Local Identity Global Focus

A project submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration
I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of
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Publications, Presentations and Actions Arising from the Study

- Research Assistant *Indigenous Cultural Festivals* The Dreaming Festival Photo Narrative Research with Lisa Slater 6 - 9 June 2008.
- Performing The World: Can Performance Save the World? 2010 – *Lu’Arn* DVD Presentation and discussion, 30 September – 03 October 2010 – Produced by the East Side Institute at the All Stars Project performance and development center 42nd Street, New York City, USA.
- Dissemination of early findings begun with a chapter submitted to Phipps and Slater’s 2010 *Indigenous Cultural Festivals* publication.
- The Torch – April 2011 *CONFINED* Indigenous Arts Officer recruitment panel member.
- Researchers Network – 2012 – Presentation Local Identity Global Focus - Culture and Community Researchers’ Network: Focus on Festivals Wednesday June 27, Victorian College of the Arts (VCA)
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- **Ventana Fiesta – Frankston City Council: Community Festival Research and Consultation Report – April/May 2012.**

- **City of Port Phillip – Recruited to part time Indigenous Arts Research and Policy Officer to coauthor Indigenous Arts and Cultural Policy 17 August 2012.**
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**Acronyms**

ABC – Australian Broadcasting Commission
ACLP – Australian Correctional Leadership Program
ACMC – Australian Cultural Ministers Council
AIATSIS – Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AIDT – Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre
AJA – Aboriginal Justice Agreement
AFTRS – Australian Film and Television School
ATSI – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
ANU – Australian National University
ARC – Australian Research Council
BSL – Brotherhood of St Laurence
BWF – Boon Wurrung Foundation
CDF – Cultural Development Fund
CDN – Cultural Development Network
CoM – City of Melbourne
CoPP – City of Port Phillip
CV – Corrections Victoria
DLG – Department of Local Government New South Wales
FHCSIA – Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
HMP – Her Majesty’s Prison
IBA – Indigenous Business Australia
IPSU – Indigenous Policy and Services Unit
ISCHS – Inner South Community Health Service
NAIDOC – National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee
NAISDA – National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association
NEIS – New Enterprise Incentive Scheme
NHMRC – National Health and Medical Research Council
OC – OPEN CHANNEL
RCIADIC – Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody
RMIT – Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
SBS – Special Broadcasting Service
SCRGSP – Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision
SIP – St Kilda Inclusion Program
SKYS – St Kilda Youth Services
SpArta – Sports, Arts, Recreation and Training Organisation Awards
VAEAI – Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.
VAJAC – Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement
VCA – Victorian College of the Arts
YWN – Yalukit Willam Ngargee
Abstract

*Local Identity Global Focus* was a hands-on festival artistry research project based on industry practice conducted over three Yalukit Willam Ngargee: People Place Gathering festival programs during 2009, 2010 and 2011. The aim of the research project was to program and produce, in association with the City of Port Phillip, an environmentally sustainable metropolitan Indigenous festival and critically observe how it created spaces for reciprocity and Indigenous community identity.

The research project’s festival programs included an Indigenous Media Scholarship; a festival marshalling and hosting program; a contemporary Indigenous dance performance, called *Lu’Arn*, that incorporated cultural reclamation practices; an art exhibition of works by Indigenous prison inmates, titled *CONFINED*; and a program that developed festival environmental sustainability measures. Under the guidance of Indigenous elders, the festival artist – the researcher – worked collaboratively with artist colleagues, community cultural development organisations, community members and festival staff; this involved multiple layers of decision-making processes.

A proposed emergent festival unique theory was examined through qualitative mixed methodologies. To this extent the Local Identity Global Focus methodology incorporated aspects of Indigenous research methodologies, arts-based methodologies and action research. The research project and festival unique theory came about as a response to a limited – albeit emerging – field of Indigenous festivals’ literature motivated in part by a familiarity with and desire for Indigenous self-representational expressions. The research project results indicated that the Yalukit Willam Ngargee was a complex specialist festival that provided spaces for safeguarding localized intangible cultural heritage and for transformative programs to occur.
The research project also demonstrated that local government can play an active role in enabling and advocating local Indigenous self-representational expressions through complex specialist festival domains. The outcomes highlight how significant local festival programs outside of national civic events are able to encourage acts of reciprocity that directly and indirectly, impact both Indigenous communities and the broader Australian society.

What was evident through the research project is that local Indigenous festivals, such as the Yalukit Willam Ngargee, have the potential to link into what was discussed as a larger Indigenous festival trading route. The contemporary aspects associated with a larger circulation of local and global Indigenous festivals are suggested to connect up possible economic development opportunities, persuasive protest and artistic and cultural practices. Indigenous festivals to this extent are not just a fun time for socializing but also a complex space of political and cultural Indigenous self-representation and self-determination.
SECTION ONE: WOMIN JEKA – WELCOME

Womin Jeka: Welcome message by Aunty Carolyn Briggs, 2009 Festival Program.


Welcome to my country, the land of the great bay of the Boon Wurrung people, our beautiful home. On behalf of the Boon Wurrung, a clan of the greater Kulin nations, I welcome you to our land.

Euro Yuroke more commonly known as St Kilda and its surrounds are special places which continue to carry forward the spirit of our tradition.

This land will always be protected by the creator Bunjil, who travels as an eagle, and by Waarn, who protects the waterways and travels as a crow.

As the spirit of my ancestors lives, let the wisdom and the spirit of generosity which Bunjil taught us influence the opportunities that may arise at this meeting place.

Womin Jeka mirambeek beek. Boon Wurrung Nairm derp Bordupren uther Willam. Welcome!
The first section of the exegesis titled Womin Jeka or Welcome is divided into two chapters. Chapter one positions the research project aims, questions, rationale and background. Chapter two details the Local Identity Global Focus methodology, ethical groundings and methods used. Boon Wurrung words have been chosen to introduce each of the four sections. Throughout the exegesis dual naming has been provided where possible and may include alternate spellings in some areas.

Appropriate reference to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people’s language or clan groups has been indicated where possible throughout the exegesis. The use of Indigenous and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander has been written interchangeably throughout the work, with sensitivity to what each of these terms may convey. Koori, Koorie and South East Australian Aboriginal are used where appropriate to regionally distinguish relational identities. Finally, a spelling differentiation is made between the Yalukit Wilam who are the people of the local area and the Yalukit Willam Ngargee as the festival.
Chapter One: Introduction and Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

Festivals are generally associated with leisure, recreation and having a good time. They gather people together to let go of their daily routines through music, arts, dance and cultural activities. Indigenous festivals go beyond these characteristics in part due to their political presences, methods for dealing with disadvantage and motivations for cultural assertion. Reciprocity and community identity are central factors of Indigenous festivals and specific to the locations where they are held. With Indigenous festivals becoming more prevalent on the Australian cultural landscape there have been ‘few researchers who have either gathered pre-participation data on festivals or returned at a later time to examine claims of enduring benefits’ (Phipps & Slater, 2010, p. 9). I will discuss through my hands-on festival artistry practice how the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals created spaces for reciprocity, community identity and festival environmental sustainability.

In locating the people and place of the festival I outline that the Yalukit Wilam are one of six clans of the Boon Wurrung language group who are one of five Wurrungs or lips/tongues of the Kulin Nation. The Boon Wurrung, their Kulin kin and Koori people of the South East Australian region have been subject to dispossession and subjugation since the 1835 arrival of the British into Victoria. They have experienced the loss of language, culture and spiritual practices due to the free settling frontier and subsequent settler government policies. Indigenous people for example were constantly moved around Victoria to missions and reserves during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century and, were not recognized as Australian citizens until the 1967 national referendum. Indigenous peoples across Australia have fought and struggled to represent themselves on their own terms through protests, activism, politics, media and the arts. Indigenous festivals, such as the Yalukit Willam Ngargee, encapsulate, share and celebrate all of these elements in a temporal moment.
Produced by the City of Port Phillip, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee follows in a succession of multi-disciplinary Indigenous festivals directed by Indigenous and Koori Arts Officers. Originating as a one off music festival for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee developed into an annual festival included in the larger St Kilda Festival program. Recognised as an emerging community institution for celebrating the local area, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee worked across many diverse areas to provide opportunities and support for Indigenous artists and cultural practitioners.

The research project is titled Local Identity Global Focus due to the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival’s locality and the discussions of national and international festivals of similar sentiment. What is made evident in Chapter Four Festival Domains Literature Review is the alignment of the festivals local practices to global conversations including intangible cultural heritage, festival environmental sustainability and the emerging literature on festival contact zones. In this regard, aspects of the research project methodology were based on Indigenous research methodologies, arts-based methodologies and action research. Getz’s (2010) discussions on an emergent ‘festival unique theory’ (p. 22) were explored during the research project and the maintaining of good relationships between the festival artist and elders guidance provided inspiration and ethical assurance.

The exegesis is divided into four sections Womin Jeka: Welcome, Yalukit: People, Wilam: Place and Ngargee: Gathering. The first section Womin Jeka or Welcome, opens with two chapters discussing the research project’s aims, questions, methodology, methods and ethics for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Yalukit or People is divided into three chapters discussing the writers who have informed the research project. Wilam or Place are the three festival project chapters and where the key impacts of the three Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival years of 2009, 2010 and 2011. Ngargee or Gathering is the bringing together of all the work into the conclusion and recommendations for further research.
Five key impacts are highlighted in the research project dealing with documentary training, contemporary Indigenous dance and cultural reclamation, festival marshalling, exhibiting Indigenous prison art and festival environmental sustainability. Music is briefly discussed in relation to economic development and how Indigenous festivals can play a substantial part in the reinvigorations of traditional cultural trading routes. Festival environmental sustainability begins each of the Willam section chapters and shows that motivation is the beginning key festival production mechanism. Local government was shown to be an area that has the capacity to enable Indigenous cultural presence through festivals and community programs but is still a literary field developing in applied and theoretical knowledge.

Disclosed throughout the research project was the notion of festival artistry. By choosing to be an artist first, the festival became an extension of my artistic practice and the recognition that the festival process itself cannot exist without a team of festival artists. More than just managing a recreational program of activities, I propose the idea that the festival artist’s gaze is informed through deep listening, familiarity, contemplation and imagination. Indigenous festivals hold the rights and responsibilities of many different people’s expectations that are represented in time and space. Festival artists can play a substantial role in the idea of social transformations, community stability and advocacy of marginalised voices within public places.

1.2 Aims

The key aims of the research project were based on first hand experiential-industry practice, informed by peers and experts in the field, online resources and literary sources. The five key aims are to:

- Program, produce and document an environmentally sustainable Indigenous metropolitan festival.
- Investigate the festival as a vehicle for realizing diverse contemporary Indigenous identities.
- Examine the festival as a space for generating Indigenous wellbeing through
reciprocity and community identity.

- Investigate the local cultural and socio-political conditions of the festival’s programming and production.
- Develop a resource of information for Indigenous festival artists/organizers and students researching Indigenous festivals.

1.3 Questions

The research questions were informed by the festival artist’s industry experience, dialogues with the local Indigenous community, involvement with the RMIT Indigenous Cultural Festivals national evaluation, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival being positioned as a local government produced event and relevant literature. The research questions guiding this study are:

- How does an Indigenous festival create spaces for reciprocity and community identity?
- What elements constitute an environmentally sustainable Indigenous metropolitan festival?
- What are the local, cultural and socio-political conditions that impact on the programming and production of an Indigenous festival?

1.4 Rationale/Significance of Study

The rationale for the research project was to evaluate the key impacts related to the production of a metropolitan Indigenous festival program. The study provides first hand insight into an Indigenous festival production and discusses the benefits of Indigenous festivals for building and maintaining stronger communities. There is an emerging field of literature on Indigenous festivals, festival environmental sustainability and local government to which the research project is contributing. Reciprocity was chosen as a research topic to understand how the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival key impact spaces had been formed and how they contributed to the formation of continued festival spaces.
My position as festival artist, researcher and industry practitioner equipped me with the means for being inside the festival production to discuss from a hands-on point of view. To this extent the research project is setting a new boundary for the recognition of festivals as an artistic form and practice. My involvement as a festival artist with Yalukit Wilam and community elders, members of the community, artist colleagues and festival patrons, provided a rich resource that may not have been accessible to a non-practicing festival artist researcher.

It is anticipated the research project could be further developed as a complementary framework for Indigenous festivals and local government to use as a guide in their own seeding and maintaining of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander relationships through public celebrations and gatherings. The highlighting of UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage convention for the safeguarding and reclamation of localized Indigenous cultural practices was aligned with the festival, to contribute to a developing area of interest within Australia. The combining of Indigenous festivals, local government and intangible cultural heritage practices are aspects that have been exposed to limited research and therefore a useful area for further exploration.

1.5 Beyond the Scope of the Research

Due to the high number of artists, festival patrons and community interests involved in the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival programs it was beyond the scope of the research to amply address each person and their experiences. The research project was able to open up in depth conversations through a festival regarding Indigenous arts exhibitions and arts therapy programs in prisons. Understanding the long term impacts of the programs between individuals and the community were shown to be beyond the scope of the research project and I recommend that an appropriate national approach should be addressed regarding Indigenous inmates’ wellbeing and curbing the cycles of post-release recidivism.
1.6 Background – Situating the Research and the Researcher

Local Identity Global Focus was an Australian Research Council (ARC) funded research project. It resulted from RMIT’s Globalism Research Centre research titled *Indigenous Cultural Festivals: Evaluating Impact on Community Health and Wellbeing 2010*, by Peter Phipps and Lisa Slater. The *Indigenous Cultural Festivals* published evaluation was funded primarily by the Telstra Foundation and covered four diverse Indigenous festivals. The evaluation was intended to assist with informing the Telstra Foundation’s policy support of Indigenous festivals and was carried out due to the ‘very little scholarly or policy work on Indigenous festivals, and no international comparative work on such festivals’ (Phipps & Slater, 2010, p. 15).

Local Identity Global Focus sits within RMIT University’s School of Art as a research project based on the researcher’s festival artistry practice and hands-on industry experience in producing three Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals in 2006, 2007 and 2008. The research project is a contribution to defining key impacts of the festival process and developing further resources for Indigenous festivals, festival artists and cultural practitioners.

**CITY OF PORT PHILLIP AND THE YALUKIT WILLAM NGARGEE**

St Kilda, also known in Boon Wurrung as Euro Yroke which is located on Yalukit Wilam country, is an iconic bayside Melbourne destination. Since its British colonial settlement the Yalukit Wilam country has been subject to numerous physical, population and governing changes. St Kilda City Council was established as a local municipality in 1846 and subsequently amalgamated in 1994 with four surrounding local councils to form the City of Port Phillip. Servicing a diverse socio-economic inner metropolitan area, the City of Port Phillip operates on a number of levels in relation to the local Indigenous community.

Angela Wallace, Arts and Festivals Department Manager for the City of Port Phillip advocated in 1994 for a Koori Arts Officer and Koori Arts Unit. Three Koori or Indigenous Arts Officers have fulfilled the obligations of the role prior to me being employed by the City of Port Phillip. Yorta Yorta artist, Maree Clarke was the first Koori Arts Officer to begin substantial Koori based arts programs for the Council.
Maree Clarke produced the first series of Indigenous Arts Festivals called We Iri, We Home Borne that grew out of a 1996 National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week visual arts exhibition of the same name that ‘launched people’s careers’ (Edmonds with Clarke, 2009, p. 38). The following series of Indigenous festivals titled Bless Your (Big) Blak Arts were multi-disciplinary arts and cultural programs produced in 2001 by Minjungbal/Bunjalung artist Kim Kruger, and 2003 by Wiradjuri artist Naretha Williams.

The Yalukit Willam Ngargee began in 2006 as a one off two day Indigenous and Polynesian music festival for the Commonwealth Games. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee demonstrated there was an interest for the festival to continue and became an independent Indigenous festival production within the larger St Kilda Festival program. Over the following two years of 2007 and 2008, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee programming formed into a multi-disciplinary arts and cultural festival production through the involvement of festival artists. I was the festival artist/director in 2009 and 2010. In 2011 and 2012, Bunjalung/Gamilaroi artist Daniel King became the Indigenous Arts Officer and Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival artist/director. What was evident in that field of the public service is that practicing artists have filled the Koori/Indigenous Arts Officer’s roles when working with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

**SITUATING THE RESEARCHER’S BACKGROUND**

Situating my own background within the research project includes the complex roles I held as festival artist, researcher and industry practitioner and my own unsubstantiated identity investigations into Aboriginality. Briefly outlining my previous experiences prior to the research project encapsulates arts and festivals practices, an extensive cooking career and no academic experience. I did not finish year ten at high-school due to learning difficulties, returning as a mature age student to gain my Year 12 Higher School Certificate. I never received any formal festival management training and have learnt about festivals through industry experience and self-motivated pursuits. My first independently produced festival -co-directed with Alison Bicknell - was The St Kilda Writers’ Festival in 2005, and 2006 a weeklong literature event celebrating the word in all its forms.
It was partly through the St Kilda Writers’ Festival that influenced the City of Port Phillip to approach me regarding a Commonwealth Games Indigenous Welcome event for which they had received funding. I declined the position as I held anti-Commonwealth Games sentiments and was travelling in China to embark on my world travels. A dream swayed my decision where I had seen an aerial view of the Boon Wurrung country, a place I was not familiar with and I returned from China to take up what I considered to be a temporary Indigenous Arts Project Officer role. I had never been asked to produce a Statement of Aboriginality nor was it implied that the role was an identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander position.

Simultaneously this string of events takes into perspective a conversation with my mother relating to a family secret regarding a suspected link to Aboriginal descent through my grandfather. Being in my early thirties and having experienced a diverse range of traditional and contemporary cultural and ethnic influences I began to question what and how I could uncover further information regarding this possible lineage. What I did was to over identify too quickly before being sure of my supposed Aboriginal connections. My fast-tracked inclusion into the Aboriginal community provided me with an immediate sense of belonging, friendships and a new insight regarding my perceived cultural being. Not having been regularly involved with the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community in Melbourne, my sudden appearance to some had been greeted most often with warm inclusion but understandably so I was aware of instances were I was referred to as a “flash in the pan”, “Johnny come lately” or a “gammon blakfella”.

I began to experience comments from non-Indigenous people such as “wog-a-rigine”, “you white Abo’s cause all the fucking problems”, “there’s no real Abo’s left except for full bloods in the Northern Territory”, “why would you wanna do something like that for”, “go on you speak their language”, “he’s gone walk about again just like those blackfella’s in your book” and “you just wanna be an Abo so you can get all the funding”. Comments like these made me feel extremely aware of identifying as Aboriginal within certain white Australian situations. I was experiencing physical states of anxiety, rage and sometimes sympathy regarding the dysfunctional polarization of identities relating to my recent encounters with identifying as Aboriginal. The experiences lead me to realize that within Australia there arguably
exists human elements that may never be swayed to accept an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander standpoint of the nation-state’s contested histories. However, breaking the generalizations there are obviously many non-Indigenous people who integrally do want to understand as well as those who are aware and active within and around various communities.

In due course, I was unable to substantiate my claims into Aboriginality. Attempts had been sought through Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and recent family connections revealing no direct ancestry links. By this stage my perceived sense of Aboriginality had strongly developed within me and by people around me. My candidature for this PhD had begun, I was heavily involved and relied upon to coordinate the fifth Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival in 2010 plus facilitating smaller community events. An immediate reaction on my behalf was to resign from coordinating these events and to surrender the PhD candidature. I felt a heavy sense of depression, loss, grief, social withdrawal and anger towards myself for not considering a more impartial position during my personal investigation. Overall the circumstances challenged and reshaped the understandings of who I am which in turn informed me of the sense of authentic purpose I needed to maintain for the commitments I had agreed to.

Through these orientations I experienced a cultural identity that broadened and deepened my views about Australia’s complex histories and in part a stronger understanding regarding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s concerns. In this regard I do not claim to be Aboriginal anymore but reflect on what it means to be a contemporary Australian citizen informed by localized Aboriginal worldviews, nation-state contact zone observations and global influences. The question I often think about and continually return to is why would I want to do something like that for? And in part, my response is that I consider it as not only the right thing to do as an Australian but that it is part of what makes us Australians. We have obligations to each other to learn, respect and grow together towards an unknown tomorrow for the betterment of our society and our future generations.
1.7 Summary

Chapter one introduced the Local Identity Global Focus research project structure, content, aims and questions. I set out to investigate as a festival artist three Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals. Five aims have been identified, and from these three research questions were generated. The study was the result of an ARC linkage grant, and involved local government, a range of Indigenous community interests, and grew from my own position and relationship with these communities.
Chapter Two: Methodology, Ethics and Methods

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two outlines the mixed methodologies used during the course of the research project, the ethical process and methods of data gathering. I discuss how aspects of three research methodologies were incorporated in the research project’s theoretical and practical nature. Ethics details the considerations maintained throughout the course of the research project. The various methods used for data gathering complete the chapter.

2.2 Research Methodology

The research project required me as a festival artist to conceptually explore and develop a festival unique theory, as identified by Getz (2010), from qualitative mixed methodologies due to its distinctly cross-cultural nature and limited festival based methodologies. Donald Getz (2010) states that methodologies should not be restrictive, experimentation should be attempted, and that a ‘festival unique theory should emerge, but so far only exists within classical discourse’ (p. 22). The festival unique theory indicated by Getz (2010) was emergent and based on core phenomena observations of event studies and the ‘event experience and meanings attached to it’ (p. 7). The festival experience is according to Getz (2010), at once both personal and social relating to each festival form such as music, arts and heritage. To this extent, festivals are complex planned phenomena and have a variety of meanings from different perspectives. Getz (2010) observes that

cross-cultural comparisons of festivals will be useful in integrating new ideas from artistic perspectives as well as revealing much more in theoretical terms about forms of celebrations and meanings. (p. 21)

In the research project I held numerous roles as festival artist, researcher and industry practitioner. Ros Derrett (2008) considers that a qualitative mixed methodology can
evolve with the complexity of the artistic practice and ‘reveal how all parts work
together to form a whole’ (p. 113). Qualitative mixed methodology aspects of
Indigenous research methodologies, arts-based methodologies and action research had
to this extent informed the research project process. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state
that ‘qualitative research as a set of interpretive activities privileges no single
methodological practice over another’ (p. 3). Specific to my festival artistry practice
was my industry practitioner basis that provided, as stated by Greenwood and Levin
(2005), ‘a disciplined way of developing valid knowledge and theory while promoting
positive change’ (p. 55). In this approach, I am a festival artist researching aspects of
my professional practice and their impacts.

INFORMING THE GAZE AND INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES
The hands-on approach to recent ideas of Indigenous research methodologies, as
informed by broader processes of self-representation and self-determination in a
multidisciplinary arts festival – such as the Yalukit Willam Ngargee, are introduced
through earlier notions of Indigenous filmmaking that directed part of the research
project basis. The entry point association to Indigenous filmmaking opened up the
idea of how methods of decision-making, engagement and reciprocal practices were
formed as part of the festival’s diverse creative arts programs. In recent years select
scholars and practitioners who prioritise processes of engagement as a critical
research method have proposed the concept of effective working methods when
working across a variety of localized Indigenous contexts. For example Bryson, Burns
and Langton (2000) raise the ‘question of the gaze’ (p. 300) and the troubling effects
that cinematic, scientific and ethnographic authorship as historical voyeurism has had
on Aboriginal audiences. The question of the gaze, as detailed by Bryson et al.
(2000), is of central importance when relating to Aboriginal histories and aligned with
understanding the impacts of self representation and Indigenous research
methodologies. It is suggested by Bryson et al. (2000) that Indigenous voices as
cultural and political standpoints can direct and assert their content and rights through
artists, intellectuals and practitioners.
The recognition of Indigenous standpoints had become evident throughout the process of determining what maybe the most appropriate Indigenous research methodology for the research project. Dennis Foley (2006) states that ‘the development of an Indigenous Standpoint will assist communities to be empowered and to preserve and retain Indigenous knowledge, be culturally acceptable to the practitioner and be academically acceptable within the social sciences’ (p. 34). To this extent my personal and social research commitment as a festival artist was maintaining an actively appropriate cultural and political gaze on behalf of the Indigenous standpoints whom I was entrusted to represent.

Informing my gaze as a festival artist was the practice of dadirri or deep listening referred to by Judy Atkinson (2002) as ‘the Aboriginal gift’ (p. 16). For Atkinson (2002), dadirri is more a way of life than a research methodology ‘that gathers information in quiet observation and deep listening, builds knowledge through awareness and contemplation or reflection, which informs action’ (p. 17). I approached dadirri as a subjective practice informing the methodological process which as Atkinson (2002) states

the researcher brings to any research her or his own subjective self. No research is value-free, for even in the choice of subject a value statement is made. In fact research must have value and be of value. In this, researchers must be able to know and acknowledge their own value judgments, and understand the beliefs, influences, assumptions and intrusions, the decisions and choices that come from their past and are active in the present in the day-to-day activities or relating in the research, and that therefore influence the research. (p. 19)

Atkinson here is suggestive that understanding value within the research is coming to know the histories and the daily lives of the self as a researcher relating to the research process. Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead (2006) argue that traditional forms of research assume that the researcher is a ‘neutral, value free operative who observes, collects data and generates evidence to support their findings, but should not influence or be influenced by the research’ (p. 30). Patricia Leavy (2009) adds in relation to arts-based methodologies ‘that this new breed of qualitative methods offers
researchers alternatives to traditional research methods that may fail to get at the particular issues they are interested in, or may fail to represent them effectively’ (p. 3). My festival artistry practice and development of a festival unique theory was the reciprocation of *dadirri* as an Aboriginal gift and coming to understand the subjective selves involved in the lived experiences of the everyday and significant temporal festival moments.

My festival artistry practice involved a number of distinctly diverse relationships, all with complex and in depth backgrounds coming together to contribute to the overall festival production. This sense of coming together is outlined by Atkinson (2002) who stated that ‘there is intersubjectivity within this sense of community, with a view that all parts are connected and informed by each other’ (p. 17). I have linked my experiences of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival’s intersubjective connectedness to Atkinson’s notion of community and to Marcia Langton (1993) who acknowledges that ‘Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are subjects, not objects’ (p. 32).

According to Langton (1993), the field of Aboriginal intersubjectivity ‘is remade over and over again in a process of dialogue, of imagination, of representation and interpretation’ (p. 33). Langton (1993) provides three broad categories of Aboriginal intersubjectivity:

1. The experience of Aboriginal people interacting with other Aboriginal people within an Aboriginal situation
2. The cultural and textual construction of things Aboriginal by white people who have never had any substantial first-hand contact with Aboriginal people
3. Constructions which are generated when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in actual dialogue. (p. 34)

Langton (1993) outlines the potential that ‘the representational and aesthetic statements of Aboriginal people made by non-Aboriginal people transform the Aboriginal reality, they are accounts’ (p. 40). Martin Nakata (2007) suggests it is ‘peoples lived experience at the cultural interface which is the point of entry for investigation’ (p. 215) more than investigating just the case itself. Nakata (2007) orients his students ‘to approach this knowledge not as facts of Indigenous realities but as the context that provides the conditions for intellectual reflection and
engagement with contemporary Indigenous issues’ (p. 225). My coming to understand Indigenous people’s lived realities, as mentioned by Nakata, was not just a reliance on objectified truths or factuality’s but the contemplation of everyday Indigenous actualities and personal relationships. Nakata (2007) observes that within the contextualizing of Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing knowledge, regardless of the traditional cultural distance contexts, are not unfamiliar and are embedded in,

ways of storytelling and of memory making; in music, art and performance; in cultural and social practices; in ways of relating to kin and socializing children; in ways of thinking and of transmitting knowledge, even in creolized languages; and in that all-encompassing popular though loosely used term ‘worldview’, and so on. (p. 220)

The above statement regarding ways of doing knowledge was related to my festival unique theory and the contemplation of localized Indigenous actualities. This process lead me to the ‘cultural interface’ (p. 14) – as suggested by Nakata and Neuenfeldt (2005, Nakata, 1997b) in From ‘Navajo’ to ‘Taba Naba’: Unveiling the Metamorphosis of a Popular Torres Strait Islander Song – to be a ‘transcultural contact zone’ (p. 14). Nakata and Neuenfeldt (2005) recognised that identities within the transcultural contact zone actively assert the reshaping of their cultural and political identities through competing and contesting discourses. Throughout the course of the Local Identity Global Focus, contact zone literature became an influential sum part when positioning aspects of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival. Mary Louise Pratt (2008) in Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation detailed that contact zones are

social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – such as colonialism and slavery, or the aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today. (p. 7)
As the festival artist I became aware of reshaping festival contact zone spaces with a focus on what Nakata (2007) outlines as the importance to understand what happens when Indigenous knowledge is documented in ways that disembody it from the people who are its agents, when the ‘knowers’ of that knowledge are separated out from what comes ‘to be known’, in ways that dislocate it from its locale, and separate it from the social institutions that uphold and reinforce its efficacy and cleave it from the practices that constantly renew its meanings in the here and now. (p. 191)

Ownership of knowledge and its locality through the development of a festival unique theory and in the pursuit of finding ways to begin breaking down contact zones was informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008) Article 11 Clause 1

Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, ceremonies, technologies, and visual and performing arts and literature. (p. 6)

The second United Nations (2008) clause of Article 11 indicates the Nation-State’s responsibility in conjunction with indigenous people for redress through effective mechanisms due to the violation and non-consenting removal of indigenous ‘laws, traditions and customs’ (p. 6). My global conceptual exploration reinforced the understanding that the Boon Wurrung social institutional presence through the Yalukit Willam Ngargee was part of a festival artistry mechanism for local government to redress.

The Boon Wurrung Foundation Senior Elder Spokesperson, Aunty Carolyn Briggs guided my festival artistry, research and industry practice during the founding and running of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee. Through Aunty Carolyn’s assistance, aspects of Yalukit Wilam and Boon Wurrung cultural reclamation practices had been conceptually developed relating to intangible cultural heritage safeguarding
mechanisms. UNESCO (2003) considers intangible cultural heritage as extending beyond built monuments and natural physical landmarks with a focus on five broad domains of ‘oral traditions and expressions in language, performing arts, social practice/ritual/ festive events, knowledge practices concerning nature and the universe and traditional craftsmanship’ (p. 4).

UNESCO (2009a) states that festivals are ‘complex expressions of intangible cultural heritage that include singing, dancing, theatre, feasting, oral tradition, and storytelling, displays of craftsmanship, sports and other entertainments’ (p. 3). In this regard a part of the Indigenous research methodology that became apparent was the localized ways of doing knowledge and how those ways occur between people. Some of the measures my festival artistry practice could encourage at a localized level to this extent were to enable further discussions in relation to a Boon Wurrung Indigenous research methodology through incorporating initial aspects where appropriate into the research project.

ARTS-BASED METHODOLOGIES
My artistic standpoint approach to festival artistry and a festival unique theory is based on a cyclical multi-disciplinary Indigenous festival domain. Art-based knowledge gained as a festival artist is detailed by Leavy (2009) as ‘holistic and dynamic, involving reflection, description, problem formulation and solving and the ability to identify and explain intuition and creativity in the research process’ (p. 10). Leavy (2009) suggests that an art-based approach encourages the ‘reciprocal and resistive potential of art being harnessed by social researchers increasingly committed to dismantling stereotypes, accessing the voices of marginalised groups, and engaging in research that propels social change’ (p. 256). James Haywood Rolling (2010) positions arts-based learning as

More ideally suited for habit forming exercises, rituals of perception, acts of reflection, personal expression, and social agency which, if they are to be seriously evaluated for their effectiveness, must be assessed over the long run to document how life practices, thinking habits and communities of the learner have transformed. (p. 111)
Arts-based methodologies informed my festival artistry practice in how to approach the natural life of the festival form and its presence. Siegesmund and Taylor (2008) suggest that an arts-based methodology can take one of two forms that are to either resolve a problem or to challenge the imagination. In this regard a part of my festival artistry artistic form and conceptual exploration was the composition of celebratory spaces and safeguarding programs for Indigenous self-representational expressions. McNiff (2008) notes that since artists’ expressions are essentially ‘heuristic, introspective, and deeply personal, there needs to be a complementary focus in art-based research on how the work can be of use to others and how it connects to practices in the discipline’ (p. 34). My festival artistry practice to this extent involved the creative programming, logistical production, communications and administration of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee in collaboration with a small team of likeminded festival artists and Indigenous co-authorship as a connecting social and artistic vehicle.

