Department of Social Sciences

My Mob, Our Country: A Qualitative Study on how a Nanda Family Group Connect to Each Other and Country

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Human Ethics (For projects involving human participants/tissue, etc) The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number #HR152/2013.

Signature: Steven Kelly

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Abstract

Despite the Mabo v Queensland (No 2) decision of 1992 and the subsequent Native Title Act of 1993, demonstrating continuous connection and direct links to country is a complex and highly restrictive process for Indigenous groups in Australia. Nanda people in the mid-west of Western Australia are engaged in this long and arduous task of validating our claims for Native Title, and this study provides insights into the shared live experiences and yarns (stories) that support a specific Nanda family's connection to each other and our Country.

The research has been conducted and framed from an insider's perspective, for the study is on my family, the Kelly family of the Murchison region of Western Australia. The study examines the ways in which members of this family have strong connection to Country through our continued presence and cultural practices, including births, deaths, camping, named places, hunting, and religion and religious practices. This thesis explores how the Kelly family connect to each other and Country, primarily through the eyes of Elders whose yarns illuminate our position as a sovereign people upholding our lore and culture.

While we have had little choice but to adapt to change and accommodate many aspects of colonisation, we continue to resist the cultural, political, social and historical influences that work to obliterate our identity and practices, and to extinguish our ongoing connections with our land. We continue to hold strong connection to Country through traditional practices that have survived and flourished – despite policies and procedures that have inhibited Nanda people over time. The Kelly family's shared lived experiences, as demonstrated by yarns maintained through close family ties, have ensured the survival of our culture.

The privileging of my family's lived experiences and perceptions is fundamental to the overarching Indigenist methodology used to frame this study. In addition, existential anthropology informed the focus on the small details of Aboriginal people's everyday lives, and photographs were used to capture aspects of Country and kin. Further, my insider positioning has been incorporated in a critically reflexive way, based on the growing recognition of the value of autoethnographic insights.

Through this study of one Nanda family in the Murchison region of Western Australia, the yarns and shared lived experiences elucidated may have significance to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people seeking to claim connection to their Country.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1
Introduction

This thesis aims to provide evidence on how members of a Nanda family group connect to each other and country. I will achieve this by producing insights of our social organisation and shared lived experiences, which will be presented through a collection of yarns (stories) by Nanda Elders. The knowledge produced and disseminated in this thesis is explicit to members of this family group and I have woven these yarns throughout the chapters to deliver a rich tapestry of evidence of how this family is linked with each other and with Country (see Appendix A for a glossary of key cultural terms used throughout this thesis). A study by Nanda, for Nanda, carries great significance for members of this family group as it promotes self-determination.

As a Nanda person, this research project is extremely poignant, personal, and vital to my family and people. The voices of Nanda people interviewed in this study connect with some forty thousand years of thriving and surviving as part of this land. With due respect to my countrymen and women nationally, the focus is solely on this particular Nanda family group's firsthand accounts of how we connect to each other and Country in order to affirm our standing within the wider Australian public, as a sovereign people with genuine rights and claims to our land. The objective of this research is to play a part in countering some of the misconceptions, marginalisation, alienation, and subjugation that have prevailed upon this Nanda family group.

This study privileges the Nanda narrative of our links to land and each other. Accordingly, interpretivism has been incorporated into an Indigenist methodology so that a range of methods could be used to explore the central research question. An Indigenist methodology allows for a robust qualitative examination of how a Nanda family group from the Murchison region of Western Australia connects to each other and Country. Methods such as autoethnography, participant observation and yarning allow for a range of materials to be drawn from the fieldwork, including reflective notes, literature, photographs, and archival and ethnographical studies. My chosen methods will support the narratives of the interviewed members of this Nanda family group. The qualitative concepts that guide the research methods complement one

another, as they allow for and support Nanda perspectives in a manner that acknowledges and encourages self-determination.

At the same time, previous research on Nanda people is utilised to support the contemporary narratives in this research project and is an essential component, for this project is an evidence-based study, which aims to provide a platform to enable an empty space to be filled by members of this Nanda family group. My standpoint as both a researcher and Traditional Owner has enabled members of this Nanda family group to revisit and redefine ourselves in historical, political, and cultural contexts that have previously tended to be overlooked or silenced. Arcidiacono, Mannarini, Sonn and Brodsy (2015, p. 1), in a collection of articles, explore "how culture in its various definitions…informs interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relationships, as well as collective processes across all community settings," and they conclude that research conducted and "produced in partnership, and mutually reinforcing of relations between people and culture, will be more effective in meeting people's needs." This research supports the application of "cultural sensitivity" and working in partnership with community to produce knowledge and create opportunities for Nanda to voice what is important to them.

As stated, the body of evidence collated for this study over the period of the research project includes genealogical and oral evidence from Elders on how we connect to each other and Country. The findings of this research project derive from accounts of Nanda people on how and why Nanda see themselves as traditional owners of the research area. This is achieved by building an analysis of our social life. Evidence utilised to assist this Nanda family group has been obtained from historical, anthropological and ethnographical studies in the area.

This research project allows for Nanda accounts to present a counter-narrative to those constructed mostly by non-Aboriginal academics, land councils, judicial systems and governments. I have achieved this by giving firsthand accounts of what we, Nanda, see as important aspects on all issues regarding our connection to kin and Country. The perspectives of this particular Nanda group offer complex explanations of what it means to be a Nanda person, as well as how the family group connects with each other and to Country. Indigenist methodology recognises distinct Nanda world views and ways of knowing, doing, and being. I argue that my preference in utilising Indigenous methodology provides for an approach that opens up fresh perspectives to the constraints of Western (living in or originating in the west, in particular Europe or

the Unites States) academic methodological frameworks informed by theories developed during the Age of Enlightenment. If these Western ways continue to be the only framework in this context, this is likely, unfortunately, to continue to subjugate Nanda people. Although interpretivism is a Western theory, it recognises that there are multiple perspectives, and that cultures, beliefs, values and practices need to be understood as complex forms of meaning making that have formed and developed over time as part of diverse expressions of humanity.

Atkinson (2002) states; that since colonisation in Australia, Aboriginal people have been subjugated to oppressive, dehumanising regimes in all aspects of their lives. Draconian policies and procedures have been applied in order to regulate every facet of the lives of Australia's first peoples. Institutions have been the order of the day, whether missions or prisons. In contrast, institutions such as western educational institutions, which are designed to better the lives of those who attend them, have been astoundingly slow in their inclusion and integration of Aboriginal people. As such, those with a tertiary education often find themselves in employment where we see the cycle of exclusion continue. As a result of being excluded from the education system most Aboriginal people find themselves in employment where they are not decision makers (Rose, 2007).

Similarly, Land Councils are designed to assist Aboriginal people with their native title claims. But it is mainly non-Aboriginal and western-trained lawyers, anthropologists and historians enacting legislation from a western legal system that is designed to construct the meaning of "traditional" and what that entails. Long periods of time are spent on research from Land Council employees in order to produce what is called a "connection report." The connection report is a body of evidence produced in order for the Traditional Owners to lay claim to land and often resources that they would not have access to otherwise. Once the connection report is completed, with the historical, anthropological and legal components concluded, the experts in their chosen professions may then declare who are native title holders and who are not. While it seems rational and logical to have a referee when dealing with issues of land, family and natural resources, Aboriginal people still find themselves on the sidelines and without much, if any, say in these processes.

Glen Kelly, a Noongar man who heads up the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, explains that "It's a whitefella legal construct, what it is actually designed to do, in my view, is not to enliven traditional law and custom but to control

traditional law and custom" (Korff, 2016a). The impetus for this research aims to enliven traditional "lore" and custom, not control it.

The process of establising native title is costly, with very few positives for the people the legislation was developed to assist. For example, during the historic Yorta Yorta native title claim between (1994-2006) a large portion of resources was directed to lawyers and experts in what became the growing "native title industry."

Another issue is the insurmountable hurdle for claimant groups who must provide evidence to prove continuity of their traditional laws and customs set within a Western legal system under the Native Title Act of 1993. Under the Native Title Act of 1993, the claimants must prove the land was theirs since European settlement (Korff, 2016a). Finally, this research provides a fresh, exhaustive alternative that is inclusive and respectful of the claimant group. The process of putting this thesis together was achieved within a time frame of around five years. In this time I have lost many family members along the way and have paid a hefty personal and financial price. All material in this thesis is without prejudice and was achieved with the support and participation of key Nanda Elders from this particular family group. I am a Nanda person and the thesis provides evidence of how this family group connects with each other and Country.

Having been away from my home town of Perth for a period of ten years working and studying, I returned when my first son was three months old to be with family. After discussion with family members about our native title claim, which was then in its sixteenth year and with no end in sight, it was in Perth that I decided to do my own research on how my family connects to each other and Country. Without prejudice, the production of this PhD, albeit in an academic format, is born out of sheer frustration, misunderstanding and lack of transparency of our Land Council. My rationale for such a major project was that, as a trained Anthropologist, I wanted to spend the next four years doing research in order to privilege my family members' voices, and my own, in order to explain how we Nanda connect to each other and Country.

Historical Context

It is important to give a brief overview of contact between European and Aboriginal people. What is clear is that both parties had major misunderstandings in

relation to land and land ownership due to conflicting worldviews. These differences have been revisited over the passage of time and into current day issues around land and land ownership. The members of a Nanda family group, our culture and region/territory will be introduced prior to giving a brief historical footnote of Nanda and early European race relations in the Murchison region of Western Australia. I then highlight two international ethnographical studies that are used to provide evidence of how Indigenous people connect to Country, as well as briefly touching on national ethnographies, before discussing studies that endorse and promote Indigenous narratives. This is done in order to explain how such narratives are pivotal for future research in this area. The remaining sections in the introduction chapter include the significance of this study, along with short outlines of each chapter.

The British invasion of Australia in the eighteenth century was part of the colonial expansion that began earlier in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and led to frontier wars on each continent (Connor, 2002). There have been misunderstandings leading to tensions in Australia between Aboriginal people and Europeans. A lack of respect and acknowledgement dates back to the English invasion, when Governor Arthur Phillip claimed New South Wales "without any reference to Aboriginal rights of prior occupation, just as Cook had done eighteen years earlier" (Yarwood & Knowling, 1982, p. 15). It is fair to say that, whilst early relationships between Aboriginal people and European settlers in Australia were initially marked by "surprise and curiosity," both parties quickly became disappointed by a lack of interest in trying to understand one another's cultures, and their positioning on land and issues around land ownership (Stanbury, 1977). Initial settlement of the Swan River in Western Australia was different to the eastern states in a variety of ways. Fink (1960) explains that Aboriginal people in Perth were initially granted the full rights of British subjects with the settlers, with the colonial government acting in moderation and walking on the side of caution during initial contact. Aboriginal people in Western Australia were not initially treated like they had been in other parts of Australia, pauperized and in some cases decimated.

According to Markey (1976), the Swan River colony was also convict free and was settled with the financial assistance of capitalists, who were rewarded for their support with grants of free land. However, the local Aboriginal people of the Swan River region, whose initial nature was "inquisitive and friendly" towards the settlers, soon became hostile once the novelty wore off and the intentions of the colonists were

made clear. The "Colonists were encroaching on Aboriginal territory, pushing Aborigines out of their hunting grounds and gathering grounds and depriving the indigenous inhabitants of their natural sources of food" (McNair & Rumley, 1981, pp. 3 & 5).

Nanda People, as with other Aboriginal people throughout the Australian continent, shared a unique balance between man and landscape, which supplied their need of food and sustenance from within their respective territories. Europeans, on the other hand, relied heavily on introduced plants and animals to survive. The introduction of plants and animals proved to be at Aboriginal people's peril, their landscape was and continues to be changed by the introduction of new species. The landscape, that provided sustenance to Aboriginal people was being altered at devastating rates. As Stanbury (1977, pp. 46 & 47) explains:

> The greatest factor upsetting the balance of nature at this time was pastoral occupation. This was undertaken largely without an understanding or care of the Aboriginals rights, without a recognition of the delicate character of the landscape, and without an understanding of the problems which would be caused by the introduction of carnivores such as cats and dogs or herbivores such as goats and sheep…The native grasses, apparently were destroyed, or were fouled to the point of useleness. The Aboriginals were thus driven away from their native lands into less congenial regions or, if they wished to stay, were placed in a debased situation on the outskirts of a civilisation they did not understand and within which they were not acceptable.

The presence of (Nanda) communities was noted by Sir George Grey as early as 1839, with Nanda sites being located around the Murchison River area. Murchison House station was established in the 1860s, near the mouth of the Murchison River, and employed many Nanda people who had previously been living in the area. In 1965, with the introduction of the Pastoral Industries Award, which set minimum wage levels for all pastoralists, many Nanda people had to leave the station, as the station could not afford to pay them (Bottrill, 1991). The spread to the north of Perth by Europeans into areas such as Northampton for cattle grazing was within Nanda territory, and evidence points to issues of concern between Nanda and Europeans over land and land ownership in the initial stages of European occupation.

Oldfield (1865) states that whilst Nanda people were acutely aware of their boundaries and that each tribe in the area was aware of these, they feared to move onto other Aboriginal territories even though they were being overrun by Europeans and their introduced species such as cattle. An example of tensions around land and

land ownership in the Murchison region between Nanda and Europeans arose from issues over who had rights to what. Moreover, European occupation of Nanda territory had retributory outcomes for Nanda who, after suffering from hunger, would kill and feast on the settlers' cattle. To avenge the act of their cattle being killed the settlers resorted to the indiscriminent slaughter of "the guilty and the innocent, of man, women and child as has too often been the policy of the Europeans" (Oldfield, 1865, p. 221).

The Nanda people of the Murchison region have a rich and diverse culture. Nanda (other spellings are Nhanta, Nhunda and Nhanda – pronounced *Nun-Dah*) is the name of the language and people that lived, and today continue to live, along the coastal area north of Geraldton and south of Shark Bay, Western Australia. Nanda are considered to be the northernmost group of people in the area, with the Nanda language being spoken in and around the mouth of the Murchison River, which is near where the coastal town of Kalbarri (Wudumala) is currently situated, north to Gee Gie Out camp, and inland along the Murchison. Other groups of Aboriginal people in the area are the southern dialect Amungu, and the central group referred to as Watchandi, whose language was spoken in and around Northampton and Port Gregory (Blevins, 2001).

Research on Nanda perspectives, connection to Country, and what it means to be a Nanda person in contemporary Australia, as well as continued documentation of Nanda culture, is long overdue. This study builds an account of traditional ties to Country and documents Indigenous perspectives that may assist in bridging the reconciliatory gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. I achieve this by answering the central question of this research study: How do Nanda people connect to each other and Country? This central question is answered by describing what it means to be a Nanda person and how we connect to each other and Country through oral yarns of Elders, and by identifying the historical, ethnographical and anthropological records that connect Nanda to a particular area.

