher reflections have been included in italics as demonstration of reflexivity at the time of interview, or during transcription. Please now meet each contributor. They stand in visible relatedness to, and with, this research - and in this way each offers their presence as an invitation to become *Known* to the reader. As researcher, I strongly encourage the reader to become immersed in each of these stories, to place the Self in relatedness to each contributor, and to experience the knowledges they present to the macro-narrative of this inquiry.

5.1: Teresa

- Beginnings:

T: I am an Indigenous person… an Indigenous person from Cape York… my community is Hopevale… and I'm glad to be here…

R: … and thank you again for your generosity and your contributions… we were saying before that we've had a couple of false starts at getting together… in fact I've been thinking about that, and I think it's helped develop relationship a little bit – like we don't really know each other very much, and we've had to negotiate these challenges in catching up to yarn…

T: I think it has… as I was looking through your questions, one of the first things that I was actually happy about doing this research, is the *questions* that you're asking… and the first one here, says: "... when an outsider, or non-Aboriginal person comes to work with Aboriginal people about a problem, what things make up right way for them to do, or to be?"… and you hit the nail on the head… it's about building the relationships… it's about building the trust… that is *absolutely critical*...

…let me think for a moment to find the right words… I don't want it to sound offensive… OK… because, I think that's the problem… the problem of non-Indigenous people going into Indigenous communities… with their own agendas… that's offensive…

…yep, if nothing's been negotiated and there's an expectation that the community has to meet… yep… yeah… it's the way it's done… there has to be proper and respectful discussion and talking together… otherwise it's just forcing people into things… I see Government working this way because it's about *them* ticking off the boxes… *their boxes* - to actually say: "… well, we're *doing something*". It's about *them ticking off their boxes* – not ticking off the Community boxes – the People on the ground – it's not about ticking *their boxes*… it's about *Government* ticking *their boxes: "…yeah, we've done this and this – we've done our bit…".*

...but I don't believe it's a challenge from an Aboriginal point of view – the challenge is going to be changing the white minds of the non-Indigenous

person... to meet the expectations – meet expectations and *finding that half-way point*... and *allowing* it to happen... so there's got to be a bit of give-and-take... on *both* sides...

…we know the right way of implementing programs… to get solutions our way… including yarning about how it was to be done, and measuring the outcomes… it would be achievable because you're finding common ground to sit down and talk about it…

…yes… the Community needs to know what is required, and be involved in coming to an agreement about how it will be achieved and the outcomes… so that everything is clearly understood and flexible and worked out in the dialogue – because Community are wanting to get outcomes for the people on the ground… the comment I made before – Government is more about ticking off on *their* boxes, not the Community boxes… but there's a space in-between where *dialogue can happen*… mutually agreed boxes… a mutual agreement about what the expectations are… in meeting outcomes on both sides… yeah, finding that *middle-space*… *"…here's money… what can you do about this problem…"*. Otherwise, you know, there's no point funding something the Community don't want to do...

…look, one of the things that I often challenge is policies develop by a Government department and the way they design their policies around behaviour management… how you manage a code of conduct… um… and the point that I made this morning, was that these policies don't allow that space to, you know,

reflect… to allow for positive growth… for students… it doesn't allow that person to have a say… it's all… not the way… I see that it's not culturally appropriate… not culturally appropriate… you know… in Indigenous settings when people experience a crisis, or loss and grief, or conflicts, or… you know… the experience has been that… we… actually the *whole family* is affected by it… we live so closely together… you know, um… and we actually sit down together to come up with some possible solutions… to work our way… that's how we do it… as a family… so when you look at these policies… you know, your children going to school… it doesn't reflect that… it doesn't respect cultural aspects, cultural frameworks within which Indigenous people work… it's very individualized and I think it separates… you know, if you are a student and you don't know how to… you know… your emotions are high… there's anger, you may be frustrated… and you're taken into this kind of environment… it's not going to serve any purpose… probably going to cause further anger and frustration… rather than doing any good or justice for the person… it doesn't allow for… you know, the growth to learn… it's kind of… yeah… so the policies around behaviour management, I kind of don't agree with it…

…I think there is scope to do it differently… um… you could review the policy… you could consult with the school community… you could engage parents… so what I'm trying to say is, it's easy to take policy away and keep it within bureaucracy, and get bureaucracy to, you know, *change* the policy… but *an empowering way*, I think, is to… an *empowering framework* is about engaging

those parents and allowing people to be the policy-makers… to have input… not to be the policy-maker, but to have input into how the policy could best meet the needs of the school community… by engaging the parents… you know… to be *flexible*… but I've never come across anyone anyway… they… people stick by the policy… they stick by it… ahh… they stick by it, because it *protects them*… the policy protects them… and it doesn't protect the student… it protects them… that's what it does… it protects them… as employees… not the student… that's why I disagree with… the *way* the policy is developed… and the way it's implemented… you can change the implementation of it… but the implementation is guided by the policy, so… the policy needs to change in order for it to change in the implementation… there's nothing that I've ever experienced where … I can't even imagine it… because there is no flexibility… the implementation is guided by the way in which the policy is developed… *by the rules*… I've actually talked through some of these points with these Principals, about the policies… but… it's hard to change peoples' frame of thinking, if their thinking is guided by a policy that's been there for… that's well-established… and embedded into… you know… the systems… and if it's going to change, you *have to* … we know that policy takes a long time – it's a process… it takes a while… but you know it's about starting that process anyway… if it's going to take ten years, let's start a process and make sure they are inclusive of the wider community… and in this case, the parents… even students… would be involved in *developing* the policy… you know, get people to… use a participatory action process and framework by asking what's working around behaviour… and

including the parents and kids… if the students are mucking up, what *can* be done about it…:… and that invitation is *not there*… nah…:… it should all be about positive personal growth… like the ownership of the solutions… and it's about inclusion… yeah… I think parents and students would love the opportunity of brainstorming some solutions… absolutely… it's part of the learning curve for young people as well… and you're also giving them ownership… the parents and students *ownership* of developing these policies, or *having an input* into these policies… and I think *the respect*… you know, *having ownership brings respect*… you're building a *relationship* to that policy… I'm going to *respect* it… I'm going to *reinforce* it… it's *meaningful* for me… yeah, it's really meaningful… it's about… it's about *talking*… you know, it's about *being*, *being there*… to flesh out this… yes… the barriers, the difficulties, the challenges… also the opportunities… yeah, *being there*… if there was a window of opportunity, I'd be there…

…this is coming from up-stream, thinking about that primary health care framework… you know, trying to look at problems up-stream, not trying to fix it down here… in the down-streams… you know, we know that social determinants impact on health… and if this is an impact, it's a positive impact… something in place that's going to allow young people to *grow*… and to grow up in a positive way… not everybody has the same opportunities… and young people's situation can, you know, yeah… people's experience can be good, or bad… those who are experiencing the bad situations are most likely to fail – not *fail* – are more

likely to show more emotions, and are more likely to not have the skills to know how to deal with situations… so I just think it would be a positive step…

...do you know how it would be done differently? If I had to do it differently, which has *never* happened (chuckling)... shut the communities down for two or three months of the year, particularly around the wet season... not shut them down / shut people out... but it's to shut off the visiting agencies, close them off for three months... every year, so that the Community can sit down and plan... sit down and plan, and *think* for the next nine months that they are going to move into*... think about what needs to be done*... around the sorts of things that is expected of them... control has to go back to the Community... that *allows them* to plan, it allows them to really work closely with their staff on the ground... you know... do some planning, mapping... around skills development, further training, and also around project management type of work... you know, *how* these things are going to be implemented, who's responsible – all that planning stuff – 'cause at the moment, communities are constantly working in crisis – they have been working like that for two decades... they've been working in crisis, responding to every man and his dog, that comes into the community... (non-Indigenous ones from outside the community)... in and out of the community with *more expectations*... 'cause they've got funding that they received for projects, and they've got timeframes to meet, yeah... they've got to tick off on *their* boxes, but no-one is measuring outcomes on the ground – no-one is... yeah, shutting the community off for three months would allow people to plan – because I see that

people are just constantly working in crisis... that's why communities can't work their way out of crisis, because that's the way they are operating... so there needs to be a mechanism, a way in which communities can come together and design a way, develop a way in which *they work internally*... and how that's coordinated externally... need to give the community the capacity to plan, so that you're building ... it's the bottom-up approach... not the other way around... and we've been saying this for years!... literally... for years!

...yeah, well, community politics is a learned behaviour ... it's been transferred... you know, when I look in my community, you know... that behaviour rarely existed because it wasn't the way we worked... it's the opposite to Spirit in Community, because we have dysfunction in community... we are dealing with the impacts of loss of language, loss of story – you know, loss of being able to practice... so we are doing the opposite... so if you look at education, education was a part of our circle, but not the education of white man – education was around, you know... *living* as an Aboriginal person... within this kind of setting (Spirituality diagram)... with knowledge being passed down about all of these things...(Being, and Doing, and Existing)... about *Land*, about *how we should be*, and *all these things around*...

...it's about building the relationships… it's about building the trust… that is *absolutely critical*… yeah… look the reality is that we all have… we all have… an agenda… we all have needs… um… we all come from different backgrounds… we all live in different environments… so… um… in terms of relationships… so

what I'm trying to say is that there is different levels of relationships… but the reality comes back to the points that I've made about environment, backgrounds… um… you know… we all have agendas… I think where the boundary isn't set is… not knowing those boundaries… where people actually step over the line of those boundaries… then it becomes… you know, the situation can become intense… you know, the relationship can break down… but there's also room… to look at that… and reflect on it and think… *"… well, what can I do about this…how can we work through this?"*…and come to an understanding… so there's *opportunities* there… to rebuild as well…

…this is all about making changes… and it's all about mobilization as well… mobilization of change… so policy changes would mean that we want to see less children suspended from school and more children that are actually *growing* at, you know, their *lived* journey, their *lived experience* to be positive… and the journey that's going to give them skills for growth… and for further development… that's the dialogue from the Indigenous worldview...

 ...you know, a lot of the systems we experience today… as Aboriginal people… policies, you know… some of those policies don't give people *the room*… um… it doesn't… um… it doesn't *create the space* that *allows* people to speak in a *safe place*, and in a *safe way* as well… people's voices need to be heard… so for these sorts of policies, they say one or two things… *"…our way, or the highway… if you can't work within this policy framework, then…"*… if you can't accept that, then there's no room for negotiation… no room to talk… no room to put forward

your views… the views about the things that are important to us (as Aboriginal people)… *how do you get that message*… it doesn't allow you to do that… this is what I find… what I dislike about policies… they say "…*you do it this way or not at all*…"… you know… you either comply with this or you don't…

…their dialogue would be reinforcing the bureaucratic… ahhh… way of thinking… that's the challenges… it gets really frustrating, even though there is a lot of literature out there around better ways of doing things, in the translation and in the dialogue… it gets all lost… *(sounds frustrated)*… 'cause when you work in… yeah… it just becomes too problematic, you know… you kind of wonder if it will change, because there is a lot of evidence around about ways of working better… I think that there's a lot of improvement – let's use the Negotiation Tables – the idea of setting up those Negotiation Tables, was to allow the interfacing of… you know, between Government and Community… now, for Government to go to the Community, really hasn't… for Government to do the negotiation by *going to the Community*, you would think *"… OK, this is a safe way of doing it…"… but it hasn't been*… nothing really has changed… you know, they're working from a… basically, it's a David and Goliath… um… *way of working* with Indigenous People… David is the Community, and Goliath is the Government… *attitudes* haven't changed*…* everything is… let's look at the local Indigenous Partnership Agreement… that'd been signed off, you know, between the seventeen communities and the Premier – it's all been *forced*… communities

aren't being resourced… resourced properly, to implement this… Council, the Mayor and six Councillors and one CEO, can't implement this…

…there's risk, yeah… it can only work, or it won't work… but it's about creating that *safe space*… to reflect… to think about… to re-negotiate… and come to an understanding… *bit like conflict*… what is it that you want to achieve?... to build the relationship… to re-build the relationship…

…yeah, to be on the same page… where *both* needs are respected… yeah… negotiating the relationship and the boundaries… um… to me, when we talk about *safe spaces*, safe space can be anywhere… it's not about the physical space… it's about *how* it's being done… *how* it's organized… *how* you create the space to sit, to talk… and you know… setting some boundaries… you know: *"…where to from here…"*… *talking* though it… *talking* through the steps to… you know… to come to some understanding… that *this* is how were going to move forward on this…

...and you know what the difference is... it's about building that trust and it's about building that relationship... yeah... but you can say those words, but if you... and Bama can pick up on people who are Fakes... they get sorted out eventually...

...their language, by the way they relate, the way they communicate, their body language, whether they are sincere... and they are watched all the time... Community analyse people, and they have their ways of knowing how to do that, and they do that... and they can be very judgemental too... they can pick up on

who's faking and who's real... um... and people who don't listen come across as fake... and ignorant... and *it's all about them*... very self-centred, selfish people... it's about *them* looking after their own needs and nobody else's... yeah, someone who's fair who utilizes that Space, has a win-win situation... you can't have your cake and eat it too... but if you can find a space that's going to *allow* win-win situation, then that's a good thing... I think that that's what our People struggle with... because no-one meets them halfway... because there has been *too many things* where they *haven't* been met halfway... you know what I said before, about the learned behaviour – the selfish way of behaviour... the selfish game – history gets in the way... and learned behaviour gets passed down – it's intergenerational now... 'cause it's a learned behaviour...

...not if you negotiate the boundaries... it's how you do it... if it's done in a reflective way, that allows, you know, the openness... you know, setting some clear boundaries, um... but there needs to be equal power and relationship and respect...

...if they don't develop the relationship, then there's no negotiation... so I can't understand why it's not being practiced at all levels... not just between people like Kevin Rudd and Noel Pearson... the developing of the relationships – why is it that it's there, practiced higher up... doing it at a political level... and yet they are not doing it out on the ground... it's a disrespect... *there's disrespect*... for Aboriginal People's perspective... but yet, at this higher level there's respect for the countries in which they can come to a place, to negotiate... so to me, that's

the message... we don't deserve to be respected... as Aboriginal People... so *"...we ain't going to create that space for you..."*...

R: So what gets in the way at the local level...?

T: The disrespect... there's no respect...

R: So at the grass-roots level...?

T: There's no respect...

R: At the practitioner level...?

T: There's no respect...

R: ...and if those workers were showing more respect, they would be ...

T: ...oh, very productive with the community... John Havilen is an example – he came with an attitude of respecting the people he was going to work with for 3 years... he earned that respect... and he got what he wanted... but he didn't leave, he just didn't grab his cake and run... he shared it... he gave... and this is exactly how Donald Steinman works... he's been a Principal at Hopevale for a *long* time...

...yeah, yeah... the way things work, the way things are done... you share... you don't have to share everything, like your money and things – that's not expected of you... but it's about the value being expressed when you share...

…the social determinants of health … it should be talked about… um… not just within health, but education, employment, economic – it should be talked about, and brought in… you know… I think enough of it *hasn't* been said… because people… when I hear 'social determinants of health', it's *always associated* with health… yeah… but non-Indigenous people don't see that holistic... they don't see it as holistic... they think education sits here, health sits here, this sits here, and that sits there... you know, they think... in silos… Indigenous people think holistic… that's the difference… when we look at health, health isn't just about our *physical* health… *health is everything* – our *land*, our *culture*, our *customary practices* – it's that *whole spiritual – it's the Spirituality of Being – of our Aboriginality*… and I see spirituality as the higher being, or the higher authority – when you look at the Spirituality – the centrepiece of *Spirituality* is *the Land*, then you have *the Sharing* and *Caring* and *the Values*, and *the Principles*, and then you have *the Culture*, *the Customary practices*… song and dance, traditional foods and medicines – the *doing things*… things that we *do* as *Aboriginal People*… so the song, dance – this is the whole *Spirituality – all of this*… it's the *Higher,* it's *the Higher* – it's *Everything*… if you take the Land away, right?... the whole thing is not Spirituality… if you pull out the Values and the Principles, and the Land – put the Land back there, it's still not Spirituality, but if you glue them all together – the Land, the Values and Principles in which you live and raise your family, your cultural practices… that we do as Aboriginal people… the song, the dance, the traditional hunting, the food, the way we communicate in our languages… um… you know, protecting our totems – *all* of those things, *all of it –*

that's what Spirituality is – if you take one of those away, it leaves a hole… *it leaves a gap*… Spirituality – we need this as Aboriginal people to become and stay strong and for our healthy people, we need *the Whole*…

…actually, I did a… (*drawing a graphic*)… this is our Land, Land is *Why* we exist – if we don't have Land, we don't… we *can't* exist… then you've got here, this is our Values… this is how I… Principles… I Hopevale we say the *Wallan* and the Matha. This is the Wallan way… the values… so, this is the Sharing and Caring – that's what it is… the Matha is no-good way… yeah… Sharing and Caring… that's the Wallan Way, sharing and caring, values and principles…

…(*continuing to draw*)… and this next one is *the Doing – how you do it*… this is How you do it… this is your song, you need dance… you need, you know, your bush medicine, your bush foods which is your hunting and gathering… you need your language, um… your totems… stories… all the *doing stuff*… it's what we *do*… um… (*reflective pause*)… this *Whole* thing is *Spirituality*… do you know why its Spirituality?... because it's the Higher… it gives you the Higher… it takes you to the Higher living Being… Higher level of Existence… that's what it is… so when we look at the 'Social Determinants of Health', that's what it is… (*clear, firm voice*) … that's what they need to stay safe… to keep them safe in their Journey…

…yep… it's about…. like when you leave your Community, you take that Spirit with you… so it doesn't matter where you go, you'll have this *instilled inside*… with you, for the rest of your life… but if you trade these things in, or negotiate

them away, though… it can become weaker… and you *know* that – when you feel weak, and there's a sense of… um… *sadness*… when you're feeling weaker, you know that it's a sense of sadness… and you know… there's a *need* to go back to Country and rejuvenate… yep… you *carry it with you*… you don't forget it… yeah… on a journey, you can become weaker, or you can become lost – *but you know when you need to go back*…

…I would think when the whole is working all together, you've got Spirit... 'feet' needs to be in that, because 'feet' keeps you grounded... that's the Land... so if you have all those four things, the whole thing is the Spirit... that's what I mean when we're talking about Spirituality – it's the Higher Essence... so when People say... are calling upon the Higher Spirit, it's the Higher Essence, like in meditation... yeah...

…when you think about Myers Briggs stuff, and look at this here now, the heart is all about feelings... and the feet is about being grounded, like when you think about stability... strong, intuitive, balanced... and the hands and the head – yeah... so when you said that most non-Indigenous sit on hands and head parts, I agree absolutely.... absolutely... and it tells us that Aboriginal people have a lot of heart and a lot of feeling in our work and our lives...

R: This picture that you've drawn here that explains these things... can I have your permission to use this, to include it in the completed document – with your permission and referencing to you...? ... you own it, but may I use it to help get our message across...?

T: Yes... as long as you acknowledge it to me... that's fine... I see this as not only for how... not only for how white peoples work, it's also for within our own community – the right way of working... for *all* People...

...yes, yes... *why* we exist, *what* are the values about how we exist, *how* we do it – the strategies... when you're looking at it from a service delivery way of working... so... Land – you would say... "...I am here on *your Land* to *share*... to *value* and *respect*... and this here is about *how* we are going to do it"...

...so what *binds* the two together is... the *respect*... the interface with each other... and in between you have the thing that *glues* it all together... the *respect*... it *glues it together*... yeah... and that's the *meeting place*... you know, in Indigenous culture, where people have *always* talked... well, in *dialogue* – there's *always* a meeting place... that People refer to... *that's* the *meeting place*... *literally*, that's what the Meeting Place *was* – it was a *place* for *reconciliation*... the Place to tell Stories... the Place to *share*... and *dialogue*... yeah, responsibility... respect and responsibility just says it all... yeah, yeah... *(reflective silence)*... that make sense...?

...it feels true for me... it's holistic... look at our National Social and Emotional Wellbeing Framework – it's *everything* – it's *holistic*... it's *all* of this *(indicating the diagram)*... one can't *be* without the other... it's *everything*... when we *try* to deal with health – it's everything, it's *everything*... when we look at the Social Determinants of Health, it's not just health, it's about education, it's about... *all those other parts of being*... yeah... it's holistic - you *can't separate* the bits off...

you can't separate *any* of them from each other... yet we work in these.... these *silos*... you know... education over *here*... health over *here*... this one over *there*... you know... why is it designed separately, *that's* what I can't understand... you know, and I'm just saying it *on behalf* of Indigenous People... does that make sense...?

R: Absolutely... I just haven't got the words to thank you enough, for opening up these ways of thinking and talking... these connections in our thinking are critical...

T: Yeah, yeah...

R: For me, these conversations have taken it to the levels of *being* and *doing*... I'm not explaining myself well...

T: No, you're saying it *right* – it's of the **doing** and the **knowing**... knowing, being and doing... yeah... that's what we've got... *existing and Land is **Being***, the *values and principles is the **Knowing***, the way you're brought up, the principles and values that you are raised in – *Wallan Way – right way*... and ***Doing** is what we do and the importance of what we do*... based on these other ones...

R: So it's a bit like, every time something is done *wrong way*, it because something *has been neglected here* – in Walaan Way...

T: Yeah... in this Model of the Being, the Knowing and the Doing... yeah... holistic is complex... but we talk it every day when we talk about the Social Determinants of Health... absolutely, yeah... you can also think about it... from basically...

thinking about *needs*... Maslow's... so when you look at those basic human needs, right...?... physical, social, emotional, spiritual... if you take one of them out... and if you think about a child growing up without *each* of these four needs being met... what kind of life would this child be having... ... if one, two or three things are missing, you can't... you can't reach the Higher Essence... you know...?

R: ...and if a non-Indigenous person comes to do some work, with clear thoughts about why it's important, and with a strong heart, strong feelings and respect for others, and is grounded and stable, and behaves in a balanced, whole way... a sense of connection and groundedness - what would you say about that?...

T: That would be a good person... Old People say it in such a way... like harmony... there's a way they express it when people are working in this way – all balanced and... yeah... there's an expression... I've got to think about it for a bit... about how they express that... 'cause I've *heard them* express that... I'll think about it and get back to you on that... there is a word that they use when they express that... so let's use an example... John Havilen... when John Havilen... umm... I think he was a PhD or something... so his time... he spent a lot of years in Hopevale, and um, he was actually doing his PhD... he is one person which People gave him a Name... this special Name... it was *the way* that he actually *worked* – the *way* he worked with People on the ground... and cared... and the things he needed for his PhD... as well as giving something back to the Community...

...and he is well-respected... well-respected in the Community... and... he gave something back... he lived on the Community for quite a few years... I was only a kid... I remember him and his wife and his children... he made a big impression on me... um... the whole family lived there... um, gosh... he was very... *he was a powerful man*... powerful, because he was respectful... a giving, humble person... and the People of the Community gave him this special Name – I'll have to think about that name...

...quite different to 'seagulls'... they're the ones that Community take offence, because they don't... look for that space there, you know... that in-between space... yeah, just being respectful... he didn't not interact, or not engage...

R: So that one who is coming to talk to people in the Community, should be really open, even about the things that are hard to talk about?

T: Yep.

R: When they have to say hard things, they need to remain respectful and conscious of other People's feelings?

T: ...and talk in a way that is safe...

R: Saying it in a way that says: "... *we* need to find a solution to..."?

T: Yeah, a shared approach that is respectful and focussed on finding a respectful solution...

- Concluding the session:

R: Hmmm...so how are you feeling about what we've talked about so far?

T: Yeah... happy, yeah... good... yeah, all good... when we talk again, I would rather in a face-to-face way – it's better that way... *communication* – that is *so important* when it comes to that safe space... that in-between space...yeah – respect, responsibility... so when you look at it, it's about *communication*.

R: Talking on a whole lot of levels at the same time? Perhaps these levels of *doing* and *knowing* and *being*?

T: Yep!... a *wholeness*, that's good.

R: I hope I can get all this right in writing it up...

T: Just as long as you... you know, bring it back... come back and talk with me so we can fine-tune this, you know?

...yeah, thanks, I enjoyed that... *thinking* about that Spirituality stuff –it's been in my head for a long, long time... and you know, it *could* take me... you know, who knows *when* I might get the opportunity to do a PhD... and I can get things out of my head, and if there's somebody else who's prompted my thinking... and based on my own learnings, and my own upbringing... so be it... yep, I'm happy!

5.2:   Arnold

(*Identified as:* Indigenous male from the Wuthathi Clan Group of Cape York)

- Beginnings:

A: Have I got to sign this?

R: Yes please Arnie – paperwork required by Uni…

A: Great places of learning – Universities… (*laughing*)…as long as they don't get bogged down in their own… self-importance… they need to be open to learning and moving on…

…whether they be black-fella business or white-fella business… and that may change according to who holds *Power*… *perceived* power… or in fact, if we're talking about… *true* Aboriginal *Way*… then… for me, there's a… um… *equity* in a *democratic* way… within Aboriginal Societies… which *certain* People have responsibilities for… and which they have responsibility to *share*… um… the *delivery* of certain aspects of Society… um, and they have the responsibility also, to *learn from Others*… so that the *Core Business* of any particular Group, ah… cultural, social Group… has at least *some essence of Purity* about it… how they move forward, and in their Existence… and *that* can bring to *many* discussions... lots of different aspects, um… of Our Life… *and we carry that*, not only in our personal life, but in our collective engagement… um… both in our own family and others, and for Aboriginal People, um… lots of Indigenous groups… we *perceive* that *we could carry that into other establishments*… like Government

organizations… and lots of times it will *backfire* on us, because… Government is about *control*, not about *collective harmony from the Mob*… collectively… it's about, sometimes, *their* perception in lots of instances about *what's best for you*…**their** perception of what's best for you… which is *another* topic altogether…

...well, let's talk about it a little bit, because I think it's importance in terms of… *it's gone on for decades in this country*… that Government has perceived that *White* is best for all… it's um, population… um, and it supposedly does a whole lot of consultation… um, and they get… they get their information from what I call 'black dealocrats'… or people who, in the Community, who they *perceive* to have the Knowledge…

...(*strong voice*) **because I can tell you now, that We in Cape York, are a very divided Mob**… um, that um… we *only* have Alliances when we are being *rewarded*… for our support… rewarded by *those who have Power* given to them by Government… or *schemed* so that Government can give them Power… and, you know… um, my Mob are um… are an example of that… there are other Mobs too… in Cape York, if you are in the *favourable* Mob… and you can see it in this Country… and I can point it out to Clan Groups who have made alliances with the 'blackocrats' or 'black bureaucrats'… that are getting all the resources and support… um… and you know, I can stand up and say that… um… without any fear of um, retribution or proven otherwise…*it's the Truth*… you know…

...People *still*... from *their* perception, *their* worldview... um... 'hang on' to what they think is going to get the best outcomes for them and their Mob, um... until again, um... we look for a *solution* and *not* for the Power...

…sometimes that perception is based on… people who have enough *education* to talk about it… which can sometimes be a *misconception*… because *traditionally* in Aboriginal Societies, the Right to speak on behalf of the Mob, could have been *given on the day*… not necessarily *over years*…um, it *may* be given for *that* person to speak about *certain* aspects of the Culture, um… *and as quick as it can be given, it can be withdrawn*… so the *Government* thinks, that if *They* have elected somebody from *that* particular Community to talk on *that* Community's behalf, that it is there forever… but the Elders in their Wisdom, have not had the chance to say… *"…that's enough of that Person's interaction with you… um, as a Government agency…"*… because *that* Person's knowledge has now become limited… on a particular issue… um, because it's usually the *young*… it's usually some young person… as it is in Traditional Times, you had a responsibility to *hunt,* but that was only for *that* day… or they may have been given responsibility for Song, or Ceremony… um, under their Family Lines… that's where their *duties* or responsibilities lay… in a particular area… um, so *Government* has, for instance, um… you know, *misconceived* the *responsibilities* of some People…

…when we talk about, you know, service delivery, what's the right thing for these Communities, and where should we be putting our money, and… as a

Government… um… Governments tend to *blanket* a whole lot of Communities, in a particular geographical area, about *how **they're** going to do good **for them**…* um… *one* of the things that they forgot to do, and they are not even doing it well to this day, is to *consult* the Community… um…about their thoughts, about what is the best way… to go about, um, implementing any programs… or models, of service delivery and the resources available… *one* of the things that is still happening today, is that um… we are still doing the 'consultation thing', not necessarily with the right People, um, we are still 'blanketing' communities...

...what we are *not* doing right, is saying… "…*you* tell *us how* you want to *handle* this particular issue in the Community…um… and *how* you want it *governed*, and *how* we can *resource* it…

...many, many, many Government bureaucrats come to Negotiation Tables… and it's, you know… they're there 'for The Mob…'…and they've 'got all this money', and 'this is what Aboriginal People have to do to get this process happening for them' whether it's infrastructure, or whether it's a program, you know… "…here I am… I'm here to bring you Mob salvation…" … they give them a speech… they walk out the door of the hall… and they can't even say "gidday" to the Mob that they've just been 'there for'… you know, it might be that they have some poor interpersonal skills… but certainly when you walk out that door, you don't just put your nose in the air and get back on that 'plane and go home!... that's not being genuine – that's not showing compassion for The Mob… when you've given this great speech, and when you walk out the door they're wanting

to talk to you, and you turn your nose up at them!...you're being watched..."..oh yeah – that fella there… he come here that one time… yep… well he must want something… he came back a week later… something must have gone wrong, because he come back to see us… he still hasn't said 'gidday' to us… he still doesn't know who Elders in the Community are… he still doesn't know who are the Right People to talk to in the Community about this particular issue… he's a 'fly-in / fly-out Johnny-Come-Lately'… and he hasn't asked the question: "…what can we do to help you decide what process you want to run with"…

…um, it's about *being yourself*… and if you're only there for the process, then you'll have *very* little success… *pushing the Government process*… yeah… *you* want an *outcome*… because if we talk about *why it hasn't happened*, you know the question I'm asking… we *know* about it, we throw *money* at it, *why* is it that there hasn't been any greater success in that area... this might be the Question… "…are you a *genuine* person… you bring a *message* from Government… is that all you're doing… or are you *really* concerned about us…"… that's a *really important* part of the process…

R: …and what you're saying is 'while that question mightn't be on People's lips, it's on the eyes and their ears'…

A: Yep… and it's in their memory bank… and they reckon that *elephant's* got good memories… well, blackfellas' are better than elephants'… (*laughing*)… I mean, you know… *everybody*, not only Blackfellas, remembers how people *engage* with them… and it's about… in our society… it's about '…are you

genuine about The Mob'… '…are you genuine about the work you do…'… and how do you engage… I can say that I've read about this and that, and I have a process that I have to do, but unless I engage and get to know the People, *how do I know what your pain is about*…?... unless I spend sometime with you to *understand* that… so for *me* to go away and talk on *your* behalf, um… unless I *really* engaged, I can only talk about a situation or an issue that's affecting the Community…

…there is some things and principles that are core… and sometimes those elements are *broken*… or *compromised*… and *they* too can force a change… that compromise can *force* a change… because if an institution changes, those elements change too… they need to change with it… and those things which we… which some *sectors* hold… as core principles and if those… um… if they're changed… and we don't change with them, um… we can no longer be able to promote the value and principles… but for us as individuals, things might change around us, but we'll still try to influence those values...

…you've heard that old thing… *"…what goes around, comes around…"*…and um… *Right* will always win out in the end… um… somebody's got to be a stickler for that fight… because as you know, things *do* change… and there'll be cycles of *influence*, and cycles of… um… *processes* that keep coming back… this business about 'stacking meetings'… to get an outcome, *is not* the true Aboriginal Way… the true Aboriginal Way is what is already in Principle, particular standards… policies, whatever… it's bull-shit - you stack a meeting to

go against the Wisdom of the Elders… you know, I say "…you need to find out about your Aboriginal Culture…" …because *Culture guides the Society*… because that's the *benchmark* for Social Engagement… I talk with *my* Mob about *maintaining values as an Aboriginal Person*… for instance, people *don't realize* that the Aboriginal *Way* about *doing something*, is about a *core* energy for doing things… so when you get, either young people, or people that wanting *power*, you know... in the Community… um… my remarks to them are often about… *being Aboriginal*… and doing things *outside* of the Aboriginal Way, which may be in terms of them wanting to gain power… ah… politically, or economically, and um… using *nepotism,* for instance, to gain that *power*… that's *not* the Aboriginal Way… the Aboriginal Way is about supporting the true values of the Mob – those things set in Tradition… which Elders carry… which we call *Wisdom of Elders*… anything that goes *against* that, then becomes a *process for*… cultural suicide… so that we then tend to drift away from *True Value* of… our *Existence*… um… some people will go with the flow… but as *change* happens, there will be a core group, either Elders or Learned People in the Community, that *will try to influence that change*… even though the 'politics of the day' may dictate that we conduct ourselves otherwise, there'll be those that have their Core Principles inbuilt in them, in-grained in them, Spiritually or otherwise… socialized… perhaps… but it's *those* things that… those Core Principles, that some of Us carry… which *we believe* is that *Thing* that… that I was saying about *the Right will always win out*… onto those Core Principles… and so some of Us *hang onto* those Core Principles, even though at that

particular point in time, *they may not be* what the rest of Society *deems* to be 'the right thing to do' or the 'politically appropriate thing to do' at the time… um… so even though the *social* culture may change, the *Spiritual Culture will maintain itself*… um… so at the end of the day, as things go round and round and round, those People who *have got* those Core Principles and Values, will hold up their hands and say… "…here We are again… and We want to take *this opportunity* for Righteousness…"…um… in the *cultural* sense… um… *those* things would *set the benchmark* for *social regulation*… um, and which we deem to be, um… the Core Principles throughout Time… and they might just be *basic* things like 'you don't abuse Elders', 'you don't abuse your partners'… you know, um… 'the right to ensure that children have rights, and gain responsibility and learn *all* that they can – that can be handed down to them from their Elders'…um… that they have the Right to be safe… um… that we, as parents, have a *responsibility* to them… as mentor to our nieces and nephews… as nurturers to our own children… um… as Leaders in our Community… who have responsibility for certain Ceremony… or Other Things… those are our Responsibilities and we see them as needing to keep those Core Values as Time rolls on...

...I think it was Professor Reynolds that said: "Australia has a Black History". *It does*, and we need to look at what made it *work*… you know, when we talk about *Culture*, for instance, we talk about um, the *spectrum* of Culture, from those that live in the Cities, to Urban Centres, to Rural Centres, and out into the Rural Communities… all those *pockets* … of um, Culture… have their own Way of

doing, and dealing with things, and it's about saying … "…what's *best* for *you* in *your* environment" ...

...you've got to *trust* us that we'll *get there*… because, for *me*, in *my* experience, it's been that, *as long as it's the business of Somebody Else*… that Aboriginal People have *no opportunity* to control or manage… it will always be… "…that's *your* core business… *you* want to give me a core program, *you* want to give me a new economic strategy, *you* want to build infrastructure in *my Country… without engaging me*… that's *your* Business… and if it falls over, that's still your business, it's not my business… *you put it on me*… until you give me ultimate Power, to govern my own Business, then the Responsibility is mine, and I'll take it on, 'hook, line, and sinker'… but as long as *you* are there at the head of this thing, controlling it – it's not my Business, it's Yours… *what **control** do I have over it*… **NONE**… so, the point I want to make is, Aboriginal People *can't control their Affairs*, or get any *trust* to control their Affairs, until they have *absolutely, ultimate responsibility for it*…

…Government talks about *partnerships*… I've never seen a true Partnership yet!... (*chuckling*)… you know, Uluru for instance – Traditional Owners 'have control' – what a load of garbage… the moment they let Ranger uranium in there, *the People there lost Control*… threw their hands in the air, and said: *"…why, my Country is now sick…"*… People get sick going there! …so where's the partnership arrangement there?... where's the *equity* in the partnership… *why can I not stop a Mine that's going to damage my Country?*... if I'm a part, if I have

equitable process – what do I get out of it?... I get some Royalties, which are 'a bowl of rice' in terms of… the *Tradition* that's gone on in that Country… you know… it's a *frustrating* and *disheartening* situation… for Indigenous People … (*reflective silence*)…

...the *other* thing that I've found is their level of **trust**… (*chuckling*)… one of the **key** words for Aboriginal People are 'what level of *trust* do we have in *you*… that we can be sure that *what we are doing, will enable us to go full steam ahead*…to meet that Objective…'… um, not to say that we shouldn't have any um, *regulation* about *how* we get there… or any *accountability*… along the way…

...what is *not realized*, is that... what enables that 'blanket' to work on the ground... that '*blanket'* policy to work on the ground... it isn't the bureaucrat that comes from Canberra or Brisbane – it's your *Field Worker* in the field that makes that work... *his* level of engagement, *his* level of genuineness, *his* level of interpersonal skill – *that makes or breaks it at the Community level*...

...and for *me*, when I'm hiring staff, it's about *all* those things as well as 'how do you *fit* in the workplace... in which you're going to operate...?'... I look at it as... 'how will this person meet my objectives around engaging the Community, and how is he or she going to fit in the Team?'...I have on a couple of occasions, seen people with good qualifications at the University level, in academia... and then when it came down to *engaging* with people, and *fitting* in the Team, I've made a choice not to hire them... so that for me, I'm safeguarding Government's ability to work with The Mob... to work in the Community... because I give that a

great weighting... I hold fast, those *old* Principles of what you're about – your *honesty* and *integrity*... but it *is* about... you know... *how do you get on with the Person sitting next to you*... to get some real outcomes... for People... and how they *communicate* with The Mob... that they're *responsible*, but also that they are *flexible*... whilst we have a high bureaucratic level from the Minister – some hard core objectives that we must meet, at any cost... it's about *how* I get the Team here, to be flexible enough on the ground, that we get some outcomes without *crippling* Communities... :…it's just about getting People to identify *their* strengths, you know... um... and *not being afraid to get out there*...

...like I said, I handled it that way with him, because the interpersonal skills had been developed, rapport had been developed…and it's about talking straight up and respectfully... you know...if you're genuine and honest... people don't want you beating around the bush!... you know, they don't want you still, you know, six months later... walking around like you're treading on glass... they want you to be 'down the line'!... you know... "... what you coming here doing that small talk for... we got that in our *first* meeting!...you know... you're here to talk about *business*... yeah, we can have a talk about fishing for five minutes... now let's talk about the *business*...

 …hmmm, and People have to say to themselves..."...what do I *really* want out of *this*... and what do I *really* want out of any process"... and um... certainly... so we *shouldn't* always go into Community thinking that... again, what they should or shouldn't have... because they might just outright not want it... they may be just

happy with their Lot... maybe they have other more important things on their agenda... otherwise there is no *value* in it... if *commonality* is not there... um... there's no value there... ... but I guess it's what you make out of it... it is what it is... and to me, and I told this Mob... if it's *not* there, then at least you've had some *engagement* with *somebody* on the Community... that you've had some *engagement* with another Human Being, and they know who you *are*... and they may ring you up, or talk to you about something *else*... of interest to them, or at sometime in their life, ah... it may *become important* to them, um... so it might not always happen right there and then... but you know, two years down the track... they may have a need that they might want to talk to you about... so at least you've made a connection... nothing, no engagement with Community is always fruitless... it's about your *positive perception*... to what you're there for... you know, don't ever think you've been somewhere, and it's been... um, a *useless* exercise...   and don't ever think you're not being watched…no, don't ever think *that*! ... (*laughing*)

…um, *trust* is a very slow… and *rapport* is a very slow process – it goes back for further than White Australia… I can tell ya – White Australia just *clarified* that trust and rapport would take longer… and exacerbated the gap… yeah…"

...Government *still* hasn't got it right in terms of the *Community capacity* to *do it their way*… and when you're talking about the Community capacity to do it their Way, it's about how are they going to go about it Culturally, taking with them all of the Traditions that they had, um… and saying to the Mob… "…*how* do you want

to do it – you *used* to do it this way, it *worked*, do you want to give it a go, um, *we'll* stay out of it, but we'll resource you to the 'n'th degree'…um, to work towards some… some success…a 'collaborative alliance'…there's the resourcing side of it, both human and otherwise… it is also about 'how do we build those *Entities*, like the *Cultural* side, um… that *gave* your Mob *Power*, and *Order*… to… um, to ensure that certain benchmarks – *Cultural benchmarks*, are *met*, that um… will bring success…in whatever you're attempting to do…

...what Government doesn't realize is, is that *those things worked* Traditionally, and it's Government-created policies, which then… um, *cause* things like… *force* people to have ill-health, force People to be disengaged from their Country which brought about their wellbeing, it's no more, you know, creating them policies that… took them away from the very social order that created Harmony in their Communities…

…so whose lens is being looked through… one or two visits to a Community, um… doesn't do it for me… when Governments are creating Policy… you know, we talk about the life span of Indigenous People being less than non-Indigenous People… people can ask questions about 'what *is* that'… '*why* is that'… *my* question is… "…after *all these years*, why is it **still** like that…"… why is it *still* like that… and part of the answer is going to be because… "…*the Mob haven't been asked 'how do they think it would work'…"*… and when somebody in the Community holds up their hand and says… "…*we* think it should be like *this*…"… that that doesn't then get put in the 'too hard basket', because *they're already*

down a road … *they're already* down a road about how *they're* going to do it…like consulting after they've already had the idea about how it's going to happen...I guess *my* experience comes from working both within Government and without Government… as a Leader of the Clan Group… politically and Culturally at some level… um, but also about working in non-Government areas where… *you watch*… the *slow* education of some non-Indigenous sectors of the World, and for me it's been in the environmental movement, where the Environmental Movement has been happy enough to say… "…well, we will *go* with this… all's we want to see is *certain objectives* met…"...'big picture and then how do we get there together' sort of thing...

...some people say, you know*…"…white Australia can't be trusted, and that's why we're slow to engage with them…"*…it goes back further than that… each Aboriginal Clan Group or Tribal Group, was a *Nation* on it's own… and so that *slowness to trust*… goes way back to Ancient Times… …because… black-fellas are only human too... and they *will* cross borders… and have cross-borders… *and trust – trust has been broken*…um, and because they're in small Clan Groups, they've been over-run by Others, in the past...

...it's been there for…dunno… since time began I think… any institutions… very few… I think they're all *forced* to move on… at some stage, individuals are forced to move on… even institutions have frameworks that don't work… and the thing is, as we *learn* more, sometimes *our* reality changes too… and it may change *for*, whatever is appropriate at the time… so that's why I keep saying… "…learning

can change…"… learning *needs* to change… because as things change –
politically, socially and… I dunno… everything's *evolving*…

…two things need to happen… (a) Government needs to sit and assist in a
collaborative process, for Community representation… secondly, the Community
needs to be looking to, that… what I call 'Aboriginal Way' of solving their
problems…um… that is separate and apart from self-gain, you know, some of
them wanting Power, and look at those *Old Principles* of *Wellbeing for the Mob*…

…but at the end of the day, it is about 'what is it that he *brings* … to a *process*…
that *enhances*… the um, the *issues at hand*…'…so it is about um, a Government
officer coming and saying … "look at what we've got for you, and how do you
want to do it…"… it *is* about the language and what it is you're trying to
communicate… and it *is* about 'are we hitting on the nail that's pertinent to how
the Mob want to do it'…

R: …and for the non-Indigenous person who's struggling in 'walking a line' and
preserving their values and ethics, and the things they believe in… and maybe
making some mistakes, how do they demonstrate that they are trustworthy, and
are trying to 'get it right'…

A: I guess it's about 'communication'… it's about communicating that... saying
them up-front… saying: "…this is what I'm about, this is what I want to try"… or:
"…this is how I want to assist you…"…um… "…I might fall over, can you give me
a hand getting up…"... because it is about them being the other side of the coin –

and saying… '…look, I don't know all there is to know about the process, or your Mob, or your Culture… um… can you trust me to do the best that I can do… and if I do fall over, can you help me…find the way… find the path again…

...it's not impossible... in Aboriginal Tradition, People crossed Traditional Borders for instance… it's about the rapport you build with The Mob… or the rapport you've built with individuals… *and*… everybody has this innate ability to *know* whether you're genuine or not… in dealing with The Mob, it's about the *genuineness* that *you* bring to the process… it might be a Government process, but it's about whether People perceive you as *being genuine*… and *honest*, and um… *there for them*…

...he hasn't asked the question: *"…what can we do to help you decide what process you want to run with"*. Therein lies the success of individuals in Community… coming into Communities… they don't spend a day, sitting down with you if you are a male, sitting down with the Old People, if you're a lady you sit down with them Old Ladies… you don't turn your nose at them just because they might… *smell* differently, or they might be eating something that you would *never* eat… you know… it's about *your genuineness*… and whether you bring *that* to the party… because People will pick it up (*clicking fingers*) … in an instant… um, it's about *being yourself*…

R: … and it's important that we are clear about *what* we do, and *how* we do it, and *why* we do it that way… and by being clear about those things, it is telling the world or the Community, or the individual… something about our selves…

A: *Absolutely*, absolutely...so if you are perceived to be a person of 'good judgement', People will then operate with you… hmmm… *true heart*…yeah… (*reflecting*)...

R: Hmmm, what makes up 'true heart' – because you don't go to University and come out with a 'true heart'…

A: No , no…you don't… that is something that you bring as an individual… um, so we perceive that you are doing this just as your job, or you're really interested in my personal wellbeing and my family's personal wellbeing… which comes across in your communication… and you know… your body language, your time spent with them, your discussions and communication – it all comes out as to whether you're a 'part-timer' or you're really 'here for the Mob', you know…?...so People usually *engage* with you, on whatever level you confront them with… um… if you confront them as a 'part-timer', that's what you're gonna get… if you're a genuine person, and you can show real compassion for their wellbeing, People are gonna engage with you at that level…

…and um… I'm really *slow* to um… give my trust… and you know, … 'cause I might only give you five minutes of my time today, 'cause I remember what you mob did to me last time… but as you spend *more time* with me, and you show me that… that you are a person of good judgement, you know… and true heart... then um... then I might be willing to give you some more time... if you come here, and you get what you want out of me, and piss-off and I don't see you again... it's "...yep, alright - I've been there, done that", um... *not nice* though... um... but if

you're talking about, you know... continued engagement, and setting up a time, and you know, is it appropriate, and all that sort of stuff...um... it's just about some 'common sense' and professionalism about, you know... how you engage with another Human Being... *is anything ever more than that?...*well, we can make it as *simple* as we like, or *complicated* as we like... you know... we can make it as *genuine* as we like, or we can make it as *half-hearted* as we like... its about *' what do you bring to this engagement'*...

...um, because I have a *trust* in you and what you're saying, and what you've got to deliver to me is 'the genuine article'... you're a person of... *good judgement* and *good heart*... that's the *rapport stuff*... so if I've got *that* with you, I know that I can have a five minute discussion about this issue which we're going to move *forward* on... and if we don't come to any compromise, then it's... "well, how do we do it differently"...

...and I always say to The Mob here, at work... that *there's a solution to everything*... *because that just the way of things in life*... that's the Universe... you know... there'll always be a solution to an issue... hmmm, hmmm... sometimes things may appear to be... you know... *enormous* issues, you know... *huge* mountains... to the client – but once you start to sit down and talk it through, it's *really* only a molehill...

- Concluding the session:

R: Thank you very much again, Arnie... when I was talking about passing the information back to you for your approval, you'd said the other day, that you didn't require it back.

A: I don't require it back... I know what I've said to you... and I know that you and I have a trust... and I trust that it will be used in the best interests... of People's wellbeing...

R: Hmmm... thank you for that...

A: You're most welcome... (laughing)...

Researcher reflections: Arnie's interview affirmed a number of things to me:

- the privilege being afforded to me as researcher by participants in their willingness to invite me into their stories and experiences;
- the value of researcher and participants being collaborators in the research – in both processes and outcomes;
- the undeniable importance of relationship, relatedness and 'connection';
- participant generosity and trust in sharing their thoughts, experiences, and stories – frequently of pain - always of hope;
- and reinforces my feelings of stewardship and humbleness / feelings of being trusted and honoured.

5.3: Cindy

(*Identified as:* Noongar Woman from Western Australia)

- Beginnings:

Cindy heard about the research project from another participant and self-selected into the process. I had not met her previously. She worked in 'the Department' and wanted to talk about how practice 'should be'.

...(*big sigh and voice changes to sad*)... I um… I just look around …. it's like ….I just want to go and retire… I've seen so much in my 'tour of duty' I suppose - and I can't fix it – you know – people like you and I have tried to help and be part of it, and they (community) need so many more critical friends – a whole lot of assistance with the things that have been built up around them – when corporate becomes enmeshed with culture... I think the picture will look a bit like this – corporate and government will negate Indigenous input because it is only about dollars and buildings – and not about people...