ACTION RESEARCH
The festival artistry practice maintained multiple roles and responsibilities informed by aspects of action research as an extension of traditional methodological enquiry. Martyn Denscombe (2008) suggests that ‘action research is normally associated with hands on small scale research projects’ (p. 122). The hands on characteristic that Denscombe (2008) mentions includes practice, change, cyclical process and participation as aligning attributes of the festival unique theory. McNiff and Whitehead (2006) propose three methodological assumptions in relation to the use of action research. First that practitioners consider themselves as agents, second the methodology is open ended and developmental, and third that the ‘aim of the research is to improve learning with social intent’ (p. 29). McNiff and Whitehead (2006) consider that ‘instead of beginning with a hypothesis, which they aim to accept or reject, action researchers start with an idea and follow it where it leads them’ (p. 31). In this regard action research as a methodological aspect related to the research project scale, intent and varying degrees of festival artistry exploration.

The challenge throughout the course of the research project was the clarification of an applicable research methodology that suitably presented the festivals’ natural life. Adapting aspects of research methodologies allowed for the hands on festival artistry
practice to be intuitive, challenging and socially motivated whilst maintaining the integrity of Indigenous self-representational expressions. Aunty Carolyn is a featured voice throughout the course of the study and without her elder’s guidance neither the research project nor the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival would have been able to move ahead in such a positive manner.

PHASES
The overview of the research project phases takes into consideration the many shifting elements within and around the natural life of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee. The original research project proposal outlined four research phases including planning, data gathering, analysis and reporting, and the dissemination of the findings. What was apparent was that the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival was operating at the same time as the research proposal and ethics clearances were being finalised. Throughout that period I was working on the festival fulltime. This was inclusive of attending festival meetings with a range of festival stakeholders and structuring the 2009 festival program as part of my industry practice. The four research project phases began to overlap depending on when and how the festivals’ key impacts were founded or implemented which required a flexible methodology throughout the course of the research project.

The Yalukit Willam Ngargee operated on an annual cyclical program and the key impacts encouraged through the festival had to be recognised for their own distinctive existences. During the course of the research project three primary festival phases of operation became apparent including pre-production, production and post-production. The pre-production lead in involved but was not limited to consultations and meetings, applying for funding and sponsorship, structuring the festival program, and producing marketing and promotional materials. The production phase was the actual temporal Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program period and the point where I was the most active in the roles of being a festival artist, researcher and industry practitioner. The post-production phase involved finalizing funding reports and acquittals, debriefing and wrap-up meetings, following up on marketing and promotions and processing of invoices and payments.
My enrolment took place shortly after the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival had concluded in February 2008. Overall initial planning for the research project happened while structuring the research and ethics proposal. Once the final ethics clearance had been received in October 2008 I was able to begin the research project for the 2009 festival in February. My festival artistry practice during this period involved setting up all of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee details whilst maintaining my regular daily duties as Indigenous Arts Officer. When the research project commenced it corresponded with festival promotional collateral being drafted and made ready for public marketing. Yearly planning was scheduled at the end of each year from this point, divided into quarterly blocks. The final write-up occurred once all the data and evidence had been analyzed and as festival key impacts continued to progress. I maintained a willingness to speak about my research and to continue learning from elders and colleagues.

2.3 Ethics

Local Identity Global Focus was considered to be a high-risk categorization two for working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. An ethics proposal was drafted in detailed correspondence with supervisors and RMIT ethics committee members - one of whom was a representative from RMIT’s Ngara Willim or Gathering Place Indigenous Centre. I based the ethics proposal requirements on the National Health and Research Centre (NHMRC) Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research (2003) as adapted from the AIATSIS ethical research guidelines.

The NHMRC (2003) Indigenous ethical values and fundamentals of ‘reciprocity, respect, equality, survival and protection, responsibility, spirit and integrity’ (p. 8) were maintained throughout the research project. I implemented the NHMRC (2003) research practices of ‘conceptualism, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination’ (p. 8). Regular meetings occurred with guiding elder Aunty Carolyn who advised on the research content, developed ideas, recommended informative materials and approved the primary subject matter.
Information included within the final exegesis directly relating to interviewed participants was sent to them for clearance before submission. A Consent Form, Plain Language Statement and questions list were presented to the interviewed participants with details regarding the research project and contact numbers for both supervisors and myself. Surveys remained anonymous and the writing, presentation and dissemination of the research project were addressed in ‘good faith’ (AIATSIS, 2011, p. 12) to the cultural appropriateness and guidance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sensitivities. Within 24 months of the project’s completion, for archival purposes and future reference, all collected data will be offered to the Ngarara Willim Centre for first right of refusal with copies supplied to the Boon Wurrung Foundation and offered to Bunjilaka Melbourne Museum or the Koorie Heritage Trust.

2.4 Methods

The methods with which I gathered data were based over three festival productions and their key program impacts. They included the hands-on festival production, literature review, interviews, elders’ guidance, industry advice, surveys and weblogging. Data collection supporting the research project was sourced from festival produced documentaries, recorded interviews, document analysis and photographs. I maintained a detailed journal for self-analysis and met with supervisors on a regular basis to discuss my work throughout the research project. The review of collected festival evidence was obtained from various supportive sources acknowledged in the exegesis.

The qualitative methods I used for the data collection evolved within a festival unique theory. Derrett (2008) observes that ‘it may appear a simple task, but its complexity requires empathy and familiarity between the researcher and sites of investigation, the festivals’ (p. 122). I found through Derrett’s (2008) explorations of her own festival experiences there had been emergent and transferable qualities that did not follow ‘conventional objective or detached approaches to the context of the festival study’ (p. 12). In justifying the qualitative methods Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that
Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview artifacts, cultural texts and productions, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives. (pp. 3-4)

According to Gray (2003) being a researcher means becoming part of the cultural world you are a researcher in, in a ‘Macro’ sense whilst becoming part of a chosen setting, site or geography in a ‘Micro’ sense. A macro sense as suggested by Gray indicates an immersion of being into larger cultural intangibilities and how they exist for the researcher within the micro locality of space. It is suggestive of the interconnectedness between smaller or micro actions and larger or macro dialogues that are in need of each other to co-exist.

As a festival artist relating to Gray’s observations, I considered this to be aligned with the many national Indigenous cultural discussions, which themselves are within their own micro settings influencing a macro sense. It is arguably an Indigenous cultural gathering, such as the Yalukit Willam Ngargee, that is itself a micro setting that could also feed into a larger macro regard. With this complex understanding of seeing the sum parts within the whole, I became aware of multiple cross-cultural layers, local geographical settings and private and public dimensions. With this in view, my hands on, direct research involvement was a principal method of data gathering which Derrett (2008) states from her own experiences that

I believe the rich description that emerges from my observations allows for insights and conclusions to be transferred to other cases. This personal viewpoint is motivated by a strong commitment to appropriate regional development and minimizing the exploitation of festival organisers just entering the profession. (p. 123)

Derrett’s approach is observant of her own festival artistry gaze and ensuring the festival artistry of the locality and industry is strengthened. It has to be kept in consideration that festivals are unique to their own time and space and my approach to the research project and key impacts began relatively unstructured. This is
relational to Burns (2000) who acknowledges that some researchers may have ‘little idea about what it is they precisely want to observe, or what might go on’ (p. 408). Burns (2000) notes in relation to conducting and observing research that

There are no initial checklists, simply observation of events, situations and behaviours, which are then written up gradually, as more data accumulates, tentative guiding hypotheses, categorizations, conceptual frameworks and some theoretical underpinning coalesce to give some body, focus and direction to later stages. (p. 408)

IMMERSION
My experiences of living for twelve years in the local area and the three years of festivals prior to the research project taking place positioned my ability to be immersed with the natural life of the festival. Burns (2000) suggests that the researcher becomes involved and immersed over a period of time, including months or years when observing and documenting studies. Observing natural settings rather than artificially created conditions or experiments is according to Denscombe (2008) the whole point of the fieldwork observation.

Burns (2000) cautions though, that ‘the attempt to be both a member and a researcher can often lead to problems of role conflict’ (p. 406). In order to manage these concerns Creswell (2009) suggests researchers need to reflexively and explicitly identify their values and biases relating to the research project. Maintaining the complex relational stance in which the artist-researcher-practitioner operates, Creswell (2009) states that research characteristics take place

in the natural setting, relies on the researcher as the instrument for data collection, employs multiple methods of data collection, is inductive, is based on participants’ meanings, is emergent, often involves the use of a theoretical lens, is interpretative and is holistic. (p. 201)
AUDIO, VISUAL and ONLINE

Documentation through qualitative audio, visual and online materials was used to support my observations. According to Creswell (2000) forms of qualitative data can be ‘photographs, art objects, videotapes, or any forms of sound’ (p. 181). Derrett (2008) in her observations of festival case studies used photographs and crowd based images as a method to indicate participation levels and details of social relationships, demographics, spatial relationships and atmosphere.

In relation to documented images a resource had been accessed through the Yalukit Willam Ngargee’s contracting of Indigenous photographers from 2006 to 2012. Most notably Watha-Wurrung artist/photographer Bindi Cole, prominent Indigenous photographer Wayne Quillam, Yorta Yorta musician/photographer James Henry and professional Indigenous photographer Steven Rhall through The Torch. Any public release of their images have been appropriately acknowledged and agreed. To this extent non-commissioned or non-curated images, videos and online commentary were accessed as a form of weblogging.

Getz (2007) indicates weblogging as a method of field research data collection that assess ‘the meanings of what people say on web logs, or in other written texts’ (p. 365). Web logs contained comments and images of the festival from festival attendees providing anecdotal evidence regarding the festivals impacts. Getz (2007) considers in relation to sourcing anecdotal weblogging reference related to festival research that ‘if you assume there is some grain of truth in them collectively, it will probably result in improved understanding and maybe play a part in developing theory’ (p. 366). Some of these sources included social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube and blogs. Data gathered from the culmination of these qualitative festival methods included two documentaries produced through the festival, festival images sourced from consenting and acknowledged photographers, non-curated online commentaries and audio and visual recordings of interviews.

INTERVIEWS

Six semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven participants involved in some capacity with the festival. The questions and interviewing style were open-ended based on Mertens (2005) rationale that it is people themselves that understand
their own lived social reality. The use of open-ended questions, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), can explore an indicated area ‘without suggesting to the participant how it should be explored’ (p. 459). Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) state in relation to interviewing the key actors who

are especially knowledgeable individuals and thus provide detailed information about a group’s past and about contemporary happenings and relationships, as well as the everyday nuances – the ordinary details – that others might miss. (p. 456)

Consenting interviewees included respected members of the local community, creative programming partners, health service providers, a visual artist/exhibition curator, Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival artist/producer 2011 and 2012, and City of Port Phillip staff. Interviewees were presented with a Plain Language Statement, consent form and question outline. The interviewees were then either filmed or audio recorded. They received a gift certificate without prior knowledge at the end of the session for their time. Interviews were carried out towards the end of the research project, which as Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) highlight, ‘tend to shape response to the researchers perceptions of how things are’ (p. 455). The insights gained from the interviews confirmed and expanded my observations regarding key areas of the festival and the research project.

SURVEYS
I collaborated with the Darwin-based Top End Arts Marketing (TEAM) Indigenous Arts Officer Alison Copley to design and implement a festival survey for 2009. Two surveys were conducted during the 2009 festival during the main festival day and a Noel Tovey theatre production. A descriptive survey as outlined by Burns (2000), ‘aims to estimate as precisely as possible the nature of existing conditions, or the attributes of a population’ (p. 566). Due to the temporal nature of the festival program the survey was cross-sectional which as Mertens (2005) indicates takes ‘advantage of collecting information in a shorter time frame’ (p. 172). To this extent the survey’s purposes were to assist both the research project and the festival.
The survey was structured in seven sections with the final reporting analysis being carried out by Copley (2009) and included respondent profile, information, interests, motivations, awareness, satisfaction and feedback. Burns (2000) notes that ‘the model questionnaire is designed in four parts the introduction, warm-up questions, body of the study, and demographic questions’ (p. 574). To gather the necessary sample size information, the festival survey consisted of a selection of twenty-three open and closed questions administered by festival volunteer interviewers.

Each volunteer interviewer was inducted and supervised by Copley to randomly approach every eighth festival participant within the surveying site, as detailed by Getz (2007) that ‘usually the researcher wants a random sample (e.g., every nth person through the gate)’ (p. 364). The anonymous survey took up to fifteen minutes to administer, was voluntary, consenting participants were over eighteen years old and received a 2008 festival compilation CD without prior indication. Follow up surveys for 2010 and 2011 festivals proved to be financially costly due to the limitations of the research project and festival budget.

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis related to the festival and affiliated organisations promotional materials, correspondences and unpublished reports. According to Derrett (2008) document analysis allows for a profile to be determined not only of the festival organizing infrastructure but of the host community’ (p. 127). Examples of festival document analysis that Derrett (2008) offers include ‘posters, meeting minutes, lists and honor boards in public places, marketing collateral to promote events and video footage’ (p.127). I refer throughout the festival project chapters in Section Three, to festival related documents in the areas of communications, logistics, administration, creative programming and the unpublished reports of Jill Robinson (2009, 2010) and Alison Brash (2010, 2011). To this extent the use of document analysis as a method of data collection provided me with access to explore festival areas that may not have been authorized to traditional methodologies outside of the festival artistry practice.
2.5 Summary

In chapter two I have presented my approach to the study of three Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals that derives from Getz’s (2010) discussion of ways of viewing an emergent festival. The approach was also influenced by the work of Derrett (2008) who recognises that in providing a description of a festival it must be one that cannot only be transferable, but also gives due consideration to regional developments and emerging industry practitioners. The methodological approach I have developed is unique to these festivals and incorporates the use of qualitative mixed methodologies, including Indigenous research methodologies, art-based methodologies and Action Research. I found Burns, Bryson and Langton’s (2000) question of the gaze influential in my own festival artistry practice, and I had also been informed through Atkinson’s (2002) discussions on deep listening and contemplation. The study is deeply indebted to the work of Langton (1993) with respect to the role that aspects of non-Aboriginal researchers’ accounts can play in transforming parts of Aboriginal people’s realities. An intensive ethical process was carried out due to the research project’s high-risk categorization. This entailed working in good faith with the guidance of Indigenous Elders and festival stakeholders.
SECTION TWO: YALUKIT - PEOPLE

The literature review titled Yalukit or People is presented in three main topical chapters titled Indigenous Voices, Festival Domains and Dialogues of Reciprocity. Each chapter heading features key insight discussions that have informed my research process. I have chosen this layout due to the broad amount of contextual literature and the limited amount of specific literature relating to aspects within each field of discussion. Literature that informed the research refers to trusted sources across various disciplines obtained from printed publications and reports, broadcast interviews, visual art exhibitions, video documentation and online weblogging. My work is intended to contribute to an emerging field of Indigenous festivals research, local government and strengthening community ties.
Chapter Three: Indigenous Voices Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

Indigenous Voices is a thematic overview of literature related to socio-historical contexts, discrimination, health and wellbeing, government discussions and localized understandings. The literature review begins by broadly positioning aspects of Indigenous standpoints and accounts. It then ties in the research project’s localized involvement with the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival towards the end of the chapter. Indigenous voices is formed into four main headings:

1. Invasion, Subjugation and the Exteriorities of Representation
2. Discrimination and Wellbeing
3. Closing the Gap, Local Government and Reconciliation
4. Yalukit Wilam, Kulin Nation and Spiritual Base

Invasion, Subjugation and the Exteriorities of Representation literature begins with a broad national context of socio-historical events that have influenced research project perspectives. Writers include Lester-Irabinna Rigney, Dennis Foley, Sarah Maddison, Sylvia Kleinert, Gillian Cowlishaw, Fred Myers and Faye Ginsburg, Edward Said, Marcia Langton, Ian Anderson, Fran Edmonds with Maree Clarke and Daniel Browning interviewing Wesley Enoch.


Closing the Gap, Local Government and Reconciliation begins with an outline by the Australian Government regarding Closing the Gap (2012) statistics for Indigenous people towards 2031. The area then leads into Erin McKinnon’s (2011) research on reconciliation and local government for Reconciliation Victoria with commentaries.
from the publication *Building Stronger Communities* (2007). A review of related local
government reports includes the New South Wales Department of Local Government,
City of Melbourne and City of Port Phillip.

Yalukit Wilam, Kulin Nation and Spiritual Base ties in the research project to the
people and place of the local area. It begins with Gary Presland (2010) outlining how
the Boon Wurrung are one of the five language groups of the East Kulin Nation. The
City of Bayside offers an overview of the Boon Wurrung language group clan
structure. Ian Clarke and Laura Kostanski relate to some specifics of the Yalukit
Wilam clan and resident-guests who live on country. Richard Broome, Martin Nakata
and Lester-Irabinna Rigney touch on discussions regarding language and culture.
Completing the Indigenous Voices chapter are the Elders’ responsibilities to Yalukit
Wilam and Boon Wurrung culture from Senior Boon Wurrung Elder Spokesperson
Aunty Carolyn Briggs.

### 3.2 Invasion, Subjugation and the Exteriorities of Representation

The broad approach I have started the literature review with begins by outlining
aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contemporary connections to
invasion and subjugation. Lester-Irabinna Rigney (2006) presents two incontestable
points regarding Indigenous Australia, firstly that prior to colonization Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Australia was ‘composed of multicultural and multilingual
societies’ (p. 384); and secondly ‘it is beyond argument that Australia was invaded’
(p. 384). Foley (2006) hypothesizes that it was the destruction and subjugation of
Aboriginal Australia that has eradicated whole generations and obliterated educational
processes permanently damaging complex Indigenous social networks. However,
despite aspects of these indelible means mentioned by Foley and as discussed
throughout the research project, there are intergenerational reclamation practices that
are broadly becoming recognized for their reinvigorations of Indigenous knowledge
and cultural systems.
In Sarah Maddison’s (2009) extensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander political national coverage *Black Politics: Inside the Complexity of Aboriginal Political Culture*, she warrants the continuing unresolved traumas of colonisation that included ‘massacres, rape, starvation and introduced disease, through to policies that justified the removal of Aboriginal children’ (p. 227). Aboriginal people have also according to Maddison (2009) ‘experienced the denigration and destruction of their traditional ceremonial processes for healing from trauma’ (p. 213). Sylvia Kleinert (2010) indicated in “Clothing the Post Colonial Body: Art, Artifacts and Action in South Eastern Australia” that South East Australian Aboriginal peoples had been ‘subject to unrelenting colonisation, devastated by disease and violence, dispossessed from traditional lands and relegated to remote missions and reserves’ (p. 4). Despite these seemingly irrevocable circumstances, what becomes evident throughout the literature are the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reclamation and actively present practices being conducted by Indigenous festivals, artists and communities.

The metropolitan setting is related through Gillian Cowlishaw’s (2009) informed accounts in *The City’s Outback* regarding urban Aboriginal identity based in Sydney’s outer Western Suburbs. Cowlishaw (2009) refers to the challenging and reshaping of urban Aboriginal identities as dynamic, labile or adaptive and created through ‘matters of contestation and assertion’ (p. 31). Fred Myers and Faye Ginsburg (2006) state that ‘by the 1980s urban Aboriginal people felt themselves denied legitimacy as Aboriginal, lacking what was taken from them by dispossession’ (p. 36). Within their article, Myers and Ginsburg (2006) map a modern history of the Aboriginal struggle and how Aboriginal cultural activists ‘cracked the distorted mirror’ (p. 29) of cultural dissonance which had been held up to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since colonisation. Aboriginal cultural activists achieved this, according to Myers and Ginsburg (2006), through using various media forms and mobilizations in addressing issues such as land rights, civil rights and the Stolen Generations.

Edward Said (2003) in *Orientalism*, relates to those reflections of cultural dissonance mentioned by Myers and Ginsburg, to be the supposed authentic realities presented by a dominant social institutions truism’s as an ‘exteriority of representations’ (p. 21). Langton (1993) views these exteriorities of representations as prominent and distorted reflections of Aboriginal people’s realities manifested in Australia’s histories by
dominant colonial cultural assumptions and accounts of constructed Aboriginal identities. One of the central problem’s according to Langton (1993) is

the need to develop a body of knowledge on representation of Aboriginal people and their concerns in art, film, television and other media and a critical perspective to do with aesthetics and politics, drawing from Aboriginal world views, from Western traditions and from history. (p. 28)

Ian Anderson (1997) approaches what he terms as socio-historical connections and transformations of black and white ancestors as people ‘who are both like and unlike ourselves’ (p. 12). What Anderson (1997) regards as the analysis of historical Aboriginal identity continuities is in effect to investigate the qualities of socio-historical connection between contemporary Aboriginal people and their ancestors. The context is according to Anderson (1997), the historical connection and coherent maintenance of tradition that is based in socio-historical transformation.

The socio-historical transformations and ancestral continuities that Anderson comments on, are relational to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultural practices. Regionally the historical background and the challenging reinvigorations of South East Australian Aboriginal artists has been discussed by Fran Edmonds with Maree Clarke (2009), in Sort of Like Reading A Map: A Community Report On The Survival of South-East Australian Art Since 1834. The disruptions of colonisation to original meanings and designs are according to Edmonds with Clarke (2009) ‘being reclaimed in new ways that reflect the multiple experiences of Aboriginal people in the region’ (p. 47). Edmonds with Clarke (2009) state that ‘Aboriginal artists and art curators today, like their ancestors, do not see a disconnection between art and culture, which remain entwined in the process of the everyday life’ (p. 47). In an ABC Radio interview between Awaye program presenter Daniel Browning (2011) and Wesley Enoch (of Murri decent, IndigeLab 2010 facilitator and Queensland Theatre Company director), Enoch states in relation to arts and cultural practice that

what makes us who we are is not our disadvantage, not how educated we are or where we live, in terms of housing, or the jobs we have. It's actually about this cultural work. And so I think that our generation has to go through and
make sure that culturally we're keeping hold of the things that we think are important for the future, both in content but also in form.

### 3.3 Discrimination and Wellbeing

Indigenous Australians continue to experience high rates of race-based discrimination. These effects contribute to decreased senses of health and wellbeing creating a societal polarization between individuals and social-cultural groupings. In the VicHealth (2009) *Building On Our Strengths: A Framework To Reduce Race-Based Discrimination and Support Diversity in Victoria* it notes that ‘in Australia, those groups most vulnerable to race-based discrimination are Indigenous Australians and those from non-English speaking backgrounds’ (p. 24). The VicHealth (2009) report outlines the negative wellbeing effects of race-based discrimination stating that:

people who are targeted by race-based discrimination respond in varied and complex ways. Some internalise these experiences and endorse discriminatory beliefs about their own group and even feel they deserve such treatment. Others turn race-based discrimination against members of their own groups or those who are more maligned than them, or lash out at the dominant group through retaliatory discrimination. (p. 19)

Community arts based programs are one of the methods in which Vic Health (2012) has confronted these issues through an *Arts About Us* program. Victorian partnerships through the VicHealth (2012) program have begun to develop, as discussed on the *Arts About Us – About* web page, ‘arts-based projects, shows and exhibitions that celebrate our cultural diversity and help people understand the impacts of race-based discrimination’ (para. 6). Examples of VicHealth (2012) funded *Arts About Us* Indigenous partnership projects include community cultural development organisation The Torch’s Reigniting Communities program, The Black Arm Band and Short Black Opera’s Pecan Summer operatic performance.
There are still many intergenerational healing aspects that Indigenous people continue to deal with due to the effects of racial discrimination. Atkinson (2002) quotes in relation to her extensive work with improving the effects of Indigenous intergenerational trauma resulting from negative states of wellbeing, that ‘healing, also strengthens the cultural and spiritual group identity which allows people to be contributing members of the society in which they live’ (p. 217). Atkinson (2002) observes that what is essential for people who feel helpless, powerless and are in pain are the practices and programs based on languages and actions of hope and courage.

Langton (2008) references Native American similarities with Aboriginal communities reporting on the ‘strong correlation between communities that have made an active and collective effort to engage in community practices, which preserve and develop cultural continuity and low youth suicide rates’ (p. 4). These community intergenerational correlations are a concern for Aboriginal health. Vicki Grieves (2007) stresses Aboriginal health is multi-dimensional embracing all aspects of living, affirming the ‘importance of survival in harmony with the environment’ (p. 19). Being able to build bridges inter-generationally to Indigenous empowerment, health and wellbeing is according to Grieves (2007)

\[\text{the capacity to “maintain and develop… identities, languages, religions” is in effect the power to transmit their own intangible cultural heritage, or way of life, to the succeeding generations, to ensure their wellbeing. (p. 16)}\]

A part of my coming to understand Grieves mentioning of surviving in harmony with, in particular contemporary environments, I draw upon the term Survivance that I was introduced to during my November 2010 visit to the Smithsonian Native American Museum in Washington DC. The ongoing cultural and visual art exhibition Our Lives Contemporary Life and Identity (Smithsonian Native American Museum, Washington, DC, 2010) featured eight native American communities defining their own 21st Century identities as first nations peoples on the North American continent. On a display board entering the Our Lives: Contemporary Life and Identity (2010) exhibition it stated that Survivance
is more than just survival. *Survivance* means redefining ourselves. It means raising our social and political consciousness. It means holding on to ancient principles while eagerly embracing change. It means doing what is necessary to keep our cultures alive.

Gerald Vizenor (2008) who coined the term *Survivance*, is a prolific Native American writer, play-write and activist. In Vizenor’s (2008) work *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*, he describes *Survivance* as ‘an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion; *survivance* is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction’ (p. 19). Vizenor (2008) states that ‘*survivance*, then, is the action, condition, quality, and sentiments of the verb *survive*” (p. 19). Representing cultural continuity in the return of a Native American Diaspora, *Survivance* is in Vizenor’s (2008) terms ‘an active resistance and repudiation of dominance, obtrusive themes of tragedy, nihilism and victimry’ (p. 11). To this extent I refer to *survivance* throughout the research primarily as an active presence over absence as the term does not as yet have a firm salience in current Indigenous Australian literature.

Mulligan, Humphrey, James, Scanlon, Smith and Welsh (2006) reported in *Creating Communities: Celebrations, Arts and Wellbeing Within and Across Local Communities* that ‘as a mountain of indisputable evidence now indicates, a sense of community belonging is crucial to the maintenance of individual health and wellbeing and, would add, to the ability of individuals to deal with change itself’ (p. 145). The research by Mulligan et al. (2006) suggests that a way to understand the social health and wellbeing benefits of community arts, celebrations and festival programs is to considered them in terms of an iceberg metaphor ‘with some benefits remaining visible and even measurable, and many others remaining hidden’ (p. 145). In relation to Indigenous wellbeing, festivals and public space I note, Lisa Slater (2011) in “Don’t Let the Sport and Rec Officer Get a Hold of it: Indigenous Festivals Big Aspirations and Local Knowledge”. Referring to Slater’s (2011) empirical research findings into various Indigenous festivals around Australia, she clarifies that in order for Indigenous wellbeing to improve there ‘is a need to promote and support public spaces’ (p. 632). Slater (2011) affirms that Indigenous festivals are able to cater to these details by fostering Indigenous control of culturally appropriate, stable and localized authorship.
3.4 Closing the Gap, Local Government and Reconciliation.

The Australian Government’s (2012) *Closing the Gap Report* is defined as ‘a work in progress’ (p. 120) regarding the reduction of Indigenous disadvantage targets. Some of the targets the report states is working towards includes, closing the Indigenous life expectancy gap within a generation by 2031, halving ‘the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five by 2018’ (p. 1), and halving ‘the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and other Australians’ (p. 1). The Australian Government (2012) states that the work on reducing Indigenous disadvantage is a shared responsibility requiring intense and collaborative effort from all governments, Indigenous people, the private sector, non-government organisations and the wider community. (p. 1)

Local Government is one layer directly involved with the research project that is capable of presenting means for assisting in the reduction of Indigenous disadvantage as mentioned in the report. Erin McKinnon’s (2011) *Reconciliation in Local Government Action Research Report 2011* for Reconciliation Victoria states that local government is the closest tier of government to communities and ‘they are well placed to lead and influence positive changes at the local level’ (p. 5). McKinnon (2011) notes the significant potential for local governments ‘to celebrate Aboriginal culture and strengthen communities through supporting arts and cultural activities’ (p. 57). Three primary points McKinnon (2011) raised in the report relate to the provision for Aboriginal arts and cultural support by local government include:

- Commissioning or procuring Indigenous artworks for display in public and council spaces;
- Inclusion of Indigenous arts and performance in existing council festivals and events;
- Supporting local artists through grants, sponsoring exhibitions or joint projects. (p. 57)
The promotion by local government of Indigenous arts within the wider community from McKinnon’s (2011) research indicates the creation of ‘positive economic, social and cultural outcomes for local Aboriginal communities’ (p. 57) plus the building of appreciation, harmony and recognition.

McKinnon’s (2011) findings indicated there are demanding, challenging and significant Aboriginal and council expectations placed on the role of local government Indigenous Liaison Officers. According to McKinnon (2011), the spectrum of Indigenous Liaison Officer expectations can range from going ‘beyond the scope of the local government mandate’ (p. 49) to responding to or providing ‘advice on anything considered an Indigenous issue’ (p. 49). If not managed well, McKinnon (2011) highlights that Indigenous Liaison Officers can be pulled in many directions that ‘could lead to burn out or job dissatisfaction’ (p. 49). McKinnon (2011) recommends that retention of Indigenous Liaison Officers roles needs ‘appropriate management and support, including career development’ (p. 11).

In providing ways to bring people together Hughes, Black, Kaldor, Bellamy and Castle (2007) in Building Stronger Communities indicate that an ‘expert system’ be in place and that ‘the trust one places in the individuals who are part of the system derives from trust in the system itself’ (p. 90). Hughes et al. (2007) continues to state that ‘confidence consists of believing that those employed within the system know what is required in their job and will do their job properly’ (p. 91). Whether recognized or not, Hughes et al. (2007) outline that the representative person within the system takes on board a leadership role both within the expert-system and with the various community groups.

One leadership form which Hughes et al. (2007) highlights in relation to community development is transformational leadership which ‘seeks to lift the quality of people’s actions by raising their consciousness of higher ideals and moral values such as liberty, justice equality, human rights and kindness rather than invoking baser emotions such as fear, greed, jealousy or hatred’ (p. 169). For an expert-system to provide social opportunities for diverse cultural groups or communities to
satisfactorily meet their needs, Hughes et al. (2007) state that ‘a significant part of building stronger bridges is helping vulnerable individuals and communities to feel empowered as they enter into contracts, as well as encouraging the development of trust and reciprocity in contracts’ (p. 77). These are suggestive of forming lasting agreements and partnerships between expert systems and members of the community.

McKinnon’s (2011) report argues for setting up stronger social structures which include two-way agreements articulating shared visions and objectives, mutual commitments, responsibility and ‘requiring multiple party sign off’. (p. 10). What is indicated from McKinnon’s (2011) research is ‘an apparent lack of documented evidence’ (p. 15) regarding local government contributions towards improved Indigenous wellbeing or ‘reconciliation initiatives to close the health gap’ (p. 15). McKinnon (2011) notes there is not a ‘common approach to or understanding of what constitutes ‘good practice’ cultural awareness in the Victorian local government sector’ (p. 16).

The New South Wales State Department of Local Government (DLG) (2007) released Engaging with Local Aboriginal Communities: A Resource Kit for Local Government in New South Wales in 2007. The resource kit states that Aboriginal community members’ contributions are often under-utilized. It continues by detailing that by including community contributions it acknowledges and celebrates Aboriginal culture and initiatives, ‘while at the same time contributing to the overall development of a community’s social and economic fabric’ (p. 15). DLG (2007) outlines methods in which a local government body can provide better service and access for diversity, equity and respect stating that

local councils can play an active role in enhancing lifestyle and cultural opportunities for Aboriginal people in the local community. This will assist Aboriginal people in overcoming health and social disadvantage as well as adding to the robustness and cultural richness of the community. (p. 15)

The DLG (2007) resource kit states that ‘councils can play an important role in the promotion of language’ (p. 15) through dual naming of significant Aboriginal ‘cultural and environmental features’ (p. 15). The DLG (2007) recommends
conducting an Aboriginal heritage assessment by collaboratively involving Aboriginal people as ‘a good way for a council to improve its planning and service delivery to Aboriginal communities’ (p. 13). Aboriginal heritage values are according to the report associated with tangible objects and intangible places ‘where no physical evidence remains’ (p. 14) and has significant meaning to Aboriginal people.