Studies on Nanda/Yamatji

There is a dearth of literature on Nanda people. There are, however, collections from the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that include ethnographical accounts of Nanda language and culture from Grey (1841), Oldfield (1865), and Bates (1944). In addition, there are studies by Bates, edited by Bridge and

Reece (2004) and White (1985), on Nanda and the Murchison region that are useful in establishing an account of Nanda language and culture from these eras.

Recent studies on Nanda include linguistic research work by Blevins (2001) on Nanda language and identification of Nanda language speaking people in the region, and Gerritsen's (1994, 2002) studies on Nanda and their language. A Jackson and de Grand (1996) heritage study of the Nanda area is based on desk top research study and a seven-day fieldwork study. The desk top study focussed on previous research on Aboriginal Heritage issues in the region, consultation with Aboriginal people in the region, formulation of recommendations for the management of previously recorded Aboriginal sites, filming and production of a video, and fieldwork.

Prout (2008, 2009, 2011) has completed studies that focus on mobility in Yamatji Country from a geological perspective, but suggests a need for more research to "advocate the conceptualisation of Aboriginal mobility processes and practices around Aboriginal narratives and definitions of their spatiality…Such approaches require the adoption of more qualitative methodologies such as participant observation" (Prout, 2009, p. 418). Indigenous scholars also promote an Indigenous narrative in their study aptly titled "Martu Storytellers: Aboriginal Narratives within the Academy" (Somerville, Sommerville and Wylde 2010). They place importance on Martu narratives being utilised to inform the wider community of their culture and history, as well as privileging Martu positions for them to act as a conduit of appropriate storytelling from an Aboriginal world view. This platform enables the Martu people to inform the wider Australian community of their connection to Country and identity from of their own stories. Finally, Prout (2008) points out that traditional owners being able to to speak about contemporary expressions of traditional land custodianship is vital for future research. My study fills major gaps by documenting Nanda narratives on connection to Country and each other, and providing deeper and richer accounts of what it means to be a Nanda person in contemporary Australia.

Significance

This research is significant in several ways as it seeks to make a contribution to qualitative research in a variety of disciplines undertaken on Aboriginal Australia. The research adds to the material on Nanda people by continuing to document

contemporary perspectives of Nanda people, our genealogies, as well as our perspectives of how we connect to Country and each other. Moreover, this study is significant in that it allows for an analysis of Nanda connection to each other and Country through oral yarns in an historical context from the standpoint of Nanda people. Given the present lack of accountability and transparency by government, both state and federal, and other non-government agencies, including Aboriginal Land Councils, research that clearly maps out genealogical and oral connections to Country, based on Nanda accounts of how and why we perceive ourselves as traditional owners of this area, is extremely important. Discussions on significant cultural sites in an ethnographic and historical context provide significant contributions that build upon existing knowledge for Nanda people.

This research is an Indigenist study driven by the researcher's positioning as a Nanda person. From this standpoint, the researcher gives insights into insider perspectives on how my extended Nanda family connects with each other and Country. I also note that this research involves Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers working together. Acknowledging and supporting the strength of these relationships within the academy is important, as is taking from it constructive ways of working together. This is not without its ideological and practical challenges, of course.

Finally, the specific insights of Nanda perspectives in relation to connection to Country and each other, and what it means to be a Nanda person in contemporary Australia, provide a shift from what has largely been a non-Indigenous perspective of historical and anthropological accounts on Nanda people, our culture and connection to Country and each other. I would like to point out that native title is a platform for Indigenous people to apply for their rights to traditional lands to be acknowledged by the state. The system is structured by a western legal system and relies on a connection report generally produced by anthropologists and native title lawyers. The state does recognise native title through connection reports and they do have a process in place for this.

However, a qualitative study by a Nanda person, on Nanda people, for Nanda people has produced a unique body of evidence. This has been done by describing how we as Nanda people believe we are connected to Country and each other. This approach is vital in revaluating and reclaiming our positioning in contemporary society, as it privileges the voices of Nanda people in what has historically been

regarded as an empty space in colonial Australia. This perspective must not be under-valued as it provides an original standpoint to research that has not been undertaken previously in this region.

Overview of chapters

Each chapter in this thesis focuses on particular ideas that were developed over the course of the study. Foremost is the application of Indigenist methodology and standpoint as a framework for examining each of the concepts to explain how members of this family group connect with each other and Country. Through the use of an Indigenist methodology and standpoint, the research provides examples of the historical and contemporary struggle of this Nanda family group's survival and recognition as Traditional Owners of a native title claim. Particular themes were recurrent features in many of the conversations with Elders. The theme of identity, pertaining to how members of this family group identify with each other and others, is consistent throughout the thesis and is based on the love and respect of family members.

Our identity is expressed through a Nanda world view and demonstrated in our ways of being, ways of knowing, and ways of doing. The theme of identity is explained through this family group's social and cultural continuity explicit in what we know, and how we communicate our knowledge. The knowledge produced in this thesis provides details of our kinship to each other and Country. This process is enacted throughout the cycle of life, with examples being displayed through family membership, which is then enacted through our social organisation. This then leads to the theme of shared lived experience – the day-to-day experiences that are nurtured and maintained by yarns (storytelling). Yarns of past events are carried forward over time and space, and are pivotal in bringing the past into the present, when we Nanda narrate our experiences of time spent with loved ones, both past and present. What is imperative in this thesis is that the topics of conversation emerge as important and dominant ideas or issues that result in informing the structure and content of the chapters. The evidence of each chapter can be found in the experiences and interpretations from Elders' yarns woven throughout, and examined through specific theoretical literature that allows a more comprehensive discussion and explanation of complex issues.

Chapter two begins by explaining the overall methodological framework used for this research and its analysis. The discussion is focussed on the broad qualitative approach required in order to support Nanda perspectives presented in this thesis. The framework is based on Indigenist methodology, standpoint theory and autoethnography. Attention is paid to interpretive practices that support an Indigenist framework and standpoint, concluding that an Indigenous research paradigm is founded on cultural respect and cultural safety, which is embedded in Indigenous ontology, axiology and epistemology. The chapter then looks at the chosen methods. Yarning and participant observation are used with thick description enabling a rich and robust account of everyday stories, as evident in the following chapters, to draw on the perspectives and explain the themes within each chapter. Chapter two then provides details of the Ethics and community consultation processes.

Chapter three begins with a brief historical overview of European settlement, from first contact in 1788 on this continent, prior to briefly discussing the settlement of Perth in 1839. The section then introduces Nanda Country. Chapter three introduces my family members in a genealogical and historical context through an examination of government and archival records that vindicate the claims of regulation used by the state in their chosen policy and procedure. These processes not only subjugated Nanda people, but a majority of Aboriginal people throughout Australia in one way or another. The discussion illuminates the effects of colonialism, where place and location were major factors in determining where and how Nanda people lived. The practice of government documenting movements of Nanda is used to provide evidence of my family's connection to Country, confirming Nanda existence from the records of overzealous Europeans in their pursuit to observe, manage and contain. The chapter establishes Nanda identity in a traditional sense and begins to explain this process through the analysis of our social organisation. Chapter three gives explicit examples of how Nanda connect through kin, and how we are identified as members of the family through the provision of yarns, as told by Elders. This chapter establishes our identity through yarns (storytelling), a procedure that elucidates powerfully emotive accounts of Nanda shared lived experiences. These experiences establish strict compliance to this family group's social and cultural existence. It is here that the chapter sets the scene for the remainder of the thesis, in that it establishes and recognises that connection to Country is formed through our

identity as members of the family group obtained through our relationships with each other.

Chapter four further explains the family groups relationships set within our family membership. The analysis provides a variety of examples that explain how members of this family group connect to Country through our associations to each other. In this chapter the emphasis is on the process of how kin and Country correlate as one. This is achieved by presenting the yarns of Elders and intrinsically weaving their stories throughout the chapter to garner rich and evocative accounts of connection to Country presented through a Nanda worldview. Topics covered in this chapter are identifying and being identified through family kinship ties to Country, identifying and connecting to people as a member of a family group, naming rights, ways of knowing, re-connecting with family, Nanda religion and connection to Country. Examples are offered of ritual practices that are still practiced today. This is achieved by weaving Elder's stories with earlier publications of Nanda in the area. The themes in this chapter provide evidence of our tradition and give profound insights into our cultural continuity.

Chapter five examines the sensitive and profound subject of loss we refer to as "Sorry Business," the time-honoured processes we follow during and after losing a loved one. This is achieved by providing details of our cultural, formal and informal gatherings that give insights into our bereavement practices. The material within this chapter offers a personal and sensitive explanation of the varying stages of Sorry Business. The chapter begins with a short analysis of statistics on the dire life expectancy of Aboriginal people in Australia. The chapter then explains the process of a fieldwork trip to Geraldton that coincided with losing a family member. Thick description in this chapter further demonstrates how our family connect to each other and Country. The analysis provides rich insights into this family group's shared lived experiences, presenting examples of a remarkable commonality of our shared identity through the collective process of Sorry Business.

Chapter six examines this family group's movement, which essentially creates a continued connection to each other over time. Mobility has always been a core feature of Aboriginal people's lives, but the speed and distance that has to be negotiated in a modern world, which tends to fragment families, has created a new set of challenges for Nanda to maintain connections to each other. This chapter provides examples of how family members connect to each other over vast geographical areas

by detailing a series of short ethnographical road trips. The first begins with a road trip from Darwin to Gunbalanya (Oenpelli) in the Northern Territory, and the second is a detailed road trip to Geraldton. Both of these accounts present the complexity of the day-to-day experiences of this family group's mobility. I again use thick description to present actual events of several meetings and gatherings with family members during these road trips culminating in a series of robust ethnographical accounts of our shared lived experiences.

To conclude, chapter seven explains that this thesis provides a rich descriptive account of how members of a Nanda family group connect with each other and Country. The evidence provided throughout the thesis gives insights into our social organisation and shared lived experiences, which have been presented through a collection of yarns by Nanda Elders and my own interactions with my family to capture the details of everyday life. These codes and conventions link the past with the present in our struggle for survival and maintaining a strong sense of culture and Country in contemporary Australia.

Chapter 2
Methodology

This chapter explains the overall methodological framework used for this study and the specific methods adopted to collect participants' perceptions about Nanda connections to our land and to each other. The study's aim was to build a thick description of the everyday ways in which we maintain these links drawing on a range of sources and materials. The broad qualitative approach will be outlined. Next, the Indigenist research paradigm will be explained in the context of standpoint theory. The rationale for an autoethnographic dimension to this study will also be set out. My positioning as a Nanda man and member of the Kelly family will then be addressed. An account of the methods used will be provided, and finally the ethical implications and processes of this research will be discussed.

Qualitative research

This research is a blended qualitative approach and is best explained by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005, p. 2) in this statement: "In general, qualitative research draws on an interpretive orientation that focuses the complex and nuanced process of the creation and maintenance of meaning." A qualitative researcher may be seen as a "bricoleur," for the qualitative researcher adapts to and utilises many methodological practices to assemble a narrative that weaves together a range of diverse materials. Qualitative researchers as explained by Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 4), "deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand."

A qualitative research approach allows me, as a Nanda researcher situated within the Western academy, the space to provide Nanda perspectives and accounts with critical judgments being made to ensure the knowledge is appropriate for the Western academy. Hence, there is frequently a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study" (Moore, 2008). There are several theoretical traditions, frameworks and approaches in qualitative research, such as Marxism, feminism, postmodernism and critical theory (O'Connell-Davidson & Layder, 1994). In this research interpretivism supports an Indigenist methodological framework and

standpoint. This methodology enables me to present a Nanda epistemology, ontology and axiology as a framework to inform the research, including an analysis and discussion of what it means to be a Nanda person. This is achieved by examining how Nanda perceive ourselves, thus enabling members of my Nanda family group to freely and frankly share our perspectives of culture, identity and sense of belonging.

Indigenist methodology and standpoint

The Indigenous research paradigm is founded on cultural respect and cultural safety embedded in Indigenous ontology (ways of being), axiology (ways of doing), and epistemology (ways of knowing) (Martin, 2008; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003). This approach involves contesting a "Eurocentrism that supports the belief in the superiority of European people over non-European (Indigenous) peoples, and extends to the lack of recognition (or ignorance) of Indigenous knowledge systems, ways of knowing, ways of doing" (Denzin, Lincoln & Tuhinwai-Smith, 2008, p. 91).

As an alternative to the longstanding prevalence of Eurocentrism, Martin and Mirraboopa (2003, p. 9) explain:

> Ways of Knowing are specific to ontology and Entities of Land, Animals, Plants, Waterways, Skies, Climate and the Spiritual systems of Aboriginal groups. Knowledge about ontology and Entities is learned and reproduced through processes of: listening, sensing, viewing, reviewing, reading, watching, waiting, observing, exchanging sharing, conceptualising, assessing, modelling, engaging and applying.

Wexler (2015, p. 895) also draw attention to assumptions that maintain the epistemological divide, or different ways of knowing, that often separates Indigenous and scientific communities, suggesting that this "provide[s] important contrasting perspectives," and adding that "Addressing these divergent worldviews requires attention to alternate epistemologies and knowledge claims that may contribute to building more accurate scientific models." They emphasise the value of a more holistic, community-based research approach, stating "such lines of research demand consideration of the distinctive, defining experiences of different cultures and different generations to better understand how political, economic, and historical forces constrain and create opportunities and shape priorities and subjectivities of diverse peoples."

Indigenist methodology means, as a Nanda researcher, I can explain how members of our family group connect to each other and our Country as part of a broader Nanda tradition. In this way, Nanda lived experiences are documented from an insider's perspective as opposed to the outsider perspectives of ethnographers, historians, and the like, whose knowledge has been privileged until relatively recently. By documenting thick and rich descriptions of everyday Nanda lived experiences, I am enacting the core principles of an Indigenist approach. This methodology is part of the struggle of self-determination. Informing this approach are three guiding interrelated principles: "Resistance as the emancipatory imperative research…Political integrity in Indigenous research…[and] Privileging Indigenous voices…" (Rigney, 1999, p. 116). The aim is to decolonize western research methods (Smith, 1999) so that research is attentive to Indigenous Australian peoples interests and needs, and not simply those of the Western academy.

In the introduction to this thesis the point is made that Australian Aboriginal people have been subjected to oppression beginning with the invasion of Australia in 1788. The ideological view from colonists was that the dispossession of Aboriginal land was their "right of occupancy." The right of occupancy was utilised simply to justify a land grab which subsequently led to the oppression of Australian Aborigines through a variety of draconian measures utilised from the invading party. As Landor (in Reynolds (1989, p. 13) explains:

> A 'right of occupancy'! Amiable sophistry! Why not say boldly at once, the right of power? We have seized upon their country, and shot down the inhabitants, until the survivors have found it expedient to submit to our rule. We have acted as Julius Caesar did when he took possession of Briton. But Caesar was not so hypocritical as to pretend any moral *right* to possession. On what grounds can we possibly claim a *right* to occupancy of the land? We are told, because civilised people are justified in extending themselves over uncivilised countries.