...you and I know from our time in bureaucracy that the centralized, decentralized, American corporatism, Harvard business school model has impinged on our way of doing business – mechanisms, language and models within Government dominate, terminology has changed - relationships and relatedness in doing work has gone – it's now all about squashing it into a quick easy snapshot – how can you unpack the story of a community, of the Aboriginal

peoples experience of community, in a snapshot, in a five minute Ministerial brief – that's what changed… it's the corporatism...

...I was working with a non-Indigenous person who had worked in Canberra for many years with money – I wanted them all to just talk together – but the other one, she was coming from a perspective of, I don't know, what do you call the perspective when someone … what did she expect? (*rising voice*)… I wanted her to come down and meet the (Community) women, meet and greet, but she said "I didn't think that went very well, that was wasted...

...she didn't see it as a success, but I did – but she didn't see it…. because of the practice of... the way the women were in that space, and I couldn't let the women know that she said that... and I'm trying to get to get this one (non-Indigenous worker) to come here (into the in-between space shared with the Indigenous women) – because she has to look after these ones (the Indigenous women) – I took here along to meet the women, to share their stories in that yarning space, but I dunno, I suppose people just get fixed (in their perspective) because of their complete 'box' – it's easier to sit back like this (*leaned back with arms crossed*), and you know, women are coming and going, and …(*voice trails off*)...

...yeah … (*laughing a little*).. I said: "come along, come on in" to these old women, and: "won't it be great, she'll help you with your submission" and we had tucker...and: "here she comes" and they were all excited to meet her. Yeah "...no outcomes"... and that: "...they weren't ready for it"...

…(*voice a bit flat*)– I just realized that it's the corporate-ness, the constraints because they work around compliance, that's their main thing, that's their main engagement strategy – and these community service officers, they now have very little capacity, to do capacity-building, it's much more about compliance and funding and … um… so they might go in and try and broker deals and … but it's much more about 'tick and flick' … they need to be called 'community compliance officers' – they need a name change – they are not 'engagement officers' – they are not engaging… that what the government is about – it's about the standards and the responsibilities, "we'll give you two years to sort it out" … see…. It's much easier… see… I've got my (*holding a book in front of her face, and speaking from behind it and to the side of it, moving the book to and fro – to demonstrate the government worker speaking from behind the book – a vivid caricature of lack of relatedness)* – "and I'll speak to you when you've got you're standards in place" (*laughing as she parodies the non-Indigenous practitioner*)

…yeah… a lack of real connection in a lot of ways… just a lot of busy-ness sometimes…. each of us has our own styles, and our own views - I just worry about how 'big decisions' are made… not enough Indigenous perspective taken into account – important to give Indigenous people a voice, and to have reference points for non-Indigenous workers to ask important questions about 'how to' – what is the terminology and reference points – what is the cost of not doing it the right way – like the Social Determinants of Health… non-Indigenous workers should not get lost in talking their own language, they need to learn the

language of the other, respectfully – (*long thinking time*) - hands and head train moves too fast, the other train is the heart and spirit and doesn't move like that – there's no time there, it's open time, it's energy that's boundless … and they don't work together… hands and head train can only go so fast because it separates, disconnects from the heart and spirit … and it does… if you don't have to think about it and put your heart and soul into something, it just happens fast – it's engineering, I've seen it in council "let's build that fucking tunnel" and it just happens – it's on… and then how do you quantify *Spirit*? – how do you quantify knowing that it's the *right* thing to do?...

…is this way the better model, this living community way? Well I think that when the world starts to implode, and there is anarchy and there's no jobs, who will be better off, masters of their land? I think it will be this one (*tapping 'community' on her drawing*) because they won't have to rely on air-conditioners, and fridges, and Ford vehicles, and …you know?

...speaking on the head, heart, hands and spirit model - these are the strengths – the people... what their grandfathers would have done... the glue… the culture… and they are all connected up – we've been part of this… but we get caught up in the conformity of the train racing on… we look back, we reflect back to see if we are doing the right thing, but train keeps pushing us along and we get caught up in the need for money for mortgages and the conformity, so it pushes us on … (*pointing to head, heart, hands and spirit model and community on her drawing*) …and is this richer for not having all the, you know, the things – you certainly

know who you are, I think, here…(*pointing to 'community'*) – I think on the train we're mixing it… you know who you are when you are connected to culture and community...

…but face-to-face costs money… but it's the murri way… people can't unpack complex things without face-to-face talking proper way – do you know what I'm saying, like the systems and corporate-ness – and the train keeps moving, leaving people behind – most government departments are looking at how they can minimize face-to face, which is all the murri way… this about the corporate dollar, making it go further – making people access the internet, the web, because it's cheaper – even call centres are about time, maximum allocation per service is about three minutes – service delivery being automated – and this is opposite to cultural way… (*in a firm voice*) and all of us are Australian citizens, and all government departments have charters about their service delivery, so any of us should be demanding proper respectful service – will they be kind enough to know that I have four languages and that I just need some assistance – "I really want to comply, but can you help me" – the call for help, what's the value on that call for help ... and what's led up to that call for help, what's it taken for me to ask for help?...

… he sovereignty issue also affects how some community people respond to government – like if your grandmother had been kicked in the head, and families shot and spread-eagled on the road, people are going to be angry and figure 'what is mine, what is country', and 'what do white people own' that government

'owes them' – they took me and raped my childhood - understanding the lay of the land is important…

…they need to understand the journey, the pain, the train, cultural awareness sessions should be about cultural security, being secure in different cultures, understanding the struggles... you have to have a willingness…

...community capacity building happens after hours – after church, sitting down and have a cuppa tea, or at the football game – you have to immerse yourself - more is done at that time, more connection with people – you can't be a public servant all the time – you've got to be someone who can just sit and fish with people, just be with them – yarning up – need to take time and slow the process up...

...I suppose 80% of me was the real me, because I had never been there before and I was learning – here I was, a project manager and I wanted their storyline about how things were working or not working...

…if I'm white, and go to a remote Indigenous area, and am the only white person in the room, who do you speak for now? You'd certainly be aware that you can't speak for the others in the room, hey? Doesn't happen that often though, does it (*laughing*)… you wouldn't put yourself *there*! ...and everyone else has the language… everyone is cousins, everyone is connected and gets together about things - I don't know where else you get it, maybe at (non-Indigenous) football or something... (*thoughtful voice*)…

...somehow you're always connected to place...and here I am in this place and I'm way out of my own place... but you're always connected to faith and spirit – need to stay connected to people first, and then overlay the work... got to get the story right or you're in trouble...(*laughing*)

...it's about trust and being asked to join... you know about the elevator door opening... you get one bite... they take one look and work out if you are straight-up... and you can't hide behind anything... you've got to have your story right, and if you don't have those stories, you're in trouble (*laughing*)...

...and this was a story that I was given - you know you have it like this is (*drawing)...* a railway track, and this is the 1800's and when Aboriginal people were on the land and knew their own space and very much that pure democracy, you know... you knew where you were going, maybe lotsa fights, but you knew who you were, very strong... but then comes around here, say at Federation... the '*making of Australia'*...1901, and the train she moves... and Federalism came and the great understanding that *we are all one* in this country, and the train keeps moving... our people here have sort of been hammered, really hammered, you know... and persecuted – doesn't matter what State you live in... you're not living... your not living as well as what you were back here, but your Dreaming is about this stuff, you know... you're sort of connected back to your relations and your land, and this train keeps moving... now comes 2001 and we've already had the settlers and the great land grab, and the deaths and the persecution and all that, and we've become *Australia*... and our people have to get on board this

train – some get on board this train and they take on white values – but very few – they might have been in the cricket or the Great Wars, but generally it was a subsistence sort of life – no welfare – this train keeps moving – 1950's get yourself a car, a washing machine, get yourself educated – and our people are still here… very few of us have gone on to get an education and all that – and the train keeps moving – 1970's to 1980's… if you haven't got yourself education, if you haven't got yourself that TV or that car, and if you haven't moved from your community into a big city, this train keeps moving — the problem is that if I haven't left my community, because I'm still back here… this train keeps moving… 1989 was the concept of ATSIC, and we had some senior Aboriginal bureaucrats, but the people are back on their community and they are aspiring… they are aspiring for their children to get education, to get jobs – and the train's moving – the problem is whether I accept all the corporate and the having all the things – whether I have culture or conformity – it's like being caught between elevator doors – for their children they want this, you know... leave your community, get yourself a job… but their children know in their hearts, they want what white people have, but they know that because of their black skin and the racism, it's really, really hard – conformity is really, really hard – go to school to year twelve, get a job – train keeps moving – if I'm on community, by 2026 I should have in place systems that make me corporate... yeah?... um… will I still have a strong… um… (*long silence and reflection*)… government inroads happen through councils – you've got this department and that department – I see the glue as community...

...need to slow it (the train) down - Indigenous people need to be in the driver's seat of the train and say: "whoa, Mr. Rudd.. whoa, Anna Bligh... we need the time to really work this out" – where are their voices?... their voice was dismantled in ATSIC – where is their voice... they have to negotiate on individual terms – you know, not that ATSIC was perfect, but it was an elected arm – it's now been disbanded and rubbed into FaCHSIA – yeah… sorry, I talk too much…

...'benchmarking' – very bureaucratic – the way that it's written – it needs to be unpacked and have a storyline to each of the standards - department practice is not taking a storyline approach, to make it applied and practical through a story instead of just words on the book – and that's a special skill – and it only comes with (the practitioner) owning the words, living the words and then sort of unpacking in your own head so that you can believe it – and it involves any sort of work with community – it's about relationship first – you can't just use the 'big stick' process – you've actually got to bring people on board – you can't just roll in and say "hi, I'm poor little pom, and you've got to do such and such" (*using mock authoritative voice*) – this department I'm working with, it's much easier hide behind and to be in possession of a pen and a tick and flick process – because you can hide behind the device of the book and the paper – and so almost be in auditory auditing: "tick, cross, yes, apply, doesn't apply", that's much easier to have a relationship that way than to come bearing gifts: "here's some grapes"... and: "hey, how are the kids" – it would give the public servant leverage, it gives leverage to walk on the land...

...it wasn't until I got out to the community and found these big thick documents just sitting on shelves and the inter-relationship just wasn't happening (between departmental staff and community stakeholders) – I don't know why this keeps happening – corporate world and culture don't go – the strength in community councils needs to be pushed up – leadership / stewardship / continuity in vision – then come the consultants, the accountants, the 'blow-ins' and they start to 'build' and 'do' – the people around the table might not be able to understand some of those systems, the layers of systems – community are being dragged very quickly through processes to bring them in line with other's standards...

...(*authoritative voice*) ...um "… you can look on our website for funding… to assist you in getting a consultant in… um… to help you, but actually those rounds may have finished, so really you need to work on an improvement plan for your organization"…hmmm… (*continuing*)…" … and *I'm* going to negotiate your next round of funding, and I'll be checking up on whatever you've got…" (*starts laughing*)…(*continuing*)… "I'll give you a couple of years, and then after that, in the next couple of years, I'll be able to then come out and see you again… but it might not be the same person"... but it will still be about the 'big C' – compliance and corporatization… what is this language? But government needs to be like that doesn't it? Because in a way, people pay their taxes and their dues to society, want the best value for money, so government officers have to be in the business of brokering the best service for that money… like it's 'best bang for the buck' – 'fit within the guidelines in a timely manner' – giving the

people a week to sign, regardless of community business or funerals, the details… not taking time to unpack the document and sign – it's about time and money – not about relating properly and respectful in the process...

...you get given a story at a time in your life when you probably need it for a reason and it is a gift – it's part of your journey, and yet you are on the outer because you are not part of that land structure – but the people I've worked with, you know, I see them in the shopping centre and they come up and give you a hug, and I don't know what that is, but it's a gift that you've been given and you learn with the Aboriginal people around you...

...you know, we're operating in this area here with like-minded people, I go back to this one and reflect back to this one I met ten years ago, and how they've helped me on my journey, you know, so I use some of the stories I've been given – do you get the stories? And you're able to use the stories to relate to *these* people? (*pointing to non-Indigenous*) – so I think my role is to try to get *these* people (*pointing to non-Indigenous*) to understand this stuff (*pointing to community*)... (*voice sounding strong and clear*) – I think that's my journey, that's been a lot of my journey – and every now and then Spirit says to me "you can go out onto community" ...and I get wised-up here – and then I come back and this is my reflection, these sorts of people ….you know?

...I stand up for the communities that I work with, and say: "...actually they need more support"... and: "I think this…", or: "I think that…" – and I'm standing up for these ones (*pointing to community*) but my colleagues are on this side (*pointing*

to bureaucracy) – you see, and then what happens is, I *have* to use the stories, I *have* to have my own memories… it's the only thing that I can use to explain this (*pointing to community*) – because I'm not living it, I'm not out on community… I can just relay the stories to help in certain situations that come up – and I'll be able to go "oh that happened and it reminds me of this, how they sort of did it...

...(*soft reflective voice*)…some could describe it as a garden or a cooking with ingredients going in – a garden is a place where you have time and space, and life, and you are not in control of it, you just hope that you can grow something – cooking is like you have a recipe, or a service agreement, and you throw in things, and then you think back to grandmother's recipe, or someone's told you something, and it starts to evolve… do you know what I mean, like the recipe of life..? (*thinking in silence)* I think what it is… do you know what it is? (*animated voice)* … Aboriginal people think of themselves as cylindrical and energy… that way… and white people think in bricks, square… so they lay their foundation in the schooling and pre-school years – they build their blocks, one block onto another – it's a different concept isn't it? …block-building…because you get a structure, but you also get a bad back and sore arms from doing it, you know…? …somewhere it seems important to say "does the emperor really have clothes on, or are we just all carting bricks side by side, because somebody told me it was an important thing to do… and for what?" … it's fundamental, and somewhere there is a key – about dialoging difference and negotiating – and it will only happen if we have some basic things like trust and relationship, and it

will take time… time is money, but the cost is high if we don't … otherwise why do we have the language of 'close the gap'… and it's about humility, and not ego and own importance of wanting to climb the corporate ladder and promotion… *people* are more important and learning, *collective learning*… importance of going back to reference points of what we believe in… 'cause that's all I've got, that's my known universe, and if I don't know, I go back to community and ask: "what happened" and she'll tell me…you've got to have people around you to tell and help you, otherwise you're stuffed… so its like a legacy around right ways of working… that we've got to pass on to others… there's always reference points around KPI's and 'tick and flick' but there's perhaps a lack of reference points around heart and spirit way of working...(*reflective silence*) ... it's embedded as a child for an Indigenous person – it's about family, it's about body language, it's about knowing your place in the world… I can't put it into words at times… Aboriginal people know they are connected to the land… white people speak for all races, Aboriginal people only speak for their families… white people can be everywhere and 'own it' but Aboriginal people can pin-point where there are connected to, a bit like whales, like sonar… they know their land and territory, and no-one can ever take that away, you can't… no matter where they are, you can't take that away. You can walk the talk and hunt, but there's something innately connected… somehow it's… maybe it *is* spiritual… it's a way of being, isn't it? (*silence*)… people run into it …

...they usually go back to the office and say: "I'm not working with that those people anymore"… but instead the worker should escalate the matter to a 'round-table' sort of discussion… and pull everyone together to problem-solve the stuck point: "I don't understand"... "What's the best way to work this out". There needs to be some leadership on it… needs to be strong and brave with heart and spirit… needs to look inside the self and reflect about it all, and go and ask a senior person about what they'd done wrong and how to fix it… needs to develop a network in community to get the real story… finding solutions at the community level… and we're not that good at it because usually we run back to the familiar, one of our own – sometimes it's because there are lots of problems in communities... it's hot, the water has stopped working, the kids fighting and the bloody government wants me to fill another bit of paper!

R: What would make a difference?

C: Trouble is, a new person is probably buddied up with a more experienced worker who is tainted, but this new worker could stay: "...solid to myself – I know what I'm about" – so I go out on my first visit, and build myself into the community, so that people see that I might be there to help them… if I'm new and insecure, just won the job, I'll probably need to tell them a bit about myself and introduce myself – community calls them 'newbies', if I'm white I'm probably scared 'cause I don't know how it works, I need to get to know people, to build relationship and it takes time – sharing food and 'yahdy ya'… talking about family, and football and baby, and all that…

…be 'I myself'… being honest about it in a way that is not about putting it up as an armour… you have to do head and hands, but you can do it with the other parts as well (heart and spirit) and relationship… and take time, but you have to be explicit about the reason for being there, but in the right way, with respect… like: "I have to do this"... and: "I want to be of value to you"… being yourself and taking risks – a scary place to be… hiding behind the document could make you safe from some of that scary stuff… and then the relationship is affected – but if it goes well, a bridge is built… but they need to know what you are on about… open and transparent communication… and people can get cranky and brutal because they've been burnt before – they say: "...where did that one get their learning from?" Workers have to realize that people *want* to do the right thing…

- Concluding the session:

R: I'm conscious of your time, Cindy… but how do you nurture yourself?

C: I'm taking some time off… I'm getting a bit tired… I think it's my time now… I haven't got my network around me… but the women that I've worked with in community have nurtured me – they give it willingly - the wisdom is out there – I don't have to tell them anything they don't already know – it's about harnessing their wisdoms - their knowledges are like a library… workers should amplify and facilitate balance by making invitations from their own knowledge base, and understand the other wisdoms and knowledge is there – not coming in as the expert – generosity is unbelievable – even at funerals, the whole community who

attends, even at the ending relationship is important …it doesn't end, it keeps going on.

Researcher reflections:

27/05/2009

Jill had suggested that I should talk with Cindy, and had facilitated the connection by on-forwarding my emailed ethics documents. Cindy then initiated an email exchange with me. Two days later, today, we met for coffee. I had not planned to actually undertake an interview process today, as I wanted to establish a relationship, get-to-know-you first – to give her a way-out if she wanted.

However, Cindy was clear that we could and would go ahead with the actual interview, and we talked for 3hours!

Her passion and her absolute commitment to 'doing it right way' was just so affirming of the importance of doing this research, of amplifying the experiences of people who have struggled to keep their heads above water when the shit has got too deep!

Her contribution to this research has gone beyond what could have been anticipated. Her participation has, amongst many other things, reaffirmed to me the importance of some sort of 'co-authoring' framework for participant contributions – I am a tool in the process, I do not own the process (neither does the university) – the co-contributors are co-owners of the product.

She is, and has been a 'boundary rider' advocating for difference and better, while staying firmly grounded in who she is, where she comes from, and the rules associated with culture. Clear and articulate, she sometimes struggles for the exact right word to capture the essence of what she is wanting to say – comfortable with the limits of language, and comfortable with seeking to capture the right words.

All the interviews to date have contained their own particular 'pearls of wisdom' and very important messages and themes. However, the interview with Cindy seemed to capture, concretise and amplify the importance and validity of 'the struggle' – to not take the easy way by avoiding methods and means that could be too hard, too uncomfortable, or too revealing of self.

I loved the way she hid behind the document, playing 'peek-a-boo' in role-playing the non-Indigenous practitioner who ducks for cover behind the representation of 'the system' that the practitioner represents. This is because it is safe, affords comfort, does not create unknowns, avoids the unknown territory of cultural difference, and is the only way known - by that person at that point in time.

Yes, it was comical. Yes, it was challenging. Yes, it was dramatising for effect, and yes, it was so tragically realistic and real. Therein resides some of the problem.

5.4: Betty

(*Identified as:* an Aboriginal woman, Traditional Owner, China Camp south of Cooktown)

- Beginnings:

R: We've been talking about the importance of talking about the things that we *know* are important…

B: It's hard to put into words – I remember talking to someone one day, and saying: "Do you have that feeling?" ...and they said: "Yeah"... and it comes from inside, and it's probably about the 'white' thing… the white days, the missionary days, you know… and I think of Hopevale… how all this domestic violence and the violence and stuff going on, and Aboriginal people, we're not violent people, historically we're not violent people, we're supposed to do everything together, you know… but since we've been brought… since the missionary days, they were punished for anything they did, so for them to do some work, they'd be set over by a whip or rules and regulations that people didn't even know existed, but they had to abide them, otherwise they'd be sent off to another community or they'd get a hiding or whatever would happen… and *that's* come through to today. The violence… yep… (*strong voice*) it's about: "...you do this"... or: "...you do as I say or you know what's going to happen"… and I reckon that's what's taught people to be violent… it's ingrained… they've ingrained it… we don't have a dance, we don't know what our dance really is – it's gone… wasn't allowed to be… (*very long silence of thinking*)…

...the Noel Pearson's, and the time to put this stuff together… and they're out there talking this stuff, and talking it loud, but what's underneath that? You know... the FRC (Families Responsibilities Commission) stuff… it's just a big empty shell… they're just putting the bits and pieces in there… it should have been brought up from the ground… it would have built itself up…you know what I mean? The ownership would have been there… communities would have felt they own it… and it would've worked… but come in and say: "You gotta do this"... it's a good way to get your back up... being told: "not to do this..." and: "not to do that"… yeah…

…like we were talking earlier… it's about the shame factor and …um… all that, I mean what *is* the shame factor? What *is* the shame about? What are they getting '*shame*' about?... and you don't know it, but it's a *feeling* - this *shame*… for instance, we were um… you're getting served, you've been in that line... and then someone else comes along, and *you're* getting served and you're still standing there, and the *shame* that comes out of that, because you know you're *black*, you know you're Aboriginal... it's a *knowing* thing too – that we've *been made* to feel like that sort of thing...

…it's not just this thing you know - it affects your whole body, your whole body can feel it, your whole body just seems to shrink… do you understand that? Do you understand that? (*with pain in her voice*)… but we walk away knowing, and it becomes an accepted thing then – this is the way probably we are supposed to be feeling… but we've got to feel that we are proud to be standing up and be

counted… and that we *are* part of society… we shouldn't be able to *feel* that way… we need to get that feeling right… then anger comes into play, and we fuck it up… and walk away and it's never dealt with… but we're looked at as if we've done something wrong because we got angry… it's a *shame* anger, it's not an *anger* anger… **huhuhum**… (*like strong anger*)… you feel it in your whole being… the shame that envelopes you… I need to get the explanation of that feeling right, that shamed-ness – you don't just say: "shame, shame" … there's more to that shame that just hiding your face, or not talking or not answering (*going silent*)...

…it's important to recognize that *spirit* gets forgotten… and Aboriginal peoples today, their spirit gets… there *aren't* any spirits left, I mean, people have killed their spirits… so how do we then bring that back to life where they appreciate themselves, I guess…

...the younger generation will say: "what is spirit?" ...and I've been hanging around with these girls, they are related to me, and they are *right into the spirit*… but I sit there and I don't know about that stuff - Mum talked about that stuff, we respect culture, but we never practiced it…

…and even now, *everything* is going mainstream… when you look at Aboriginal community, it's not just the Council running the show now, it's like how (*naming an urban centre)* runs the show… you know, plus the Shires and whatever else they (mainstream) want to do… (*thinking in silence*)….

…everyone else's ideas of bringing in all these programs and projects and things, is wrong… and they put this stuff on top, rather than people being able to work up to it… they tend to come in and say: "you've got to do this"... and: "you've got to do that"… stop telling people what to do all the time, you know (*frustration in voice*)… put it down on grass roots level… this is what we want to do and… People want to be… people need to feel as if they are important, being told, and felt important you know… that they are part of the decision-making… and so far, everywhere people are making decisions and expecting these people who are struggling, no matter which way you try to bring in the new, nothing is changing… things might be changing up here (on top) but nothing is changing on the home-front… *got that?*....(*frustration in voice*)… they've got to be… they've got to get *really* more involved… I mean these are just words we use every day… getting community involved, going down and sitting down and talking and… it's about giving, and making the community feel deadly as a whole… and making them feel good about themselves, you know?…

…but of course there has to be hope… of course… because we don't have the Karen Martin's and not many of those people around...

…and the difference when we worked with you was that we were able to work out our differences, and compromise our differences, and iron it all out, and find a medium ground, a meeting place, could go round and round and we used to argue some bad things until we found it out, and I think you then became one of us, and we became one of you, because of the knowledge base, I think we had

enough knowledge around us to understand each other… yeah, yeah… now you know talking about this spirit stuff… back then you didn't have any idea not as much as you do now…yeah… and we helped you with it… helped you to put it together… you know what I mean?... yeah, that stuff…

…because of the lack of jobs on community, people have become a bit territorial… like: "...if I tell you too much about what I know, then you'll know too much and you'll end up taking my job off me"… and that's not good for community life, community spirit… and these days it's like you've *lost* your spirit… what's happened? It's just gone… (*flat voice*)…yeah… and how do we re-capture that?

R: ...if you and I are going to do some work, and you're going to be my buddy… tell me what to do so that I don't make too many mistakes…

B: ...yeah, yeah… I'd get community people involved in the first instance, rather than just rolling in ... and say: "come on everybody, we're going to have a sausage sizzle". Just come and listen to what we have to say, and this is coming from my work… going and sitting down and explaining what we're here for… we're not here to take your children, once you've explained all that, you have a better response… it's about getting the other people in the community involved… not these ones who are on committees every day, obviously the information is not getting down the road, where's that information going? It's about spreading that information, about communication… passing it on… 'cause in the old days

they would have come back and: "...how did you go?" ...and the old man or the old lady would have just rattled it on, and that doesn't happen anymore…

R: Do you think there's hope for people to work together right-way?

B: Yeah, yeah… whether we hope or not. It's *got* to happen… how it's going to happen, that's a different story, but it *has* to happen.

- Concluding the session:

I talked with Betty about Karen Martin's comment that non-Indigenous people have the responsibility to contribute to, and facilitate, de-colonization by engaging in collaborative processes that contribute to reconciliation in this country. At this, Betty became extremely energized, focused and lighter of mood, and asked me more about my conversations and relationship with Karen. Again I felt privileged by Betty, when she said: "as TO (traditional owner), I welcomed her to country, China Camp, when she brought her research back to Country". Betty's pride at being part of this, was patently apparent. Betty was no longer lost in the pain of her memories and experiences. She was visibly proud of her heritage, work, experiences and vision. She went on to talk about the good work that we had done in the previous years, and we concluded the conversation with some discussions about some of the client-focused activities she might try in her new job – and the decision to meet again to continue the discussions. Thank you Betty.

Researcher reflections:

I've met with Betty several times during the interview preparation process, including pre-confirmation, to ascertain her views about the value of the research question. She expressed her desire to be involved, however life circumstances affected her capacity to contribute a lot of time.

On the day of the interview, Betty was again 'pushed for time' due to family commitments, however still maintained a time-slot for our discussions. She asked me: "...what it is you want me to say?". I responded by going over the research question, and inviting her to tell her story about whatever was important to her about 'good practice' by non-Indigenous practitioners.

Betty started by talking about the profound shame she experienced as an Aboriginal person – whether waiting to be served in a shop, or just being in a group – she called it the "...shame of being Aboriginal". I felt ashamed that non-Indigenous Australia has been responsible for this in innumerable, profound ways. This needs to be acknowledged. Silence would be a demonstration of racism itself by wrapping invisibility around an uncomfortable truth. This is very important.

Betty went on to talk about the very deep anger that develops from this 'existential shame'. I got the feeling that she did not like being angry about this - her demeanour and language was of anger. A couple of times she glanced at me to see if I was having a negative reaction to what she was saying and how she was saying it. A bit further in our discussion, I asked her if she thought that there was any hope of change.

Immediately her voice and face softened and she said: "Of course - there has to be hope and change, otherwise what are we doing, what are we leaving for the future". I was deeply touched by the extreme generosity that I was observing and hearing – a violated person, expressing anger at racial injustice, and immediately expressing hope and anticipating change for the future. How humble I feel in being permitted to be a witness to her emotion and personal vulnerability coupled with great strength and power. In fact, this is something that I am becoming increasingly aware of – the privilege that is being afforded to me in this research process – the 'gifting' of personal story, knowledge and experience – gifting not only to me as researcher, but to the broader public through contribution to research knowledge. This further reinforces my commitment to a 'co-authoring' relationship with participants through a narrative documentation of their contributions to this research.

Social Justice Commissioner Mick Gooda (2011) talked about violence against each other in Indigenous communities, naming it as 'lateral violence'. Gooda went to state that while this is a major problem, it has its roots in the dispossession and oppression that has been intrinsic to the past policies of dispersal and systemic dominance. He said that the solution will come from: "...Aboriginal communities, people taking control, people addressing lateral violence themselves".

Betty is doing this – she is naming it. She is expressing her frustration and exasperation at the lateral violence she sees going on around her and clearly

slating it back to her experiences of systemic power and dominance of whitestream processes. Indigenous academic Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2007) referred to this as 'talking up' about the need for solutions from an Indigenous perspective, as opposed to continued colonizing processes wherein Government systems impose 'solutions' from their own worldview and epistemologies.

5.5: Margaret

(*Identified as:* non-Indigenous female)

…as a non-Indigenous worker, working in… many Indigenous areas… part of the dilemma is the working within the confines of bureaucracy, and the *direction* of bureaucracy, and yet still working in a way that's sounds to *me*, OK for the People with whom you're working…

...and I believe there's lot's of women that act like men when they get into management positions... 'cause that's the way of 'management'... you know, they get caught in it...

...you know, it was almost like... *"...**now** is not the time or the place for **that** conversation..."* - that was the *feeling* that you got from the group… because… I guess it wasn't *on the agenda*… it was going to get in the way of keeping on getting on with 'things'...(*reflective silence*)...

…well, to be honest, a few times, say three or four times in the time I've been working, I've actually thought: "…I don't want to work any more with Indigenous communities". I've actually thought: *"…*I need to get out of this area… I can't reconcile what I've been asked to do, with what I know is the right way to work". So a few times I've just thought: "…I feel like walking away now… I can't do this to be true to what I believe to be the right way of working… I don't think I can be here any more". I could just go and put myself in work in white, middle-class land, and… you know, 'all-white land'… because that's culturally '*the way'*...

...through a white lens, people could see just negative stereotypes... it's just really, really *different* and… if I'm travelling with B. for example, you know she didn't… *her* work life is 24/7… people talk to her *all the time*… about work… and she seemingly never gets to turn-off… and the fact that she's not at work till ten-thirty doesn't mean she's not working, it just means she's working differently…

...I don't know if it was because as a group of (non-Indigenous) people we were so used to hearing these statistics, and so thinking: "… well, what can we do…"…or maybe there was that feeling of: *"… that will be right eventually…"*… but *one* of the really wonderful things about having this Indigenous person as part of the group, was that she was the only one around that table who'd go: "Stop -this is not OK"... and she did... and she said, like: "... I'm *really* upset about this". She would be listening to what we were talking about, and she would always bring it back to... and she used to keep bringing us back to: *"*whoa... whoa... whoa...". Hmmm... and also I think that sometimes that at a managerial level, people know that they are to *act* in a certain way, and there's certain *unwritten rules and behaviours*... and we are actually *beyond* the emotional response... you know, I think that seemingly, that the culture within the group, was that a *good* manager is beyond an emotional response... at the time... but that behaviour of that non-emotional... is a very *white* thing as well... we're all Anglo-Saxons – all stiff-upper-lip kind of thing...

…and for that lady who spoke up... she would be seen as a very capable woman... from my perspective, and from my conversations with her, I think she

really struggled with... she wanted to be accepted as a *professional*... within that group... and her outraged emotional response... didn't fit with what she saw as professional *in that group*... she was *so* affected by what she just heard...

...I *know* from my conversations with my colleague, that she felt *very unsupported* and *unsafe* after she had that conversation... and, um... extrapolating on from that I reckon she... she felt... she *always* felt very *different* within that group before then, and then possibly more-so because she'd 'exposed herself'...

…in *thinking* about coming towards this interview, it gave me opportunity to *reflect*… and reflect with *horror* at some… looking back… at the young worker who, you know, came in and… talking about myself, obviously… and we were just sent out by the Department, you know… assuming that I would know what I was doing, when… so what constitutes 'good practice'… I guess… I had to look at *what is the opposite of that*, you know. So 'what is not good practice'… you know… that connectedness… um, and so… um… I've… fumbled along… without that genuine connectedness, a lot of the time… and tried to develop it… and I guess… I'm getting now, towards a place where I have some connections, because I've been working in the same area for a long time…

...it's actually about, um… not wanting to keep doing… the *wrong thing*… *the thing* that just sits so terribly uncomfortably with what I'm sometimes asked to do… so I guess, how do I manage it? Well, *not very well*…

...it just raises in my mind, the um... the *dilemma* of being a non-Indigenous person, but having *some* knowledge of *some dilemmas* for Indigenous Communities and Indigenous People... and the *how*... how to raise that... in a respectful... how to *talk* about that stuff... or *if* to talk that stuff... and *if* that's OK, um, in a non-Indigenous context... and um... the legitimacy of speaking... that's probably one of the major things that has made me question whether I *should* be working with Indigenous communities – the *legitimacy* of *my* views or *my* learnings, or *my* observations... all of that... the legitimacy of *me* in this context – the legitimacy of what I know, and what I see, and what I can contribute... I'm a non-Indigenous person, speaking about... and being asked... and that's a *dilemma* for me... whether I should even be *working* with Indigenous communities, around that whole issue of legitimacy... of *being* able to, being *able* to... so what I'm *seeing*, and what I'm *observing*, and therefore what I *act upon*, is *all* through *my* cultural lens... and so I always question, well... maybe I'm not seeing it how it's meant to be seen... maybe as long as I keep *questioning*, it's still OK for me to be doing it... and when I've stopped questioning, that's when it's *not* OK...

...recently we were assisted by Brisbane (Central Office) in a process... doing some meeting, and um... Brisbane gave it the name 'Yarning Circle'... and I'm not sure where they got that *name* from... but it was interesting looking at my Indigenous colleagues' responses: *"...*ehhh... who said they could use **that** word...*"*...(*chuckling*)... *really* interesting! It was sort of: "...why are they calling it

that". So... and I guess that it was possibly a *white bureaucratic attempt* to *engage* by using what that person saw as... I dunno...

R: Did it 'grate' for you?

M: Oh yeah! – I felt *very* uncomfortable!

R: Because...

M: …because it was *generated* from the Department, and it *appeared* to me, as *artificially* trying to make it look like *'an Indigenous thing'*... like 'Yarning Circle' was *up the top*, and all the rest of it was *pure bureaucratic*, like :"...this is what we are going to tell you"...

…I think one of the highlights for me, that I've learnt over the years, is the um… the importance of relationship… and that rapport… and that *nothing*, *almost nothing, seemingly* nothing, can happen before you've actually got rapport, or *connection*… with that Community, or the People that you're needing to work with… um… *connectivity within* Indigenous community absolutely seems to be the key... but I can remember walking into Community with these two Indigenous workers and feeling, like… the *most alone person in the world*, because *everyone would know* all of the connections of these People, and I had *no connection*… and that just reinforced… I felt like an *orphan*… because, you know, everyone was saying to these two workers: "… oh, you're Aunty such-and-such… oh, you're cousin such-and-such" … that *inter-connectedness*… and I knew I had *none of that*… that was just the reality of that situation, so … I guess

that was an illustration for me, to see how important connections are, and how…
it's really important for Indigenous People to be able to put you in… to *connect*
you *in* somehow…

…I've been fortunate along the way to have a number of very generous
Indigenous colleagues… who I can just go and say: "...look, I know this is not
OK, how can I just do this", and I *know* that they… I guess the dilemma for me is
that I'm putting them in a difficult situation in providing me with advice, and… you
know when you ask an Indigenous colleague: "Do you have any connections with
this community"… that if you then *use them*, you're risking *their standing* if you
go and stuff up… and I guess it's similar if you use the advice provided and you
go and say: "…B. said it would be alright if I go and do this". I guess the *risk to*
them is that *that* can be misconstrued or whatever… but I guess along the way,
I've really been very mindful of… *leaning* on my Indigenous colleagues... I always
need to make sure that that is OK… I need to *ask* them those questions as
well…

...I've actually *sought out*, but also *fostered* those relationships and those
connections… and tried really hard. A few years ago, I had one situation
completely blow-up... and it was really very difficult for me when um… I'd been
working with a Torres Strait Island lady for a long time… and um… I said
something that really, really, really offended her, and it took… four months for her
to actually return my phone calls after what I'd said… even though I didn't… you
know when you don't even think what you've… I *didn't understand* what it was

that I'd said… I don't think we are as close as we were before… but also because we are not working side by side anymore… because the project finished… I *now* realize that what I said was interpreted through different cultural eyes, and that was… that was the dilemma…

 ...that connecting to who someone is, and more than this bit that you see – I think is something that I've learnt from working in Indigenous communities... and I think that that's really important...

…*one* of the dilemmas for me, is that as a bureaucrat, I'm asked from time-to-time to do things that just *aren't right*… the timeframe… or process-wise… and that Indigenous People are *so forgiving of that*… and so understanding of that… but… it… it's just once again being someone, a white bureaucrat coming in… and even if you're motivations are good, sound and everything – it's a *real dilemma* because… you're being asked to do something that… *just isn't right*, and you know it's not right… so things like… *rushing through* if there's funding available… and you know that *someone ...*(a more senior Bureaucrat*) ...has decided* that it would be good for a particular Community to have that youth funding, for example: "…get up there, and get them to do a submission…"… and *you know* that that's a *really bad process*… and is it a good outcome that they get the funding? I don't know… (*reflective silence*)…

…that *shared understanding* of what's in there as well… and I think the *language* of talking about it *is uncomfortable*… and the *history* is uncomfortable… I was, um… having this conversation with D., one of the managers, and he is non-

Indigenous, and in seriousness and speaking respectfully, you know…

"...imagine 100% is what you get out of a worker, how much you can expect to get out of Indigenous workers"… and speaking about Indigenous workers as a homogenous group… and he said that: "...we just need to reduce our *expectations* of this group, because that's the reality"… and there was this real dilemma in my head of engaging in this conversation… I could understand where he was coming from, but the language and the notion was kind of disturbing at the same time… this was the dilemma… I *didn't* agree with what he was saying, but I could understand where he's come from, to have that thought…

...I heard the Chairman of (an Aboriginal NGO)… it was just so distressing… and his thing to me was: "…that child might be physically safe, but how can you tell me that it is culturally safe?" That's a real question… it's a very real question about someone being spiritually safe, culturally safe, physically safe – all those types of 'safe'… *our* business doesn't generally help us to make decisions that involve spiritual safety, cultural safety... oh… I think we *lurched* to another crisis... …it's work that *really* needs to be done, and it's just… I watch my colleagues, and particularly one who beats her head against the desk, almost on a day-by-day basis, saying: "…why doesn't anyone care enough to… why can't we progress these thoughts…"

...it's the *struggle*...of being in that in-between space... in a non-Indigenous domain there is…well, comfort to some degree, in that there are 'knowns' and you don't have to put very much effort into knowing those knowns because they

are known... but when we go into this space here... (liminal space)... we're in a very different space... and it looks like we have to... have to *break* rules... and *create* rules... and *explore* for rules... and *operate without knowing* rules... in this space… and what's the *shared* language in there... what's *acceptable* in here... is it a combination of both ways...?

…I guess the stuff that's running round in my head at the moment, is whether this is a conscious, sit-down, and negotiated space... or whether it's a space that me as a worker can be *aware* of working towards, without that... without actually *articulating* that …um, I... it's actually a useful thing that I could talk with my Indigenous colleagues... I could actually, you know... *have* that discussion with *them*...

…all of the others present were non-Indigenous... hmm... separation from reality, and separation from life and work... you know, quite separate – there's my life and there's my work, and they can be kept quite separate... I bring the same values, generally speaking – but um, life and work is quite different... from my Indigenous colleagues, my observation is that their work and life is not as separate as mine...

…and after that *major* incident with my colleague, um... you know, that running back into that safe, known place... just going... *'... **what the hell happened** in there - what **happened**?'*... yeah...

...something like... to what degree does the legitimacy of each viewpoint... contribute to the desired outcome...and it perhaps goes back to this in-between space... and a lot of dialogue - there can be no *assumptions* in that space...almost *everything* has to be negotiated... because it's new turf... including in the way those two stakeholders are relating to each other... those knowns and unknowns have to get negotiated...

- Concluding the session:

R: Are we running out of time...?

M: Yeah, I have to go soon... thank you, that's great...

R: Are you OK about how this has gone today?

M: I was a bit *nervous* coming to this interview, because I didn't know that I'd have anything to talk about – and it seems that I *had a bit* to talk about! (*laughing*)... we pulled out more 'space' than you anticipated...

Further discussion July 2013:

Marg stated that she preferred the term 'de-colonizing' to the alternative 'post-colonizing' because it implied an active choice of behaviours to remediate against colonizing 'echos':

...'post' - we are not past colonizing... look to what our 'roots' in this country has inculcated us with - the knowledges and experiences that have 'grounded' us and grown us up.

5.6:   Deb M.

(*Identified as:* Aboriginal Woman from Far North Queensland)

- Beginnings:

Much discussion, yarning and storying had occurred before we remembered that the tape was not on – we had begun in relatedness!

I felt quite uncomfortable and awkward when our energies of relatedness had to be interrupted by 'doing' - starting the tape-recorder. Then the conversational style resumed, with Deb telling a Story about her growing up years. She spoke at length about her Knowledges and experiences of colonization and the non-Indigenous attempts to fracture family relatednesses through removal policies. She also spoke about how relatedness continued to be maintained:

D: ...and I had *responsibilities* in terms of *my family* and those in the community as well... 'cause we lived on the Reserve, and you're all *so close to each other*... we had a *real connection* to other Aboriginal people living in the community... um... and we had no... well, I had cousins... relatives that I call cousins, relatives, and Aunties... but they weren't, like, *close* relatives and were 'several times removed' under a *white* system, but we were all part of the *same family*... they, um... we were always at each other's houses and um... so the community was *so closely knit...*

...our work has to be on the basis that when we go to those communities, we've got something that we want to *give them*... we're not just going there to take stuff

away like we always do... we've got to have a *purpose for going*... not just for the sake of "I've never been to 'such-and-such a place', so I want to go to (that place)"... *we've got to do our stuff at the pace of the community*... we've got to be sure that the community people that we want to see, *want to see us*... and that they think that it's important... so we're trying to build the relationships... but unfortunately most people who are non-Indigenous people... don't understand that... just simply us wanting to go there and get something is not going to work... the community, and the people in the community... *need to be the leader*... *need to lead how it should happen*...

...what gets in the way, is that people are *so used to doing it one way*, and... where *we've* got an expectation that we want something *now*... we don't know how to *wait*... we just *need a result*...

...a lot of homophobic people that work here... and that's what I think is part of the problem... if I had to ask most of the (workers), um... how many Aboriginal people do they know... or had anything to do with... *any relationship* with in their lives before... most of them would probably say: "*none*"...

...like, nobody thinks about having a client on your Board... like that lady out there... (Indigenous lady that we talked about before, outside the building, in the context of 'invisibility' and the lack of acknowledgement or common courtesy towards her)... they're probably people that most non-Indigenous people would... wouldn't even *think twice about*... but they most likely are going to be the people who are going to be the clients... but they don't talk to them... they just pass them

in the street... you know... because they are not like... they are more likely to include people like me... *because they see me as being like them*... (*long silence*)...

...yeah, their worldview... yeah, I've never had any problem dealing with non-Indigenous organizations myself... in terms of accepting of *me*... yet I know other Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander people who... who I've worked with who... um... I work really well with, I get on well with, who know as much as I do... I've seen them *be excluded*, and *be ignored*... because... and my view of that is, *it's because I'm like them*... I'm 'white' for a start... I have... you know... I've gone to school, and got an education... I've gone to University... I *talk like them*... you can get a non-Indigenous person, who *might* have a degree as well... um... might have had, you know, grade 10 education... can talk relatively OK... but if they're *black*... you're different because you're black... as opposed to a fair skinned Aboriginal... but... that's *my view of it*... that's how I view it... I'm more acceptable, because *I'm like them*... (*strong voice*)... 'cause they see me as *one of them*...

...because *I'm like them*... I'm like *her*... *that's* what I mean about people seeing me as being *like them*... she didn't know me from a bar of soap... all she saw was this fair person who's going to university... and is going to get a degree... and this one... the example that she was talking about was an Aboriginal person... but it was about 'but it's not like you'... because: "you're different" ...and: "I'm different"... my defence was: "I'm 'different' because I look like you... and you think that I've lived the same way that you've lived"... so I actually said to her: "I

grew up on a reserve, I've *never* lived as a white person" - but she just *assumed* that... because I *looked like her, then I was like her*... one of the other girls, same class: "I had an Aboriginal friend at school"...and... well... there you go... that's the extent of *knowing* Aboriginal people... an Aboriginal friend at high school ... (*flat voice*)...

...part of the problem... is their *lack of understanding* that we *do things differently*... and I'm not just talking about Indigenous people who live in remote communities, I'm talking about Indigenous people who live in an urban situation... and there's also... I suppose *fear* is also another big thing... if you have *fear of the unknown*, because I suppose they don't know... non-Indigenous people... they're fearful... a lot of non-Indigenous workers that I've seen since I've been here, are afraid of Aboriginal people, because they don't know *what* they are going to do, or *how* they're going to behave... they have a stereotypical... they have an anticipation that they are going to be angry, or they're going to hit me, or be violent, or whatever...

...other non-Indigenous ones that I've worked with before... and the fear stuff... fear of Aboriginal people... I think it's the fear of... because they think that we're like this, and that's how we behave... that stereotype stuff...

...on a number of occasions... when it was an Indigenous person, they (non-Indigenous worker) didn't know how to handle it... they'd be afraid that something bad was going to happen... so they'd always ring up and say: "Can you send a worker (Indigenous) over"... and on a number of occasions, when people have

been growling and carrying on, one particular worker would lock herself in the room... and I'd be expected to send a worker over to sort it out... why would you think that an angry Aboriginal person was worse than am angry white person? That you would lock yourself in a room and ring an Indigenous worker to come and sort it out... these were professional people – social workers... you know, they weren't just anybody in off the street... and I could never figure out why that was...and at that time, I thought it was because they had just had *no contact* with them before... they didn't know how to have a relationship... the expectation was that 'when they get angry, they'll get violent'... so 'I'll lock myself in the room'...yeah: "I'll lock myself in the room, and ring you to come and fix it..." and: "...I don't care if you get bashed!" (*chuckling*)...

...there still is a perception that the only Aboriginal person is a black person... and I noticed it the other day, and I thought: "Why are we still talking like that?" ...why are we still thinking... why are people still thinking that?...

...and basically, that's what it was... the colour of the skin... it doesn't make any difference what colour your skin is, because *Aboriginality is not about what you look like*... *it's about who you are*, and if you *know what you believe* and *how you see yourself*... it's not about the fact that you have black skin...

...hmm... I just don't understand with all the stuff that's happened – stolen generations, and if you look at history and understand history... understand the whole concept of taking the kids away... and putting them out... getting them away from their families so that eventually... the hope would be that there'd *never*

be any Aboriginal... any *black* Aboriginal... that was the whole concept behind it, and now people still, 2009... some people still think that the only Aboriginal person is a black person... and the media supports that... you see stuff in the media and they throw all in the people who have got fair skin, and say: "They're so-called Aborigines" ... and those arguments are *allowed to happen...*they're given 'air-time' they can begin to have their own life, if left unchallenged... yeah... stereotypes are very powerful... and if you're not a person that knows who you are, and who is strong enough to deal with it... it can be very harmful, I think... and I suppose, um... for me, I sometimes think: "No wonder there's a lot of Indigenous people, fair ones, who don't claim to be, because it's just too difficult" ...to, you know... to say that: "I'm Aboriginal"... because you don't know who's going to turn around, whether they be white or black people... questioning you... because you happen to have the colour of your skin that *they don't think you should have*... if you were going to be an Aboriginal person...

...my grandmother always said to me: "You need to look and listen – that's the only way you're going to learn stuff"... and you need to look and listen with your eyes as well as your ears... because you can *hear things* just *by looking*... and recognizing that sort of stuff is *really important* ... um... and *you're not doing it if you're talking all the time*... if all you're doing is sitting there and yapping, you're not doing any of this other stuff...

...there's not a lot of understanding I think, around what constitutes Aboriginal practice, and how Aboriginal communities work... um... because our work is so

crisis driven, um... and we need to 'get in and get a result'... *we tend to do*

everything like that ... yeah, we tend to do everything like that, even when we

don't have to... we still do it that way, because we are so used to it... so trying to

change some of that is going to be really, really, really difficult...