The DLG (2007) regards the first productive and responsive building steps of council operations is implementing ‘cultural awareness training as an important strategy in assisting council employees to understand local Aboriginal issues, culture and ways of doing business’ (p. 25). As a guide to Local Government Indigenous cultural programs and appropriate representation, the City of Melbourne’s *Celebrate Indigenous Melbourne 2007* hosts an accessible range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-defined spaces and arts-based cultural expressions. *Celebrate Indigenous Melbourne* leads the reader into the City of Melbourne’s (2007) Indigenous Framework 2007-2010 which is ‘intended to provide a ‘whole-of-council’ approach to working with the Indigenous community’ (p. 9). Addressing two primary areas of particular importance to Indigenous peoples includes Indigenous Culture & Heritage and Indigenous Social & Economic Development. The City of Melbourne (2007) framework considers for Melbourne residents that place-naming and public art also contribute to an ‘Indigenous presence on the landscape’ (p. 11). The City of Melbourne through such publications and actions provides expert system leadership in the establishment of robust relationships between local government, Indigenous Arts/Liaison Officers and members of the Indigenous community.

The City of Port Phillip’s (2012) *Social Justice Charter* acknowledges ‘the debt all who now live on this land owe to the First People’ (p. 8) and stipulates the ‘Indigenous community’s right to self-determination and in doing so recognise the key roles of the Indigenous community becoming involved and helping to shape council activities’ (p. 8). In June 2012, the City of Port Phillip released its first *Reconciliation Action Plan 2012 - 2015* drafted through extensive consultations by Indigenous Policy Officer Todd Condie. The City of Port Phillip’s (2012) *Reconciliation Action Plan* acknowledges the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival contribution to the area along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander civic dates of national significance. The City of Port Phillip’s localized acknowledgement to the
people and place of which the council area is a part, was partly influenced through the founding and presence of the early Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals. Read out at all council events as a sign of respect the City of Port Phillip (2012) states that

the City of Port Phillip respectfully acknowledges the Yalukit Wilam Clan of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respect to their Elders, both past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land. (p. 2)

3.5 Yalukit Wilam, Kulin Nation and Spiritual Base

Presland (2010) details the five Wurrungs (Lips) or cultural-language groups of the East Kulin Nation being the Boon Wurrung, Woi Wurrung, Watha Wurrung, Taung Wurrung and the Ngurai-Illum Wurrung. Each Wurrung or language group consisted of clan groupings made up of bands or family units. Clans according to Presland (2010) were independent of the Kulin Nation, they made their own collective decisions and it was the social group with which Kulin people identified. Presland (2010) considers clans to be the most important social group because they were the ‘land owning unit’ (p. 18). Each clan had its own moiety spiritual creator or ‘skin-group’ that was either Bunjil (eagle-hawk) or Waa (Crow), an example of this by Presland’s (2010) accounts would be for a male to marry, the ‘potential wife had to be in the opposite marriage class or skin group’ (p. 33). The Yalukit Wilam clan moiety being Bunjil.

The City of Bayside (2006) commissioned a two volume report in one publication titled Ngaruk Willum – Boonerwrung People of Bayside Volume 1 and The Boonerwrung: A Broader Context Volume 2. The City of Bayside (2006) notes that the Ngaruk Willam was one of the six clans of the Boon Wurrung including the Mayne Balug, Yalock Balug, Bun Wrung Balug, Yowenjerre and the Yalukit Wilam. The City of Bayside (2006) discusses how the ‘Boonerwrung clans were among the first Victorian Indigenous people to encounter Europeans although it is likely that they would have heard news of the invasion from further north long before they saw the first European face’ (p. 6). It states that the ‘settlement of Melbourne naturally resulted in conflict between the settlers and traditional Woiwurrung and Boonerwrung
owners’ (p. 8). Conflicts within the area of the Boon Wurrung and their Kulin neighbours resulted in the dispossession of lands and cultural practices. The City of Bayside (2006) concludes by stating that ‘their story was not lost entirely, however, and the Boonerwurg people continue to fight for their rights today and tell the story of their survival’ (p. 22). The City of Bayside’s publication serves as a guiding reference and is one of the mechanisms local government can provide as an informed Indigenous cultural-resource.

Ian Clarke and Laura Kostanski (2006) provide a detailed report of the Yalukit Wilam history of the area and people in *An Indigenous History of Stonnington: A Report to the City of Stonnington*. The commissioned report provides names, dates, photos and stories referencing the Yalukit Wilam pre-colonial settlement, the crown controlled Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate through to the attitudes during the last half of the 20th century. Clarke and Kostanski (2006) indicate that the clan’s basic economic unit consists of ‘bands or mobs of people composed of one or more nuclear families’ (p. 15). Clarke and Kostanski (2006) note that bands at certain times of the year would gather together to share resources and the Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung neighbouring language groups ‘had regular interchanges for social, ceremonial, and exchange purposes’ (p. 15).

Clarke and Kostanski (2006) note that ‘Stonington has a long history of pro-Aboriginal white activism, beginning with Helen Baille and continuing with regular meetings of the white activist groups Action for Aboriginal Rights (AAR) held in members homes in Stonnington, through to the current Stonnington Citizens for Reconciliation’ (p. 96). The Stonnington Citizens for Reconciliation, Port Phillip Citizens for Reconciliation and Bayside Citizens for Reconciliation are current and active community organisations within the neighbouring local government boundaries of the City of Stonnington, City of Port Phillip and Bayside City Council. The community groups meet regularly, have acted as lobby groups, produce newsletters and contribute to grassroots Indigenous community support. Clarke and Kostanski’s report provided a supplementary full colour thirty six page resource summary accompanying the detailed report which can serve as a useful educational and information tool for schools, community groups, service providers and local residents.
SPIRITUAL BASE OF LANGUAGE AND EXCHANGE

In terms of language Richard Broome (2007) notes in *Aboriginal Victorians: A History Since 1880* that the Kulin people were seeking to have a level of understanding between themselves and the European arrivals. Broome (2007) states that ‘Aboriginal people who routinely spoke several dialects, quickly mastered sufficient English to deal with the new realities, whereas few colonialists learned Aboriginal tongues’ (p. 24). Nakata (2007) emphasizes that ‘if the history of a language and its users is not factored into the theory as a primary standpoint, then any knowledge generated about that language is flawed’ (p. 37). Rigney (2006) argues that ‘Indigenous culture is inextricable connected to language’ (p. 388) and the ‘reviving and maintaining of language is core to reviving culture and spiritual practices’ (p. 388). According to Rigney (2006) ‘Indigenous Australian languages have to be classified as not only locally endangered but also globally endangered as there are no other places in the world where they are spoken’ (p. 388). Rigney (2006) notes a linguistic renaissance being rekindle through Indigenous studies and that the stabilizing of Indigenous languages can be achieved through multiple levels of collaborations and strategies. Rigney (2006) observes there are either none or a lack of local council by-law recognitions that seek to protect Indigenous languages at a local level.

Language is according to Briggs (2008) in *The Journey Cycles of the Boon Wurrung: Stories with Boon Wurrung Language*, an important part of any culture and that the Boon Wurrung language has never been valued. Briggs (2008) estimates that the strong and detailed Boon Wurrung oral history recalls events up to ten thousand years old. Briggs (2008) states that

other Kulin tribes visiting the country of the Boonwurrung were required to speak the language of the Boonwurrung. This is described as the spiritual base to the Boon Wurrung country. Compliance with this cultural protocol was especially relevant because the demi-god Loo-ern resided in Boon Wurrung country, in the area known as Wilson’s Promontory. Visitors to Boon Wurrung Country were required to undergo a ritual that afforded rights and accompanying responsibilities. (p. 4)
According to Briggs (2008), it is her responsibility as an elder through the maintaining and reclamation of significant stories and cultural practices, to represent ‘the legacy the ancestors left within the landscape’ (p. ix). Indigenous culture for Briggs (2008) has to continue to evolve and adapt or it ‘stagnates and dies’ (p. ix). Briggs (2008) asserts that the Boon Wurrung ‘have always been a part of that concept of sharing knowledge, but now we are bringing it into the 21st century, maintaining and controlling ownership by being able to use the written material and match it against understanding who we are and where we are today’ (p. x). For Briggs (2008) it is the Indigenizing of mechanisms on Boon Wurrung terms for oral, performative and visual expressions ‘that carries forward the stories to our guests in this country’ (p. x).

3.6 Summary

Chapter three positioned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. The chapter situates the history of a multi-cultural and multilingual Indigenous Australia that was invaded by the British, and discusses the challenges for Indigenous people living in high-density environments. It was argued that cultural programs have been successful in counteracting distorted reflections of cultural dissonance by celebrating diversity through languages of hope, courage and collective efforts; this, in turn, can assist people to deal with the rapidity of change. If this is to happen with respect to a festival in a public space, and there is to be improved Indigenous wellbeing, there must be a reciprocal agreement between all stakeholders on what, potentially, is achievable. The chapter looks at the role of Victorian local government, leaning on the work of McKinnon (2011). Finally, Indigenous culture has been discussed with respect to globally endangered local languages – in particular, the Boon Wurrung language – that is in need of local government recognition.
Chapter Four: Festival Domains Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

The festival domains literature covers a broad area of insights, themes and geographical locations. Festivals represent many different things to their many different reasons for happening but the one thing they all have in common is they cannot exist in isolation due to their social nature. Seemingly ephemeral and intangible practices, festivals can be phenomena that create meaning for social cohesion through the public validation of shared space and understandings. What is particular to Australia is the thriving aspects of Indigenous festivals gradually connecting up across the country. The five main headings covered in the chapter include

1. Festival Openings
2. Indigenous Festivals Snapshot
3. Festival Intangible Cultural Heritage
4. Festival Contact Zones
5. Festival Environmental Sustainability

Festival Openings begins with Donald Getz broadly defining what a festival has become and outlines the community institution possibilities that festivals can have. Ros Derrett hints at festivals, noticeable invisible presence through their community manifestation qualities. Whilst Hughes et al. provide a context for festivals community engagement potentials with groups who may not know each other are there.

Indigenous Festivals Snapshot begins with the writers Peter Phipps, Lisa Slater and Rositta Henry who have contributed to the small but emerging field of literature on Indigenous festivals and their impacts. The primary report discussed in the festival domains chapter is the Australia Council’s Songcycles (2010) due to its relevance to Indigenous musicians and festival touring routes. The brief summaries of the four
festivals: The Garma Festival, Milipirri, The Dreaming Festival and The Moomba Festival, are primarily an assertion of their literary influence and not an exhaustive review of Indigenous Festivals due to the density of literature within the Festivals Domain chapter.

The literature on UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage is intended as a guide to the growing amount of information becoming available. Discussions include the State of Victoria’s Department of Planning and Community Development, UNESCO information sheets, Richard Kurin from the Smithsonian Folk Life festival, Harriet Deacon and the Newfoundland and Labrador Government Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

Festival contact zones is an emerging area with limited literature. The overview begins with Mary Louise Pratt and Fernando Ortiz, and draws upon related work regarding Torres Strait Islander and Koori music, the Tapati Rapa Nui festival, Festival of Pacific Arts, Canadian rodeos and museums.

The new wave of environmental sustainability is not an exhaustive analysis but primarily a guide beginning with Meegan Jones festival sustainability literature. Commentary is included from Getz, the United Nations and the inclusion of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee in the Summer of Sustainability 2009 YouTube series produced by Sustainability Victoria.

### 4.2 Festival Openings

The term festival has become ‘much over used and misused’ (p. 32) and according to Getz (2007) most festivals have become reduced to public entertainment programs or special times ‘for fun and activities rather than celebration’ (p. 32). Getz (2007) observes that broadly programmed and community festivals often forget their reasons for celebrating, lack interpretation of meaning and ‘how they are interpreted’ (p. 32). Through geographical research, Getz (2007) notes that festivals are contested spaces in which symbolic practices for consolidating or resisting ‘prevailing norms and values’ (p. 32) occur.
In Getz’s (2007) view it is the integration of conflicted or diverse social groupings that is the specific aim ‘realized through planning, decision making, all the way through to social interaction and interpretation at events’ (p. 340). Getz (2007) states that community and neighborhood festivals and events ‘can be catalysts for community development’ (p. 340) and that the ultimate recognition for festivals is their acceptance by the community as permanent community institutions.

Derrett (2005) identifies festivals, their community cultural development opportunities and sense of place as an ‘invisible phenomena’ (p. 40) and that ‘people know when it is not there’ (p. 40). Derrett (2008) states that community festivals particularly hold a significant position in three areas of the human condition. They celebrate a sense of place through organising inclusive activities in specific safe environments. They provide a vehicle for communities to host visitors and share such activities as representations of communally agreed values, interests and aspirations. Finally, they are the outward manifestation of the identity of the community and provide a distinctive identifier of place and people. (p. v)

In relation to community development and gathering people together, Hughes et al. (2007) outlines the current status of Australian local communities and the effects modernity and globalization are having within them. Hughes et al. (2007) state that ‘people will continue to experience community in diverse and fragmented ways’ (p. 217). According to Hughes et al. (2007) communities ‘will continue to engage with a variety of people – often in small groups quite distinct from each other and without awareness of each other’s existence’ (p. 217). In reference to the research project and navigating the experiences of people who may not be aware of each other’s existence, Hughes et al. (2007) suggests that by ‘just providing opportunities for people to get to know each other in a social way extends the sense of community beyond the particular interest, tasks or activity which brings people together’ (p. 218). Accordingly these insights assisted in coming to understand the community development aspects of festivals.
4.3 Indigenous Festivals Snapshot

Consistent with their location, identity and demographics, Indigenous festivals are becoming more prevalent in remote, regional and metropolitan environments. There is also an active emergent inclusion of Indigenous live performance and programming in mainstream Australian festival programs, with producing host bodies becoming more culturally and appropriately aligned. Collaboration examples of Indigenous standpoints and larger non-Indigenous producing host partnerships are exemplified in relationships such as the Queensland Folk Federation and The Dreaming Festival, the City of Port Phillip produced Yalukit Willam Ngargee opening of the St Kilda Festival program, Stylin Up and Brisbane City Council and the City of Melbourne’s inaugural Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival 2012.

Examples of Indigenous Festivals as community institutions blooming across Australia include the Garma Festival in northeast Arnhem Land, Laura Dance Festival in Cape York, The Milpirri Festival on Walpiri country, Barunga/Walking With The Spirits Festival in Beswick Falls and The Tärer Festival on Gunditjamara Country. Civic related festivals and events marking national annual dates of significance begin with Australia Day (more commonly referred to by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as either invasion day or survival day). Indigenous concerts and events are held in public spaces around the country with festivals such as Share The Spirit in Melbourne and Yabun in Sydney attracting large attendances of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous patrons. NAIDOC Week – celebrated in the first week in July – can be considered as one of Australia’s longest running national Indigenous civic events. Founded by William Cooper through the Aborigines Advancement League in 1936 NAIDOC began for the recognition of rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Further significant national civic events include Mabo Day, Sorry Day and Reconciliation week.

In particular the small amount of literature available on Indigenous festivals can vary dramatically between remote, rural or metropolitan areas where identity politics, socio-economic standards, intercultural relationships and polarizing historical contexts differ. What is missing from the current literature on Indigenous festivals are distinctly Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander standpoints addressing festivals and
their relational impacts. Taking these sets of circumstances into consideration, Festival Domains draws upon the actual festival artistry practice and available research whilst contributing literary resource on Indigenous festivals as a significant cultural industry on the Australian social landscape.

Indigenous festivals have multi-layered functions, political implications and cultural meanings aligned with the present space of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander celebrations. Not just ideal times for socializing, Indigenous festivals are according to Henry (2000) contemporary cultural tools of engagement, cultural vitality and politically dynamic sites of contestation and negotiation. Phipps and Slater (2010) argue in Indigenous Cultural Festivals: Evaluating the Impact on Community Health and Wellbeing, that Indigenous festivals challenge the homogeneity of ‘the neo-liberal colonial state agenda’ (149). To this extent Phipps and Slater (2010) recognise that what is fundamental about Indigenous festivals is their sustaining of Indigenous worlds that are ‘the very worlds that are not being valued in the race for statistical equality’ (p. 145).

According to Phipps and Slater (2010) there has been a cross-cultural engagement failure in Australia requiring ‘a form of reciprocity that is inclusive of sharing and negotiation of what is a healthy social body’ (p. 24). Reflecting on an interview with Yorta Yorta man Paul Briggs regarding Crocfest, Phipps and Slater (2010) note Crocfest’s extended role in a broader community collaborative approach against Aboriginal communities becoming ghettoised, that to build the social capability of Indigenous people and communities there must be a respect for, and valuing of, cultural difference: that is genuine reciprocity, power sharing and recognition of the cultural history and boundaries of institutions and processes. (p. 40)

This would indicate that participants attending the duration of an Indigenous festival, according to Henry (2008) are meant to experience the festival ‘as a whole self-contained world’ (p. 52) which ‘is only a partial world’ (p. 52). Here, Henry is suggestive that the worlds within festivals are also the worlds within Indigenous people’s lives beyond the festival program.
Phipps and Slater (2010) state that ‘festivals really do matter to communities; from the proliferation of very small events celebrating community life, to complex large-scale events with national and international profile’ (p. 8). Festivals provide reasons in Phipps and Slater’s (2010) view to create spaces for the renewal and regeneration of traditions and to appropriately share cultures ‘with all Australians and the rest of the world’ (p. 8). Phipps and Slater (2010) indicate this is ‘part of the rapidly strengthening political and social phenomena of global indigeneity’ (p. 18). The globalizing significance of Indigenous festivals and cultural production has, according to Phipps (2009), local level implications on cultural policy, political action and community life.

Indigenous festivals demonstrate through Slater’s (2010) commentary in *Calling Our Spirits Home: Indigenous Cultural Festivals and the Making of a Good Life*, that the makings of a good-life on Indigenous terms requires ‘the valuing of difference as much as equality’ (p. 149). Holmes, Hughes and Julian (2007) state in *Australian Sociology* that ‘an acceptance of difference in society opens up a space for marginal groups to present their views as legitimate and of equal value to those of the dominant group’ (p. 329). Henry (2008) positions Indigenous festivals as an attempt to publicly show how Aboriginal worldviews provide transformative moral discourse and principles through relationships with both the state and other Australians.

Henry (2008) describes how Indigenous festivals ‘allow Aboriginal people to be not only custodians of the past but also agents of change’ (p. 66). Indigenous communities are now, in Phipps (2009) view, using the strategy of public space and celebration for the cultural renewal and reinvention of traditions against developmental and assimilationist pressures. According to Phipps (2009), it is time to approach ‘these celebrations as significant, playful and urgent acts of cultural politics’ (p. 10). According to Henry (2008), live performances at Indigenous festivals ‘provide people not only with an avenue for presenting culture as spectacle but also with a means of political engagement, or performative dialogue, with others’ (p. 53). Slater (2010) states that
People gather to not only celebrate Indigenous cultures but to tend dynamic living cultures; in this case the festivals are spaces for performing, discussing and negotiating contemporary culture and identity. (p. 152)

Phipps and Slater (2010) have established evidence that ‘Indigenous festivals in Australia are already contributing significantly to Indigenous community wellbeing from the less tangible areas of cultural maintenance to direct economic benefits’ (p. 16). During an interview with Karl, as part Slater’s photo-narrative research on The Dreaming Festival 2009, Karl remarks that the ‘Dreaming is deadly, and it and other festivals connect up like traditional trading routes. It is all about culture. Having our space to do it’ (interview 2008, p. 56). Here Karl’s comment indicates something much larger than just a festival and that the combined efforts of Indigenous festivals as sum parts of a larger dialogue are fostering in a new development which connects trade routes, economic development and cultural expressions.

The Song Cycles: An Audit of Support Infrastructure for Indigenous Music in Australia, by Howland and Williams (2010) was commissioned by the Australia Council for the Arts to assist policy. The report is the first national analysis of its kind on Indigenous music based artists. The authors studied the support and infrastructure in place for Indigenous music across five areas including live performance, recordings, broadcasting, education and training and public funding. Outcomes from Howland and William’s (2010) findings position live performances for Indigenous musicians as first engagements in developing audience bases and suggests they can provide for most artists reasonably stable sources of income related to their chosen form. Live performance, according to Howland and Williams (2010), is the primary economic source for the majority of Indigenous musicians over commercial radio play and CD sales. Howland and Williams (2010) note that there is no ready availability of adequate management or planning and resources which act as limitations for a large percentage of Indigenous musicians.

Howland and Williams (2010) detail that ‘specialist Indigenous festivals’ (p. 16), such as The Dreaming Festival and the growing mainstream festival platforms, provide entry point opportunities for Indigenous musicians to significantly reach broader audiences and perform live. Social disadvantage is a cultural barrier to market entry
points that Howland and Williams (2010) highlight as challenges for Indigenous musicians’ within their daily lives and in the music industry. Sustaining Indigenous musicians’ performative opportunities is a factor that Howland and Williams (2010) discuss as a current impediment for Indigenous musicians trying to build on their careers with the ‘absence of regular accessible touring circuits’ (p. 3). Howland and Williams (2010) outline that this absence affects Indigenous musicians’ opportunities to craft their skills and build their reputation and audience bases that are both ‘critical for artistic and economic development’ (p. 3). Referencing the recent development and contributions of community and regional festivals Howland and Williams (2010) observe their potential for providing ‘considerable prospects through a national network’ (p. 3). In this way, Howland and Williams are suggestive of approaching festivals as part of a cultural trading route, and that specialist Indigenous festivals become sum parts in assisting the whole of Indigenous musicians’ performative career and economic development opportunities.

The Garma Festival, Milpirri Festival, The Dreaming Festival and The Moomba Festival are four Indigenous festival domains drawn upon for relational aspects to the research project and Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival. The Garma Festival, hosted by the Yolgnu people, is held annually in far North-East Arnhem Land and is both the festivals name and a ‘concept and practice’ (Phipps, 2009, p. 374). The Garma Festival’s reciprocal terms of cultural obligation, according to Phipps (2009), presents the visitor with the Yolgnu peoples worldviews and prospects of a ‘visionary local and national cultural transformation’ (p. 369). What Phipps (2009) indicates is how Garma’s pragmatic reinforcing and strengthening strategy of local practices and the building of new resources incorporates knowledge exchange relationships of reciprocity with key influential people from ‘media, law, health, public administration and education’ (p. 372).

Acts of generosity within The Garma Festival, are argued by Phipps (2009) to be ‘both attempts to educate and civilize the dominating cultures into a proper ethics of living, as well as direct political assertion of various forms of existence and sovereignty through means generally not recognised by the dominating cultures’ (p. 376). To this extent The Garma Festival’s acts of reciprocity become local and national transformational invitations that oblige key exchange relationships towards
generosity as part of an ethics of proper living and political and cultural assertion on Yolngu terms. Derrett (2008) refers to notions of a community’s idea of proper living and how localized festivals have the potential to safeguard sacred spaces, contribute to social robustness, and encourage diversity.

Milpirri is based on the contemporization of traditional Warlpiri ceremony and culture in the Northern Territory. A grassroots, large-scale festival celebration, Milpirri was founded between the Lajamanu Community of the Western Desert region and Tracks Dance Company. As part of the Warlpiri peoples’ responsibility to maintaining culture and the significant influence of ‘organisations working in Aboriginal communities’ (Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu, Holmes & Box, 2008, p. 36) Ngurra-Kurlu: A Way of Working with Walpiri People (2008) was developed as a cross-cultural template. The publication notes that ‘Milpirri precipitated a host of educational, employment, health and wellbeing outcomes’ (p. 7). Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu, Holmes and Box (2008) advocate that it should be common practice for Aboriginal peoples willing participation, sense of belonging and motivational benefits to be involved with projects that are locally run and culturally relevant.

The Dreaming Festival is a celebratory showcase of diverse multi-disciplinary Indigenous arts and culturally based forms and practices of ‘Indigenous excellence’ (Phipps & Slater, 2010, p. 48), presented at an international level. The initiative was established by Bunjalung festival artist Rhoda Roberts who was artistic director from 2005 -2009 ‘and the Queensland Folk Federation’ (Phipps & Slater, 2010, p. 48). The Dreaming Festival was according to Phipps and Slater (2010) developed through the Woodford Folk Festivals community celebrations model that provides ‘benefits from its support and infrastructure’ (p. 48) as a partnering body.

The Dreaming Festival presence contributes to Phipps and Slater’s (2010) observations of being rendered ‘absent from history is to be made marginal to the civic body, which reinforces the values of the settler colonial culture’ (p.148). Phipps and Slater’s (2010) research highlights that The Dreaming Festival is more than just an expressive avenue and that the cultural performance space provides a means for identity formation and representation plus ‘a political engagement and critique of the dominant culture’ (p. 149). It is festivals such as The Dreaming in which Phipps and
Slater (2010) consider to be socio-political spaces that affirm Indigenous peoples as historical agents of their own world meanings and what the conditions of a good life may be.

The Moomba Festival is produced by the City of Melbourne and is possibly one of the longest running festivals in Australia. A hallmark event held during the Labour Day long weekend in March, the Moomba Festival bases its program of activities and events around the Moomba Parade. Kleinert (1999) suggests in “An Aboriginal Moomba: Remaking History” that the probability that ‘performers and audience alike who participate in the popular public festival are largely unaware of its Indigenous origins’ (p. 354). The Moomba Festival’s naming can be attributed, according to Kleinert (1999) to Bill Onus’s 1951 Aboriginal theatre production An Aboriginal Moomba: Out of the Dark, that was presented in two parts as ‘The Past’ and ‘The Present’. Kleinert (1999) states that ‘whilst the idealized representations of the first half accorded with the interests of both the Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal, the evident hybridity of ‘The Present’ threatened authoritative definitions of an authentic Aboriginality’ (p. 352). Kleinert (1999) notes the socially transformative liminal zone of interacting with the everyday, which performative mediation occupies and where ‘protest becomes persuasion’ (p. 354) that performances represent an important form of cultural production and constitute one of the primary means by which First Nations peoples negotiate and circulate their contemporary cultural constructions of identity. Functioning as meta-narratives in the history of cultural representations, such performances take place within particular historical, cultural, economic and political circumstances. (p. 354)

The Moomba Festival naming, as discussed by Kleinert (1999), became a subversive counter-discourse for Aboriginal people during ‘an emerging era of black consciousness’ (p. 355). Debate came to light 14 years after the Moomba Festival’s naming, with one of its eventual meanings according to Kleinert’s (1999) research loosely translating in a Koorie dialect as “up your bum”. Whether the translation of the Moomba Festival’s naming is correct or not, what is evident is that The Moomba Festival would come to represent a time when colonial European names and settings
attempted to ‘erase a prior Indigenous presence’ (p. 349). According to Kleinert (1999), Bill Onus was seeking the widespread usage of Aboriginal names as ‘an important means of achieving a unique regional and national identity’ (p. 349). To this extent Bill Onus’s naming of the Moomba Festival was a political, social and cultural strategy for identification and assertion of South East Aboriginal Australian or Koorie place within the mainstream Australian consciousness.

4.4 Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Moomba Parade and the annual May 26 national civic recognition of Sorry Day are considered as Intangible Cultural Heritage on the Victorian Government’s Department of Planning and Community Development (2011) website. UNESCO’s (2009a) Intangible Cultural Heritage is an international treaty set up as a ‘legal, administrative and financial framework’ (p. 8) that is ratified by a Nation-State party for the safeguarding of community cultural heritage. Safeguarding is defined by UNESCO (2009b) as the means for ‘making sure that intangible cultural heritage remains an active part of life for today’s generations that they can hand onto tomorrows’ (p. 8). The UNESCO (2009a) convention outlines that the requirements of international human rights, mutual respect and sustainable development are a part of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

The recognition of intangible cultural heritage is outlined by UNESCO (2009a) as the creation, maintenance and transmission of a practice or expression considered as heritage that is identified by a community, group or individual and not a governmental agency. UNESCO (2009a) states that ‘the communities themselves must take part in identifying and defining their intangible cultural heritage, they are the ones who decide which practices are part of their cultural heritage’ (p. 10). As mentioned in Chapter two, UNESCO (2003) considers ‘festivals to be complex expressions of intangible heritage’ (p. 3). In the UNESCO Domains (2009b) info-kit it states that social practices, rituals and festive events ‘are closely linked to a community’s world view and perception of its own history and memory’ (p. 9). They are according to UNESCO (2009b) significant reaffirming practices for identity continuity that can vary in size, celebration and commemoration.
Richard Kurin - from the Smithsonian Institute Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage - was critical of certain aspects related to the Convention. According to Kurin (2004), there was a lack of best practice intangible cultural heritage assessment and study around the world. Kurin (2004) considers the Convention more a work in progress and awkward technical term but still a welcome addition and cultural tool-kit resource for ‘accomplishing valuable cultural work’ (p. 76). Aspects of Kurin’s (2004) concerns include community and intergenerational cultural sustainability of endangered cultural practices.

Kurin (2004) considers that the Convention’s concept of sustainability is more ‘an ideal to be achieved, not an eligibility requirement’ (p. 71). Here Kurin is suggestive that a requirement for national and international safeguarding must first be the traditions proven sustainability as a prerequisite more so than a selective achievement based on an ideal action. According to Kurin (2004), ‘the very fact that a tradition is endangered means that it is not sustainable in its current context’ (p. 71). To this extent, Kurin (2004) suggests it is the cultural worker’s professional judgment more so ‘than legal structures’ (p. 71) when figuring out an endangered tradition’s degrees of sustainability.

One of the methods in which Kurin (1998) as a cultural worker has been able to validate the voices of cultural traditions is through the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Kurin (1998), who considers festivals as liminal or cultural entry point moments, accounts on the complex nature of curating programs, defining culturally appropriate spaces and how the Smithsonian helps ‘validate the voices of the represented at the Festival’ (p. 42). Kurin (1998) and his team operate the festival for people to be heard through giving a voice to ‘cultures not otherwise likely to be heard in a national setting’ (pp. 51/54). What Kurin (1998) introduced through the festival were Cultural Conservation programs that examined ‘the role of local social institutions’ (p. 144), language maintenance and how natural resources can be used in the sustaining of cultural communities.

Safeguarding Intangible Heritage. Deacon (2004) states that ‘economic incentives to safeguard heritage will probably play the largest role of all in encouraging transmission and re-enactment of intangible heritage’ (p. 3). Deacon (2004) highlights an example of local community broadcasting initiatives that are delivered in the local language and raises revenue through the sales of advertising spaces. The impact which outsider cultural production has on economic incentives, according to Deacon (2004) could alter the meanings of the community’s heritage resource, and states that

the most successful incentives and safeguarding strategies will involve the use of intangible heritage forms as springboards for new cultural expressions that have relevance and meaning in the modern world. (p. 3)

Deacon (2004) suggests that ‘the best way of safeguarding intangible heritage is by supporting cultural activity at a local level’ (p. 3). Supporting intangible cultural heritage at a local level encompasses in Deacon’s (2004) terms, legal, financial and heritage support mechanisms to safeguard the crafted and renewing ephemeral and mnemonic or memory forms of intangible cultural transmission channels such as Indigenous oral traditions, poetry or ritual.

The Canadian provincial Newfoundland and Labrador Government Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (2011) recently released the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Program Funding Guidelines 2011/2012 for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage by Aboriginal applicants. The guidelines detail when defining intangible cultural heritage that this heritage is:

held collectively by members of a community, and is passed down through generations. Each new generation shapes the knowledge according to their times. This knowledge is rarely documented, and is often lost or diminished by cultural change and mass media. (p. 2)

The Newfoundland and Labrador Government Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation (2011) funding category guidelines for the safeguarding of Aboriginal intangible cultural heritage component 3 is the Recognition and Celebration of traditional culture and people who hold special knowledge. The guidelines (2001)
state this as ‘celebrating with festivals and events, or incorporating cultural activities into existing events’ (p. 3). This includes demonstrations or special celebrations such as festivals outside of annual civic Aboriginal Day celebrations.