It is with this historical legacy in mind that I locate and centre myself with an Indigenist methodology framework. This research project provides examples of the struggle of this Nanda family group's recognition of self-determination. Indigenous methodology allows for us to set our own agenda, privileging our community Elders' freedom to engage, or not, in this research project as participants, without fear of persecution (Rigney, 1999).

As an Indigenous scholar, I draw upon past and present Indigenous researchers. I am aware that I am in a privileged position due to their struggles and I am grateful that I have the opportunity of incorporating such a methodology into my study. I welcome the principles offered by Indigenist methodology in that it gifts me the space I require to do research in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner in order to draw on oral yarns from Nanda Elders. The platform afforded to me from Indigenous methodology has led to a robust study of Nanda perspectives, with detailed examples of how members of this Nanda family group connect with each other and Country.

There is a clear link between Indigenist research and standpoint theory. With women's, Indigenous peoples', and other marginalised groups' lived experiences and perspectives typically excluded or framed by European and patriarchal worldviews in the past, the voices of "others" are crucial for more balanced and inclusive social and cultural knowledge production. Standpoint theory was utilised as a "method of inquiry" emerging in the 1970s and 1980s by Feminists. Feminist standpoint theory allowed women to emancipate themselves from a world where men have constructed the social organisation of their lives. Standpoint theory was then utilised by "marginalised groups whose accounts of experience were excluded or subjugated within intellectual knowledge production" (Nakata, 2007, p. 214).

Autoethnography

"While Autoethnography is not a specific technique, method, or theory, it colors all three as they are employed in fieldwork" (Hayano, 1979, p. 99). As an Indigenous researcher working within my community, autoethnography enables me to include myself, as a historical and cultural subject, in this study in a critically reflexive way. Autoethnography is culturally appropriate because it acknowledges equality as a significant component of Indigenous peoples ways of knowing by asking "us to consider epistemological perspectives equally and to draw together self (auto), ethno (nation), and graphy (writing) together" (Whitinui, 2014, p. 467). The writing process of autoethnography is believed to be a balancing act that is designed to "hold self and culture together," allowing for the auto-ethnographer to transition between story and context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Utilising autoethnography recognises undergoing an "analysis of self-other relations" is vital in this research space. This is due to the fact that I am a family

member and researcher of the Nanda family group. My position therefore allows for autoethnography to differentiate itself from culturalism by executing an "analysis of Self-Other relations, and what can be learned from this dichotomy as we feel, think and probe our way toward some kind of understanding" (Tomaselli, 2013, p. 171).

As a method, autoethnography has been used to alleviate a host of issues that surfaced in the 1980s within the social sciences and relates to their epistemological incubation. Ellis et al (2011, p. 346) highlight this stance from the social sciences by saying: "For the most part, those who advocate and insist on canonical forms of doing and writing research are advocating a White, masculine, heterosexual, middle/upper classed, Christian, able bodied perspective." As mentioned earlier, my standpoint and chosen methodology opens up spaces for alternative accounts and counter narratives.

As a research tool, then, autoethnography is inclusive of differing epistemologies and aims to address social justice and to develop social change by engaging indigenous researchers in rediscovering their own voices as "culturally liberating human beings" (Whitinui, 2014, p. 456). At the same time, as pointed out by Hayano (1979), autoethnography, whose roots stem from ethnography, shares some identical methodological problems. In this sense, my own cultural and historical identity is entangled within the family group participating in this research. I will be attentive to these issues throughout the thesis.

Positioning myself

My positioning as a researcher is not one of benig an objective outsider. I am a Nanda man, but at the same time operating within a Western academic environment. I cannot completely set my identity aside from what I am doing, but at the same time I do have to negotiate practices and responsibilities to my people and my discipline. I am married with two children and reside in the city of Perth, Western Australia. Nanda Country is located in the Murchison region, in the state of Western Australia. My people have lived in and around this area for thousands of years. For as long as I can remember, the area where my fieldwork for this research project took place was known to my family and me as our Country.

I am the researcher of this study and some of my family members were participants in this research project. I sourced all of the participants who are members of my family's native title corporation – Nhunadar Watchinar Parnba Community Aboriginal Corporation – and have full support from the Corporation in my

undertaking of this PhD. As a member of the (NWPCAC) I participate in the Corporation's activities and will continue to do so long after this research project is completed. Upon completion of this research project I aim to disseminate the findings to the Corporation members with the intention to continue with the struggle for Nanda sovereignty of our Country.

Methods

Whilst in the process of receiving candidacy, and to meet the objectives of this study, I formulated several key questions in relation to a particular Nanda family group's connection to each other and Country. After my candidacy application was approved I then applied for ethics approval attaching my proposal and key questions to the ethics application. After I had received the official ethics approval letter, I began the process of contacting stakeholders and potential interviewees, by informing the directors of NWPCAC of my successful candidacy and ethics applications. I then presented the Corporation with the information sheet (see Appendix B) of the research project with my contact details. At this stage I also began to establish appropriate Indigenous research protocols, formulate a data analysis framework, and participate in research training and orientation. Finally, I began planning and writing before entering into the field work phase. In the field, I utilised methods such as semi-structured interviews/yarning, participant observation, field notes and my own reflections, which were all designed to meet the objectives of this research project. A range of methods were employed to deal with the complex dynamics of family members situated in our contemporary social, geographical and political settings. What follows is a more detailed account of the methods used in this research.

Yarning

I conducted semi-structured interviews (yarns/yarning) with Elders, allowing for these Elders to speak on their own terms without time limits or constraints. Yarning is explained by Besserab and Ng'andu (2010, p. 38) in this way:

> … a semi-structured interview is an informal and relaxed discussion through which both the researcher and participant journey together visiting places and topics of interest relevant to the research study. Yarning is a process that requires the researcher to develop and build a relationship that is accountable to Indigenous people participating in the research.

As a method, yarning is empowering, both for me as a Nanda person and the Elders who participated in the research process, as they were given free range to speak as they would in a natural setting free from Western constructs. The setting was on Elders' terms in accordance with Nanda ontology and axiology. These practices provided a conduit that afforded this research the platform to encourage Nanda epistemology. In permitting these frameworks, answers to the questions being asked, such as how we Nanda connect to each other and Country, were able to flow freely.

Yarning incorporates storytelling and the Elders interviewed provided rich oral accounts of day-to-day events by recollecting shared lived experiences and the mundane details of everyday life that illuminate and give meaning to how we, as Nanda, connect to each other and Country. The significance of storytelling is conveyed succinctly by David Graeber's claim (as cited in Jackson, 2013, p. 29):

> If we really want to understand the moral grounds of economic life, and by extension, human life, we must start not with cosmologies and worldviews but with "the very small things: the everyday details of social existence, the way we treat each of our friends, enemies, and children – often with gestures so tiny (passing salt, bumming a cigarette) that we ordinarily never stop to think about them at all.

To this list of everyday details we might add storytelling. In essence, this thesis is a collective of stories (yarns) as told by Elders and myself. The yarns gleaned from interviews cover a range of traditional concepts and practices from Nanda Elders that include social organisation and an oral history that pre-dates colonial Australia. The chapters in this thesis provide a rich tapestry of yarns that are written in detail, free from academic jargon. This shift of position allows for Nanda Elders to be seen as active, authentic, intelligent participants whose shared lived experiences collectively provide evidence to what "William James called the 'plenum of existence' – the full range of human experience, intransitive and transitive, fixed and fluid, rational and emotional, coherent and wild, real and symbolic" (Jackson & Piette, 2015, p. 7). Finally, the chosen methodology, standpoint and methods used in this research seek to achieve what Mattijs van de Port advocates: "risking oneself of the kinds of openness to others and to otherness that will engage our emotions, senses, and bodies, and not simply our intellects" (Jackson & Piette, 2015, p. 7).

Drawing on Elders' knowledge through yarning and storytelling, and utilising thick description, has enabled very small, and often neglected details, to be examined

and incorporated into the larger story presented in this thesis. In order to achieve this, it was imperative that I reconnect with family members. Reconnecting and connecting with family members was carried out throughout the period of the research project, and will continue long after completion of the study.

Participant observation

I chose participant observation as a method to incorporate set periods of quality time doing fieldwork with the research participants. The data collection method of participant observation complements my research project. This method, along with other data collection methods mentioned above and those mentioned below, allowed me to delve into the complex nature of my Nanda family. The process of collating data was achieved through the non-obtrusive method of participant observation, which was necessary at times in order to interpret and explicate details of Nanda experiences in ways that make it impossible for other techniques, such as structured observations and surveys. Participant observation was originally developed and used within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. Participant observation has been used in ethnographic studies for over one hundred years as a means for researchers to observe the practices and behaviors of people and groups of people "within cultures they studied" (Dahlke, Hall, & Phinney, 2015; Kawulich, 2005; Timseena, 2009).

In recent times, however, the method of participant observation has widened its scope, so it is increasingly being accepted as a superior, non-obtrusive data collection method by other disciplines including psychology, health and education (Aagaad, 2016; Watts, 2011; Woods, 1986). The method of participant observation as taken by my research includes spending time in the field with family members in their natural surrounds and yarning. Within this space participant observation has enabled family members to articulate what DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) describe as "*explicit* culture"; that is, what we know and how we can communicate our knowledge with ease. As such, the practice of participant observation has worked in unison with the range of methods mentioned above in order to provide a robust research study with this Nanda family group.

Archival documentation

A significant source of information about my family and Nanda people more generally was drawn from a variety of materials; such as, literature from books, newspapers, journal articles, and archival records, state welfare reports, and police reports, and ethnographic and historical reports. Lived experiences, perceptions and stories were gathered from recorded narratives of Elders and photographs. The rights and welfare of participants was respected at all times.

Ethics and community consultation

Participants were encouraged to proceed with an interview through word-of-mouth (snowballing) from other family members. I conducted interviews in a variety of ways due to the often busy schedules of Elders. All interviews were conducted in a safe environment chosen by the Elders, and only after lengthy discussions and agreements were made. Sometimes, after initial discussion, information of the research project was left with Elders along with a consent form (see Appendix C), allowing time for Elders to proceed at their own pace to consider if they were interested in participating in an interview.

Follow-up was necessary, either by telephone or visits, and was instrumental in the interview process. Respecting Elders' time was crucial to establishing a sensitive process. There was never any pressure on the Elders to participate in any of the interviews conducted. All were fully informed of their rights as participants, of confidentiality issues, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time at their own discretion. In the event that a participant wished to withdraw, no pressure was applied for continuation. I made it clear that if Elders who participated in the research project wished to withdraw at a later stage, all previously collated data would be returned in its entirety. As previously stated, the interviews were conducted in a safe environment, with Elders being informed of their rights. I continued to have open dialogue and discussion with the Elders interviewed and delivered individual transcripts to the Elders either via post or personally. Yarning as a process came naturally to the Elders once barriers were down and trust and rapport were gained. Some of the interviews were more structured than others, and the more unstructured interviews, questions and prompts followed, depending on a range of factors, such as age, Western education and time. Flexibility and respect for each specific participant was paramount and based on evaluating, observing and practicing cultural protocols.

The Nhunadar Watchinar Parnba Community Aboriginal Corporation (NWPCAC) is a not-for-profit community organisation based in Geraldton and Kalbarri, and has extensive membership throughout Western Australia. This research is in compliance with the vision statement derived from the "Nhunadar Watchina Parnba Community Aboriginal Corporation (NWPCAC): Organisational Information-Including Five Year Strategic Plan 2010-2015" 2010, p. 4): “To respect and promote our Nanda Cultural Heritage with a sense of belonging; to generate a strong sustainable vibrant and healthy community for future generations; whilst caring for Country and walking in partnership with the wider community.” I had ongoing consultation with the NWPCAC prior to and since the inception of this research, continuing through to (and after) its completion. The NWPCAC are family members, and I am a financial member of the corporation; as such, I fully understood there were potential risks involved with me being a corporate and family member to the people of this organisation. Due to elements of risk to the Corporation, I formed safeguards, such as the inception of a steering committee. The steering committee enabled me to guide and feed information to the members of the Corporation, allowing for transparency at all times.

I am aware of the sensitive issues around my research and that issues with family members can and, over the course of this project, have flared up at. As such, I have relied heavily on Elders from within the Corporation to guide and direct me when any issues occurred. As a member of the NWPCAC, I attended quarterly meetings and gave updates to the directors and other members of the Corporation. For example, I provided opportunities for open dialogue with family members at all times via telephone, gatherings and meetings, and held open forums where I presented my findings to members of the family group. In doing so, I allowed for input and advice from members of my family throughout the life of my research. I retained my independence as a researcher by living in Perth and doing my field work in the Murchison region. I have had over the course of this project committed to family obligations that needed to be addressed as they presented themselves as I understand that obligation and reciprocity are vital to any research with a group or groups of people. In order to receive support from my family in my attempt at such a personal, political and often difficult project, I sought and was provided with a letter of support from the NWPCAC that I attached to my ethics application.

To conclude this chapter, the methodological framework used for this research has drawn on an Indigenous research paradigm embedded in Indigenous epistemology, ontology and axiology. The framework was designed to employ a culturally appropriate and community collaborative study founded on cultural respect and cultural safety. Moreover, this paradigm was adopted in recognition of the struggle of this Nanda group's self-determination and to support Nanda representation at all levels of the research. The aim of using thick description of the everyday ways we maintain these links was to draw from a range of sources and materials. This enabled me to incorporate very small, and often neglected, details into the larger story presented in this thesis (Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Piette, 2015).

The methods used in this research – participant observation and the traditional concept of yarning or storytelling – were integrated to assist in giving clear insights into how members of this family group are connected to each other and to our Country. This research is a blended qualitative approach that incorporates autoethnography to allow me, as a Nanda researcher, to provide Nanda perspectives and accounts of everyday shared lived experiences and perspectives. At the same time, critical reflexivity has been applied to ensure the knowledge is appropriate for the Western academy. The following chapter incorporates the above-mentioned framework, providing an historical account of first contact between Nanda and Europeans, before introducing members of this family group and presenting a detailed composition of who we are, where we come from, and how we connect to each other.

Chapter 3

Nanda: Who we are and how we connect

I begin this chapter by giving a broad introduction of the 1788 contact between European and Aboriginal people in Australia, before moving the discussion to the initial contact period in Western Australia. I then shift to examining historical evidence on Nanda people and our Country, before introducing my great grandparents, Cornelius Kelly and Nellie Wilson. The stories of my great grandparents' lives and how they lived and survived are collated from government documents that are indicative of policies and procedures at the time. Sadly, it is evident that these policies and procedures were implemented by the Western Australian government to regulate the lives of many Aboriginal people in the state, and members of my family were not untouched by the draconian measures utilised to control and oppress them.

It is important for me, as a researcher and a descendent of family members in this project, to point out that the data collated from government documents that inform this study has and still does carry with it remnants of institutional abuse. It is evident throughout this thesis that the effects of colonialism are far reaching amongst members of this family group, and it is through the administrative processes of colonialism and its effects that I give voice to not only my great grandparents, but also my grandparents, uncles, aunties, mothers and fathers, cousins, brothers and sisters. For the purpose of this study the relevant documents collated have been utilised in order to provide written evidence of how we as a Nanda family connect to each other and Country. Finally, in this chapter I provide evidence on how Nanda identify in traditional ways to connect with each other and Country, further enhancing the historical evidence provided. I then discuss how we, as a family, identify and connect within the family group as well as with other Nanda and Aboriginal people in general.