...this one (colleague) in particular would be talking about a recruitment process,

and I was part of a working group... I was the only Aboriginal person there –

there was about four other people... all non-Indigenous... and we were sitting

there talking about what needs to change and recruit and keep Aboriginal people

– because they come and they go... we were doing a recruitment thing, so I said

when I got employed... the criteria about understanding Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander customs and law / lore, and being able to communicate, was not a

'demonstrated' – it was *'an ability to quickly acquire'*... and I... we were arguing,

Indigenous staff, that you can't *quickly acquire this*. I'm sorry, but you can not

acquire this quickly – so it needs to be a *demonstrated* – you need that depth –

put the *'demonstrated'* in front of it – not 'quickly acquire it'. Then the people who

were there with me obviously didn't agree with me... but one of them... they said

to me... um... there was four of them sitting across the room, and I was on the

other side – I don't know why it worked out that way. Anyway, I said "...*how many*

Aboriginal people do you know? How many Aboriginal people do you actually

class as your close friends? How many Aboriginal people come to your house,

sleep over, eat at your table, if you've got children – how many Aboriginal friends

do your children have – that they invite over for weekends and sleep at your

house?"....none of them could tell me... the only Aboriginal people they knew were the ones that worked with them... they didn't know anybody else...but one of them took a bit of an offence. This fella... he didn't say anything at the meeting but he sent me an email after... (*chuckling*)... he took offence at me raising it because he thought I was having a go at them! He's left now – he doesn't work for them anymore... he decided to 'give up the ghost' and run away... (*silence*)...

...the comments that you're... you know... "You're like us... you're not like them". Because, you know... it just shows... you know, how little people really, really know, or really care about it... Aboriginals in Australia...

...and the non-Indigenous organisations that I worked *really well with*, were the ones that also ring you up and say: "We've got an Indigenous client here who might need some support... could you come down?"... because *they recognised it*... so you know, that was about the *relationship stuff*...

...that trans-generational stuff... the history... when I have talked about that, in the past... and it's like 'hoo-haa' with people, you know?... because people *don't believe it*... people like policy makers, people who... um... non-Indigenous people... people who have an opportunity to make a difference, in terms of allocating funding for particular programs and things like that... the white people... um... it's not really a recognised ... it's not something they recognise because it's not *tangible*... it's something you can't put your finger on... it's just like... when you talk about trans-generational trauma: "...oh, how do you know...?" How would my grandmother have transferred it to me? That's what I'm talking about

...because I got it from what happened to my grandmother... stories... and watching... and seeing how she behaved and how she suffered... when it happened... but... it's still nothing that you could put your finger on... and I've learned from my point of view, and maybe I've mixed with the wrong sort of *white people...* that, um... they're the people, who need to be able to *show it* to you... and they can't *show that* because it's a 'transference of something' - like accumulated pain has to be tangible for some people to believe it is real...yeah...(*long silence*)...I'm talking about stuff... that I'm carrying the pain and trauma that happened to my grandmother in my life a couple of generations ago...

...trans-generational trauma... you need to acknowledge it and you've got to understand it's nature... and if you're going to be working with Aboriginal people... say if you are a practitioner, and you've got other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming to see you... if you don't recognize that that stuff impacts on how they are now, then you're going to... the work that you're doing won't be effective... so if you're a practitioner that doesn't even understand it and doesn't believe it, then you are not going to be able to work with people... you're not going to get any real outcomes... so even though we talk about people who drink and take drugs... and are violent... there's still an assumption that... the relationship between violence is back to the abuse of substances... there is that thinking that if you drink and take drugs, you are going to be violent... I know people who drink and take drugs and they are *not* violent... and until people start

thinking that it's more than just if you drink... and take drugs... then you've got problems, 'cause of that... there must be some other reason that people drink and take drugs... there must be some other reason that people are violent... or um... that people are suicidal... or that people have mental health issues... other than a chemical imbalance... you know what I mean? Sometimes it's just a chemical imbalance – sometimes it's just also something else... and if you're a practitioner and working with Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people, and you don't understand or even acknowledge that that actually exists, then how do you work with them? How can you care... how can you be effective? I don't think you can... so... that stuff has to be acknowledged and I don't know that... um... many practitioners *do*... acknowledge it... so you know... even talking about it in a sense of it being 'up there'... trans-generational trauma... you know... 10yrs ago maybe, was the first time I ever heard of it... there was some... like it wasn't even *called anything*... which is... we have problems because of that... because *we're black*... you know... and yet when you look at the hierarchy of where people are in society in Australia... Aboriginal people are right down there... (*silence*)... they don't teach you any of that stuff... I mean, I dunno... do they teach that stuff at Uni. these days... about trans-generational trauma? They didn't do it when I was there and that wasn't that long ago...

...there are people who... people do recognise that we need to do things differently, but because it's *too hard to do differently* because... *we've got the*

crisis to deal with... so we *haven't got the time to do it differently*... we've got to *get in there and do it!* ...no, it's not productive at all...

...hmm... and you have people like... it took me seven years to finally get a degree, but I finally got one... but over those seven years, that I went to the courses, and I saw these people, and I talked to people, and I watched... and I'd often think to myself: "...remember who these people are, because when they become qualified*, this one* you'll refer to, *but that one you won't*"... because of the way they spoke and the way that they behaved in class. One particular young fella... um... who had... historical links... white boy... to the Territory... now his forebears had been in the Territory for 150 years and that, and they *had this land*, that they had *somehow got* – they had this ranch that: "blah, blah, blah... but something happened... something about *land rights* happened... and *they lost it*" ...and he stood up in this class, and he was *very annoyed* and *distressed*, he said that: "...his family had had this land for 150 years and Aboriginal people come and took it off them". *Poor them!* ...(*chuckling*)... I was just... I didn't know whether to laugh or cry... (*laughing*)... all I can just remember is this boy: "...150 years in our family"... and they lost it!... but they *had that land for 150 years*!... just that whole concept of, you know... this ... *Aboriginal people have had that for forty thousand years!*... um... as opposed to 150... yet he was just *so upset* because this land got taken off them, and you don't even recognise that Aboriginal people had this land for many years before that... and those sort of

people, I think to myself: "When you're qualified, I'll find out where you are, and I'm not going to send anybody to see you" ...(*chuckling*)...

...there was one little elective I did, and there was a fellow student... an Aboriginal girl... and she knew I'd been around Indigenous affairs for twenty-odd years, and she said... she asked me: "You know, over those years, have you seen a lot of change in Aboriginal affairs?"... and I said: "No". We're still talking about the same things we were talking about twenty years ago – not a lot has changed... there's a few more Indigenous organisations, but there's not a lot of change ... and the subject got to education... and these non-Indigenous people are sitting in the room, and the other Aboriginal person sitting in the room said: "Well, things have changed... now we're at university"... and I said: "Yeah... we could have been at university before, but we didn't"... and I said: "Look around the room here and see how many people are in this room with you... and they're all white... and they don't come from this Country – there's no non-Indigenous people from this country sitting in this room with us, learning about Indigenousness from other people". They were all from overseas. White Australians, ones that have lived here for years... in my experience, don't really give a shit... you know... in my experience, they don't give a shit... they don't... they weren't sitting in that room learning about Aboriginal history and Aboriginal culture... they all had accents - German and others.... they all had white skin, but they every one of them had accents... and I found that interesting... and this

young fella wanted to argue with me that things had changed, that we could have education now...

...I was the only black kid in my years – the only Aboriginal child person in school... um... in year eleven... I can still remember this teacher... we were talking about education and Aboriginal people again... I don't know who it was... it was some woman... someone who didn't know me obviously, because if she did she would have known I was Aboriginal... she was talking about education and the lack of Aboriginal people who went on to further education... or even after grade ten, because you did grade ten and then you leave, in those days... and one of the girls piped up and said: "You said none of them do, and Deborah's here – Deborah's in our class and she's Aboriginal"... and the teacher didn't know and she was quite surprised... that anybody would even go... for some reason I still remember that bit... this teacher that said that "no Aboriginal kids do grade eleven and twelve, and they don't go to university"... yeah, that teacher was perpetuating a myth... and to her I was just like everybody else – I looked white... yeah... and over the years I found that ... we often have debates, instead of arguments, in the classroom, whenever Indigenous stuff came up... we didn't talk about it a lot, just when it came up, particularly in English... and History... um... the level of... of *lack of understanding* by the kids in the room, about *what actually happened*... as well as their *repeating things that they learnt from their parents* ...

...yeah... *they didn't know the Stories*, they were just *repeating* things that they heard their fore-bearers... you know, I had *many* arguments... with one boy in particular... I still think about him... he must have hated me, because nearly every time we'd have... he'd repeat things that his parents had told him, and not correct or stereotypical, and I'd have to pluck up and we'd have an argument... but um, I still think of him and I wonder where he is today... (*chuckling*)... and all he did was repeat stories of what he'd heard, because he wouldn't have had a clue! ...(*silence*)...

...I'm talking *heaps* to you, but if there was other people... it depends on the situation... but there are instances where I *know* that there are people who probably think that I don't have a lot to say... I could sit in a meeting and not say anything... because I know from my Grandmother that if you've got nothing important to say, you're not going to have value, then what's the point of talking?

R: ...but you pick your time...

D: Yeah, but some people don't see it that way... and I'm thinking about my Grandmother and that she was a very quiet person... but that's what she did as well – she picked her time... just don't speak so that you can hear your voice... you know? Just pointless listening to yourself... to talk... crap... (*quiet reflective time for both of us*)...

R: How's this going for you?

D: Yeah, good... talking about stuff... but I can ramble on... I know that...

R: When you say it's been good...?

D: It's been good to talk some of the stuff through... a lot of the time I *think* about things... you know...

R: Do you have people that you can talk about these things with?

D: No... and not that it's not *real* – but when you talk about it, it... it's a *remembering* process, but it's also a *thinking* process, so you're bringing it out... about what you *really think*... like... for me it's about "...yeah, that *did* happen" or helps me to reflect on how... *the way* I was feeling then... and am I feeling differently now about it... through talking about it... like that story about the fella "...feeling sorry..." for me because I "...had no white friends..."... you know, now I laugh about it, and think: "Oh my God, that poor man". I dunno what he thought... "...no white friends..." ... *I'm just missing out on lots of things!...* (*chuckling lots!*)

R: But you've helped some other people to learn things...

D: Yeah... (*thoughtful* voice)...well I hope so... and I think it's... I've got a couple of things that have helped me to feel, I suppose, a little bit good... about some of the things that I *do* say sometimes... and they do... sometimes I still have a.... hmm... bit wary about opening my mouth up... because I don't know the people that I'm speaking to... and I don't want to upset people, or put people off, but I also don't want to be taken out of context... because sometimes people don't see things the way you do, so they take them out of context... and it ends up being not a useful process for anybody... but there's been two instances that I think of

occasionally where I think that I've... um... I spoke about something at a... bit of a forum... a number of years ago when I was working at W... and I had someone come back and tell me after, that she *really* appreciated what I'd said, um... it was about... and I still say this to people... it was about growing up as an Aboriginal person on the Reserve, and learning and understanding stuff and how we as Aboriginal people *don't know* everything about Aboriginal people either... so I wouldn't have an expectation that a non-Indigenous person would know... because *I don't know*... and I was talking about it in the context of... (the workplace)... and how we all worked as a team... and that we all, you know, there was four or five of us and we all have different experiences... and we learn from each other, and we transfer that learning amongst each other... because *my* experiences as an Aboriginal person growing up on a reserve with my immediate family, living in Cairns, going to school here, you know... getting married, having kids, living in a Reserve... as opposed to someone who might have grown up in Yarrabah... they are different experiences... but there is an expectation sometimes of non-Indigenous people that: *"... because we're Aboriginal – we should know..."*. What I was trying to get across that day was that, why would we expect you to know - *if we as Aboriginal people don't know, why would we expect you to know?*... and she was the one that said that she felt good about that stuff, you know... there was another instance recently where I ran across a girl at...(a workplace), and she actually did a paper, she presented a paper at a conference, and she said: "I couldn't find you and I'm hoping you wouldn't mind me mentioning..."... she mentioned *me* and what I'd said to her at some stage, and

she used it in the paper... and I said: " I hope it was something good", and she said: "Yes it was... I had a talk to the people about it....and all these social workers, and all these people around the table that didn't agree with it, wanted to argue with me about it, '...it's this and it's that, that we don't like and we don't want to be part of as social workers and psychologists and...' ...blah, blah, blah...". The thing that I said, that she took away from it, that she thought she *would use*, was: ".You don't have to agree with it, but you're working with people, and um... try and find something positive in it... there must be *something positive* that *you could find* that *you could work with*...". Because at the end of the day, there's social responsibility, there's re-building Indigenous authority – they're positive things in themselves... you know. Find something positive and work with that... I don't know what she wrote, but it was something to do with that that she took away... so I thought: "OK ... well someone has taken away something, taken some notice of me..."... which is good... something that I might be good at! ...(*chuckling*)...

...yeah, where I was talking with you a bit earlier about the...um... *finding your place* stuff... um... one of the biggest things I remember about my grandmother, um... the reason... and I *never thought about it*... actually didn't *ever think* about *why I do that* or *why do I behave that way*... or *why that stuff was passed on to my children*... but I've tried to tell them: "You've got to find your place". You know... there's no... *you can't just barge in and 'big-note' yourself*... 'cause straight away it's going to get you off-side with people. People need to learn...

people need to *trust* you ... to *know you*... and to *see how you fit in*... because if you *don't fit in*, they'll *tell you* that you don't fit in... but until you find your place, you're not going to get anywhere... you're not going to get anywhere, so you might as well not bother doing any of that sort of stuff. Respect the fact that you need to *find your own way* ... into this circle... *this community*... this community of service providers that you need to work with... um... (most) non-Indigenous people, are quite happy to sit there and espouse *their views* and you know, *put forward things*... you shouldn't do that until ...*you* are good and ready, and when *you've* decided that you are able to put it... put your view across... and people are going to take notice of it, or respect it... 'cause if you do that too soon, you will be called a *'big note'*... (*laughing*)... you know what I mean?...

...in order for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and I can't talk for white people, 'cause I don't know... um, to *acknowledge* that you have something to offer... or to actually think that you are *there* with *no ulterior motive*... they have to *learn*... they have to see that from you ... you can't be about you just coming and saying: "Well, I'm coming to *this meeting* and *this* is what I want from you... and I'm *taking this away from you*". There has to be reciprocity... that word... reciprocity... *there has to some of that happening*...

...as an Aboriginal person I have *my way* of working out how I fit in... and when I have something to say, when I feel that I'm *able to say it*, then I'll say it... but don't expect that the way *I behave* is going to be the same as you, because I have a different upbringing, I have different values, different belief systems ...

R: Hmm... can we talk about what you see as important for a practitioner... what would a good worker be doing, how would they be behaving...?

D: Yeah... um... the ones that I think work well with me, the ones that I have a lot of respect for... are ones that have a lot of respect for other people... don't 'big-note' themselves... um... don't barge in and decide that they know the best, and they're the ones... the saviours of the world.. and um... to me 'big-note' is about... being the one that thinks you know... and thinking that you have the experience and the understanding, so that therefore... you're able to go off on your own and do stuff...

R: Like 'the expert' sort of thing...?

D: Yeah... I'd also say that the other context of 'big-noting' is that... um... if we were sitting around a group... even with people that I know... um... and I started talking about something, that people didn't want to talk about, or didn't think that I had the right to talk about it... *I'd be a 'big-noter'*.. you know what I mean, it's sort of like in that context, and that's what I mean I suppose... because if we're going to do work with an Aboriginal community... this person has never been to that community before... they don't have any connection, they don't have any *relationship*... and then we go to a meeting, and *I'm* there, and *she*... let's say I take *you* along, and we go to a Community meeting, and I've invited you along and we're going to go there together... and then instead of you taking your lead from me, and um... you just started rambling on, and talking about stuff... I'd say you were 'big-noting... because you are not learning, you're not waiting to be

led... and to figure out whether you have the right to talk... whether you have the right to do whatever...

...and then there was a couple of... um... workers, managers that I worked with... we used to... we kept *beside each other* when we went anywhere... because they had to lead because that was their job – they were supervisors – she was a lawyer, it was her job to talk... um... we'd have... *I'd touch them* ... so I'd just connect with them, and they'd say something, and I'd just put my hand there, and touch them or something, and they'd *know* ... they'd either *shut up*, or they'd got to go down a different track because what they'd be doing would *cause offence*... we had that sort of a thing between us, because we ...had *relationship*... um... so... we'd *always* sit beside each other... *eventually* they would learn... to... you know, they'd learn from me... to be quiet... that to not speak unless you're spoken to... um, you know, *acknowledge people*...

- Concluding the session:

R: Are you comfortable with what we've been talking about?

D: Yeah, yeah, it's been good... I'm fine - just leave out the bit about ....(some requested exclusions)...

R: Absolutely... I'll type this all up and send it back to you... and you can give more feedback or change any bits you want, or delete any bits – correct any bits I might have not got right... you might want to say: "...that's not quite what I meant..."

D: Yeah, yeah... that sounds fine... that's good... yeah... it's been great... thank you for allowing me to be a part of this... I actually enjoyed that... for someone to actually *want to listen*, for a start... (*laughing*)... yeah, really!...

R: Hmmm... what do you mean...?

D: Um... my experience is that there is a lack of ***real commitment*** to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people... but I also think that... that... it serves people's purpose, because they don't want to know, they don't want to give a shit... as well... really... I think... at the bottom line... the bottom of it is that... because it is too hard, I suppose... when I first came here, I had a talk to one of the managers... probably a lovely man... I don't know him well enough to know whether he is lovely or not... but someone said: "Go and have a yarn with him, and talk to him..." and I started to tell him my story, but... just the way he came across was like... he didn't really give a shit, because he was going to take notice of... the people who'd been around for 10years working in this area... um... so that's what I mean... there are people who don't want to hear... so when someone actually wants to listen, and hear what you've got to say as valuable, it's really good...

R: ...and this comes back to your Grandmother where we started off... about listening and seeing... with your ears and your eyes and your heart...

D: Yeah... yeah... (*quite reflective voice*)... yeah... I tell myself that I'll stay here till my twelve months is up, and then I'll see how I go... it's just really hard to get things moving...

R: Where do you get your energy from...?

D: I don't have any at the moment, and that's a problem... it feels like nothing is going to change... I'm lucky to get anyone to take notice of anything I say... I think it serves their purpose, and they can ignore doing anything else...

R: In listening to you, I'm also starting to realise that this research is about helping to develop a group story where individuals are not trying to stand up on their own, but are part of a collection of voices... thank you for helping with this...

D: Hmm... it's been good... it's been interesting... and like I said, it's been quite enjoyable... it's been really good...

Researcher reflections:

Thank you Deb – it is indeed important to 'know my place', and to use this as a guide, or moral compass about what I stand up for, and how I reflect on whiteness and Aboriginality. This is an example of 'the learning moment' described by Kaya Prpic (2003) as a "... stepping stone between experience and possibility" in which 'being' as different to 'doing' helps me to connect with my learning struggles and re-connect with new ways of 'knowing'.

Deb's Story, reminds me of the writing of Moreton-Robinson (2007) who extended a profound challenge when she stated: "...how does the... (non-Indigenous stakeholder) ...come to *know* about Aboriginality?". She asked that the non-Indigenous person face up to questions regarding their social distance, familial distance, cultural distance, and their relatedness with, or relationship distance from Aboriginality.

There is no other way than for the non-Indigenous Australian to look deep and long at their own sources of knowledge, their ways of being in relation to Indigenous Peoples, and the potential impacts their own behaviours, dialogues and communications. Moreton-Robinson (2007) suggested that through such reflexivity, the non-Indigenous Australian may scrutinize the values that are embedded in the non-Indigenous history in this country and socially articulated in current discourses.

Deb passed on her story from her grandmother whose advice to Deb was: "...find your place" through: "...looking and listening with your ears and your eyes". For the non-Indigenous practitioner, a reflective analysis of their 'place' in relation to 'whiteness' may identify the way in which conversations and dialogues name colour as a mark of difference. It is important to remain aware that relational power is constructed by behaviours such as naming and evaluating 'the other', and by using descriptors and signifiers that frame statements attributing 'markers of other-ness'. To do otherwise would contribute to the discursive reproduction of

'knowledge' that becomes replicated through a range of social structures, such as the media.

Deb's integrity, enormous strength and tenacity, and commitment to change are all signposts towards a decolonizing practice paradigm. Her enormous use of energy in balancing both worlds, and the expectations of both worlds is a beacon for others to follow.

Talking with Deb again reinforced to me the importance of the participant stories having a clear place in the research document, so that their stories are grounded in the research. This is not about 'legitimization' of their stories. My role as researcher is as a 'steward' of their stories, and the facilitator of a process that participants can use in a beneficial way.

5.7: Ng.

(*Identified as:* non-Indigenous male community worker)

- Beginnings:

As a non-Indigenous male living in an Aboriginal community for two decades, Ng provided informed consent, however did not want to be named in this research as he feels that he does not have any particular 'expertise'. However he was keen to participate based on his personal and professional experiences and observations. Therefore the pseudonym 'Ng' has been used to de-identify his contributions.

Ng stated that he had seen a lot of people come and go, and not be as effective as they could be. For him, induction processes for non-Indigenous workers, usually leave a lot to be desired. He believes that Yolngu people are the best people to teach Yolngu – also that non-Indigenous are the best to teach non-Indigenous people. This contributor suggested that non-Indigenous people with greater knowledge and experience should be 'buddied up' as mentors / advisors / support people to other non-Indigenous workers.

Ng.: …and we assume that Northeast Arnhemland being part of Australia, and that the Indigenous people who live here, being Australians, have the same values… and that's not necessarily true… so, to look and say: "We're here to work on a *problem*"… first of all, I think you got to get *consensus* on *'the problem'*… *with* local people…

...but the definition of strength, is for you to *know* what is right and ... to *do* what is right... and to *stick by it*... I wrote down there "do unto others", you know if you... if you're in doubt, put yourself on the other side... you know... if you're going to say something, would you like that said to you... no? Well then don't say it! It's not rocket science!

…when people come here, they are already… in their *own mind*… they are already aware of '*the problem*'… they come to do a job… and before they even get here, somebody… usually a non-Indigenous person, has articulated to them, 'what the problem is' that they need to be working on… and so they come in with the belief that they *already know what the problem is*… and I'm not sure that that is always the case… in fact, I think that that's probably *rarely* the case…

…well, I think you're working with people who we *underestimate* – we pay lip-service to these sorts of things… and to the way Yolngu culture works… and Yolngu society too… um… but I'm not sure that we give it any… much more thought than just a bit of lip-service… like: "Ah yes, we need to learn a bit about the culture"… and you know… but that goes back into the back of our brain… and I suppose when I first came here I was the same… I thought I knew what I was here to do… I had a job that they'd set out to me before I came here… and 'away I go and do it'… and… over time you learn that it's not quite as clear cut… or it may be a problem… but a definition of a 'problem' can be different for different people… and it depends on their world-view… I think *that is* that most important thing… is to realize… and accept… ah… again, not just *tolerate*… but

accept… that there is another world-view here other than mine… we have a white, Christian outlook on the world…

...once, many years ago, when we were talking about 'land rights'… doing an education program on land rights… and she drew a picture of a person with great big glasses… and said: "This is a ngapaki looking at the world through their ngapaki view-point glasses"… and we have nothing else to *look through*… initially… because this is the way we've been brought up… you know… *our values* are *our* values… and I don't know that that is going to help you in a situation like this…

…and whether you identify as a Christian or not, doesn't matter… all of our… we are *brought up* in a Christian environment… you know… all our *laws* are based on Christian doctrine… um… and… that where we make our decisions… that's what we *call on* when we make decisions about *wellbeing*…

…there's a song about anthropologists… an American Indian guy wrote it saying: "Here come the 'anthro's' on another holiday"… you know… or the anthropologist that comes to talk to the Indigenous person about their culture and… here's this old guy sitting outside, and this guy comes along and says: "I'm here to find out about… all about your culture"… and the old guy says: "Oh yeah… good… yeah, OK"… and he gets up and goes inside and comes out again and says: "Here, read this"… and hands him some other anthropologist's book. You know… I've seen people, particularly anthropologists who come through and they want stuff from Yolngu… and Yolngu say: "Rruhpia"… and these people look aghast and

are aghast that someone would ask for *money* to do this… but then that Yolngu is also aware that you're going to go away and… you're doing a PhD…and nothing personal, but people come and they *want something*… they *always want something* from these Yolngu… what do they ever get back? Most of them never even bother to send them a copy of their thesis… you know? So why… I've seen people *hide* from people… under beds basically… to get away from this stuff… you know?

...the informed consent and information pages... it says here that: "many times, services are *imposed* on Indigenous communities" .... without establishing partnerships and relationships... now that *couldn't be righter*... (*slight wry laugh*)... that's *exactly what happens! I'm* not an Aboriginal person and *I'm* saying it! I'm saying that most ngapaki that come in here, come in here with the idea that: *"I'm going to make your life better"*... and Yolngu are sitting there and thinking: "Oh yeah?"... maybe you are, maybe you aren't, you know?...

...and when you *think* about it, we're talking about *educated people*, *usually with a university degree*... who say: "Oh, I'll use your English name *because it's easier*". Now what is that? Why is that? If you or I... and it's like down at the hospital... they *won't use* Yolngu names... they want English names... they have enough trouble with just the surnames... and if you, as a person coming in to work on 'the problem', whatever it might be... you can't even go to the trouble to *learn* how to say a person's name properly... it's not rocket science... what message is that giving... if you cannot or *won't* ... not *can* not – won't, *will* not... at

least take the time... to _learn_ a person's name... and _how_ to say it properly. This is the worst possible thing you can do... as far as I'm concerned... and I think that Yolngu look at it like that and they say: "Oh yeah... _doesn't even bother to learn my name_..."... and what message is that giving... and what sort of _cooperation_ and trust do you think you're going to get? You're going to get a smile that says "You think I'm smiling at you, don't you... you prick"... you know...

...you know, as I said to you yesterday... there's times when I've heard people say racist things, but if you were then to confront them and say: "That's being racist" they'd be horrified. They don't ,for one minute, think that it's racist... but _it is_...

…and that's why _I'm_ sitting here… _I_ wouldn't do this interview, or talk with you about this stuff… if I didn't think that what is going to come from it, is going to help _solve problems_… it's that _orientation_… _induction_, for want of a better term, stuff… it's… people _need_… we _want_ people to be _effective_… we _want_ to try and _bridge that gap_ somehow… as to _how do you become effective_ in tackling problems… without spending five years here… and becoming a 'known' and therefore becoming a 'trusted' and being seen as not another 'fly-by-nighter'… how do we compress that? I think that what you're doing… um… could go some way to helping that. I think that _you're_ talking… what _you're_ wanting to do here will _help other people who come after you_… and who come after me… and they won't have to _reinvent the wheel_ every time a new person comes in… um… they will have something to refer to…

...yes, as we were talking yesterday... about unpacking or unlearning... we come with these things that we've learned throughout our collective experience in our lifetime... you know. Whatever age we are now, our life to date is the sum of all our experience... that's all we've got to relate to. If we are going into somewhere where *those* experiences are *basically useless*... um... what do we do?... like... if you're forty years old when you come here, do you have to spend another forty years experiences before you get to where you are at that point? Let's hope not, you know... that's why we need to have things like your research... and what you're going to come up with... and others too... to *help people*... because... look, I know what it's like to flounder... you know... I can remember back to my first days here, and like I said, I'd travelled a fair bit – I wasn't like I was just, you know, fresh out of the city, and had never had... never been anywhere – I had... and I was... I was *floundering*... I was in the classroom... and I... well, for a start I was a high school teacher, and I started off in a primary school class in the Yirrkala school... teaching kids who *didn't speak my language* ... and who had no idea, who couldn't read and write... I was fortunate enough to have a team teacher... I had Rarri, you know Rarri (Yolngu lady)... Rarri was my first team teacher... I was adopted into her family so that made it even stronger...it gets back to that again, that stuff about gurrutu... and relationships...

...again the thing is... we tend to... you know... some ngapaki (non-Indigenous people) wouldn't even *acknowledge* that we had one of these things... (pointing to *spirit*)... we ngapaki tend to look at this (head and hands) and not this (heart

and spirit)... these two are similar aren't they... you're talking 'heart' as not that physical thing that pumps away.   It quickly goes to head and hands. I don't think we give this one much of a chance... (heart and spirit)... I don't know that we even... that most of us even... um... give it much *credence* ... even recognise that we... that we *have it*...

R: ...and when I've asked Yolngu about this... um... they are very clear about where ngapaki start... with the head and the hands... and that for Yolngu, it starts with heart, and that heart has a desire, and then goes and talks with spirit... to work out what should happen... then those two go and talk to head... and get head thinking about it... and then the three of them tell hands what to do...

Ng: ...(*chuckling*) yeah... that makes sense to me... and you *know* ... you just *know* sometimes what they're thinking... and it's "these poor ngapaki"... and look, I feel sorry for some of these ngapaki here... they *really don't know*... I feel sorry in some respects, and in other respects I don't... because they don't know, they don't know that they don't know... and therefore they don't know that they need to do something... so they're *never* going to get it... you can see it... as long as... *unless* they're prepared to *unpack the baggage that they brought with them*... they're never going to get anywhere... and no matter how long they stay... you know there are people who have been here as long as I have... if you don't *engage* with people... you know... (*chuckling)*... I had this teacher once say to me: "How come Yolngu want to go fishing with you and do all this stuff?"... and I said: "Well, when you go fishing with them, they are *your* hooks, *your* sinkers,

your bait... when *I* go fishing with them, it's *ours*...". They're going to catch more fish... I'm not much of a fisherman... um... but *what's mine is theirs*... and so therefore *what's theirs is mine*...

...you can usually tell with people... black, white or brindle... you can usually tell where their heart is... you can tell if they are meaning well, even if they make a mistake because of ignorance... you can usually tell when they mean well... you know... it's no point having a good intention... and not spending time in *honestly reflecting* on what you're doing... you know, you've got to be *totally honest*... and before you're dishonest with anybody else, you're dishonest with yourself if that's what you going to be... you can go and bullshit to everybody... you can make a lie become the truth... in everybody else's head... but you know in your own *heart*, if you like... or head, or spirit... you know, *you know* ...

...Yolngu see themselves as *part* of the Land… part of the *Landscape*… um… they don't see *people* and *environment*… they see people as *part of* that environment… and we tend to have this idea of ownership… um… whereas… you know, where we *own* the land… as far as they're concerned *the land owns them*… they are just as much a part of it as the trees and rocks and everything else… and, you know… there *are* different outlooks on the world and you've got to… not only become aware of them, but as I said, accept, if you want to… to *do your job...*

...*we* need to take the blinkers off *our* heads and look at some of the things that Yolngu do in a much broader context... and that's why it's important to establish

relationships and partnerships... before you start telling people how to suck eggs, learn whether they already know how to suck eggs..!

…you *cannot* underestimate the power of that kinship… it's… it's not just like we see 'family'… it's… it's the *system*… it's the *Law*… it's the *obligation*…

...I think the most important thing to do here is to try and establish a relationship... you know... a *real* two-way relationship... ah, again I think, I can't over-emphasise that I think we tend to *dismiss* what Yolngu have, as being *inferior* to what we have... and you do that subconsciously in your brain and away you go: "Oh yeah, that's important, but my stuff is *more important"...*

…the confusion of the outside influences of ngapaki… whitefellas… and the way we think and live… and the way we tell them that *they* should think and live… *like us*… um… so… we have this *belief* that this is the *best way to live*…

...if we say "... you can only have two days for ceremony"... because we're thinking: "Oh... all they're doing is burying that poor person"... then what we're doing is we are completely chopping away, their education system... and saying... again: "Oh we appreciate and value Yolngu culture"... *bullshit* ... it's just words... just words... when you're doing all of these things... if we don't allow (the space for) them to practice their culture, they'll *lose* it...

…having said all of this, if you come in here as a new person, you've got nothing else to draw on but your own experiences and your own upbringing and your own values, and morals and so on… so… but then what you've got to do is… I tell

people… when we used to get new teachers, the first thing I'd tell them was to keep their eyes and ears open and their mouths shut… till you know what's going on… because you will put your foot in it…

…and I think one of the things… one of the glaring differences between ngapaki and Yolngu, is… we have problems with what I call 'pregnant pauses'… right? We like conversation to run… we like… if we have a meeting we don't like to sit there and have nothing being said… for *any* length of time… we like it to roll along. If the conversation ebbs, then somebody takes responsibility to crank it up again… ah… and I think it's part of our basically wanting everything done yesterday… um… what you've got to do is go in… you know, initially you go to meetings to talk with people about how… a problem… um, and how we're going to deal with it… um, you've got to be prepared to sit there and have nothing said by *anybody* for a period of time… because sooner or later Yolngu will start… sooner or later someone will say something, and someone will say something else, and then it will go around, and go around… we have problems with this, so we tend to start it, and that's when Yolngu… what they do then is they sit back and they will… what have I written down here?... ah… ah… (*longish pause while looking through his notes*)… ah, just that… you've got to listen… listen to what Yolngu have to say… about the problem… otherwise *they* are just going to listen and simply agree with what you are saying… and I think… again, it's *partly* because… we *all* have uncomfortable situations… find ourselves in uncomfortable situations, and we're… we're willing to do… *whatever we have to*

do to get out of that uncomfortable situation… so even though we may not agree with decisions that are being made, we will *go along with them*, because we *just want to get out* of the place… you know… we just want to get out of it… so… and I know Yolngu… Yolngu are *very* good at learning all the clichés that they know that we want to hear!. So, you know… we sit around this table with a group of Yolngu, and we talk about something, and… and… you know, it's *usually* the ngapaki that do most of the talking… again because… because of that *nature*… um… and then eventually you'll get Yolngu say: "yo, yo… ma… ma… yalala… ma"… *see ya later*… we find it very difficult to sit around in a situation like that and just *let it be silent*… and it could be silent for fifteen minutes! Now we have enough trouble with a silence that goes on for fifteen seconds, let alone fifteen minutes… and… and you find that we have these norms, of… looking at somebody when you speak to them. Yolngu don't *necessarily* do that… um… most Yolngu talk to each other *without* looking at each other… um… we have the "please" and "thank you's"… ah… Yolngu don't have those… those things… we tend to think that Yolngu are *rude* because they don't have "please" and "thank you"… ah… they don't say "thank you" and they don't say "please"… if you listen to Yolngu talking to each other you would think that they *hate* each other a lot of the time… or really dislike… they are short and sharp and gruff with each other… ah… that we find… you know, this is our Anglo-Saxon, English heritage, ah, that *we* find that… we are *uncomfortable* with that, you know… we think that somebody's rude...

…you see… you can't be very effective until you are a 'known'… and there's only… this is why I can do things now, that I couldn't do when I first came here… um… and probably that *you* can't do… because I've been here a long time, the people *know* me, and they know… because also, the vast majority of ngapaki that come through a place like this… that's what they do… they just *come through*… they're here either for their own personal 'blackfella experience' for a period of time, you know… so that it gives them things to talk about at dinner parties… or they're CV building… ah… and they don't stay *very long*… ah… they *all* seem to come and think that they're going to 'change the world'… um, and then, you know, they leave three months or three years later… um… not having changed much at all… um, and Yolngu are very, very shrewd and perceptive people… and they can see what's going on… so they know… for them… you know, I've been here a very long time, and I worked at that school for eighteen years, and the number of teachers… *qualified* teachers that have come and worked in that school… I couldn't… you know… *countless*… I've seen them come and go… lots of them… some of them have been effective… some of them you couldn't wait to get rid of them… but if I could see, just imagine what Yolngu are seeing, you know… "ah yeah, here comes *another* one"…

...to be really effective, and to really work on 'a problem', you can't just come and 'do it' in a short period of time… it takes *years* before people see you as a *known quantity* and they know you're not just another 'fly-by-nighter'.

5.8:   Djapirri

(*Identified as:* Yolngu Aboriginal woman, Traditional Owner, Gumatj Clan, Miwatj Region, Northeast Arnhemland, Northern Territory - Manager of Women's Resource Centre Yirrkala)

- Beginnings:

R: ...Djapirri, you are one of my Grandmothers… I call you…

Dj: ...Momu…

R: ...Djapirri, I'm sorry I have to put this tape on, and I know it has interrupted our conversation that we were having, but we had started to discuss some really important things…

Dj: …and again, going back to People not getting into employment, training and education… is because the Government *wouldn't listen* to what we need… because we as Yolngu People *know* and can solve our own ways… by thinking… rather than white people telling us all the time… *"…you must do this, you must do that, you must do this..."*…that's to give us a chance to turn our lives around, the way *we* think we can create… um, industry, how we can see our education turnaround… how we can see our community turnaround… and that takes effort and time… and can take as long as it likes… in the *right* time…

…and we need to focus on the *attitude* of the non-Yolngu… because people with *that* attitude comes in and destroys… either for the learning of the Yolngu to be handed down from this person… *"…do this, do that, do this…"* ...Yolngu is not

designed for (won't accept) that *ignorance*... yo, a waste of time… and not even one Person will last long with that person…

…when I *see* things… *thinking* of the past where many Yolngu wouldn't go anywhere… as in getting a high position in any workplace… but you can see, it's because again, in the wider world, seeing Yolngu as a disadvantaged People…

...I think, um… the obstacles was what ngapaki brought as poison… to the lives of Yolngu People… and I can mention those… like alcohol, like drugs, like racism… is one of the biggest barriers… in getting Yolngu to the standard where, again, can be recognized… and balancing the two worlds… Yolngu have stepped back because there was no opportunity for a Person to get to that level...

R: ...sometimes for me, when I'm doing that walking together, and working at that two-ways learning… sometimes I feel a little bit afraid that I might make a bad mistake…

Dj: ...but that's why it's… always *listen* to the leader… yo… learning… yo… and *respect* for each other within… and *relationship* for each other… yo, *relationship* is one of the *key happenings* to success…

R: ...that communication with each other all the time…?

Dj: ...yo, yo… asking each other… *straight away*… *put it out*… so you are not *loading* yourself with something… because if you're starting to load yourself with something, you begin to see changes, that things are not progressing… and

when you come to that, um… you wonder why is… the plants not growing, it's all died… why is this growing and this one not… (*long reflective silence*)

...I guess it is the… it is the *role* of the true Leadership within the Community… giving out that information all the time… encouraging People, that they should do… and take up employment… and healthy living and healthy eating… and planning what there is offered… in the wider world, as in creating small businesses, creating industry opportunities, creating opportunities for Yolngu to reach that benchmark where they can be recognized in equal rights as White Australians… and I think it has taken a *very* long time, for *us* as Yolngu People, to now be seen…

…and we ask them today, we as Yolngu People – we *can* make things happen… if we are *working alongside* with the non-Yolngu People…… to do things in the white world's culture… and if we do that, we then can see the transformation in the lives of Yolngu People…

…staying connected to Country is important for the young ones… yo… but it is hard being able to be *both-ways*… at the same time, you need parents to be supportive in all sorts of things – in education, in what you are eating, what your djama (work) is, in your *whole* lifestyle… because a lifestyle represents *you*… your lifestyle - as in *wellbeing*, right from the very small… it's like a flower, blooming…

...there has to be a *reconciled* way between one another… and if *we,* as a Yolngu Person, and a ngapaki person, *doesn't* make that reconciling commitment, then it's worth *nothing*… by working alongside, step by step by step… is the way that a Yolngu Person can achieve his or her or community's real ambition…

...the right attitude brings People together… the right attitude brings team work together… it can be a team of one ngapaki, and Yolngu joins in with his team… see, it's like you Rosie… you know, um… if you'd come and worked in the Resource Centre, we don't really know you, what kind of person are you… but we will study you, your character, your behaviour, your attitude… because at first you may be polite, gentle… but as things go on, you can change once you become familiar with the place where you work, your attitude could change… and we're watching for that… *"…don't do this, don't do that…"*… or you may start to get bossy… but not realizing that there's a Yolngu Person in there for a *very* long time, and knows too about the general, you know, of what's around… and then, the person that is non-Yolngu can lift himself up, and *looking down* on Yolngu… but if we want to see things happen in this Community, and good for the better of all, *these two stays together*…… so it's actually *a two-ways of learning things*… at the same level… and walk on the same way…

...it's like… how can you and I travel to that Island over there… in a dugout canoe… are you going to let me paddle all the way there… somewhere along the line, my arms are going to get tired and my body is going to get weak… so you

need to contribute something to that journey… by me taking a rest, and you paddling… and other times, it's that communication barrier… communication between you and the second person… how can we steer, or paddle the canoe together, so we can get to the destination safely, on time… and what direction we're going… how is the wind going to go – this way?… how is the wind going to go this way – because *wind* is the voices of the People watching you do that... yo… *trust* because *we can be a team to make it happen*… so that communication is a *constant*… you know…

R: ...*healing* is an important thing to happen? … in ways that ngapaki don't know about…?

Dj: ...yo… even in ways that ngapaki will *never understand*… because *our* culture, you see, has been a hidden treasure… and ngapaki culture has come over the top of us… you know… so *this* culture *has to come in level* with *this* one…

R: ...and are you saying that those Government programs are not working…?

Dj: ...as in not doing things *with* the People – it shouldn't be *this one coming down* – it should be *this one going up*…

…and then another Yolngu woman was interviewed: "…what do you think that, in establishing the Mine here… and on your land… has done…" … and she comments about, um… "…well, I think this is not a good idea… these white people are bringing us poison… poisoning our culture, poisoning our Land,

poisoning our mind, poisoning and drowning our strength, as in doing things…"

… that's what that miyalk was saying… (*long reflective silence*)… I mean, that pain, and will never go away… because the miners and they are digging up the Land – even though they are re-vegetating it, it's not the same in here… (pointing to her chest)… just the way when I study people's behaviour, I think with the drunks especially, because what the Mine has done… to the Land… and the Land affected the people, because of the disconnectedness…yo… and because… of what, you know… they brought in… the poison… the alcohol… a depression that comes up and slowly they're like… in a way… a slow process… of killing themselves…

…now the Government are trying to *help* with funding about how they can get… run programs for suicide, and you know… but *nothing* is *changing*… in the lives of these drunken people here… you know, rrhupiah (money), after coming in and doing every part of it to make them change and turn around – I mean the *real* alcoholics… they seem to stay in the same pool… and the only way, is to *restore their soul* with… like a *cultural* restoration… a cultural healing, and the way the *old* People… the *Old People* used to stay healthy, do a lot of hunting, you know…

...because again, the rrhupiah (money) has come in… nganatji (alcohol) has come in… other things have come in… as in *family violence* has come in… stealing has come in…

…that is one of the main things… learning about Yolngu knowledge and ngapaki knowledge… *never take things for granted*… always give back… you've got ngapaki knowledge and Yolngu knowledge, and *there* you see a *big* tree growing beautiful and rooting… fertilized with the goodness of your action, your words… towards that young tree…

...when we do invite non-Yolngu to our Community, we would like to… from the *very beginning* when they come to the community… is to know the Yolngu structure and protocols that they have to follow… that is *very* important to *know about these things*… what they need to do, what they don't need to do… what they don't need to photograph, and what they can photograph… so there's a *process*… sitting down and *listening*… listening to *the voice* of the Yolngu People… and that is an important part in the Yolngu culture, for the non-Yolngu to be accepted… and if they don't do that, *then you've wasted your time*…

- Concluding the session:

R: ...hmm… I have these pieces of paper that need to be done for the University… and letting you know that if I do anything wrong, you can make complaints about it… and to get in touch with her – Susan Gair, is one way…

Dj: ...yo…

R: ...and this one is for you to sign if you are agreeing to be interviewed… and for me to tape-record… do you agree for me to quote you in my writing…?

Dj: ...yes, Djapirri Mununggirritj…(signing papers)…

R: ...thank you very much – you keep those copies – I'll be bringing a copy of what you've said, back to you – for your to approve or change, if you wish to…

Dj: ...ma (yes, OK)…

R: ...shall I finish this off now?

Dj: ...yo, biling (we're finished).

Researcher reflections:

For Djapirri:

> …finding the answers to challenges facing us is all about working forward respectfully and embracing each other's culture, and building relationships with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. It is about sharing each other's culture, experiences and knowledge, so we can find real solutions together to the problems that we face in our society today. We can all be better off that way (Munungurritj, 2008, in Fletcher, 2009).

5.9:   Sharon M.

(*Identified as:* Aboriginal woman who also has strong family linkages with Yolngu Gumatj Clan by marriage)

S: …I think it's just something that people see… they see their stance… and that they're with them on the journey… they are *genuinely* with them on the journey… they're not there for the cheque and the benefits of the job… they're absolutely with them on the journey… people can see that… they can see when people are *genuinely* there… people know… they know when people are there on that journey of 'let's move forward together'…

…(here Sharon told a story about a non-Indigenous person offending an Indigenous colleague by telling her to do something 'chop-chop' and clapping hands together)…

…that might work in Canberra, but it doesn't work here in community… you see, they'll stop coming to work… they'll stop trusting… you see it all the time… people get offended by these things… to that person (non-Indigenous) that's *the norm*… absolutely that's a bad thing… I don't think she realized that it's *horrific* to speak to someone like that… it's *harming* people… it's causing *more harm* to people… that's the *worst*… and then if you walk away, and you've left that person with all those wounds re-opened, and you can't deal with it, because you've handled the situation the *wrong way*… people have to have a trust… you have to have a rapport… sometimes it's irreparable… and it can be dangerous… well… it opens up wounds for people… you've got to be really careful, really,

really careful, when you're doing your work, that you don't open up wounds…

that you work in a way that creates *safety* for people…

…and being patient…that's the other thing that I've found… people's lack of

awareness and patience… thinking: "...well we're going out and this needs to

happen *now*… and this plan will happen *now*"… and you know, you might not

get your meeting for six weeks… and its not going to happen *now*… and it's

learning to be patient… for people to learn how to *just sit*… now that's

important… and I feel sometimes that people often…and it's been said in

Government departments, you know, you hear people say stuff like: "…oh, I went

out there and all we did was sit around and have a *cup of tea*…they weren't

working…"… and I think to myself: "…yes they *were* working… they're building

the *network*…they're building the *trust* ". You won't get work done without that…

so it's learning… it's for non-Aboriginal people to come in and realize that this

…*is…still…work*… it's not *your* way of working, it's not *European* way of

working… you know, you can't sit down and dot point what you did between ten

and three…'cause you were sitting under a tree in the shade with the old ladies

having a cup of tea… but you *did a lot of work*… and it's learning to accept that

you *did* do the work… and the *importance* of that work… 'cause you really can't

under-estimate that… because, you know… *trust* is the key. If you've got that

and you've got those relationships - that's your key into the community…

…the other thing I was going to say, is about the internal racism that is

widespread in communities… um… and this is it… every community that I go to

… it's very sad… it's sad to think that we have racism in the community amongst our own people… the reality is that it is there…(*long silence*)… and it's also where you sit with your own Aboriginality that makes you stronger… it's sad… it's a huge barrier… it's a *huge* barrier… all over… how can we heal others if we haven't healed ourselves… (*long silence*)… you see it all the time… people want to do healing work and they haven't healed themselves… or they're prepared to do *harm* to others, and I don't mean physical… but it made me think… you sit back and think of things that you might have said at meetings, and … you know… you think… gee, I bet I've caused harm… I *know* I've caused harm to people… but it was not intentional, it was immaturity, it was a lack of respect… it was lots of things… and it's OK… you've acknowledged it and you can move on from it… but it still goes on… it still goes on all the time and it's really sad, because there is such good work that could be done, but I see these little factions and it's the Aboriginal people who are suffering… some non-Indigenous people who are seen as having a 'black heart' might be able to ask about this… people who are trusted by community and seen as being there for them… community will wear it from them… they would take it, take what's being said, take it on board…

…well, going into community, people need to know all the protocols… I mean, cultural safety is broken all the time…I don't believe it's intentional… I think it's just because people weren't made aware of what the boundaries are…of what the protocols are… and about the consequences of it… because if you've broken

it, then you've breached cultural safety. People will not be open to you… and it'll take a very long time to earn that trust… and it might have consequences for that person, that Aboriginal person of that community that you've broken it with… and I've spoke to a very senior man… and he said to me how people are suffering… because the workers come here and they're told, and they still continue to breach cultural safety and say the wrong thing…they won't ask for help any more, they stay home because they don't want to be embarrassed any more, they don't want their cultural safety breached anymore… so they stop asking for help… if people reach out say "do you want any help", they say "no, don't want any help"… they are just *over it*… they are *over* having their cultural safety breached… so it a very big issue…

...use a *cultural mentor* and put themselves under that person's care, instead of the other way around, which is sadly sometimes the case. People come out and …you know: "I'm only twenty-five, and never been to a remote community before, but I've got a degree, and you guys don't know more than you're doing"… and this is how it is…I think also recognizing that you can't put a value on the cultural knowledge… so be prepared to go to the community and go *under* that person's cultural guidance… that's how you can work together… and we've all seen that… we've seen that done really well…and you can do great, really great work…that they are *open to*… they've got to be open to it… if they are not open to it, then its not going to work…

...it's not impossible to do good work… non-Indigenous people have done a *lot* of good work in community over the years… but they are usually the people who came and stayed… do you know what I mean… they were the people who came and sat quietly… and were just so open to it… to taking on the cultural safety too… just being so aware of what their boundaries were… being open to 'not knowing'… (*long silence*)…

- Concluding the session:

R: ...how's this going for you?