Tying the Yalukit Willam Ngargee in as a possible agent for intangible cultural heritage are its festival productions outside of national civic events and co-authoring relationships with people such as Aunty Carolyn who hold special cultural knowledge. Relating my festival artistry practice during the course of the research outlines the conceptual safeguarding mechanisms I used including agreements, design of the festival program, commissioning works and being a part of creating the spaces for contemporary Yalukit Wilam ritual to occur as a sustainable cultural achievement.

4.5 Festival Contact Zones

Festival Contact Zones looks at an emergent area of literature related to Pratt’s (2008) definition of contact zones and the observations of festivals, events and exhibitions that take place within these spaces. The geographical coverage includes Cuba, Torres Strait Islands, Easter Islands, Canadian Rodeos and North American Museums. As mentioned in chapter three, Pratt’s (2008) definition of a contact zone is an asymmetrical dominate and subordinate social space in which ‘disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other’ (p. 7). Contact zone spaces create what Pratt (2008) observes as a ‘transcultural phenomena’ (p. 7). According to Pratt (2008), a transcultural phenomena is the cultural selection and invitation by subjugated people who may not be able to control the transmission of what the ‘dominant culture visits upon them, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, how they use it, and what they make it mean’ (p. 7).

The term transculturation was coined by Cuban essayist and ethnomusicologist Fernando Ortiz in his 1947 publication *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*. Ortiz’s (1947) use of the term transculturation described the cultural convergence and emergence between Indigenous peoples, colonialism, slavery and immigrants during a period in Cuba’s evolution of complex ‘economic-social-phenomena’ (p. 97). Nakata (2005) observes in relation to the shaping and reshaping of transcultural contact zones
‘that music was one of the many cultural artifacts, which circulated in the Torres Strait along with its mobile and multicultural population’ (p. 13). Music, according to Nakata (2005) is a benign, portable artifact that is open to transcultural borrowings and adaptations. A South East Aboriginal Australian example of music being a portable, transcultural phenomena is provided by Broome (2005) in relation to Aboriginal creativity and how Aboriginal music has ‘blossomed as a new cultural creation drawing on diverse styles and Koori ideas’ (p. 388). Broome (2005) recognised these practices as being part of an ‘Aboriginal cultural renaissance’ (p. 390) that has extended into language and education whilst fuelling employment, pride and cultural production.

The Tapati Rapa Nui Festival held annually in January on the Easter Islands is considered by Dan Bendrups (2008) in Pacific Festivals As Dynamic Contact Zones: The Case of Tapati Rapa Nui to be a cultural festival contact zone space. Bendrups (2008) regards cultural festival contact zones as spaces ‘in which there are multiple layers of display, and where the boundaries between curator and visitor, or performer and audience are sometimes blurred’ (p. 17). Bendrups (2008) indicates that the festival is now far from just being a vehicle for constructing cultural identity and that successful local festivals have come to represent ‘social wellbeing and survival, especially for smaller islands or island groups’ (p. 14).

Bendrups (2008) outlines two key factors relating to the cultural prevalence of festivals in the Pacific, which are to do with the 1960s and 1970s decolonizing of Pacific Islands and their ‘mechanisms for establishing unique cultural and political identities’ (p. 18). Performative mediation, such as dance, marks Pacific Island independence days and the creation of a regional performance framework had resulted from the establishing and institutionalizing of the 1972 Festival of Pacific Arts. According to Bendrups (2008), the Festival of Pacific Arts ‘demonstrated that indigenous performing arts could be beneficial to economic, diplomatic and national development’ (p. 18). To this extent, festivals such as Tapati Rapa Nui and Festival of Pacific Arts are suggestive, by Bendrups accounts, of decolonizing themselves through cultural diplomacy in order to potentially break down larger contact zone spaces.
Mary-Ellen Kelm (2007) notes in *Riding into Place: Contact Zones, Rodeo, and Hybridity in the Canadian West 1900–1970*, that rodeos are ‘suitable vessels for expression by marking out territories within the grand narrative of nation-building and operate at the micro-historical level’ (p. 109). Rodeo’s cross-cultural history of sport and performance became an appealing hybrid ‘to settlers as well as First Nations across the Canadian west’ (p. 111). Kelm (2007) states that ‘rodeos expressed community values, identity and history, and some settler towns saw the presence of Aboriginal people as integral to their sense of themselves’ (p. 117). What is indicated by Kelm is the reciprocated ownership of identity between Aboriginal people and settler towns, manifested through rodeos’ performative mediation and continuity of relationships.

Contemporary museum practices have been extensively written about. The link made in the literature review is based on the impacts of contact zone spaces as related to collaborating cultural relationships. James Clifford’s (1997) *Routes: Travel and Translation in the late Twentieth Century*, presents a number of museum collection case study examples dealing with contact zones, reciprocity and transculturation in his chapter “Museums as Contact Zones”. Clifford (1997) repositions Pratt’s notions of contact zones related to the European expansions of interior frontiers to the cultural relations within the regions of city centres.

Contact work in museums, according to Clifford (1997) is about going beyond discovery, negotiation, consultation and sensitivity towards an ‘active collaboration and a sharing of authority’ (p. 210). What Clifford (1997) suggests is that ‘contact zones are constituted through reciprocal movements of people, not just objects, messages, commodities, and money’ (p. 195). Clifford (1997) states that a contact perspective is about specifying local/global choices and struggles which concern ‘inclusion, integrity, dialogue, translation, quality and control’ (p. 214). The small pool of festival, rodeo and museum contact zone literature discussions as yet haven’t touched on their environmental impacts and how the environment maybe an added dimension to understanding festival contact zones.
4.6 The New-Wave of Festival Environmental Sustainability

Festival environmental sustainability is an area growing in practice, theory and acceptability. Literature is provided across a range of accessible media such as print, film and online. Meegan Jones (2010) states in *Sustainable Event Management: A Practical Guide*, that ‘those producing live events can demonstrate sustainability in action’ (p. 3). Jones (2010) suggests it is the festival artists/organisers role ‘to ensure a healthy marriage’ (p. vi) between the functions of sustainability and environmental management. Jones (2010) continues by stating this is achieved through the festival artists/organisers intimate event knowledge including audience and ‘other particular circumstances surrounding them both’ (p. vi). Jones’ (2010) reasoning for producing sustainable festivals is that

> with the sheer size of the events industry across the world and the millions upon millions of people who attend events each year, the industry and all who arrange large public gatherings have a responsibility to ensure sustainable event management. (p. 4)

Jones (2010) points out that the ‘base function of sustainable event management is communications, management, marketing and making the right choices’ (p. vi). Getz (2007) states that it is the infusing of ‘environmental education into events, as a form of social marketing’ (p. 344) that is part of the goal. Jones (2010) relates to a social messaging example regarding the guiding principles of the Burning Man Festival held in the Black Rock Desert, Nevada, USA. On the Burning Man Festival (2012) website it details both the festival’s and festival attendee’s expected obligations with respect to its ten principles including ‘Radical Inclusion, Gifting, Decommodification, Radical Self-Reliance, Radical Self-Expression, Communal Effort, Civic Responsibility, Leaving No Trace, Participation and Immediacy’. In reference to the Burning Man festival principles and the research project, it can be noted they served as a resourceful guide to introducing environmentally sustainable values connecting festival management, those attending the festival and for the resident communities involved with the festival production. This would be encapsulated through the Burning Man’s notion of leaving behind no physical trace of the festival as mentioned
in Chapter six regarding the early design of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee environmental management plan.

Getz (2007) believes that ‘the greening of events will remain a major issue’ (p. 316), citing the implementation of the Olympics environmental program as leading the way. According to Getz (2007) it is the principles of sustainable environmental development in which future events will be referenced and evaluated, noting the following sustainable event criteria as:

- Minimization of waste, energy consumption and pollution
- Keeping private travel to a minimum
- Protecting resources for the future
- Fostering a positive environmental attitude
- Re-Using facilities, not building needless infrastructure
- Avoiding damage to wildlife habitat and ecological systems. (p. 316)

One of the catalyst international events partly responsible for influencing today’s global environmental sustainability movement is the first World Environment Day initiated during the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment 5 June 1972, in Stockholm. As part of the United Nations (1972) conference, a Declaration on the Human Environment was implemented including seven proclamations and twenty-six principles, the first principle stating that humans have

the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and wellbeing, and he/she bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations. (para. 11)

Bringing the literature back into the festival artistry locality I refer to the 2008 Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival that was included in the Summer of Sustainability. An evaluation of festival and sustainability measures Summer of Sustainability was produced by Liz Franzman on behalf of Sustainability Victoria (2009), State Government of Victoria. The Summer of Sustainability series featured the new wave
of festivals and festival artists/organisers that have tried, tested and innovated festival environmental sustainability mechanisms. Released as an accessible online five-part YouTube series, the Summer of Sustainability is housed on the Sustainable Living Festivals online video hub resource. The five topic titles include planning and auditing, waste issues, water question, the energy equation and onward and upward. The program received a Banksia Award in the Environmental Services Category 2009 and has since contributed to the global dialogue of festival environmental sustainability.

4.7 Summary

The examination of the literature with respect to festival domains considered both local and global practices. It was seen that Indigenous festivals challenge the dominant nation-state homogeneity through valuing difference and equality on Indigenous terms. They raise issues of inclusion and reciprocity in the social dialogues of power sharing, policy, politics and what a good life means to the Indigenous community. It was suggested that Indigenous festivals cater to educational, health, employment and wellbeing prospects by being locally operated. Additionally, they have the capability of handing on to successive generations a part of today’s active life as identified and defined by the community. Crucial to this conversation is UNESCO’s approach to intangible cultural heritage and the vital role that festivals can play.
Chapter Five: Dialogues of Reciprocity Literature Review

Understanding reciprocity is indispensable for understanding all social forms, such as communities, organisations, families and political systems. (Kolm, 2008, p. 5)

5.1 Introduction

Dialogues of Reciprocity draws upon an extensive field of literature to provide a background on how I was informed of the many different approaches to reciprocity. The chapter’s depth of literature is introduced by definitions and is then presented in four thematic headings.

1. Reciprocity Rules
2. Wholes in the Economy
3. Reciprocitarian Motives and Intergenerational Equity
4. Indigenizing Reciprocity

Reciprocity Rules reviews the discussions of rules related to reciprocity in spiritual and religious writing and client and commercial based publications. Wholes in the Economy is based on the anthropological writings of Marcel Mauss (1924) and David Hamilton (1970) which consider small scale and industrial circulations of exchange, social institutions and productivity.

Reciprocitarian Motives and Intergenerational Equity begin with Serge Christophe Kolm’s (2008) *Reciprocity* that outlines reciprocitarianism and how it may influence entrepreneurship. The heading leads into discussions by Richard Hiskes (2009) and Edith Brown Weiss (1990) regarding intergenerational reciprocity and planetary rights.

Reciprocity forms a broad spectrum of abstractions ranging from regular occurrences, nation state trade relationships, implied trans-migrations of the soul such as reincarnation and is a place name called Reciprocity No. 32, in Saskatchewan, Canada. Literature fields that discuss reciprocity in its various forms include economics and business, religion and spirituality, politics and policy, education, anthropology, social sciences, health and wellbeing, photography, mathematics and engineering. There is a limited discussion in the arts relating to reciprocity and it is hoped the research project will contribute to an emerging field for fellow practitioners.

The etymology of the word reciprocity is derived from the Latin recos-procos meaning ‘going backwards and forwards (like the sea), hence alternating and working both ways’ (p. 554) as defined in Origins: A Short Etymological Dictionary of Modern English (1966). Broken down etymologically Origins (1966) details “re” as back and “pro” as forward. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989), defines reciprocity as ‘a state or condition of being reciprocal, a state or relationship in which there is mutual action, influence, giving and taking, correspondence between two parties or things’ (p. 330). A second Oxford English Dictionary (1989) definition of reciprocity consists of ‘mutual or correspondent concession of advantages or privileges, as forming a basis for commercial relations between two countries’ (p. 330). Reciprocity’s root, as alluded to by Origins and the Oxford English Dictionary, suggests a going backwards in a present space in order to go forwards between two parties with the larger observation of either nation-State trading or natural forces operating within a cyclical circulation, such as the influencing of the sea tides.
5.2 Reciprocity Rules

Rules of approach have been designated to reciprocity from religious and spiritually based beliefs to client and customer relations. Suggested rules for instilling reciprocity are evident in several religious and spiritual doctrines including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism and Buddhism. The Parliament of World’s Religions bounds itself to the Declaration Towards a Global Ethic authored by Hans Kung (1993). The principles of reciprocity that Kung (1993) outlines revolve around the Silver Rule and the Golden Rule which are found and have persisted in many ‘religions and ethical foundations of humankind for thousands of years’ (p. 7). The form of the Silver Rule mentioned by Kung (1993) denotes a negative approach basis for reciprocity as ‘what you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others’ (p. 7). Where as Kung’s (1993) notion of the Golden Rule, which is associated with an ethic of reciprocity, forms a seemingly positive basis of approach with the more commonly known adage do unto others as you would do unto yourself.

In contrast, Marty Seldman, John Futterknecht and Ben Sorenson (2007) detail in Customer Tells: Delivering World-Class Customer Service by Reading Your Customers Signs and Signals, how business and marketing has applied reciprocity as its philosophy for customer relations. Seldman et al. (2007) state that people are different and that ‘the platinum rule is quite simply: treat people the way they want to be treated’ (p. 72). According to Seldman et al. (2007) the foundation of the platinum rule is to assist in quickly and accurately predicting the approach of a customer’s behavior in order to understand ‘how we can make that customer feel comfortable and to create a positive relationship with him or her’ (p. 209). The second part to the platinum rule is ‘adjusting our own behavior to others expectations’ (p. 210). Seldman et al. (2007) suggest that before we adapt to others we must become aware of our own comfort zones, style and that ‘we must understand our own cultural patterns before we can adjust to a customers norms’ (p. 210). What is suggested through the literature based on the Golden Rule, Silver Rule and Platinum Rule are a set of reciprocity approach methods that are dependent on the motivations of mutual exchange, perceptions and the social situation.
The Reciprocation Rule says, according to Robert Cialdini (2007) in Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, ‘that we should try to repay, in-kind, what another person has provided us’ (p.17). Cialdini’s work examines marketing, business and sales setting out case studies and examples such as free sampling, merchandising, gifts and favours. According to Cialdini (2007) it is the web of indebtedness that forms a critical ability of social advancement and an inherent sense of obligation and future orientation from which

a widely shared and strongly held feeling of future obligation made an enormous difference in human social evolution, because it meant that one person could give something with confidence that it was not being lost. (p. 18)

Cialdini (2007) outlines that ‘although the obligation to repay constitutes the essence of the reciprocity rule, it is the obligation to receive that makes the rule so easy to exploit’ (p. 31). Cialdini (2007) continues by stating that ‘the obligation to receive reduces our ability to choose whom we wish to be indebted to and puts that power in the hands of others’ (p. 31). It is through the virtue of the reciprocity rule that, according to Cialdini (2007), obliges future repayments and can enforce uninvited debts. Cialdini (2007) suggests that the reciprocity rule can no longer be an ally if the initiated actions of indebtedness are used as a manipulation or compliance device rather than a favour.

Cialdini (2007) believes that we will always ‘encounter authentic generous individuals as well as many people who try to play fairly by the reciprocity rule rather then exploit it’ (p. 52). Cialdini’s assertions of the reciprocity rule are suggestive of an initiation of future indebtedness from one party towards a respondent party inducing in-kind and debt canceling repayments equal to or exceeding the value of the accepted debt incurred from the initiator. It is the receiver though, who can be potentially manipulated and exploited, into feeling unduly indebted through an unequal relationship until the debt has been cancelled out by the responding exchange.
5.3 Wholes in the Economy

Although dated, Marcel Mauss’s 1924 publication *The Gift*, reprinted in 1969 is considered one of the primary anthropological works on introducing the principle of reciprocity and the obligations of gift exchanges. Mauss’s work was informed by Bronislaw Malinowski’s ethnographic writings on the Kula Ring and the accounts of other researchers and anthropologists. Mauss (1924/1969) observes Polynesian, Melanesian, North West American, Germanic, Roman and Anglo-Saxon ‘total social phenomena’ (p. 1) and their social institutional expressions. Mauss (1924/1969) is concerned with reciprocal accounts of whole or total society phenomena inclusive of their institutions and the initiation of gift obligations.

The total social phenomena according to Mauss’s (1924/1969) accounts include spirituality, law, morality, economics and their aesthetic and morphological phenomena prior to what we recognise as the modern economic market form. Within *The Gift* Mauss (1924/1969) refers to what he terms as wholes which are ‘systems in their entirety’ (p. 77) and states that it is only by

> considering them as wholes that we have been able to see their essence, their operation and their living aspect, and to catch the fleeting moment when the society and its members take emotional stock of themselves and their situation in regards to others. (p.77)

Mauss (1924/1969) indicates that the symmetrical patterns of gift exchange obligation are spiritual bonds and that ‘the gift not yet repaid debases the man who accepted it, particularly if he did so without thought of return’ (p. 63). Mauss positions the symbolic social act and relationship between the gift initiator and respondent and that reputation and social standing becomes an influencing factor of the reciprocity process. Mauss observes the protocols of response to the gift’s invitations and that the gift itself is a spiritual entity within the circulation of obligations when observing the micro-histories of gift exchange within meta-narrative circulations.
Mauss’s notion of the gift circulation is symbolic of its influence on social dynamics through reciprocal arrangements based on dependency, structural ambiguity and parts of a cultural economy. It is a cultural economy that is suggestive through Mauss’s work that includes and encourages social intersubjectivity based on socio-cultural values and histories. Mauss alludes to the current market economy that is based on an industrialized pre-determined value of objective categorizations through a monetary system.

David Hamilton’s 1970 article “Reciprocity, Productivity and Poverty”, discusses the industrial market based economy in terms of technical and ceremonial reciprocal aspects. Hamilton asserts that ‘reciprocity does set up a system of distribution’ (p. 39). According to Hamilton (1970), there is no technological reason for poverty to exist in the industrial economy and that ‘nothing short of massive institutional change can eliminate poverty in the industrial economy’ (p. 41). Hamilton (1970) argues that industrial abundance can only be paired with abundant consumption that in turn encourages reciprocity within the industrial economy to assume the form of productivity.

Reciprocity’s system of distribution in the industrial economy is suggested by Hamilton (1970) to be monetarily symbolized and exchanged through a technical initiation whilst the goods or services provided would then be a ceremonial response. Equalities in the return of equal social worth are based, according to Hamilton (1970), on ‘social custom and habit’ (p. 39) and that even ‘social detriment must be reciprocated by something with equal social detriment’ (p. 39).

What can be recognised through Hamilton’s commentary is that a reciprocal system of distribution is composed of technical and ceremonial attributes in which a motivation and counter motivation can be socially equitable and defined. To this extent, Hamilton’s work presents a brief explanation of the industrial economy and aspects of the effects that over abundant production and consumption are having within the complexity of contemporary society.
5.4 Reciprocitarianism Motives and Intergenerational Equity

Serge-Christophe Kolm’s (2008) publication *Reciprocity* considers reciprocity to be the act of ‘treating others as they treat you, because of this fact and not as a result of some agreed upon expected exchange’ (p. 11). Kolm (2008) explains it as a factor of human social behaviour and that it is the particular motivational sentiments that defines how reciprocity can be recognised and enacted. According to Kolm (2008) ‘there are three categories of reciprocitarian motives’ (p. 100) which are liking, balance and continuation or sequential exchange.

Reciprocitarian motives are relationally suggested by Kolm (2008) to be communally characteristic regarding the importance of intensity to a sense of community. To this extent a reciprocitarian definition is regularly alluded to by Kolm but not described in any greater detail. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989), definition of a reciprocitarian is ‘one who advocates reciprocity in trade’ (p. 330). As such I came to understand a reciprocitarian to be an individual or group who entrepreneurially enacts reciprocal or exchange motivations and sentiments as manifested through communal values and principles.

Kolm (2008) suggests that social reformer’s advocate for reciprocity to take a greater role in society as an ‘alternative to coercive hierarchy, selfish exchange, and the utopia of unconditional altruism’ (p. 2). What is implied by Kolm (2008), is that it is through the delicate process of selecting the positive aspects of modern technology to rely on rather then replace traditional reciprocities that can permit more efficient cooperation. This would also, as suggested by Kolm (2008), maintain trust, solidarity, local democracy and ‘outperform standard markets and external administration in all respects’ (p. 43).

Kolm (2008) suggests that reciprocity is part of a helping behaviour towards a larger number of agents and that it is ‘based on a reciprocal sentiment towards others in general or society at large’ (p. 4). Both directly and indirectly, generalized and reverse reciprocity extends, according to Kolm (2008), into longer chain reciprocities. These include ‘various intergenerational reciprocities found in families, in pay-as-you-go pension systems, or in the public financing of education’ (p. 4). Kolm’s work was
suggestive of social entrepreneurial reciprocitarian motivations that can be applied as longer chain reciprocities and shared societal norms as opposed to the sentiments of self-interest.

Richard Hiskes (2009) discusses the notion of intergenerational reciprocity, environmentalism and future reciprocal rights in *The Human Right To A Green Future: Environmental Rights and Intergenerational Justice*. According to Hiskes (2009) reciprocity as a relational and moral sentiment is more than just entering into self-interested contracts and not just selfless generosity. Reciprocity is illustrated by Hiskes (2009) as ‘a relationship among individual people in a spirit of shared community defined by more than just economic self-interests’ (p. 51). Hiskes (2009) details friendships as being instructive for justice, however, not necessarily because the same warmth of feeling is necessary for justice as for friendship, but because of what friends share that make friendship possible as a cooperative or reciprocal relationship. (p. 53)

Hiskes (2009) positions future environmental rights as a form of intergenerational reciprocity that reciprocally protects our current interests and characterizes ‘ourselves as a nation with the reciprocal aid of those who come after us’ (p.65). It is the sharing of the same past and future spaces defined by institutions, customs and principles that Hiskes (2009) recognizes the engagement of our reciprocal intergenerational duties. Hiskes (2009) states that ‘our environmental interests are in a relationship of reciprocity with the environmental interests of the future’ (p. 60). Edith Brown Weiss (1990) suggests in “Our Rights and Obligations to Future Generations for the Environment”, that these rights are part of the principles of intergenerational equity. According to Weiss (1990) the principles form the basis for planetary rights and obligations derived from successive generations as part of the ‘inter-temporal entity of human society’ (p. 202). Weiss (1990) states that intergenerational planetary rights may be regarded as group rights as distinct from individual rights, in the sense that generations hold these rights as groups in relation to other generations – past, present and future. (p. 203)
To this extent Hiskes and Weiss are suggestive of viewing group obligations and rights to past, present and future groups as a form of intergenerational reciprocity and planetary environmental responsibilities.

**5.5 Indigenizing Reciprocity**

Indigenizing Reciprocity is an overview of Indigenous related literature discussing reciprocity in contemporary and traditional aspects. What the breadth of literature does encompass is policy, health, research, law, culture and the spiritual basis for reciprocity. Reciprocity on Indigenous terms has been described as ‘two-ways’ or ‘both-ways’ and has been written and observed by researchers under a number of descriptions that includes anthropological exchange, primitive communism, exchange theory, gift relationship, caring and sharing and the Indigenous domestic moral economy. Indigenous literature that discusses reciprocity recognizes it as a social circulation of obligation amongst recognised kin with complex understandings that can have benefits for cultural resilience and the possible influence on policy.

One of the primary works referred to during the research project relating to practices of reciprocity, culture and policy was R. G. Schwab’s 1995 discussion paper “The Calculus of Reciprocity: Principles and Implications of Aboriginal Sharing”. Schwab (1995), points out that the paper is not an ‘exhaustive analysis’ (p. 14) but it introduces the social and political values and principles which reciprocity holds for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Schwab (1995) discusses reciprocity in urban, regional and remote settings summarizing that sharing is the ‘norm among Aboriginal people’ (p. 13) and that ‘individuals learn early in life the rules for responding to demands in culturally appropriate ways’ (p.13). According to Schwab (1995) the calculus of reciprocity is based on a ‘web of kinship’ (p. 7) that is a social and cultural interaction relating to principles of simple expectation founded on a variety of complex assumptions.

Schwab (1995) states that ‘at the heart of Aboriginal culture is a core value: caring and sharing” (p.12). Schwab (1995) positions generosity as ‘the right to seek assistance’ (p. 8) and for kin not to reciprocate back to a demand or to bluntly refuse
is ‘a poor economic strategy since the refusal effectively denies the authenticity of the basis of the demand’ (p.13). In this way, Schwab (1995) states that ‘it is important to recognise that reciprocity is a core element in the organisation of Aboriginal communities; Aboriginal people operate in a social universe, not in isolation’ (p. 13). Schwab (1995) points out that sharing is both an economic and social transaction, which creates and sustains party bonds by validating the givers’ actions and creating recipient obligations.

Schwab (1995) summarizes six principles as cultural assumptions regarding Aboriginal sharing and reciprocity. Firstly that ‘Aboriginal kinship is extended and flexible’ (p.11), that ‘sharing is the norm among Aboriginal kin’ (p.12), that sharing is propelled by a demand but constrained by a delicate balance between what is appropriate to the demand and appropriate to the refusal. Schwab (1995) continues on stating that, saying ‘No’ has social implications, that ‘deflecting demands requires strategic behaviour so as not to shame or embarrass either party’ (p.12) and that the ‘social implications of refusing to share are particularly profound for individuals in peripheral positions’ (p.12).

To this extent, Schwab (1995) states that ‘a better understanding of the principles of reciprocity in contemporary Aboriginal communities should be useful in a range of policy contexts’ (p. 2). Schwab positions the principles of reciprocity as an aspect of the cultural principles of interaction and that by better understanding the approaches with regard to culturally appropriate policy that chances will increase which align with ‘existing community structures and expectations’ (p. 14). In this way, reciprocity, sharing, caring and generosity are the core cultural factors that are framed by obligations and rights to kin forming the Aboriginal social fabric on Aboriginal terms.

chapter three that over recent decades ‘there has been a strong renaissance of Indigenous culture and forms of creative expression, and a reconnection and reclaiming of cultural life’ (pp. 25-26). This was attributed in part, according to Working Together (2010), to reciprocity and sharing in Aboriginal society being an important characteristic.

According to Zubrick, Dudgeon, Gee, Glaskin, Kelly, Paradies, Scrine and Walker (2010) in Working Together, reciprocity’s underpinning for social cohesion is outlined by the cultural identification and reciprocal relationships in which ‘Indigenous cultures would offer some protection against the ravages of stressful events’ (p. 85). Zubrick et al. (2010) also recognise that land is central to Indigenous people’s wellbeing, spirituality and social relationships. One of the aspects Working Together (2010) identifies as a unique protective factor for Indigenous peoples and communities is reciprocity’s contribution to the underpinning of wellbeing and resilience.

Relating reciprocity back into the field of Indigenous research and drawing again on Atkinson (2002) who regards the principles of reciprocity to be a part of dadirri or deep listening. Atkinson (2002) refers to Rose Ungunmerr’s definition of dadirri as ‘we call on it and it calls on us’ (p. 17). Suggesting a two-way relationship Atkinson (2002) acknowledges that the process of researcher’s principles should be informed by the responsibilities that accompany knowing and living dadirri. Atkinson (2002) states that

the principle of reciprocity involves the researcher locating her or himself within community in time and place and in relationship to those who came into the research as participants. (p. 21)

According to Atkinson (2002), a further principle of reciprocity for the researcher includes the obligation of the returning of resource materials to participants as ‘these materials include the knowledge(s) derived that arise from the research’ (pp. 20-21). To this extent, the principle of reciprocity within the research project is a social value for practice, resource and discussion.
When referring to the legal literature related to reciprocity and Aboriginal people the *Western Australian Aboriginal Bench-Book* by Stephanie Fry-Smith (2002) provides a brief traditional overview. Fry-Smith (2002) describes how mutual rights and obligations of traditional Aboriginal society are consistently observed and principally derived from kinship. Fry-Smith (2002) provides an example of male initiation and the expectation of making gifts ‘to those that initiate him’ (p. 15). The value of the goods is not important according to Fry-Smith (2002), it is the social reinforcing of giving and receiving that is the purpose.

The aspects that underpin the reciprocal requirements of community life include according to Fry-Smith (2002), ‘ritual, ceremony and protection of scared sites’ (p. 15) and that ‘the cultural practice of sharing food and other valued goods is based upon reciprocity principles’ (p. 15). Sharing between people to this extent is considered by Fry-Smith (2002) as the past benefits received and whom future benefits will be received. Fry-Smith (2002) notes that inter-group and intra-group reciprocity is a system that balances social equilibrium and strongly reinforces ‘personal and group relations’ (p. 15). Fry-Smith (2002) alludes to reciprocity as a governing cultural norm ‘of avenging wrong-doing’ (p. 15) called payback or squaring it up. According to Fry-Smith (2002) continuing long-term feuds can culminate if payback got out of hand.

Larissa Berndt (1995) states in *Aboriginal Conflict Resolution* that ‘even where a traditional lifestyle has been lost, land continues to be of central importance to Aboriginal people’ (p. 9). The Aboriginal community believes, according to Berndt (1995), that the land still belongs to them and that it has never been surrendered or traded, asserting that

> it always was Aboriginal land and it will always be Aboriginal land. In our culture, land is not something that you can buy or sell or give away. (p. 9)

What was evident in traditional Aboriginal societies according to Berndt (1995) was that ‘there were strong kin ties and notions of community and reciprocity’ (p. 7). Berndt (1995) is suggestive that reciprocity played a role in traditional lore and
dispute resolution due to people living in small communities with large extended families. This would be evident in the close-knit community which ‘required the existence of a complex workable system of resolving conflict and a method of communal decision-making’ (p. 7). These processes, according to Berndt (1995), needed to produce effective outcomes ‘that members of the community would comply with’ (p. 7). According to Berndt (1995) the discriminatory treatment of Aboriginal people today, with particular reference to the Justice system, reflects ‘how Aboriginal people are treated and perceived by the wider Australian community’ (p. 106). Berndt highlights Aboriginal over-representation in prisons, Aboriginal sovereignty and that Aboriginal communities can resolve Aboriginal disputes for themselves on their own terms.

Ronald and Catherine Berndt (1999) contextualize in *The World of the First Australians: Aboriginal Life Past and Present*, aspects of traditional accounts relating to reciprocity, trade and the practice of exchange. Berndt and Berndt (1999) consider that traditional Aboriginal societies were repetitive societies in which members emphasized traditional importance and an unchanging quality of life. To this extent, Berndt and Berndt (1999) recognize that the context of traditional Aboriginal society was based on a subsistence economy that was divided into a division of labour between males and females in which all efficient labour was valued. According to Berndt and Berndt (1999) ‘all gifts and services are viewed as reciprocal’ (p. 122) which are to be repaid within a certain period of time and forms the basis of the economy. Berndt and Berndt (1999) outline six main types of gift exchange within traditional Aboriginal societies that include the

- Basis of kinship
- Gifts made to settle grievances or debts, arising from an offence by a single person or group
- Gifts in return for services or goods
- Formalized gift exchange, involving trade between various defined partners, in a series that may cover a wide area
- Trade. If we look at any given locality in Aboriginal Australia, in traditional terms, we can see that there is a more or less a constant movement of goods, some coming from one direction and some from
another.