Settlement in Western Australia

The British invasion of Australia in the eighteenth century was part of the colonial expansion that began earlier in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and led to frontier wars on each continent (O'Connor, 2007). There have been

misunderstandings leading to tensions in Australia between Aboriginal people and Europeans due to a lack of respect and acknowledgement that dates back to the British invasion, when Governor Arthur Phillip claimed New South Wales "without any reference to Aboriginal rights of prior occupation, just as Cook had done eighteen years earlier" (Yarwood & Knowling, 1982, p. 15). It is fair to say that whilst early relationships between Aboriginal people and European settlers in Australia were initially met with "surprise and curiosity," both parties quickly became disappointed by a lack of interest in trying to understand one another's cultures and their positioning on land and issues around land ownership (Stanbury, 1977).

Initial settlement of the Swan River in Western Australia was different to our eastern states' counterparts in a variety of ways. Fink (1960) explains that Aboriginal people in Perth were originally granted the full rights of British subjects, with the settlers and colonial government acting in moderation and walking on the side of caution during initial contact. Aboriginal people in Western Australia were not initially treated like they had been in other parts of Australia, pauperized and in some cases exterminated. The Swan River colony was also convict free and was settled with the financial assistance of capatilists who were rewarded for their support with grants of free land (Markey, 1976). However, the local Aboriginal people of the Swan River region, who early on were "inquisitive and friendly" towards the settlers, soon became hostile once the novelty wore off and the intentions of the colonists were made clearer. The "Colonists were encroaching on Aboriginal territory, pushing Aborigines out of their hunting grounds and gathering grounds and depriving the indigenous inhabitants of their natural sources of food" (McNair & Rumley, 1981, pp. 3 & 5).

Nanda Country

Figure 1. Map of Nanda region in Western Australia.

In the Murchison region, Nanda people (see Figure 1), as with other Aboriginal people throughout the Australian continent, shared a unique balance between man and landscape, which supplied their need for food and sustanance from within their respective territories. Europeans on the other hand relied heavily on introduced plants and animals to survive. The introduction of plants and animals proved to be at Aboriginal's, and certainly Nanda's, peril as their landscape was, and continues to be, changed by the introduction of new species. The landscape, which provided sustanance to Aboriginal people was being altered at devastating rates due to the early occupation of the colonisers. Stanbury (1977, pp. 46&47) explains:

> The greatest factor upsetting the balance of nature at this time was pastoral occupation. This was undertaken largely without an understanding or care of the Aboriginals rights, without a recognition of the delicate character of the landscape, and without an understanding of the problems which would be caused by the introduction of carnivores such as cats and dogs or herbivores such as goats and sheep…The native grasses, apparently were destroyed, or were fouled to the point of useleness. The Aboriginals were thus driven away from their native lands into less congenial regions or, if they wished to stay, were placed in a debased situation on the outskirts of a civilisation they did not understand and within which they were not acceptable.

The presence of people (Nanda) and their communities was noted by explorer George Grey as early as 1839 and explicated in his journal (Grey, 1841). The data stems from Grey's failed attempt to lead an expedition designed to examine the Western Australian coastal lands from Perth to Shark Bay. Shortly after arriving at Shark Bay the expedition was caught in a cyclone and, after having lost most of their equipment and stores, decided to return to Perth. Heading south along the coast the explorers again found themselves in trouble after their remaining two boats were swamped by waves at the mouth of what is now known as the Murchison River. With little food and no water the bedraggled expedition party were left with no choice other than to walk the five hundred or so kilometres back to Perth. It was on this track back to Perth that Grey began to record his observations. The observations made by Grey indicate that far from the Nanda people being nomadic, uncivilised and unsophisticated, they were a developed people who resided in semi-sedentary urbanised villages or towns. Below is an example of Nanda existence some ten years after the colonisation of Perth from Grey's journal (Gerritsen, 2002, p. 2):

> April 5 1839: ….The estuary [actually a salt marsh, Hutt Lagoon] became narrower here, and shortly after seeing the natives, we came upon a river running into it from the eastward [Hutt River]; its mouth was about forty yards [36m] wide, stream strong but the water brackish, and it flowed through very deep ravine, having steep limestone hills on each side…Being unable to ford the river here, we followed it in a SE direction for two miles [3.2 km], and in this distance passed two native villages, or, as the men termed them, towns,- [sic] the huts of which they were composed differed from those in the southern districts, in being built, and very nicely plastered over the outside with clay, and clods of turf, so that although now uninhabited they were evidently intended for fixed places of residence.

Similar sightings were made by the party as they made their way back to Perth and, in describing settlements such as Willu Gulli on the Bowes River, Grey (1841, p. 26) states:

> This spot was a favourite halting-place of the natives; and from the number of huts, and other indications which we saw, the district must be very densely populated. The huts were of the same superior construction as those which we had seen near the Hutt.

Figure 2. Bowes River: A popular fishing spot.

Figure 3. Road leading into Willu Gulli.

Figure 4. Whilst the settlements are no more, evidence of Nanda existence remains through Rock Art on cave walls at sites around Willu Gulli.

Over a period of twelve years following Grey's expedition in the Victorian district, similar observations were made from a variety of explorers, pioneers and government officials (Brown, 1851; Foley, 1851; Helpman, 1846; Roe, 1847; Stokes, 1841). Stokes (1841) describes spending the night in a "wigwam" that gave them warm quarters for the night. Other findings and conclusions made by Gerritsen (2002, p. 22) include:

> That Nhanda people of the Victorian District were engaged in agriculture. That there were at least five substantial settlements inhabited by the Nhanda and associated groups in the Victorian District and Shark Bay. That the populations of these settlement, where these could be determined, ranged from an estimated 99-290. That two of these settlements have been identified, the possible location of the third determined and the general location of the remaining two ascertained. That the dwellings of the Victorian District were typically dome-shaped structures up to 1.8 metres high, that they were built with large timbers and coated with clay, and capable of accommodating up to ten people. That these settlements were probably permanent and that their residents exhibited a high degree of sedentism, to the extent of being multi-seasonally sedentary; that the range of settlement types were in evidence including "homesteads," "dispersed settlements," "hamlets," and "villages"; and that there were other habitations and settlement sites in the region, with Bootenal, the lower Irwin River and the lower Chapman Valley being likely locations.

Murchison House station (see Appendix D) was established in the 1860s near the mouth of the Murchison River and employed many Nanda people who had previously been living in the area. During this time Nanda people were sought after to perform menial tasks on the station and were paid below the minimum rate or in rations such as flour, blankets, tea and tobacco. However, in 1965 with the introduction of the Pastoral Industries Award (the Act set minimum wage levels for all pastoralists), many Nanda people had to leave as the station could not afford to pay them (Bottrill, 1991). The spread to the north of Perth by Europeans into areas such as Northampton for cattle grazing was within Nanda territory and evidence points to issues of concern between Nanda and Europeans over land and land ownership in the initial stages of European occupation.

Oldfield (1865) asserts that whilst Nanda people were acutely aware of their boundaries, and that each tribe in the area was aware of these, they feared moving onto other Aboriginal territories, even though they were being overrun by Europeans and their introduced species, such as cattle. An example of tensions around land and land ownership in the Murchison region between Nanda and Europeans arose from issues over who had rights to what. Moreover, European occupation of Nanda territory involved retributory outcomes for Nanda who, after suffering from hunger, would kill and feast on the settlers' cattle. To avenge the act of their cattle being killed the settlers resorted to the indiscriminent slaughter of "the guilty and the innocent, of man, women and child', as has too often been the policy of the Europeans" (Oldfield, 1865, p. 221).

Nanda identity

Having provided this historical overview of the Nanda, I will now outline our distinctive social and cultural identity in more detail. The Nanda people of the Murchison region have a rich and diverse culture. Nanda (earlier on colonial spellings are Nhanta and Nhanda), pronounced (Nun-da) is the name of a language and people that lived, and still live, along the coastal area north of Geraldton and south of Shark Bay, Western Australia. Nanda are considered to be the northernmost group of people in the area with the Nanda language being spoken in and around the mouth of the Murchison River, which is near where the coastal town of Kalbarri (Wudumala) is currently situated, north to Gee Gie Out camp, and inland along the Murchison River.

Other groups of Aboriginal people in the area are the southern dialect Amungu and the central group referred to as Watchandi whose language was spoken in and around Northampton and Port Gregory (Blevins, 2001).

Australian anthropological approaches to Aboriginal relational/social organisation have been largely based on kinship and social structures. The following discussion will highlight the social organisation of members of this particular Nanda family group. In the following sections I will utilise what are strong foundations of research on Aboriginal social organisation and build on these to establish a detailed analysis of Nanda ways of being, doing, and knowing, thus allowing for a contemporary study to decipher how this particular Nanda family group connect to each other and Country through kinship, genealogy and social organisation.

Aboriginal Australians have a unique world view bound by what has been described as commonalities, which flow from a system allowing one to identify as a member of what is the oldest practicing culture in the world. First, there are historical patterns influenced by European contact (Reynolds, 1989). Second, there are cultural values and underlying principles of Aboriginal social organisation that together combine to produce these remarkable commonalities (Sutton, 2003). Within the Aboriginal community/s, the concept of Aboriginality is built on sets of values that begin with the fact a child born to a particular mother and father inherits his/her position within not only the immediate family unit but the broader family group. Through the very act of their birth they are allocated a set of birth rights, allowing exclusivity within a particular family group from the cradle to the grave (Barwick, 1998).

Sansom (as cited in Berndt 1982, p. 136) explains “Aboriginal commonality has its genesis in the repetitive reassertion of similar forms for social association on a continental scale.” Whilst this format is deemed to be in relation to pan Aboriginal commonality, I draw from it examples of how we connect with one another as Nanda. For members of this Nanda family group, repetitive reassertion stems from a variety of practices. This is a constant and, as such, I give examples of a set of rules and regulations through this family group’s social association, arguing that they are informed through family membership and passed down from generation to generation. This is achieved by producing compelling evidence that offers insights into the traditional aspects of this Nanda family group’s membership.

Whilst I accept that there are Aboriginal commonalities throughout Australia, it is not my objective in this thesis to argue that all Aboriginal people are the same. We are different in a variety of ways that are brought about by barriers including, but not limited to, geographical space, language, religion and politics, to name a few. My focus, with all due respect, is on a particular area and a particular family group – my own. In the following sections of this chapter I provide evidence of how this is achieved with analyses of identity through people-to-people interaction, who is and who is not Nanda, and what constitutes this. I begin by discussing identity from within, linking how this is achieved through a transfer of knowledge from Elders. Transfer of knowledge covers a range of aspects that include genealogy. Knowledge of genealogy is enacted by holding onto, and passing down, knowledge to family members individually. Genealogical knowledge can also be accessed by the broader family group, and in the following sections I give explicit examples of how these processes are passed on to individuals and the larger family group. I do this through an examination of and focus on the family group's social organisation in terms of functionality.

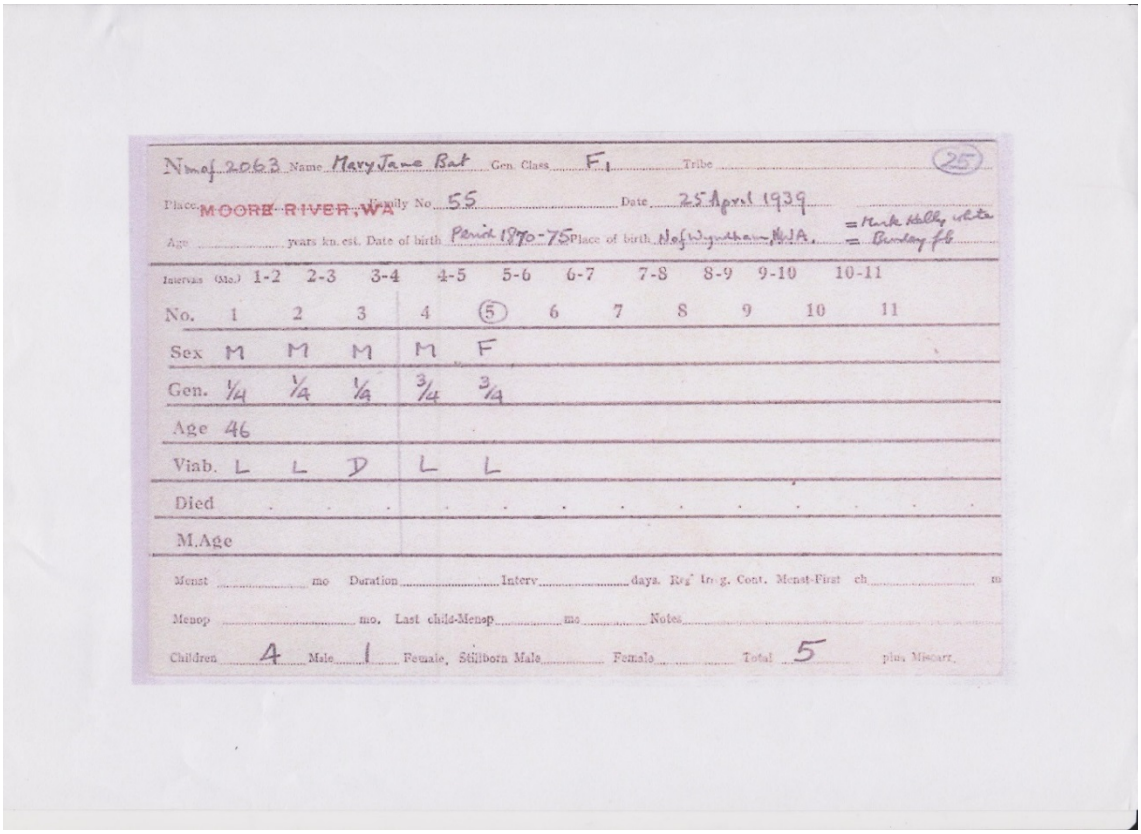
The family group involved in this study is the direct descendants of a Nanda man known only as Brindy (Brinty, Brintey, and Brindey), date of birth unknown and Mary Jane Batt. For the purpose of continuity I will refer to him as Brindy in this thesis. Evidence of Brindy and his movements were collated from police, prison and other reports that locate him in the Murchison region as early as 1869 and as late as 1892. One police report gives explicit details of him being sighted in 1874, at 4-mile pool, Murchison River where he and a number of other Aboriginal men were seen carrying mutton (O'Connor, 2007). As mentioned above, such sightings and reports would follow Brindy until, in June, 14, 1878, he and six other Aboriginal men were charged and eventually convicted of spearing and killing five sheep and one heifer. On July 5, 1878, Brindy was sentenced to six years imprisonment at the now infamous Rottnest Island prison (Green & Minchin, 2014) . Upon Brindy's release from Rottnest Prison, police documents continued to provide evidence of his movements in the Murchison area. For example, in 1892 at South Hutt River Flat, a missing young woman was found and retrieved from a pool where "Mark Kelly got a native named Brindy to dive about the pool – and in about 10 minutes he found the body of the girl and pulled it out quite dead" (O'Connor, 2007, p. 63).