S: …good, good, (*strong voice*)… thank you for this …I was scared to start talking, but it went good.

Researcher reflections:

Within the interview conversation / yarning process, Sharon told several stories to more deeply illustrate the points that she was talking about. Clearly, the narrative conversational style of a yarning process facilitated the telling of further stories and narratives of experiences – as different to a narrow 'collection of data'. The narrative approach has facilitated a depth and breadth of discussion, in a relaxed and informal way, with the direction being led and set by the contributor. It has provided the context for layers-on-layers of stories. This style of dialoguing also created opportunities for sharing and reciprocity – a giving and taking within the relationship created by the interview process, similar to a

'coming alongside' each other in relatedness as discussed by Karen Martin (2008, p. 79).

This increase in relatedness extended beyond the actual interview itself. I notice that Sharon and I share a closer respect now… a significant change from the tensions of earlier times.

5.10: Alistair

(*Identified as:* non-Indigenous male community worker)

- Beginnings:

A: This is a bloody hard topic!

...(*describing previous work in an organization that was committed to working with decolonizing methods and strategies*)…and that was hard work, and did not fit with 'streamlined' outcomes and timelines… these methods were important because they were an *act* of capacity-building in and of themselves…around the individual and the community from which they came…um…so I brought those views to this work up here (Northeast Arnhemland)…

 ...the colonial structure…you set up a *Board*…and I know that people sitting around a table and setting up an agenda and that stuff, can be alienating in itself…and… those processes can be alienating... the systems, because they are 'white-man's structures' they are alienating…they use language that is *extremely* marginalizing…ah, you know… and they are *complex* systems…and unless you *understand* those systems, you're really going to be *screwed by the system*…

…and as a white man sitting in a room with twenty Aboriginal people… um… like…*how you inhabit that space* as a non-Indigenous person working in an Indigenous context, and then what you then *do* with information that comes out of the group, and *how* you *implement that* as a worker, is where you can have issues with… you know… well, *everything* – from language, words, how you

understand it, what you think … and *how you impose your own views*… and really trying to be hyperconscious of the fact that *everything you do* comes with a social context – and if you're not *interrogating* that all the time, then you'll find yourself imposing your own ways of doing stuff on the community…

 *...*reflection is *really* important… because that's *how* you work out what you *should* be doing… well… first of all it's about putting aside what you've learnt before you've came here, in a sense… I mean, you *draw* on that, but you need to draw on it *in a different way*… ah… you need to *draw* on your experience and your knowledge, that you've got something to contribute - but *how* that's contributed, and *what* it is that you actually contribute… is *not up to you*… ah… it's *up to others*… and… ah… so you need to set up structures whereby you can *be informed* as much as possible about how you do that…

...so a *hyper-consciousness* about *how* you go about doing business…

R: …what has been the most challenging?

A: …I feel bloody exhausted…(*laughing*)… and a lot of that exhaustion is from never being really sure about what you're doing… and always being in almost *universally dependant* on others… to know *what* you're *doing*… the community and participants in the work… but I'm *very clear* that *I* can't solve the problems… I'm very clear that the problems *won't* be solved in a short amount of time… we're talking about generations… that I am only *part of* a process… and obviously you get 'wrapped up' at times when you forget that...

...I suppose, in terms of devolving, or recognizing that you don't have that much control over… or that you're not the 'solution to the problem' is that maybe you are separate to the outcomes, or lack of outcomes… at the beginning I probably thought I knew more than I do now…(*laughing*)… so I *certainly* know more now than I did then...

...I think that's a valid reason for wanting to be engaged with Indigenous communities… it's *not* 'helping them to navigate' or 'determine solutions'…it's helping them to bring about *those solutions* in a *white-man's context…* which I think…it's difficult…

R: ...and sustaining yourself?

A: …you have to seek out the right people for support… I've got certain people who know the context… if you *think* about it too much it's going to be completely crippling… you might as well *stay in bed* and you would end up not being able to do *anything…*(*laughing*)… and you would think to yourself, and we've probably all done this… that you've got absolutely *nothing* to contribute… you need reinforcement from the people that you're working with, that you *do* have something to contribute...

 ...in respect to Indigenous people, I talk about de-colonizing methodologies because I think that we need to acknowledge that historical patterns that are associated with the colonial state have failed and they've largely failed because

they are based on… on the idea that 'white man knows best'… and I don't consider that to be true…

…and in my work here, it's an important balance between the way of doing the work, and the *push* for outcomes… because if you don't think about those things, then you can find yourself imposing your own views… and then… um… not recognizing what I think to be the most important aspect of *any* work that affects …ah… communities that are… are disadvantaged or marginalized… and that is to not further marginalize or disadvantage through *process*…

…and I think that *acknowledging* that the outsider, the practitioner, whoever you may be… doesn't *know best*… that communities have solutions to their own problems and that *those solutions* are what need to be nurtured… then *that* is the most important thing for me about coming into a community, and working with that community to develop solutions… the opposite is coming into a community and… taking the view that you know how the community should go about business, or what sort of things the community should do… ah… and I find that to be… ah… *de-developing* or… (*laughing*)… the *opposite* of capacity-building…

R: …colonizing?

A: …it is, it is…(*emphatically*)…ah… and further marginalizing and … and *really* entrenching *old patterns* that have… you know, worked to the disadvantage of Indigenous communities...

…you know, it *is* difficult…(*wry laugh*)… it is really difficult… and sometimes it's damned near *impossible*… um… but you *commit yourself* to that sort of methodology and you stick by it… it is difficult… but *so it should be* …because otherwise… you know, there is no *easy* way of solving these sorts of issues… that whole conversation about 'outcomes'… that's very, very 'loaded' that sort of language… what some people might see as small things, can really be a big change… for example, someone who has had a long history of alcoholism, to organize and come to meetings on community issues, is a *big thing*… an *impressive outcome* I think… and that whole thing about 'outcomes and objectives… according to whose point of view?...

...if we don't make sure that the organization also ensures good practices - it's all too hard… resources – it's about the skewed lack of resources – it takes more to deliver services to these communities, and the politics around the distribution of resources, there is so much need… just get over it when you say: "...but it costs a lot of money"!... and it's counter-active to the delivery of *good* services… the issue of resources affects the delivery of services on the ground…

...so the lack of resources will deter good people from coming, and makes people (with skills and knowledges) leave… it's so hard – lack of resources means that everything is just that much harder to do, to achieve… and it also means that organizations can't put in place proper staffing models, so that staff can be provided with support… I've had no support in nine months… you're flying 'solo'…(*laughing*)...

...a lot of the issues… that *challenge* Indigenous groups, or… organizations, or individuals… or communities… *are* interactions or interfaces with non-Indigenous structures… with *the law*… or with the health system, or government, or whoever… funders… blah, blah, blah… and that there *is* a role… *undoubtedly* there *is a role* for people like me to *assist*, or *work with*, or *facilitate*… the kind of *easing* of those *interactions*… the same can be said for any of the systems, because they are 'white-man's structures' they are alienating… they use language that is *extremely* marginalizing… ah, you know… and they are *complex* systems… and unless you *understand* those systems, you're really going to be *screwed by the system*… so there *is a role* I think, for…ah… *non-Indigenous* people to play in making... you know, I hate to use the term 'bridging the gap', but it *is* that… or *bringing together*, or *facilitating* the interaction in a way that makes it easier...

- Concluding the session:

R: I imagine that you've used a lot of energy…

A: YES,YES… but it *has* been about managing to get through… I mean, it's ridiculous… but it's going to take time… and this is the same for Community people… some people are called on *all the time* and they get tired too… living in a community, where it's expected that you'll devote almost *all* your energy dedicated to meeting the *survival* of that community – it's exhausting for the community… and it's not recognized… it's "shit-hard" work!... but I'm about to get

in a plane and fly back south to another job… community people stay and continue to live with these things.

Researcher reflections:

For A., his practice was constantly guided by deep reflexivity and the interplay of his epistemological knowledges, and his ontological self in relatedness to both his workplace responsibilities and the Indigenous stakeholders that he worked with. He was clear that working in this 'in-between' liminal space uses a lot of energy, as he continually interrogated and re-interrogated the Self in context as practitioner. For him, this reflective space was populated with self-doubt, however he maintained his relatedness with his practitioner self with clarity about why he does what he does, in the way he does it. He remained grounded in Knowledge that colonial practices marginalize Indigenous agency – he maintained 'pride in the process' of his Doing and Being.

5.11: Josie

(*Identified as:* Indigenous Person - female community worker)

- Beginnings:

J: My name is Josie Mooka – and I am from this Community of Umagico and Bamaga in the Northern Peninsular Area… and I am an Indigenous person…

…well, um… when other people come into our Community to work with us, um… they sit with us, and the first thing that they say to us is, um… is, you know… not *asking* us… what our Community is like – and, um… how do we *do* things in Aboriginal life – as an Indigenous Person in the Community. The way they do work with us is by *wanting us to listen* to *what they have to say*… and actually wanting us to *do* what *they said*… or told us to do – and… I don't think that that is good practice… because I think what they need to do is… is to *get acquainted* in all our, um… culture and tradition…… get the grounding in Communities, see how They work, um… you know, what They *really do* with life – and *get the idea* of the Community – and you know, People… and then, you know… when they are coming up and working with us, you know… they will get a bit of an idea of what they are actually looking at, and um… how we, as Community People, actually live our everyday life, instead of just coming and telling us: *"...oh, this is the way you should do it…"* and: *"...that's not the right way"*…and: *"...this is the way it should be done…"*…but I think it's best to… like I said before – come in, and get accredited with the Community, the People… and the Culture… and Tradition… and then, when coming up to actually *do work with us*, then they'll

have a fair idea of how they can *be*… and *work* with us in solving anything that… that will be *right* in our kind of view and also in theirs…

...and sometimes the Department workers come and say: "…this thing has to be done, and this thing has to be done..."… and I say: "…how can this thing be done, when it doesn't go well with our Way?". The Bureaucracy really needs to sit here for a couple of days and see how we live and how we can do things, instead of telling us … "…listen to me…" … and we can't come to any agreement when there is an imbalance in that Power… where one thinks that they can tell the other one what to do, or not to do… hmmm…

...a lot of talking *to* us, and telling us… "…*this* is the right way…" … and not giving us a chance to speak how we… to think how we should… you know… because we should be saying how we live our life and how we deal with things… about our children, or our families or our mothers, you know… us in the Community… but with *them*, you know – they come in and go straight to the 'this is how it should be done'… and no consultation or anything like that… um… it's just 'in, do what they want to do, and get out again'…

…maybe they think that, ah, we're not *capable* enough… you know… to do stuff, or to actually sit with them and reason with them… it's always *them*… and um, and not giving us as individuals, or as Community, the space to say something that is connected to them… (*reflective silence – thinking*)

…because we ourselves as Indigenous persons, *are learning* white-man ways… (*chuckling*)… so white-man has to learn black-man ways as well… living equal in this Country… yes… it's about *balance* – we don't want to be like in the Colonial times, you know – everyone should be on reconciliation, so everybody should be together… everyone should be working together as one… we should be *doing reconciliation* … we should be *doing it – together*…

…I suppose the main thing is... to get acquainted with Indigenous Culture, to get acquainted with how we live… work *together* with them…get the goals and aims, and then *work straight together*… (trust and relationship)… *not* one going this way, and the other going this way… otherwise that will be all the way down the crack, a big crack… (between the two cultures)…big time… so it should always be together as one… hmmm… that's the only solution… otherwise, everything will be down-hill and always will be in chaos… so both have to take the time to work together as one… not as two different races of people… but as One… *equal* in *all areas*… balance everything out… as *One*…

…oh, when that happens…(*strong voice*)… you know… we'll say: "…what do you think you know about us, or about our Community…"… or: "…how are you living, to actually come in here and tell us this is the way you should do it…"… and you know, what we could say is that: "… yes, um… maybe Mainstream, maybe that's how mainstream does it…but that's not a particular um… purpose for us in the Community" … maybe like I said, if they see it, and then we say: "…OK, maybe… we could do it a bit like that, but not too much, because in our

Community, it's this way…"… so we'll do it in our Culture and Tradition… whereas with Mainstream, maybe a little bit of your Mainstream, we could have that… to put into practice… um, you know… write us a letter, give us a ring, tell us what you are up here for… and if you come up – like I said before – we are friendly community People, and Culture and Tradition… and then when they actually *come up*, um… they'll have a fair idea… and then we'll know what we are dealing with… because if they don't do that, there won't be *any agreement* within what they're talking about…

…because, um… everywhere else, um… they have their Traditions and Culture, and it's the same thing, you know, if you're a non-Indigenous person, and you've got a *job* to do in one of the Communities, and you go off on the 'plane, and you go into the Community, and you think, you know: *"…I'm here to do my job… and I expect them to listen to me…"*… and sometimes they're *in for a shock*, you know… because there won't be People around to listen to them! They won't listen to all their crap that they take into the Community, because that's just not how the Community works…

…hmm… you see, when non-Indigenous people come into the Community, they should approach the Elders first in the Community and *get to know People*, and *respect* their ways… before even *trying* to *do things* with the Community…

…you know, Mainstream *always has their way*… and that's how they want Community People to go by… *their way*… and… not having the respect of Indigenous People and *their ways*… and in a child care centre like this, you

know, they expect us to talk in English all the time… you know, English is always our *second* language, and we always do use Creole… even at school. "You have to talk English"… you know... "...you have to speak *English* to the children"… and English is our *second* language… we don't speak *good* English… we speak what we *know*… what we're *able* to speak… but they expect us to talk to our children, at the day care centre and the school, in *English*… and: "…don't talk language, don't talk Creole…". You know, we talk Creole at home, but sometimes we get *tired* of talking in English… and we have to talk in Language or Creole… and um… so that's how it is…

…maybe they want the children to learn English, but the problem is, some of us who doesn't even know how to speak English *properly*… you know, it will *always* be a problem for us… to even be able to *teach* those young ones to *speak that English*… it will *always* be *Creole* in the middle, you know… in the *way* we speak… and not fully in English…

… (*chuckling*)… English is our second language, and we *usually* speak Creole… it's a bit *insulting*, I think so… you know, some of these kids are *babies*… maybe when they are in Grade One, then they'll have the opportunity to learn a bit of English, and they have teacher aides to help them out between Creole and English… but with *babies* here, um… if we speak to them in English, *they won't know what we are talking about*… you know…

…someone the other day said: "… you gotta talk *English* to the kids…"… and I said… "…who's going to talk English to the kids, when most of us here talk

Creole at home?"… and they are *more time at home* than they are *here*… so certain Departments come up and, you know… all the kids, they get excited at seeing new faces… and they run up to them, and you know… and the way they speak is not how you speak, and they get all confused, and they say: *"… what are they saying…?"*… and we say: *"… oh, they're saying this, and they're saying that…"*… and they want us to teach the kids English… so that they don't open their mouths and speak in Creole and say things they don't understand… (*laughing*)… we had a visitor from the Licensing Department up here, and you know the kids ran up to both of the ladies, and were speaking in our tongue, you know… and both of them backed off saying: "We can't understand them…"… (*laughing*)…

…hmm… they *have* to understand *our* Culture, just like we've had to understand *their* culture… and *get to know*, you know – Indigenous Culture…hmmm…… because they haven't taken the time to actually *sit with* various People in the Community and *ask* about the Culture… and actually engage with their Culture… even they would get the chance to get to know *us*… as Indigenous People, and how we lead our lives everyday… you see, when we try to learn other Cultures, we are just 'babies'… you can't say you're just going to learn like that, *overnight*… and the next day you'll be *just like them*… no… that just doesn't happen… it's a slow process, but *we* get there…

…they can't come and work the same way here, because Aboriginal Communities – we're *all* Indigenous People, but we're *all* a different Culture –

Torres Strait Islander People have a different Culture to Aboriginal People, but there's *some* similarities there… but not disconnected… that's why with Aboriginal Communities… and further up this way, there is many Torres Strait Islanders here, and um… we sort of adapt Aboriginal ways from these Aboriginal People up here, and they're… um, grown to adapt *our* ways also, so we interact with everyone else, and everyone… and that how…when the *white* people, non-Indigenous people *come into* the Community, um… that's how they should see our two Culture works… yeah… (*thinking time*)…

...come into the Community, and *build a relationship* with the Community People… get to know the way they live, their Culture, their Tradition, and… you know, just to get a fair idea of the way they live their lives… and then *before* they come to the Community, to get a fair idea of who they can approach, *who* they can talk to about things, and *how* to talk to the People…

...build *relationship* with them, and then if there's a *trust*, otherwise if you don't do that, you won't last long in the Community… and that's the outcome for some people who come up here… they don't get to know the People… maybe they think that we have to do things the way Mainstream does it… another worker came into Community, and she works beautifully with staff, and that's the sort of people we like to see – because we see that they *can learn* our Culture, they *can learn* our Ways, and they see it from *both sides*… from a non-Indigenous side and an Indigenous side… now that's the kind of person we want in the Community… because they can help us in many ways… when you approach a

person like that, they will give a helping hand, yeah…and to step *into* Culture to meet halfway…hmm…

…it's always good to work together… it's no use being a separate group, and thinking you can always be like *that*, when you can be *one*… and being One, there is always… there is a lot of things you can do as One… where there is Two, there will always be problems… one is *always* more powerful than the other… (*soft thoughtful voice*)… that's why they need to get in and work *together*… and work together to get *everything*, for *both* non-Indigenous and Indigenous people, done… *as One*…

…I see the non-Indigenous being more powerful… and they have been for a very long time, and um… *now*… we need to come together as One… and work together as One People …that would be Reconciliation…

…hopefully… not now… but further down the tracks… a lot of things need to change… um… there is a *lot* more things that need to change… but I think the *main* thing is… um… before all other things can be changed, is for this to… for both People, non-Indigenous and Indigenous, to come *together*… and to *see* it together… and *negotiate* on things… um… in order to speak as *One voice*… and then, you can just move from there…

...because you can't just be *doing things*, and let your *hands* do the work, and *your heart's not in it*… everything has to be in it… your heart has to be One… then everything goes *smoothly*, otherwise if we don't come to that time when

People sit together and try and negotiate together, we'll always be the same as two different groups of People…

…and honesty and love needs to be between the People as well… a bit of love and honesty… will always be love…

…yes, it always has to come from the right pathway, the heart first… otherwise if your heart's not there… if you *think* you're doing the right thing, and your heart's *not there*, it's a waste of time… you know… because what you're doing won't go anywhere…

…yes – *everything works together*… not straight away with your hands - bring your heart and your spirit and your head, and *come and know us*, *think* about that, and then come back and work with the whole lot… yes…see, *everything* has to come from the heart…

R: …hmm… I wonder if non-Indigenous people find that a *hard* thing to do… to look at the heart and the spirit levels first…

J: …they are just *head and do it*…hmm… (*thinking silence*)…

…hmm… I would just like to say that it was nice talking to you… and um… what you are doing *working* with Indigenous People, because you *care* about Indigenous people, and want to *help* Indigenous People, and um… you've come to *know*… how Indigenous People *actually feel*, and um… how they *work* in the Community… whereas you were before in the Department *looking from the inside out*, and not actually *being* in the Community… and for quite a long time,

actually getting *acquainted* with the Culture, the way they *live*, the way they *do things* – now you're *in there*, I suppose you're *looking back*, to where *you* were, in the Department and seeing you sitting in there, and um… discussing things that *now* you can see it hadn't actually *met up with* Community… and now that's why you've sort of, *gone out* to the Community now… to *take back*, to *help* the Indigenous people *take back*… what the Community *really feels*… to those in the Department to say: "…this is how they *really* feel…whereas I didn't actually really feel what *they* felt…"…and saying something for us…

…and how you're going to do it…hmm… and then when you are actually *in* that Other Place *now*, and looking back… the you can see the picture being *real clear* …hmm… because they've given their trust to you… to them, you're one of them, and they trust you… and they've given you the responsibility to be able to *do things* on their behalf… you see, they have to see if they trust that person… and they talk with the Elders… and when they do trust that person, they give them a Name… and they give them responsibility of saying things, or doing things on their behalf…

- Concluding the session:

R: …do you think we've fixed a problem today…? (*chuckling*)…

J: …or three!...

R: …Josie, as always… your leadership and guidance on these things is so important, and I thank you so much for helping, and talking with me about these things…

J: …thank you very much Rosalie – I've been *very happy* to see you… and to tell you the truth, it was just last week I was *thinking* about you… and I didn't think that I would *actually see* you… 'cause I just, out of the blue, was thinking about you... and I thought: *"…when I go to Cairns, I probably should go to the Office and say hello to Rosalie…"*…and here you are and not in Cairns…. (*laughing*)…

R: …and when I was coming here, I didn't know if you'd be here or not… so I came here thinking: "…I might get all the way there, and there's nobody to talk to me…"… or: "...nobody *wants* to talk to me..." …(*much shared laughter*)… and you know, what this has also demonstrated is… like, if you didn't *know* me, I *couldn't* just come to you and ask you these questions…

J: …nah...

R: …you have to have a sense of *who I am*… whether you can *trust* me… whether I'm likely to say the *same thing* when I walk out the door or not… you've got to have a bit of knowing what my heart and spirit is about… before you can trust my head and my hands, I think…

J: …yes, yes…

R: …I'd told the University that the interviews that I'd be doing would be based on existing relationship, because it wouldn't be right to do it any other way… if you didn't know me…

J: …yes, yes… no – if I didn't know you, I would have said: "What does *she* want to talk to *me* about…"… but *knowing you* for *quite a long time*, I've actually… we've got that sort of *bond* there… I see you and we *always* give each other a hug… of course… it's brilliant… because I *want* to trust you… and no matter where you work, you *come up here* – you're *always* my friend…

R: …thank you Josie, thank you… because it was *that* day, sitting *there* in Rydges… and I remember it as 'an invitation to bravery' – because I had to really quickly work out in my head, whether I was going to be brave or not…

J: …(*chuckling*)…

R: …do you remember that… that's what you did that day… you invited me to be brave, and without that invitation… um…um… I might not be on the path that I'm on…

J: …I remember that day… and that's how non-Indigenous come into the Community… half of them not saying something, because maybe they say something wrong… and maybe that day you thought: *"…I might say something wrong to Josie, and she might rise up or something…"*… I'm a good person, I don't go off my head… (*chuckling*)…

R: …we *all* had to do difficult work… and there was *no way* we were going to be able to do that difficult work, if we were not *honest* and *straight* with each other… and to do that we had to trust and respect each other…

J: …hmm… it was serious… and that's what makes up a good relationship… both sides are a party and once you've got that *trust*, and you can *rely* on that person… you know, it just got solved straight away… you can do something, *anything* together… (*quiet, shared thinking time*)…yes… and when you walk around, you're not somebody new now… *you're sort of like family*… and we *expect* People coming into our Community to be *friendly* and *want to have a good relationship*… coming with good spirit and good heart, and everything will go smoothly…

R: Hmm… is that all good?

J: Yes…(*soft voice*).

Researcher reflections:

After talking with Josie today, I was left with a very strong feeling that she has experienced much 'instrumentalism' in the work by some non- Indigenous workers. That is, they only work with their head and hands. Josie's story described their lack of skills in working with heart and spirit, such as taking the time to introduce themselves properly to community stakeholders and country. In doing this, the non-Indigenous workers show disrespect towards a culture based on relationship and relatedness.

Josie also expressed sadness that these workers demonstrate a lack of interest in negotiating a common collaborative pathway towards solutions.

Josie, this could also be summarised as the workers demonstrating a big lack of cultural competency and not working in a culturally secure way. Some people would also say that the practices of these workers used power and did not meet with you respectfully as an equal. They came as the 'experts' when they told you that you could not speak language in the day care centre. In fact, their instruction to you is in violation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, articles 11 to 13, on Language, Cultural and Spiritual Identity. This formally, and Internationally, acknowledges your right to protect and practice your culture, your languages, histories and ways of thinking about the world.

Instrumentalism protects the workers – it does not focus on the child within its family and culture, and does not build commitment to commonly agreed goals.

Your commitment to working with heart and spirit reflects your strong values and beliefs about the future of your children. This has also been very clearly demonstrated over the many years that you have devoted to establishing a child care centre in your community, including the training and licensing work that you have committed yourself to. You have worked with your whole self – head, heart, hands and spirit for the future of the children.

5.12: Harriet

(*Identified as:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman community worker)

- Beginnings:

H: I am an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman… my country is travelling through from Wenlock River coming up… and my mother, she is a Torres Strait woman, and her islands are in the Badu Islands, up the top in the northwest Torres Strait islands.

…good practice in our work, our society, our community… good practice is all about getting to know… getting to know all the different ways of community… of cultural knowledge… cultural knowledge on the way we practice… how we practice within our community… looking through that background of being Indigenous…

…that's our duty… to inform them, we let them know what's happening… and when they do come in and there's things they are doing that we don't agree with, we actually tell them. If it's to do with their conduct, or the way they are dressed, we *tell* them, and say: "...go back home and change, and when you decide to do something appropriate please come back..."... because there is no way that the sector or the community would … yes, so it's like that…

…like I say, we approach when they step into the community… their approach has to be different, it's not like when they step into mainstream… when they step into community, we have culture that needs to be acknowledging… who the

people are, and what we do together, because at the end of the day… um…
we're after agreement…

…I believe that the community would like to know who they are speaking to
also… they have a right to know who they are speaking to – it has the effect of
people invading their space… invading their space – like I said… you… you…
people *have* to know each other – it's about courtesy, it's about respect, it's all
about a visitor… and like, these are the values… respect, courtesy… showing a
good way… we call it 'good fasion'... you have to show that good fasion, that
good way about quiet acknowledging the people, by acknowledging the
traditional owners, acknowledging this is *their* country… you are stepping into
their country… but not to 'invade'… it's all about coming together, working
together… visiting… that you're only *visiting*… and the community, they have
their laws, they have their culture and their practices also… (*strong voice*) they
are the *guardians* – they're the *caretakers* – the need that respect, that respect
has to be shown… they are the people of the land… they are the caretakers…
and this is so important, because respect is a two-way – you want them to
respect you, you have to respect them… it just like honour… you honour them,
they'll honour you… and that's the way it goes… there's no other way of talking…
like to describe that … it's just all about *showing yourself* and…um…
respecting… yeah… (*voice trailing off after talking strongly*)… like I say,
acknowledgement is so important… it's the way of our people…

acknowledgment… yeah, um… you acknowledge them, they acknowledge you… so that that respect is given... yeah…

…for the mainstream to get to know the culture of… and understand the lifestyle, and how we live and how we can exchange… how we can exchange, and… it's all about working together… at the end of the day, we have to be working together to make sure that we are doing, that we are delivering… that we are doing things that we know will bring a balance into society… see it's all about transparency…

…when we know that there is no working together in partnership… we know that there is no acknowledgement there… we put in a complaint straight away… we go straight to their supervisors or to their managers and put a complaint in… we really inform them of our work practices within the community, and if they won't acknowledge us, we put a complaint in… oh yeah… we know the dynamics of the community… we acknowledge the cultural practices… and like, our directors, they were all community women… and um… yeah… we are a very strong advocator of our people… yeah… a very strong advocator… and we work very closely with community, you know, and we get… like I say, at the end of the day, it's all about us working together…

...well, like I say, it's all about our visions and goals… and our aims… its not about them bringing in a new thing… and they have to have passion, its all about passion and working with community… making sure we achieve our goals – it's all about our children, and if we know that we've, um, not going in the right

direction, we will pull them in and say: "It's all about working together" – and when they step into the community, they themselves need to know what are the protocols of the community - and we have a handbook that when they step into the community, they can learn about the community, and how the community sits – they cannot fly in and step into the community – they cannot do that, because if they do that it will just be a… they will get not a… it's all about acceptance. They will be asked: "...who is you family?" and they will be told: "...I think you'd better go back there, because what you're looking for, you'd better go back there". Do you know what I mean? I think at the end of the day, it's all about acknowledgement. It's all about acknowledgement… it's all about your approach… and what is your knowledge of the community that you are stepping into. You have to *know* people and you have to *know* the community, you have to make it your business to get that knowing so that you have an understanding…

…and I don't just speak of myself – I speak also of my sisters like Patti and Clara, and Josie… I speak on behalf of the women of this community and we've been through this problem from the day we started… and that was enough to *do* something… and we got to stand up, but it's a woman like Amanda (non-Indigenous) who helped us, because she knows two cultures – she came into that space - she brought her knowledge and knowledge is so important...

…our organization is very structured, we have an orientation… we have policies and procedures that blends in with our culture and our protocols and when some people comes from a non-Indigenous organization, we notice some things. It's

about their approach… the approach of the way they step into the community… the approach of the way they do their non-Indigenous work… within our organization we have a structure of when visitors do come in, they have to come in and sit within the organization, and say that they are coming in and what they are coming in (for), and how long they are coming in for… it could be Justice, or Parole… and they need to inform us before they come in… some of them do that… but some of them, such as Child Safety, it's very hard, they don't… they won't... sometimes we will hear that they are here, but they don't come in… they are here for a couple of days and then they leave again…

…they have to be in-tune to understand that … ah… it's such a two different worlds… there's so much to be taught and so much to be learnt… um… yes… there's still so much things to be taught and so much to be learnt… so much to be teaching… and so much to be learning… (*reflective voice*)… we're not there yet… no… we're not there yet…

…and the shared space, that's the right way… that's what makes this the right way… there's a boundary there, but its all about cultures working together… and it's scary when we have to step out of our home culture and into the shared space… ah, yes… because it's all about changing… it's all about changes… change to us is like a taboo, because we are so used to this one culture, but you know that if you are to learn, we *have* to step out… it's very challenging…

…good practice in our work, our society, our community… good practice is all about getting to know… getting to know all the different ways of community… of

cultural knowledge… cultural knowledge on the way we practice… how we practice within our community… looking through that background of being Indigenous…

…and it's so much different to the white society… within the community… and to begin to understand it… to understand it, to understand the cultural practice… of how the community's structured… in our community structure… of how the community fits… in the dynamics... and um… and um… ways of exchanging knowledge… getting to know the two cultures… two cultures of community... um… getting to know the outside, or getting to know the mainstream, and for the society of mainstream… for the mainstream to get to know the culture of… and understand the lifestyle, and how we live and how we can exchange… how we can exchange, and… it's all about working together… at the end of the day, we have to be working together to make sure that we are doing, that we are delivering… that we are doing things that we know will bring a balance into society… (*some quiet reflection)...*

…and it's important to come and sit and talk with a vision in your heart… and there is so much about community lifestyle that non-Indigenous people don't know, and they need to come in and take the time, and then take that information *out* to show the bigger world, that there are people in the community who want to see that acknowledgment, and to take that experience *out*… that… that um… that people like *me* have got a vision and ...um… are the caretaker for our people, and we have to ensure that… (*reflective and slow*)…

...knowledge is so important… even today we have to have knowledge of who we are, what we are, what woman we are and what we want to do… and where we are going to go in the future… knowledge is *so* important – if we don't have knowledge, we are like the blind leading the blind – and that's not a good feeling… but because everything changes today… before, in the old days there was one culture, one law – but today there is two laws… and we need to stand strong together… yeah… having the one vision working towards the one goal… and we have a responsibility to look after the other one who is a guest on Country…

…and over the years we've had so many non-Indigenous people come through, and *they've still* got to learn and understand the culture and the protocol… and be acknowledged by us…(*voice trailing off*)…

…at the end of the day, it's about *both* parties… working together, working in partnership… but understanding each others values and purpose… because we're all aiming at the one goal, working towards one goal… and they need to know what their goal is so that they are working towards it… and we've got an organization goal as well as being a cultural person – a culture within a culture – and within our culture, we've got a working culture, and our home culture or a community culture… and it's all about balancing that also… a culture that's coming from the outside world, coming into our culture, and it's all about working together… that's it…

…and like I said, that's *very* important – with our organization, if we have new workers who are non-Indigenous, we will take them to community, introduce them to the Elders, to people who can help them with their work… we will take them and meet up with them and introduce them to it… so like I said, acknowledging people is very important - and to know that you are accepted into the community, or accepted into that place, is very important...

- Concluding the session:

...it's tiring, sometimes it's challenging and confusing… yes… 'cause you have to get some balance… when we know that something is not right, we go back and sit, that's when we go to our healing country… you know… that's who we are, that's where our energy comes from… (*laughing a lot*)... this sort of work is about seeing it happen. It's about working as a collective… and taking this message out.

R: …thank you Harriet… thank you for having me on your country – I feel very privileged and honoured.

5.13: Patti and Steven

(Patti: *identified as:* Torres Strait Islander woman)

(Steven: *identified as:* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander man)

- Beginnings:

P: …*you* can ask us *questions*... (giving permission to engage directly with the process – relatedness already establish – the 'coming alongside' as described by Martin, 2008, is present / has been established /negotiated already)

P: …one of the things that also… for outsiders when they are coming in… it's not about… just take for example… I'm maybe well-known status in the community, and people will come in and say: "How about I talk to Patti because she's got a good position" – even though I'm the Area Coordinator, I still don't call the shots for community business… there's always someone identified within the community… recognized by all people in the community… who would say: "yes"... um... that person is always the one who has got to say…even though *I'm* the one who has got the ideas, that person will be saying: "Yes, that is the way to go". For example, I'll just give an example… in the Women's group… we were nominated through the white-man's structure, a President… but the president is not educated maybe… or not um… but the president is a well-known status in the community, so when we make a decision, we basically make a decision as a group, but it's the president who actually makes the last say… because they make the decision from a *cultural* context - so what we need the non-Indigenous

to know, is that most of our decisions are made on the *cultural* knowledge… of the way we *deal* with people… and we always look at the consequences… when you are making a decision… it's the cultural context that overrides our decision… so when we make the decision, it's *in line* with them… within the cultural contents… if I say… if I'm making a decision, I'm thinking at the same time: "...how's it impacting on the community"… or: "...how is it going to impact on that particular family"… it's not necessary the rules or the regulations, it's just how… how the culture fits back in within the community… that's why the decisions are made in that way… so it mightn't make *sense* for the non-Indigenous worker, but what we're saying is: "...think about what *might* make sense" - don't jump into conclusions… and say: "...that doesn't make sense"… the important thing is to step back and say: "OK, why are they saying what they are saying"…OK… it can be just confusing, but it's important for the non-Indigenous worker to *work with* Indigenous people and try and get a *clear* understanding why the decision is made the way it is… so you see… if they are *truly* thinking of working in *that* community, they must make it their business to know *why decisions are made the way they are*…

…and having to have an application or submission is frightening… people who haven't been educated…are *more* frightened…it might be a simple English, but it's the *fear* of writing it…to do the *right* information…fear gets in their way… for anything …it closes up their minds…so that is not the way to be getting Indigenous people participating to try and make it work…the thing is…the bottom

line is…we try and address the issues of Indigenous peoples. Having to have the same standards as across mainstream is not… is not… I suppose… is not the *ideal* way… because *fear* will intimidate people… just to even put a pen to a page… so what happens is they don't even bother… and people think that Indigenous people are not interested… they're lazy… they don't even have the sense… it's not that… it's the *fear* of putting the pen to the paper… it's the *process*. If we are trying to address the issues of Indigenous population, we've got to do it in a way where somebody is going to translate it – like a tape-recorder… talking to them… they don't even have to put a pen to a paper… and if we say: "...how do you think that program will work in the community", they will *say* it to you: "...it's going to work like this". If you say: "...write down how the program's going to work in the community, who the target group are", they just aren't going to be bothered, because: "...what is a target group?". Not many people know what is a target group… frightened of saying it the wrong way. If you say: "...which people will use it?"…we *think* differently, we *do* it differently…

…for Indigenous people… like… what are some of the things that make the *'right ways'*, and… having to come in and say: "This is what I am here for..." and: "...this is what I'm expecting to get an outcome on" is not the way to go. The way to go is… um... to go about in more of a *yarning* way… so when you come in, the important thing is that… for us, is that you acknowledge the *person*… even take the time to have a small yarn on… like: "How's things going..." or if you know a family member, it's good to ask for the family member, then… *then* you

sit down and… the time is not an issue here… I know people look at the time… when we see people for looking at the time, it straight away indicated that you are not interested. So it's important that you get to know that when you… when you are going to try and get *outcomes* from there, that population, don't look at the time, because time is not that essence. Try and establish that relationship, first and foremost… and it will generally come out… what you want – you don't even have to prompt it, it will come out by itself… but it's more of a *yarning* way, it's a *yarn thing*… yarn like the *family way*… in that way, then they start to look at "OK, this person wants to yarn" ...so we yarn back, and whatever you want them to say, you do it… it will be in a *yarn style*…um…

R: ...it's like if someone is coming in with a power-point, it's like they've already made up their mind?….

S: …(*animated voice*) that's right, that's right, it's *structured*… you know… like you don't know anything… talk *with* me… but don't talk *at* me… give me *opportunities to ask questions*… you know…a nd if you *want* to use fancy technologies, because let's face it we live in a space of, what do you call it?, technology… where everybody comes in with a power-point – if you want to do that, how about using a bit of humour, and utilizing the resources available, so that they are listening to what you say, and all of a sudden something funny comes up, and people can relate to…you know, it's very hard to win people over… and have people at your level, to have people understand and appreciate where you are coming from… and going back to what you're saying… decisions

have already been made… and we experienced that all the time… especially when it comes to research… you know…

...when I left school and down to Sydney from the middle of a sugar-cane farm, to Sydney on my own… and because I lived in so-called 'white society' way of life, and my mother and father being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, before I left, she called me aside and she said to me: "…in order for you to survive, because where you're going, to Sydney, we can't be there for you… so we've taught you the fundamental foundations on survival in life"... and she said to me:

> ...when you go, all I want you to remember is this… is what we have been teaching you… take what is good of Western society, or white society, and take what is good of your cultural background of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. You need to formulate it in your head, to make it suit you so that when you leave, not only have you got two, but you develop and connect it strong, because once you overstep the mark and you've gone out of our sight, it's the difference between survival and success, or failure.

...and a lot of us have to do that - get out of your comfort zones, and make a combination… or formulate something…so that you… so that when you go… everything is right (*voice softening*)… and I've had to live with those principles all my life… (*quiet reflection moment for all - respect for Relatedness to Knowing, Being and Doing)*

P: …see that's the thing… the practice relates back to policy… our policies… our mainstream policies - but it there needs to be clearly identified… but it's not… you can pick it up… but the policies does not take into account *how we do our business*… but the *practice* is the one that must be picked up… and make a difference… it needs to be written, because we really are not meeting that. If we blindly come into the system and think about the *outcomes* that we're going to achieve, we are going to *waste* our energy… most of our energy… in fighting… it's very unnecessary… if we start to move from the very instant into some of the things that we can expect, as we enter into this process (of negotiating the in-between space)… then it will make it a lot easier for non-Indigenous and Indigenous… so that we have enough relationship and respect to sort it out between us… and I feel confident in you because I *know* you, and not everybody would say that… but it's very important to make that person as comfortable as possible… while you're watching them eye to eye, and the body language, and we know those ropes… that it's important to be relaxed… and important to not ask too many questions… like social therapy where you just sit and listen… it's the same for Indigenous people, you just sit and listen… the English can be *very* intimidating… so like, I suppose what makes it the right way for the community… it depends on the community… again… and importantly… I think that it's important if you can just get to *know* someone… and walk *through* that someone, it is more important than trying to *invade* yourself into the community… you *must* get to know *someone* in the community… and then you can walk *with* that person in the community…

...time is *big*… people see people sitting around talking… people say: "...they are just *lazy,* sitting around yarning"… but it's not about that… the yarning has some significance behind it… looking how we can make things better, in the yarning stuff… that's the only time they get to meet, when they are sitting around yarning… the rest of the time, they are doing their own business… and if they can sit down and have a yarn… Indigenous people sit down and bring their *issues* into the yarning circle… it's *yarning* that's the best way to sort things out… *yarning*…

S: …huh… you know what I find so concerning… and it's happened to me in the last six months… when you say 'simple English'… it's like *someone* in the non-Indigenous speaking world has gotten the advice of somebody who *is* Indigenous, but not from this area, or the area that they want to communicate, or consult or whatever… see one of the mistakes that Government department people make, is… say for example… just use this for example… they say: "...hi, you Torres Strait"… they say: "...you TI - you from Thursday Island" – and I say: "...nah …I'm not from TI" – my bloodline is within Torres Strait, but I'm not from TI. They've got this mind-set, they make this assumption… you're under this one umbrella – you're an Islander therefore you're a TI person. Little do they know there are five sections and two language-speaking… you know… there is more detail than that… do you know what I mean? It's that *assumption*… so if they are wanting to talk or write 'simple English' they've probably got wrong advice from

the wrong person who has no idea – and they think: "...oh, he knows, he is the expert" – *no…*he's *not* the expert...!

…and like for me, for an outsider coming into a remote area, say… I think one needs to be doing a bit of research themselves and say: "...who are these people, what is their background, what is their make-up, um… what are the politics of the area, what are the cultural things in the area" – rather than come in 'blind'. I think that you need to be part-prepared when you are coming in… as opposed to coming in 'blank'… when you do eventually come in, you need to know 'who are the key people I need to talk to'… like you said earlier, it could be community Elders, it could be the Council leaders, or community leaders, of a particular community – and once this is achieved, then you would get some insight and direction, and: "OK, I've sort of set the foundation"... although it's not set… but an *idea*… and you know…"...where to from here"… and it's a *slow process*… and as Patti said, it's a *yarning thing*. The other thing is *don't expect* high expectations or start to be judgmental, or place demands on *how* things are going to happen… in other words, don't come in here with something structured… you know? I's got to come from the *heart*… and its got to be free-moving… got to be a free-spirit type of environment… the mind needs to be *clear*… and also, when you are *wanting* to discuss whatever the issue is, it *has* to be… be in an environment where… well *you've* got to make yourself comfortable in *their* environment, you know?... and not looking around for a nice chair, or nice clean room, or nice whatever… because that may not be the reality, may not be

the case, you know?... and in relation to technologies and things like that? …(*voice becoming firm*)… one of the frustrations that I've got, is that they come in with this *structured* plans and… and sitting down, and here you are, you're either *watching* the person… nodding 'yes' but you really don't know what they are on about… or why they are here, or what they are talking about… or (*laughing)*…what this power-point today up on the board and you're sitting down, and they've got *no idea* what the hell you're talking about…which leads to unclear communications, and you need to understand and try and come to their level when you are communicating… because you can be talking over the top… *does that make sense to you?*...(*enquiring tone of voice*)…

P: ...it's always been in the back of my mind that it's really… that it's really crucial… that we must have a… there's got to be a link between an Indigenous and a non-Indigenous way of thinking… and doing things…

 …if they don't understand, don't… don't feel intimidated… don't feel angry… try to… um… in a pleasant way, one on one would be preferable because they don't like … open discussion makes them shamed…

S: …or intimidated…

P: …hmm..hmm… so the most important thing to do is … if you are non-Indigenous, and you are feeling that the information is not going across, because you can't understand where they are coming from… just one-on-one say: "Can you please try and explain… and help me to understand… like… why you are

making the decision the way you are…"…because they *will tell you* if you ask

them… but not in front of people… they tend to close themselves too… when you

really get to know Indigenous people, they are humble, and really quiet people…

people like myself who are still working in government departments, we still

speak the same language because we are confident speaking the same

language… but it's the language barrier more than anything… because um… we

can't… language… because if you speak the same language, they will speak to

you quite confidently, but the English interpretation… that's what's the barrier…

became a big barrier for us… so if you… if you… that's why one-on-one, we can

say it slow, maybe broken English… and they too shame to speak in open

forum… and if they thinking that they might get laughed at… so that's also a

barrier also – English… 'cause a lot of people still speaking Language… and

regardless what people say, we're in 2010, and a lot of people still speaking

Language… still taught Language-speaking… and *think* in Language… yeah…

and if we're going to help… if we're investing our time to help Indigenous people,

the business *must* be done differently*…*

S: ...*Protocols*… it's an *instinct* thing… straight away you go on to another man's

territory there are rules and regulations… that's white man's words, but basically

the same… a lot of the things we need to observe… a lot of the things we have

to do, bearing in mind that you don't belong there… if it was the old days there

would be war and you'd be dead or something like that… so, yes, it took us a

long time and even though for two years, that we were going backward and

forward, it still felt strange, and we still had to *learn*, what… you have to find a way about *what to get across*, and *what to communicate* with that person… same thing applies for the non-Indigenous person, although it might be *harder* for them… you know… because they probably don't know about the protocol, black fella cultural protocol is, but I mean… and you've gotta find a way, but don't assume… (*firm voice*).

Researcher reflections:

Right at beginning Patti and Steven gave me permission to 'ask questions'. I was surprised by this, because I knew that 'asking too many questions' was not right-way culturally. On reflection, I believe that this was a direct invitation to commence the 'interview relationship' – and to come-alongside them in relatedness to the research question, its purpose and process, and to each other. They both were seemed to be very relaxed throughout the exchange. They told stories within, and alongside, their narrative participation. We yarned – we also shared stories - purposefully and with relationship and shared intent – demonstrated by their references to both-ways practices.

They were adamant that 'yarning' is the preferred discussion style. Yarning requires relatedness – it is not merely a casual conversation. With Patti and Steven, it was a sharing, a debating, and a respectful conversation where people look at each other, and appreciate each others 'otherness'. Yarning provides the medium for a collective of voices where the Self is but one of the participants.

As contributors, they stressed importance of working in the 'in-between space' – where non-Indigenous and Indigenous Knowledges overlap – with each retaining their own identity, but collaborating in relatedness to finding solutions.

For them, practitioners should take the time to work out their own comfort zones and to reflect on mind-sets and processes as the factors influencing and impacting on their relatedness with Indigenous peoples.

I thank them deeply for their trust, their knowledges, wisdoms and observations. Their willingness and commitment to a better way of working together was very clear – as was their generosity towards an outsider, any outsider, who is trying to join up in respectful partnership towards difference.

5.14: Jill

(*Identified as:* non-Indigenous woman)

- Beginnings:

The following is a broad, reflective discussion with a non-Indigenous practitioner about decolonizing practice.

J: …individualizing limits us… for me, it's the experience of oppression… and dispossession in your own country, because you've got constant reminders of that… the landmarks and wounds are always there… so that's the paradox that I operate within… how do you strengthen resilience and… um… build people's capacity… and encourage support… optimism… (*long silence*)… hope… so they are some questions that I struggle with… I struggle with those… so that's me being really honest with you…

…well I think it's about reflection: "Is this the best it *can* be?… how did it go? …how can things be improved?"…um… and that *intention* of *wanting it to be as good as it can be*… and forgiveness… so you know… like real true spiritual resilience, capacity, compassion and forgiveness… hmm… you know, I don't think that the bureaucracy is clever enough to have a conspiracy… I think they just blunder along… driven by a whole series of bureaucratic and political imperatives… so you know… we know the *endless* things of *good practice…* the *principles* of good practice and the values… and you know… the bureaucracy's got lists and lists of them… um… but it's about *do people walk their talk?*… is it

enacted?... and a lot of the time *it's not*… and then they have those instances when people who work in the bureaucracy and not operating with *integrity*, that's when they become disconnected from *themselves*, and then they get disconnected from people that we are *supposed* to be providing *service* to… (*reflective silence*)… then they get 'burn-out' or 'rust-out'… or they get 'power and control'…

...for me, it's relational… I would need to develop *relationship* first, before I work with them – I can't work with the head and the hands, that's why I actually start working with the heart and the spirit first…

 ...non-Indigenous workers get stuck in head and hands – thinking and doing – without connecting to values and spirit… yeah, this is an *action-learning cycle*… and for me when all those things are operating together, we're doing *soul work*… you've got the professional and the personal… and often for a worker this will create conflict for them… I believe that the stronger relationship is, the less important process is… we are more forgiving of bad process when we have *strong relationship*… that's not to say that we shouldn't have strong, good processes…

…and when you look at it… these overlapping circles… if there's *good processes* and *good relationship*… and bringing lot's of both… there's a really large area of fertile ground to work with, within… but if processes are not very good and relationship is not very good… you've got a *very* small area of mutuality… but if

you have good relationship you are in a better position to develop better process if it needs re-negotiation… if I had to choose, I would choose relationship…

…and it's about the journey of relatedness… the coming together with the same intention…or negotiated intention… and it's that divergence and convergence in that space… based on a knowing and a desire to articulate and replicate, reproduce, the things that work… to bring them into greater reality… hmm… the best of me, and what of that do I bring into a shared relationship… and bringing the best parts of us… what does that look like?... so you're sharing from a deep space of *knowing of yourself*… and into a shared space of knowing of each other… a position of unified strength…

…when we did our transformational collaboration research, there was something we called zones of interaction… and that… (*pointing to the in-between space*)… we called edge-space… is actually the most *fertile* space of all… that is where there are so many possibilities… rich…the soil's incredibly rich… and it can support a whole range of different life-forms… so if you're looking at it from purely a physical, biological perspective… and when you look at it metaphorically, it's where systems *meet*… and overlap and start to merge… that… that's where the *synergy* can happen… and that's where *change and transition* is possible…

R: …the other part of this, is that nothing will take away anything of the reality of the fresh-water, and nothing will take away the reality of the salt-water… each

has it's own place and space… metaphorically the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous…

J: …exactly… and each maintains it's own integrity… there's a couple of ways of looking at it… one is that some things are easily contaminated so it only needs one small part to affect and alter it… and some things are incredibly *resilient* and can withstand a lot of the contamination and stand up to it… and get the benefits of both and take on new things as well… as different to swamping or diluting … by intensifying and enriching… so I think that that's where it can go… it can go to complete overwhelming and swamping… or it can actually go into an incredible richness that can form *all sorts of new life-forms*… and through no ill-intent, one could overwhelm simply by being what it is 'without consideration of it's impacts'… so this (in-between) space is the magic space… the inter-dependent space… the space where new possibilities can be developed…for me it's about: "What are we going to *co-create*?… what do we each *bring* that can be of *value* to the *other*…"…plus things that we might bring in that we don't know *what* they might do… it's not always about working with *what you know*… it's also about, embracing the paradox… the unknown potential…

R: ...what things need to be *present*…?