- The economics of a sacred life. (pp. 122-123)

Partnerships and social relationships, according to Berndt and Berndt (1999) are the main thing which provide a suggested sense of prestige or distinction that the ‘partners derive from the exchange’ (p. 133). Whilst the utilitarian and intangible aspects of the goods are ‘enhanced in value by virtue of the exchange or associated ceremony’ (p. 133), they are only considered as wealth, according to Berndt and Berndt (1999) if expendable and can be passed onto others. To this extent Berndt and Berndt (1999) observe the assumptions and expected response framework based on the implicitness of obligations and responsibilities towards kinship networks that always have an ‘element of looking ahead’ (p. 133). Berndt and Berndt (1999) indicate that the one item which is non-exchangeable and not personally owned is the land, stating that

there is no private land as such, nor individually owned patches of yams or trees and so on. Land belongs to the local group, the clan, or even the tribe, and it is inalienable. In the contact situation, it is the only real wealth these people have which is recognized as such by Europeans. Unfortunately, in nearly all cases it has been taken over entirely by the newcomers, and local rights in it ignored or brushed aside. (p. 134)

According to Berndt and Berndt (1999) traditional Aboriginal societies realized too late they were unable to maintain their unchanging intentions due to alternative modes of action and choice, which at times presented tangible benefits from the direct result of contact. Traditional Aboriginal societies, as accounted by Berndt and Berndt (1999), were expecting ‘the same treatment which they gave, or would have given in such circumstances’ (p. 493) but soon became disillusioned, realizing ‘that their values were not those of the newcomers’ (p. 493). A localized example is Richard Broome’s (2006) accounts regarding the Kulin who ‘expected access to European food resources in accord with their ideas of reciprocity – whereby kin shared food and goods – and also because of the privileges they felt were their due as landowners’ (p. 18).
In relation to the Kulin people, Diane E. Barwick (1984) in “Mapping the Past: An Atlas of Victorian Clans 1835 – 1904 Part I”, reconstructs from available evidence the relations of time and space through the collation of ethnographic records and notes. Examples of these are outlined through A. W. Howitt’s notes of interviews whom Barwick (1984) observes as spending many months of reciprocal visits with Woiwurrung ngurungaeta William Barak and other Kulin elders between 1880 and 1903. Barwick (1984) asserts that ‘European writings are but a flawed and partial record of Kulin land ownership: by ancient convention only clan owners could publicly ’speak for’ their land’ (p. 112).

Barwick (1984) suggests that Chief Aboriginal Protectorate G. A. Robinson understood this convention in composing his 1846 list of clans that included the Boon Wurrung nation and noting that ‘Benhow gave names as a favour’ (p. 112). Benhow which is an early spelling for Benbow, was as Briggs (2008) claims ‘possibly one of the first Boon Wurrung to make a bid for the rights to his land’ (p. 15), which provides guidance for spiritual, historical and lived realities within the locality of the research project.

According to Barwick’s (1984) accounts, individuals were permitted through the Kulin land tenure system, to be able to make land usage claims that were beyond their own estate with various relatives. Lifelong access could be acquired, according to Barwick (1984) if born on the land of another clan but they could not acquire clan membership. Whereas visitors had to ‘seek formal permission from clan-heads for temporary access’ (p. 106) and whose safety was always guaranteed once approved. This system had worked according to Barwick (1984), ‘because reciprocity was the guiding principle of land and resource management’ (p. 106).

Reciprocity on a localized Yalukit Wilam basis is characterized by Aunty Carolyn Briggs (2008) through the spiritual laws of Bundjil the Boon Wurrung and Kulin peoples ‘creator and spiritual leader’ (p. 18). Briggs (2008) describes a time of great chaos and change when the Boon Wurrung people did not listen to the laws of Bundjil, were in conflict with other Kulin nations, argued and fought, over killed without eating and neglected the land. Bundjil, according to Briggs (2008) became
angry at this and began to make the ocean rise over the Boon Wurrung hunting grounds which are known as Nairn or Port Phillip Bay. Briggs (2008) describes how the Boon Wurrung people went to Bundjil to stop the water from rising but Bundjil was angry, telling the people ‘to change their ways if they wanted to save their land’ (p. 19). The Boon Wurrung, as detailed by Briggs (2008), had been made to make a promise to respect the laws of Bundjil who then stopped the oceans from rising but reduced the Boon Wurrung peoples land to ‘a narrow strip of coastline’ (p. 19).

Returning to their old values, Briggs (2008) outlines how the Boon Wurrung people met with other Kulin people to sort their ‘differences through sports, debates and dance’ (p. 19). Briggs (2008) states that one of the most important laws that Bundjil required to be obeyed was for Boonwurrung people to always welcome visitors, and to require all visitors to make a promise that they would obey the laws of Bundjil, not hurt the land of Bundjil and not harm the children of Bundjil. (p. 19)

According to Briggs (2008) the Boon Wurrung people passed their history between generations through story and drawings and survived many great natural catastrophes. Briggs (2008) describes another time of great change for the Boon Wurrung who were frightened when they ‘saw the arrival of the white men’ (p. 21). This time, as mentioned by Briggs (2008) brought great sickness, kidnappings and population decline. The frightened Boon Wurrung people, according to Briggs (2008) went to seek out the advice of the wise old people who had seen a vision of great crisis, death and pain for the people. Becoming more frightened and angry about the prospect of the new arrivals not following the laws of Bundjil, Briggs (2008) describes how the wise old people told them of a second part to the vision. Briggs (2008) describes how they saw a time ‘many years later, when the white man who stayed began to understand the laws of Bundjil and the Boon Wurrung people’ (p. 22). The wise old people according to Briggs (2008) saw a time when the spirit of the Boon Wurrung would be reborn, a time the river would run clean again, and trees and forests would re-grow. The wise old people saw a time when the strong spirit of the traditional owners, their culture and their enjoyment of this wonderful landscape would be reflected again in this land. (p. 22)
5.6 Summary

Chapter five discussed the literature with respect to reciprocity. Essentially, reciprocity is seen as a two-way web that directly and indirectly creates an obligation of future indebtedness between parties. The value of the item or service exchanged is not necessarily of primary significance: it can be the act of the exchange itself that creates meaning and relationship and this can take on a spiritual dimension. It was suggested that advocates for reciprocity can encourage social reform and trade that is not based on coercion, self-interest or altruistic utopianism. It was seen that reciprocity in reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, as discussed by Schwab, is a social interaction of simple expectations founded on complex assumptions.

The chapter highlighted the fact that for Indigenous people and communities reciprocity is a core element in the right to seek assistance and to validate bonds; learning the social implications and culturally appropriate ways to respond to reciprocal demands are part of an individual’s early life lessons. One of reciprocity’s important characteristics is its ability to provide cultural protection for Aboriginal people against stressful events. It was seen that in local Indigenous community structures there is a delicate economic and social balance, guided by the principles of reciprocity. With respect to this research, the principle of reciprocity was discussed in reference to the work of various writers, including Briggs, Berndt, and Ungunmer (particularly Atkinson’s discussion of dadirri). Basic to this study was the importance of encouraging the attributes of reciprocity in a policy context in order to increase the likelihood of aligning appropriate approaches with existing community social fabrics. A core message from the reciprocity literature in relation to my role as festival artist/researcher is the significant privilege I was given in being permitted by Briggs (Aunty Carolyn) to talk about cultural aspects of the Yalukit Wilam, Boon Wurrung and Kulin peoples.
SECTION THREE: WILAM - PLACE

Section Three titled Wilam or Place is an overview of the projects presented in three chapters. The Wilam section discusses aspects related to my festival artistry practice and five key festival impact areas. The five key impact areas include:

1. Indigenous Film and Documentary Training
2. Festival Hosting and Marshaling
3. Cultural Reclamation and Contemporary Dance
4. Indigenous Prison Art Exhibition
5. Festival Environmental Sustainability

A brief account called music plays acknowledges the presence and contribution of music to the Yalukit Willam Ngargee. An in-depth study of music’s impact within localized through to international Indigenous festivals is suggested as a direction for future research. The following three chapters will be themed to the key impact year of programming but may overlap in areas and years of production. The beginning of each chapter will be structured with an introductory paragraph providing a festival program overview. Followed by festival mechanisms of environmental sustainability discussing some of the green festival measures conducted. Each chapter will lead into paragraphs relating to the designated festival key impacts. The festival key impacts will discuss points in time through the provided documentation and resource material. To this extent the research project will highlight how the actions of reciprocity existed within the many layers and levels of participation and support within the Yalukit Willam Ngargee.
Chapter Six: Living in Two Worlds - 2009 Festival

6.1 Festival 2009 Program Introduction

Chapter six begins by outlining the Yalukit Willam Ngargee 2009 festival program. The chapter leads into the festival environmental sustainability measures and how they influenced that year’s production. An outline of the history of Indigenous film and media contextualizes part of the background regarding an Indigenous Media Scholarship that was one of the key impacts to take place during that year. The Indigenous Media Scholarship produced a short documentary called *Living in Two Worlds* presenting a transition into the next key impact relating to the festivals hosting and marshaling program. Music plays concludes the chapter discussing the importance of live music to the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival but was not presented within the research project as a key impact.

The first Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program produced as part of the research project took place between 29 January and 19 February 2009 with festival events held in various venues on the Yalukit Wilam country. To set up the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program and production values I began planning at the wrap up of the 2008 festival program. This included applying for funding and sponsorship, conducting festival consultations, negotiating creative and cultural event logistics and drafting the 2009 program design and feel. Programming of events for the 2009 Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival were composed on the observations of the previous festival, consultations with traditional owners and community elders and the sourcing of current and significant Indigenous arts and cultural practices.

The 2009 festival program consisted of the launch of East Gippsland Aboriginal Arts Corporation visual arts exhibition Grangabunnkit Kinaway: Happy Exchange held at the Alliance Francaise. The Indigenous Success Stories Forum held in the St Kilda Town Hall was a one-day forum of presentations, workshops and yarning circles based on the creative and cultural programs that are working in Indigenous communities. The forum was designed to flow into the launch of the first *CONFINED*
exhibition of artworks by Indigenous people in custody. Attended by 120 people the *CONFINED* exhibition presented works from four men’s prisons and one female prison. The following day was the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival main day featuring a diverse range of musicians, a curated contemporary Indigenous dance program, free public programs, children’s activities, community stalls and the Koorie Night Market. An internal City of Port Phillip cultural awareness session was held as part of the festival. Completing the festival program was a Yalukit Willam heritage trail walk and the one-man theatre production titled Little Black Bastard, performed by Noel Tovey at Gasworks Arts Park. The two key impacts this chapter will focus on are the Indigenous Media Scholarship and the main day festival hosting and marshalling program.

### 6.2 Festival 2009 Environmental Sustainability

The Yalukit Willam Ngargee was the first festival in the City of Port Phillip to begin implementing active festival environmental sustainable mechanisms beyond the main day waste management, energy consumption and amenity services. Festival sustainability mechanisms to reduce carbon emissions were introduced into the Yalukit Willam Ngargee from its founding festival in 2006 through the use of bio-diesel generators to power the main festival stage and waterless, composting toilets supplied by Natural Events. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee vision was to establish environmentally sustainable mechanisms that would be cost effective and transferable to other similar-scale festival productions. During the 2007 and 2008 festival productions I worked with Michael Dodd, a Council environmental management staff member, to assist in structuring best practice examples and methods for environmental evaluation. The continued collaboration ceased due to the festival activities being beyond Dodd’s initial job descriptive role.

The actions, direction and mechanisms developed by Dodd and I provided the Yalukit Willam Ngargee with the opportunity to be included by Liz Franzman in Sustainability Victoria’s (2009) *Summer of Sustainability*, festival environmental sustainability research and five part YouTube series. The sustainability mechanisms introduced by this stage included...
• the continued usage of bio-diesel generators and composting toilets,
• contracting of Green Collect for main festival day waste management and sorting services,
• introduction of festival environmental program and online messages,
• initial festival environmental auditing,
• the drafting of a five-point environmental management plan.

The drafting of the 2008 five-point plan included environmental vision, environmental goals, festival office, contractors and stallholders and festival visitors.

Primary measures raised within the five-point plan revolved around the festival’s obligations towards waste minimization, sustainable energy consumption, water usage, sustainable transport and having a deadly time without leaving a trace.

Leading into the 2009 festival I set up a voluntary Environmental Project Officer role to assist in the monitoring and reporting on festival sustainability across relevant festival sites. The 2009 festival was aiming to reduce its carbon emission footprint by 25% from the previous year’s total calculated emissions. To this extent I refer to the Yalukit Willam Ngargee environmental sustainability measures through unpublished document analysis. This includes the quantitative and qualitative data collected and reported on by the Environmental Project Officer Jill Robinson, 2008/2009 Green Collect waste management reports and early festival sustainability empirical measuring mechanisms. Further to this, the industry insights and proven practices of the Summer of Sustainability YouTube series guided the Yalukit Willam Ngargee ethos and philosophy to promote positive effects that are ongoing beyond festival boundaries. Hamish Skermer founder of Natural Events states that “If you can do it at a festival, you can actually see it’s a lot easier for people to conceive taking it into their house” (Sustainability Victoria, 2009).

To this extent, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee sustainability measures are positioned, as mentioned by Jones (2010) in Chapter Four, to be a festival responsibility due to the millions of people attending events around the globe yearly through to its possible influence on people’s daily home lives.
The 2009 Yalukit Willam Ngargee Environmental Performance Report prepared for the festival by Robinson (2009) included ‘(a) Data Processing and Methods of Collection, (b) Discussion of Key Findings, (c) Recommendations and (d) Resources’ (p. 1). In some areas Robinson (2009) used estimations and assumptions due to partial data comparisons with the 2008 reporting not providing sufficient baseline figures and differences in reporting methods on both festival program lengths. The festival carbon emissions measuring mechanism which Robinson (2009) used, were based on the Victorian Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Carbon and Ecological Footprint Calculator. Collection of data included the main festival day which received a Bronze Waste Wise Certification, Indigenous Success Stories Forum, *CONFINED* exhibition at the St Kilda Town Hall, and the Grangabunnkit Kinaway: Happy Exchange exhibition launch at Alliance Francaise.

Robinson (2009) estimated 32 total hours of activity equaling 1.33 days on the EPA calculator, not including bump in and bump out or the operation of energy during the extended length of exhibition venue and festival office hours. The primary points Robinson (2009) recommended include the employment of an Environmental Project Officer ‘for a sufficient amount of time either side of the festival’ (p. 11) and seeking another environmental performance indicator to assess results and data. Robinson (2009) reviewed the usage of bio-diesel, bike-parking facilities, limiting meat availability due to it being the highest contributor to festival carbon emissions, factoring in positive waste and clearer programming and signage.

The City of Port Phillip Sustainable Environment Team held an information stall during the 2009 festival main day. Environmental stall feedback to Robinson (2009) quoted that

> they wished to promote the connection between Indigenous issues and sustainability as they both attract a similar market of people. Also, the promotion of YWN’s Footprint will be helpful in encouraging these links. creating awareness of our sustainability programs, creating connections between Indigenous issues and sustainability... The EcoFootprint measurement may prove to be the most marketable evidence of this connection. (p. 14)
The marketability of festival sustainability interweaves into the possible influencing of peoples daily home lives as previously referred to by Skermer. Also as mentioned in the above quote, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee was suitably aligning both festival and council related sustainability information with Indigenous connections. It was the notions of localized planetary rights as discussed in Chapter five by Weiss (1990) and intergenerational reciprocity that formed the motivational aspects for festival environmental sustainability. This is reflected by Robinson (2009) who states that “solutions and initiatives need to have a long term vision in mind, with the aim to be reducing impact year after year” (p. 12).

I gradually worked towards implementing Robinson’s 2009 recommendations and reducing Yalukit Willam Ngargee 2010 festival emissions. One of the main challenges I faced was the sourcing of extra funds to maintain the adequate improvement in these areas of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee. What was actively present during the period was an increasing locality of festival artists/practitioners implementing sustainability measures in a developing industry area as presented through the Summer of Sustainability YouTube series.

Most of the festival’s suppliers could be considered in the early phases of festival sustainability industry development and who I contracted on terms of their specialization within the field. Due to the very limited festival budget, all of the 2009 festival sustainability auditing was completed voluntarily both by the Environmental Project Officer and a main festival day assistant. In return I sought avenues for accruing funds in the development of the Environmental Project Officer’s role going into the 2010 festival program.
6.3 Indigenous Media and Film: A Brief History

The history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander film and documentary making spans a period seeded by a filmic exteriority of representations through to asserting the presence of self-representational expressions. According to Catriona Moore and Stephen Muecke (1984), Australia’s first cinematic genre period prior to the first-world war cast white people in some movies wearing black faces. According to Moore and Muecke (1984) representations of Indigenous people were portrayed as savages or ‘as ferocious nuisances to the colonial endeavour’ (p. 40). The white actors were described by Liz McNiven (2009) to have ‘lacked any resemblance to the actual people or their customs’ (p. 1). McNiven (2009) highlights the influence cinematic film had on the broader populations that reinforced the perceptions of Indigenous people’s inferiority to white characters by casting Indigenous people in major roles as primitive savages or subordinate sidekicks.

The ethnographic genre of film, according to Faye Ginsburg (2002), had been conceived and developed by anthropologists in the early twentieth century ‘as a broad project of documenting on film the “disappearing” life-worlds of those “others” – non western, small scale, kin-ship based societies’ (p. 213). Bryson, Burns and Langton (2000) discuss the troubling effects which cinematic, scientific and ethnographic authorship had on Aboriginal audiences and that what is of central importance is the ‘question of the gaze’ (p. 304) and Indigenous people’s history of self-representation and involvement in film.

Bryson et al. (2000) suggest that with the rise of the pan-Aboriginal movement in the late 1970s and 1980s the question of the gaze ‘focused on the recognition of certain rights – one of which was the right to self-representation’ (p. 300). According to Bryson et al. (2000) the period saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people begin to be trained in video camera skills and making films in their own right ‘as directors, as participant in community productions, and as collaborators with other film-makers’ (p. 304). The emergence of training programs and identified Indigenous positions by the late 1980s became ‘common in federally funded organisations and institutions’ (p.
Local and national levels of the television broadcasting industry became training grounds during the 1990s for Indigenous media-workers that ‘provided many with the skills to venture into film production’ (p. 302). These training experiences according to Bryson et al. (2000) have been part of the development of Indigenous filmmaking which ‘is no longer simply a tool for change’ (p. 303) but also a developing art form for the gaze of Indigenous filmmakers.

Frances Peters-Little (2003) compares the politically motivated 1960s and 1970s weekly magazine television programs that ‘covered issues from land rights to anti-uranium mining to Aboriginal citizenship’ (p. 35) and the relatively fashionable collaborative works during the1970s and 1980s period to today. Peters-Little (2003) suggests it is somewhat erroneous that political messages from the Aboriginal community are more frequent and getting better on current television. In Peters-Little’s (2003) opinion the formalizing and legalizing of ethical guideline protocols after 45 years of television may manipulate, discourage and restrict future white and Aboriginal film-makers from challenging each other by having less room to create open dialogue. These issues which Peters-Little (2003) raises may in part be related to the federally-funded institutionalizing of Indigenous filmmakers training that both encouraged development but also set the boundaries for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation.

With these histories and expectations in mind it indicates Indigenous filmmaking may exist at times within an Indigenous media contact zone as previously referred to by Mary Louise Pratt (2008). To this extent Indigenous media contact zone filmmaking is suggestive of how filming and broadcasting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-representational expressions, consists in part of being aware of current polarizations between social institutions and supporting the collaborations that provide challenging open dialogue. Phipps and Slater (2010) state in relation to Indigenous festivals and media representations that there are few alternatives to the one-dimensional media reports and government claims about so-called dysfunctional Aboriginal communities, so it is paramount that people have opportunities for self representation. (p. 56)
The gaze of the Indigenous contact zone filmmaker in this regard becomes layered with industry protocols, technical abilities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural expectations and the artists or team of artists own exploration for imagination and open debate. It is also, arguably the gaze of the contact zone filmmaker that provides a contribution to the creation of new cultural phenomena in co-existence with what has been previously observed as an Indigenous cultural renaissance.

Filmmaking can be a costly process and involve a number of roles synthesised to the project at hand. Essentially, according to Bryson et al. (2002) ‘films, unlike paintings and photographs are produced by teams’ (p. 302) and the production of Indigenous directors and producers visions ‘requires the skills of many individuals, some of whom may not be Indigenous’ (p. 302). Sally Riley (2007) believes that what is evident is the dedication and commitment of a small group of Indigenous producers and the many contributions to ‘the development of Australian Indigenous film’ (p. 6) by Indigenous cinematographers, technical crew and actors.

The remarkable technical skill and proficiency of Indigenous filmmakers, according to Riley (2007) has been developing over the years as the bar has been raised higher and higher by filmmakers who ‘inspire those following in their footsteps’ (p. 3). Riley (2007) observes that to guarantee the longevity of the fledgling industry more concentration needs to be focused on ‘supporting and developing a larger pool of talented creative producers’ (p. 6). It could be argued that the output of Aboriginal film both as an independent filmmaker or as an industry ‘must be financially nurtured because of the high cost of production’ (Langton, 1993, p. 86). The industry prominence that Indigenous filmmakers have made as a very small minority is restricted by the necessary expenses and ‘investment in Indigenous film-makers, has been predominately funded by the federal government’ (Bryson, Burns & Langton, 2000, p. 302). As discussed, government funding support can potentially develop, restrict, maintain and manipulate the filmmakers gaze as the government may at times be the body that enforces the Indigenous media contact zone either knowingly or not.
The titling Indigenous Media is considered by Faye Ginsburg (2002) in “Screen Memories: Resignifying the Traditional in Indigenous Media”, as suggestive of the ‘importance of contextualizing this work within broader movements for cultural autonomy and political self-determination’ (p. 211). Accordingly, Langton (1993) discusses the basic issues and motivations for the televised transmissions of Indigenous community video production that are relational to ‘self determination, cultural maintenance and the prevention of cultural disruption’ (p. 85). In terms of supporting the broadcast of Indigenous film, television and media there are four primary broadcasters currently operating on the Indigenous Australian landscape. These include the Alice Springs based CAAMA (Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association), the Aboriginal owned and fully commercial Imparja TV, the not-for-profit NITV (National Indigenous Television) and SBS soon to be released Indigenous program channel. Vibe Australia is an Aboriginal media, communications and event management company that presents Indigenous media programming on NITV, ABC3 and online.

Examples of Indigenous programs on mainstream Australian television broadcasting include the ABC program Message Stick, TV and the ABC radio and podcast programs Speaking Out and Awaye. SBS produces the weekly half hour television affairs program Living Black titled after Kevin Gilbert’s 1978 publication Living Black: Blacks Talk To Kevin Gilbert. More recently SBS produced the significant television documentary-series The First Australians written, produced and directed by Arrrente filmmaker Rachel Perkins. One of the primary national touring Indigenous film festivals is the Message Sticks Film Festival and two current examples of film training are the Australian Film and Television School (AFTRS) National Indigenous programs and the Black Pearls Indigenous Screen and Media training in Queensland.

6.4 Festival Founding Years and Indigenous Media Scholarship

Observations during the Yalukit Willam Ngargee foundational years of 2006, 2007 and 2008 seeded the film and documentary meaning-making spaces. Different attempts at documenting the festival main day included a local Russian documentary crew engaged by the City of Port Phillip to document all of the council’s cultural
activities during the 2006 Commonwealth Games. In 2007 an independent filmmaker was engaged to document the festival main day and to provide raw festival footage. The first national broadcast of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee was in 2008, produced by Sistagirl Productions for NITV as a 54-minute documentary style coverage of the main festival stage. During the 2008 festival lead in period of NITV negotiations I wanted the first right of offer and refusal to go to a Melbourne based Indigenous film and media production crew. The experience indicated the limited resource and high demand of Victorian based Indigenous film and media production companies.

The Indigenous Media Scholarship originally began in early 2008 as a festival artistry conversation for a large-scale screening project with OPEN CHANNEL CEO Martin Renaud. Indigenous filmmakers, artists and musicians would be commissioned to create a site specific multimedia work incorporating performance, an audio landscape and the projection of footage onto the side of The Palais Theatre wall. The initial idea and motivation shifted due to the size of the projects financial and production logistics. We refocused our time to finding ways for providing spaces to create and support emerging Indigenous filmmaker opportunities. What resulted was the setting up of an Indigenous Media Scholarship partnership between the City of Port Phillip, OPEN CHANNEL (OC), St Kilda Youth Services (SKYS), Adult Community Further Education (ACFE), NITV and a steering committee. The program working title was labeled the Indigenous Media Scholarship and based on providing Indigenous filmmakers with proficient technical abilities in order for them to practice and learn on their on terms through the documenting of a significant point in festival time.

Practicing as a festival artist on behalf of the City of Port Phillip I brought together the corresponding partners through a series of conversations, meetings and emails. OPEN CHANNEL as a collaborating partner provided on the job style training, sourced peak industry professionals as trainers and supplied student accreditation. St Kilda Youth Services, as auspicing partner, successfully auspiced state-government funds, provided in-kind human resource and the provision of infrastructure support in the form of the training venue in Port Melbourne fitted with new Mac professional editing software suites. ACFE were the primary state government funding body providing the bulk amount of funding for adult education. NITV funded in part the
final documentary finishing funds for broadcast with the students receiving a national screen credit to build their portfolios and screen reputations. Finally, a steering committee was set up with Aunty Carolyn Briggs, local Indigenous community members, Indigenous artists and members of the partnership.

The Indigenous Media Scholarship training was based on OPEN CHANNEL’s nationally accredited twelve-week full time certificate three in documentary filmmaking. OPEN CHANNEL tailored the Abstudy approved training framework by structuring the program into three main parts designed around the availability of the three industry lecturers leading each part of the program. The first part of the program in learning the foundational aspects of being a filmmaker was led by award winning Indigenous cinematographer Allan Collins ACS (Australian Cinematography School). The second part of the program to take place was the actual filming of the festival led by Indigenous director and filmmaker, Rimou Tamou. The third part of the program was post-production and editing led by Peter Moreland.

In the early stages of the program a casual filming and BBQ afternoon was organised as a bit of fun learning and socializing. During the BBQ the students as a team practiced their filming and interviewing techniques with Indigenous community elders and members of the steering committee. The festival documentary content and structure was chosen, researched, written and directed by the students who titled the documentary Living In Two Worlds. A 23-minute documentary, Living In Two Worlds was based on two main interweaving stories that stretched beyond the sites of the festival precinct featuring members of the Collingwood Parkies and Gunditjamara/Kookatha musician Dave Arden.

The Living In Two Worlds documentary gaze viewed the primary spaces of music and marshalling as part of the life of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee, touching on aspects of past and present issues that surround them. Titled by the students after a musical track by Dave Arden, Living In Two Worlds opens with the Collingwood Parkies arriving at the Yalukit Willam Ngargee main day festival site in St Kilda. Living in Two Worlds shifts between the festival site, a park at the base of the Collingwood flats, Dave Arden’s home and his family photographs. The documentary essence is about the
human stories of Aboriginal people who live or have lived and socialise in parks around Melbourne.

The *Living In Two Worlds* commentary presents a strong emphasis on family and extended kin through cultural security found in parks. This is particular for Indigenous people who, as mentioned by Eugene in the documentary, may have been recently released from institutions or homes, are rendered homeless, often without family and affected by traumas of stolen generations. It is also suggested by Eugene and Aunty Denise that whilst parks maybe a connecting space, they have also been a starting off space. Eugene’s commentary in the documentary is suggestive that the Parkies do have respect for themselves and can rise to responsibility that is best understood through Aboriginal terms.

Kathleen touches on the history of Parkies and that before there were parks, there were lanes as detailed by the iconic Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter song *Down City Streets* released in 1991 and based on the early years of their lives. Music plays a big part in the search for completeness as Dave Arden describes how he was on the wrong path but was lucky because music came along. According to Dave Arden music and song-writing was appealing making him feel good and providing a sense of being human.

*Living In Two Worlds* premiered in the St Kilda Film Festival 2009 program. Attended by over one hundred and fifty people the *Living In Two Worlds* premiere screening was opened with a Welcome to Country by Aunty Carolyn, accompanied by official speeches from the Mayor of the City of Port Phillip Councillor Frank O’Connor, the St Kilda Film Festival director Paul Harris and OPEN CHANNEL CEO Martin Renaud. Following the screening Dave Arden performed in the Lobby Bar and light refreshments were provided. The St Kilda Film Festival catalyst space for premiering localized Indigenous film projects was partly influenced in 2008 through my bringing together NITV and OPEN CHANNEL to sponsor the Best Achievement in Indigenous Film Making Award.

Through setting up the award in 2008 and the screening of *Living in Two Worlds* the St Kilda Film Festival has since premiered *Lu’Arn* in 2010 and the *St Kilda Saints*
based on local Indigenous identities, some of whom meet in parks, in 2011. Shortly after the *Living In Two Worlds* screening the Indigenous Media Scholarship pilot program received a SpArta (Sports, Arts, Recreation and Training Organisation Awards) Innovation in Indigenous training award sponsored and presented by VAEAI (Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.). The SpArta award honours outstanding achievements and innovation in vocational education and training systems in sport, recreation, arts and culture sectors.

One of the main challenges faced outside of the program’s administrative obligation was a series of emails by someone of Indigenous descent claiming I was exploiting Indigenous students for the benefit of the festival and to save money on paying for a documentary film crew. This kind of reaction to the Indigenous Media Scholarship was a legitimate concern to the Council, involved partners and myself. There were by no means any attempts at trying to or wanting to exploit the participating students. A reply email to the person outlined that the program was being set up not to exploit students but to pilot a program from an identified lack of Indigenous filmmakers and producers in Victoria. Secondly the graduating filmmakers would be trained by an awarded Indigenous cinematographer and Indigenous writer/director.

Unfortunately the person in question was still unhappy with the program going ahead and I had to refer the person onto my Council superiors due to a possible case of harassment. A significant point in the email correspondences was the challenging of my identity and the claim that I was filling an identified position for an Indigenous person. The roles identification for an Indigenous person had been removed before the City of Port Phillip approached me in late 2005 and the questioning of my Aboriginality had set in place a personal journey to clarify my claims through AIATSIS and family connections which are still unsubstantiated.

Where the Indigenous Media Scholarship lost traction was not obtaining a second round of state government funding support with an expectation the program would be self-sufficient after twelve months of operation. The first scholarship was seed funded by a state government body for Adult Education with supplementary funds sourced through NITV. A second year proposal to the state government body indicated a progression on the first year’s structure. The proposal was seeking to employ a casual
Indigenous program officer, conduct another twelve week certificate three
documentary and media scholarship program for five emerging filmmakers and to
provide three associate diplomas for established Indigenous producers, writers and
directors. Most grants in Australia in this respect and as noted by Hughes et al. (2007)
‘have been for very short periods of time, rarely beyond three years, and often for
only one year’ (p. 214). Due to not receiving the necessary program funding the
Indigenous Media Scholarship was unable to continue. The partners and I had not
been time resourceful enough to maintain an extensive follow up funding and
sponsorship campaign for the program. Whilst the in-depth reporting required for
acquiring funds was overly lengthy compared to the actual financial amount received.
The space for film within Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival remained in the
proceeding festivals but in different forms.

6.5 Key Impact Marshaling and Entrepreneurial Vision

In particular to the marshalling section I am not attempting to make a commentary
through the research project on all Indigenous people who choose to meet in the park
or who consider themselves to be Parkies. The scope of adequately representing all
Parkies’ voices was beyond the boundaries of the research project. As such the term
Parkies is provided to contextualize a relational point in time and space between me
the festival artist and members of the park who had been involved with the festival or
participated in the research project to some degree. What was apparent was that the
festival marshalling, as a key impact, overlaps in years from 2006 to 2012. Its
progression was due to many people creating and maintaining understandings from
festival space relationships.

The Living In Two Worlds marshalling topic chosen by the students highlighted an
early stage in the developing of a festival key impact for community empowerment
and small business entrepreneurship. During the founding festivals of 2006 and 2007,
I was seeking an Indigenous security company to manage the main festival day. As
there was no Indigenous security company currently operating in Melbourne at that
time I contracted the services of a non-Indigenous security firm for the first two years.
In the lead up to the 2008 festival production I worked with local Indigenous
community elder Uncle Ray who had security experience. On a recommendation I had approached a different non-Indigenous security firm that year in an attempt to set up an Indigenous marshalling and security presence. The contractual and working agreement between the parties had been to provide a predominately localized Indigenous security and marshalling team with Uncle Ray’s assistance.

The requests to the security company were not completed to my expectations creating tensions and a rift between me and the local marshalling members involved. The rift was based on misunderstandings and the assumption that the festival had not paid marshalling staff, which was the contracted security company’s obligation with claims beginning to circulate about some of the Parkies being taken advantage of. This was in no way true from my festival artistry point of operation and I continued to attempt to clarify and rectify where the situation had broken down. Uncle Ray maintained a strong relationship with me, becoming a crucial intermediary between the parties due to the complexities of the situation and the agreement that had not been satisfactorily fulfilled.