Mary Jane Batt's (Brindy's wife) records include a genealogy undertaken on April, 25, 1939, by Norman Tindale revealing that she had two husbands, Mark Kelly and Brindy, four male children and one daughter. The records indicate that Mary Jane, who at the time was residing at Murchison House Station, was the child of an Aboriginal woman and white man and that she was born in Wyndham, a small town in the far north of Western Australia (Office., 1919-1924). However, Tindale's birth place details of Mary Jane are challenged as incorrect by O'Connor (2007, p. 75) who states:

> I think it unlikely, given the dates and ages of the family members, that this is a reference to the present town of Wyndham. Instead, it is more likely that it refers to Wyndham Creek a small tributary of the Gascoyne River not far from Gascoyne Junction. The location of Wyndham Creek seems to be a more logical place of birth for Mary Jane and can also be attributed to traditional concepts of marriage. It is widely held that Aboriginal traditions indicate that marriage was performed outside of the family unit and the fact that Wyndham Creek is relatively close to Nanda Country makes it more practical for a traditional marriage to take place.

In summary, this family group's members are descendants of Mary Jane Batt, born circa 1860s with oral historical records and recorded birth dates indicating that Brindy and Mary Jane had two children together, Angelina, born in 1892 in the Murchison House area, and later, Cornelius, born 1896 at Murchison House Station (other records of his birth date are 1893). Records also indicate that between the births of Angelina and Cornelius, Mary Jane Batt went on to have two more children to a non-Aboriginal man by the name of Mark Kelly (Tom, 1884, and Charlie, 1885). The historical records draw on Mary Jane's movements in and around the Murchison area from the period 1882-1922.

Included in the details of the historical records are that Mary Jane Batt gave birth to her first child, Angelina Rose Kelly, at Murchison House in 1882, and in 1896 she gave birth to Cornelius Kelly, again at Murchison House, identifying Brindy, a Nanda man as having been the biological father of both Angelina and Cornelius. Notes from Tindale also imply that "both Angelina and her brother are Cornelius ¾ [implying three-quarter caste], both being the children of 'Mary Jane Batt' and 'Brindey'" (O'Connor, 2007, p. 75).



Nmaf 2063 Name Mary Jane Bat Gen. Class F1 Tribe (25)

Place MOORE RIVER, WA Family No 55 Date 25 April 1939

Age ... years kn. est. Date of birth Perish 1870-75 Place of birth Nof Wyndham, N.W.A. = Mark Kelly white = Brindy FB

Intervals (Mo.)	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11
No.	1	2	3	4	(5)	6	7	8	9	10	11
Sex	M	M	M	M	F						
Gen.	1/4	1/4	1/4	3/4	3/4						
Age	46										
Viab.	L	L	D	L	L						
Died	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
M.Age											

Menst ... mo Duration ... Interv ... days. Reg' lr. g. Cont. Menst-First ch ... m

Menop ... mo. Last child-Menop ... mo ... Notes ...

Children 4 Male 1 Female, Stillborn Male ... Female ... Total 5 plus Miscarr.

Figure 5. Formal card of Mary Jane Bat produced on 25 April, 1939: Note husbands Mark Kelly white and Brindy FB relating to the measure of Aboriginality, in this case FB = Full Blood**.**

However, further inspection reveals, as noted previously Brindy was detained in the notorious Rottnest Island Prison for six years from 1878-1884 (Green & Moon, 1997) . Therefore, the prison records rule out Angelina, who was born in 1882, as being the biological daughter of Brindy. The historical records also document the births of Mary Jane Batt's other children and follow their movement throughout the Murchison region accepting food rations that include specific details of the amount of sugar and flour she received (O'Connor, 2007).

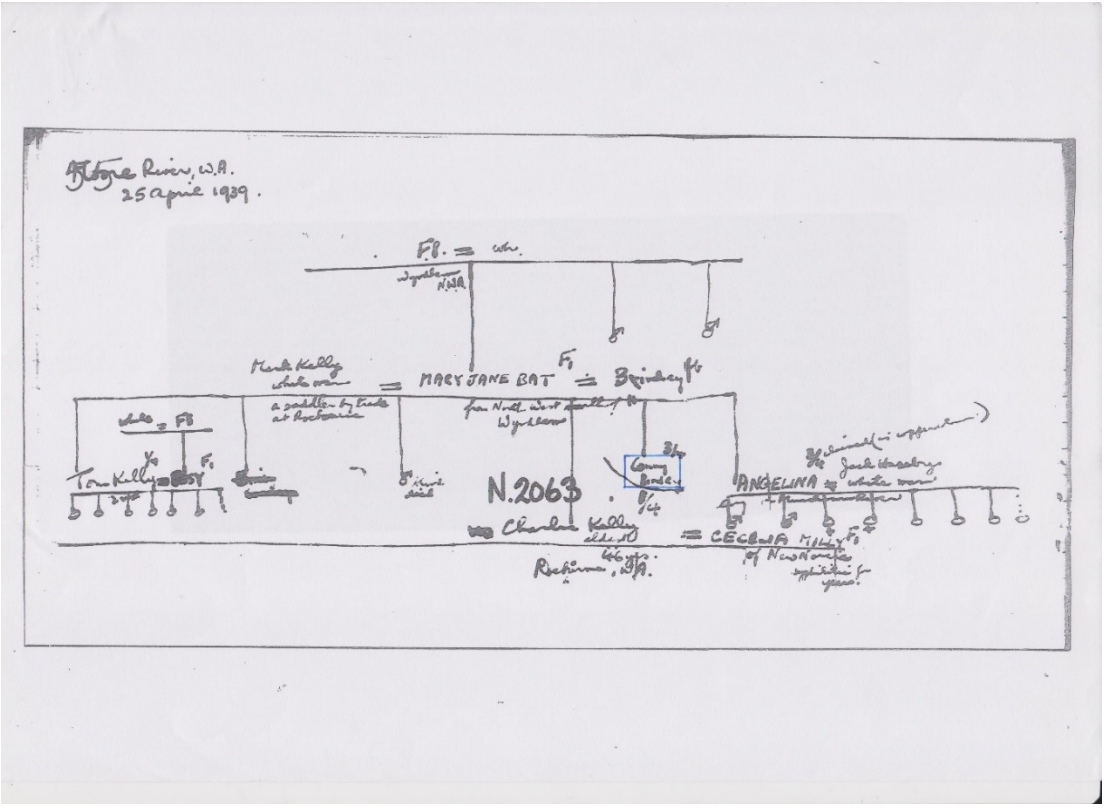
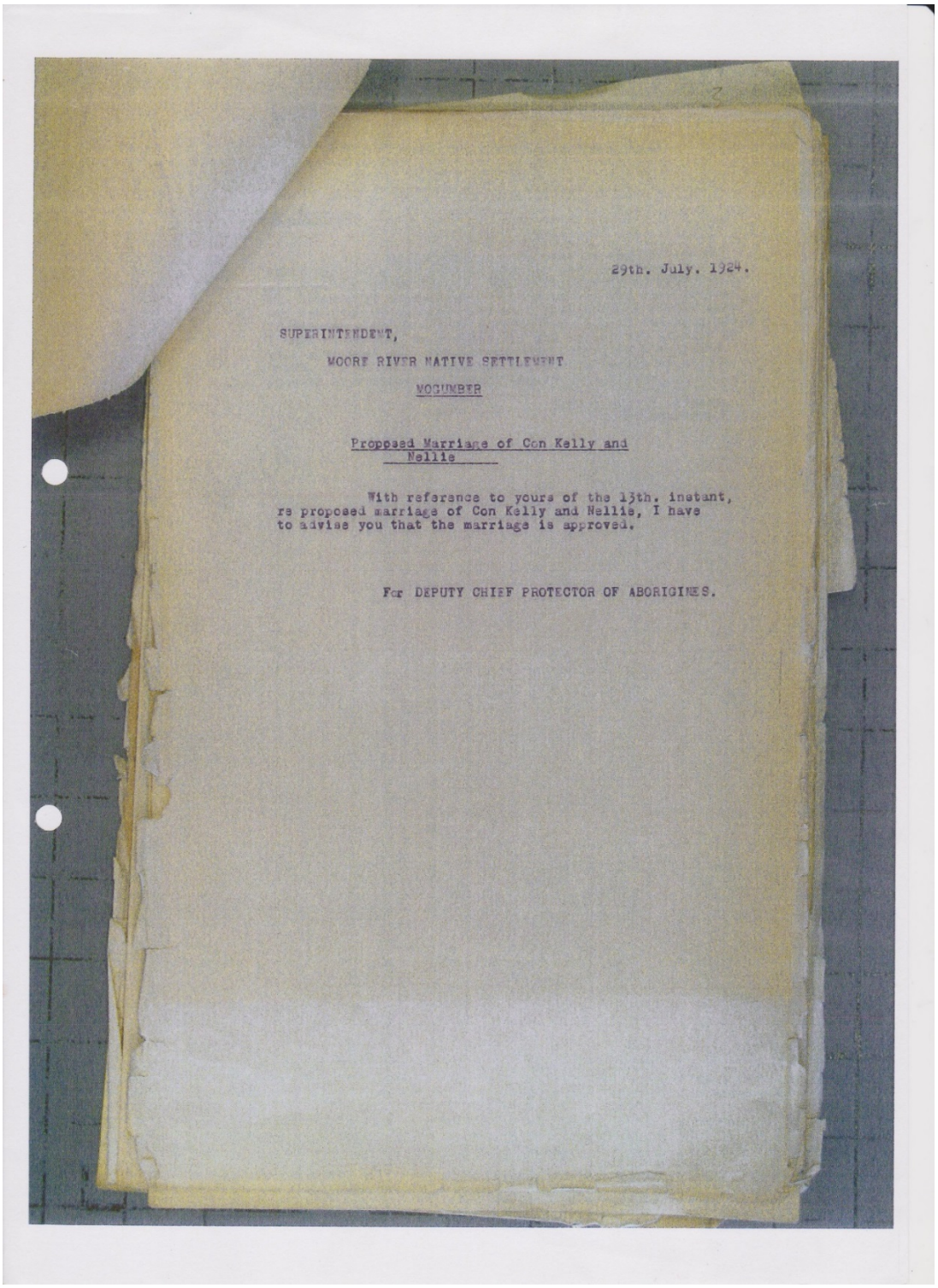


Figure 6. Original Tindale Genealogy drawn up at Moore River Settlement, April, 1939.

Cornelius Kelly was born in either 1866, 1893 or 1896 at Northampton and married Nellie Wilson, a half caste daughter of a white man by the name of Wilson and an Aboriginal woman named "Sally." Nellie was born at Peak Hill in Western Australia in 1904. Both Cornelius and Nellie grew up in a time and period in Australia where the "Natives'" lives were severely regulated by a White administration known as the Aborigines Department and overseen by a Chief Protector of Aborigines. The Department in Western Australia was based in Perth and presided over the lives of all Aboriginal people in Western Australia, under the laws enacted in the 1905 Aborigines Act. The Chief Protector of the Department was the peak authority within the Aborigines Department who managed all Aboriginal people residing in that state from a Perth office. However, it was the police stationed in country Western Australia that enforced the 1905 Aborigines Act, at the expense of Aboriginal people (Office., 1919-1924).

Marriage was one section of the law that was utilised to regulate the lives of so many Aboriginal people in Western Australia. Under section 42 of the 1905 Aborigines Act, the Chief Protector could only approve in writing of marriages

between Aborigines and not an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Moreover, under the 1905 Act, the Chief Protector also had the power to consent to or decline marriages between Aboriginal people (see Figure 7).



29th. July. 1924.

SUPERINTENDENT,
MOORE RIVER NATIVE SETTLEMENT
MOGUMBER

Proposed Marriage of Con Kelly and Nellie

With reference to yours of the 13th. instant, re proposed marriage of Con Kelly and Nellie, I have to advise you that the marriage is approved.

For DEPUTY CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES.

Figure 7. Government documents approving of the proposed marriage of Con Kelly and Nellie Wilson.

Nellie Wilson was sent to the Moore River settlement from Peak Hill and arrived in November, 1920, with her eldest daughter, Alma. At the time of her imprisonment at the Moore River Settlement, Nellie had a tribal husband, originally from Broome, to whom Alma was the father and a white man based in Peak Hill keen on marrying her in the Western tradition (Office., 1919-1924).

How Nanda connect through kin

In the previous paragraphs I provided this family group's genealogical structure, beginning with my Great-Great Grandparents, Brindy and Mary Jane Batt. The structure I presented to explain this genealogy is explicit, in that I follow my lineage through my mother's mother's father's father. I have also added historical data of Nellie Kelly and Mary Jane Batt and given further genealogical details from state government records that incorporated my Great Grandparents. In the following sections below I provide evidence through the analysis produced by interviews with Elders of our family genealogy. I do this by giving examples of how we connect to each other as a family and moving from the genealogical as a structure to genealogy as a process produced from our social organisation. Shifting from structure to process allows for examples to be provided through analysis of how members of this family group become familiar with one another through immediate family, mother, and father introductions. I do this by discussing how we connect to each other through our family processes.

In the main, Elders from within this family group have been extremely generous with their time and sharing of knowledge. Within this particular family group it is customary to introduce infants at a young age to the wider group. This is achieved in a variety of ways. For example, an infant or young child may be introduced at large family gatherings, such as funerals, wakes, birthday celebrations, or other family gatherings, where large groups would meet and spend time together. It is at these times where family meet and spend time together in large gatherings that the family genealogy as a process is played out. Older members of the family are aware of their place within the family structure, acknowledging one another formally and informally, depending on the relationship and adapting to how they conduct themselves within the family structure. Men will be seated together yarning in no particular sequence, and knowledge will be passed fluidly from one group to the next.

Figure 8. A family gathering in Geraldton, Western Australia.

The photograph above demonstrates the seating arrangements at a family gathering. There is gender division within our culture and this protocol is learned during adolescence. I am seated within the immediate group of men - my cousin-brothers and other men, including my uncles and other non-relatives. In the background is a section of women seated in a semi-circle. They are all relatives, including the two males seated on the left opposite them. Within the wider group there are numerous small clusters of family groups. The process of these gatherings means that people are in a constant flux, moving from within and throughout the varying groups of people seated together. The outcome of constantly meeting new family members is that relationships are formed, re-formed, nurtured and developed. This act is achieved by members of the family continually connecting and re-connecting with each other by simply acknowledging each other as members of our larger family group. For example, uncles will introduce young men to one another; mothers and fathers will introduce their children to the extended family in much the same way they were introduced to family members when they were infants. All members of this family group share genealogical knowledge of family members by name, rank and position within the wider family group. This is a process that has been passed down from generation to generation. Upon being asked how this is achieved, one Elder adds: *"It's like, it's like word of mouth that he's passing on, our history,*

our genealogy and our culture, back down to me, so that I could teach my kids, you know."