J: …well… I think there needs to be an understanding of that… of understanding and entering into a new space together… and conscious appreciation… for the *other*… so that… knowing that you bring opportunities with you and so does the other person… it's an *exchange*… it's a co-creation…

R: …what has to happen to ensure the environment for this…?

J: …trust and respect and openness… and you know, all of those very basic things…

R: …and these things don't come out of a brief-case, or a book…

J: …and that's part of the problem… people think that they can just *step into that space*… and I've learnt that it is *such a precious space*… and it can be *so easily contaminated*… and sometimes it's got a 'half-life' of twenty years (*wry chuckle*)… and it affects anyone else who wants to come into it… it becomes a *poison space*… like people *carry the memory* of that *wounding*… to someone who comes in fresh, and wants to walk into that space, and others won't go or won't let them because… last time they went there, or every time they've been there over the last 200 years… (*reflective silence*)… so for some people they have *much more at stake* when they move into that space than other people… and often people who are coming from here (their hearts and their spirits) have much more at stake… and are potentially more vulnerable…

…and so your gift is your insight, your consideration, the quality of your questioning… um… your ability to be really *clear* once you've done the questioning… so … ah… I think it's personal and professional… so you're being professionally led, and personally led to this place of practice… head and heart and everything, had led you to here you are… but what you want to *do* is to use

the practical lived experience to actually *change* not only people you've been working with directly, but… the *system…*

… rigid processes… um… limitations… um… people not being authentic… um… people not connecting with who they *really* are… and not being able to connect with who *someone else* really is… that's about being *present…* so… when I'm meeting with someone, or working with someone… I'm actually *available…* I'm available for them… I'm focused on managing whatever stuff comes up for me… but I really looking at the highest good that can come out... and it's about that honesty and integrity…

…well I think probably right off, they should be going as a 'human being'… and then there is a cultural context… there's a context for the Aboriginal person in their community, their cultural belonging and their language, and all of their lived experiences… and for the outsider, there is all the *values* that *they* bring… um… their cultural context… some of which is positive baggage, and some of it is negative baggage… and it won't be the same for everyone… but for me, it's about connecting at the level of common humanity first… and having an understanding of context and lived experiences… that disenfranchising and disempowering by not learning from things that didn't work, but… you know… keep on doing the same thing over and over again… and People just are exhausted and they've given up hope…

…there are so many complex factors… that I go back to our *essential humanness…* if we go with positive intent, and authenticity and respect and

reverence and all those kinds of things, then whatever happens… there's never going to be that … um… that *wounding*…

- Concluding the session: a conversation about some of the research challenges:

J: …using a process that has integrity, that actually a reflection of the work that you are *doing* – that's one of the principles of relationship and… narrative, and yarning, and journeying… and sharing souls and those kinds of things… those are the principles that will possibly *emerge* about practice, and it's also the way you're running the research process…

R: *(sharing some information with Jill about some of my learnings from the challenges...)...*I was asking this contributor about his practice, about how he seeks direction about good working in this in-between space – his comment was: "...if I can have pride in the process, then I know I've done a good job"… and that was like a *thunderbolt* to me, because *that* was the path… to *not negotiate* something that seems unsound.

Researcher reflections:

Good processes help to establish relatedness and relationship, and these then sustain ongoing processes, negotiations and discussions. Work can be done and mutually satisfying solutions created within relatedness.

Good processes are developed, established and strengthened built by integrity, respect, authenticity and genuineness.

5.15: Steven L.

(*Identified as:* an Indigenous person - Professor Steve Larkin, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership, Charles Darwin University, Darwin)

- Beginnings: (*telelink discussion)*

R: Thanks Steve – first of all, because we don't know each other very much, I'm wondering if there is anything you'd like to ask before we start…

S: …no, all good…ready to go…

…well, I want to talk to a number of things… one … I think… um… a critical awareness… an introspective awareness… of *standpoint*… I would have thought that any good cultural competency training… um… would have helped… um… a participant to develop a good sense of *standpoint* … so that they're coming in… they can say: "I'm coming at it as a non-Aboriginal person…"... um… you know: "...I have a… fairly middle-class upbringing… um… I understand things like… um… equality and equity in a certain way… um… and that may be different from a group different from me"… being aware of your own, sort of, cultural socialization… and what that means for how you see the world and understand it…

…and them being prepared to know that there's a sort of *borderland*… and um… and when engaging with others… um… that it might be different from yours… that would be *one thing* I would have thought… um… I would have thought that a *second thing* would be having a *parity of esteem*… so it's not necessarily… um…

so that it is not necessarily to be conducted or constructed as a *power relation*... hmm…

…what the white fellas are doing is that they working with their own anyway… um… you know… most Government departments have a *specific* Indigenous *program* responsibility, and most of those employees are white… particularly in the *leadership* positions… so they are actually amongst their own anyway, except they don't see it that way because they're 'not *raced'*… ah… but when you talk to them about Indigenous employment for example: "Oh, we need more *numbers* in here because *they* are *more comfortable* when there's *more of them* here with each other"… but the same thing is operational really with *them*… and ah… and so… anyway, I guess… um… there is a right way to work, but it comes more from that *critical awareness* of the *standpoint*… and other things *flow*, you know… you're prepared to do… and acknowledge… um… not so much *acknowledge*… you're prepared to *do* that work around, you know… *reexamining* your own *assumptions*… you know: "I assume it to be like this… but in fact, that's not what I'm getting… that's not what I'm hearing… that's not what I'm saying" … um… and that that person would then relate it to a new way of thinking and doing. The person who hasn't done that work will try and re-frame things… back into their own… you know… epistemological framework…

…you know, I think part of it is that people are *socialized*… you know… there is a large… probably 90% of non-Indigenous Australians have little or no contact with Indigenous Australians… and that's probably the workforce that's coming into…

you know… is coming into the various *levels* of… of Government… and um… so they *haven't* had that *interaction*… and I'm not convinced that Government puts a lot of resources into getting people to be *effective practitioners*… and into any *engagement* activities… people are bringing, you know… a whole lot of *un-interrogated baggage* into their interactions…

…it's *discursive* as well… and a *discursive* framework enables some things to be talked about in particular ways and other things are not talked about at all… um… and… yeah… you become *aware* of that… so… um… and some things are given *weight* over *others*… and some things are *resourced* and others aren't … so… um… some options are *preferred* in relation to others… you know… they are all *value judgments* in the end… about what people *think* is *right*… but I guess where it plays out with *engagement* in relation to agencies such as Government… um… is that… um… people are bringing a whole range of ideas and beliefs into the functions about how they *problematize* … um… and how they *respond* to that… you know... what's the best way to respond to that?… and I think there's a couple of things that *play* in that… one is what your thesis is about… you know… there is *colonial artifacts* in the thinking… and so they *automatically presuppose*… they position themselves into a *helping* position…um… and helping gives a… you know… is a *power* word… you know: "... I *help you* because you *need to be…* where *I* am"… and um… so that's one thing… and I guess their own *whiteness* plays that as well, because… it's that they are not socialized to think of themselves as *raced*… they take a *human*

position… and they distance Indigenous people from that position as well: "You need to work with your own people, because that's your people – you can only work for your people… but I can work with them too, because *I'm human*… I'm not raced… and… I'm just an Australian"…um, so… ah… I think that's… I see that a lot… at the University and from my years in Government… and it's that stuff that… like: "Well, look… it's good to have a career in Indigenous stuff, but if you *really* want to make it, you've got to get into the *mainstream* – that's where the *real action is*…"…and I sort of think the other way around because it's all about… 'working with *racial homogeneity*'…(*laughing*)…

R: …hmm…Steve, you mentioned about cultural awareness training… do you think that cultural awareness training includes those things?

S: …well, they do…a nd it really depends on the provider… there again, *their* standpoint in relation to what *they* think that means… so… you tend to get quite a *variability* in the sorts of packages that are being provided… um… I'm not *convinced* that they get to the *heart of the issue*… in relation to, ah, their standpoints… you know, as a unique person *themselves* … so part of that would be understanding their whiteness and their own cultural themes… you know I think it's pretty simplistic and it's inappropriate to say that it's a *negative* thing – you know… it's more or less just coming to accepting that… um…you have a skin colour and you have a culture… um… and so I would have thought those *two* things would be paramount to my mind… and I would have thought that… following from that, everything seems to flow from that…

…I'm not even convinced that *cultural competence* is the *right* framework either… perhaps it's a continuum… and eventually it winds up being something else… but at the end of the day… um… you know… I find that it's the *experience* of *doing things* together that tends to be more effective overall…

R: …what might be some of the challenges for those non-Indigenous people?

S: …hmm… that self… that *introspection* is the *most challenging* because… because it's *unsettling*… um… you know… it's being confronted with a *whole new way* of *thinking* and *feeling* and *doing*, that people haven't been socialized or *trained* to… to *introspect*. One thing I want to do here, with the cultural competency program that we're developing, is to make it *ongoing*… because you can't… I just think it's *unfair* to… you know, when I did my social work degree, we went though part of this – we went through… you know… we came in thinking that we were going to 'take on the world' which was *legitimate*… and to be confronted with the whole range of the new thinking… and that involved *yourself…* was *unsettling*… and we had some support along the way… and I just think… if you just throw someone into a cultural competency program that might go for a *few days* or… you know… and they get to *that point*… and they need to be supported to keep going through that journey… I mean… you can either say: *"It's too threatening"* and reject it all, or be supported through it, and come out the other end… so to have all your ideas about everything *thrown upside down* can be very *threatening* and *unsettling* for people… you know, we have an ego defence… you know… and people don't *want* to think… that, um… you know…

that they've been… you know… seeing things in a particular way, and what that meant for their *identity*… you know… 'cause it has an identity cancellation aspect to it… I think that would be the *most* challenging thing… um… and then when the light is switched on, other things start to fall into place… you know… for example, you can understand *society* and *society's institutions*, and in one particular way. It's another thing to come to grips with race and gender *power*… you know… if you've been *blind* to it before, you know… and then you start to see things in a *completely* different way, it can be very unsettling… but it's not a *bad* thing, it's just *change*, you know…

R: …that's about *learning*…

S: …and we're *relying* on people to *do that*… because… you know, it's part of the reason why disadvantage *is perpetuated*, I think… not the whole reason, but it's *part* of the reason… part of the reason… you know, we *say* that we allocate the Nation's resources 'according to need' but, you know, then it's not reflected in the *allocations*… you know… that is disadvantage being made…

R: … Steve, you said: "We're relying on people to do that"…

S: … to do that work, that *introspection* work… you know, you can tell the difference… I can certainly tell the difference in under five minutes, if someone is *switched-on* or not… um… it's what they *say*, what they *think*, their *approach* to things… I can pretty much suss it out within five minutes… you know if someone is going to take some time for me to *work* with… or if they're some I can work

immediately with… 'cause they automatically *genuinely* and *sincerely* have an understanding of the area…of the context… (*silence*)

R: Hmm… as you're talking, I'm reflecting on my own struggles… the… um… risks associated with opening your mouth and seeming like a fool… compared with… or seeming like you don't know what you're really talking about, when really you know you don't know what you're talking about – you're struggling with it…um… through to learning … through to the 'light-bulb going on'… and then starting to work out *what are the words* or *what are the discourses*… um… and it *is*… it's a very *tricky thing*…

S: ... it can be… um, it can be… it depends on… you know, there's always more than one way to 'skin a cat'… and um… so… the tendency for some people is to start to become the *staunch advocate*… you know… again it's the *whiteness thing*… because generally the white ones want to… they want to genuinely… um… be a part of *the transformation*… um… but they think they *have to lead it*… (*chuckling*)… um…

R: …like they've 'got to fix these things'…

S: …(*chuckling*)… yeah… you see it in *Hollywood movies*… you know… the head of the heroes is *always white*… even if it's a *race* story… um… Dancers with Wolves – the hero is Kevin Costner… um… the other one about, um… the three African radicals that were assassinated… the hero there was Gene Hackman… any media you look at, um… what was the one that Tom Cruise was

in – you know, he was the agent for the footballer… they're all *white*!... (*laughing again*)… so that's part of what I was explaining before… I'd never *noticed that*… and now you notice it… and… and how men and women are *positioned* in their *roles*… of what *characters* they have… you know… it's all quite *intentional* and *deliberate*… so… so I keep going back to your point… people don't have to be there to *lead!*

…you know, if you're working with an Indigenous organization, or community or group of people… it's… *they've* got ideas *too*… and their take on the world… but nobody bothers to *ask* much… and… and if they *do*, they're always trying to reframe it back into a western, European framework, and… um… but I found it was more effective to explain the situation to people… to *demystify* it: "When they're saying *this*, they mean *this*"… and then people can have an appreciation… part of why people don't seem to be overtly engaged is because they are trying to understand how the white fellas think and do… and people don't like to be *shamed* you know… by not knowing something… so people would rather say *nothing*… so I found a lot of… well I try and engage and try and find out what people know and then try and give them information, and then allow them to think about it…

…so with CDU I'm proposing that the Reconciliation Action Plan that um… means as a specific *plan*… instead of having a discreet teaching *plan*, I'm proposing that we do a series of specific *projects*… that facilitate and enable people to *work together* on something that they can *achieve*…

R: …to do things together …

S: …yeah, yeah… and um… if you do it in a *team way*, you know… you come up against dynamics, and you have to negotiate those things as part of the process… um… you know… sometimes people… um… *learn* better by *doing*…

R: … you were just saying about: "…what's the history about how we're saying this… and what's the stories that's led us to this point…"

S: … they don't problematize themselves – one of them actually talks about… how it might be a white system and how it might be unfriendly and isolating… you know, it was mainly put down to ATSIC being dismantled, and the abolition of base rate positions… none of them had been thinking about *the system* that they are working in, because… you know… they were *privileged* in that – it was *all about them*… so they had to go to a *deficit* rather than asking the harder question about why: "…why is it OK for *me* and not OK for *them*"…

R: … and they couldn't hear their own position…

S: … yeah… I'm interested in making this explicit, so that it might stimulate that sort of process that I was talking about before… you have to imagine the public service and talk about it, in a different way:"… what is it about our pattern of previous contact, and our relations, that has lead to this?" That might explain why you *can't* keep the blackfellas in there! See, they're saying it's a lack of education, a lack of skills… ah… living in Canberra… um… all that sort of stuff… um… but they're still getting the same numbers of people coming in there… but

they're getting a high turnover rate… and you know… it says to me that there's something happening in the workplace… it's part of that colonizing force… it's being on the other end of it that you are always *written out*… you know… and I find that a large part of what I have to do is try and write our mob *in*… (*wry chuckle*)…

...they were going to form a committee on I.T. and the draft membership was there, and there's no-one from my area even on there… and this is part of their habit thinking manifested as well… you know: "… you're not interested in I.T. are you?... you?... your people?" You see how it works? So I've been critical in part about Indigenous knowledge systems… and how people are talking *about us* – because it's always talked about in the context that that's 'resource management': "How does the environment work… you know… how does flora and fauna come together in an Indigenous perspective…"... but I've said… you know… people have a lot of things to say about a *whole range* of things… if only… if only we disseminate information and give people access to it, and they have time to think about it… I'd love a Yolngu Elder to give me his take on Foucault… know what I mean… instead they're only going to ask him: "How are fish going to behave at a certain time of the year"… they're only going to ask him *that*… because: *"He's limited just to knowing that"*… he's not seen, or imagined, to have that political, philosophical framework… um… it's all contextualized into the lands and the sea and the air… and the climate and the animals and the you

know… the vegetation… because that's how they are depicted… you know… the legacy of the anthropological efforts over the years…

...I think it goes back to… um… a capacity … to continually question um… how it is that things are *thought of*… well, put it this way… a white frame of mind… an epistemological and an axiological and ontological dimensions for this… ontology is about how we understand reality… the axiology is about what values that we put on various parts of that reality – what sorts of values are good or bad, right or wrong - and those two things come together, I think, to shape your epistemology… but how do we know what we know?... how do we validate what we know? …. and I would have thought that part of a de-colonizing practice would be having to do some of that work… there are *dominant* epistemologies and there are *subjugated* ones… you know… you probably could argue that Indigenous epistemologies, which we call Indigenous knowledge systems, are… on the margin… their not on the margins other than there are power relations between those epistemologies… the white way of knowing… you know you've got the university one which is predicated on a neo-liberal positivism… you know there is one way of knowing, there is one answer, and you just have to find it… you know, if that's shaping your thinking, your rationality… you know it's the old Mark Twain saying: "...if the only tool I've got is a hammer, then every problem is going to look like a nail"… so it's becoming… part of decolonizing, is shedding this idea, this presupposition that there's a dominant western way of knowing something, and there's particular ways of finding that out… there's particular

ways of making things look like problems… there's particular way of answering it, and there's particular ways of describing what we think is the answer… and quite clearly… um… there are other epistemologies and actions that are culturally-bound, and they might perceive things differently and… you know… it's not a matter of being … or making it a binary thing of it's either this way or that way… it's not an absolute… because you know, it's trying to understand… like the history wars are a good example… like there was only one way of telling the history… when there are *alternative* accounts being put forward, you know, there was… a battle went on… you know, they were just Indigenous and non-Indigenous – you could argue that on gender grounds as well… as told by male historians, about the struggle of women through that… so I think that's a *fundamental starting point* of decolonizing practices… to understand colonialism and colonization and what were the prevalent ideas… and in practices, can you see artefacts of that today… well, *I can*…

…not knowing and not knowing the reasons for 'not knowing'… I got a new book… *Race and the Epistemologies of Ignorance*… people are socialized to learn *some* things… and *not others*… that's why like to say they don't know, they haven't bothered to learn, to know… they haven't *wanted to* know because it's never been seen as *important* to know… if they'd bothered to mobilize up… they've got to do some *work*… (*chuckling*)… it's *ignorance*… you know… it's not something that's existed by *accident*… you know, tools of ignorance… how are they produced… and how are they sustained? I'll just read it out here:

"…it's often thought of as a 'gap in knowledge'… an epistomogomacite that needs to be remedied once it's been noticed, or an accidental by-product… so often it's not an accident…a severe lack of knowledge, or an un-learning of something previously known, often is actively produced… for purpose of domination for exploitation"...

…so, you know… part of that ignorance, part of the effect it has, is to *limit*… for example, the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum… "...well, we didn't do that because we *didn't know*…"…I'm sure *women* had the same fight. I find feminist literature very helpful, because sometimes you can transpose... connect to *gender*… it's the same dominant force… white middleclass, upper-class men… they dominate… and they say they *don't know*, but they haven't made an effort to know… but that's not *an accident*…

…yeah… there's a Canadian book written by First Nations… and it's like a training manual on racial equity: *Walking on Hot Embers*… it's designed as a training resource tool, but it's *really* good because it brings out all of those subtleties… white governments… when they can't get any Indigenous workers, they go to the 'white woman' default position…

- Concluding the session:

…to close off… as an example… what I found in mine… I interviewed twenty-three Senior Executive Services officers in the Commonwealth Government, Bands 1 to 3… half Indigenous and half non-Indigenous… it's just that I'm writing

it up now, one thing that became *really* apparent, is with the non-Indigenous executives could only imagine Indigenous employees being in service delivery, at base grade or as trainees… particularly as young… and so I'm picking that apart… and what I'm saying is that it's the resilience of the deficit school, you know… it's all a part of it.

Researcher reflections:

What I am discovering within this process of research is that I am constantly asking more questions and exploring more thoughts. However, I am quite convinced at this stage, (April 2009) that it is important to understand the ways that we have come to know things – the processes interpersonally, cross-culturally, and intra-personally that have informed our standpoint. For many practitioners this relates to our acculturation within 'whiteness'. As Steve said, this is why the work of critical reflection is paramount.

I am beginning to understand that decolonizing practice is underpinned by respect for Indigenous sovereignty, and responsibility and accountability for one's own engagement or not, with this – the alternative accounts... and critiquing the positioning of Power that subjugates.

Conclusion:

It is important to acknowledge that these contributors have willingly exposed themselves to varying levels of discomfort by revisiting their ongoing struggles and experiences with systemic dominance so that others, including the researcher, can take the steps of learning from the history of colonization. For the Indigenous contributors this has included discrimination, racism and the impacts of privileged whiteness in their own country. In sharing their stories, participants have demonstrated immeasurable respect, courage, agency and commitment.

Their particular dramas and marginalizations, together with the things that keep them strong, have been shared in order to promote further knowledge. Through their narratives of agency, and by analysing and giving voice to negative experiences, they are offering others the opportunity to gain knowledge and learn respectful ways. In this, they are demonstrating great respect towards the Self of those who are willing and able to hear and reflect on these messages (Martin, 2008).

These narratives place the reader in relatedness with each participant as a knowing person, as different to 'a source of data'. Martin (2008, p. 79) described this way of doing as: "...pausing and immersing oneself ... so that other messages come forth to confirm or clarify". For Martin, 'coming amongst' their stories in this way, builds relatedness, and enables one to learn more and more by applying the new information to other contexts (2008).

PART 3: KNOWING for BEING and DOING - a way to connect with the knowledges of the contributors.

Introduction:

Throughout this research, non-Indigenous stakeholders have been invited into relatedness with other knowledges, and other ways of being. Within their narratives, contributors have clearly signalled some of the enablers for making changes. Deep reflection on these matters will guide non-Indigenous practitioners to enhance their own ways of knowing, being and doing.

To date, the inquiry has focussed on ways of knowing, with ways of doing corresponding and responding to those knowledges. This is now the space to draw together and focus on the research stories. Re-conceptualizing in this way will continue to strengthen relatednesses, including between existing knowledges and the knowledges that have been contributed and created. Meaning-making is thus deepened and enhanced when the task of critique is underpinned by ways of doing imbued with respect, responsibility and accountability Martin (2008).

Chapter 6:   The analytic task.

Throughout the research journey, I had worked within the tensions of a 'duality' – my accountability towards an Indigenous worldview and my relatednesses with Indigenous stakeholders, and secondly, towards the requirements of non-

Indigenous research and my relatedness with non-Indigenous stakeholders. The task of analysis invited much reflexive 'sitting with' in order to discern and mediate a respectful, responsible and accountable way of 'doing'. However, Martin's (2008) description of her Quampie methodology for undertaking Indigenist research provided affirmation of the challenges, and grounding as to the way forward. Even though analysis appeared to be a daunting assignment, my responsibilities of accountability to the research stakeholders guided me to ensure fidelity, validity, trustworthiness and ethical responsiveness. While it was clear that this inquiry had been underpinned by congruency with relatedness theory (Martin, 2008) deep reflexivity on my ways of knowing, being and doing had assisted me to deal with the tensions, demands and complexities that occurred at many points along the journey. However, the analytic task presented an exacting and unique challenge. It required a particular concentration to ensure that as researcher, I did not become drawn to a paradigm that in any way disrespected any stakeholder. A way of doing the analysis needed to be consistent with the integrity of the inquiry journey thus far, including relatedness and researcher reflexivity.

Within Martin's (2008) Quampie methodology she identified four phases, the fourth or final phase being made up of three specific tasks. She named these as the projects of critique, re-framing and harmonization (2008, pp. 102-103). For me, this framework provided conceptual consistency and aligned with my responsibilities and accountabilities as researcher. In addition, these tasks were

allied with the macro-context of the research: the Ways of Knowing (the task of critique), Ways of Being (the task of re-framing), and Ways of Doing (the task of harmonization).

For Martin, the task of critique "...involves reviewing what has emerged from the research Stories by sitting in relatedness with these to look at them again and again, in relatedness to the research question" (2008, p. 97). Secondly, she described re-framing as seeking: "...a deeper relatedness to the research Stories so that they make sense, particularly to the Aboriginal research participants" (2008, p. 97).

Furthermore, the categorisation mechanisms and frameworks used here remain congruent with three principles that have been fundamental to this inquiry. My standpoint researcher remains that of a non-centred facilitator. In line with Indigenous paradigms, Knowledge remains in relatedness to Ways of Being and Ways of Doing (Martin, 2008). Finally, as method, storywork and yarning retains presence and significance (Martin, 2008, Weber-Pillwax, 2001).

Chapter 7:   Type of analysis.

Bishop, Sonn, Drew, and Contos described an: "...iterative-reflective-generative practice" approach to processing information gathered from participants in any research study (2002, p. 11). For these writers, the nature of the research question is likely to evolve because information continues to be received and analysed in an ongoing way. In this way, the researcher is able to analyse

understandings, and then advance more sophisticated questions, to progress to even greater understandings. Thus the inquiry incrementally changes and advances (Bishop, 2007, p. 13). Martin (2008, p. 69) defined these processes as 'enfoldments' and 'evolvements' that in turn develop, establish, maintain and enhance relatedness to, and with the research tasks.

From an epistemological perspective, this research has been strongly informed from Martin's (2008) relatedness theory and critical race and whiteness studies (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). These frameworks have provided the foundations for the task of analysis. First considerations have been to sustain and uphold relatedness with ways of knowing, being and doing, and secondly to ensure that the researcher has been located as an active learner as different to an expert judge within the project of critique. In line with relatedness theory, Ragin (1987) and Creswell (1998) emphasised the researcher as being an instrument of data collection whose role is to facilitate deeper understanding. As such, the researcher develops a detailed, coherent scrutiny and then: "...builds up complex, holistic pictures, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in natural settings" (Creswell,1998, p. 15).

Braun and Clarke (2006) similarly discussed the standpoint of the researcher within the analytic task. These writers highlighted that: "...researchers make their (epistemological and other) assumptions explicit" in applying a method to data analysis, and therefore need to be clear about what they are doing within analysis, why they are doing it that way, and how they are doing it (2006, p. 5).

They emphasized that data can not be examined in an 'epistemological vacuum' because "...researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments" (2006, pp. 5 &12).

The stories contributed to this research and the data themes therein, do not require interpretation by the researcher. They are robust and stand of their own accord in relatedness to the knowledges and lived experiences of the contributors. Interpretation by the researcher would be an imposition of 'expertise' on top of their narratives. Martin was unambiguous that the purpose of critique and analysis within Indigenist research is to "…discern what is available in existing Stories and at the same time, decolonize these to inform research and benefit Aboriginal Peoples" (2008, p. 83).

For Braun and Clarke thematic analysis is a technique to "...both reflect reality, and to unpick or unravel 'reality'" (2006, p. 9). Within this analytic approach the processes are non-linear, iterative, recursive and evolve within the research from "...noticing patterns of meaning" through to "...the endpoint (of) reporting the content and the meaning of patterns" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 15). These writers stated that thematic analysis produces a "rich, detailed, complex account of data" (2006, p. 5).

Likewise for Martin, the process of inquiry is not linear, but rather one of "...immersion, of coming alongside, and then coming amongst the research contexts... to ensure relatedness is maintained and then expanded as the

research is being undertaken" (2008, p. 95). In these ways, the research process has included elements of analysis and data collection from the very beginning.

However this current space is where the range of stories within the research story, are brought together in a focussed way, to provide another story about 'possibilities', and other ways of knowing, being and doing. For Martin (2008, p. 97) the three tasks of analysis require: "...the deepest levels of immersion where the procedures of research are transformed as re-search, the search again". Braun and Clarke similarly described the concept of 'immersion' within data analysis as involving multiple and repeated reading and re-reading of the data: "...in an *active* way - searching for meanings..." (2008, p. 16).

Within Part 2, the transcribed contributions, also known as the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5), have illustrated the narrative foundations for the analytic task within this research. The early stages of 'coding' have become apparent as definitive reference points have developed from the participants' inscribed dialogues. Therefore, their transcriptions have authenticated and demonstrated the source of the data themes within this research.

These criteria are consistent with qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and with relatedness theory's connectivity of all things (Martin, 2008). By remaining focused on the perspectives of participants' and their contributions, research processes of respect, responsibility and accountability have been valid outcomes in and of themselves, as different to 'data production' as a primary outcome (Ragin,1987).

The analytic task involved seven sub-tasks. Firstly the *interview narratives* were transcribed from the audio tapes, and then the *narratives were read and re-read* to gather key themes discussed. This was followed by developing a *thematic summary* according to the key ideas identified, together with an *analysis* and collation of frequency of occurrence. Extracts from a number of contributions were chosen as most strongly articulating each of the identified themes. The next stage explored relatednesses between the literature and the contributors' narratives, to bring these alongside each other. Finally, the information has been narratively and graphically presented back into the research interface to show connections between the knowledges (Martin, 2008).

On occasion, a number of ideas that initially seemed to be similar had to be reflected upon in terms of their particularity. This was the case in relation to the themes of race, power and colonialisms. At these times, reflexivity and further reading led to a decision and a resolution on the most respectful way of inclusion. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 5) similarly described the complexity of the thematic analysis process, and stated that this can potentially result in data investigations that are deep, detailed, rich and complex.

The following table is drawn from their explanation of the processes and criteria underpinning a thematic analysis. It provides a concise overview of my tasks of analysis within this inquiry.

Processes used.	My tasks within thematic analysis.
Transcription	Data has been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail; Transcripts have been checked against the tapes for 'accuracy'.
Coding	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process; Themes have not been generated from a few examples, but have been thorough, comprehensive and inclusive; Themes have been checked against each other, and back to the original data set of the narratives and the literature; Themes have been coherent, consistent and distinctive.
Analysis	Data has been analysed and made sense of, rather than just paraphrased or described.
Overall	Enough time was allocated to complete all phases of the analyses adequately, without rushing the process or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	Described method and reported analysis are consistent; Language and concepts are consistent with epistemological position of the analysis; As researcher, I was present and active in all research processes.

Following Braun and Clarke, (2006, p. 36).

However, Martin (2008, p. 83) took the task of critique a step further. For her, a core element is the researcher's capacity to 'come alongside and sit in relatedness' in order to learn within the milieu of analysis, and from a deconstruction of the literature and texts. My tasks of gathering information and knowledges have been sustained by sitting with, and being in relatedness to the participants and ensuring their continued engagement with the evolving information. Ongoing discussions, story-working and yarning created a community of investigation and reflection, and strengthened relationships of respect and accountability. Thus through immersion in relationship and reciprocity the 'thick, rich description' continued to evolve (Martin, 2008; McCashen, 2005; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

While it was crucial that I remain grounded in relatedness and vigilant against any behaviours of expertise, the task remained to evolve ways of providing information. It was essential that analytic processes and instruments would function with respect for relatedness and within a decolonizing approach to ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. Therefore data gathering and analysis has been mediated by constantly thinking back on issues of power and behaviours of whiteness. In this way, continuous reflexivity has framed, informed and reconciled all of the processes and frameworks for presenting research data. Martin described such 'ways of doing' as being underpinned by living and practicing relatedness, and remaining reflexive and dialogic 'across contexts' (2008, p. 79).

The themes within this analysis have been informed from the literature by Indigenous writers and confirmed within the participant dialogues presented in Chapter 5. In the next Chapter, the previously mentioned processes of thematic analysis continue to create bridges of information on the pathway towards responding to my research question of 'what constitutes a decolonizing practice'. Participants' responded to this question and their grounded knowledges are now framed within an analysis of how often each broad theme was mentioned. They give relatedness to the macro contexts of both colonization and decolonizing practice. In the following section, the themes titles are neither prescriptive nor representative of participants' experiences. However, consistent with the narrative approach that supports this research, the inclusion of excerpts from participant contributions robustly demonstrates the nuances and subtlety with which each theme was discussed. As discussed by a number of Indigenous writers, including Martin (2008, p. 74), this is totally in line with Indigenous communication styles. It adds great depth to the weft and warp of analysis that has been developed in trusting relatedness and respect with the research participants.

Now it is time to represent the 'numbers story' – the data canvas that evolved from the research processes.

Chapter 8:   Critiquing: Data and Findings.

> …first get to know the Stories of relatedness and then get to know
>
> these stories from other perspectives and more than one purpose
>
> (Martin, 2008, p. 102).

For Martin the task of critique, or data analysis, is the first of three processes that function to distill and transform the research narratives. It is the stage of 'looking again' at all the data to tell us "…what is 'wrong' and what is to be avoided" (2008, p. 84). For me this included the contributors' stories, the literature and the documentation of my own reflexive learnings. Through further immersion and many re-readings of the amassed information, key categories were developed as a way of grouping or codifying the recurring themes (Martin, 2008, p. 102).

The literature review whiteness studies, decolonizing methodologies and critical race theory had provided an overview of current and past practices by non-Indigenous practitioners. This contextualized the research problem and advanced some key ideas. However during the interview stage, these 'concepts' became confirmed and firmly grounded by the within the contributors' knowledges and experiences.

To this point, processes of reading and thinking had informed my intellectual understandings and these had become magnified and connected at a heart and 'being' level through my relatedness with each contributor. Nonetheless, it was through the experience of analysis that the intensity and power of colonialism became more embedded for my Self. Processes of deeper immersion, of re-

engaging with the contributors through another medium - the texts of their knowledges, engaged me in even deeper relatedness with their experiences as colonized Indigenous peoples. This transformative experience is similar to that described by Hiles (2002, cited in Martin, 2008, p. 97) as "…a participatory process of inner reflection and discovery that leads to fresh insights, greater awareness".

For Martin, transformation evolves from a reframing of understandings and assumptions as the researcher comes to understand the "…relatedness of the research interface and the research study contexts" (2008, p. 139). For my Self, the context of critique and analysis had strengthened my relatednesses with the contributors and escalated my connections with their knowledges. I experienced the project of critique as embedded within deep relatedness. Respect, responsibility and accountability became enacted as moral and ethical obligations informed from my "…intellectual, spiritual and emotional compass" (Martin, 2008, p. 140).

According to Martin, transformation has the potential to occur at the research interface when the contexts of the participants, the researcher and the institution all 'come alongside' each other in deeper relatednesses (2008, p. 141). For her, this change manifests as the researcher positions themselves through their behaviours and decision-making, particularly in relation to research processes and protocols. This deep 'coming alongside' the contributors' knowledges enhanced my own understandings immeasurably. However as I integrated their

information as new knowledge, this transformative learning was not without considerable tension and uncertainty. As the challenges and implications became recognized, I resolved this by identifying the not-negotiable elements and then deciding on potential directions. Again respect, responsibility and accountability to and with the research contributors remained resolute as the guiding principles (Blagg, 2008; Lynn, 2001; Martin 2008; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). It was at this time that I resolved that the contributors' narratives would be included as Knowledge within this research as different to being positioned as a research resource.

These forms of transformative experiences have underpinned and enhanced my understandings of knowledge, of self and of practice. This is in direct relatedness with the epistemological, ontological and axiological fundamentals of ways of Knowing, ways of Being and ways of Doing, and Martin's Relatedness Theory (2008, p. 80).

Having discussed the researcher context in relation to the analytic tasks, it is now essential to bring this alongside the milieu of the contributors' knowledges and narratives. Their grounded knowledges regarding better ways of working are clearly linked with the issues identified within the literature. Therefore their stories have conceptually framed this analysis.

As previously discussed, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic content framework has been used to distinguish key concepts. These were recognized and sorted from within the Stories of the contributors, and in this way thematic groupings

became explicit. Throughout the tasks of analysis and critique, further categorization identified these themes into groupings. I noticed that the key concepts had clear linkages with the three domains of relatedness - Knowledge and knowing, Being, self and relatedness, and Doing and practices.

Therefore to further support this research task of critique, the following table positions the concepts of epistemology, ontology and axiology in relation to practice (Moreton-Robinson, 2010):

Domain	Essence or *Way of:*	Function	Essential questions
Epistemology	Knowing	Knowledge; Informational; Informed thinking.	Where do you get your knowledge from? What do you know?
Ontology	Being	Relatednesses; Who you are in relation to self and others; Worldview; Affective.	What is your 'place' – your position, your worldview?
Axiology	Doing	Behaviour; Actions.	What do you do, how and why?

Now this analysis focuses on looking for the relatednesses within, and between the participant narratives, and representing their responses within a framework or 'patterning' related to a 'grand narrative' (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). Likewise for Green, Sonn and Matsebula, a decolonizing agenda is progressed when non-Indigenous stakeholders imagine and engage with "other ways of being and knowing" to challenge dominance, power and the *"...taken-for-granted centrality of Western ways of knowing''* (2007, p. 409). In this way, this critique provides the opportunity to amplify the 'counter-narratives' and accounts of Indigenous sovereignty and self-agency (Martin 2008; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

The chosen framework is consistent with Indigenist methodologies and is supported by Martin (2008), Moreton-Robinson (2010), and Tuhiwai-Smith (1999). In following Martin (2008) and Green, et.al., (2007), epistemology (knowledges), ontologies (self and being), and axiologies (doings) have been contextualized within relatedness as the underpinning premise. Presenting knowledge this way, preserves the richness and integrity of the participants' contributions and facilitates other new Knowledges to emerge within the research (Martin, 2008).

To briefly revisit the contributors' context and as previously noted on page 66, research participants included community workers, university lecturers, government workers, and health workers. As researcher, I did not question their representation or entitlement to contribute. Data validity has been achieved by means of a research approach underpinned by critical race theory, whiteness

studies and relatedness theory. These paradigms emphasize that Indigenous agency should be determined by Indigenous stakeholders themselves – it is not 'granted' or decided through a whiteness lens. Participant A. (see page 98), clearly described his experience of non-Indigenous stakeholders choosing to 'consult' with an Indigenous person, based on their opinion of who 'has the authority to speak':

> …sometimes that perception is based on people who have enough *education* to talk about it… which can sometimes be a *misconception*.

Because this research has been underpinned by relatedness across a number of contexts, as researcher I have been immersed in multiple accountabilities. The participant contributors and the institute of James Cook University remained as key stakeholders. However my relatednesses within both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews required additional responsibilities. Gundimulk Marawilli, my Yolngu sister in Arnhemland, said it this way:

> …both ways, bringing information together, listening to each other and creating another way for us both to consider through words, pictures, symbols and story… (personal communication, March 20th 2007).

Now the research task of analysis re-presents knowledges and information in a number of ways including text, tables, diagrams, graphs and narratives. This ensures that within this stage, I respond to my responsibilities and accountabilities to all stakeholders.

8.1 Thematic Summary - Key concepts revealed as Themes within the contributors' Stories

This section includes a 'numbers story' (Martin, personal communication, May 5th, 2013). These graphs match up with the topics that were discussed by the Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. They give a picture of how often each theme was discussed. For example, on 'colonialism', all responses were from Indigenous participants, with no mention by non-Indigenous participants. Looking at the graph on 'reflexivity', this was discussed a total of thirteen times by the group of four non-Indigenous participants and sixteen times by the group of twelve Indigenous contributors.

These diagrams do not hold any superiority nor do they position the personhood of the participants as 'data sources' (Martin, 2008). This is another way of summarizing and making visible what the participants talked about in our discussions and highlights the relatednesses between their knowledges. The following graphs may appear to some people to be a quantitative representation of 'data', however others will see them as a picture representing the importance of the points that the contributors spoke about.

Neither does this section seek to 're-tell' parts of each person's story. Rather it provides a reminder of the issues discussed, and demonstrates the source by referencing to the location of each narrative. In addition, the reader is re-directed back to the crucial presence of each participant within the broader canvas of this inquiry.

Here I draw the elements of the participant's stories together into a 'bundle of Knowledges' from which the reader can reflect on and evolve their own 'new' Knowledges. Again for me this is consistent with my role as researcher, and reflective of a line in Oodgeroo's Story (1993, in Martin, 2008, p. 89) where she journeys to "...remember the old stories, so that through them she might find her tribe" (Oodgeroo, 1993, p. 80, in Martin 2008, p. 89). Just as with Oodgeroo's gathering of paper-bark and charred sticks, the quotes from the Contributors vary in size and form. Some are small and some are a bit bigger. Each is unique – its own shape and size. However all contain their own integrity and message, and together they make up an 'other' Story – one that shapes a decolonizing practice paradigm.

To additionally strengthen this critiquing task, literature extracts have been brought into relatedness with the narratives of each contributor, as other texts and stories. In this way, respectful connectedness is maintained between all of stories and knowledges within this inquiry. Martin described this Way of Doing as one that situates "…the research Stories amongst the existing Stories without replacing, displacing or destroying" these stories (2008, p. 98). This guarantees a "… culturally safe, culturally relevant and culturally respectful articulation and presentation of the research Stories back into the research interface" (Martin, 2008, p. 98).

During conversations with the participants, I had discussed my intention to link their contributions with the existing literature. Each participant strongly endorsed

this process, and thus provided direction for the analytic task. Martin (2008, p. 98) similarly supported processes that ensure: "…particular attention is given to how these research Stories are written, how they are presented to the Aboriginal participants to give the Stories back, to re-present them – or re-gift these Stories".

8.2   Power:

Number of times discussed:
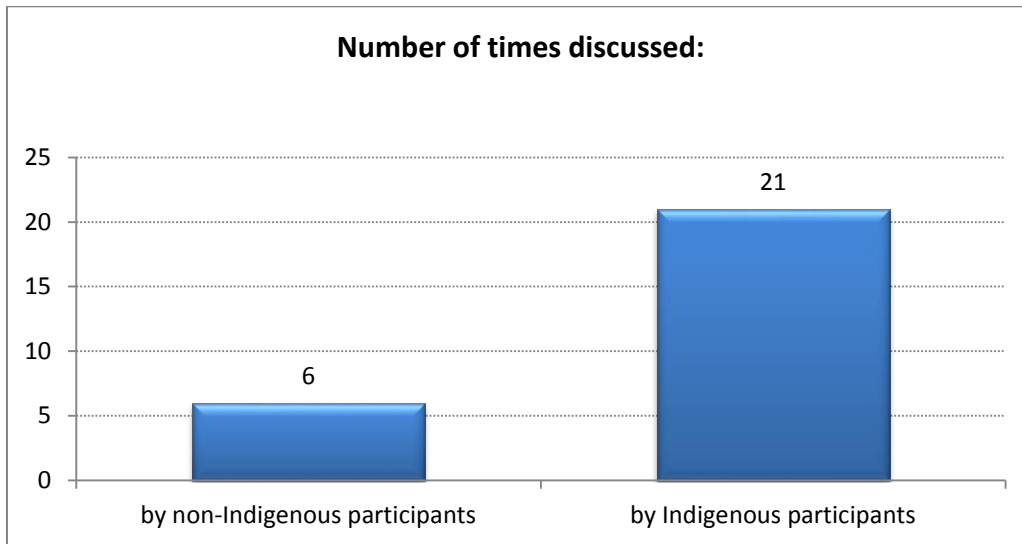
Grande (2008) stated that: "...Indigenous notions of power are defined as being rooted in concepts of respect, balance, reciprocity and peaceful co-existence" (in Denzin, Lincoln & Tuhiwai-Smith, 2008, p. 252). For the contributors, power featured significantly in their life experiences, professionally and personally. A.W., a Senior Traditional Owner from Cape York, drew a relationship between whiteness and the concepts of 'power' and 'control' and 'preferred relationships' (see page 100). He described the power that is ascribed and inscribed by those *'in* power*'*, and the way that this impacts on Indigenous communities. For him, 'power over' is quite different to his worldview of 'power with' that is enacted by 'collective harmony':

> …*it's gone on for decades in this country*… that Government has
>
> perceived that *White* is best for all… and it supposedly does a whole lot
>
> of consultation… they get their information from what I call 'black

dealocrats'… *those who have power* given to them by Government…
or *schemed* so that Government can give them power…

For C.S. an Indigenous government worker, current practices perpetuate a
continuing conflict between culture and corporate power (see page 119). She
was clear that this way of working inhibits good outcomes for Indigenous
stakeholders:

> ...corporate and government will negate Indigenous input because it is
> only about dollars and buildings – and not about people...relationships
> and relatedness in doing work has gone.

The next two contributors identified the negative impacts of power that exists
within, and is exerted by, a top-down approach to practice. For them, this way of
working results in conflict and disempowerment:

B.W. (see page 136):

> …and they're out there talking this stuff, and talking it loud, but what's
> underneath that?… it's just a big empty shell… it should have been
> brought up from the ground… it would have built itself up… but come in
> and say 'you gotta do this' it's a good way to get your back up!... being
> told 'not to do this' and 'not to do that'… yeah.

For non-Indigenous community worker A., 'white-man's structures' and systems
are powerful, complex and alienating for Indigenous people because:

…they use language that is *extremely* marginalizing… and unless you *understand* those systems, you're really going to be *screwed by the system* (see page 205).

8.3   Whiteness:

Number of times discussed:
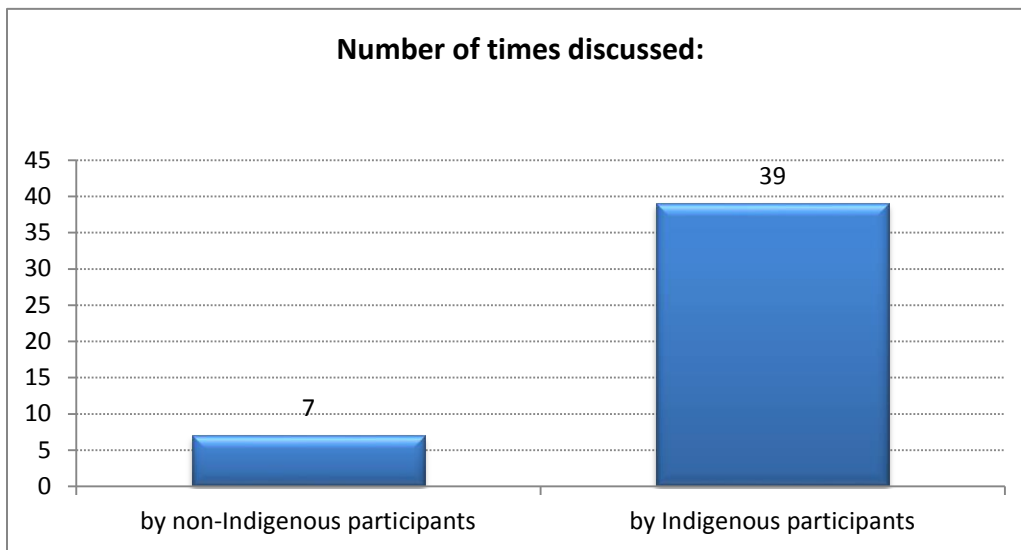
Whiteness has been defined as the ways that power and identity discursively construct and act on 'knowledge' (Frankenberg, 1993; Moreton-Robinson, 2007). For Puzan the concept of 'whiteness' is:

> ...a socially constructed category of race, where-in non-white people are racially designated, while whites escape such designation and occupy positions which allow them to carry on as if what they say is neutral, rather than historically and ideologically situated (2003, p. 193).

Within this inquiry 'whiteness' is used to describe a particular epistemological perspective - one that is enacted by and arises from, the structural dominance imposed by colonization. As history has demonstrated, the colonizers continued to impose their social and legal configurations of knowledge upon the Indigenous

'other'. Thus whiteness became embedded in power relations between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

The pervasiveness of whiteness behaviours within practices, of 'knowing best' for Indigenous people, has featured very significantly in these narratives, being discussed by every contributor except for one of the non-Indigenous participants. The following two Indigenous contributors talk of 'only the white way' of doing business.