I wanted to maintain the prospect of an Indigenous marshalling and hosting presence during the 2009 festival main day. A local Indigenous member of the area suggested I speak with Aunty Denise Lovett due to the Collingwood Parkies marshalling experiences including the annual NAIDOC march, NAIDOC in the Park event and the Long Walk. A festival consultation meeting was scheduled to discuss the marshalling details but was not well attended and I did not have the time resource to conduct more individual liaisons. Further discussions and negotiations were held with Aunty Denise in relation to appropriately setting up the marshalling services for the festival main day. As quoted in *Living in Two Worlds* Aunty Denise states that

> We’re used to doing marshalling all the time, when we’re called, when we’re needed. So it’s not unusual to see a big crowd for us. Most of the musicians we already know from years back, like Archie and Ruby and Andy Alberts and Peter Rotumah and that. They were all original Parkies and that’s something that showed people that you don’t have to drink in a park or take drugs, you can do something with your life and that’s how these people started off. Shows people that the Parkies are not just alcoholic or drug affected, when
they know they’ve got a job to do they will do it, it shows a lot of people that they have got responsibilities and they have got respect and especially for themselves and it gives them self-esteem, and it also shows the other Parkies that they can do this as well or anybody can do it.

There had been a minor confrontation with the local Parkies and myself regarding my decision to work with Aunty Denise and the Collingwood Parkies. The confrontation once sorted had ultimately formed a festival bond for the main day marshaling. Logistical operations for the festival marshaling were set up over a period of five months between Aunty Denise, festival production manager Georgie Roxby Smith and me. According to the DLG (2007) resource kit there are significant funding opportunities available for the development of Aboriginal cultural and economic initiatives and often what is needed ‘is for an organisation to take the initiative and councils are often in a prime position to do this’ (p. 15). In this regard I applied for funding from a philanthropic donor in partnership with Inner South Community Health Service for the marshalling. Aunty Denise and I negotiated a contractual agreement that clearly stated our expected duties and reciprocal obligations.

I worked from within the Council to extend the City of Port Phillip’s public liability coverage for the all of the participating marshals as a community program. Including six local Parkies the total marshaling team numbered twenty four people who had all been witnessed by Aunty Denise at the end of their shift signing the pay book and paid on the day. Each marshal during the final on the day festival briefing session received a cap, water bottle, festival T-Shirt, safety vest, meal tickets and a hand held two-way radio with a contact’s lanyard. The only incident to be recorded on the day was the escorting of an intoxicated Caucasian male off the festival precinct site prior to the festival beginning.

Due to unfortunate circumstances the festival did not work with the Collingwood Parkies in 2010. The positive 2009 festival experience and transferal of skills served as an inspiring catalyst for local leadership by Uncle Ray in organising the 2010 festival hosting and marshaling operations. To this extent the Yalukit Willam Ngargee was significantly utilizing the major contributions of Aboriginal community members which ‘acknowledges and celebrates Aboriginal culture and initiatives’ (DLG, 2007,
p. 15) and contributes ‘to the overall development of a community’s social and economic fabric’ (DLG, 2007, p. 15). Uncle Ray and I began meeting six months prior to the 2010 festival main day to arrange details. At that time an interdepartmental Council partnership began between myself as the festival artist and the St Kilda Inclusion Project (SIP) that had recently coordinated a Concierge Program at the Gatwick boarding house.

The Concierge Program was delivered and accredited by the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) as a three day conflict management course tailored to the needs of its clients. Through a series of consultations and discussions I held with appropriate and respected community members, the Concierge Program was developed as a compulsory one-day conflict management program for all festival hosts and marshals. Dealing with conflict management on the marshal’s terms and understandings, the Brotherhood of St Laurence trainer delivered the course in the presence of Boon Wurrung traditional owner Aunty Carolyn and community elders. The twelve local marshalling members received a statement of attainment and payment on the day of completed services. The successful program was implemented again for the 2011 festival that was delivered and accredited by an Indigenous trainer from the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

The 2011 Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival maintained the hosting and marshalling relationship with Uncle Ray after I had left the Indigenous Arts Officer role after the 2010 festival. Uncle Ray over that period developed the marshaling program and festival opportunity into an emerging entrepreneurial small business venture, NASSACK – Indigenous and Islander Security Solutions. One of the strategies for local councils to assist in Indigenous empowerment and economic development is ‘the support of Aboriginal business ventures through the provision of leadership and specialist advice’ (DLG, 2007, p. 21).

The space created by the festival provided an entrepreneurial opportunity for Uncle Ray to set up NASSACK security through the Australian Government’s New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (or NEIS program). Assistance was provided by the festival artist Daniel King in his role as Indigenous Arts Officer, Todd Condie the Indigenous Policy Officer, a federally-funded Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)
representative and myself. As part of the research project and my own personal obligation, Uncle Ray and I maintained regular meetings to discuss business development and opportunities for sustainable growth.

The current localized operations and networks for NASSACK are small-scale and attainable but in need of regular supportive assistance from the area. Recent 2011/2012 contract examples are the St Kilda Twilight Markets – a ten-week summer market in O’Donnell Gardens – hiring three Parkie hosts through NASSACK security, the Global Poetics Tour producing a slam-poetry street festival in South Melbourne, and contracts with St Kilda Youth Services for various youth related festivals and events. I set up a relationship between Uncle Ray and a local non-Indigenous web designer to provide pro-bono company design, website proofs and business marketing assistance. In a 2008 research-study on Indigenous entrepreneurs in Australia, Hawaii and New Zealand, Dennis Foley states that

only 16 per cent of participants in the Australian study are second-generation entrepreneurs; the remaining has no history of family members in business. The majority of Indigenous entrepreneurs were the first in their respective families to display entrepreneurial tendencies that resulted in business undertakings. On entering business many felt culturally, spiritually and physically isolated as they were participating within an activity in which they had few to no role-models. This is an indication of limited social capital in business acumen. Networking was a key component to their survival however it was networking involving non-Indigenous business mentors who helped them establish key industry contacts that arguably would not have been possible previously due to negative nineteenth century stereotypes and discrimination. (p. 209)

NASSACK security as a developing entrepreneurial vision has been assisted through at least four years observation and experience between Uncle Ray, myself as festival artist and Indigenous and non-Indigenous mentors. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee space provided Uncle Ray and myself with an opportunity to grow together through the festival and to be of benefit to the people around us. What is specific is that the NASSACK entrepreneurial vision was developed on Indigenous terms and through
Indigenous defined spaces that resulted from the forming Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival life. It could also be recognized as a micro-history attempting to break down the contact zones from within social institutions through supporting entrepreneurial vision and the celebration of Indigenous music and culture.

6.6 Music Plays

the story contemporary Indigenous musicians have to tell is rich, varied, and complex, often painful, yet ultimately optimistic. Elements from the past, both Indigenous and European, as well as present struggles, at both local and national levels, are helping to inspire and shape, oral – and aural – history which attests to continuing viability of Indigenous expressive culture in Australia. (Oein, 2000, p. 340)

Oien’s (2000) statement is an affirmation that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music is a crucial component in the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program. Whilst not concentrated on as a key impact within the research project it is important to note some of the possible impacts music plays as part of the festival program. Festivals for Indigenous musicians, such as Dave Arden open spaces for professional livelihood, to connect with their own artistic gaze and to contribute to community resilience and voice. As mentioned in chapter four by Howland and Williams (2010) that specialist Indigenous festivals, which the Yalukit Willam Ngargee could be considered as one, provides a performative entry point to craft skills and maintain economic and career support through being part of a touring circuit that builds on reputation and audience bases. To this extent the Australian Cultural Ministers Council – ACMC (2008) publication Indigenous Contemporary Music Action Plan Towards a Stronger Indigenous Contemporary Music Sector, recommends the development of

a range of overlapping national touring circuits that link general performance and music venues, state and territory touring circuits and touring and music exchanges in local communities. (p. 3)
Music in this regard is an essential sum part of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival whole in bringing friends and family together as well as inviting in guests to be a part of celebrating the area and artists. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee also extends itself out to become a localized sum part in the larger whole of a national touring circuit and exchange circulation for Indigenous musician’s careers and creative works.

Through empirical observation and document analysis, the Yalukit Willam Ngargee has provided paid spaces for over 450 Indigenous and Non-Indigenous musicians during the research project’s four-year involvement. Musicians would include those performing on the main festival day, at satellite events and at specific music events. It was not uncommon during the festivals for musicians to play between bands and support each other in various roles. It is also not uncommon for Indigenous festivals to loosely work together. They have provided marketing and sponsorship support, in one case the Yalukit Willam Ngargee funded a smaller festivals hire of a backline (basic sound amplification and drum kit) and is a touring circuit moment as a cluster of reasonably paying gigs for musicians.

Local government can have very different expectations regarding methods of exchange than Indigenous musicians maybe used to and it was my responsibility as a festival artist to navigate this process to the best of my resourceful abilities. What was evident through being a part of the exchanges are the levels of bureaucracy that can be unique to local government but excessive compared to similar scale specialist Indigenous festivals. In this regard I set up in 2009 a Creative Programming Partnership with an emerging Indigenous events company called Djaban: Slippery Eel Productions. The partnership, which extended into 2012 but may have altered since my involvement, enabled Djaban to manage musician’s details and payments, provide reliable on the day event management services, and assisted in building Djaban’s developing reputation through being part of a festival and event touring circuit.

6.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival of 2009 that featured the main festival day, two visual arts exhibitions, an Indigenous success stories forum, a
theatre performance, a heritage walk, and a cultural awareness training session for council staff. The chapter focused on festival environmental sustainability, an Indigenous Media Scholarship that was piloted and which involved the production of a documentary, a marshalling program that became a small entrepreneurial security business, and aspects of Indigenous contemporary music.
Chapter Seven: Lu’Arn 2010 Festival

part of giving you my name is also welcoming you to my country.


7.1 Festival 2010 Program Introduction

The chapter begins by outlining details leading into, during and ongoing, beyond the 2010 Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program from 7 January to 9 February. It discusses the festival’s environmental sustainability practices before a brief contextual background relating to certain key moments in the formation of Indigenous contemporary dance and the positioning of dance aspects during the founding years of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee. The 2010 key impact focused on the spaces created through extended festival acts of reciprocity during the development of localized contemporary dance piece *Lu’Arn*. What was apparent were the ongoing beyond spaces in which the natural life of *Lu’Arn* took shape and the influence it held regarding cultural reclamation practices for the 2011 *Boon Wurrung Ngargee Sunset Ceremony*. The chapter concludes with my commenting on succession planning for the continuity of future Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals and recommendations that arose when writing myself out of the Yalukit Willam Ngargee picture.

The 2010 Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program opened with the *CONFINED 2* exhibition launch at the St Kilda Town Hall. The second year for the *CONFINED* exhibition consisted of a Creative Programming Partnership handover to The Torch Project to facilitate the exhibition program curated by Wongai artist Brian McKinnon. The Nexus Contemporary Dance performance curated by Gerard Veltre was a shared contemporary dance program with the MidSumma Gay and Lesbian Festival performed at Gasworks Arts Park. Fundraising for Small Community Groups was intended to be a full day practical seminar covering fundraising basics for small to
medium sized not-for-profit community organisations, the workshop was cancelled due to low bookings.

Each year I presented festival entry point opportunities for council staff to build on their understandings relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. A fully booked internal cultural awareness-training program was lead by an Indigenous cultural facilitator from the Koorie Heritage Trust. What became apparent is that these types of workshops are an initial introduction and should lead to ongoing informed localized programs for councillors, department management and staff. *Etchings Indigenous: Black and Sexy in Melbourne* publication launched by Ilura Press at Readings Bookstore was a full colour journal based on the successful *Etchings* journal model. The publication consisted of essays, stories, poetry, interviews, photography and visual art and was on sale. Recipients of the City of Port Phillip’s Cultural Development Fund, *Etchings Indigenous* was structured around an Indigenous publication team including an Indigenous editor, Indigenous internship and promoted by an Indigenous marketing and promotions role.

The main festival day structure remained similar to the previous year except for program content changes and the addition of a fully curated dance program. As part of the main festival day I commissioned, Uncle Les a lead Indigenous community artist, to facilitate a three metre by one metre community painted banner that was hung from a red double decker bus during the main festival day. Fifteen Parkies from St Kilda marshalled and hosted the main day festival site after taking part in a one-day conflict management training program coordinated by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Jumbi’s Genbook: Brothers In Laws Canoe was the second exhibition featuring art works of Koorie artists from East Gippsland Aboriginal Arts Corporation at the Alliance Francaise. A four metre long canoe constructed from found objects around the East Gippsland region to represent family memories was centred in the middle of the Alliance Francaise’s main exhibition room. A series of lino prints on the walls around the canoe represented the meaning making process the Koorie artists had taken part in when creating the piece.
7.2 Festival 2010 Environmental Sustainability

I sourced the budget for the 2010 festival’s environmentally sustainability measures through funding applications to casually employ an Environmental Project Officer for a period of time prior to, during and post the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program. Jill Robinson, the volunteer Environmental Project Officer, from the 2009 festival had been engaged to advise and report on the 2010 Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals sustainability mechanisms and carbon emissions. Robinson’s (2010) unpublished report for the festival provided a key findings structure similar to the 2009 report and whilst some areas of improvement sit in stark contrast between festival years there are considerations to keep in mind. Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival general improvements had been reported by Robinson (2010) to include

- Better preparation for collection of data, including better and higher quality contact with festival venues, contractors and participants;
- Increased environmental budget to instigate initiatives;
- Ability to utilize experience and data gained during 2008 and 2009 festivals;
- Sustainable use of energy sources on main festival day; two biodiesel generators onsite (who source fuel from a local, sustainable source), able to meet the majority of power needs on main festival day. (p. 10)

But these general improvements developed from three years of data collection should be considered, as suggested by Robinson (2010), to be ‘reviewed and refined, indicators to be assessed as to their relativity and new targets be developed and implemented into the 2011 EMP’ (p. 10). Robinson (2010) suggests that an important target for the Yalukit Willam Ngargee was to develop a ‘transferable and replicable sustainability-assessment template for use by other small-medium urban festivals’ (p. 10). In this regard, Robinson provided my festival artistry gaze with an insight into the 2011 festival production, this included how it could be further resourced and improved for transferability that would be of benefit to the local community and community of similar sized festivals.
7.3 The Ngargee, Meeting Places and Dance a Brief History

Setting the scene for the dance, ceremony and ritual space within the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival program encompasses a history of cultural dispossession and reclaiming the essences of traditional principles in contemporary forms. The last great Ngargee to be documented for the Yalukit Wilam and Boon Wurrung people is estimated by Jacob Boehme (2012), on the IDJA contemporary Indigenous dance company website, to have been performed in 1843 with a ‘recorded 774 dancers, dancing up country, under the full moon’ that sounded like thunder as a cultural exchange to a colonial audience. Shortly after this ceremonial presentation, the Boon Wurrung people and their Kulin kin had been further displaced and removed to the Melbourne outskirts as the 1850s colony rapidly populated due to the squatting settlers, Gold Rush and extending frontier.

After extensive conversations between Aunty Carolyn and myself, the Ngargee of 1843 became understood not as a recreational demonstration of skills but an introduction for the new outsiders outlining the lores of Bunjil and their expected obligations to country as a visitor. In this regard I came to understand that the last of the great Ngargees could be considered as a transmission of cultural knowledge systems based in an ethics of proper living and a cultural economy. The Ngargees’ reciprocity was indicated to be a performative mediation for the teaching of lores to country through dance and the assumption that the newcomers, who were received as guests would respect them.

What is apparent from the works of early writers to current literature is that a suppression of mobility and a rapid decline of the Kulin population took place from Victoria’s 1835 colonization. According to Stanfield (2011) the British House of Commons in 1837, recommended through a published report regarding the treatment of Indigenous people within the British Empire, establishing of the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate. It was the instructions of the Colonial Office based in London that established the Port Phillip Aboriginal Protectorate in 1838 in an
'attempt to place colonisation in the newly settled Port Phillip district — now the state of Victoria — on a humanitarian footing' (Stanfield, 2011, p. 162). The placement of Aboriginal Protectorates and assistant or sub-protectorates such as William Thomas, as discussed by Stanfield (2011) proved to be ‘a short-lived policy, with the dissolution of the Port Phillip Protectorate in 1849’ (p. 162). What is noted from the period by Stanfield (2011) is that these policies of restricting Indigenous mobility were not isolated to the Port Phillip area or Australia but also extended to New Zealand and South Africa.

The Boon Wurrung and Woi Wurrung resistance to the colonial Aboriginal Protectorate restrictions is indicated by Stanfield (2011) in the tenacity in which they continued ‘to practice their seasonal and cultural mobility despite Thomas’s efforts to regulate them’ (pp. 169-170). Kulin resistance had been met with ‘increasingly violent means’ (p. 170) by Aboriginal Protectorates, which ultimately resulted in the attempt to keep Aboriginal people out of Melbourne that ‘would become a preoccupation of the Protectors and colonial officials in Port Phillip’ (p. 170). According to Stanfield (2011) what became increasingly apparent during this period was the regulating of Aboriginal movement by white farming due to local spaces around Port Phillip being meeting up places

where Aboriginal people struggled to maintain their own cultures and lifestyles in encounters with colonists — be they humanitarian, colonial authorities, or individual settlers — on the ground. The maintenance of mobility can then be seen as an important act of cultural resistance by the Boonwurrung and Woiwurrung people. While increasingly curtailed and criminalised, they persisted in the choice of mobility as manifestation of their connection to country. (p. 181)

The Aboriginal Protectorate had been considered a failure and by 1860 a select board of white male pastoralists was set up to control the interests of Aboriginal Victorian people and manage what was considered to be the transition of a dying race. The Victorian Aboriginal Protection Act of 1869, accessible on the Museum of Australian Democracy (2012) website, was the first comprehensive scheme enacted in pre-federation Australia to ‘regulate the lives of Aboriginal people’ (para. 1). Enforced by
The Board for the Protection of Aboriginal people the act, according to the Museum of Australian Democracy (2012) website, had ‘developed into an extraordinary level of control of peoples lives including regulation of residence, employment, marriage, social life and other aspects of daily life’ (para.1).

The act was intended to send Aboriginal people to missions and reserves around the state, separating family and extended kin and clans from language groups. The Museum of Australian Democracy (2012) notes that by 1886 the *Aborigines Protectorate Act*, that became known as the half-caste act, was designed as a policy to exclude the so-called 'half-castes' and ‘assumed that numbers of Aboriginal people on the reserves would decline, so that reserves could be reduced and eventually closed down’ (para. 4). The Board continued controlling the lives of Aboriginal people considered wards of the Victorian state until 1956 when ‘it was replaced by the Aborigines Welfare Board, which had two Aboriginal positions among the predominately non-Indigenous membership’ (ABC, 2012, Para. 10). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people around Australia during these periods continued to be affected by government policies of separation whilst being recognised under the Australian Constitutions flora and fauna act until the 1967 national referendum that eventually instated their rights to full citizenship.

In relation to the influence on contemporary Indigenous dance the period of the late 1960s saw the emergence of the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association or NAISDA, Black Theatre and the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT). It was a period when, according to Carole Johnson (2000) ‘Indigenous Australians were beginning to identify as part of the international world of black peoples and Australian government attitudes and policies relating to Indigenous people were changing’ (p. 363).

Johnson (2000), who was part of the 1972 Eleo Pamare Dance Company Tour from New York that was invited to perform at the Adelaide Festival and Sydney Conservatorium of Music, suggests that this moment ‘opened the way for modern theatrical dance to become a form of expression for Urban Aboriginal and Islander peoples of Australia’ (p. 363). NAISDA dance training encourages a strength in diversity of distinct dance forms by ‘presenting and training in three styles –
traditional Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and contemporary interpretive dance’ (p. 364) according to Johnson (2000).

In 1989 Carole Johnson was part of establishing Bangarra Dance Theatre, Australia’s peak contemporary Indigenous Dance Company with Stephen Page becoming the Artistic Director in 1991. Stephen Page (2003) in a Phillip Parson Memorial lecture commented that ‘my cultural world, and that of most artistic leaders, revolves around the bringing together of a clan’ (para. 4). Dance for Page (2003) ‘is such an ancient form because of the labor of physicality. It has a strong connection with people and land and how people live by land’ (para. 29).

Page (2003) refers to the use of traditional and western cinematic media soundscapes and how he feels he is part of setting up ‘the 21st-century library, being part of the process of making work now’ (para. 27). I came to recognize that it was in part an opportunity that had emerged from an Adelaide Festival catalyst space that influenced aspects of new cultural phenomena such as NASIDA that encouraged strength in distinct diversity. The bringing together of a clan in the now, as mentioned by Page, establishes aspects of an evolving contemporary Indigenous dance practice that continues to have deeply formed roots relating to land and people.

These earlier contemporary dance initiatives had been a sum part in the forming of an Indigenous arts and cultural renaissance. This was indicated by the Australia Council’s Lydia Miller (2005) of Kuku/Yalanji decent in her overview of the Creating Pathways National Indigenous Dance Forum, stating that it

began in the 1980s with the emergence of a critical mass of young, vibrant Indigenous artists who took to the stages and the galleries with the electric energy that is synonymous with Indigenous artists. (p. 2)

The 1990s was a decade in which the Indigenous renaissance movements took stronger shape and presence across Australian practices and attitudes. A prime example is the emergence of The Dreaming Festival as part of the Sydney Olympics arts program in 1997. The Dreaming Festival became a site for asserting contemporary Indigenous dance, performance and ritual through the vision and
convictions of festival artists such as Rhoda Roberts, who quotes in relation to the motivations and articulations of an Indigenous voice that

as a Bundjalung woman, I have a moral obligation, I have no choice. I have the opportunity, the oratory skills, the platforms – whether it be theatre, television, radio, festivals – to show that my people are human beings. So, for me it is that obligation to my community to challenge the stereotypes, to challenge those situations with faith, and to also provide fun and positive energy and all the rest of it. (Glow & Johanson, 2009, p. 43)

Slater (2010) suggests that an effective festival catalyst mechanism set up through The Dreaming Festival was the Commission Series and Kinship Program supporting ‘new works and performers’ (p.59). To establish and polish works, ‘Rhoda Roberts works closely with artists and communities’ (p. 59), an example being the twenty minute performance of ‘the contemporary Torres Strait Island dance piece Koiki, directed by Gail Mabo’ (p. 59), based on the story of Eddie Mabo. Slater (2010) considers that most contemporary Indigenous dances are adapted from ceremonies due to there being few established traditional dance troupes.

Kleinert (2010) suggests that the adaptations in particular for South Eastern Australian Aboriginal cultural revivals recreate and transform through complex processes which are far from replications but proceed ‘by way of memory and history and narratives of identity and experience that carry political, moral and cultural force’ (p. 8). To this extent the supporting of Indigenous dance troupes on their terms through a festival commissioning projects and working closely with artists and communities can provide a transformative space of force for the cultural narratives of memory and history.

AUSDANCE REGIONAL REPORT AND FESTIVALS

Core Strength is a report of dance communities in regional Victoria conducted by Ausdance Victoria, authored by Sandi Nicolaides in 2010. Nicolaides (2010) reviewed how festivals and outdoor programming produced by local councils can provide encouraging spaces for dance to take place. According to Nicolaides (2010) councils can connect with communities through providing public performance,
festival or gathering opportunities that can ‘promote their services, engage with new residents and get important messages across, while also attracting visitors to their area’ (pp.12-13). Nicolaides (2010) highlights how local councils can encourage local dance and that there is ‘an opportunity for dancers and other artists to devise works based on the local history for inclusion in the festival’ (p. 30).

Nicolaides (2010) states that public activity and celebration are important to any community and that ‘festivals and cultural events provide an effective means through which communities can confirm their histories and celebrate their traditions’ (p. 30). To this extent Nicolaides (2010) suggests that what could help strengthen local identity is the offering of incentives for local dancers in the development of ‘new site-based and culturally based works’ (p. 46). Opening the public realm to provide wider audience access and opportunities, Nicolaides (2010) details that many local councils employ a range of officers that may have local dance community contacts. In this regard, I held as a festival artist a local government role as the Indigenous Arts Officer seeking to create spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance opportunities within a specialized Indigenous festival program.

7.4 Lu’Arn – The Story, Performance and Screening

FESTIVAL FOUNDING YEARS
The first Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival community consultations that had occurred in 2006 encouraged the creation of a ceremonial space and the inclusion of Indigenous dancers to perform. The 2006 festival began with a silent procession from Cleve Gardens, a former significant contemporary meeting site for Indigenous people to O’Donnell Gardens the current significant meeting place. The Silent Procession was collaboration between community cultural development artist Mandy Field and myself. From within the council I sought a road closure and maintained the safety of the festival guests.

We had created a temporal space for Aunty Carolyn’s Womin Jeka or Welcome for festival attendees to country and spoke about remembering the continuity of people and ancestors who had been a part of the space. The group then walked silently along
the Esplanade, crossed over the mouth of Luna Park and into O’Donnell Gardens. Upon entry into the festival precinct festival guests were greeted to the site with a 40 foot tissue paper Aboriginal Flag draped over the side of the main stage I had commissioned Australian Football League (AFL) St Kilda Football Club supporters to make.

Official festival proceedings took place in the centre of the O’Donnell Gardens including a smoking ceremony to cleanse and mark the festival’s time and space conducted by Aunty Carolyn. This was followed by Commonwealth Games and Council related speeches, concluding with a traditional dance performance before the main stage music acts began. During the course of the day a contemporary dancer of Yjindi decent performed three contemporary dance pieces that induced encouraging discussion regarding future contemporary dance opportunities.

After the 2006 festival production wrapped up, talk of a 2007 festival began to culminate. Discussions regarding contemporary dance had begun circulating and influenced community conversations relating to the support of a local Indigenous dancer’s intentions to start a dance group. Unfortunately, the first attempt at supporting a local dance group had not worked but the experience had maintained the significant role of creating festival dance spaces. For the 2008 festival I programmed into the festival main day after community consultations, the Freestyle Ngargee, that was a Hip Hop dance program tailored from a pre-exiting Council youth dance program.

The Freestyle Ngargee was a collaboration between professional Indigenous dancer Nikki Ashby and a non-Indigenous dancer/performer Neda Rahmani. The 2008 festival main day also included roving performances by the Snuff Puppets operated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous puppetry performers that presented short Indigenous stories from their full length production Nyet Nyet’s Picnic. An attempt was made to produce a free full-length production of Nyet Nyet’s Picnic on the St Kilda foreshore for the 2008 festival but the funding proposal had not been successful.
One of the main festival challenges I faced annually was accessing the required funds to program the festival main day acts and infrastructure. The total operational festival budget was not generally known until a couple of months out from the festival production. The tension that formed around the festival budget meant that pending funding amounts were balanced on the availability of key artists and performers who sometimes needed to be confirmed months in advance. Whereas some emerging festival programs could not be confirmed or programmed until closer, often weeks to the festival time due to the pending funds.

This was the case for the 2009 festival’s curated dance program in which I was waiting on the pending outcomes of major funding proposals before activating the programmer needed to set it up. The funds had been confirmed two weeks prior to the festival taking place. Dancer, choreographer, puppeteer and NAISDA graduate Jacob Boehme of Narangga and Kauuna decent was contacted in relation to setting up the dance program. Within the short time frame and limited budget, Jacob curated a full day contemporary dance program including the commissioning of a short dance piece. Proving to be a successful component of the main day festival program, I sought funds for a 2010 contemporary dance program.

Talks with Jacob resumed in July of 2009 relating to the 2010 festival program. During a meeting in early September Jacob spoke with me about Aunty Carolyn’s language and cultural reclamation work. Based on the Boon Wurrung spiritual demi-god Loo’ern/Lu’Arn Jacob’s interest was in choreographing the story into a full-length contemporary Indigenous dance production. From that conversation I sought the funds to commission Lu’Arn through the Yalukit Willam Ngargee as a seven-minute Womin Jeka/Welcome dance piece based on Jacob’s cultural entrepreneurship and as a safeguarding mechanism for Aunty Carolyn’s Boon Wurrung reclamation efforts. The 2010 festival safeguarding catalyst mechanisms I set up included sourcing seed funding, creating a public performance space, documentation, artists payment and set up future possible opportunities and linkages for Jacob’s emerging contemporary Indigenous dance company IDJA.
During the period of discussions, I had also been conducting meetings with community cultural development organisation The Torch regarding the second \textit{CONFINED} exhibition and arranged for the two parties to meet and possibly collaborate. The auspice of The Torch for IDJA as an emerging contemporary Indigenous Dance Company, could assist with public liability, office space, administrative and marketing support, artistic and cultural collaboration and extended networks. I set up a Creative Programming Partnership agreement between the festival and the Torch to recognize that the dance program would be curated and managed by Jacob’s choreography and previous Indigenous Arts Officer expertise.

Philanthropic funds had been successfully sourced from The Gandel Charitable Trust and auspiced through a festival related Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Inner South Community Health Service (ISCHS). The agreement detailed that the funds were to be used as quick release installment one payments for the materials and rehearsal needs of \textit{Lu’Arn} as a festival commissioned work. The second installment payments for the dance program and documentary came from the Commonwealth government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FHCSIA) with supplementary third installment funds being provided by the City of Melbourne’s quick release Indigenous arts funding support. Start up funds for the \textit{Lu’Arn} documentary came from FHCSIA with the final half of the documentary funds being donated personally through myself as the festival artist in support of the creative and cultural reclamation work underway.

It was through the combined efforts of Aunty Carolyn, Jacob, The Torch and myself that set up the emerging creative and cultural safeguarding catalyst mechanisms. Our cultural reclamation and festival artistry transmission practices aligned with the UNESCO 2003 statement that communities

\begin{quote}
in particular Indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity. (p. 1)
\end{quote}
The cultural reclamation work provided a Yalukit Wilam and Boon Wurrung active presence as a potential intangible cultural heritage domain. As previously mentioned in chapter four by Deacon (2004), supporting local level cultural activity ‘was the best way of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage’ (p. 3). Deacon’s (2004) suggested support mechanisms encompass legal, financial and heritage support mechanisms to safeguard the renewing and crafted ephemeral and mnemonic/memory forms of intangible cultural transmission channels such as poetry or ritual. To this extent the relational layers of meaning renewal and meaning making is stated by Aunty Carolyn (2010) in the *Lu’Arn* documentary that this

hasn’t been an easy journey because the way Aboriginal people were moved around this state and their survival in moving around, rounded up and put on a reserve and then moving to another place and then back to another place. One of the things is about memory and people had to remember country, to remember the heartbeat, remember where their waterholes were, where their connection to their life was.

**THE STORY OF LU’ARN**
The story of Lu’Arn recollected and renewed by Aunty Carolyn and Jacob is based on the journey of a young man’s spiritual awakening and coming to connect with country. As told in the *Lu’Arn* documentary Aunty Carolyn (2010) states that

this is about a story that began when lore was being developed by our ancestors. It’s about nature, it’s about a story that gives direction and lore to young men and older men. To take responsibility to caring for country.

Lu’Arn is the story, Lu’Arn was a person that was fishing on the river what we know as the Yarra, it’s known to us as the Birrarung. He and his wife Loorntoowooka were cooking eels. Lu’Arn saw a feather and it was moving, it was dancing like it was hypnotic in its movement. Lu’Arn was mesmerized by this feather which turns out to be a swan feather, a black swan feather and it moved and he danced until it went to the east. The feather danced to the east and then it moved to the south and Lu’Arn suddenly realized that he was being taken off course to learn, to understand the country that he was a part of. So he was being drawn by this feather for his journey to reconnect to his life, to his
spiritual life because in that journey he learnt many things on the way. Lu’arn became the demi-god of spiritual enlightenment. He took on the spirit of the swan. Boon Wurrung Senior Elder spokesperson Aunty Carolyn, 2010

Aspects of Lu’arn have been recorded by early ethnographers who provide an area of research reclamation relating to the spiritual and cultural stories of country. An early 1876 account by R. Brough-Smyth of Lu’Arn spelt Loo-errn in the publication states that ‘Loo-errn was very great and very powerful’ (p. 454). The ethnographic account details that ‘Loo-errn’s country – that which was peculiarly his own – was that tract of heavily timbered ranges lying between Hoddles Creek and Wilson’s Promontory’ (p. 454). To this extent there exists an ethnographic documentation regarding the importance of Lu’Arn as a spiritual figure to the Boon Wurrung and their extended kin and that part of the value of meaning renewal is relational to the ancestral country in which Lu’Arn resides.