Identity from within Nanda: Being informed of who we are from Elders

At the time of European contact evidence provided suggests that the population of the Aboriginal family group was generally of a small and tight-knit family group of around thirty people with a larger group consisting of the tribe making up a larger group . In contemporary Australia, Aboriginal people have rather large extended families. The Kelly family is no exception to this rule as, within this family group, there are upwards of six hundred kin. It could be argued that the larger extended family group is a by-product of a sedentary lifestyle introduced by early European missionaries and protectors during the 1830s and 1840s, after a devastating period of colonial expansion (Reynolds, 1998).

However, it is not my intention to explain this particular family group's population growth. Rather, I use the setting as a backdrop to assist me in developing examples that reveal the current-day situation of our position as a family group in contemporary Australia. In the following discussion, I will give examples of how we identity from within as a family group. I then move to explain how Elders inform us of who we are, demonstrating how this process lays the foundation through identity. I then give examples of how identity and identifying other members of this family group is produced in the format of indoctrinating young Nanda into a Nanda world view. This process is achieved by further discussing details that infuse us as a family group due to the fact that we learn at an early age to love and respect our Elders and other members of the family, such as uncles, aunties, siblings, nannas (grandmothers) and pops (grandfathers). I argue that within the family group Elders hold knowledge of how we are connected to each other through oral genealogy passed down from generation to generation. I give examples of how Elders constantly educate young Nanda family members, informing them of who they are, where they come from, and how they are connected to other family members. I conclude by giving examples that this form of affirmation is achieved through the act of the introduction and contact with other family members such as uncles, aunties, cousins and other Elders, also known as nanna and pop.

The following section stems from the first interview I did shortly after receiving ethics approval from the Curtin University Ethics Committee in 2013. The interview took place at my house in Gosnells with my mother, Gladys Clinch (nee Kelly). My two children and wife were in the house whilst I conducted the interview, and as my mother was two hours late, I was in the process of calling the interview off in order to re-schedule with her at a later date. As such, I called my uncle to arrange an interview with him that afternoon. Whilst I was in talks with my uncle on the phone my mother arrived at my house, and after some small talk, we began the interview. Within this particular family group there needs to be a substantial amount of flexibility and adaptation to allow for the ups and downs, ebbs and flows of family politics and sudden life changing situations that occur in today's environment. However, having said that, I feel that issues that arise within my immediate and extended family are magnified ten-fold from the 'normal non-Aboriginal' family existence and, as a consequence, it is difficult to juggle work, study and life around family.

For example, prior to this interview my Mother had taken an urgent call and needed to be somewhere else to assist another family member in a time of need and so was late arriving to my house with the outcome being that this interview was almost cancelled. I understand this is the case with my mob and reiterate the importance of flexibility whilst working with family. I also utilised different interview techniques and will approach different family members according to our kinship structures. For example, I approach my biological mother in a different way to how I would her brother, my uncle. During the interview my mother spoke at length about growing up on Country with family and extended family. She spoke glowingly of being raised by her grandmother, Nellie Wilson, stating:

> *Well, all I can remember is um, we grew up in Northampton; it's a little place about forty k's out of north of Geraldton and I lived with nanna, nanna (Nellie) Kelly nee Wilson for most of my early years.*

She explained how she was exposed to traditional aspects of Nanda social family life such as sharing food with other members of the family, saying that when she was a young girl living in Northampton her family went to the public well to pick up water and cart it back to the family home by horse and cart *"in containers, big drums, and cart the water back."* She added further:

> *We'd try and shoot a kangaroo and have some meat and then we'd all share it with the rest of the clan that were there, the Councillors, and old Uncle Johnny and Aunty Rosie Councillor, nana would always give them something of what, you know, the uncles caught, and ah, if we went fishing, out at um, Willu Gulli, there at Willu Gulli, we used to always catch fish, it was good.*

Sharing with other family members is a traditional concept that is still practiced today with my mother adding, *"Yeah, it was always um, sharing with families and caring about other people, Aunty Lucy Ryder's family too, you know."* Mum further explained that there was *"a big mob of us, all first cousins it was lovely. Anything that we got we shared, and um, we had to share, we were made to share. Nothing was ours, we had to share with everybody."* This statement is pivotal in understanding how Nanda kinship structures are learnt from an early age. Moreover, growing up with brothers, sisters and first cousins helps shape one's identity within the wider family group. This is achieved by learning a Nanda world view that involves ways of knowing, being and doing.

The photograph below (Figure 9) provides an example of how identity of self and others is accumulated through a Nanda world. This is demonstrated by illustrating how ways of knowing, being and doing are acquired within the family group. Here, we see a picture of four young children. Within this picture, however, is a much deeper dynamic: the photograph provides a snapshot of how Nanda children learn about our kinship structures through identity, their own and other family members'. The boy and girl at the front, and the girl on the left at the back, are biological brother and sisters. The young boy in the back right of the photograph is their cousin-brother (first cousin). Within this family group's socialisation process, family members would spend time together allowing for their children to socialise, which in turn provides the impetus for them to learn how to identify as Nanda themselves and the larger family group.

Figure 9. Cousin-brothers and sisters growing up on Country: Clockwise top left Gladys, back right Uncle John, front right Aunty Pauline and front left, holding a lizard, Uncle Marshall Kelly.

The Nanda worldview of knowing is expressed explicitly in getting to know kin, knowing where you stand in the family kinship structure, knowing who your relations are, and knowing how to conduct oneself as a member of the family group. Knowing is achieved through the act of being: spending time with kin, and doing – actively learning through shared lived experiences.

As explained above, the experience of family being together includes meeting new and old family members and identifying each other as a relative – a brother, sister, cousin-brother and sister. In the first instance of meeting family members, and after their initial greeting, Elders would them introduce their children to other Elders, informing them of who they are and how they should be addressed. For example, a parent might say, “This is your uncle and aunty” before introducing their children. Within Nanda kinship structures, all cousin-brothers and cousin-sisters (first cousins) are considered brother and sister. Moreover, uncles and aunties are also considered

mother and father; therefore, this process is a constant learning about one's identity borne out of our shared lived experiences.

While family members may not see others for long periods of time due to seasonal employment and geographical barriers, such as distance, when the extended family gather, kinship structures through socialisation are displayed and demonstrated publicly. Allowing the combination of family members to spend time together and introduce their children to individual family members of the larger family group is an important initial step that provides the platform in shaping one's identity. There are no gender division rules amongst Nanda children. This practice is aimed specifically at developing a Nanda identity. This is achieved by allowing children to learn how to identify as Nanda and to identify with others, individually and with the larger family group. This process is generational with the cycle being performed from one Nanda to another, past, present and into the future. To conclude, the process explained above is produced and reproduced through grandparents, mums and dads, uncles and aunties, brothers and sisters, cousin-brothers and cousin-sisters – all connecting and re-connecting with each other over space and time. The family group continues this age-old tradition led by Elders who connect and re-connect at gatherings, large and small, formal and informal. By doing so, Elders enable their children to learn in the same way they themselves had learnt.

Gladys Clinch interview

Gladys May Clinch (neé Kelly) was born in Munimaya (Northampton) on January 3, 1948, the second eldest daughter of Jessie Kelly. Jessie Kelly was one of ten children to Cornelius and Nellie Kelly. Gladys had three sisters, the eldest Marion (dec), Pauline, and Nita, and a brother Marshall. In her early years, Gladys (Plukey, a nickname given to her by her Aunty Marjory) was raised predominantly by my great-grandmother, Nellie, in Munimaya. Eventually, Plukey would leave Munimaya with her mum, Jessie, and step father, Pat Dowker, sisters Marion, Pauline, Nita and brother Marshal, before briefly settling in Carnarvon, a small seaside town some four hundred kilometres north of Munimaya. Pat was fortunate enough to secure employment as a station hand on Dirrawarra Station where the family moved and lived in tents around the Gascoyne River. Gladys began her education through the school of air, before she moved into Carnarvon Mission to begin grade one. Mission

days were difficult with *"lots of chores to do, such as cleaning, peeling potatoes and preparing other vegetables to cook for some couple of hundred kids."*

Another chore required of her in the Mission was to scrub the floors on her hands and knees and, as Mum explained, they were required to *"make them shine, and they would get ripped up* [told off] *if they weren't up to scratch."* Whilst in the mission, her mother, Jessie, passed away and at thirteen Plukey left Carnarvon Mission and went on to attend Carnarvon High School for two years. At around the age of fifteen she left Carnarvon and settled in the affluent Perth suburb of Applecross with missionaries she affectionately referred to as Ma and Pa Shedley. She would later move to live in the suburb of Koongamia where she attended Governor Stirling Senior High School residing with a foster family, the Clapp's. Although a great distance from family, Plukey would always return during school holidays spending time with uncles and aunties. As a young lady, she procured employment as a Carer at Sister Kate's and began her nursing training at Swan Districts Hospital. After graduating as a registered nurse, she was posted at numerous hospitals around the state, including one in Onslow in the far northwest and Busselton, a hospital south of Perth. Plukey raised five children whilst working full time and was an active contributor to raising and supporting other family members. She eventually married Owen Clinch and we became a rather larger blended family of ten. Plukey loved education, and eventually after many long years working as a nurse left and went onto work in the public service before, in the early eighties, extending her education at Curtin University with the Centre for Aboriginal Studies.

She worked tirelessly throughout her life raising children, her own and others, grandchildren, and whilst employed full time and attending university she attained a degree in Indigenous Community Health Management (ICHM) before enrolling in the Marr Mooditj Health Care Worker Course. She worked in Aboriginal communities throughout the state of Western Australia and eventually began employment in 1990 with the Department of Community Services (DCP), where again her hunger for education fuelled her desire to enrol in a Bachelor of Social Work degree, enabling her to progress through the ranks of DCP where she became a Senior Social Worker. During the early 2000s, Plukey's passion for Aboriginal children's welfare took her back to the towns of Carnarvon, Onslow, and Port Hedland where she worked in child protection services, again with DCP. After many years of country and community employment, and with failing health, Plukey returned to Perth where she officially

retired (for the time being). Plukey was always busy with family, native title issues and travel back to Country from Perth for visits and Sorry Business.

Eventually, Mum would again procure employment, this time in the Perth hills suburb of Parkerville, caring for a family of four Aboriginal children for a period of two years. The four children she cared for, who referred to her as Nan Gladys, were in foster care and came from the Kimberley town of Derby, located in the far north of Western Australia. Mum would often chaperon these four young children on trips back to their Country for family visits on school holidays and it was during this time, doing what she loved doing so much, that she passed suddenly on November 27, 2014. As my mother was, at the time, the matriarch of the Kelly family and the driving force behind this research project, it was only fitting that I privilege her the first interview before moving on with interviews of other Elders within this family group.

The interview was not structured in any formal arrangement, and my children can be heard talking in the background. From this particular interview major themes emerged that, over time, would align with most, if not all, of the other Elders' responses in regard to questions of family connection to each other and Country. Mission life was a recurring theme amongst most of the Elders interviewed and, in this one, my mother also spoke at length about being taken away to the mission. Mum gave detailed explanations on the two world experiences stating that her family never left her alone – there was always a member of the family around. On Nanda identity, and how she learned about being a Nanda person, her response was:

> *Well I guess that really, um, is something that I've always been proud of, cos, I knew that I was a Nanda woman. And it's ah, it's sort of like an inheritance that's passed down from generations. We were always told we were Nanda; my mum and her family were very proud Nanda people.*

The constant affirmation that Elders would instil in their young was achieved by being told who you were and where you belong, giving one a sense of belonging. Being proud of one's heritage anchors one to place and is constantly on display within this family group. The format for this concept is lodged firmly in traditional kinship structures. An example of this concept is expressed in the statement above when this Elder reveals that her Elders, aunties, uncles and grandmother "told" her who she was at an early age. In this statement it is clear that her Elders were educating her on

Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing, through Nanda kinship structures. My mother was raised in a time where the family did not have much money or material goods and, when asked about growing up in Munimaya, Mum encapsulates it succinctly adding: *"Yeah so, yeah we didn't have um, we didn't have a lot of flash things, but we had a lot of love there in that place, there in Northampton."* This statement highlights how profound the significance of love is as it was being showered from Elders and onto the next generation of Nanda children. Here we see a generational process being passed down. Love and being loved, showing love and giving love in its purest form is an essential ingredient within this particular family group and is as much about acceptance and being accepted of who we are as Nanda. Love and respect for each other, it could be argued, are the two necessary ingredients that bond kinship structures together allowing for the process of cultural fluidity, reciprocity and all that comes with it in order to continue to function as a family group. On family and how Nanda connect to each other, Mum further explained that her grandmother Nellie,

> *Already had a daughter, a little girl, that she had in the mission with her, and, and um, that was Aunty Alma. But it didn't make any difference because, Mum and Aunty Al, Aunty Marj, and Aunty Lorn, they were the only girls, and they just all loved each other, they had so much respect for each other. And it was the same with the boys.*

Members of the family were showered with love and respect and, in turn, displayed love and respect to one another at an early age. They were loved and respected from kin from all sections of the family, young and old, parents, uncles, aunties, brothers and sisters and so on. The process of showing love and respect to kin is passed on from our Elders and is inherent within this family group. In the above statement we see traditional concepts of kinship being displayed. For example, Mum was citing the fact that my grandmother, Elma, was not the biological daughter of Cornelius Kelly, my great grandfather. However, in this particular family group, it simply did not matter. Grandmother Elma, as Mum explained, was the daughter of Nellie and, as such, was a full sister to her other brothers and sisters, irrespective. There are no half measures with kin: it is all or nothing. In contemporary Australia, this practice is still prevalent with acceptance of our kin in the fullest manner being reproduced within this particular Nanda family group. Members of this particular

family group do not acknowledge half or step kin, but unfortunately this traditional structure of kin and kinship is constantly challenged by the contemporary western model of a family structure.

Themes of love and respect for each other as kin are reiterated constantly throughout this thesis. It is my belief that these two sentiments are the glue that binds our kinship structures together, allowing for continuity of our culture. Love and mutual respect has been a prevalent backdrop during most, if not all, of the conversations in this research project in order to provide the rich tapestry of evidence and answers to the questions raised. I would hazard a guess that without love and respect for each other as kin, the family simply would simply not have survived as we have. When asked about what it is that is so important for us as Nanda members of this family group, my mother who previously highlights love as a significant ingredient moved to speak of respect and the importance it has within this family group, explaining:

> *And um, that's just ah, respect for the Elders, you know, doing the right thing by them, they all thought, you know the world of me, I was treated like royalty, when I, whenever I went home, and um, I know that, you know that my old Aunties used to just love me and I've still got letters that my Aunties, my old Aunty Marj wrote me. And, I think, for me to be able to pass on that information is, great, really is. I've even let her, let her ah grand-daughter and daughters read my letters, you know, just to show them, you know.*

This process of continuity is achieved by Elders passing on knowledge, educating their young by word and by showing. As previously stated, themes of love and respect for one another as kin are pivotal ingredients connecting this family group, and done so since time immemorial. Being told who you are is affirmation and demonstrates how one receives a sense of belonging from within this family group. Affirmation of one's identity and standing equate to knowing who they are and where they stand in the world. In turn, this process provides the roots that support one to grow and mature with an acute sense of one's identity. Moreover, being told or informed who you are and where you belong has positive effects in that it gifts a member of the family the tools required to understand, make sense, participate, nurture and be nurtured in all aspects of Nanda world views. The process of informing and educating members of the family is performed through our epistemology, ontology and axiology (Martin, 2008), and is achieved in a variety of ways. For

example, being informed constantly by loved ones is positive reinforcement of a person's identity. Being constantly informed of who you are and educated on where and how you belong through attachment to kin and Country from such a young age lays an unshakable foundation in the shaping of one's understanding of one's world and world view.