T. spoke passionately about a systemic whiteness perspective whereby Indigenous stakeholders are positioned as failing to address the standards and requirements prescribed by those in positions of decision-making and privilege (see page 79). She particularly mentioned these practices as ones that subjectify Indigenous experience and function to reinforce a 'deficit identity':

> …I see Government working this way because it's about *them* ticking
>
> off the boxes… *their boxes* … not ticking off the Community boxes – the
>
> People on the ground … it's about *Government* ticking *their boxes…*
>
> *"…yeah, we've done this and this – we've done our bit".*

Another contributor A.W., similarly highlighted the uninterrogated behaviours and ways of being, that for him currently inform non-Indigenous practice (page 100). He was clear that while these Ways of Being are invisible to Whiteness, they are readily apparent to Indigenous stakeholders. He vividly described the 'ways of whiteness' that are observed by Indigenous people:

...many, many, many Government bureaucrats come to Negotiation Tables… they're there 'for The Mob' … "here I am… I'm here to bring you Mob salvation…" … they give them a speech… they walk out the door of the hall… and they can't even say "gidday" to the Mob that they've just been 'there for'...you're being watched..."..oh yeah – that fella there… he come here that one time… yep… well he must want something… he still doesn't know who Elders in the Community are… he still doesn't know who are the Right People to talk to in the Community about this particular issue… he's a fly-in / fly-out Johnny-Come-Lately".

M. clearly described her practice struggles from the standpoint of being a non-Indigenous worker within a government department (page 145). For her, the 'white way' of being and doing remains irreconcilable with her awareness of Indigenous ways of doing business:

…so a few times I've just thought "…*I feel like walking away now… I can't do this to be true to… what I believe to be the right way of working… I don't think I can be here any more…*"… I could just go and put myself in work in white, middle-class land, and… you know, 'all-white land'… because that's culturally… *the way*...through a white lens*.

Deb M. talked about whiteness in the context of being 'a fair-skinned Aboriginal' and the ways in which she has experienced skin colour as being a determinant of privilege, access and opportunity. She poignantly identified how a light skin

colour determines acceptability, and how practices of whiteness function to centre the white-Self and position non-whiteness as 'other' (see page 155).

> ...I know other Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander people who know as much as I do... I've seen them *be excluded*, and *be ignored*... and my view of that is *it's because I'm like them*... I *talk like them*... I'm more acceptable, because *I'm like them*...(*strong voice*)... 'cause they see me as *one of them*.

She similarly gave a vivid example of the discursive, un-reflected positionality of whiteness when she described her interactions with a fellow student:

> ...*they didn't know the stories*, they were just *repeating* things that they heard their fore-bearers... one boy in particular... he'd repeat things that his parents had told him - not correct or stereotypical, and I'd have to pluck up and we'd have an argument... and all he did was repeat stories of what he'd heard, because he wouldn't have had a clue!

For S. an Indigenous academic, it was clear that whiteness behaviours and practices can be ameliorated by non-Indigenous Australians engaging in a number of critical reflections on their ways of knowing and ways of being (see page 253). He pointed out the importance of respectful relatedness and an acknowledgment of 'not knowing' in relation to other ways of knowing, being and doing:

…an introspective awareness of *standpoint* … (and) can say "I'm coming at it as a non-Aboriginal person… I have a …fairly middle-class upbringing...I understand things like equality and equity in a certain way …and that may be different from a group different from me"… being aware of your own cultural socialization and what that means for how you see the world and understand it... (and) having a *parity of esteem* …so it's not conducted or constructed as a *power relation*.

8.4   Race:

Number of times discussed:

by non-Indigenous participants	by Indigenous participants
0	16
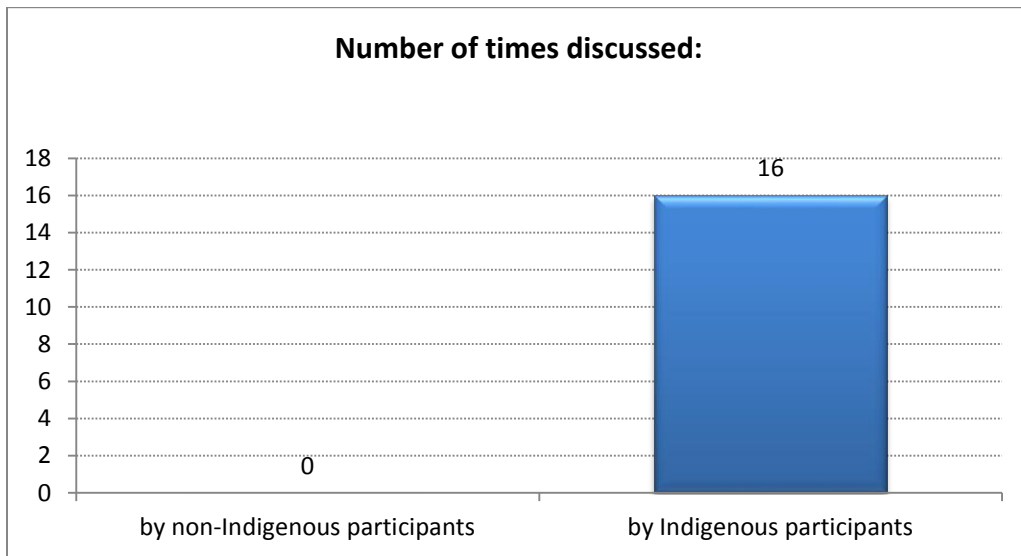
Ladson-Billings argued that people of colour have a shared 'experience of racialised identity' as outsiders who experience the political and cultural impacts of dominant settler-coloniser power systems. Therefore race functions as a powerful social construct and signifier that has continued to shape relationships of power, inclusion and exclusion (2000, p. 8). Constructed by white Europeans and their forebears, the ideology of racism has been used to attribute beliefs of inferiority, and continues to perpetuate hierarchy, privilege and inequality (Driedger, 2003; Fleras & Elliott, 2002). For Parker (1998) dialogues on 'race' can expose the historical vestiges of discrimination, and lead to a fuller understanding of the ways that it remains manifested in the present-day (Parker, 1998).

The following contributors described the effects of 'race' for them as Indigenous people. For them, racism is similar to, but different from whiteness and power. Similar in that the engagement of racialised behaviours, attitudes and practices

are demeaning and destructive of sovereignty. However, different in that race is most often associated with skin colour, and is thus more explicit than it's less tangible cohorts - power and whiteness behaviours.

As an Indigenous woman B. (page 136) provided a powerful painful personal narrative of her experiences with the daily manifestation of racism. For her, racism results in feelings of shame and damage to relatedness, sovereignty and agency:

> …it's about the shame factor and …um… all that, I mean what *is* the shame factor? … what *is* the shame about?.. what are they getting 'shame' about?.. and you don't know it, but it's a *feeling* - this *shame*… for instance, we were um… you've been in that line, and you're getting served before… and then someone else comes along, and you're getting served and you're still standing there, and the *shame* that comes out of that, because you know you're *black*, you know you're Aboriginal, it's a knowing thing too – that we've been made to feel like that sort of thing.

Other contributors similarly described racism as fear of difference, colour of skin and stereotyping behaviours. Deb M. (page 155) was clear that racism towards Indigenous people remains based on ignorance, fear and a complete absence of relatedness:

...(part of the problem)... is their *lack of understanding* that we *do things differently*... I suppose *fear* is also another big thing... they have a stereotypical anticipation that they are going to be angry, or they're going to hit me, or be violent, or...because they think that we're like this, and that's how we behave...that stereotype stuff.

Within the literature, Haggis and Schech (2000) and Moreton-Robinson (2004) discussed the propensity and assumed entitlement, of non-Indigenous whiteness to characterize Indigenous people according to their definition of the 'authentic native'. D. too spoke about her experiences of 'whiteness' being the reference point that attempts to define her Indigeneity. For her, a non-Indigenous world-view continues to impose skin colour as a determinant of race:

...there still is a perception that the only Aboriginal person is a black person... and I noticed it the other day, and I thought "...why are we still talking like that?"... it doesn't make any difference what colour your skin is, because *Aboriginality is not about what you look like... it's about who you are*, and if you *know what you believe* and *how you see yourself*... it's not about the fact that you have black skin...yeah stereotypes are very powerful...

For J.M., increased relatedness between the 'races' would result if non-Indigenous people chose to learn more about Indigenous ways (see Josie's story on page 212). She said that 'working straight' together would be fundamental to

any decolonizing agenda. However she was clear that this would require a proper commitment to reconciliation and true equality:

> …because we ourselves as Indigenous persons, *are learning* white-man ways… (*chuckling*)… so white-man has to learn black-man ways as well… it's about *balance* – we don't want to be like in the Colonial times … we should be *doing reconciliation*…*work straight together*… *not* one going this way, and the other going this way… that's the only solution… so both have to take the time to work together as one… not as two different races of people… but as One… *equal* in *all areas*.

S.L. clearly linked non-Indigenous ways of knowing and being with processes of socialization (page 253). He described a lack of reflexivity that has resulted in continued practices of discursive whiteness and ongoing un-interrogated racialised discourses:

> …probably 90% of non-Indigenous Australians have little or no contact with Indigenous Australians… people are bringing a whole lot of *un-interrogated baggage* into their interactions… and a *discursive* framework enables some things to be talked about in particular ways and other things are not talked about at all… they are not socialized to think of themselves as *raced* …they take a *human* position… "I'm not raced… I'm just an Australian".

8.5   Colonialism:

Number of times discussed:

[Bar chart]

- by non-Indigenous participants: 0
- by Indigenous participants: 7
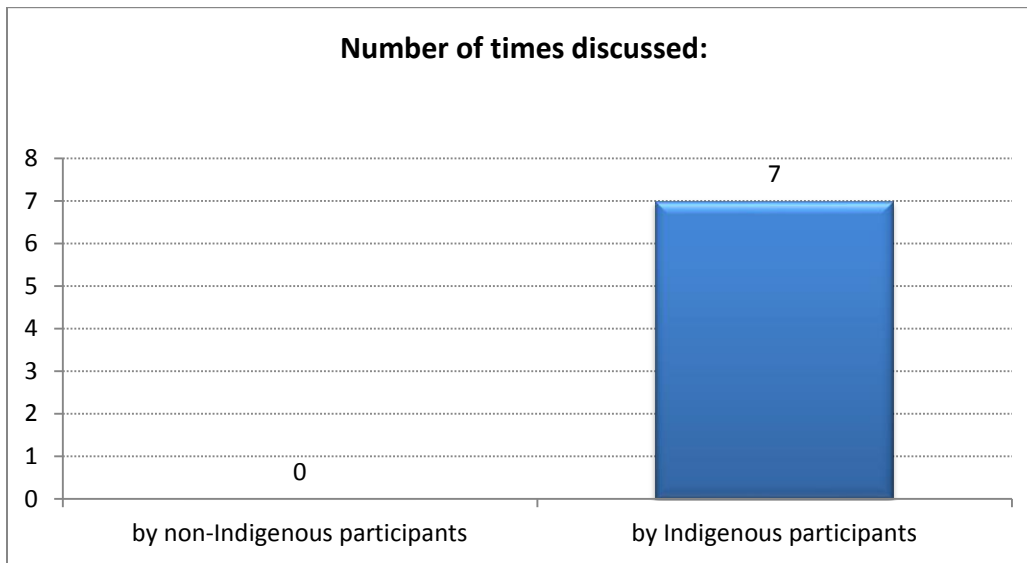
'Colonialism' refers to the practices, policies, processes and mechanisms through which Indigenous sovereignty has been historically disavowed from the time of the early white settlers (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999). For Indigenous academic Aileen Moreton-Robinson (2004), the nation-building agenda of colonization has been underpinned by whiteness, race and power. She stated that this legacy remains visible and ongoing in the ways that non-Indigenous practices continue to operate from an unexamined lens on power and associated privilege (Moreton-Robinson, 2004).

Participants in this research similarly described the many ways in which colonization remains present as historical vestiges and persists as intergenerational impacts for Indigenous people within Australia. Contributor C. (page 119) discussed the way that Indigenous life became influenced by systems and structures based on the rules, regulations, behaviours and values of the

white 'nation-building' Westminster system. As an Indigenous woman she vividly précised the ways that white individuality, possessiveness and entitlement function to discount and overrule Indigenous sovereignty. She described the continuing experience of colonialism as a struggle for Indigenous Peoples in Australia. However, for her community and relatedness remain of vital importance.

> ...Aboriginal people were on the land and knew their own space. Our people here have been hammered, really hammered, you know… and persecuted – but your dreaming is about being connected back to your relations and your land... the problem is it's like being caught between elevator doors... they want what white people have, but they know that because of their black skin and the racism, it's really, really hard… *(long silence and reflection)*.

Deb M. (page 155) named the persistence of whiteness and colonisation behaviours in the present, as denial mechanisms that are responsible for the continuing pain for Indigenous people. She emotionally discussed the enduring personal trauma of colonial practices and policies.

> ...that trans-generational stuff... the history... it's like "hoo-haa" with people, you know?... because people *don't believe it*... people like policy makers... non-Indigenous people who have an opportunity to make a difference... it's not something they recognise because it's not *tangible*... *(speaking angrily).* How would my grandmother have

transferred it to me? That's what I'm talking about... *because I got it*

from what happened to my grandmother.

A.W. similarly described the way that the unexamined behaviours and values of

colonialism continue to negatively impact on Indigenous Australians (page 100).

From his point of view, a trusting relatedness is crucial if solutions are to be

found:

> …um, *trust* and *rapport* is a very slow process - White Australia just
>
> *clarified* that trust and rapport would take longer… and exacerbated that
>
> gap.

8.6   Neo-colonialism:

Number of times discussed:
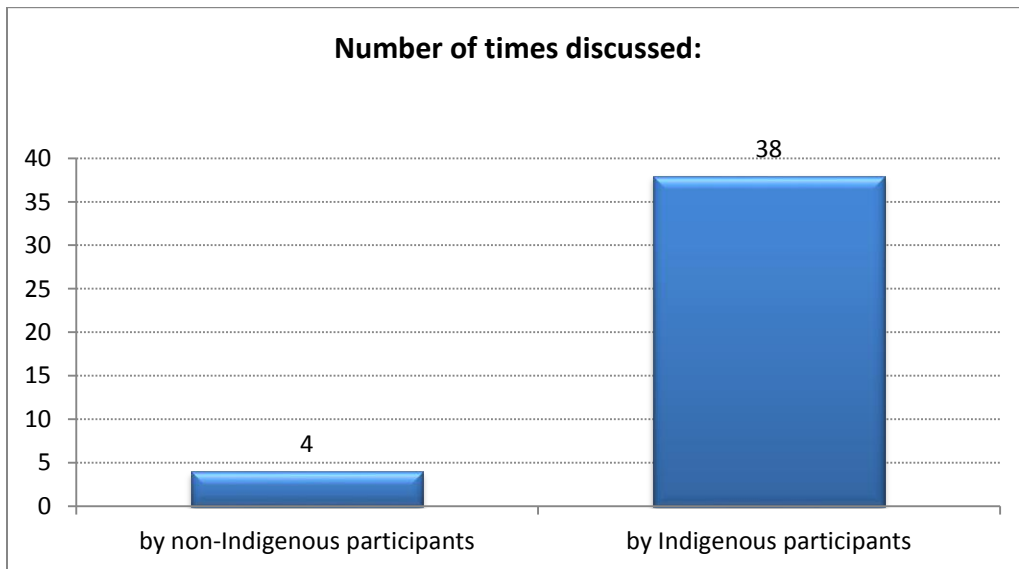
Neo-colonialism is defined as:

> ...the cultural legacy of colonial rule - that is, the cultural identity of the colonised peoples, in which neo-colonialism is the background for the contemporary dilemmas of developing a national identity (Wikipedia accessed July, 30th 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neocolonialism).

While this provides a useful general definition, other authors scaffold the term to colonization processes within an African context. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1998) together with Young (2001) reference the term 'neo-colonialism' to Ghana's first post-independence president Kwame Nkrumah (1965) who described it as the worst form of imperialism. For Nkrumah (1965), neo-colonialism actively controls the affairs of the 'other', often ignoring their needs such as living conditions and education.

Moreton-Robinson (2004) extends the definition and role of neo-colonialism to include the ways that it manifests as apriori knowledge. Here the discursive practices of whiteness function to ensure that the themes of power, racism and colonialism remain inextricably intertwined on a daily basis. This writer and academic described the way that 'race' provides the context through which neo-colonial classificatory and 'authenticity' devices function as 'knowledge'. In turn, such 'knowledges' perpetuate neo-colonial ways of knowing, being and doing (Moreton-Robinson, 2010). As a recent example, controversial Australian commentator Andrew Bolt's public discourses of 2011 attempted to attribute degrees of Indigeneity based on an apriori 'authentication scale'.

The following three Indigenous contributors were clear about the ways that colonial worldviews continue to minimize Indigenous sovereignty. Equally, they were unambiguous about the impacts of ongoing neo-colonial discourses. Each described the ways that those with the power to guide the dialogue politically, fail to reflect on both their decision-making and their practices.

A.W. (page 100) referred to the lessons still not learnt, with neo-colonialisms perpetuating negative impacts through a lack of real 'consultation' in each 'new era' developed by each new government:

> …so whose lens is being looked through when Governments are creating Policy… we talk about the life span of Indigenous People being less than non-Indigenous People… people can ask questions about 'what *is* that'… '*why* is that?' *My* question is: "…after *all these years*,

why is it **still** like that?" ...because *they're already down a road* about how *they're* going to do it… like consulting after they've already had the idea about how it's going to happen.

Likewise, C. (page 119) pointed to the plethora of 'big thick documents' that lack any input from, or relatedness with the lived experiences, the knowledges and worldviews of Indigenous Australians. For her:

...you can't just roll in and say: "...hi, I'm poor little pom, and you've got to do such and such..." (*using mock authoritative voice*). This department I'm working with... it's much easier hide behind and to be in possession of a pen and a tick and flick process. Because you can hide behind the device of the book and the paper – and so almost be in auditory auditing – "...tick, cross, yes, apply, doesn't apply"... I found these big thick documents just sitting on shelves and the inter-relationship just wasn't happening.

For B. (page 136) neo-colonialisms are implicit in non-Indigenous practices, and the ways that these continue to 'tell people what to do'. She described respectful practices as those that would feature inclusive dialoguing, building relatedness and working *with* Indigenous people and communities:

…they tend to come in and say you've got to do this" and "you've got to do that"… stop telling people what to do all the time, you know (*frustration in voice*)… put it down on grass roots level… they've got to

get *really* more involved… getting community involved, going down and

sitting down and talking and … it's about giving, and making the

community feel deadly as a whole… and making them feel good about

themselves.

She was clear that processes of partnership, cooperation, engagement and self-determination are fundamental to 'good practice'. For her, these provide a sense of control over one's own life, without which powerlessness and dispossession results. Calma and Priday similarly stated: "...the process is often just as, if not more, important than the outcomes because it equips the community to be able to do things for themselves" (201, p. 151).

As a non-Indigenous government worker (page 144) M. expressed her frustration at being directed by her line management, to employ neo-colonial practices in her work with Indigenous stakeholders. She stated that these 'top down' processes continue to deny and ignore the significance of engagement, respect, and relationship with Indigenous communities. For her, the 'authority' attributed by way of whiteness, status and position, always directs the discourses and decision-making. In so doing, practice frameworks became based on discursive suppositions, dominance, and standpoints informed by power, privilege and entitlement:

…*one* of the dilemmas for me, is that as a bureaucrat, I'm asked from

time-to-time to do things that just *aren't right*… the timeframe… or

process-wise … so things like… *rushing through* if there's funding

available… and you know that *someone*... (a more senior bureaucrat)*...*

has decided that it would be good for a particular Community to have

that youth funding: "…get up there, and get them to do a submission".

As an Indigenous woman, Deb (page 155) was equally frustrated by an absence of genuine reflection on the impacts of the colonial history for Indigenous Australians. Moreton-Robinson too had stated: "...oppression and domination can be minimized by being a reflexive subject" (2000, p. 20). Deb's experience as an Indigenous woman demonstrated to her that non-Indigenous Australians lack commitment to knowing about, and truly understanding the history of colonization and its impacts for Indigenous Australians. For her, this represents neo-colonial ways of being and doing.

...and I said: "...look around the room here... there's no non-Indigenous

people from this country sitting in this room with us, learning about

Indigenousness from other people". White Australians, in my

experience, don't really give a shit... they don't... they weren't sitting in

that room learning about Aboriginal history and Aboriginal culture.

8.7   Decolonizing practices:

Number of times discussed:

A bar chart titled "Number of times discussed:" with a y-axis ranging from 0 to 14. The bar "by non-Indigenous participants" shows a value of 1. The bar "by Indigenous participants" shows a value of 13.
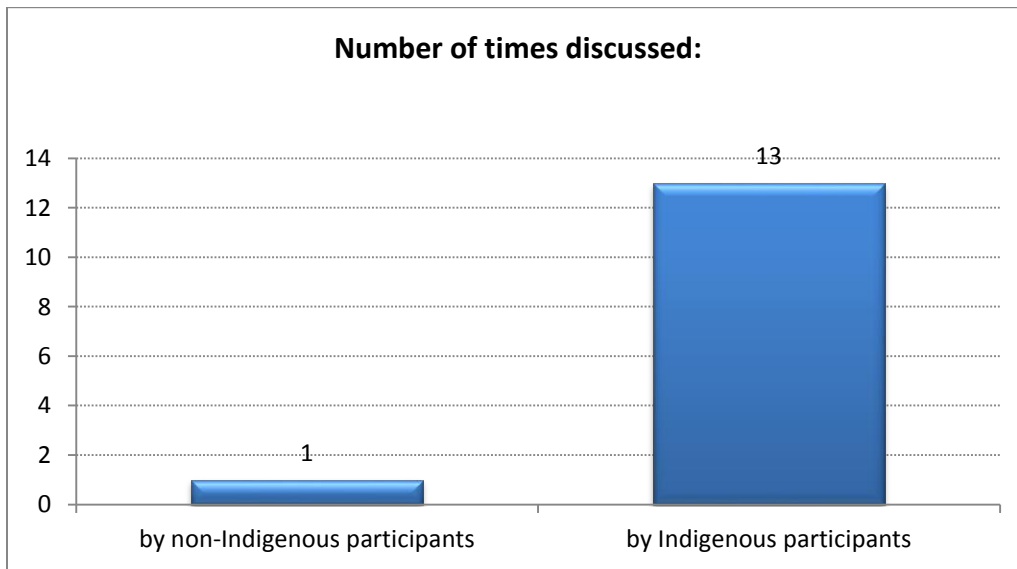
According to key writers, decolonizing practices would be made up of a number of processes underpinned by respect for Indigenous sovereignty, and responsibility and accountability for one's own engagement. Martin (2008) and Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) both stated that such a practice framework would include the use of systems and ways that are consistent with an Indigenous worldview.

Several contributors discussed the ways that current practices deny any alternative accounts of knowledges. Similar to Foucault's (1970) description of western thought, Indigenous academic S.L. (page 253) referred to the structural dominance of knowledge as being underpinned by epistemological 'a priori'. For him, such unreflective, taken for granted ways of structuring, organising and accepting 'knowledge' serve to deny the 'other accounts' of knowledge and experience that need to be known.

He was adamant on two key points. Firstly, that a decolonizing paradigm would only be achieved by non-Indigenous people critically understanding how the history of white colonization has informed their ways of knowing about Indigenous Peoples. Secondly, they need to recognize how this way of knowing has influenced their way of practice in relation to Indigenous people:

> ...part of decolonizing, is shedding this idea, this presupposition that there's a dominant western way of knowing something … so I think that's a *fundamental starting point* of decolonizing practices… to understand colonialism and colonization and what were the prevalent ideas… and in practices, can you see artefacts of that today.

Each of the following three contributors spoke from their standpoint as Indigenous workers within various government departments. A.W. (page 100) described his experiences of structural power and the way that it operates to subjugate the capacity of Indigenous people's input to the decision-making that affects their own lives. Here accountability is to 'managers' rather than to the community itself. For this practitioner, collaboration towards outcomes that are defined by 'cultural benchmarks' would provide a better alternative way of working:

> ...Government *still* hasn't got it right in terms of the *Community capacity* to *do it their way*… to work towards a 'collaborative alliance'… to ensure that certain benchmarks – *Cultural benchmarks*, are *met*, that will bring success in whatever you're attempting to do.

C. (page 119) spoke specifically about the importance of a reflectively informed approach to practice. Again, this participant highlighted the current bureaucratic ways of doing work with Indigenous stakeholders. For her, such practices fail to build relatedness. She described collaborative narrative strategies and story-working as achieving desired outcomes with respect for Indigenous sovereignty:

> ...benchmarking – very bureaucratic – the way that it's written - needs to unpacked and have a storyline to each of the standards - department practice is not taking a storyline approach, to make it applied and practical through a story instead of just words on the book – and that's a special skill – and it only comes with (the practitioner) owning the words, living the words and then sort of unpacking in your own head so that you can believe it – and it involves any sort of work with community – it's about relationship first – you can't just use the big stick process – you've actually got to bring people on board.

D. M. stressed the importance of knowing about the impact of past practices so that similar mistakes may be avoided in the present (page 155):

> ...and if you're a practitioner and working with Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander people, and you don't understand or even acknowledge that that actually exists, then how do you work with them? How can you care... how can you be effective? I don't know that many practitioners *do* acknowledge trans-generational trauma. We have problems because of that... because *we're black*... you know... and yet when you

look at the hierarchy of where people are in society in Australia...

Aboriginal people are right down there...(*silence*). They don't teach you

any of that stuff... I mean, I dunno... do they teach that stuff at Uni.

these days... about trans-generational trauma?

This is supported by the work of Archibald (2001) and Martin (2008) who both

stated that an acknowledgment and understanding of the ways in which

colonizing practices have denied the rights of Indigenous people, is foundational

to the development of practices towards a strong future:

H. (page 226) worked within an Indigenous community organization. She

described the importance of decolonizing processes that are consistent with

Indigenous values, practices and beliefs. For her, such ways of practice must

respect Indigenous sovereignty, autonomy and agency. However, she was

unambiguous that there is still so much that non-Indigenous practitioners need to

learn in relation to a decolonizing way of working**:**

> …they have to be in-tune to understand that … ah… it's such a two
>
> different worlds… there's so much to be taught and so much to be
>
> learnt… um… yes… there's still so much things to be taught and so
>
> much to be learnt… so much to be teaching… and so much to be
>
> learning… (*reflective voice*)… we're not there yet… no… we're not
>
> there yet.

As a non-Indigenous contributor A. (page 205) discussed his observations of top-down decision-making process. For him, these ways of doing are based on historical patterns, and an inherited entitlement to do so. This corresponds with the studies of Frankenberg (1993) and Moreton-Robinson (2004) who stated that decolonizing behaviour would be informed from an exploration of privileged structural locations, positionalities and practices of whiteness.

A. said it this way:

> ...I talk about de-colonizing methodologies because I think that we need to acknowledge that historical patterns that are associated with the 'colonial state' have failed and they've largely failed because they are based on… on the idea that 'white man knows best'… and I don't consider that to be true.

8.8   Sovereignty and Agency

Number of times discussed:
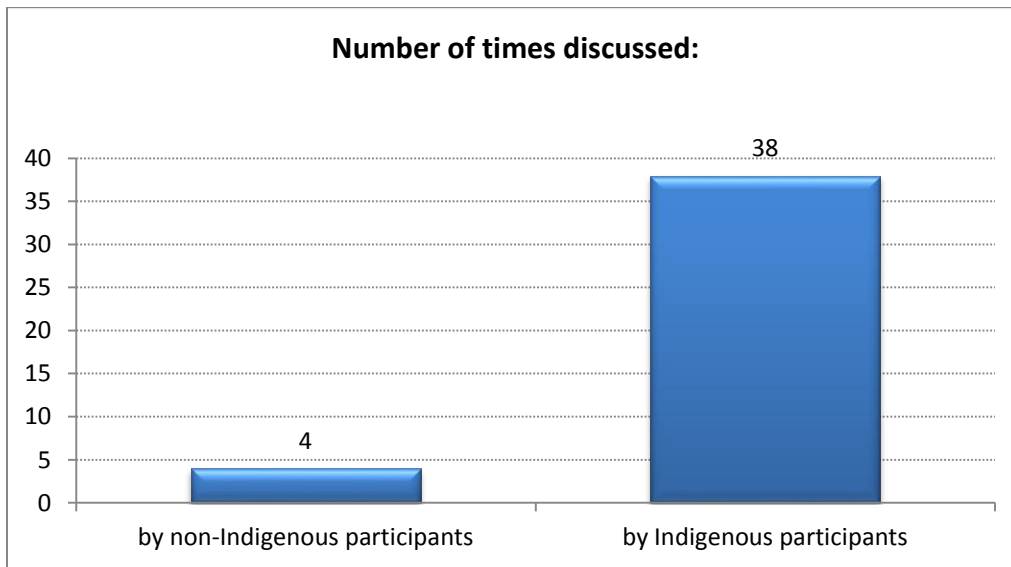
For Lyons sovereignty is: "...a people's right to exist and present its gifts to the world... an adamant refusal to dissociate culture, power and identity from the land" (2000, p. 457). Historically, denial of Indigenous sovereignty by the white settlers served to reinforce the whiteness values of individuality, possessiveness and entitlement. This fulfilled the agenda of colonization and the 'nation-building' plan. In the current context, an unexamined lens on power and associated privilege provides the medium for denying Indigenous agency (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2004; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

A significant number of contributors to this research identified that Indigenous strengths, capacities, values and beliefs should be at the centre of non-Indigenous ways of working. For the following Indigenous contributor, sovereignty is underpinned by a number of core values that inform Indigenous Existence and Right Ways. These qualities provide guidance and sustenance for

standing strong when challenged by the 'politically appropriate thing to do'. Martin (2008) similarly stated that Indigenous sovereignty is maintained by Relatedness to all Things, and is demonstrated by respect, responsibility and accountability to and for these values and beliefs.

For A.W. (page 100):

> …the Aboriginal Way is about supporting the true values of the Mob – those things set in Tradition which Elders carry… which we call *Wisdom of Elders*… so even though the *social* culture may change, the *Spiritual Culture will maintain itself* so at the end of the day, as things go round and round and round, those People who *have got* those Core Principles and Values, will hold up their hands and say… "…here We are again… and we want to take *this opportunity* for Righteousness"… in the *cultural* sense *those* things would *set the benchmark* for *social regulation*, and which we deem to be the Core Principles throughout Time.

Similarly, participant C. (page 119) pointed to the strengths of Indigenous ways of thinking, feeling, doing and believing as 'the glue', saying 'they are all connected up'. She described materialism as one of the major challenges to sovereignty and culture. For her the history of colonization and whiteness behaviours has violated Indigenous sovereignty and traumatized Indigenous people and communities. C.'s view was consistent with whiteness studies, when she stated that non-Indigenous people need to 'have a willingness... to understand the struggles' of Indigenous Australians:

...speaking on the head, heart, hands, spirit model of practice... these are the strengths - the people... what their grandfathers would have done... the glue… the culture… and they are all connected up – we've been part of this …you know who you are when you are connected to culture and community.

…the sovereignty issue also affects how some community people respond to government – like if your grandmother had been kicked in the head, and families shot and spread-eagled on the road - understanding the lay of the land is important… non-Indigenous people need to understand the journey, the pain... cultural awareness sessions should be about cultural security, being secure in different cultures, understanding the struggles, you have to have a willingness.

B. described the deep pain caused to her and other Indigenous Peoples by disrespect for their sovereignty as people (page 136). Martin similarly stated that damaged relatedness leads to feelings of distress and violation (2008, p. 76). Here, B. described how her whole sense of Being, her Sovereignty of Self, and her sense of Agency remains at risk of diminution and subjugation by behaviours of dominance from non-Indigenous people.

...it affects your whole body, your whole body can feel it, your whole body just seems to shrink… do you understand that? Do you understand that? (*with pain in her voice*)… but we walk away knowing, and it becomes an accepted thing then – this is the way probably we

are supposed to be feeling… but we've got to feel that we are proud to

be standing up and be counted… and that we *are* part of society… we

shouldn't be able to *feel* that way… we need to get that feeling right…

then anger comes into play, and we fuck it up… and walk away and it's

never dealt with… but were looked at as if we've done something wrong

because we got angry… it's a shame anger, it's not an *anger* anger…

huhuhum… (*making a sound like strong anger*). You feel it in your

whole being… the shame that envelopes you. I need to get the

explanation of that feeling right, that shamed-ness – you don't just say

"shame, shame"… there's more to that shame that just hiding your face,

or not talking or not answering (*going silent*).

As a non-Indigenous participant who had lived within an Indigenous community

for over twenty years, Ng. (page 179) was clear that non-Indigenous people have

a responsibility to respect Indigenous Knowledges. For him this can only be

achieved by knowing and being in relatedness to one's own way of Knowing,

Being and Doing. He said that it is equally important to know how to 'just be' in a

space of learning about other ways of Knowing, Being and Doing. For Ng. 'doing

your job' in a decolonizing way, means becoming 'more knowing', and learning to

recognize sovereignty and relatedness as not-negotiable conditions for

Indigenous Peoples:

…having said all of this, if you come in here as a new person, you've

got nothing else to draw on but your own experiences and your own

upbringing and your own values, and morals and so on… there *are*

different outlooks on the world... and that's why it's important to

establish relationships and partnerships... before you start telling people

how to suck eggs, learn whether they already know how to suck eggs!

8.9   Reflexivity:

Number of times discussed:

	by non-Indigenous participants	by Indigenous participants
Number	13	16
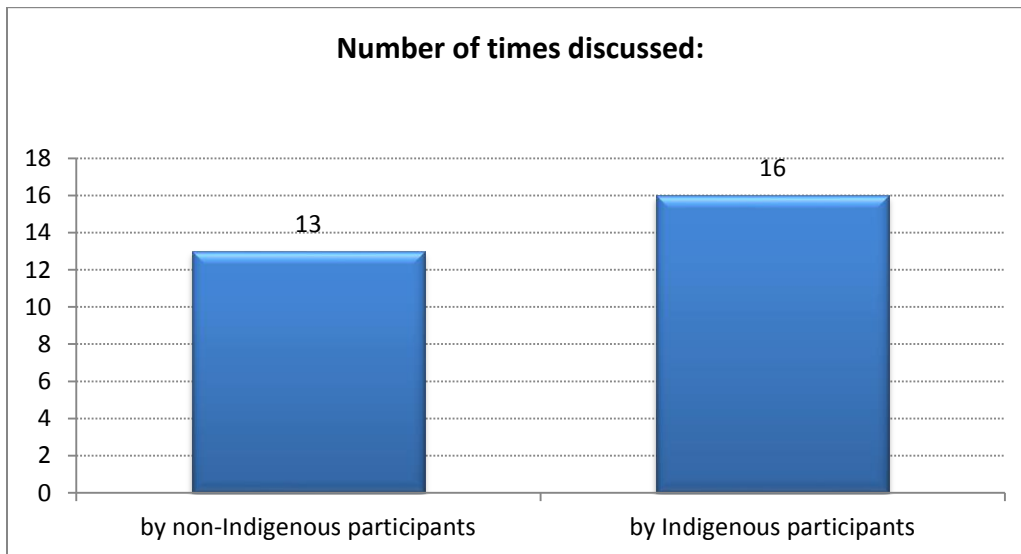
Reflexivity is defined by Geertz as the practice of 'sitting with silence' and a 'deep hanging out' that allows the quiet Self to engage in processes of close observation (2001, p. 53). Expanding on this, Grande stated that reflexivity is where: "...the gaze is always shifting inward, outward, and throughout the spaces-in-between... (to)... survey viewpoints (and) ideas, their representation and potential power to speak across boundaries, borders, and margins" (2008, p. 233).

For Martin (2001) an Indigenist practice commitment is underpinned by reflexivity, responsibility and accountability for one's own learnings based on ones 'place', ones worldview, and ones ontology. A number of contributors similarly stated that ongoing reflection on self and ways of working must inform the processes of a decolonizing practice paradigm. C. and D. spoke as Indigenous women, discussing the importance of reflexivity.

For C. (page 119) reflexive practice is demonstrated by behaviours of taking time, listening, and thinking. This contributor defined a reflective practice approach as one where the use of head, heart, hands and spirit becomes joined-up. She stated that these ways of knowing, being and doing are consistent with doing 'business' with Indigenous stakeholders. In the following excerpt, she described un-reflexive practitioners as getting 'lost in talking their own language' and 'just a lot of busy-ness':

> ...(it is)... a lack of real connection in a lot of ways… just a lot of busy-ness sometimes… not enough Indigenous perspective taken into account. It is important to give Indigenous people a voice, and to have reference points for non-Indigenous people to ask important questions about 'how to'... non-Indigenous people should not get lost in talking their own language - they need to learn the language of the other, respectfully.

Participant Deb M. (page 155) referred to the advice of her grandmother on the importance of respectful listening in order to learn about the incommensurabilities within other knowledges and worldviews. She described a lack of reflexivity as a 'yapping all the time' that damages relatedness. For her, engaging in reflection assists with clearer ways of thinking, and being and doing:

> ...my grandmother always said to me: "...you need to look and listen – that's the only way you're going to learn stuff"... and you need to look and listen with your eyes as well as your ears... because you can *hear*

things just *by looking*... if all you're doing is sitting there and yapping,

you're not doing any of this other stuff...there's not a lot of

understanding I think, around... what constitutes Aboriginal practice,

and how Aboriginal communities work... when you talk about it, it... it's a

remembering process, but it's also a *thinking* process, so you're

bringing it out about what you *really think*... for me it's about: "...yeah,

that *did* happen" or helps me to reflect on *the way* I was feeling... then...

and am I feeling differently now about it.

Non-Indigenous practitioner Ng. (page 179) described reflexivity as being totally

honest with ones self, and reflecting deeply in order to learn from other

perspectives and worldviews. For him, this is the way of connecting in respectful

relatedness:

...you can usually tell where their heart is... you can tell if they are

meaning well, even if they make a mistake because of ignorance... you

can usually tell when they mean well... it's no point having a good

intention and not spending time in *honestly reflecting* on what you're

doing... you know, you've got to be *totally honest* and before you're

dishonest with anybody else, you're dishonest with yourself.

Another non-Indigenous community worker A. (page 205), was clear that non-

Indigenous stakeholders should recognize their propensity to be 'in control', and

be aware that they are not 'the solution'. This contributor was adamant that the

practice of reflexivity provided an essential space to explore, unpack, and learn

about the ways in which responses and behaviours have been socially conditioned and perceived:

> ...it's *really* important, because that's *how* you work out *what* you should be *doing*…well, first of all it's about putting aside what you've learnt before you've came here, in a sense... I mean, you *draw* on that, but you need to draw on it *in a different way*… ah… you need to *draw* on your experience and your knowledge, that you've got something to contribute, but *how* that's contributed, and *what* it is that you actually contribute… is *not up to you*… ah… it's *up to others*… and…ah… so you need to set up structures whereby you can *be informed* as much as possible about how you do that…

He went on to recount some of the challenges he has experienced as a reflective non-Indigenous practitioner, and the ways that he has worked to reconcile these, including the issue of 'control':

> ...so a *hyper-consciousness* about *how* you do... about doing business… I think I've made myself stay hyperconscious...

> ...and I feel bloody exhausted…(*laughing*)… and a lot of that exhaustion is from never being really sure about what you're doing… and always being in almost *universally dependant* on others to know *what* you're *doing*…the community and participants in the work… but I'm *very clear* that *I* can't solve the problems… that I am only *part of* a process… and

obviously you get 'wrapped up' at times when you forget that... I suppose, in terms of devolving, or recognizing that you don't have that much control over… or that you're not the 'solution to the problem'.

Indigenous academic S. (page 253) stated that the hard work of reflection is crucial for non-Indigenous stakeholders to integrate transformed, decolonized thinking and action into their practices. Lincoln and Guba (2005) described this interrogative reflexivity as the fundamental mechanism for negotiating the contradictions, binaries and paradoxes of practices. For S. it is readily apparent when a non-Indigenous stakeholder is reflecting and practicing from a de-centred standpoint. They are 'switched-on' to other ways of knowing, being and doing, as different to 'the expert'. He was clear that without such transformative practices, disadvantage will continue to be perpetuated:

> …hmm… that self… that *introspection* is the *most challenging* because… because it's *unsettling*… um… you know, it's being confronted with a *whole new way* of *thinking* and *feeling* and *doing*, that people haven't been socialized or *trained* to… to *introspect*... and to be confronted with the whole range of new thinking that involved *yourself… was unsettling…* you know… and they get to *that point*… and they need to be supported to keep going through that journey… I mean… you can either say: *"it's too threatening"* and reject it all, or be supported through it, and come out the other end… so to have all your ideas about everything *thrown upside down* can be very *threatening* and *unsettling* for people… you know…

seeing things in a particular way, and what that meant for their *identity*…

you know… 'cause it has an identity cancellation aspect to it… I think

that would be the *most* challenging thing… and then… when the light is

switched on, other things start to fall into place… you know… for

example, you can understand *society* and *society's institutions*, and in

one particular way. It's another thing to come to grips with race and

gender *power*… you know…if you've been *blind* to it before, you know…

and then you start to see things in a *completely* different way, it can be

very unsettling… but it's not a *bad* thing, it's just *change*, you know…

…we're relying on people to do that work, that *introspection* work… you

know, you can tell the difference… I can certainly tell the difference in

under 5 minutes, if someone is *switched-on* or not…um… it's what they

say, what they *think*, their *approach* to things… I can pretty much suss it

out within 5 minutes… you know if someone is going to take some time

for me to *work* with… or if they're some I can work immediately with…

'cause they automatically *genuinely* and *sincerely* have an understanding

of the area…of the context… (*silence*).

8.10 Relatedness:

Number of times discussed:

[Bar chart showing: "by non-Indigenous participants" = 13, "by Indigenous participants" = 40. Y-axis ranges from 0 to 45 in increments of 5.]
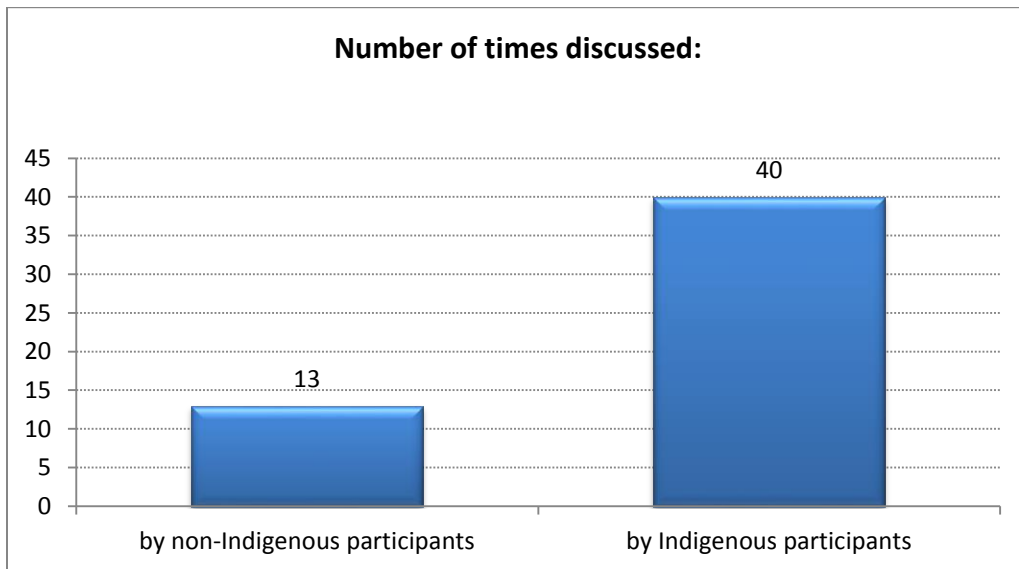
For Martin relatedness is defined as a fundamental way of being that is informed from, and supported by processes and practices of connectedness between all Things and across all contexts (2008, p. 69).

Relatedness was consistently discussed by contributors, with trust, genuineness and connectedness described as the key elements for establishing and maintaining relatedness. Participant T. was clear that even though we all come from different backgrounds, and boundaries can sometimes be inadvertently compromised, relatedness provides the opportunity to negotiate and rebuild the relationship between stakeholders. This is supported by Martin who advised that while damage to relatedness may occur, particularly during times of transitions and transformations, it is 'sustained and ultimately expanded' by respect, responsibility and accountability to each other and to the self (2008, pp. 77-79).

Speaking as an Indigenous woman, for T. (page 79) a decolonizing practice approach is defined by trustful communication and reflection:

> ...it's about building the relationships… it's about building the trust… that is *absolutely critical*… you know, the relationship can break down… but there's also room to look at that and reflect on it and think: *"… well, what can I do about this… how can we work through this?"*… and come to an understanding. So there's *opportunities* there to rebuild as well.

The following participant similarly highlighted the imperative of trust and accountability within relationship and relatedness. As an Indigenous Elder and government worker A.W. (page 100), described the capacity for relatedness as a number of behaviours and qualities that must be present when working with Indigenous stakeholders:

> ...the *other* thing that I've found is their level of **trust**… (*chuckling*)… one of the **key** words for Aboriginal People are 'what level of *trust* do we have in *you*... *his* level of engagement, *his* level of genuineness, *his* level of interpersonal skill – *that makes or breaks it at the Community level*... nothing, no engagement with Community is fruitless... it's about your *positive perception*... don't ever think you've been somewhere, and it's been a *useless* exercise... and don't ever think you're not being watched… no, don't ever think *that!* (*laughing*)

For C. (page 119) as an Indigenous woman, relatedness is crucial. She gives this advice for the non-Indigenous practitioner to reflect on:

> ...it's about trust and being asked to join … you know about the elevator door opening … you get one bite… they take one look and work out if you are straight-up… and you can't hide behind anything… you've got to have your story right, and if you don't have those stories, you're in trouble... (*laughing*)

As a non-Indigenous practitioner (page 145), M. talked about her observations and experiences of relatedness within her work domain. She described this as a 'connectivity' and 'relationship' that she believed to be an imperative condition of practice. In addition, she reflected on her lack of relatedness, what relatedness meant for her, and her learnings on being 'not related':

> …the importance of relationship… and that rapport… and that *nothing*, *almost nothing, seemingly* nothing, can happen before you've actually got rapport… or *connection*… *connectivity within* Indigenous community absolutely seems to be the key... but I can remember walking into Community... and I knew I had *none of that*… I guess that was an illustration for me, to see how important connections are, and how… it's really important for Indigenous People to be able to put you in… to *connect* you *in* somehow... and I think that that's really important.

For H. (page 226) non-Indigenous workers frequently disrespected relatedness when they visited her community in remote Cape York. This contributor stressed the importance of relatedness and being – the primacy of knowing 'who you are', so that relatedness can evolve to respectful ways of being, and then become a 'knowing for doing'. Martin too stated that relatedness provides the conditions for respectful processes and practices (2008, p. 79). H. reinforced the importance of practicing with respect, responsibility and accountability by 'getting the knowing' in order to 'understand'. Non-Indigenous people need to 'know' and acknowledge relatedness in their work with Indigenous people and communities, according to H.:

> ...they cannot fly in and step into the community – it's all about acceptance… they will be asked "who is you family?" and they will be told "I think you'd better go back there, because what you're looking for, you'd better go back there"… I think at the end of the day, it's all about acknowledgement… it's all about your approach… and what is your knowledge of the community that you are stepping into… you have to *know* people and you have to *know* the community, you have to make it your business to get that knowing so that you have an understanding.

As Martin stated:

> ...we are accountable in our actions, thoughts, non-actions and non-thoughts to sure that relatedness is not damaged (2008, p. 78).

8.11   Liminality, 'in-between' and a third space:

Number of times discussed:

A bar chart showing the number of times discussed. The vertical axis ranges from 0 to 25. "by non-Indigenous participants" = 8; "by Indigenous participants" = 23.
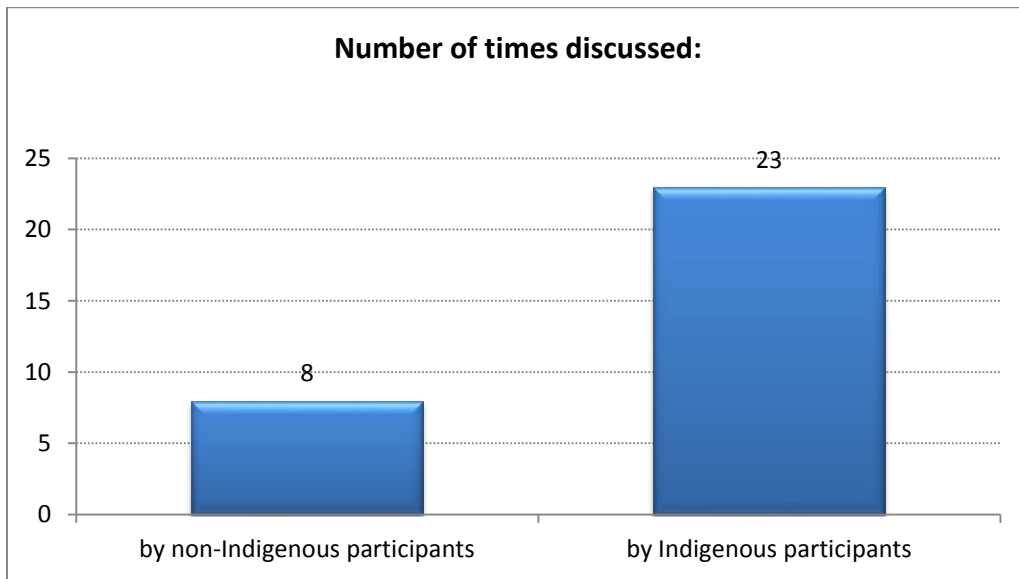
Several contributors called for non-Indigenous practices to be located in a space in-between the worldviews. Some named this a 'liminal space' or a 'shared space'. A number of writers have similarly discussed this 'in-between' space.