THE PERFORMANCE OF LU’ARN
The seven-minute performance of Lu’Arn as choreographed by Jacob in consultation with Aunty Carolyn opens with Lu’Arn lighting a fire as a boy. A giant feather manipulated by Jacob, entices Lu’Arn who follows it through various dance moves introducing three painted white dancers wearing purpose built swan puppets fitted to their foot. The piece finishes with Lu’Arn performing solo as an enlightened deity who had travelled from the Yalukit Willam banks of the Birrarung to Wilson’s Promontory. According to lead dancer Hank of Boon Wurrung and Yorta Yorta decent, who performed the character of Lu’Arn ‘the swans coach Lu’Arn onto the water and this is where Lu’Arn starts to get his spiritual awakening … he becomes that leader’. Hank relates significant aspects of Lu’Arn’s story to his own journey and recovery from alcohol towards becoming an Indigenous leader. In this respect Aunty Carolyn states in the documentary regarding her efforts to reclaim the story of Lu’Arn that

I have a responsibility as an Elder to hand back knowledge. And unfortunately a lot of my family are gone now. You gotta remember we were down to 300 people in Victoria. You gotta also remember that Boon Wurrung men were wiped out. There was no one to continue voicing the stories.
To this extent the *Lu’Arn* performance is relational to Vizenor’s notion of *Survivance*, in the form of a self representational cultural expression that was an active presence over absence, nihilism and victimry. One of the performance aspects was about creating a space for cultural reclamation that in turn created an assertive space for Indigenous male role models.

Jacob held a responsibility as an assertive Indigenous male role model towards the responsibilities of Aunty Carolyn to maintain the essence of dramatizing the story of *Lu’Arn*. As mentioned by Jacob in the documentary ‘traditional dance hasn’t been practiced in Melbourne for nearly 150 years’ meaning there wasn’t a specific reference point of continuity to go from. Jacob and the dancers were aware of appropriating styles and chose to choreograph the piece as purely contemporary. To this extent the creative development of *Lu’Arn* as Jacob states

was a constant process of mashing up an idea, creating a couple of minutes of work and inviting Aunty Carolyn to come in and pretty much get approval. It was always about getting back to the heart of the story, the essence of the story.

The essence of the story is multi-layered both with decision-making protocols and aspects of continuity into the present. Aunty Carolyn acknowledges in the documentary that Jacob was aware of creating a work that was receptive to the now audience. Aunty Carolyn refers to her adaptations of early writer’s old language to give the performance of *Lu’Arn* added essence in the now and states that ‘for Jacob to listen and Jacob understanding protocols, respecting the knowledge of old and bringing it into a now is not an easy journey’.

A primary aspect of the contemporization influencing the *Lu’Arn* piece revolved around the unique construction of the swan foot puppets. As Jacob mentions in the documentary that what they did with the puppets had to adhere to cultural protocols that created a dance maintaining ‘all the meaning, all the symbology, all the ritual of ceremonial dance but was a purely contemporary modern form’. The swan foot puppets, were as Jenny states in the documentary a very simple design but something
she had never seen before and began ‘creating a whole set of design based around this
cconcept’. To this extent Lu’Arn and the swan puppets came to represent an act of
indigenizing transculturation from within the contact zone producing a new cultural
phenomena on Indigenous self-representational expressive terms for meaning
renewal.

*Lu’Arn*’s performance during the festival was presented in a black box theatre as part
of the shared Nexus dance program at Gasworks Arts Park and in O’Donnell Gardens
as an open public area during the festival main day. Differences between the sites
varied according to the infrastructure, arrangement of audience and blocking of the
piece. The black box theatre at Gasworks consisted of racked seating, ticketing and
lighting designs. *Lu’Arn* was programmed alongside a variety of contemporary
Indigenous and non-Indigenous dance pieces and performed for a primarily non-
Indigenous audience. Where as the main festival day was free and open to the public
who could sit and come and go as they pleased and consisted of larger Indigenous
community attendance. Performed during the day *Lu’Arn* was the Womin Jeka or
Welcome dance piece that opened the festival main day program. Preparing *Lu’Arn*
for different sites Jacob states that he was

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bringing in all the training that I’ve had, all the stuff in how you block, create,
design Western theatre but having to try and honor the story and honor our
own traditional ways of storytelling through song and through dance, through
ceremony and ritual.
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Commenting on the outdoor production Jacob said that he was proud of the work and
that it was made not just for our own mob but to make it accessible to a wider
audience who could not only come to understand it but to also ‘take it on as their
own’. The outdoor performance to mob according to Jacob had been the best run so
far by ‘nailing every single little bit of choreography’ and that the dancers spirits rose
to the occasion making the dancers feel really good. For Hank, the lead dancer, he
commented that he had been a Parkie and that performing in the park was a
significant part of his journey of recovery stating that
the Parkies were just so proud of me and I was honored and proud to be there to see, to play that role. The men in the park just said thank you, you’ve given me something Hank, that was just awesome.

Aunty Carolyn thought they did a magical job of bringing the Lu’Arn piece into the now during the festival. For Aunty Carolyn she believes that culture can not stagnate and that it has to be from the old to the new, to keep recreating it, strengthening it, saying that it still lives ‘just in different ways but the elements are still there. The values, the belief systems, the customs, the culture is still alive today, just in new forms’. For Aunty Carolyn her dream is to ‘reconnect young people to dance, story telling, going to the next medium recording and helping us journey to the now’. In this regard Aunty Carolyn’s gaze and Elder’s intergenerational responsibility is about encouraging young people to take leadership and become strong advocates in the celebration of their culture and memories of their ancestors. To this extent Aunty Carolyn states in relation to young people and guests on country that

it was about their connection to the stories and it is about that reconciliation.
Once they start to understand and embrace the whole history of Australia they can move forward and we can move forward and we can be one but we’re different but we can be one as Australian’s.

THE LU’ARN DOCUMENTARY
The 24 minute Lu’Arn documentary directed by Mike Hornblow 2010 featured interviews with Aunty Carolyn, Jacob and Hank. As the key Indigenous voices they expressed their experiences regarding Lu’Arn’s creation, performance and spiritual significance. Brief interviews with Gerard Veltre Nexus program curator, Jenny Ellis puppets builder, myself as festival artist/producer and festival attendees are included. The documentary was encouraged through my festival artistry practice as a collaboration between an Indigenous dancer and non-Indigenous dancer/filmmaker Mike Hornblow to be produced by OPEN CHANNEL.

A part of my festival artistry motivation was to make the documentary to maintain a film presence within the festival and as a mechanism to have the renewed meaning making beginnings of the Lu’Arn performance safeguarded through film. An aspect
that influenced my motivation was the documentary commissioning as a festival
catalyst mechanism for Jacob’s emerging contemporary Indigenous dance company
IDJA. The documentary could serve as promotional collateral, support material and as
a measurable point in time for Aunty Carolyn and Jacob’s visions. *Lu’Arn* was
premiered as part of the St Kilda Film Festival 2010 program and select scenes have
been used by Vibe Australia in one of its youth dance programs for national broadcast
on ABC3 and NITV.

Challenges of the final edit of the documentary included the busy schedules of all the
involved creatives, filmmakers and speakers in the documentary. An opportunity
missed was the inclusion in the United Nations Indigenous Short Film Festival due to
the documentary length and the ABC not accepting the documentary due to the
director as key creative not being Indigenous. Whilst there are now in hindsight
improvements that could be made to the length of the documentary that highlight the
dance content specifically and with the implementation of more robust forms of
cultural protocol relating to filmmaking formalities, the essential purpose had been
achieved. What came to be understood through the process is that collaborative film
relationships are not dissimilar to a well crafted, considered performance piece that
needs to continue to build on the previous experiences so greater understanding
between artists is achieved to maximize creative freedom and expression for all
involved.

### 7.5 Boon Wurrung Ngargee Reclamation and Celebration

*Lu’Arn* had opened a catalyst space that developed into a larger Victorian research
and revival dance pilot project for the reclamation and celebration of Boon Wurrung
cultural practices. The *Boon Wurrung Ngargee: Sunset Ceremony* became a
partnership between IDJA, The Torch and the Boon Wurrung Foundation that had
formed around an Arts Victoria Community Partnerships funding application for new
works. The Boon Wurrung Ngargee was a practice of lore and language through new
songs and dance built on the traditional transferral of knowledge and memory,
contemporary Indigenous performance and the writings of early European settlers
who witnessed the last documented Ngargee in 1843. Held at sunset in the middle of
the O’Donnell Gardens festival main day space the Boon Wurrung Ngargee was choreographed around the tradition of Boon Wurrung women maintaining the ceremonial beat with stretched possum skins over their knees with the inclusion of drums for the ceremony.

The Boon Wurrung Ngargee song, choreography and orchestration was maintained by Jacob with clapsticks who lead the ceremony in Boon Wurrung language. Everyone who participated had their face and body symbolically painted in white Boon Wurrung designs. Children, teenagers and young adults were situated at four main entry points into the ceremonial site and led single file into the festival space by elders holding fire sticks. In middle of the space Aunty Carolyn handed each person a eucalyptus leaf representing a passport to country and to obey the lores of Bunjil. The Boon Wurrung Ngargee ceremony included Indigenous community members from Footscray, Fitzroy and Frankston with up to fifty people participating. The Australia Council’s Arts Yarn Up (2011) publication reported that by the end of the ceremony there were ‘500 people dancing together on the ceremonial stage at sunset’ (p. 7). Arts Yarn Up (2011) stated that Aunty Carolyn wept tears of joy when ‘she saw the first modern Boon Wurrung Ngargee performed in front of 2,000 people’ (p. 7) and quotes her saying

it also helps to strengthen our own identity. We learn old stories about our ancestors and we bring it to a new world. This is what our culture is about—the sharing and caring we always talk about. Young people want to have a role in giving back to modern Aboriginal society… We have something to give and invite others to share our vibrant culture. Only then can we understand how everything is connected to the land, people and animals. Every living thing is a part of you. (p. 7)

The Arts Yarn Up (2011) reported how ‘the experience led to greater community trust and helped to develop the skills of the artists involved’ (p. 7). This is evident from the Boon Wurrung Ngargee beginnings in Lu’Arn as a key impact and how it had been ongoing beyond the expected life of the research project, guided by Jacob and Aunty Carolyn’s efforts and support networks. IDJA received Cultural Development Funding in 2010-2011 for Lu’Arn’s further creative development as a Womin
Jeka/Welcome dance piece. After the Yalukit Willam Ngargee Lu’Arn lead the 2010 Moomba Parade and was the opening Womin Jeka/Welcome piece for the Australian World Music Expo 2011 held in Melbourne. The inaugural Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival 2012, produced by the City of Melbourne in February, premiered the full-length seventy-minute free to the public version of Lu’Arn over two nights on the banks of the Birrarung or Yarra River.

To achieve the full-length production, IDJA partnered with Footscray Community Arts Centre to house the company, provide administrative support, marketing assistance and production rehearsal space. There are currently very limited opportunities for Indigenous contemporary dance companies in Victoria. IDJA is one of the few active Indigenous contemporary dance company’s that is not purely hip hop based to be asserting its presence on both artists terms and with the responsibility of reclaiming Koori or South East Australian Aboriginal cultural practices. Support in the form of public space and rehearsal space is primarily provided from small to medium sized community centres, cultural organizations and Indigenous Arts Officers within local government. In this regard contemporary Indigenous dancers, such as Jacob, are not only the company’s key dance creatives but generally manage the business administration, sourcing funds, cultural consultation and marketing roles drawing the artist away from their actual motivated creative and cultural practice. To this extent, Lu’Arn as a short piece is a cultural product for IDJA contributing to the companies ability to provide for itself within a market based economy whilst the companies reclamation efforts are part of a cultural economic obligation to the bringing together of a clan and meaning renewal in the now.

7.6 Writing Myself Out of the Festival Picture

Leading into the 2010 festival program I indicated to the Council I would consider leaving after the production to complete the research project. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee as a specialist Indigenous festival had in place a number of Creative Programming Partnerships, environmental sustainability practices, funding relationships with philanthropic, commercial and government bodies and developed community relationships. My concern was the continuity and succession of the
festival program and developed networks. The suggestion I offered was to hand over or transition the festival to the next festival artist/producer during the course of the 2010 festival program. The Council had not adopted my suggestion and shortly after the February wrap up of the 2010 festival I presented a resignation letter that outlined a number of recommendations. To this extent my recommendations suggested that an

- Indigenous Policy and Programming Officer be reinstated
- Revise the Council Memorandum of Understanding and consider the introduction of an annually revised protocols agreement with the community
- More points of entry into the festival for community input and consultation
- The employment of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Indigenous Arts Officer interviewed and selected by a City of Port Phillip employee, Traditional Owner and Community Elder
- More distinct Yalukit Willam signage in the local area
- Access to significant local cultural awareness training for Councillors, organisational management and local residents.

7.7 Summary

Chapter seven dealt with the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival of 2010. In addition to the main festival day, the program involved two visual arts exhibitions, a cultural awareness program for staff, and a shared contemporary dance program with another festival. A major improvement over the previous festival related to environmental sustainability areas; this included the sourcing of funds for a paid Environmental Project Officer position that had previously been a voluntary one. The key focus of the chapter was on the commissioned performance of a dance piece, Lu’Arn (a Boon Wurrung spiritual figure), which related to cultural reclamation and was documented on video. This provided testimony to the role that festivals and local government can play in encouraging contemporary Indigenous dance as a celebration of Indigenous cultural practices. One spin-off from Lu’Arn was another ceremonial-dance work, the Boon Wurrung Ngargee: Sunset Ceremony, performed in 2011. It is contended that such festivals and performance pieces have the potential to contribute towards
building community trust and artistic skills in young people as a means of developing – under the guidance of Elders – an understanding of their interconnectedness to all things. The chapter also details my belief in the importance of succession planning.
Chapter Eight: CONFINED 2011 Festival

8.1 Festival 2011 Program Introduction

Chapter eight is presented in four main areas of reference to the festival and to Indigenous prison art. The first area outlines the 2011 festival program and environmental sustainable mechanisms. The second area positions a brief history of Indigenous prison art. The third area discusses Indigenous imprisonment and curbing recidivism with a consideration towards Koori youth prevention. Prison art discussions provide an overview of related prison art literature and leads into five examples of Indigenous prison arts related programs. The fourth area sets up the founding festival years of the CONFINED exhibition as an overall key impact, drawing upon aspects of CONFINED 2, 3 and 4 resourced from interviews and document analysis provided by The Torch as key impacts ongoing beyond the research project’s original expectations. Whilst there are indications in the chapter regarding reasons relating to Indigenous imprisonment rates and recidivism it is beyond the scope of the study to provide in-depth research related to the ongoing direct and indirect impacts of the CONFINED exhibition spaces. Further directions in research are recommended as a follow on space from the research project to come to understand pre and post release arts and cultural based methods for what is discussed as lifestyle change and curbing recidivism.

In maintaining a sense of continuity and community involvement with the selection of the next City of Port Phillip Indigenous Arts Officer, a representative from the local community and Traditional Owner Aunty Carolyn took part in the interviewing and selection process of applicants. The interim between leaving the position and the position being filled covered a four-month period in which the recruitment process took shape. The original successful applicant to the position departed after a short period in the role moving onto a national level role in Sydney. Filmmaker and artist Daniel King was subsequently contacted to fill the Indigenous Arts Officer’s position. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee held in 2011 was the first festival to be produced by Daniel King as the festival artist.
The 2011 festival program included the CONFINED 3 Indigenous inmates’ visual art exhibition and the East Gippsland Aboriginal Arts Corporation visual art exhibition titled Celebrate. The main festival day maintained a relatively similar program structure to previous festivals, including the Boon WurrungNgargee Sunset Ceremony and continued the festival marshalling with 15 local hosts. In its second year the Etchings Indigenous publication titled Treaty was a compilation of essays, stories, poetry, images, interviews, reviews and visual arts. Launched at Readings Bookstore Etchings Indigenous was created by a new Indigenous publication team, funded by the City of Port Phillip’s Cultural Development Fund and Arts Victoria.

There had been no main operations relating to the festival’s sustainability mechanisms continued into the 2011 festival. This was due to the new festival artist’s coming up to speed with the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival in its sum part layers and the entirety of its existence. To this extent I maintained an open line for consultation to the festival artist Daniel King related to any discussion needed as a network of support and guidance.

8.2 Indigenous Prison Arts a Brief History

The contributions of Sylvia Kleinert’s (2001) paper “Dreaming On The Inside”, related to the history of Indigenous prison art and has been one of the primary sources of input in an emerging academic field of discussion. Kleinert (2001) surveyed key moments of historical patterning from the late nineteenth century to contemporary times. The history of Indigenous prison art begins with the British settlement of Australia as a penal colony, which is recognized by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as a colonial invasion.

According to Kleinert (2001) there are several significant moments in the history of Indigenous prison art since Australia’s 1788 colonial settlement or invasion. One of the earliest surviving examples of Aboriginal prison art Kleinert (2001) raises dates back to 1872 of rainbow serpent figures and small lizards ‘which relate to an Aboriginal world view grounded in the spiritual world’ (p. 4), engraved into the
wooden cell walls of Albany Gaol, Western Australia. Kleinert (2001) suggests that the inscribed designs on artifacts, cave surfaces, walls and bodies are forms of cultural inscriptions that indicate obvious responses to incarceration.

The Northern Territory mural and painting works of Larrakia artists in 1882 at Fannie Bay Gaol, Darwin, as outlined by Kleinert (2001) are examples of how Aboriginal people through their own self-representational expressions of symbology, character and energy co-opted ‘the place and space of the prison’ (pp. 4-5). By 1888, the first international exhibition of Aboriginal prisoner art titled *Dawn of Art* was held at the Melbourne Centennial International Exhibition, featuring five Larrakia artists from Fannie Bay Gaol.

Wurrundjeri Willam (Clan of the Woi-Wurrung language group) ngurungaeta (head man) William Barak from Victoria presents a cultural and political gaze through his works in relation to ‘the system of reserves and missions established in the mid to late nineteenth century’ (Kleinert, 2001, p. 6). The systems, according to Kleinert (2001), enforced by the Crown and Aboriginal Protectorate at that time ‘kept Aborigines within a form of custody where they were subject to specific laws and restrictions designed to facilitate their subjugation and dispossession’ (p. 6). It could be arguable that Barak’s cultural and artistic practices came to represent a transcultural phenomenon that was related to the asymmetrical power relations of that time.

The maintenance and effects of these overarching systems into the twentieth century can be witnessed by one of Australia’s most celebrated watercolor painters, Arrente artist Albert Namatjira. Due to Namatjira’s success as a water color artist he became, according to Alison French (2007) in *One Sun One Moon: Aboriginal Art in Australia*, ‘a free man with full citizen rights in 1957’ (p. 152). The documentary *First Citizen – Albert Namatjira* produced by Wilson and Tristram (1989), suggests as the title describes, that Albert Namatjira was the first Aboriginal person to be granted full Australian citizenship rights. It was 1959 according to John Ramsland and Christopher Mooney (2006) in their publication *Remembering Aboriginal Heroes*, when Namatjira ‘was sentenced to three months imprisonment for offences related to alcohol and his Australian citizenship’ (p. 42). This string of events placed Namatjira at age 57, who ‘had been painting for two decades’ (French, 2007, p. 152) between
two very contrasting worlds that may have played a significant health related part in his early passing away.

The increasing assimilationist policy period of restriction during the 1950s and 1960s was a time when Aboriginal people had begun to more heavily populate urban and metropolitan centers. The period saw rates of Aboriginal incarceration escalate as they became more visible to the Police and Aboriginal artists who lived on the run, one step ahead of police and Welfare ‘found it easier to produce art inside rather than outside prisons a factor which continues to concern criminal justice systems’ (Kleinert, 2001, p. 7). One of the most significant South East Australian works of this era is Koorie artist Ronald Bull’s 1960 mural at Pentridge Prison.

The mural depicts a hunter-gather scene and as Edmonds with Clarke (2009) recognise that Bull who despite living many years in institutions had used art as ‘a way of expressing his Aboriginality’ (p. 23). What occurred then has since become possible to turn into prison art initiatives indicating how, according to Edmonds with Clarke (2009), art in prisons can provide ‘Aboriginal prisoners with opportunities to connect with their culture in a hostile environment’ (p. 23). To this extent I refer to prisons and the Justice system for Indigenous people as contact zones that related to not only prison incarceration but to the questions of citizenship and governing systems of subjugation.

8.3 Indigenous Imprisonment Discussions

Aboriginal deaths in custody have been prevalent since Australia’s colonisation. This in part was evidenced by the high rate of unexplained Aboriginal deaths in prisons across Australia during the Royal Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Commission.

According to Joseph Reser (2000) in The Oxford Companion to Aboriginal Art and Culture, the profoundly symbolic event of The Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody was ‘a historical moment that branded itself upon the national consciousness and conscience’ (p. 572). Reser (2000) states that
from an Aboriginal perspective, the Commission was to have been about correcting a system of injustice, and achieving some semblance of accountability, acknowledgment and justice. (p. 572)

Reser (2000) made it apparent that Aboriginal artists keenly felt the confrontational and disturbing impact by these deaths due to a number of artists either personally experiencing custody, ‘or knew of friends or family members who had died or spent much of their lives in custody’ (p. 572). To this extent the Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody touches nearly all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in some way.

A benchmark in modern Australian history, the 1987/88 Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths In Custody, authored by Nagel and Summerrell (2002), ‘was established in response to a growing public concern that deaths in custody of Aboriginal people were too common and poorly explained’ (p. 7). The Commission according to Nagel and Summerrell (2002), investigated ninety-nine individual cases that ‘had one or more files created’ (p. 15) for them. Nagel and Summerrell (2002) note that ‘the Commission tried to find larger social and economic factors to explain Aboriginal deaths in custody’ (p. 22). This includes Indigenous disadvantage and led to another investigation regarding the ‘wider issues underlying the differences between Aboriginal people and other groups in Australian society’ (Nagel & Summerrell, 2002, p. 22). The RCIADIC has since influenced a field of literature and practices in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment.

The Systemic Racism as a Factor in the Overrepresentation of Aboriginal People in the Victorian Criminal Justice System report authored by Blagg, Morgan, Cunneen and Ferrante, 2005, was released as part of the Systemic Racism Project. According to Blagg et al. (2005) ‘innovations since the RCIADIC have been premised on the assumption that Aboriginal people are disadvantaged in their dealings with the criminal justice system’ (p. 8). Blagg et al. (2005) recognized that Indigenous people are amongst the most imprisoned people in the world and are essentially marginalised to the Eurocentric criminal justice system structure both in philosophy and practice. To this extent Blagg et al. (2005) state that Indigenous overrepresentation is ‘a reflection of the multiple layered patterns of disadvantage and extreme forms of
marginalisation experienced by Aboriginal people’ (p. 8). What does become apparent throughout the literature are the cycles of intergenerational offending and the Justice initiatives set in place to prevent these trends, in particular by the State Government of Victoria.

The RCIADIC findings of 1991 generated Aboriginal Justice Agreements around Australia of which Victoria is the only remaining jurisdiction that maintains one. The *Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement 2006* or *AJA2* (2006) is the review phase of the AJA1 that was the first Aboriginal Justice Agreement phase set up in 2000 in response to the Royal Commission. An Aboriginal Justice Agreement partnership was established between the Victorian State Government and the Koori community that drafted the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement for reducing the over representation of Koori peoples in the criminal justice system. There are ‘relatively poor outcomes Koories experience’ (p. 6) in the criminal justice system and systemic discrimination continues to be a major focus of the *AJA2* (2006). The statistics *AJA2* (2006) related to Koori over representation detail that

- Koori prisoners, on average, were 30% more likely to re-offend and re-enter prison within two years of release between 2000/01 and 2004/05
- Kooris were approximately 20% more likely to be incarcerated in maximum security when in prison between 2000/01 and 2004/05
- Kooris were nearly 19% more likely to breach community-based orders between 2000/01 and 2004/05. (p. 6)

The youth demographic is stated in the *AJA2* ‘to offend more frequently than older people’ (p. 13) and defines the Koori community has having a very youthful demographic profile (approximately 50% of Koories are less than 20 years old compared to 28% of the non-Indigenous population) suggesting that the upward pressure on over-representation will continue. (p. 13)
According to the *AJA2* (2006) there are young Koories who are currently demonstrating characteristics and life histories that are putting themselves at risk as they tend to possess few life skills that can protect them from criminal lifestyles. The *AJA2* (2006) states that

Continual exposure to disadvantage, community dysfunction, a lack of future prospects, marginalisation and victimization increase the large number of risk factors already prevalent in the lives of Koori youth. (p. 13)

There are suggested protective factors the *AJA2* (2006) indicates that can counterbalance the risk impacts and reduce young Koori peoples probabilities for engaging in offender behaviour. These include:

- Strong bonds with family, friends and teachers
- Adequate parental monitoring
- The belief in a positive future
- Participation in family, school and community activities
- Recognition and praise for positive behaviour
- Cultural resilience. (p. 14)

The *AJA2* (2006) stresses ‘that any attempt at reducing over representation must also address the disadvantage that underlies it’ (p. 12). The *AJA2* (2006) states that ‘much of the over representation is caused by Indigenous social and economic disadvantage’ (p. 6). Disadvantage is according to the *AJA2* (2006) ‘a direct result of Koories having been dispossessed from their land and culture and being forcibly removed from their families’ (p. 12). One aspect the *AJA2* encouraged in relation to the probability of reducing intergenerational offending and Indigenous disadvantage are the community partnerships that support the maintenance of community and cultural practices.

The *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Key Indicators* 2009 report published by the Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (SCRGSP) discusses issues regarding Indigenous peoples over representation in prisons. The SCRGSP (2009) report states that the significant issue is repeat offending ‘sometimes called recidivism’ (p. 10.42). SCRGSP (2009) report insights are based on research
showing that ‘once Indigenous offenders come into contact with the criminal justice system, they are more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to have further contact with it’ (p. 10.42). Support services according to the SCRGSP (2009) report, can help lower the rate of re-offending and ‘can enhance rehabilitative outcomes and the reintegration process by helping Indigenous offenders remain in contact and involved with the community (p. 10.43). To this extent the SCRGSP (2009) report states that

given the extent of Indigenous imprisonment, it is important that people who have contact with the criminal justice system have the opportunity to integrate back into the community and lead positive and productive lives, which may also break the intergenerational offending cycle. (p. 10.42)

Closing The Gap Clearinghouse Resource Sheet no. 11, *Strategies to Enhance Employment of Indigenous Ex-Offenders After Release From Correctional Institutions* authored by Joseph Graffam and Alison Shinkfield (2012), outlines what they know, what works and what they do not know. What is immediately apparent through Graffam and Shinkfield’s (2012) research is that ‘Indigenous Australians are over-represented in all Australian state and territory correctional systems’ (p. 1). In particular Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) note that ‘the area of employment services for Indigenous ex-offenders is broadly under-researched’ (p. 2). Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) state within the summary that ‘progress must be understood and managed in terms of small steps’ (p. 8). To this extent Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) state that

because the real issue for many ex-prisoners is not merely employment, but lifestyle change, a more comprehensive and personalised approach is important. It is also important to integrate the pieces of a personalised approach into a whole, so that a cohort of individuals can be supported, each in terms of their needs. For these reasons, an integrated local support system of networked providers, organised and managed well and using a personalised case-management model, can provide the means to achieve sustainable, positive lifestyle change for Indigenous and non-Indigenous ex-prisoners. (p. 9)
Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) note in the summary, that State and Territory correctional facilities provide in-prison employment assistance, education programs and vocational courses. These programs according to Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) can be employment-specific or ‘part of a holistic program in which employment is one component of a broad program agenda’ (p. 4). In this regard, Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) also note that participation within the programs needs to be urgently improved to increase the chance of prisoners being successfully employed post-release. The urgent reforms of policy and programming as recommended by Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) are ‘needed to reduce waiting lists for courses and to increase resources to provide vocational training and education’ (p. 8). Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) outline five broad evidence based strategies for the improvement of Indigenous ex-offenders employment outcomes that

- incorporate culturally relevant and appropriate methods of service delivery, and involve Indigenous community members and elders in the design and delivery of the program
- improve availability of employment programs for Indigenous prisoners serving short custodial sentences
- strengthen family and community connections to the employment service and encourage active agency in the reintegration process locally
- develop social enterprises as a basis of employment opportunities
- develop an open system integrated local support network for Indigenous ex-prisoners that is operated on the basis of a personalised case-management model. (p. 11)

The *Reintegration of Indigenous Prisoners: Key Findings 2008* was authored by Australian Institute of Criminology research analysts Willis and Moore. Willis and Moore’s (2008) research recognised that ‘Indigenous people are heavily overrepresented in the Australian criminal justice system’ (p. 1) and that the proportional population of Indigenous peoples in prison ‘is far in excess of their representation in the general community’ (p. 1). According to Willis and Moore (2008), there is a need for more national studies relating to Indigenous prisoners program participation ‘to identify the specific elements and delivery techniques
needed to increase Indigenous cultural specificity without negatively affecting program integrity’ (p. 6).

Willis and Moore (2008) clearly indicated from the collated data on male incarceration over a two-year period obtained from all Australian jurisdictions that Indigenous offenders are admitted more frequently and sooner than non-Indigenous offenders. To this extent Willis and Moore (2008) assert that ‘the problems of disadvantage extend well beyond the purview of corrections and all parts of the justice system’ (p. 6) and that reintegration practices ‘must ultimately be supported by major changes at the community level’ (p. 6). Transitional support back into the community became an evident theme during stakeholder consultations conducted by Willis and Moore (2008), who state that

correctional approaches must involve throughcare principles and engage family, community members and respected persons like elders, within the context of much broader improvements to relieve social disadvantage, if lasting change is to be realised. (p. 6)

Post release transitional support has been indicated by Borzycki (2005) in Interventions for Prisoners Returning to the Community who suggests that ‘it is also critical that services are available at that time when an offender is motivated to change, to maximise their chances of success (Solomon, Gouvis and Waul, 2001, p. 31). Borzycki (2005) notes that ‘correctional practitioners operating four decades ago acknowledged the necessity of prison aftercare’ (p. 9). According to Borzycki (2005) there is a growing esoteric level of interest relating to the prisoners process of re-entry into the community and how the experiences of certain prisoner subpopulations ‘can provide important information about the nature of social inequality’ (p. 9). Borzycki (2005) states in relation to social inequality that the additional consequential challenges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face due to the colonization experience include ‘lose of positive identity and connection to culture’ (Jones et al., 2002, p. 55). As discussed by Borzycki innovative prison after care programs for offenders motivated to change have been discussed for over four decades, steps in which some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corrections based facilities around Australia have begun to implement.
Indigenous Prisoners and the Correctional System was a paper presented by Ken Wano in 2001, from the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit Department of Corrective Services at The Character, Impact and Prevention of Crime in Regional Australia Conference convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology. Wano (2001) suggests that the exploration of innovative and creative methods of rehabilitation be attempted ‘to reduce the endemic levels of Indigenous incarceration and re-offending’ (p. 2). Wano (2001) discussed the development of a Cultural Immersion Program by the Townsville Correctional Centre, Queensland, that had been attempting to break the re-offending cycle by forging partnerships with community and Government agencies. The four primary components of the program detailed by Wano (2001) included ‘Self-Healing, Community Healing, Victim Empathy and Jobs/Education preparation’ (p. 2). According to Wano (2001) it is the brokering and maintenance of partnerships with those relevant community and government agencies that provides an extended platform for appropriate program consultations and social and community development for the Townsville based Correctional Centre.