In this interview, my mother presented vivid details of growing up in a bygone era that gave me with the opportunity to seek out major themes from other Elders interviewed in this research. I was astounded by her recollection of her childhood and what it was like growing up in Munimaya circa 1953, as Mum explains:

> *We weren't allowed out after dark, cos there were no street lights like there is now, it was just all dark, we had no electricity. And um, we didn't have nice carpets on our floors, they were dirt floors. We didn't have nice curtains up, it was just hessian bags. And, they were whitewashed, they were sort of like painted white, so that, um, it just kept the, the bags kept the cold out and, separated rooms, that sort of thing. But, as we got older things improved and we got into houses that were, brick and tile, where is, this was an old tin house, and nanna was so proud of it. And um, she, she taught us how to wash, we used to have a little washing tub out the back that we used to wash our clothes in, or else take them down to the, take them down to the little creek if it still, still had water in, where she used to do the washing.*

It is clear from the details given above that life as a young Nanda girl growing up in a small country town in Western Australia was certainly not easy. Explicit details of the walls of their house being made of whitewashed hessian bags, no electricity, running water and lack of other creature comforts seem impossible to comprehend by today's standards. We liken such living conditions to Third World countries that are so far removed from our everyday lives and realities, that when they do present in the form of television adverts they shock us, reminding us that such squalid living conditions still do exist in other countries far away from our world. Such profound images on our televisions after a certain time of the evening permeate our psyche in order for us, as Australian citizens, to reel in the shock of seeing such abject poverty. It allows for the viewer, in some instances, to reach deep into their pockets in order to make a donation to help alleviate such desperate living conditions. Sadly, however, some living conditions like those mentioned by my Mother still exist in this country for some of our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

For Mum, knowing her position within the family group, community, and place in the world enabled her to grow and develop as a productive member of our

society. Being told who you are and where you come from resonates within this family group's psyche, and lays the foundation of a sense of belonging.

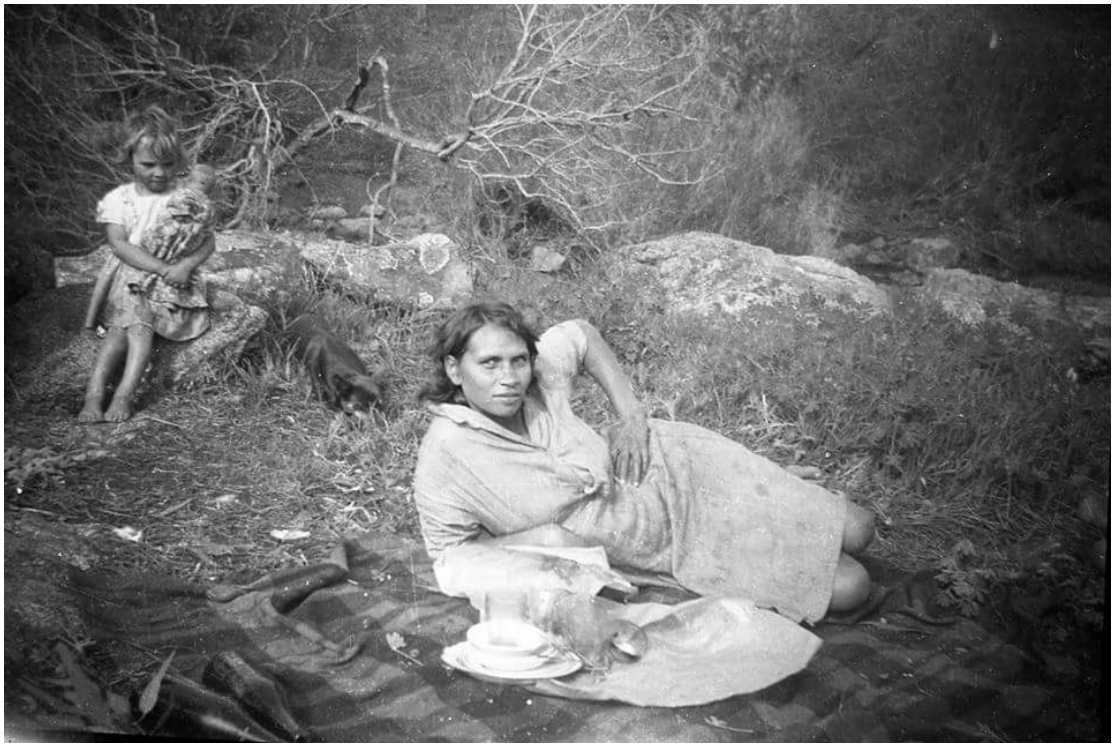


Figure 10. Top left hand corner, a young Gladys May Kelly. Centre, Gladys's mother Jessie Kelly.

Upon being asked how we connect as a family group, Mother explained that it is through inheritance that the formation of being a Nanda person becomes a reality, again citing traditional practices, adding that the process is passed down from generation to generation. The photograph above (Figure 10) shows my grandmother, Jessie, with her daughter, Gladys, my mother, on Country. Inheritance, as my mother explains, is passed on from parent to child and, for members of this Nanda family group, inheritance is unique as it stems from birth. The above photograph illustrates the process of inheritance within Nanda culture. Whilst my mother was born into this family group, the full extent of her inheritance is passed down through her mother and other Elders over many years of learning. Note how my grandmother is laying on her side hand on hip, staring intensely into the lens. The contrast is evident, for Jessie is front and centre, a proud Nanda woman in her prime. A young Gladys, on the other hand, has her head bowed in the background, as if waiting patiently for the opportunity to one day be like her mother, and with full honours taking her rightful place within the family group. Our sense of belonging is formed over time through

the socialisation of our young, creating a sense of how we fit in. In acknowledging that it is within the family and Aboriginal community/s that the concept of Aboriginality is built, my mother actively accepts that these sets of values begin when a child is conceived to a particular mother and father. Moreover, children born within this family group inherit their position not only from the immediate family unit but the broader family group. As previously discussed, it is through birth Nanda are allocated a set of rights, allowing for Nanda children to be recruited within this particular family group.

When asked how Nanda connect to Country, Mother illustrates this succinctly, delivering in a few short words a truly profound understanding of Nanda connection to Country:

> *Well, being on Country is sort of like, it's belonging, you know you belong there, when you go somewhere else you respect other people's land and all that, and you know, but you know it's not your home, so, it'll never be home, but when you go back to, when I go back to Northampton I know that, that's my home it doesn't matter who's there.*

Again, insights given above attach a great deal of meaning to belonging and a sense of group identity, as previously discussed. In the statement above, Mum continues to specify the message of respect; in this instance it is respectful to acknowledge people as traditional owners of Country. Respect in this case is achieved by acknowledging people through their ownership of their Country and their sovereignty. Members of this particular family group hold with them mutual respect for other people's Country. Mum highlights this in the above statement by explaining that she acknowledges other people's Country and is mindful of this. Mum also stipulated that the township of Northampton is her home. I suggest that, in this case, Mum was implying that the town is built on her Country. This belief system set out by my mother is highlighted in relation to Aboriginal connection to Country in this statement by Elkin (1951, p. 165): "The title deeds are spiritual. A man's Country is the home of his pre-existent spirit, and no other 'country' is the same to him."

Furthermore, I would suggest that Mum was locating herself in relation to place names, in this case the country town of Northampton which is built on her Country, her home. By naming Northampton as her home, Mum anchors herself to place. When asked about the importance of returning to Country, Mum's response was:

> *Oh, I think it's really important for me to go back on Country because, then I can tell my children, and pass on that information to my grandchildren, and I've got great grandchildren now, and they can go back there, it's really important for them to know where they belong and where they come from.*

The statements above illuminate this family group's yarns on how we connect to each other and Country. Connection is achieved by illustrating a sense of belonging to both kin and Country. Out of the initial interview with my mother and during and after interviews with her younger kin, such themes were compiled to produce the evidence required in order to support the findings in this research.

As stated, the questions developed by myself and put to Elders in this project assist in giving lucid explanations on how members of this family group connect to each other and Country. In this chapter I am consolidating the previously-mentioned yarns from my Mother and other Nanda Elders in order to give examples of how members of this family group connect to each other. I begin this section with a discussion on this family group's kinship structures. Members of this particular family group learn about kinship and kinship structures at a young age. This is achieved through the process of meeting family members and developing lifelong relationships with kin that presents a shared lived experience. To reiterate, Nanda members would, from an early age, learn how to recognise other family members through a socialisation process within the immediate family, as well as the larger extended family members through exposure. The family group is of course continually expanding, re-shaping and changing over time. Moreover, the world view of what it is to be a Nanda person is in constant flux due to mobility, place of residence, gender, age, and life experience. This form of socialisation also correlates with how the transfer of knowledge from Elders to the next generation of Nanda is performed.

In the following section I provide evidence of this family group's socialisation in order to further explain how we Nanda connect to each other through our Elders. In Aboriginal societies throughout Australia and indeed the world, Elders pass on knowledge to their young. This too is our way of learning. Respect of Elders is an

important component of being who we are and it is through our connection to our Elders, and the willingness of Elders to pass on valuable knowledge that young Nanda continue to uphold their identity. Our Elders guide and support members of this family group throughout the cycle of life. In contemporary Australia, we Nanda are faced with issues too numerous to name here and it is through our Elders that we can, more often than not, navigate through the most complex of settings that we find ourselves in. It is important to note that Nanda live in two very distinct worlds: our own and the wider Australian community. Thankfully, our Elders inform young Nanda people at an early age of their position in their world, thus making it a little easier for the next generation of Nanda to navigate through these two opposing spaces. Historically, Nanda people have world views based on an oral tradition. As such, knowledge is transferred orally from Elders to younger Nanda people within my family. As previously explained, belonging and having a sense of belonging affirms who we are, and our place in the world. Being informed orally by an Elder that you do indeed belong is further affirmation of one's sense of belonging within this family group.

This acceptance of individuals into a larger setting or group as a whole is integral to members of this Nanda family group. For example, I feel honoured when being acknowledged by my Elders and other family members as a Nanda person, even more so in my understanding of the significance that comes with belonging to a family group whose lineage dates back at least forty thousand years.

All of the Elders interviewed within this study were extremely proud of their heritage and provided evidence of how they transferred knowledge. Again, learning who you are and where you belong creates a sense of belonging. In the following sections I present more examples to explain how the transfer of knowledge is practiced. Examples provided will include how members of the family group teach other family members of our genealogy, how we identify each other from within our group, and how other Nanda identify us individually and the larger family group. The analysis will also include discussions of how we, as Nanda, determine who is and who is not Nanda, whist explicating the concepts of Nanda identity. The many interviews of Elders for this research were a revelation, in that they allowed for robust conversations to elucidate how members of this family group connect with each other and Country. At the time, the Elders interviewed were between the ages of 57 and 70 years of age and I found that not only did they have the patience to explain their

perspectives on questions asked during interviews, but they continually provided further evidence by offering their support, insights and yarns over the duration of this research project.

In this interview my Mother, for example, recaptures stories of when she was a young girl around the ages of five or six living at her Nanna's house in Northampton. She explained that she had fond memories of her childhood, recalling the street name of the block she lived on, adding that these events took place whilst she resided on the block, some sixty years ago. So explicit was her memory of the time and events that took place that she also gave details of the animals that were on the block at the time, stating that there were:

> *... three dogs, a horse and cart, with uncles and aunties that used to come and go, and always stay at Nanna's, they'd always bring something with them, some food, or take us looking for food, kangaroo shooting, and things like that.*

Memories of shared experience and living on Country are of good and bad times; they are of a constant flow of family members coming and going, connecting and re-connecting.

Nanda shared lived experience

In the previous paragraphs I have discussed Nanda shared lived experience providing evidence from the perspective of Elders of how this is achieved and disseminated within the family in order to explain that the shared lived experience for Nanda Elders are based on being together and experiencing this togetherness over long periods of time. As explained, the shared lived experiences of this Nanda family group carry the same significance with all members of this particular Nanda family group and begin at a very young age. Shared lived experience, as one Elder explains, is achieved by *"Uncles and Aunties and brothers and sisters, all little kids that used to run around together, and my cousins and that."*

Having discussed the significance of time being spent together with members of the family, it is important to add that there is no time limit on this experience, and the experience itself can also be good or bad. Shared lived experience with family members is a valued commodity that carries with it cultural currency (Sansom, 1980). Members of this Nanda family group also carry shared lived experiences from the past into the future, with such experiences equating to cultural currency. The cultural

currency of shared lived experience is achieved by the telling and re-telling of events from the past and bringing them into the present. This format allows for continuity of memory of family members by collectively disseminating Nanda family yarns over time and space. Shared lived experience may incorporate not just members of the immediate family group, but members from other family groups. When asked about growing up on Country and how the family are connected with each other, one Elder in her late sixties answered again by recalling her childhood and explaining it in this way:

> *We used to go out. The whole lot of them, used to take us out in a horse and cart. We used to go and live out there [on Nanda Country] just about, you know, go and camp down next to the big trees. And there was us, and there was the Councillors and the Corbetts, whoever used to want to, you know from town used to go there. We all, more or less, all been together, you know. And, it was really good.*

From my earliest memories I have always known and accepted that I was Nanda, and as I grew older I was constantly being introduced and reintroduced to family members. As a child, my Mother, my siblings and I lived in Geraldton, some 60 kilometres from Northampton, our Country. I vividly recall being around my cousins all of the time. I knew where they lived and they, where I lived. We would spend our time exploring the bush near our family's homes in the Geraldton suburb of Rangeway. There would always be a big mob of us, seven, eight and more Nanda boys ranging in ages and always together, never alone. There would be me, and my two brothers, along with other cousins seeking adventure and walking for what seemed at the time miles, albeit in reality a short distance from our neighbourhood. We would argue and fight amongst ourselves; we would also fight with other outsiders, laugh and play together; we would cry and support each other when hurt and help each other in times of need; and we would spend our time making cubby houses and playing sport, football in winter, cricket in summer.