Van Gennep (1960) defined liminal space as a zone of transition populated by uncertainty, unpredictability and ambiguity where the usual forms of authority are put aside. For Turner, within the state of liminality, one's sense of self is challenged leading to a degree of disorientation and the possibility of new points of view: "...it potentially can be seen as a period of scrutiny for central values and axioms" (Turner, 1974, p. 274). The experience of liminality can therefore thus facilitate transformed understandings through: "...the sudden foregrounding of agency and the sometimes dramatic tying together of thought and experience" (Turner, 1974, p. 232). Equality and common humanity form the basis of an unconditional, non-hierarchical relatedness within the communitas space

bordered by incommensurable worldviews. Within this space where power relations do not dominate, one's sense of self and identity become challenged by the tensions of struggle, difference and transformation (Turner, 1974).

Similarly, Bhabha (1994) proposed that when otherwise subjugated knowledges become part of the dominant discourses, 'another' or 'third space' can be produced from the relatedness between cultures of different background. He described this space as one where profound incommensurabilities become evident, and where the rules of authority do not hold power.

Each of the following contributors agreed on the importance of an 'in-between space' built on relatedness, and populated by the conditions of problem-solving, equality and common humanity. T. spoke as an Indigenous woman (page 79), saying it would be a safe place providing the opportunity to build and rebuild relatedness – one that is underpinned by respect within difference and incommensurabilities. She described such a safe space as extending beyond a physical concept, to include the 'way' that unconditional, non-hierarchical relatednesses are developed and sustained, in the presence of mutuality:

> ...there's risk, yeah… it can only work, or it won't work… but it's about creating that *safe space*… to reflect… to think about… to re-negotiate… and come to an understanding… what is it that you want to achieve?... to build the relationship… to re-build the relationship… to be on the same page… where *both* needs are respected…

… negotiating the relationship and the boundaries… it's not about the physical space… it's about *how* it's being done… *how* it's organized… *how* you create the space to sit, to talk… setting some boundaries… *talking* through it… to come to some understanding… but there needs to be equal power and relationship and respect. It's about building that trust and it's about building that relationship... but you can say those words, but if you... and Bama can pick up on people who are fakes... they get sorted out eventually.

Similarly, Waters (2001) called this in-between space an 'interstitial space' between incommensurable worldviews. She described this as an environment that is tentative, not fixed or permanent, where meanings are constantly re-negotiated, compromises enacted, and relatedness is nurtured.

This next contributor spoke about her commitment to practicing within the space created where the worldviews overlap. C. (page 119) reflected on the challenges and tensions that she experiences in this domain as an Indigenous worker, together with some of the ways that she sustains her relatedness to herself and to her People. C.'s view is similar to Martin's description of the need for: "...self-reflexivity in order to maintain autonomy" (2008, p. 82) within transformative work that is "...complex, dynamic and demanding" (2008, p. 80). C. continued:

...you know, I think my role is to try to get *these* people (*pointing to mainstream ways on a diagram representing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews*) to understand this stuff (*pointing to Indigenous*

community - voice sounding strong and clear). I think that's my journey, that's been a lot of my journey - and every now and then Spirit says to me: "...you can go out onto community" and I get wised-up ….you know?

R: ...so you spend a lot of time I this in-between space?

C: ...yes, yes...

R: ...does it use a lot of energy?

C: ...yeah, yeah… it does, and that's why I get tired...

R: ...is it a comfortable space?

C: ...no, no...

M. (page 145) described the tensions that she experiences as a non-Indigenous practitioner. For her, the in-between space presents a number of challenges to her worldview. She reflected on the ways that her sense of self and identity are at times confronted by the tensions of struggle, difference and transformation within this 'other' space:

> ...it's the *struggle* of being in that in-between space...in the non-Indigenous domain there is comfort to some degree, in that there are 'knowns' and you don't have to put very much effort into knowing those knowns because they *are* known... but when we go into this space here... (liminal space)... we're in a very different space and it looks like

we have to... have to *break* rules... and *create* rules... and *explore* for rules... and *operate without knowing* rules... in this space…and what's the *shared* language in there... what's *acceptable* in here... is it a combination of both ways?... it's actually a useful thing that I could talk with my Indigenous colleagues.

As an Indigenous community worker (page 226) H. too, discussed the uncertainty and challenges that must be faced when working within the liminality of an in-between space. For her, power relations would not dominate. It must be a shared space, an 'in-between space' where non-Indigenous and Indigenous Knowledges overlap – with each retaining their own identity, but collaborating in relatedness to finding solutions. However she remained emphatic that this important work is based on collaborative relatedness, is sustained by relatedness with Country, and is underpinned by shared respect, responsibility and accountability:

> …and the shared space, that's the right way… that's what makes this the right way… there's a boundary there, but its all about cultures working together… and it's scary when we have to step out of our home culture and into the shared space… ah, yes… because it's all about changing… it's all about changes. Change to us is like a taboo, because we are so used to this one culture, but you know that if you are to learn, we *have* to step out… it's very challenging… it's important that we take the time to talk about these things.

The following excerpt from H. has clear relatedness to the story of the Quampie filters as described by Martin (2008). For Martin the filters are metaphorically related to the practice of reflexivity that: "...enables active participation rather than stagnation, digression or dislocation" (2008, p. 77). H. went on to explain how she maintains her focus and energy:

> ...working in this in-between space… it's tiring, sometimes it's challenging and confusing… yes… 'cause you have to get some balance… when we know that something is not right, we go back and sit, that's when we go to our healing country… you know… that's who we are, that's where our energy comes from… (*laughing a lot*)... this sort of work is about seeing it happen. It's about working as a collective… and taking this message out*.

However Karin Ikas and Gerhard Wagner (2009) provided advice that for one to enter a shared 'third space', it is crucial to be in relatedness to the social and political circumstances which surround the context. Drawing on Martin (2008), this can be understood and enacted as Being in relatedness to Knowings of history and behaviours of Whiteness – the knowings and experiences of those with whom the 'third space' is being shared. Such knowings can only be achieved through respectful and accountable relatedness demonstrated by shared dialogues and behaviours of deep listening.

8.12   Implications for Learning:

Number of times discussed:

Many participants described specific behaviours and values for non-Indigenous practitioners to reflect on in relation to better ways of working with Indigenous people. Qualities such as humility, respect, openness, being non-judgemental, and a genuine interest in knowing more about other worldviews all featured highly in their discussions.

Research participants were unequivocal that these personal traits and behaviours should be enacted within any practice framework that values a social justice perspective. While formal learning can be acquired through the educative processes of the dominant culture, for Sinclair (2004, p. 53) an effective learning pedagogy would be informed from history, Indigenous peoples' experience of colonization, and Indigenous epistemology and culture.

Mezirow (1978) added that learnings are produced from the use of reflective insight, sensitivity, and an open, inclusive attitude. In order for these qualities to evolve, a worker needs to have been touched by transformative experiences – those which have challenged assumptions, reasonings, perspectives and meanings (Mezirow, 1978). Each of the following contributors referred to an effective worker as one who demonstrated the willingness to engage in ways of doing that are underpinned by a commitment to relatedness and a capacity for deep reflexivity.

'How the work is done' was very important for this Indigenous participant. T. (page 79) remembered a non-Indigenous community worker who had demonstrated a number of crucial qualities. As a result he was perceived as 'powerful' and deserving of a 'special name' by the Indigenous people that he had worked with. This contributor wanted non-Indigenous practitioners to understand that relationship and the ways of doing their work are paramount and are seen by Indigenous people as being a reflection of the person. Young, Zubrzycki, Green, Jones, Stratton and Bessarab similarly stressed a focus on process rather than product within practice (2013, p. 193). Below, T. stresses the importance of authenticity and reciprocity within ways of knowing, being and doing:

> ...a good person – the Old People say it in such a way... like harmony... there's a way they express it when people are working in this way – all balanced and... it was *the way* that he actually *worked* – and cared...

giving something back to the Community... he negotiated that in-between space well... and he is well-respected... he made a big impression on me... um, gosh... *he was a powerful man*... powerful, because he was respectful... a giving, humble person... and the People of the Community gave him this special Name.

A respectful 'not knowing', yarning, and genuine presence with Indigenous stakeholders was important for S., as a Torres Strait man (page 234). Within the literature Tuiwahi-Smith (1999) and Martin (2008) both emphasized the importance of such qualities, process and behaviours, to demonstrate authenticity, transparency and reciprocity. S. continued, saying that deep listening and real communication in 'speaking from the heart' builds respectful relatedness towards problem-solving:

> …and it's a *slow process*… and it's a *yarning thing.* The other thing is *don't expect* high expectations or start to be judgmental, or place demands on *how* things are going to happen… don't come in here with something structured. It's got to come from the *heart*… and its got to be free-moving… got to be a free-spirit type of environment… the mind needs to be *clear*… and also, when you are *wanting* to discuss whatever the issue is, it *has* to be… *you've* got to make yourself comfortable in *their* environment, you know?... (*voice becoming firm*)... and you need to understand and try and come to their level when you are communicating… because you can be talking over the top.

Participant A. W. (page 100) expressed his concern about the lack of processes to facilitate acknowledgment of, and learning about Indigenous ways of knowing and doing. According to Young et.al.: "Indigenous pedagogies are essential in the educative process" in order that 'epistemological equality' would inform practice from the perspective of Indigenous people (2013, p.183). This is supported by a number of Indigenous writers including Martin (2003), Moreton-Robinson (2004) and Tuhiwai-Smith (1999). The continuing presence of unequal power structures also remains a concern for A. W. as an Indigenous leader (page 98). For him a well thought-out approach to the 'frameworks' or 'doing the practice of learning' is required, so that new perspectives can be unpacked and revealed:

> ...as long as they don't get bogged down in their own self-importance… they need to be open to learning and moving on… at some stage, individuals are forced to move on… even institutions have frameworks that don't work… and the thing is, as we *learn* more, sometimes *our* reality changes too.

In relation to developing a culturally secure practice perspective, Hoskins (1999) suggested a foundation of continuous reflective learning, relatedness with knowledges, and the recognition that incommensurabilities exist between worldviews. For this writer, effective learning takes place when the practitioner functions from a position of 'not knowing' - a non-expert standpoint underpinned by qualities such as humility and a desire to understand. However, for Indigenous

academic S.L. (page 253), many non-Indigenous stakeholders do not choose to undertake the hard work of reflexivity and knowledge-building in relation to their own practice with Indigenous peoples. He was clear that:

> …not knowing, and not knowing the reasons for 'not knowing' … people are socialized to learn *some* things and *not others*… that's why they like to say they don't know, they haven't bothered to learn, to know… they haven't *wanted to* know because it's never been seen as *important* to know… if they'd bothered to mobilize up… they've got to do some *work*… (*chuckling*)… it's *ignorance*… you know… it's not something that's existed by *accident*… you know, tools of ignorance… how are they produced… and how are they sustained?

8.13 Implications for 'better practice':

Number of times discussed:

A bar chart showing the number of times discussed. The "by non-Indigenous participants" bar reaches 4, and the "by Indigenous participants" bar reaches 21. The vertical axis is scaled from 0 to 25 in increments of 5.
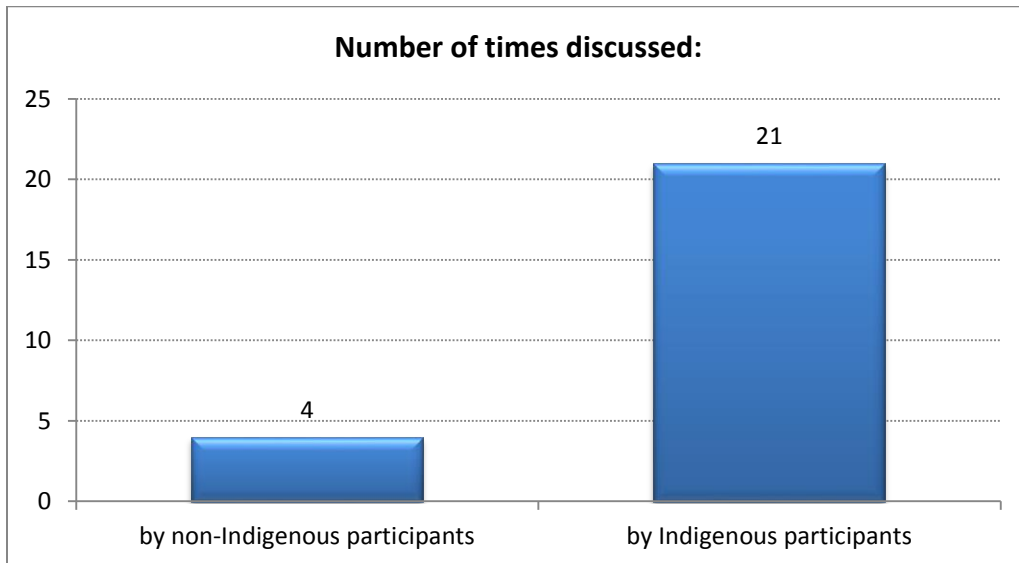
Storyteller and author Boori Monty Pryor, says that when he is discussing racism, he avoids angry or political words because some people tend to 'switch off'. Pryor stated that he is in fact, really talking about humanity:

> ...after I've finished talking I don't want...(non-Indigenous people)... to run up the road waving an Aboriginal flag shouting 'land rights'. I want them to take a deep breath, think about ways to find out what they don't know, and then make their own decisions (2011, p. 10).

For Martin (2008) practice is manifested from being and doing knowledge and is crucially supported by respect and relatedness with ones ways of Being. For Martin, three primary 'ways of doing' should be engaged. Firstly, this means 'doing' perspicacity, mediation and filtering of meanings. Secondly the task is to

stay connected. The third 'doing' is to cope with instability, ebb and flow, changes, alignments and realignments (2008, p. 77).

This was clearly confirmed by a number of contributors, who stated that h*ow* practitioners do things, is more important than *what* they *do*. Participants were unambiguous that workers' intent and values are explicit and 'readable' in the *ways* that they negotiate their engagement, and in the *ways* that their practice is done. It is extremely significant that most of the Indigenous participants used adjectives to describe the *characteristics* of a 'good practitioner'. There was a distinct absence of verbs to describe what the non-Indigenous worker would *do*. It was clear that the worker's ways of *Being* are prioritized over their ways of *doing*.

The following three Indigenous contributors were clear about the qualities that a non-Indigenous worker should bring to their work with Indigenous people. A. W. (page 100), was adamant that a worker can choose to be 'as *genuine* as we like, or we can make it as *half-hearted* as we like'. For this participant, a number of easily recognized qualities are essential within practice with Indigenous stakeholders:

> ...it *is* about the language and what it is you're trying to communicate…
> and it *is* about 'are we hitting on the nail that's pertinent to how the Mob
> want to do it'. It's just about some 'common sense' and professionalism
> about how you engage with another Human Being... *is anything ever*
> *more than that?* We can make it as *simple* as we like, or *complicated* as

we like... we can make it as *genuine* as we like, or we can make it as *half-hearted* as we like. It's about *' what do you bring to this engagement'*... um, because I have a *trust* in you and what you're saying, and what you've got to deliver to me is 'the genuine article'... you're a person of... *good judgement* and *good heart*... that's the *rapport stuff*... and if we don't come to any compromise, then it's... 'well, *how* do we do it differently'.

In the same way, C. (page 119) was adamant that an effective way of doing practice is inextricably linked to self-reflexivity. She made particular linkages between ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing, and perceptively acknowledged that transformative opportunities are presented within practice struggles. For her, a fundamentally better practice approach will evolve when non-Indigenous practitioners learn to accept such risks, and make an effort to establish respectful rapport with Indigenous people. C. affirmed that an effective practice framework is focussed towards the maintenance of relatedness, while developing the capacity to sit-with, and be in reflexive relatedness to the tensions associated with learning better ways of working. She described this way of doing, as "building bridges". This is similar to the Quampie methodology described by Martin wherein a respectful, responsible practitioner would prioritize the discernment of: "...what is useful and what is harmful, to Self and to relatedness" (2008, p. 69). For C. such ways of doing relate to being honest, and working with head, heart, hands and spirit:

...the trouble is, a new person is probably buddied up with a more experienced worker who is tainted, but this new worker could stay "solid to myself - I know what I'm about". So I go out on my first visit, and build myself into the community, so that people see that I might be there to help them… if I'm new and insecure, just won the job, I'll probably need to tell them a bit about myself and introduce myself. Community calls them 'newbies'. If I'm white, I'm probably scared 'cause I don't know how it works. I need to get to know people, to build relationship and it takes time - sharing food and yahdy ya… talking about family, and football and baby, and all that… be 'I myself' … being honest about it in a way that is not about putting it up as an armour… you have to do head and hands, but you can do it with the other parts as well (heart and spirit) and relationship… and take time, but you have to be explicit about the reason for being there, but in the right way..with respect… like: "I have to do this" and "I want to be of value to you". Being your self and taking risks - a scary place to be. Hiding behind the document could make you safe from some of that scary stuff… and then the relationship is affected - but if it goes well, a bridge is built… but they need to know what you are on about… open and transparent communication… and people can get cranky and brutal because they've been burnt before. They say: "...where did that one get their learning from?" Workers have to realize that people *want* to do the right thing.

This next contributor warned that when *doing* takes precedence over relationship, where relatedness has not been established and reflexivity is not engaged within practice, the non-Indigenous worker is likely to be perceived by Indigenous stakeholders as 'big-noting'. For Deb M. (page 155) a process of cultural mentoring, or accessing a 'cultural navigator' would assist the non-Indigenous practitioner in their learning about 'right ways of being' with Indigenous stakeholders:

> ...this person has never been to that community before... they don't
> have any connection, they don't have any *relationship*... and then we go
> to a meeting, and *I'm* there, and *she*... let's say I take *you* along, and we
> go to a Community meeting, and I've invited you along and we're going
> to go there together... and then instead of you taking your lead from me,
> and um... you just started rambling on, and talking about stuff... I'd say
> you were 'big-noting'... because you are not learning, you're not waiting
> to be led... and to figure out whether you have the right to talk... whether
> you have the right to do whatever.

As a non-Indigenous participant, M. (page 145) reflected on the importance of negotiation and dialogue within the interpersonal space between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders. She was clear that practice should be free from assumptions and reticence, and instead be characterized by respectful ways of being in relatedness with each other:

...to what degree does the legitimacy of each viewpoint contribute to the desired outcome... and it perhaps goes back to this in-between space... and a lot of dialogue - there can be no *assumptions* in that space...almost *everything* has to be negotiated... because it's new turf... including in the way those two stakeholders are relating to each other... those knowns and unknowns have to get negotiated.

Participant H. (page 226) highlighted that non-Indigenous workers need to recognize the significance of relatedness to Country, People, Culture and Community. For her, the non-Indigenous worker would demonstrate respect by acknowledging Indigenous people as the caretakers and guardians of Their Country. She also advised the non-Indigenous stakeholders to just 'be' by 'showing your self'. H. equally reinforced the centrality of relatedness, underpinned with reciprocated respect and honour of each other. She described her Peoples' agency in regulating Outsiders who disrespect relatedness. For her, the non-Indigenous worker should recognize the importance of Knowing and Being, before they focus on *doing.* Importantly, H. drew a relationship between 'good practice' and the historical experiences of Indigenous people, reminding the non-Indigenous practitioner that they are: "...coming into their country – but not to invade":

> ...*ask* for help… and like I said, that's *very* important... we will take
> them to community, introduce them to the Elders, to people who can
> help them with their work… we will take them and meet up with them

and introduce them... acknowledging people is very important - and to know that you are accepted is very important. You are stepping into *their* country… but not to 'invade'… it's all about coming together, working together… visiting… that you're only *visiting*… and the community, they have their laws, they have their culture and their practices also… *(strong voice)*. They are the *guardians* - they're the *caretakers.* They need that respect... that respect has to be shown. This is so important, because respect is a two-way - you want them to respect you, you have to respect them. It's just like honour - you honour them, they'll honour you… there's no other way of talking … it's just all about *showing yourself* and respecting… yeah… *(voice trailing off after talking strong)*.

Several contributors commented on inappropriate practice by non-Indigenous workers, and the negative impacts for Indigenous Peoples and Communities. Notably participant Steve (page 253) took it a step further when he emphasized two salient points in relation to uninterrogated practice. Firstly, that:

…there is a right way to work, but it comes more from that *critical awareness* of the *standpoint*… and that you're prepared to *do* that work around *re-examining* your own *assumptions*… and that that person would then relate it to a new way of thinking and doing… and the person who hasn't done that work will try and re-frame things back into their own epistemological framework...

…and secondly:

> …there is *colonial artefacts* in the thinking… and so they *automatically*
> *presuppose*… they position themselves into a *helping* position…and
> helping is a *power* word… you know: "I *help you* because you *need to*
> *be…* where *I* am".

Research contributors clearly described ways of practicing that are similar to that articulated by Martin, who stated that Ways of Doing, practicing and behaving are informed and evolved from relatedness with our Ways of Knowing and our Ways of Being, (2008, p. 79). For Martin, continuous self-reflexivity offers opportunities for transformative work when the practitioner becomes immersed in relatedness on both a conscious and subconscious level. Such engagement thus results in: "...observing, discerning, filtering, applying, reflecting, sharing, and confirming... then you do it all over again, like the enfoldments and evolvements of a transformation" (Martin, 2008, pp. 79-80).

On page 205 above, non-Indigenous community worker A. described his enactment of self-reflexivity as having 'pride in the processes'. Similarly for McLaughlin: "...the demonstration of praxis, of deliberate efforts to include Indigenous knowledges... models cultural competency and professional responsibility" (2013, p. 8).

8.14 Participant reflections: honouring the process in research engagement:

Number of times discussed:

	by non-Indigenous participants	by Indigenous participants
Value	4	12
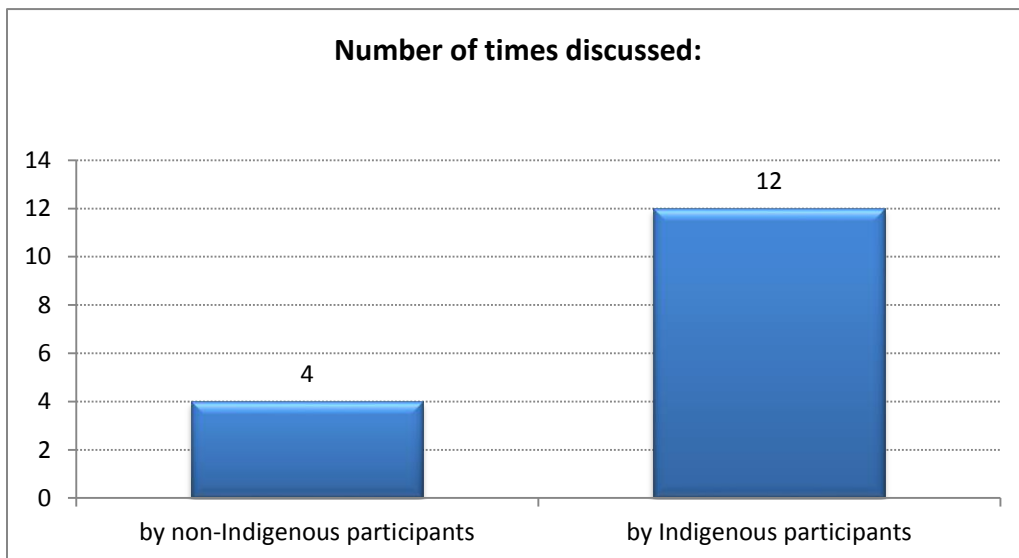
As previously described, the research interviews had been conducted as a narrative yarning session. Each discussion was marked by a relaxed ebb and flow of dialogue, and came to a natural ending, as different to being directed by the researcher. This is consistent with a respectful Indigenist methodology (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2011).

A single exception occurred on a remote community in Northern Cape York. Two participants were engaged in a shared yarning session, when they were called to an urgent phone call, and were unable to continue the discussions. We planned to meet again later, but their work demands precluded their availability at that time. However, they keenly expressed appreciation at being able to 'yarn' about these important things.

Thus, it is accurate to report that all contributors expressed safety and satisfaction with their participation in the research. The following concluding comments demonstrate summary thoughts and satisfaction levels.

T. (page 79) described how the discussion had stimulated her thinking and helped her to fine-tune some previous thoughts and reflections. Her comments below are a reflection of her generous sharing of knowledges and thoughts. The interview with T. was the beginning of many years of reflective discussions about better ways of practice. Within these ongoing conversations, she described her experiences in presenting her model of Indigenous Spirituality in a number of forums. Over this time, her model has continued to develop. This has demonstrated the evolvement of knowledge and relatedness for both the contributor and the researcher – reciprocity within the inquiry journey:

> ...yeah, thanks, I enjoyed that... *thinking* about that Spirituality stuff –it's
> been in my head for a long, long time... and you know, it *could* take
> me... you know, who knows *when* I might get the opportunity to do a
> PhD... and I can get things out of my head, and if there's somebody
> else who's prompted my thinking... and based on my own learnings,
> and my own upbringing... so be it... yep, I'm happy!

At the conclusion of A.W.'s discussion (page 100) he was adamant that he did not need me to 'check-back' with him regarding my understanding of the information he had provided - his Story. At the time I was taken aback, because I believed that this was an implicit and ethical part of the research practice – to

decentre myself as researcher, and to ensure authenticity, validity and reciprocity. However his comments invited much deep reflection on what I understood to be an appropriate process. As a result, I came to appreciate that the depth of our shared relatedness was beyond the need for him to provide confirmation:

> ...I don't require it back... I know what I've said to you... and I know that you and I have a trust... and I trust that it will be used in the best interests of People's wellbeing… you're most welcome... *(laughing).*

Towards the conclusion of our conversation about the research question, C. (page 119) began to reflect on her own Being. She said that she wanted to take some time away to care for her Self. In summarizing, she stressed the importance of sharing knowledges, being one's self, and in working with each other towards solutions. Similar to Martin's (2008) description of relatedness, C.'s concluding comment re-connects with this fundamental way of knowing, being and doing in relation to self and others:

> ...I'm soon going to be taking some time off *(from her work)*… I'm getting a bit tired… I think it's my time now. I haven't got my network around me…. But the women that I've worked with in community have nurtured me – they give it willingly - the wisdom is out there – I don't have to tell them anything they don't already know – it's about harnessing their wisdoms - their knowledges are like a library. Workers should amplify and facilitate balance by making invitations from their

own knowledge base, and understand the other wisdoms and knowledge is there – not coming in as the expert – generosity is unbelievable – even at funerals, the whole community who attends, even at the ending relationship is important… it doesn't end, it keeps going on.

H. (page 226) similarly described the importance of working within collaborative relatedness based on shared respect, responsibility and accountability. This means that it is not negotiable that a non-Indigenous worker should demonstrate respect for People within Country. For H. this included knowing one's place in relation to the country, and being respectful of the people whose country it is. H. affirmed that it is crucial to sustain and maintain energy and focus. She described how staying in touch with her Ways of Knowing and Ways of Being, has assisted her to keep her balance when she is positioned between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews:

> ...yes it's tiring, sometimes it's challenging and confusing… 'cause you have to get some balance… when we know that something is not right, we go back and sit, that's when we go to our healing country… you know… that's who we are, that's where our energy comes from… *(laughing a lot)*... this sort of work is about seeing it happen. It's about working as a collective… and taking this message out.

For B. (page 136) the yarning session brought up some strong emotions. Before discussing the concluding parts of our yarnings, it is necessary to provide some

further context in order to properly respect B.'s contribution. She had talked about the very deep anger produced from her experiences of feeling shamed by non-Indigenous Australians. I got the impression that she didn't like being angry about this. Her verbal and non-verbal language was of anger, and a couple of times she glanced at me to see if I was reacting what she was saying – the fact that non-Indigenous Australia has been demeaning Aboriginality, in a range of ways since colonization.

Somewhere through the conversation I asked her if she thought that there was any hope of change. Immediately her voice and face softened and she said: "...of course - there has to be hope and change, otherwise what are we doing, what are we leaving for the future". I was deeply touched by the extreme generosity that I was observing and hearing – a violated person, expressing anger at racial injustice, and immediately expressing hope and anticipating change for the future. How humble I felt in being part of this trusting dialogue of personal vulnerability coupled with great strength and power.

Through her presence, she gifted her personal story, knowledge and experience to my Self as researcher and to the broader public through her contribution to research knowledge. In 'coming alongside' her Story, we are offered opportunity to reflect, learn, respect and dialogically engage with responsibility and accountability. As Martin stated: "...it begins with Ways of Knowing, enfolds Ways of Being, and evolves to Ways of Doing" (2008, p. 79).

As we neared the end of our conversation, B. again referred to her experiences of racism, and became a little tense. Continuing the yarn, I mentioned a conversation that I had with Karen Martin, during which she had stated that non-Indigenous people have the responsibility to contribute to, and facilitate, de-colonization by engaging in collaborative processes towards true reconciliation in this country. At this B. became extremely energized, focused and lighter of mood, and asked me more about my conversations and relationship with Karen. Once again I experienced B.'s generosity of Being and Doing, when she said: "...as TO (traditional owner), I welcomed her to country, China Camp, when she brought *her* research back to country". B.'s pride in being part of Karen's research was unmistakable. At that moment she was beyond the pain of her memories and experiences. She was proud of her heritage, work, experiences and vision. B. then went on to talk about the good work that we had done in the previous years, and we concluded the conversation with some discussions about some of the client-focused activities she might try in her new job – and the decision to meet again to continue the discussions.

Likewise for Deb M. (page 155), the discussions had covered a number of key concepts that she was passionate about, including her experiences of racism and neo-colonialisms. She too, affirmed her experience of the research process. Again, our pre-existing relatedness had created a safe environment for D. to share her knowledges and experiences, including those which had dishonoured her sovereignty as an Aboriginal woman:

...hmm... it's been good... it's been interesting... and like I said, it's been quite enjoyable... yeah... it's been really good.

As a non-Indigenous contributor, M. (page 145) reflected on her journeying through the yarning session and expressed surprise and yet satisfaction, at the depth and intensity of dialogue:

...I was a bit *nervous* coming to this interview, because I didn't know that I'd have anything to talk about – and it seems that I *had a bit* to talk about! *(laughing)*... we pulled out more 'space' than you anticipated.

Ng. (pseudonym, page 179) another non-Indigenous contributor, had lived in an Indigenous community for many years. This participant reflected on the significance and ethics of the research project:

...to be really effective, and to really work on 'a problem' you can't just come and 'do it' in a short period of time… that's why *I'm* sitting here… *I* wouldn't do this interview, or talk with you about this stuff, if I didn't think that what is going to come from it, is going to help *solve problems*… and becoming a 'known' and therefore becoming a 'trusted' and being seen as not another 'fly-by-nighter'… how do we compress that? I think that what you're doing… um… could go some way to helping that. I think that *you're* talking… what *you're* wanting to do here will *help other people who come after you*… and who come after me… and they won't

have to *reinvent the wheel* every time a new person comes in… um…
they will have something to refer to.

For Djapirri (page 191), engaging in a respectful process is crucial to learning. Her participation in the research had demonstrated our shared relatedness and her acceptance of the researcher:

> …so there's a *process*… sitting down and *listening*… listening to *the voice* of the Yolngu People… and that is an important part in the Yolngu culture, for the non-Yolngu to be accepted… and if they don't do that, *then you've wasted your time*. That is one of the main things… learning about Yolngu knowledge and ngapaki knowledge… *never take things for granted*… always give back… you've got ngapaki knowledge and Yolngu knowledge, and *there* you see a *big* tree growing beautiful and rooting… fertilized with the goodness of your action, your words towards that young tree.

Sharon M. (page 199) had initially verbalized some reservation that her contribution would be useful, however within the conversational yarning of the interview process, she told several stories to more deeply illustrate the points that she was talking about. The narrative approach clearly facilitated depth and breadth of discussion, in a relaxed and informal way, with the direction being led and set by the participant. This provided the context for layers-on-layers of stories, and associated enhancement of rapport, safety and trust for her as contributor. In addition, the yarning process strengthened a 'coming alongside' in

relatedness as discussed by Martin (2008, p. 79). Dialoguing in this way created opportunities for sharing and reciprocity from the researcher participant – a giving and taking within the relationship created by the interview process. For this participant:

> ...it's not impossible to do good work… non-Indigenous people have done a *lot* of good work in community over the years… but they are usually the people who came and sat quietly… and were just so open to it… to taking on the cultural safety too… just being so aware of what their boundaries were… being open to 'not knowing'… *(long silence)*… *(strong voice)*… thank you for this …I was scared to start talking, but it went good.

As a non-Indigenous community worker, Alistair (page 205) reflected on the amount of energy he used in constantly interrogating and re-interrogating the actions and decisions of his practitioner-self. He described not only his frequent self-doubt, but also his clarity about why he does what he does, in the way that he does it. For him, good practice is one in which epistemology, ontology and axiology join-up in an inter-relatedness underpinned by sustained reflexivity and self-interrogation:

> …and in my work here, it's an important balance between the way of doing the work, and the *push* for outcomes… because if you don't think about those things, then you can find yourself imposing your own views… and then not recognizing what I think to be the most important

aspect of *any* work that affects communities… and that is to not further marginalize or disadvantage through *process*.

Participant Josie (page 212) was similarly clear that a shared relatedness was most important to any practice between a non-Indigenous worker and Indigenous stakeholders:

> …*and when you walk around, you're not somebody new now… you're sort of like family*… and we *expect* People coming into our Community to be *friendly* and *want to have a good relationship*… coming with good spirit and good heart, and everything will go smoothly… it is all good... yes.

For Steven and Patti (page 234) who shared in a group discussion, it was imperative that respectful practices, processes and ways of doing should be informed from knowledges and processes other than those of the dominant culture:

> …the business *must* be done differently. It might be *harder* for them because they probably don't know about the protocol, black fella cultural protocol… and you've gotta find a way, but don't *assume…(firm voice)*.

As a non-Indigenous contributor, Jill (page 246) described how relatedness was an important component of her participation in the research process:

> ...hmm... well, I think we shared a common practice base... I think there
> are many things... and I'm excited to see you doing the work that you
> are... from the space that you are doing it... thank you.

Steven L.(page 253), a senior Indigenous academic, concluded his contribution by sharing knowledge he had discovered in his own research. He particularly highlighted some epistemological processes by non-Indigenous stakeholders that continue to marginalize Indigenous people:

> ...to close off... as an example, what I found in mine - I interviewed
> twenty-three Senior Executive Services officers in the Commonwealth
> Government, Bands 1 to 3... half Indigenous and half non-Indigenous...
> it's just that I'm writing it up now, one thing that became *really* apparent,
> is with the non-Indigenous executives could only imagine Indigenous
> employees being in service delivery, at base grade or as trainees... and
> so I'm picking that apart... and what I'm saying is, that it's sort of the
> resilience of the deficit school... it's all a part of it.

The underpinning values for this analysis have included to: maintain relatednesses within the research process; explore for key concepts identified from the literature and discussions; investigate connectednesses between the contributed narratives and the literature; and to draw attention to contributors' knowledges and lived experiences. This task of critique has brought a range of issues alongside each other, as different to separating them from their contexts and realities. In these ways, the pathway towards a de-colonizing paradigm has

become clearer for the non-Indigenous practitioner, as it has for the researcher-Self.

Chapter 9:   Reframing: Meaning and relevance of findings.

For Scott, when listening to the dialogues of others, insight occurs in the space between words: "... if we learn how to listen to them, they will guide us" (2004, p. 186).

Critical engagement with the narratives of the contributors reinforced my responsibility and accountability to two primary stakeholder groups. Firstly I needed to ensure the respectful inclusion of the participants' knowledges. Secondly to the inquiry endeavour itself – to construct a framework that clearly demonstrated linkages with the literature and with the research processes.

Deep analysis and immersion within the shared dialogues revealed definitive linkages with Indigenist methodologies that have epistemology, ontology and axiology as conceptual anchor-points. These have been articulated as ways of Knowing, ways of Being and ways of Doing with relatedness as the fundamental premise (Martin, 2008; Moreton-Robinson, 2010).

In this way, Martin's relatedness theory has provided the guiding framework for all research tasks, including a 'reframing' to focus on the emerging Stories (2008, p. 85). In line with the reflexivity required by Indigenist methods, deep and thoughtful examination of the information and knowledges provided by the participant contributors has revealed crucial messages implicit and explicit in their 'data'. For Martin (2008, p. 85): "…the project of re-framing requires the re-conceptualization of what is emerging from the project of critique".

9.1: Reviewing the themes through the lenses of Epistemology (Knowledge and knowing), Ontology (Being, self and relatedness), and Axiology (Doing and practices).

Initially, key concepts were identified in the literature review as having the potential to inform a decolonizing practice paradigm. Within the analysis phase, these were confirmed by the themes within the participants' narratives. However these processes were neither linear nor sequential. The research project has been characterized by multiple processes occurring in a multi-layered way, at many different times. Just as the macro-process of research has evolved and become multifaceted, so has the content as additional questions became revealed through deeper exploration and investigation.

Likewise examination and re-visiting of the interviews, conversations and narrative story-working has expanded, amplified and consolidate core elements of this inquiry. Martin (2008) would describe this 'coming together' as an evolvement in relatedness between the parts within both the process and content of the research project. Thus the next task within this inquiry is to look at the relationships between the key themes, and to position them within the fundamental framework of Relatedness Theory and practice.

In fulfillment of this, the following matrix has been developed. The first column names the relatedness context of Knowing, Being or Doing. Secondly, the key themes or concepts are situated within this milieu. The third column summarizes the contributors' descriptions on the ways that they have experienced the enactment of these issues. The right-hand column then defines the consequence

of such ways of knowing, being and doing. Therefore, this Table links the research stakeholders' lived experiences and knowledges, and provides some insights into the elements that would inform a decolonizing practice paradigm – both 'what to do' and 'what *not* to do'.

Table 1: **Matrix of Knowing, Being and Doing.**

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Knowing and practice	Power: "…*Doing* because I know best and I can…"	Power over other; Control; Attributed power in return for particular support; Creating division; Corporatization of 'practices'; Over-use of 'Head' and 'Hands'; Absence of 'Heart and Spirit'.	Lack of relatedness; Lack of respectful processes; Diminished accountability to People; Diminished responsibility for collaborative practices.
	Race	Racialised actions and behaviours; Racialised languaging; Stereotyping; 'Whiteness' as a definer of Indigeneity;	Shame; Damage to relatedness, sovereignty and agency; Discursive thinking and Neo-colonial assumptions.
	Colonialisms "…*Doing* because I know best and I can…"	Over-use of 'Head' and 'Hands'; Absence of 'Heart and Spirit'.	Trans-generational traumas; Corporatization of human services; Damage to trust and rapport; Lack of relatedness, lack of respect, and lack of accountability to Community;

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Knowing and practice (ctd.)	Whiteness (…an inherited and discursive way of Knowing, Being and Doing - '*Doing* because I know best and I can…')	Over-use of 'Head' and 'Hands'; Centering of white self; Whiteness as normative from which Others are positioned; Lack of 'Heart' and 'Spirit'; Racism and colonial artifacts in Being in whiteness and others as 'same as me' or 'different to me';	Lack of relatedness; No respect, responsibility or accountability towards Indigenous Peoples; Lack of critical awareness and introspective awareness of white standpoint; Lack of a 'borderland' or 'third space' – which would be featured by a lack power relation, and instead marked by the presence of relatedness and respect.
Being and practice	Reflexivity	Connection between Head and Heart before Doing; Deep relatedness to Self; Relatedness to own knowledges and values; Respect for self-responsibility and self-accountability; Honesty with Self; How you work out what you should be	Taking time to reflect; Avoiding busy-ness; Having reference points; Asking important questions about 'how to"; Learning the 'language' of the Other; Putting Heart and Soul into something; Knowing that it's the right thing to do; Learning 'stuff'; A remembering and thinking process;

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Being and practice (ctd.)		doing; A hyperconsciousness about how you go about dong business; I am only a part of the process; Devolving control; Deep introspection;	Honestly reflecting on what you're doing; A whole new way of thinking and feeling and doing; Understanding society and society's institutions in another way.
	Relatedness	Being and Knowing; Established before Doing – in order to Do in right way; Being in relatedness to Self and Others; Respect for Self and Others; Responsibility and accountability to Self and Others; Building the relationships, building the trust;	Room to reflect on it and think 'how can we work through this?'; Opportunity to negotiate and re-build relationship; Trust and accountability; Embedded levels of interpersonal engagement and genuineness; Increased levels of positive perception; Being invited to 'join with' the Other; Being perceived as a 'straight up' person; 'nothing can happen before you've got relationship and rapport' - interconnectedness;

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Being and practice (ctd.)			Connecting to someone who is 'more than this bit you see'; Your approach being perceived as acknowledging of people and Community.
	Liminality and a Third Space	Knowing and Being and Doing in relatedness; Mutuality – working with likeminded people; Shared respect, responsibility and accountability; Communitas; Equal power and relationship and respect; *How* you create the safe space - setting some boundaries; Taking the time to discuss and share; Learning and stepping out of own space into a shared space.	Creation of a safe space to reflect, to think about and to negotiate; Building of relationship, or re-building of relationship; Being on the same page, where *both* needs are respected; Building of trust; Can be challenging if an unfamiliar place; The 'right way' – cultures working together; Working as a collective

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Being and practice (ctd.)	Sovereignty and agency	Knowing and Being and Doing embedded in Relatednesses and Connections; Relatedness to all Things underpinned by respect, responsibility and accountability (Martin 2008); Head, Heart, Hands, and Spirit as strengths of the grandfathers;	Supporting the true values of the Mob; Spiritual Culture maintaining itself; Benchmark for Right – the Core Principles through Time; Reflections for non-Indigenous people: Affects how some People respond to Government – non-Indigenous people need to have a willingness to understand the pain, the journey, the struggles of Indigenous Peoples(Cindy, 2009); When there is a damage to Relatedness, it causes injury to sense of Being, Agency and sovereignty of Self (Betty, 2009); Need to acknowledge and Know sovereignty and relatedness for Indigenous Peoples, *and* Need to take the blinkers off our heads and establish relationships and partnerships (Ng., 2009).

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Doing and practice	Learning	Doing in relatedness with Being and Knowing; The way he actually worked; A good person in harmony and balance – the Old People have a special name for this way of working; Negotiating the in-between space well; Being open to learning; It's a slow process; 'Not knowing' and not knowing the reasons for 'not knowing'; People are socialized to learn some things and not others;	Well-respected in Community; Giving something back – reciprocity; As we learn more, sometimes our *reality* changes; Work needs to come from the heart, without expectations, judgments, or demands; People like to say they don't know, they haven't bothered to learn; They haven't wanted to know because its never seemed important to know; Reflections for non-Indigenous people: - They've got to do some work! - Tools of ignorance – how are they produced and how are they sustained?

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Doing and practice (ctd.)	Doing (in Relatedness to Country, People, Community – Martin, 2008)	Doing in relatedness to Head and Heart (Knowing and Being); Showing *yourself*; Commonsense and professionalism and how you engage with another Human Being; What do you bring to this engagement; 'Solid to myself - I know what I'm about'; Being 'I myself'; Doing 'Heart and Spirit' in addition to 'Head and Hands'; Being yourself and taking risks with open and transparent communication; The 'in-between space' with a lot of dialogue and no assumptions – everything has to be negotiated; Knowns and unknowns have to be negotiated; Asking for help;	Government needs to sit as assist a collaborative process for Community representation; Community needs to be looking to 'Aboriginal Way' of solving problems; What worker brings to the process that enhances the issues at hand; Its about the language and how its communicated; 'Are we doing it the way the Mob wants to do it'; 'I have a trust in you and what you are saying'; Good heart, good judgement and rapport; Building of Self into Community so they may see some of the Self; Getting to know People, building relationship and taking time;

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Doing and practice (ctd.)		Acknowledging People and Country; The People are the guardians and caretakers – they need that respect;	Doing 'right way' with respect and taking proper time; New turf including the way stakeholders relate to each other; Taking your lead from another Person; Learning and waiting to be led; Figuring out whether you have the right to speak or do something; You are stepping into Their Country, but not to *invade*, just *visiting*; Coming together, working together; Respect is two-way – you want them to respect you, you have to respect them; You honour them, they'll honour you;
	Decolonizing (Doing in relatedness to Self and Others)	Doing in relatedness to knowledge, colonial policies and practices, whiteness, neo-colonialisms; Collaborative 'knowing' and 'doing';	Doing with respect, responsibility and accountability; Making work applied and practical, instead of words on a book;

Fundamental question of:	Theme related to:	Enacted as:	Visible as:
Doing and practice (ctd.)		Practitioner owning the words, living the words and the unpacking it in your own head so that you can believe it; Acknowledging trans-generational trauma as a consequence of colonizing policies and practices; Being in-tune to understand that it's such two different worlds – there is so much to be taught and so much to be learnt; Doing 'learning' in relatedness with Indigenous Peoples.	Any sort of work with Community; Taking a story-line approach; It's about relationship first; Bringing People on board; Reflexive practices which acknowledge that historical patterns associated with the 'colonial state' have failed because the idea that 'white man knows best' are untrue; 'We're not there yet' – need to share Knowledges and Learning.

Within the practice and processes of this research, as well as 'the ways forward' that were articulated by participants, echoes remained of the head, heart hands and Spirit model of practice developed from my groundings in community development. As mentioned earlier, on page 383 of this thesis, I present a Head, Heart, Hands and Spirit model that came out of a yarning session with my cultural Grandmother, Dhanggal. For me, this draws together a number of elements that contributors have described as being of core importance to a decolonizing practice way of Knowing, Being and Doing.

For Kelly and Sewell:

> ...the support, wisdom, insight and worldviews of our co-travellers are vital, as is their critique of our work. In this collegial process, we are each holding bits of a whole, that none of us can fully see, all becoming more than what we currently are (1988, p. 84).

9.2: Discussion and Implications - what the contributors said on Knowing, Being and Doing.

Number of times discussed:
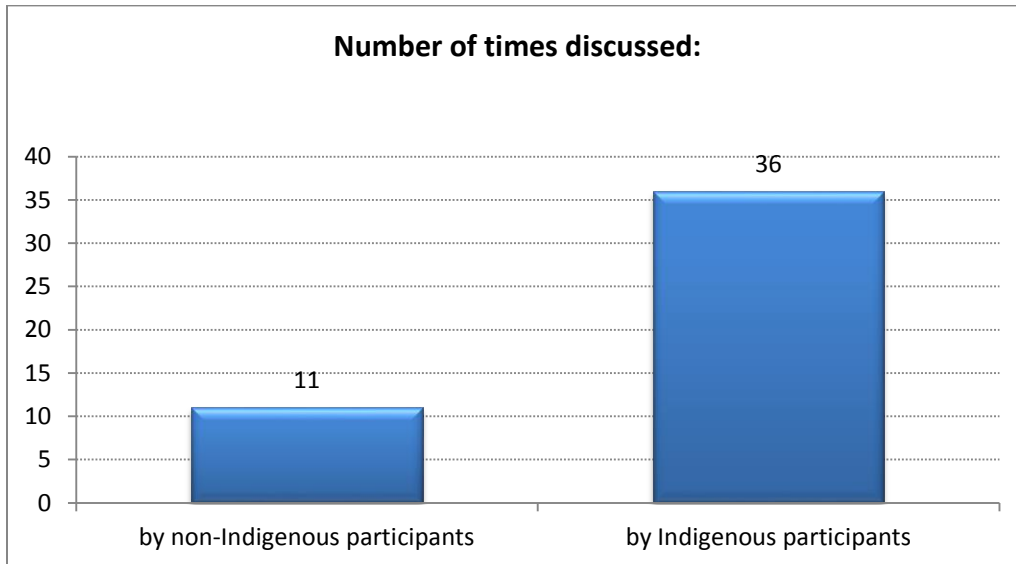
This graph gives a picture of how often the contributors discussed ways of Knowing and Being and Doing, particularly in relation to practice. For Partridge (2008) practice has inevitable encounters with power. He stated that when practice is aligned with ethical and political dimensions, the concept of praxis "...draws our attention to the asymmetrical relationships of power" and invites the practitioner to gain knowledge with which to act ethically and justly (2008, p.166).