The Indigenous Specific Programs 1 paper was part of a research project authored by Jones, Munro, Rowbottom and Creighton, 2010 for the Australian Correctional Leadership Program (ACLP) and published by the Australasian Journal of Correctional Staff Development. Jones et al. (2010), consider that over recent years there has been a general trend regarding the development and implementation of aspects within cultural programs that ‘may lead to reducing reoffending and rates of recidivism’ (p. 1). Jones et al. (2010) discuss Indigenous specific programs such as Victoria’s Wulgunggo Ngalu: Learning Place that seeks to promote, sustain and renew Indigenous culture. The paper by Jones et al. (2010) states that

programs focusing on Indigenous culture provided to Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders, staff and community members should raise the profile, understanding and acceptance of Indigenous people as a significant part of Australian culture. (p. 1)
In this regard Jones et al. (2010) provide three strategic recommendations to consider when addressing Indigenous over-representation and implementing effective culturally specific programs that could assist successful community re-integration

- Research to be undertaken to determine “best practice” principles and guidelines for the development and implementation of culturally specific programs,
- Develop and implement culturally specific programs and deliver to Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders and staff in consultation with the Indigenous community,
- Consider a uniformed national approach as this will provide consistency and uniformity across all jurisdictions. (p. 5)

8.4 Prison Art Discussions

The 2011 report for Arts Access Australia *Art in Prisons A Literature Review of the Philosophies and Impacts of Visual Arts Programs for Correctional Populations* was authored by University of Technology student Alexandra Djurichkovic. It outlines the current limited field of literature related to prison arts practices. Whilst the report did not specifically highlight Indigenous arts based programs in prisons it did open up the discussion of current issues to what Executive Director of Arts Access Australia Gareth Wreford (2011) mentions in the forward as ‘making the field one worth further academic, policy and program attention from both the arts and corrective services sector’ (p. iii). Djurichkovic (2011) highlights that there are articulated positive benefits related to prison art programs from the limited literature. In the report Djurichkovic (2011) notes that the merits of prison arts programs have not been widely accepted by the decision makers within government or corrective services.

Djurichkovic (2011) cited Peaker (1997) reporting that the benefits prison arts programs provide is that as ‘the vast majority of those imprisoned will be released back into the community at some stage, it is in the public interest to ensure that inmates are given opportunities to improve themselves and, upon release, are motivated to make a positive contribution to society’ (p. 12). To provide more in-
depth experiential understandings of how prison art programs can best be implemented and maintained Djurichkovic (2011) states that

in Australia the dispersed individuals and organisations that advocate and operate these programs would benefit from sharing models and pedagogical approaches and discussing operational issues. Alongside knowledge networking, national standards of training, education and implementation would create a rich body of knowledge and high standards of operation. Further, improved access to funding through a legislated prison art program budget would mean that more inmates are given the opportunity to use their time in prison for positive change in their lives. (p. 30)

According to David Gussak (2007) in his paper “The Effectiveness of Art Therapy in Reducing Depression in Prison Populations”, ‘one of the most prevalent mental illnesses in prison is depression’ (p. 445). Gussak (2007) cited Ursprung (1997) states that depression often leads to suicidal tendencies and self-abusive behaviors. It is surprising to note that despite the prevalence of rigidly held defenses, and debilitating mental health conditions such as severe depression, there seems to be a natural desire for creative and artistic expression by inmates. (p. 445)

Gussak (2007) discusses how those inmates that participated in the ‘Arts-in-Corrections program’ (Brewster, 1983) had decreased the number of written disciplinary reports and ‘recidivism (California Arts In Corrections, 1987) as measured during a 6-month and a 2 year period of time’ (Gussak, 2007, p. 446). In this regard Gussak (2007) in 1997 ‘delineated eight benefits that art therapy may have in prison’ (p. 446)

• Art is helpful in the prison environment, given the disabilities existent in this population, contributed to by organicity, a low educational level, illiteracy, and other obstacles to verbal communication and cognitive development.
• Art allows the expression of complex material in a simpler manner
• Art does not require that the inmate and/or client know, admit, or discuss what he has disclosed. The environment is dangerous, and any unintended disclosure can be threatening.

• Art promotes disclosure, even while the inmate and/or client is not compelled to discuss feelings and ideas that might leave him vulnerable.

• Art has the advantage of bypassing unconscious and conscious defenses, including pervasive dishonesty.

• Art can diminish pathological symptoms without verbal interpretation.

• Art supports creative activity in prison and provides necessary diversion and emotional escape.

• Art permits the inmate and/or client to express himself in a manner acceptable to the inside and outside culture. (p. 446)

The article by Theresa Van Lith, Patricia Fenner and Margot Schofield (2010) “Art Therapy in Rehabilitation” for the International Encyclopedia of Rehabilitation, discusses art therapy rehabilitation practices within prison environments. Presented in five main sections, Lith et al. (2010) discuss sensory experiences, symbolic expression, emotional expression, life enhancement, cognitive development and social connectedness within rehabilitative prison environments. Lith et al. (2010) recognise that suitable art therapy research approaches are still in their early stages relating to appropriate methods of evaluation and understanding the qualities and benefits of its practice. In this regard Lith et al. (2010) state that

the restorative and transformative benefits of art are gaining considerable attention in rehabilitation settings and readily being adopted as a positive, strengths-based and meaningful activity. (p. 7)

As mentioned by Lith et al. (2010) ‘art therapy ultimately works in a strengths-based way to assist in rehabilitation through restoring the self’ (p. 4). According to Lith et al. (2010) art therapy can provide a sense of catharsis through a contained release of emotions ‘in a safe and therapeutic setting by creating a physiological response of relaxation or through altering mood’ (p. 5). To this extent Lith et al. (2010) argue that
‘art therapists highlight the value of art as having healing or therapeutic potential through the context of where it takes place’ (p. 6). The following heading outlines three Indigenous prison exhibitions and one international prison arts program that have had aspects of either arts-based therapy practices or have been vocationally guided.

8.5 Current Snapshot of Program and Exhibition Landscape

A snapshot of the current Indigenous prison art program and exhibition landscape reveals an increasing acceptance in the areas of public acknowledgment, and select Corrections and Justice departments. There exists at least one Indigenous prison art related exhibition in most Australian states and territories plus an international exchange example as part of a festival. The Behind the Wire exhibition is an annual exhibition of Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners’ works from Fannie Bay Gaol as part of the Darwin Festival program. In the Northern Territory News article Killers make ... a killing, Sarah Crawford (2011) quotes from Department of Justice Chief Executive Office Greg Shanahan speech during the exhibition launch that ‘the art program was an initiative to combat the Territory's "awful" recidivism rate’. Crawford (2011) continued quoting Shanahan in the article, which stated that ‘about 47 per cent of released prisoners return to prison within two years’. The inaugural Western Australian exhibition Freedom Of Expression was launched in October 2011 at The Goldfields Arts Centre. Indigenous artists exhibiting in the Freedom of Expression received accredited units in Certificate One and Two in visual arts and contemporary Crafts through the prisons education and vocational training unit.

The Goulburn Correctional Centre in New South Wales exhibited in November 2011 Places We Been: People We Know that was curated by Bunjalung/Ngaku curator Djon Mundine. Inmates produced works for sale as souvenirs structured on ten monthly one-day workshops between Indigenous inmates and seven accomplished Indigenous artists. Places We Been: People We Know was exhibited at the Goulburn Regional Art Gallery that is facilitated by the Goulburn Mulwaree Council. In an international context, Mathew Meadows (2010) in Insider Art discusses United Kingdom prison artists. According to Meadows (2010) it was during the exhibition
titled Aratjara or The Messenger that was a part of the 1993 Corroboree Festival program when Mathew Cort who had been working for 24 years in prison art, arranged for several visiting Aboriginal artists ‘to do workshops with prison art students at HMP Wormwood Scrubs’ (p. 48). Meadows (2010) notes that the successful collaboration resulting from the Corroboree Festival program catalyst space led to further projects with lead artists and prison artists the following year.

**8.6 Founding Years and CONFINED**

**FOUNDING YEARS**
The beginning spaces created for the CONFINED exhibition occurred in early 2008 with a conversation between Johnny King and myself. King, with a background in case managing Indigenous young people in both juvenile and adult custody, worked for the Brosnan Centre/ Jesuit Social Services. During our meeting I was shown a number of visual art works produced by Indigenous men at Fulham Correctional Centre that were anonymous or un-signed and we spoke about the possibility of collaborating together around a prison art exhibition. King’s (2010) observations regarding his experiences in working with Indigenous juveniles and adult prisoners were reinforced in the CONFINED 2 exhibition catalogue where he stated:

> I’ve met and worked with a young man who had served five adult sentences and learnt to paint from his elders in jail producing work of a really high standard. However, this young man reports that he has doubts of continuing an artistic career outside of prison. He provided me with the idea to try to engage prisoners with an exhibition that is letting the community see the quality of the work being produced in jails across Victoria, everyday.

I considered the importance of such an exhibition and how the Yalukit Willam Ngargee could open up these spaces to represent the works. The Alliance Francaise, a French language school in the local area, was the original venue that agreed to exhibit the works. With a possible exhibition venue arranged I began to draft funding proposals in back and forward email correspondence with King. A series of meetings was conducted with the Department of Justice who supported the first exhibition with
$5,000 of VAJAC funding. We initiated and developed contacts with Corrections Victoria (CV) Indigenous Policy & Services Unit (IPSU) that would allow King and myself to begin approaching Indigenous prison arts programs to take part in the exhibition.

The Corrections Victoria Indigenous Policy & Services Unit were aware of the rehabilitative and therapeutic benefits that an Indigenous prison artists’ exhibition might provide, but needed to maintain the safety, security and integrity of the artists identities and works. We also had to maintain the considerations and sensitivities towards victims of offences who may have been affected by an exhibiting artist within the exhibition. King managed internal relations with key stakeholders in the male and female prisons, given his extensive experience within the justice system and his range of contacts. He secured the support of his employers and was able to assist in guiding my festival artistry gaze to suitably structure the exhibition’s ‘balancing act’ in relation to both security and cultural requirements.

Both King and I worked closely with the acting manager Adrian Skutthorpe at Indigenous Policy & Services Unit to maintain effective and appropriate mechanisms for the exhibition’s representations of artists works. This included drafting a suitable artists agreement over the course of three months in close correspondence with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), Corrections Victoria Indigenous Policy & Services Unit provided final approval and sign-off. As advised by Corrections Victoria Indigenous Policy & Services Unit the exhibiting artists were not allowed to profit from their works. The artist’s agreement included the option of works being Not For Sale or For Sale with proceeds going into a charity of the artists choice and a percentage towards art supply materials for the artist’s prison arts program. To this extent the CONFINED partnerships set up prior to the exhibition taking place, had been negotiated through the many decision making layers of various social institutions before actual access to agreeing Indigenous prison arts programs could commence.

The employed positions of King and I made it possible to attend the numerous meetings and agreed obligations the CONFINED exhibition required. During prison visits we were accompanied by the acting Indigenous Policy & Services Unit
Manager Adrian Skuthorpe who fully supported the exhibition program. Four prisons participated in the first *CONFINED* exhibition: Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC - Women); Port Phillip Prison, the Metropolitan Remand Centre (MRC) and Loddon Prison (three male prisons). In addition art work was secured from men residing at the Wulgunggo Ngalu: Learning Place, a Corrections Victoria auspiced initiative for men serving community based orders sited at the former Won Wron prison site in Gippsland. At each of these settings we met with Indigenous Liaison Officers and prospective artists to outline the upcoming festival and art exhibition and were shown works. We sat down one on one with interested artists and went through the artist agreements, clause by clause.

King’s organisation, Jesuit Social Services, remained committed to the ongoing *CONFINED* exhibition and King took on coordination of a statewide Indigenous support program for former prisoners called Konnect, during 2009. King was able to ensure Konnect case management staff could further support the important ‘in-prison’ access and negotiation with custodial staff, Indigenous well-being/liaison officers and Indigenous artists in the prisons. King’s Manager at the Brosnan Centre was supportive of the ongoing work of *CONFINED* and any work the Konnect staff were involved in given the rehabilitative focus of the exhibition initiative.

Due to the complex nature within the many layers of the exhibition’s decision making processes the original exhibition venue had been shifted from the Alliance Francaise to the St Kilda Town Hall newly renovated The Gallery space. I had instigated the move to The Gallery due to the unknown quantity and quality of works produced and subsequently the East Gippsland Aboriginal Arts Corporation had been offered the Alliance Francaise exhibition space. In total 24 pieces of work were exhibited with one of the few works for sale being sold and most works being promised to a relation or someone outside of the prison as a gift.

Some of the artists we met were uncomfortable or wary at first with the idea of the exhibition, needing to be assured their works would be handled respectfully in their presentation and return. A satisfactory avenue was the festival’s provision of a professional visual arts delivery driver, a professional curator that managed The Gallery and a professional visual art installer/hanger as employed by the Council.
There had not been enough works to fill The Gallery prompting the manager/curator to source photographic images by Aboriginal-Tasmanian photographer Ricky Maynard from the City of Port Phillips permanent collections to complete the space. To this extent the final works to arrive from Wulgunggo Ngalu for the exhibition had been delivered by the acting Indigenous Policy & Services Unit manager on the day of The Gallery installing.

The *CONFINED* exhibition was championed by celebrated Mutti-Mutti musician and Koori activist Kutcha Edwards, host of 3CR’s Beyond the Bars annual *NAIDOC* program simulcast live from various prisons around Victoria. One of the only radio stations in Australia to broadcast live, Beyond the Bars has been simulcast from Victorian Prisons since 2002 receiving the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Radio Award in 2004 and producing six CDs featuring interviews, poetry, conversation, music and inmates messages funded by Community Broadcast Association, Department of Justice and City of Melbourne.

During the exhibition launch Kutcha whilst praising the exceptional quality of the works expressed how unfortunate it is to be having an exhibition celebrating Indigenous prisoners and their overrepresentation in the justice system. In the article titled “Behind Bars, But Reaching an Audience”, published by the local Melbourne paper *Emerald Hill Times* (2009) promoting the exhibition, Kutcha quotes that ‘when you’ve been denied a voice as these Indigenous prisoners have been, art offers a powerful means of self-expression.’

After the successful wrap up of the first *CONFINED* exhibition King and I realized the level of commitment involved for future exhibitions to continue. What we were unable to provide was the critical evaluation and personalized gaze needed by the practicing artists when discussing techniques, styles and the approach of their works. In this regard we needed to approach a localized and appropriate organisation for the continuity and development of the *CONFINED* exhibition. The Torch, a Community Cultural Development organization, had relocated to St Kilda during the time of the exhibitions founding and expressed interest when presented with the idea of facilitating the 2010 exhibition program.
The Torch’s agreement encouraged me to set up a Creative Programming Partnership in externalizing the festival’s creative programming operations out of the Council and into the care of The Torch’s Artistic Coordinator Alison Brash. A highly experienced visual arts practitioner with an informed Indigenous visual arts gaze, Brash enlisted the experience of Wongai artist Brian McKinnon, to curate the second and third *CONFINED* exhibitions. I had maintained regular connections and conversations with Brash regarding progress of the *CONFINED* exhibition and The Torch’s extensive reporting and evaluation methods.

During the *CONFINED* prison visits McKinnon was accompanied by Neil Hassle from the Indigenous Policy Unit at Corrections Victoria. The support assisted in maintaining consultations for direct inmate contact and to work intensely with the prison Indigenous Liaison Officers. A key point raised by McKinnon in the *CONFINED 2* launch speech was the need for better quality art supplies if the inmates were to continue practicing. Brash indicated that one of the commitments provided by the then Corrections Victoria Commissioner was to begin exploring the opportunity to purchase better quality materials for inmates. Brash (2011) reported in an unpublished evaluation, that ‘the recruitment of Brian McKinnon as Guest Curator of *CONFINED* 3, meant he has had the chance to meet with inmates in the prisons and offer feedback on their work, as well as discuss career realities artist to artist’.

The Torch had taken measures to support artist visual literacy through the distribution of contemporary art magazines, which as Brash (2011) recognizes is a resource for ‘identifying the importance of always looking at what others are doing and producing in the industry’. McKinnon’s relationship with Marngoneet Prison has been, according to Brash (2011), ‘ongoing beyond *CONFINED 3*’, with the provision of direct art resources and supporting wooden artefact making that is a new initiative at the prison. Torch staff had begun lending and donating their own arts resources for visual literacy to the prison arts programs and have met with prisoners post-release to offer continued feedback on works.

An aspect of post-release arts based prospects The Torch had been developing included working with festival artist Daniel King on behalf of the City of Port Phillip to conduct a post-release exhibition of artists involved within previous *CONFINED*
exhibitions. What had become evident from Brash’s experiences were the former prisoners who had initiated contact with The Torch wanted to maintain feedback and advice due to their being keen to explore further exhibition opportunities. According to Brash (2011) there had been what Torch arts worker delegates to the prison programs witnessed as a mini-arts revolution. This was recognized through the first Torch visit in 2009 to Ararat prison with only three practicing artists. On a 2011 trip The Torch had recorded sixteen practicing artists who enthusiastically welcomed The Torch members into the program space. Brash (2011) reported that Ararat Prison-Indigenous Liaison Staff and inmates spoke of the importance of CONFINED 3 and a Torch assisted visual art exhibition at Brambuk. To this extent The Torch had received positive feedback from Corrections affiliates, prisoners’ families and members of the general public.

The 2011 research project key impact was the culmination of incremental spaces created, maintained and extended towards The Torch being enabled to implement an employed position. The Torch in 2011, successfully received from The Department of The Attorney General, eighteen months funding for the recruitment of a part-time, statewide Indigenous Arts Officer. This was in addition to a smaller three-year grant from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet’s Office for the Arts, which provided enough funding for the CONFINED exhibition component of the program. The Attorney General’s funding included capacity for The Torch to purchase a second hand vehicle, due to the CONFINED 3 exhibition travel of over 3,000 kilometers and extensive associated vehicle hire costs.

The Torch conducted a targeted recruitment strategy resulting in a good level of strong Indigenous applicants for consideration. The applicant recruitment and interview process in June 2011 was attended by the Manager of Indigenous Policy for Corrections Victoria, Alison Brash and myself. I was able to take part in the interviewing and selection process of the role as informed through my experience with the previous CONFINED exhibitions and research project process. This sum part in the research process provided contemplative awareness in which the circulation of reciprocity extended between the many meaning making gazes and decision-making layers involved in the life of the CONFINED exhibition spaces. Through the work of recruited Indigenous Arts Officer and Wiradjuri artist Kent Morris, the CONFINED
exhibition has continued into the 2012 Yalukit Willam Ngargee festival, with another exhibition held at the Blak Dot Gallery with works for sale. The program continues to rely on eighteen-month funding rounds which do not provide long-term initiatives to ingrained disadvantage and issues that continue to exist for Indigenous peoples in custody and society.

8.7 Summary

Chapter eight begins by discussing developments that took place with the Yalukit Willam Ngargee after I left the position of Indigenous Arts Officer. The discussion focuses in part on the role inadequate succession planning played in the break-down of the festival’s environmental sustainability component. Following this discussion, the chapter examines CONFINED, an Indigenous prisoners’ art exhibition held as part of the 2011 festival. This is discussed in the context of issues such as Aboriginal Justice Agreements, Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and disadvantaged Indigenous communities, particularly in relation to Indigenous youth with a particular focus on Koori young people. Underlying the discussion is a belief that arts programs offered to Indigenous prison inmates – which emphasizes cultural safety – might provide an innovative model for the implementation of arts programs with mainstream prison populations. This discussion leads to a consideration of festival management with respect to The Torch, arguing that it is only through resourcing longer term – as distinct from ‘one-off’ – arts program initiatives that attempts at curbing recidivism and improving Indigenous prisoners’ wellbeing will be successful.
SECTION FOUR: NGARGEE – GATHERING

Ngargee or Gathering is the final conclusions and recommendations section of the Local Identity Global Focus research project. It confirms that the research project aims and questions were addressed as stated in the first section titled Womin Jeka or Welcome. The second section, Yaluki or People, set about how Local Identity Global Focus was conducted relating to its methodology, ethical practice, mixed methods of data gathering and extensive literature review. Wilam or Place was the third section that outlined the three festival years of 2009/2010/2011 and the five key impacts of interest. The support material included two DVDs titled Living in Two Worlds and Lu’Arn, three CONFINED exhibition catalogues, select images from the festival and accompanying festival programs for each festival year.
Chapter Nine: Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research

The wise old people used to say:
The Earth is but a reflection of the stars,
it is the in-between you need to see.
(Lu’Arn Documentary, 2010)

9.1 Conclusion

Indigenous festivals are journeys within a journey. In addition to providing an important opportunity to socialize, Indigenous festivals assert a political and cultural presence in a temporal public space for Indigenous peoples. They commemorate everyday community relationships and maintain the shaping and re-shaping of meaning making practices. Indigenous festivals essentially, should not simply be a program of recreational activities but rather, a celebration of Indigenous people’s struggles and recognition of the intrinsic and vital role that they should play in the Australian nation-state.

No festival can survive in isolation and the Yalukit Willam Ngargee has shown clearly that reciprocity is a key factor in this festival’s existence. Reciprocity is the life of the festival, creating a succession of spaces that enables further spaces to be created. Whilst being a robust and vulnerable aspect of the festival, reciprocity takes time to establish among many diverse people and various layers of decision-making processes. Reciprocity within the festival brings together an array of complicated assumptions for the simple expectation that a cyclical gathering will represent a local community’s motivations and values.

The guidance of Elders, such as Aunty Carolyn, was a foundation of the research project’s local practice. The festival was a persuasive mechanism for creating spaces to safeguard Yalukit Wilam, Boon Wurrung and South East Australian intangible cultural heritage practices. Aunty Carolyn, Indigenous artists, and festival artist colleagues worked together to create multiple liminal lines such as exhibitions, stages,
theatres, publications and forums for the performative mediation of language, arts and cultural practices.

The research project is one of the first of its kind in Australia to discuss local government and Indigenous festivals in relative detail. It has demonstrated that local government can have an enabling role in providing festival and administrative avenues that have the potential to facilitate cultural redress; but this must be owned by the Indigenous communities themselves. It is contended here that local governments have the infrastructure for facilitating festivals of a similar scale to the Yalukit Willam Ngargee. Further, the research project has shown that they can be a conduit for empowering local Indigenous community members in economic development, cultural reclamation, wellbeing, employment and social justice. It is the consistent community approach that local government can champion by building trust with Indigenous community members through festivals and cultural programs.

Indigenous Arts Officers are an active cultural link between what the council can do and what the community wants to do. Local government has to keep in mind that the Indigenous Arts Officer’s role is a specialized cultural position. To a large extent the manner in which, and the degree to which, a Council maintains support networks for its Indigenous Arts Officer reinforces – or otherwise – the Council’s reputation within the Indigenous community. Indigenous Arts Officers, in working across two worlds, have a high degree of responsibility and have to navigate what can be at times a precarious path of internal and external expectations. Such a role demands consideration being given to succession planning to ensure that achievements and gains in negotiating these paths are not lost.

Festival environmental sustainability was shown to be achievable through incremental practices; at the same time it was demonstrated that gains could lose traction if they were not seen as part of the whole festival philosophy, planning and production. The primary tool needed for festival environmental sustainability is the resolve for it to become an intrinsic part of the production. All festivals have an effect not only on their environmental surrounds, but also on the resources used in making them happen. It should be considered that regardless of a person’s role or nature of involvement in a
festival, it is everyone’s responsibility to leave no trace; one person’s waste is everyone’s concern.

You can never go to the same festival twice as no two festivals will ever be the same. Festival artists then, have the opportunity to question and inspire society through public gatherings. It would be safe to state that no festival artist operates alone and it is the team of festival artists working together as conduits for the people’s voices where reciprocity in all its forms becomes richer within the temporal festival moment. Working together festival artists can illuminate an attentive space for the artist and manifest aspects of a local community’s identity that invites in a reciprocal viewer and potentially transforms the space beyond the space itself. In order to achieve this festival artists take risks. They spend time making things happen on limited resources and bring together many diverse social institutions needing patience and commitment. Times can be testing for festival artists when balanced across pending funding proposals, programming deadlines, bureaucracy, community expectations, seeking financial resource, artists needs and the always unexpected something that can happen at any moment.

This was especially the case during the 2010 festival program when mid way through the festival main day, my most trusted production manager accidentally inhaled a tiny piece of plastic, lodging into her air way. Not the most ideal situation for her, or for the festival. She was rushed to hospital, returning later that evening informed by the doctor that it was best not to continue working on the festival that night. Committed to the Yalukit Willam Ngargee’s developing principle of reciprocity and under strict instructions to be seated the whole time and not to talk, much, she was allowed to maintain some aspects of her role. Fortunately in that situation another reliable and trusted person stepped up to the duties and the festival continued on without the festival public being aware of the situation. This is one small example of what makes the reciprocity of festival artistry so collegial. We care for each other and we care for the people who entrust within us the safety and liberty of their best interests.

It could be argued that Australians have an obligation of indebtedness into the future with each other. What maybe needed to assist in better understanding our different approaches to reciprocity are how Indigenous festivals can be domains that challenge
and validate what we have come to know. Although Indigenous festivals are not the complete answer, they are a part of the overall solution and it is in-between the festival programs where the real work has to be achieved. The power of Indigenous festivals needs to live in our everyday relationships, conversations, bridging the distances between people and how we celebrate our part in those changing cultural marks we made on the day that we were here.

To conclude, Local Identity Global Focus has, in addressing the three research questions, shown ways in which an Indigenous festival can create spaces for reciprocity and community identity; identified important elements that constitute an environmentally sustainable Indigenous metropolitan festival; and engaged in an extensive discussion of the local, cultural and socio-political conditions that impact on the programming and production of an Indigenous festival. This can serve to assist those who consider producing comparable festivals on a similar scale.
9.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The research project has contributed to a developing field of Indigenous festival literature and has opened discussions for further research. In particular, six areas of further research interest are identified here and relate to: 1) the need for a national study of Indigenous festivals’ trade routes, 2) local government, 3) arts therapy, 4) intangible cultural heritage, 5) festival environmental sustainability and 6) contemporary Indigenous dance.

1. The Yalukit Willam Ngargee Indigenous festivals offer insights into how other festivals – particularly those of a similar scale – might be approached. This leads to the first recommendation, namely, that there could be merit in all such festivals, regardless of where they occur nationally, giving serious consideration to the sentiments and relationships enshrined in the Yalukit Willam Ngargee festivals, including notions of reciprocity that are ongoing and not limited by an emphasis on reconciliation only. Further, the notion of a cultural trading route between festivals, which has special significance in an Indigenous context, has the potential to strengthen economic development, wellbeing, and cultural presence. Of course, these very principles might also be implemented globally in relation to indigenous festivals in other countries.

2. Local Governments, as well as other organisations, have employed Indigenous Arts Officers in various roles across the country. There is a limited body of coordinated information and research that brings together the work they are engaged in and, at the same time, evaluates its effect. For example, it is not clear, on a national level, whether it is the Councils themselves or members of Indigenous communities who benefit most from this work. Accordingly, it is recommended that a study be undertaken that evaluates the work of Indigenous Arts Officers across all Australian states and territories. Ideally, the results
of such a study will open the debate on what their roles and contribution could be. Such a study might be broadened to undertake a comparative investigation of the roles of corresponding personnel working with indigenous communities in other countries.

3. This research project is one of a relatively few to initiate a discussion regarding the benefits of arts therapy programs in prisons for Indigenous inmates. Unfortunately there is no long-term national study of such programs. It is recommended therefore that this be conducted with a view to implementing arts therapy programs for Indigenous Australians in prisons throughout the country. The literature on arts therapy leaves no doubt on the benefits of such programs in dealing with psychological, emotional, and ‘spiritual’ wellbeing. This is especially an issue given the relatively high percentage of Indigenous inmates in our prisons compared to other ethnic populations. The arts therapy programs that are recommended here might also have success in curbing disciplinary reporting within prisons and post-release recidivism. A focused and well resourced study might lead to greater understanding of avenues for improving the lives of Indigenous inmates whilst in custody and beyond. Again, it is envisaged that a global perspective would also provide new insights.

4. This research project has given some attention to UNESCO’s notion of intangible cultural heritage, which is a means of drawing global attention to the importance of understanding indigenous people’s localized cultural practices. There is an increasing but still emerging field of literature with respect to Indigenous Australians, enabling government mechanisms and festival domains. The study recommended here would focus on Indigenous Australians identifying intangible cultural heritage, how this can best be supported and the role of this in their lives according to UNESCO guidelines.
5. The research project has drawn attention to the importance of festival environmental sustainability. As indicated, festival environmental sustainability is developing into a global industry that has growing resource material relating to the environmental impact of festivals. Accordingly, there is a need for a national study of festival environmental sustainability measures that extends well beyond the Indigenous festivals that were the focus of the present research. The study proposed should consider environmental sustainability measures enacted in festivals world-wide, as a means of contributing to discussions relating to Australia’s emerging awareness of the importance of this industry.

6. Contemporary Indigenous dance is a field becoming professionally engaged by mid career Indigenous dancers as a regularly practiced form. The challenges that most mid career Indigenous dancers face could be further addressed nationally in the scope that it deserves. Indigenous contemporary dance is the dance of the person, the people and the country. It can be a personal exploration and it can be a re-imagined social representation. As yet we have not valued contemporary Indigenous dance to the full extent that dancers have been looking for, or to the merit of who we are as diverse Australians on ancestral Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Consent Form

Name of investigator: Bo Jason Svoronos  
Phone: 03 9925 2156  
Email: s3208147@rmit.edu.au

Local Identity, Global Focus: Examining reciprocity and community identity within the spaces of an Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island festival.

1. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the interviews or questionnaires - have been explained to me.
2. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.
3. I give my permission to be audio recorded/photographed □ Yes □ No
4. I give my permission for my name or identity to be used □ Yes □ No
5. I acknowledge that:
   a. Having read the Plain Language Statement or had the project explained to me, I agree to the general purpose of the research.
   b. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
   c. The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me. The privacy of the information I provide will be safeguarded. The privacy of the personal information I provide will be safeguarded and only disclosed where I have consented to the disclosure or as required by law.

Participant’s Consent

Name: _______________________________ Date: ____________________

(Participant)

Name: _______________________________ Date: ____________________

(Witness to signature)

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. Details of the complaints procedure are available at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/rd/hrec_complaint
Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island Festivals Project

Local Identity, Global Focus: Examining reciprocity and community identity within the spaces of an Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island festival

I am a PhD student from the Globalism Research Centre and School of Art, RMIT University in Melbourne. Research for my project is called 'Local Identity, Global Focus: Examining reciprocity and community identity within the spaces of an Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island festival'.

I will be investigating to what extent Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island festivals contribute to community wellbeing during the Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island festival program Yalukit Wilam Ngargee: People Place Gathering.

When I finish this project it will

- Become a resource for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander communities
- Be given to the organizations and communities which participated in the project
- Be made publicly available on the RMIT website
- Form part of a report to the Telstra Foundation who are funding the research
- Aspects of it will be published in academic journals and may be reported on in the media
- Within 24 months of the project finishing all research data will be presented to an Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander institution for archival and future reference purposes.

It is the hope of both RMIT and the Telstra Foundation that the research from this project will be beneficial to the management of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander festivals and the communities they serve.

Participation is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed information previously supplied.

If you are not happy with the research or would like further information about the project you can contact the researcher or alternatively the project supervisors at the postal address below or by email:

Bo Jason Svoronos s3208147@rmit.edu.au
Associate Professor David Forrest david.forrest@rmit.edu.au
Dr Lisa Slater lisa.slater@rmit.edu.au

Yours sincerely,

Bo Jason Svoronos

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Executive Officer, RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee, Research & Innovation, RMIT, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. Details of the complaints procedure are available at: http://www.rmit.edu.au/rd/hrec_complain
Interview Questions for identified research participants

- Where do you come from and what are the reasons behind you deciding to operate in your chosen field?
- What does the word reciprocity or mutual exchange mean to you?
- What do you think are some of the ways in which an Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander festival maybe able to create spaces for reciprocity?
- How do you think Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander festivals address issues around Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander identity and wellbeing?
- How do you think Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander festivals affect the breakdown of ‘Difference-Blindness’ between Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander and non-Indigenous identities?
- What are your thoughts on the future of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander and non-Indigenous relationships in Australia?
- What do you think are some of the local, cultural and socio-political conditions that may impact on a metropolitan Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander festivals programming and production?
- What relevance do you think an environmentally sustainable festival has with Indigenous peoples?
- What does celebration mean to you?