T. (page 79) spoke to the 'wholeness' of knowing, being and doing within an Indigenous worldview, and compared this to the 'silos' of a non-Indigenous perspective:

> …when I hear 'social determinants of health', it's *always* associated
> with health… but non-Indigenous people don't see that as holistic. They
> think education sits here, health sits here, this sits here, and that sits

there... you know, they think in silos. Indigenous people think holistic…
that's the difference… when we look at health, health isn't just about our
physical health… *health is everything* – our *land*, our *culture*, our
customary practices – it's that *whole spiritual – it's the Spirituality of
Being – of our Aboriginality*… and I see spirituality as the higher being,
or the higher authority – when you look at the Spirituality – the
centrepiece of *Spirituality* is *the Land*, then you have *the Sharing* and
Caring and *the Values*, and *the Principles*, and then you have *the
Culture*, *the Customary practices*… song and dance, traditional foods
and medicines – the *doing things*… things that we *do* as *Aboriginal
People*… so the song, dance – this is the whole *Spirituality – all of
this*… it's the *Higher,* it's *the Higher* – it's *Everything*… if you take the
Land away, right?... the whole thing is not Spirituality… if you pull out
the Values and the Principles, and the Land – put the Land back there,
it's still not Spirituality, but if you glue them all together – the Land, the
Values and Principles in which you live and raise your family, your
cultural practices… that we do as Aboriginal people… the song, the
dance, the traditional hunting, the food, the way we communicate in our
languages… um… you know, protecting our totems – *all* of those
things, *all of it* – that's what Spirituality is – if you take one of those
away, it leaves a hole… *it leaves a gap*.

For C. (page 119) as an Indigenous woman, ways of knowing, being and doing are inextricably linked, and remain embedded within relatedness. In a soft reflective voice she said:

> ...some could describe it as a garden or a cooking with ingredients going in – a garden is a place where you have time and space, and life, and you are not in control of it, you just hope that you can grow something – cooking is like you have a recipe, or a service agreement, and you throw in things, and then you think back to grandmothers recipe, or someone's told you something, and it starts to evolve… do you know what I mean, like the recipe of life..? *(thinking in silence)* I think what it is… do you know what it is? *(animated voice)* … Aboriginal people think of themselves as cylindrical and energy… that way… and white people think in bricks, square… so they lay their foundation in the schooling and pre-school years – they build their blocks, one block onto another – it's a different concept isn't it? …block-building… because you get a structure, but you also get a bad back and sore arms from doing it, you know? Somewhere it seems important to say: "...does the emperor really have clothes on, or are we just all carting bricks side by side, because somebody told me it was an important thing to do" ... and for what? It's fundamental, and somewhere there is a key – about dialoguing difference and negotiating – and it will only happen if we have some basic things like trust and relationship, and it will take time.

Time is money, but the cost is high if we don't … otherwise why do we have the language of 'close the gap'… and it's about humility, and not ego and own importance of wanting to climb the corporate ladder and promotion. People are more important - and learning, *collective* learning… importance of going back to reference points of what we believe in… 'cause that's all I've got, that's my known universe, and if I don't know, I go back to community and ask "what happened" and she'll tell me… you've got to have people around you to tell and help you, otherwise you're stuffed… so its like a legacy around right ways of working… that we've got to pass on to others… there's always reference points around KPI's and 'tick and flick" but there's perhaps a lack of reference points around heart and spirit way of working …*(reflective silence)*. It's embedded as a child for an Indigenous person – it's about family, it's about body language, it's about knowing your place in the world, I can't put it into words at times… Aboriginal people know they are connected to the land. White people speak for all races. Aboriginal people only speak for their families. White people can be everywhere and 'own it' - but Aboriginal people can pin-point where they are connected to, a bit like whales, like sonar. They *know* their land and territory, and no-one can ever take that away, you can't… no matter where they are, you can't take that away.

M. (page 145) described her experiences as a non-Indigenous practitioner and having demarcation and minimal relatedness between the domains of her work-self and her home-self. However she observed that for her Indigenous colleagues, these domains were not differentiated, that for them relatedness bound the parts of the Self:

> …all of the others present were non-Indigenous... hmm... separation from reality and separation from life and work... you know, quite separate – there's my life and there's my work, and they can be kept quite separate. I bring the same values, generally speaking – but um, life and work is quite different... from my Indigenous colleagues. My observation is that their work and life is not as separate as mine.

For Deb M. as an Indigenous person (page 155), establishing relatedness to environment, to Community, and to People is of crucial importance within all elements of practice. She was clear that practitioner reflexivity between Knowledge and Being is vital to a decolonizing way of working. She explained relatedness as fundamental to Being before 'doing' and 'talking', and that as this becomes further developed and nurtured, trust becomes more deeply established. However, she cautions that this takes time, and failure to remember these principles of relatedness, has one marked as a 'big-note':

> ...yeah, where I was talking with you a bit earlier about the *finding your place* stuff... um... one of the biggest things I remember about my grandmother, um... the reason... and I *never thought about it*... actually

didn't *ever think* about *why I do that* or *why do I behave that way*... or *why that stuff was passed on to my children*... but I've tried to tell them "you've got to find your place"... *you can't just barge in and big-note yourself*... 'cause straight away it's going to get you off-side with people... people need to learn... people need to *trust* you ... to *know you*... and to *see how you fit in*... because if you *don't fit in*, they'll *tell you* that you don't fit in... but until you find your place, you're not going to get anywhere... you're not going to get anywhere, so you might as well not bother doing any of that sort of stuff... you need to respect the fact that you need to *find your own way*... most non-Indigenous people, are quite happy to sit there and espouse *their views* and you know, *put forward things*... *you* shouldn't do that ...(until) ...*you* are good and ready, and when *you've* decided that you are able to put it... put your view across... and people are going to take notice of it, or respect it... 'cause if you do that too soon, you will be called a ***'big note'***... (*laughing*).

D. was also clear about the presence of incommensurability between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, and the importance of recognizing this within practice:

> ...as an Aboriginal person I have *my way* of working out how I fit in... and when I have something to say, when I feel that I'm *able to say it*, then I'll say it... but don't expect that the way *I behave* is going to be the

same as you, because I have a different upbringing, I have different values, different belief systems.

In line with Martin (2008), respect for relatedness has been paramount. The research tasks have not responded to questions of judgement, validity, reliability, or comparisons of 'better' or 'worse'. Rather, the stories are positioned in relatedness to the participants and their contribution to Knowledge, and to the researcher and the research inquiry. The researcher has been directed by the imperative to ensure accountability to the contributors, their Knowledge and their Stories. The knowledges available in the Stories are shared in relatedness to, and respect for Indigenous sovereignty and agency both within the research process, and beyond. Participant Teresa (page 79) said it this way:

> ...knowing, being and doing... yeah... that's what we've got... *existing and Land is Being*, the *values and principles is the Knowing*, the way you're brought up, the principles and values that you are raised in – *Wallan Way – right way*... and *Doing is what we do and the importance of what we do*, based on these other ones... (personal communication, June, 2009).

This is supported by Wilson (2001, p. 91) who stated that: "…an Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that all knowledge is relational and shared". However Martin extended this saying that: "…the three knowledge bands of relatedness theory…(are)… Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing" (2008, p. 82).

As researcher, my trust in the research method has been rigorously mediated through deep self-reflexivity and ongoing dialogic relatedness with the participants and others. This is consistent with Martin (2008) who stated that researcher reflection and relatedness to Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing within the research undertaking, is a self-regulatory task that: "…affords agency and sovereignty to the Aboriginal research participants" (2008, p. 138). Therefore this analysis has been carried out in the same way.

The task of analysis has not been about individual knowledge. All knowledge is presented as interconnected in multiple relatednesses and contexts. Likewise, the Stories have been enfolded into this thesis. Their knowledges have been presented for the reader to think on and to come alongside, to critique within self-reflexivity and to contemplate their own behaviours and thoughts, particularly those that may disconnect them from relatedness. If these processes are mediated with respect, honour and cultural security, their relatedness will remain present to inform and evolve further Ways of Doing.

Table 1 has presented a framework that draws from the contributors' knowledges to inform a decolonizing way of Knowing, Being and Doing. The next Chapter now discusses three models, or ways of knowing, that are underpinned by relatedness theory and likewise bring together the key themes discussed by the research contributors. These offer the reader a micro-opportunity to reflect upon their own ways of knowing and understanding.

PART 4: KNOWING and BEING for DOING: a decolonizing practice informed through knowings, knowledges and a way of being.

> ...progress and enlightenment do not always occur in a linear manner
>
> (Dodson, 1994).

Chapter 10: Harmonizing the key ideas for reflection.

By enfolding the existing and latest stories, the tasks of analysis have brought some existing literature knowledges alongside the Knowledges of the contributors. Now the task of harmonization re-presents the research Stories: "...in relatedness to the needs, cultures and traditions of the research participants and the research academy" (Martin, 2008, p. 86). Here harmonization brings these knowledges into ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing that acknowledge and respect Indigenous worldviews and sovereignty.

Contributors to this inquiry intended the target audience to be those within research, policy and program development, service delivery, and any discipline that is committed to an ethical and socially-just practice framework. They have highlighted the significance of an in-between space where one's way of being, doing and knowing, is in duality, and in relatedness with that of Indigenous Australia. For them, a decolonizing practice is not a binary, but a continuum underpinned by relatedness.

For Blagg future practice solutions may well reside in a: "...liminal space between domains (that) while opening up room for dialogue, do not attempt to dismantle or coopt..." the Indigenous spheres of influence (2008, p. 50). Here, knowledges and world-views may be incommensurable, but they are not unrelated; probabilities and possibilities are prioritized as different to certainty and predictability; and there is a willingness to accept uncertainty in order to advance learning and transformation.

Similarly for Bhabha (1994), a 'third space' is produced from the relatedness between cultures, where otherwise subjugated knowledges become part of the dominant discourses. He described this space as one where profound incommensurabilities become evident, but the rules of authority do not hold power.

Racher and Annis (2007) stated that effective learning takes place when 'not knowing' takes the place of desire for certainty. They emphasised:

> ...building bridges to connect diverse worlds is not merely a set of strategies, but an all-encompassing 'way of being' that comes from an ethic of cultural attunement (2007, p. 265).

While further knowledges have clearly evolved within this research, I have purposefully declined to *name* this way of working because its influence and authority is in the *Ways* of knowing, being and doing. To prescribe a *name* could

potentially invite practices derived from that *word*, rather than the evolvement and development of ways necessary for the maintenance of relatedness.

Notwithstanding the non-naming of a Way, new knowledge has been possible through other ways of knowing. The following three models show other ways of re-presenting this research knowledge.

10.1: Three models on a decolonizing Way of Knowing, Way of Being and Way of Doing.

One participant contributed the following model and text in support of this research. She has provided a framework and a name for this 'right way of working'. Her Walaan Way explains 'right way' of Knowing, Being and Doing. Within this, respect, responsibility and accountability are clearly defined. Values and beliefs sustain the whole, and maintain balance physically, emotionally, mentally and Spiritually.

Please note: Teresa has generously provided this, so that non-Indigenous practitioners can learn other knowledges and reflect on their own ways of knowing, being and doing. This is her Knowledge presented through this research, therefore it is crucial that this must be respected and always acknowledged to her as the owner and Story-teller.

10.1.1: Traditional Aboriginal Spirituality Model - Higher Essence of Being.

(Teresa Gibson August 2013)

Spiritual

HEAD & HANDS

How we *do it?....Responsibility* (Leadership)

Protect totems for survival and attachment to lan

(DOING)

Teach language, uphold pride and identity

Impart skills for the creation of hunting and gathering tools that is significant for survival of family & clan

Reconcile & Respect family, clan and tribal boundaries

STOMACH & HEART

Share knowledge, and skill of song, dance and the spiritual meaning of ceremonies (birthing, initiation & death/life)

Share knowledge and skill for hunting, gathering and survival

FEET

Mental

Emotional

Instil knowledge and understanding about kinship lore and lore of the land

(BEING)

Teach the skill of art and spiritual meaning

the creation of traditional artefacts & painting to express spiritual connection at a deeper level

How we exist?....Walaan Way (Caring & Sharing)
(Values & Beliefs)

(KNOWING)

Impart knowledge about bush food & bush medicine for health, healing and wellbeing

Impart knowledge and understanding about dreamtime stories to uphold significant morals, values & oral history between all living things

Protect and provide spiritual & cultural, physical, social, family, mental & emotional needs for health and wellbeing of family & clan

Physical

Traditional Aboriginal Spirituality Narrative…..Higher Essence of Being

(Teresa Gibson, August 2013)

Why we exist?....Land
(Spiritual beginnings/ foundation)
(Being)

Being grounded on two feet that supports the body in the way that land holds the spiritual being

Land is our mother, it gives us life. It is the foundation of aboriginal spirituality; it is important to care for and respect the land and keep a connection with it.
It is a belief that if you look after land, it will look after you……..it is in the same way we care for our family.
It is also a belief that if you don't care for land you will perish and spirit of the land dies with you

How we exist?....(Walaan Way (Caring & Sharing)
(Values & Beliefs)
(Knowing)

Caring and sharing knowledge and wisdom, supporting one another. The heart holds the wisdom and the stomach feeds it with knowledge that's shared and valued by families and clan groups.

The values and beliefs or caring and sharing shapes our knowledge of how to be and enables us to grow to become a whole spiritual being
If you don't uphold the values and beliefs of caring and sharing our knowledge and how to be, you won't grow to become a whole spiritual being

How we do it?....Responsibility (Leadership)
(Doing)
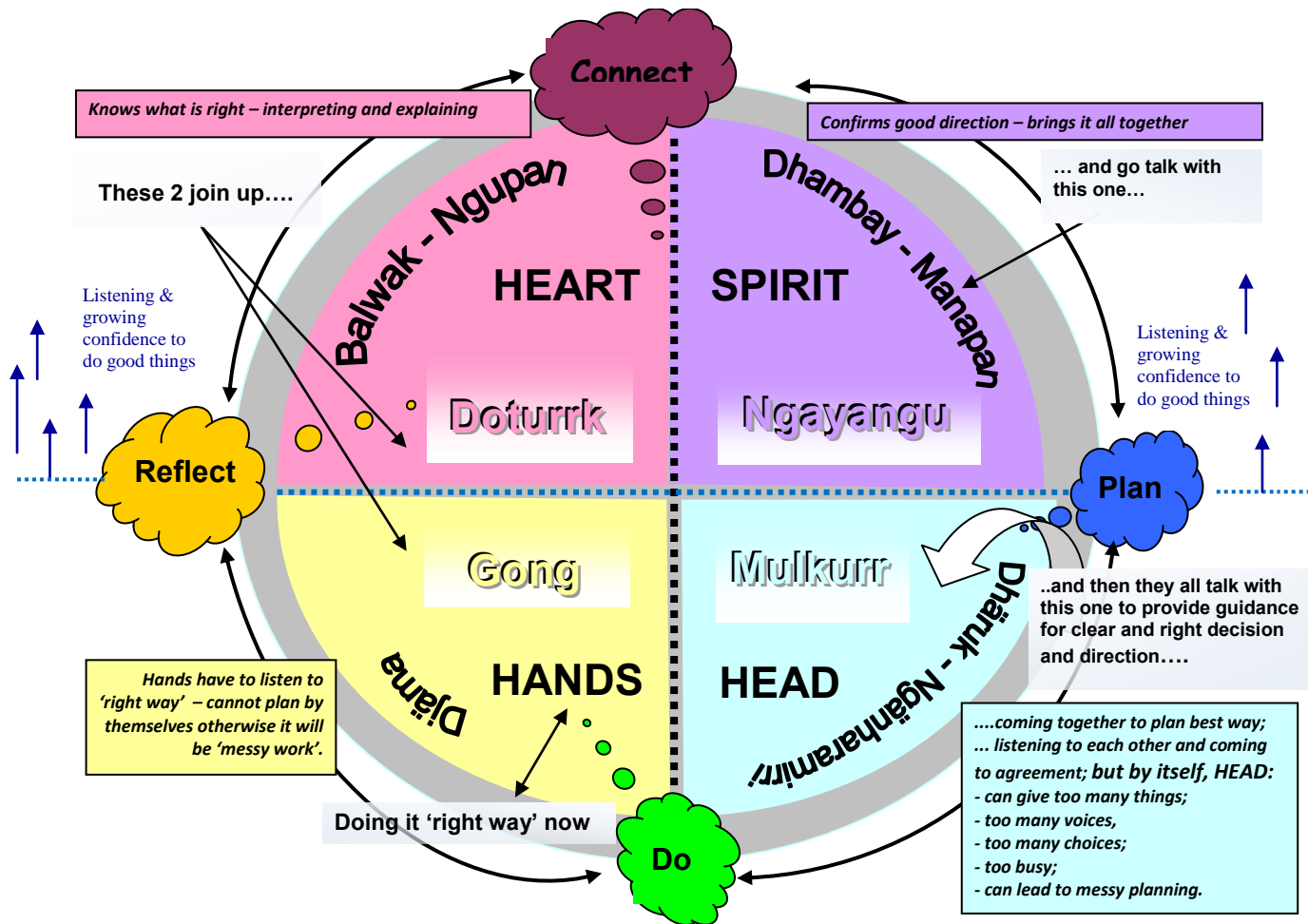*Family and clan have a responsibility to use the Being and Knowing wisely in everything they do. The Elders carry the greatest responsibility to ensure that cultural traditions are respected and practiced and an understanding of how they are still meaningful in today's world is developed and shared.*

If you don't respect and practice your cultural traditions, the Higher Essence of Being is Lost

10.1.2:   Head, Heart, Hands and Spirit.

The following diagram was put together in collaboration with my Yolngu Grandmother, Dhanggal Gurruwiwi. I was talking with her about some challenges, particularly how to make the 'right' decisions in relation to my work within the community, as the sole non-Indigenous worker. She explained that Indigenous people make decisions in a different way to white ngapaki. I listened closely as she continued: "...Yolngu start with what feels right in their Heart, then they take it to Spirit to help work out if it is right. Next these two take it up to the Head where they all talk about the right way. Then Hands have the 'right way' by being connected with the other three. Hands cannot do things on their own, and Head cannot make decisions without Heart and Spirit. Otherwise it is not 'right way'.

Connect

Knows what is right – interpreting and explaining

Confirms good direction – brings it all together

These 2 join up….

… and go talk with this one…

Balwak - Ngupan

Dhambay - Manapan

HEART

SPIRIT

Listening & growing confidence to do good things

Listening & growing confidence to do good things

Doturrk

Ngayangu

Reflect

Plan

Gong

Mulkurr

Dhäruk - Ngänharamirr

HANDS

HEAD

Djama

Hands have to listen to 'right way' – cannot plan by themselves otherwise it will be 'messy work'.

..and then they all talk with this one to provide guidance for clear and right decision and direction….

Doing it 'right way' now

Do

….coming together to plan best way; … listening to each other and coming to agreement; but by itself, HEAD:
- can give too many things;
- too many voices,
- too many choices;
- too busy;
- can lead to messy planning.

When I asked Dhanggal where she thought that non-Indigenous people started, she laughingly responded that white people begin with head and hands and "...just get in and *do* it".

Several contributors similarly discussed the importance of using head, heart, hands and Spirit in a 'right' way of doing that is informed through reflection. Again this has similarities with Martin's (2008) description of beginning in ways of Knowing, enfolding ways of Being and then evolving to ways of Doing. Relatedness becomes sustained, maintained and enhanced when these ways

are underpinned with respect, responsibility and accountability (Martin, 2008). Thus relatedness provides the milieu for practices that challenge dominance, power and the centrality of non-Indigenous ways of knowing, and instead respond by: "...imagining and engaging with other ways of being and knowing" (Green, Sonn & Matsebula, 2007, p. 409).

This reflective practice model links closely with Kolb and Fry's (1975) framework for experiential learning, and provides another lens for the non-Indigenous practitioner to contemplate their way of knowing, ways of doing and ways of being.

10.1.3: Another decolonizing practice way.

This Story is a personal one. It was created at a time of major decision-making. Having 'gone south' and relocated to a metropolitan setting, I was far removed from my deep relationships with family who had shared much important Knowledge in order to 'grow me up' Yolngu way. Doubting my capacity to continue with the research, I contacted an eminent critical friend, a Quandamooka woman and Traditional Owner of the Place where I live. At the conclusion of our conversation, she told me to go to the beach and start drawing in the sand, and to look at what evolved.

In very quiet relatedness with the sea and land around me, I sat reflecting on the research knowledge and the processes that I had journeyed through. I remembered the many significant relationships underpinning this research,

including a 2012 conversation with my Mari or cultural grandmother, Dhanggal Gurruwiwi. I had been discussing with her some challenges within the research process. After sitting with a long silence, she began telling me about the meaning of my language name, and the story of Wuyal, the sugar-bag man. It was a story of journeying, disrespect for relatedness and responsibility, the importance of decentre-ing the self, a mixing of knowledges and ways, incommensurability yet joining, and transformative opportunities.

Through adoption into a Yolngu clan nation in Arnhemland, I had been given the name of WuyWuy. It is a Gapu name, a water name that means '...*the foam where the two waters flow alongside, and past each other'*. With this name, I have been attributed with particular responsibilities. These understandings and metaphors from Yolngu knowledges have been passed to me through relatedness with my Mari (Gurruwiwi, personal communication, March 2007). Ours is a particular relationship with significant responsibilities for teaching and learning. She told me *these* Things in *this* Way for my learning, and to add to non-Indigenous Knowledge. In this way she has ascribed me the ability to engage in my stewardship responsibilities to pass on these messages.

This story is shared so that non-Indigenous people can reflect on their own knowledges in the presence of other ways of Knowing. Mari Dhanggal described this as: "...to gain knowledge when they are seeking something" (personal communication, September 2014).

To quote Dhanggal further: "...people need to see the unseen in a way that cannot be taught". She was clear that non-Indigenous people have a choice to make, and one choice is indeed to 'do nothing different'. However, calmness together with hearing and seeing and reflecting on 'other knowledges', offers another choice, that of transformative opportunity to open the mind to other ways. This Story is of a decolonizing practice way of Knowing, Being and Doing.

In this visual Story, the greater part functions within sight of the legacies of the white colonizing behaviours and values that cast their ubiquitous impacts. Implementation of the white Westminster systems, rules, and regulations sits omnipresent at the top. This is marked by white cross-hatching reminding us of its striking power to be dominant. The white bars represent a message to do it 'this way', or be enmeshed within or behind these structures. This pattern is not bounded. Just as neo-colonialisms continue in the present, it does not have a border. However black dots mark that Indigenous sovereignty has never been extinguished.

The white waves containing white dots signify movement towards reconciliation and decolonizing ways of knowing being and doing. Indigenous agency and the rising tide of 'talking up' join with the ripples of transformative opportunities that continue to grow and develop. Knowledge and awareness is evolving. This is promoted by the work of Indigenous academics such as Dr. Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Dr Karen Martin, Dr Steven Larkin, Dr Brownwyn Fredericks, and Dr Chris Sarra, media programming such as Redfern Now on ABC Television, NITV, Reconciliation Australia, the Healing Foundation, and the persistence of Indigenous people in a range of everyday settings. Non-Indigenous practitioners can gain 'immersion knowledge' by exposing themselves to in Indigenous worldviews through these readily available mechanisms.

At the base of the painting, the ochre pod-shapes provide reminders of the incommensurabilities within knowledges that are fundamental to, and remain

present within relatedness and the flowing, mixing transformative processes. Again Indigenous agency, sovereignty and knowledges provide essential foundations.

The circular pattern system is multi-layered and multi-dimensional, full of movement, flexibility and energy. In line with Martin's (2008) Relatedness Theory, there are three bands of pods, some containing dots of particularity. These bands represent the relatednesses of ways of Knowing, ways of Being and ways of Doing.

Located outmost, Knowing is in relatedness to history, self and standpoint. Through deep reflexivity with Knowledges and the impacts of privilege, dominance and power, Ways of Knowing evolve to a deeper level.

Secondly, one's values and beliefs are engaged to develop stronger relatednesses to knowing the self and others within Ways of Being. Reflexivity provides guidance for behaviours and practices that evolve from a deconstructed worldview.

Immersed within the Ways of Knowing and Being, the next band represents Ways of Doing. Here Doing is in respectful relatedness with Others - with unconditional respect, responsibility and accountability. Behaviours and actions of relatedness such as de-centred openness, humility, reflection, and respect enfold the core space.

These 'circles within circles' symbolize a number of important knowledges and provide a non-linear, wrapping around to sustain and protect the Core of relatedness. They represent 'gapu within gapu', water within water, salt water and fresh water, mixing to create new and other ways of Knowing and Being. As well, they signify the fast water flowing, slowing down, and becoming calm and still with other ways of seeing things, beyond one's own way of seeing and being. Within the research, this manifested as ubiquitous deep reflexivity in relation to all processes and content.

Dots of ochre represent the ever-present relatednesses that support ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. While present at the beginning of the journey, and implicit along the way, they encircle the Core. For Martin (2008), relatedness remains sustained and maintained by ways of respect, responsibility and accountability to each other and to the Self.

The Core is at the centre as a space of possibilities between one and another. It is the place where Knowing, Being and Doing join up, mix and continue to evolve. Here these ways are imbued with ongoing reflection, reflexivity and the energies of transformation. This hub embodies the Ways that support, preserve and uphold a decolonizing way of working together. It represents a depth of transformative Otherness and robust relatedness (Martin, 2008, p. 141).

Likewise from Bhabha (1994), equality and common humanity form the basis of an unconditional, non-hierarchical relatedness. Within this space, power relations do not dominate. Even so, one's sense of self and identity can become

challenged by the tensions of struggle, difference and transformation. Here, the strength of relatedness functions to maintain unconditional respect, responsibility, and accountability to, and with each other. Any incommensurabilities in relation to knowledge, being and doing remain respected and preserved within relatedness. This 'coming together' or coming alongside each other, has the potential to build connections of unity, and to create transformative 'learning moments' (Prpic, 2003). In these ways stakeholders remain supported by their relatednesses with Self and Others, to constantly reflect on decolonizing ways of thinking, being and practicing.

10.2: Messages for a de-colonizing practice.

From these models, grounded as they are in the world-views of the Indigenous participants, a number of key messages are apparent. The three visual representations of knowledge presented above, provide crucial alternative accounts to the dominant colonizing ways of knowing, being and doing. As this Research Story comes to a conclusion, a reflection on these models provides another narrative – one of a decolonizing practice paradigm that can be used by any non-Indigenous practitioner in any context. Throughout this thesis, I have discussed the relevance and importance of an in-between space within a decolonizing practice approach, including within the Table on page 363.

From the collective knowledges provided by contributors to this research, it is clear that the knowings, beings and doings of a non-Indigenous practitioner who

is committed to a decolonizing practice approach would be informed by their deep reflections on the nature of liminal, in-between spaces. According to Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 261), decolonizing practice is expressed by the practitioner who engages: "…in dialogue and the desire for exchange" to confront: "…the coloniality of power, knowledge and being" that has: "…enslaved populations through the planet".

I now metaphorically draw on the context of inter-tidal zones to demonstrate a number of ways in which the Models presented above, can inform better ways of working. Decolonizing practices can be defined as extending from one defined space to that of another, and yet function in relation to each other even though they are bounded by incommensurabilies.

To continue with the metaphor, these spaces offer opportunity for great productivity and nourishing growth unless they are contaminated by un-reflexive behaviours and practices that evolve from an un-deconstructed worldview. The contexts vary, as do the environments of policy and program development, service delivery practice, and research practice;

Decolonizing practice spaces are characterized by fluidity, movement, and uniqueness. They are represented by ways of doing that demonstrate de-centred openness, humility, reflection, inclusivity, and respect. However these spaces do contain a range of risks, such as the tensions of not-knowing. This invites the practitioner to sit in reflection with un-certainty, and to respond with unconditional respect, responsibility and accountability

within this shared space. To conclude the metaphor, a decolonizing approach provides a huge range of options, including the opportunity to reflect, recognize, reframe, re-shape and transform practice.

10.3: Limitations to this research.

This research has distilled key elements that are enmeshed within non-Indigenous practices with Indigenous Australians. A number of key concepts invite the reflective practitioner to position themselves in relation to their own ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. However, for the outcomes of this research question to be useful, productive and have continuity within a practice environment, the learnings offered herein require integration across knowledge frameworks.

It is important to recognize and remember that strategies of power were used to claim entitlement in this Country, because non-Indigenous practitioners are inexorably positioned by this history. Knowledges and worldviews acquired and integrated through acculturation are difficult to acquiesce, change or give up, as they have had a lifetime of informing the construction of the Self. Thus when exposed to conceptually challenging ways of thinking, troublesome-ness may be experienced.

Several writers discussed 'threshold concepts' as being transformative gateways because they offer new understandings through the exploration of conceptually challenging ideas. However these new knowledges may be in conflict with the

worldview previously held, or be counter-intuitive and initially difficult to grasp. Thus they risk being experienced as 'troublesome knowledge' (Meyer and Land, 2003).

As researcher, a particular struggle involved my own acquisition of knowledge in relation to the sovereignty of Indigenous knowledges. Having been raised within the white Australian landscape, I became quite unsettled by my reflections that perhaps I would be inadvertently appropriating or 'colonizing' knowledge when I found it to be completely congruent with the values and beliefs that underpin this inquiry. However, this challenge was fundamental to my capacity to continue. Relatednesses between whiteness and colonization, sovereignty and responsibility became a crucial threshold to be traversed. I experienced significant internal dialogue and tension. Sitting with 'not knowing' for a while, was followed by several reflective dialogues with Indigenous support people. Thus learning tasks avoided being put in the 'too hard' basket.

For me, this raised some concerns similar to that expressed by Perkins who cautioned the reflexive practitioner against the tendency for learning to become 'inert' instead of being applied and used in practice:

> ...unfortunately, considerable knowledge that we would like to see used actively proves to be inert. Students commonly learn ideas about society and self in history... but make no connections to today's events. Students learn concepts ... but make little connection to the world

around them. Students learn techniques... but fail to connect them to everyday applications (1999, p. 8).

For Reason (2000, p. 15) the challenge is: "…to bring scholarship to life… bring inquiry into more and more of our moments of action". Within this research, participant contributions have been presented and summarized as key concepts. However, the tasks of learning through techniques of critique, exploration, reflection and integration remain. While relatedness to the research and its outcomes offers opportunities for transformative scholarship, implications remain for a closer focus on learning. Two ongoing questions have relevance for further exploration and understanding. What are some ways that decolonizing frameworks can be positioned within the acquisition of new knowledge? What mechanisms and further knowledges may facilitate a learning pathway?

Chapter 11: Conclusion.

Within this research I firstly explored what Indigenous stakeholders considered to be 'better ways of working' particularly in relation to social work and community welfare practice. Secondly I wanted to understand what a decolonizing practice framework would like. In doing so, it was crucial that the practice of inquiry would be consistent with such a framework. Extensive reviewing of the literature, together with discussions, 'interviews', yarnings and much deep reflection has populated the research environment. Importantly, relatedness (Martin, 2008) and

my own cultural responsibilities and accountabilities guided the practices and processes for ways of Knowing, ways of Being and ways of Doing this research.

For a moment I would like to revisit the work of Yanow (2009). She stressed the importance of a reflective practice approach that challenges 'expert' knowledge claims and instead asks the questions: '…what authorizes a way of knowing?... what validates the knowledge it generates?" (2009, p. 582). For her, reflexivity is engaged through a standpoint of inquiry, as different to a position of authority or power (2009, p. 568). A standpoint that is underpinned with dialogical inquiry and humility asks: "…how do I know?" and "… how would I know if I were wrong?" (2009, p. 588).

Sonn (2005) has described a practice perspective within which an Indigenous standpoint is respected. He stated that three particular aims are crucial:

> …turning the gaze inwards, placing an emphasis on knowing ourselves in our own context, and emphasizing knowing our own group memberships and the privileges that come with that and being a particular colour (2005, workshop presentation).

For him, such ways of practicing, would be culturally sensitive, facilitating socially-just change instead of reproducing non-reflexive, deficit-loaded, discursive spaces.

Within this research, the use of discursive language by well-intended non-Indigenous practitioners revealed the depth of issues related to power, whiteness

and colonialisms. Some perceived 'inclusion' of Indigenous Peoples as an element of their culturally 'appropriate' practice. However, as described by Indigenous participants, this risks significant offence when non-Indigenous Ways of Doing are based on an un-reflected whiteness worldview. Several Indigenous contributors described their experiences of this, ranging from the Whiteness behaviours of preferential inclusion (Arnold, page 100), to Deb's (page 155) experience of racism and being 'included' because she is a fair-skinned Aboriginal, to Ng.'s (page 179) and Steve L.'s (page 253) comments about the superiority-standpoint of a white 'helping' perspective. As described at the beginning of this thesis (page 25), non-Indigenous people have been positioned to determine whether an Indigenous person is 'the right sort of Aboriginal', or not (Wymarra, personal communication, 2014). The use of the word 'inclusion' by non-Indigenous decision-makers can have such echoes for Indigenous People. Indigenous contributors spoke definitively about their need to contribute their views and have input into the policies, programs and practices that affect their lives and their communities (Betty, Deb., Teresa, Cindy, Harriet, Steven and Patti, Steve L., Arnold, Josie, Betty, Djapirri, Sharon M.). Perhaps the non-Indigenous practitioner's intent was to ask: "What do you think about this? … How do you think this might work?". Words, phrases, and language used in this Way would reflect the speaker's intention to respect, collaborate, align and ally worldviews within the essence of relatedness. This single example shows how intent, words and language can easily, inadvertently, discursively and un-reflexively damage relatedness with Indigenous People.

However Indigenous contributors Betty, Teresa, Cindy, Josie, Harriet, Arnold, Djapirri and Deb expressed hope for change and difference. This was summed up by Betty as: "...there has to be hope and change, otherwise what are we doing, what are we leaving for the future". For Josie:

> ...it should always be together as one… that's the only solution… otherwise, everything will be down-hill and always will be in chaos… so both have to take the time to work together as one… not as two different races of people… but as One… *equal* in *all areas*.

Therefore it follows that some particular questioning is essential and would assist the non-Indigenous practitioner to expand their thinking, and transform their ways of being and doing. Such deliberations include 'who am I' and 'where do I come from'. This applies within a physical sense, and equally through the lens of one's "…historical, political, social, gender, professional, cultural, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual" domains (Martin, 2008, p. 138). Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 262) takes this a step further, adding: "…the Decolonial Turn is about making the visible the invisible, and about analyzing the mechanisms that produce such invisibility". This includes practices and attitudes that promote: "…a shift away from the imperial attitude… (through) …interventions at the level of power, knowledge and being" (Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 262).

An active interrogation of Knowledge and Self will thus provide doorways for evolved considerations on the ways that we have been acculturated, how this has contributed to our knowledge and how we interact with the world. Immersing

oneself in this deeply introspective work offers opportunities for the transformative reframing of understandings and assumptions. The development of other ways of being and doing will be observed and experienced as 'right way' by Indigenous people.

Stories gathered from the contributors have been given and received in shared relatedness with each other, and to the research question. The practice of this inquiry has incorporated their knowledges and lived experiences in ways that ensure respect for their sovereignty, and the integrity of the research. Trust, responsibility and accountability have provided the corner-stones of sustained relatedness between the contributors and my researcher-self. Arnold expressed this explicitly when I offered the transcript back to him for his endorsement. He firmly but warmly stated:

> …I know what I've said to you... and I know that you and I have a trust... and I trust that it will be used in the best interests... of People's wellbeing... (personal communication, July 2009).

Deep ongoing reflexivity has maintained relatedness to my Self, and my autonomy as researcher. Within this, and as described by Martin (2008) and Tuhiwai-Smith (1999), I came to appreciate that the Ethics Approval process undertaken with the University, provided a 'big picture' endorsement to ensure cultural safety and respect. However, it soon became evident that relatedness with the stakeholders provided another context of ethics. This held strong obligations and expectations for interrelated accountability and responsibility, and

manifested as a sophisticated and all-encompassing protocol. As researcher, this has been experienced as an intensive consciousness of 'the right way', and instant insight when I have over-stepped ethics as framed by relatedness.

Many of the participants referred to 'right way' in practice, confirming qualities and behaviours such as: respect, honesty, genuineness, acknowledgement, honour, being present, rapport, good judgement, good heart, true heart, being yourself, a collaborative alliance, talking straight up and respectfully, equal power and relationship and respect, their language, by the way they relate, the way they communicate, their body language, whether they are sincere. The words of Arnold, represent the position of all contributors for whom relatedness underpins 'right way' of being and doing:

> ...it's just about some 'common sense' and professionalism about, you know... how you engage with another Human Being... *is anything ever more than that?...* well, we can make it as *simple* as we like, or *complicated* as we like... we can make it as *genuine* as we like, or we can make it as *half-hearted* as we like... its about *'what do you bring to this engagement'*... your body language, your time spent with them, your discussions and communication... (personal communication, July 2009).

Contributors similarly described the challenges that they have experienced when navigating and contesting white entitlement and power. They referred to the ways that colonial power relations continue to perpetuate structural inequities for

Indigenous people, and the ways that the privilege of whiteness enables neo-colonial practices in the present.

A deep critiquing of these factors invites the non-Indigenous practitioner into reflexivity and introspection on their own relatedness to and with, these aspects of Australia's past and present. The learning task thus becomes to develop enhanced understandings and practices that acknowledge and respect Indigenous peoples' experience of colonization.

In understanding how whiteness has benefitted from that history, and how this continues currently, one may unpack the costs for Indigenous Peoples, and reflect on one's own responsibility to action. Even if engaged at an individual level, respectful and accountable relatedness is none-the-less political and emancipatory. A starting point might be to find out whose Country you actually live on and which Clan group originally lived on that Land – to reflect deeply about what this might have looked like and felt like, and what 'processes of settlement' might have happened there.

Through an investment in relatedness, and the development of other pedagogies, the non-Indigenous practitioner has an opportunity to challenge the mechanisms that perpetuate positions of privilege and structural power over 'others'. The reflexive non-Indigenous practitioner thus has the potential to influence change within the contested space between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews.

Consistent with standpoint theory and relatedness theory and whiteness studies, Yanow (2009, p. 591) promoted reflective practice as a way of knowing, being and doing in order to cultivate the habit of: "...examining our decisions, our judgements, our diagnoses, at times in the midst of action". This inquiry has been an invitation into self-reflexivity and dialogic relatedness with the contributors and their knowledges. Their narratives remain as discourses and dialogues on decolonizing practice. For them, self-responsibility and accountability for Doing is mediated by knowing 'what you do', 'why you do it that way' and how the Self is positioned and related within practices. For Martin:

> ...once we know and accept we are part of our world as much as it is part of us, the stories of relatedness now reveal deeper meanings and deeper significance" (2008, p. 77).

Thus these research stories have been positioned to have continuing relatednesses. They have informed this inquiry project, and from here they enter into a wider circle where power relations function in a different way, and are framed differently. In this way, the evolved knowledges will be carried beyond the parameters of the research project, and into other domains of potentiality. While the primary focus within this research has been decolonizing practice for social workers and community workers, it is not restricted to these professions. All health and human service workers, indeed all workers who engage with Indigenous People and Communities, would benefit from the outcomes of this research.

Insights developed here offer opportunities to contemplate on 'other' perspectives. Even as this reflexive and reflective activity evolves at the intra-personal level, the macro-task of critiquing colonization and neo-colonialism will be transformatively advanced by each person who is committed to practices built upon respectful relatedness. For Maldonado-Torres (2007, p. 262): "…the *decolonial attitude* demands responsibility and the willingness to take many perspectives".

According to Martin, this is a 'coming amongst' Stories that: "...begins in Ways of Knowing, enfolds Ways of Being, and evolves to Ways of Doing" (2008, p. 79).

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Another axiology, another ontology:

This section ascribes to two significant epistemologies: Martin's (2008) Relatedness Theory and that all things exist in relatedness; and the knowledge that Indigenous discourses and Knowledges are inscribed in Songlines and a range of medium such as graphic art, dance and music.

The following content is placed here as an increment to this research, because it is the work of other people. It is provided as a complement to the academic exchange of ideas, firstly so that other Ways of Knowing are honoured and foregrounded, and secondly to augment reflection on the ideas generated within this inquiry.

Thus two sets of lyrics are presented here as part of the research Project. While the first glance might be of entertainment, a purposeful reading of the words will evoke the Spirit of this research. This is a purposeful strategy to bring other Ways of Knowing alongside the written text that precedes this section. A decolonizing standpoint by non-Indigenous Australians would feature: 'standing up and being counted' and a 'Treaty' - another axiology and another ontology.

Stand up and be Counted: Within these ways of Being and Doing, the non-Indigenous practitioner may develop and demonstrate another way of Knowing - decolonizing approach based on deep, deep reflection of one's entitlement to

privilege and power. Such a standpoint would be marked by respect, responsibility and accountability for relatedness between Peoples, Places and Entities.

Treaty: A way of Knowing that Australia was never ceded by Indigenous Peoples who had been in occupation with their systems of Lores, Connectedness and Collectivity for over 47,700 years before Captain Cook stated that the land was not owned by anybody. Sovereignty was never relinquished by Indigenous Peoples nor acquired by the colonizers. Nor have any treaty negotiations ever been initiated. As a reconciliation mechanism, such an accord would acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty, and leverage a future committed to inclusive, respected, transparent and honest discourses and practices.

Warumpi Band lyrics: BLACKFELLA WHITEFELLA

(Stand Up and Be Counted)

Blackfella, Whitefella

Black fella, White fella,

It doesn't matter, what your colour,

As long as you, a true fella,

As long as you, a real fella.

All the people, of different races,

With different lives, in different places,

It doesn't matter, what your name is,

We got to have, lots of changes.

Blackfella, Whitefella

We need more brothers, if we're to make it,

We need more sisters, if we're to save it.

Are you the one that's gonna stand up and be counted?

Are you the one that's gonna be there when we shout it?

Are you the one that's always ready with a helping hand?

Are you the one who understands these family plans?

Black fella, white fella,

Yellow fella, any fella,

It doesn't matter what your colour,

As long as you, a true fella.

All the people, of different races,

With different lives, in different places,

It doesn't matter, which religions,

It's all the same when the ship is sinking.

We need more brothers, if we're to make it,

We need more sisters, if we're to save it.

Are you the one that's gonna stand up and be counted?

Are you the one that's gonna be there when we shout it?

Are you the one that's always ready with a helping hand?

Are you the one who understands these family plans?

Stand up and be counted,

Stand up and be counted.

Are you the one that's always ready with a helping hand?

Are you the one who understands these family plans?

(*www.lyrics.wikia.com/Warumpi_Band:Blackfella_Whitefella* accessed 24/07/2013)

YothuYindi lyrics: *TREATY*

Treaty

Well I heard it on the radio

And I saw it on the television

Back in 1988, all those talking politicians.

Words are easy, words are cheap

Much cheaper than our priceless land

But promises can disappear

Just like writing in the sand.

Treat yeah treaty now, treaty yeah treaty now.

(a paragraph in Yolngu matha (language))

This land was never given up

This land was never bought and sold

The planting of the union jack

Never changed our law at all

Now two river run their course

Separated for so long

I'm dreaming of a brighter day

When the waters will be as one.

Treaty yeah treaty now, treaty yeah treaty now.

(a paragraph in Yolngu matha (language))

Promises disappear – priceless land – destiny

Well I heard it on the radio

And I saw it on the television

But promises can be broken

Just like writing in the sand.

Treaty yeah treaty now, treaty yeah treaty now

Treaty yeah treaty now, treaty yeah treaty now

Treaty yeah treaty ma, treaty yeah treaty ma

Treaty yeah treaty ma, treaty yeah treaty ma.

This song was written after Bob Hawke, in his famous response to the Barunga Statement (1988), said there would be a Treaty between Indigenous Australians and the Australian Government by 1990. The intention of this song was to raise public awareness about this so that the government would be encouraged (to) hold to his promise (Mr. M. Yunupingu. accessed 24/07/2013 at *www.yothuyindi.com/music/treaty.html*)

The Barunga Statement

In 1988, the bicentenary of British settlement in Australia, the then Prime Minister was presented with the Barunga Statement, at the Barunga Festival in remote Northern Territory. This proclamation was modelled on the Yolngu 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petition protesting white entitlement to mine their traditional lands. The Bark Petition to the House of Representatives failed.

Bob Hawke, on receiving the Barunga Statement from the two Senior Indigenous Traditional Owners, declared that the Australian Government would enter into a Treaty accord with Indigenous Australians by 1990. However this commitment failed to manifest.

The Barunga Statement, shown below, called on the Australian Government to recognize Indigenous Rights and Sovereignty through a formal Treaty with Indigenous Peoples. The designs surrounding the central text document, represent the Yolngu (East Arnhem) and Central Australian Indigenous Peoples.
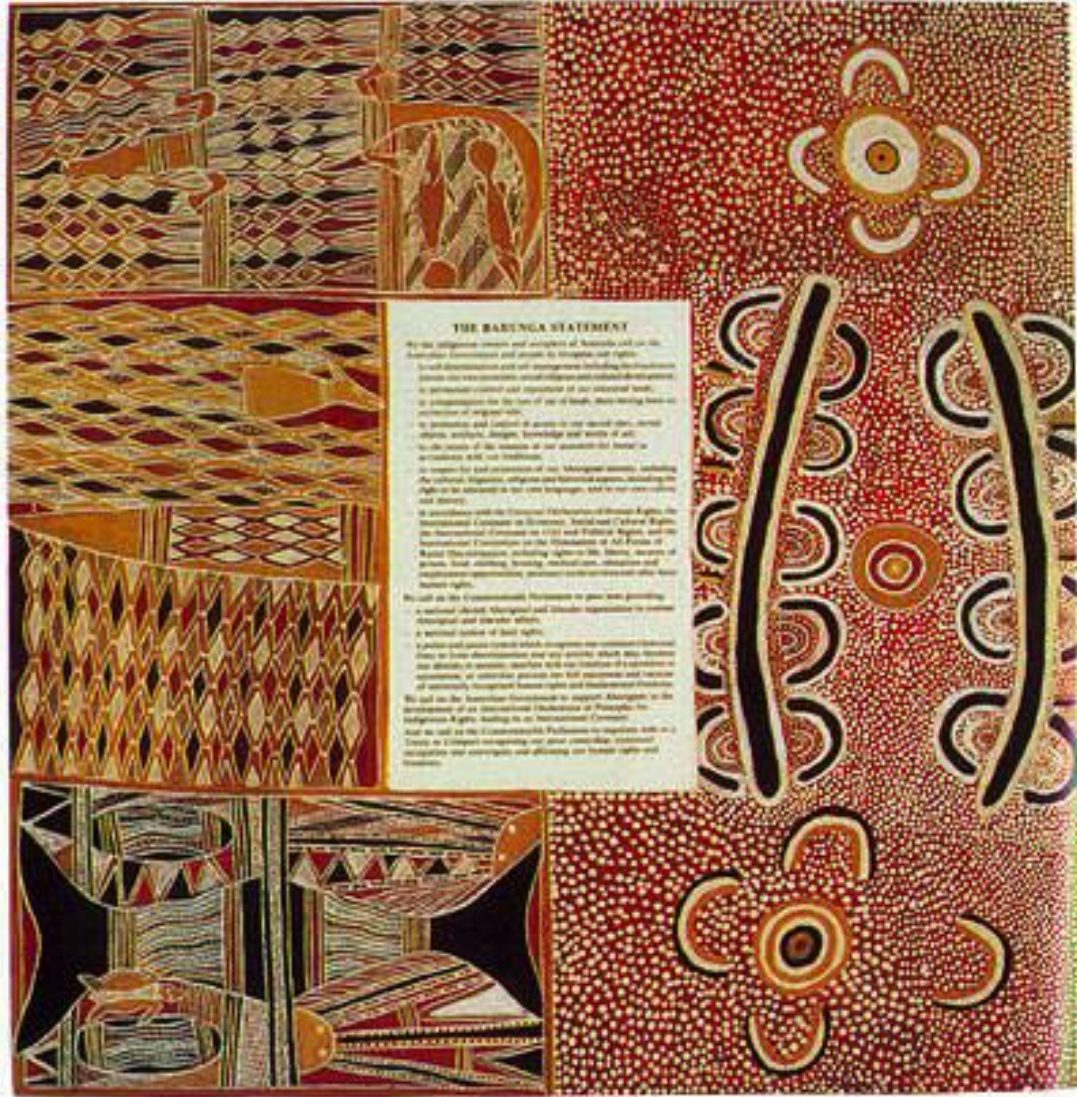
(Reproduced from *www.yothuyindi.com/music/treaty.html* accessed 24/07/2013)