Basketball and boxing were to become other favourite past times amongst us. We later moved to Perth, and as I grew older, I recall similar experiences due to constant visits to family back in Geraldton, Carnarvon and Northampton on school holidays. I also had family in Perth and the theme of spending time with family continued in much the same way as previously discussed. I recall movement of families, our selves included. We were always moving house. I also recall aunties

and uncles, along with their children, my cousin-brothers and cousin-sisters, would come and go, visiting and spending time with my family, as had been done since time immemorial. I recall card games generally held on a pension day. I also recall numerous picnics and family gatherings at places such as the Swan River, and Lake Leschenaultia, as well as crabbing and camping at Mandurah, south of Perth. The times spent together with family were always enjoyable, and as a young boy, I felt a sense of belonging that one can only know if one has experienced this type of large family existence. I understood who I was, and I had knowledge of who "my Mob" were. I knew my grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousin-brothers and cousin-sisters. I knew family up close and from far away distant places – those who came and went without much notice and those who stayed close to my immediate family and vice versa. I shared with them special moments in time that, in some cases, were never to be repeated. The special moments brought by spending time together with extended family at times can resemble a small community, and it is this "shared lived experience" that I find is a fundamental factor of being a Nanda person.

Spending large amounts of time with family and extended family throughout my youth and adolescence is how we, as Nanda, learned how to connect with one another at a young age. It is through such shared experiences that we develop memories of our loved ones throughout our lives, allowing us to connect and re-connect with one another as we move through life's stages. This process was how my mother and her mother were raised. We, as a Nanda family group, were doing what we have been doing for generations and what we continue to do in contemporary times with our family group. We are simply continuing the tradition of connecting and re-connecting with each other.

Who is and is not Nanda

In the following section I discuss Nanda identity and give examples of how Elders of this family group decide who is and who is not Nanda. I begin this process by delving into the interesting phenomenon within contemporary Australian Aboriginal societies of what are understood as the commonalities of Indigenous identity. My positioning here is to first and foremost emphasise that Aboriginal people identify with one another through a historical shared lived experience of colonialism. For example, Maddison (2013) explicates that the arrival of the British

colonists had an immediate impact upon Aboriginal people “through direct and structurally violent means,” which was swiftly followed by the attempt to erase their histories. The process of invasion invariably led to the beginning of colonial regulation of Aboriginal people that began by re-constructing Aboriginal identity. Since European contact, Aboriginal identity, Clarke (2000) argues, “has been largely shaped by government policies.” The removal of Aboriginal children from families and being placed in institutions is today referred to as the “Stolen Generation” and this, along with other destructive policies and procedures, has evidently had devastating effects on Aboriginal people and their families.

Aboriginal identity has been developed by perceptions of who we are and how we must act in society with the issues of identity reverberating individually and from within our communities, as Taylor (2003, p. 93) explains:

> The reality of Aboriginal identity is that the process of colonisation, compounded by the impact of racist assimilation policy and the devastation of the removal of children, has resulted in significant diversity amongst Aboriginal people. Diversity in terms of appearance, presentation, location and lifestyle is clearly reflected in the diversity between those who currently identify as Aboriginal. The nature of the colonisation process in Australia has inevitably resulted in a multiplicity of Aboriginal identities – no longer are we able to be solely represented as the traditional nomad, if we ever were. Common assumptions made by non-Aboriginal people surrounding Aboriginality and Aboriginal identity continue to ignore the existence of this prevalent diversity.

The areas of concern in relation to the re-constructing of Aboriginal identity can be divided into “four broad areas and time frames,” all of which overlap and fall under the protection era between (1840s-1950s), the assimilation period between (1950s-1970s), the integration period of (1967-1970), and the self-determination and self-management periods from 1970 onward. The impacts of these periods have left indelible marks on the psyche of Aboriginal people, in particular the first three periods, which attempted to remove the shared group identity of Aboriginal people. Fortunately, however, and to the credit to Aboriginal people past and present, these attempts have failed, as Aboriginal people have and continue to retain “a strong identification with their Aboriginality, in light of powerful political and social pressures not to do so” (Gilbert, 1995, p. 147). Thus, throughout the periods of protection, assimilation, integration, and self-determination, there has been a constant flow of measures utilised to regulate Indigeneity and shape Indigenous identity.

Legal definitions of identity are based upon the English meanings of identity, which relate to the single person with a non-Indigenous understanding of Aboriginal identity that is limited. This is due to the fact that Aboriginality is diverse and encompasses a multitude of realities, ranging from shared histories, to lifestyles, and relationships. However, whilst it is possible to speak of the different realities of Aboriginal identity, such as histories and relationships, "the difficulty of pinning down any single concept of Aboriginal identity across this diversity is evident" (French, 2011). Moreover, anthropological research on Aboriginal identity has focussed on "kinship ties associated with the person's place of origin," with an emphasis on rural areas, missions and reserves (Yuriko, 2010). In recent times, research has attempted to elucidate what constitutes Aboriginality and identity within an urban setting, with migration to a particular area being the focus and how the role of Aboriginal organisations played a part in connecting and re-connecting Aboriginal people. Such studies include discussions of how Aboriginal people relate to one another. The findings of these recent studies suggest that Aboriginal identity "is ambiguous and constantly under negotiation according to the arrangement of social relations" (Yamanouchi, 2010; Yuriko, 2010).

It is clear that there are a variety of historical and political factors that have contributed, and still do, to pan-Aboriginal identity. It is here that I would like to explore the social organisation of this Nanda family group's identity, remembering as Langton (1993, p. 11) puts it, "Aboriginal cultures are extremely diverse and pluralistic. There is no one kind of Aboriginal person or community." The following section relates only to this Nanda family group. I would like to point out that it is with respect to other Aboriginal groups that I do not speak on behalf of them, so as not to encourage or support the sweeping generalisations that have been made about Aboriginal people, by other Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal people, past or present. As stated, the sections below discuss this Nanda family group's identity. I do this by giving a detailed analysis of how we identify with each other from within this family group, as well as being identified by other Nanda. I then shift the discussion providing examples of how this family group identify who is and who is not Nanda. The previous discussions explained how and why Nanda identify each other within the family-group. The section below is designed to build on that by further explaining Nanda Elders' perspectives on our identity.

When we speak of Countrymen and women, we can be referring to other Aboriginal people, both up close and from a distance. This term has several connotations that are used across Australia to identify and acknowledge our brothers and sisters who share a common thread as a whole. The process of acknowledging Aboriginal Countrymen and women can be viewed as an acknowledgement of sovereignty and is not about claiming other non-relatives as one's own. Within this particular family group we acknowledge our Countrymen and women, both up close and from a distance. By distant I refer to Countrymen and women who one might come across whilst travelling, and especially when entering another group's Country. Again, there are several ways that are utilised in order to perform an acknowledgement for example, as will be explained. Within my own Country, we have several other family groups that we acknowledge as Countrymen and women, not through kinship, but proximity. Turner (1980, pp. vi & vii) explains alliances between two patri-groups whose countries are linked from what he refers to as a "brotherhood," adding that this alliance is unique in Australia and can operate in two forms, both of "which allow for a person and his or her cognates' patri-groups to reach out and embrace the universe."

The first alliance in relation to brotherhood is made when different people in different groups share the same totem or totems. The second, "and closely related to the first, a 'brotherhood' alliance may also be recognized if two people find themselves in groups whose Countries are linked by the track of a common mythological or Dreamtime being" (Turner, 1980, p. vii). In this case, this family group share with our Countrymen and women a Dreamtime being we refer to as the serpent, *Beemarra,* which I discuss in detail in the following chapter.

In previous sections I have explained that one is introduced to family members at a young age and is directed and guided by Elders in the process of gaining knowledge of kin. This is achieved in a genealogical manner that eventually extends to what is referred to as "shared of lived experiences". The process of shared lived experience is also extended to our Countrymen and women. We, as individuals and the larger family group, gain genealogical family knowledge of other family group members as individuals, as well as from the larger family group. This is achieved from growing up with each other or living in close proximity to one another, as well as sharing cultural values, as previously explained. One example of how a Nanda person might identify another is specified in this interview. The setting of the

interview was at my uncle's house in Perth and occurred whilst I was in the process of interviewing a relative and Elder, and whilst I was asking questions in relation to how we as family members connect to relations. Furthermore, I asked how we identify as Nanda, and in turn are identified by other Nanda family groups and members. It was at this stage that a non-relative Elder intervened, relating our oneness as Countrymen and women by describing the genealogical links held within this particular Nanda family group. The statement below relates to the shared lived experience of people-to-people relationships and builds on the previous discussion.

This Elder and his family group, through proximity and shared lived experience, are privy to intimate knowledge of my family group through the act of participating in our shared lived experience. The Elder explained this process beginning with, *"Well, your mummy here is a Nanda. She is dinky-di* [real] *Nanda* [referring to my mother]. *I'm a dinky-di Nanda,* [pointing to his chest] *you know, because I'm the … family and then my brother here* [pointing to my uncle seated next to him]; *he is a Kelly and we are dinky-di Nanda's you know."* In the statement above the non-relative Elder explicates genealogical knowledge of members, which is intrinsically linked by shared lived experiences of the two men of differing family groups.

His knowledge of my family group is explained in reference to my mother as an individual Nanda person. This Elder then shifts his positioning, first by acknowledging he and his family group are Nanda, personally identifying himself and his family, before publically acknowledging that my uncle and the two family groups are "dinky-di Nanda." In the above statements this Elder's proclamation links the respective family groups by identifying both his and my family group as Nanda, individually and collectively, thus anchoring both men and their respective families to Country. Finally, intimate genealogical knowledge is intricate and can only be accessed through the act of inclusion. When pressed to explain how this is achieved, the two men break into a lengthy conversation (P1 being non-relative Elder and P2 my relative):

> *P2: We have lived on the land all our lives. Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers have all lived there. And this one here [pointing to the Countryman], he is from Coolcalalaya and all that, and me, I'm around Kalbarri and all that.*
> *P1: Yeah, yeah.*

> *P2: He used to live on the River. Dad's father, old Con Kelly.*
> *P1: Oh, Connie, Uncle Connie, he used to work on Coolcalalaya with us [a station that my great grandfather worked on with older members the* [surname supressed] *family.*
> *P2: Yeah, and all through that area see, like all our old people, they go around, we're all around that fucking area.*

Knowledge of the family genealogy is recognised through membership of the family group, either as individuals, or as members of the family group as a whole. Aboriginal genealogy is complex and, as Cribb (1993, p. 11) explains, this "involves many cross-connections between individuals. People who are related through descent may also be related by marriage." The statements made above illuminate this process, first by giving examples of how Nanda acknowledge family members who may, or may not, be related and have shared lived experiences with other family members. To my knowledge participant two did not know my mother directly, but did have direct knowledge of my family group's genealogical structure. I discovered during the interview that he does have deep connections with my uncle, for both grew up together on Country from an early age.

Another example given to explain how we connect to each other was provided when the two men discussed family members working together at Coolcalalaya station. Here, both men explain that shared lived experience may be from people we may, or may not have met, and are linked to the family through the process of sharing time together, in whatever format that may be. These are some examples of how members of this family group identify and are identified by other Nanda family groups and individual members.

As discussed in previous sections, Nanda sensibility of kin is defined by our social life performed through modes of shared lived experiences, interconnectedness, with knowledge being passed down from Elders and stories being told and re-told from family member to family member. For example, stories from a bygone era may have been passed on of times shared with relatives of loved ones who have long since passed away. It is through these concepts that family connections and re-connections are developed, nurtured and strengthened.

In the following section I explain transfer knowledge, and of what it means to be a Nanda person, along with a discussion of how we are accepted as such from the extended family group. Though the analysis below I provide examples in the context that elucidates the process of knowledge transfer, how this is achieved from members

in this family group, and how it has been and continues to be passed down over time, from generation to generation. It is only natural that Elders are the main source of transfer of knowledge and examples given in the following section provide a platform that builds on the previous discussion on Nanda identity, which then feeds into a discussion on the process of identifying Nanda – who is and who isn't.

The setting for this analysis begins from a fieldwork trip in 2013, whilst I was visiting an aunty on a reserve. Members of this family refer to this camping area as Kelly's Camp, aptly named after this family group's surname. The camp is situated roughly eight kilometres west of the small, sleepy fishing and tourist township of Kalbarri, some several hundred kilometres north of Perth. This interview was held at Aunty Jenny's place, with her partner present. Aunty Jenny is the daughter of Marjory Kelly; Marjory is Cornelius and Nellie Kelly's oldest daughter and sister to my mother's mother. Aunty Jen's place is where she and her partner settled, and at the time of the interview, had continued to live for the past five years. The camp sits on Unallocated Crown Land adjacent to Reserve 12996, and it is largely made up of corrugated iron that has a kitchen with a kitchen sink, of which Aunty Jen proudly explains comes *"from her other house in Geraldton."* Reserve 12996, or "Paradise," as members of the family refer to it, was land allocated to Nanda people at the time of the development of Murchison House Station and was set aside for Nanda people to live and camp as they had done on Country for thousands of years prior to European occupation (Office., 1919-1924).

Since moving from Geraldton to her camp with her partner, the two enjoy a simplistic, enviable life, fishing from the Murchison River and surrounding areas, as well as hunting (Marlu) kangaroo and goats (see Figure 11 below). They grow their own vegetables to compensate for the exorbitant prices that come with living in a small fishing town, and whilst they don't pay rent or council rates, they do not have running water or electricity, and have made use of a small generator, which they use to power their fridge and freezer, along with lighting in their place. They cart water from one of Aunty Jenny's cousin's house (for a small fee) from the town of Kalbarri. The road in and out of Kalbarri is unsealed and can be difficult to navigate in the winter months, as it becomes quite boggy due to heavy rain, thus making the transportation of large goods extremely difficult. They have a four wheel drive and a small boat, and use a net to catch live bait for fishing trips.

Figure 11. Aunty Jenny's camp situated on Reserve 12996 also known as Kelly's Camp.

The section below highlights responses and reflections from this Elder that are also explicit to other Elders interviewed from within this particular family group. Upon being asked the question about how we as Nanda identify who is and who is not, this particular Elder explains, *"To be a Nanda woman, well I'm getting to the age now, two years away from sixty* [both laughing at what Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation Land Council and representative body stipulate as being an Elder, as written in their policy]. *Um, and um, well even for, in, in our family, I'm, I'm acknowledged as an, as an Elder. Cos, my older brother has passed away, and now I become the Elder in our family."* In the above statement the Elder in question begins by first acknowledging her heritage, before explaining her position within the family group. Aboriginal perceptions of what constitute being an Elder can be explained in this way:

> Aboriginal communities are hierarchical structures. Elders can be very powerful. In some communities men and women are elders with equal standing; in others it may be a few men who hold that status. Aboriginal people reveal their culture bit by bit to their younger generations… Elders are usually addressed with "uncle" or "aunty" which in this context are terms of respect. They are used for people held in esteem, generally older people who have earned that respect. They don't need to be elders (Korff, 2016b).

It is important for me to impart my thoughts of what being an Elder within this family group constitutes. In my view, being an Elder is achieved through the reciprocity of love and respect, and one that I believe is not sought through demand. Second, becoming an Elder is a gradual process and one that is not born out of abuse in any way shape or form. Forms of abuse can be achieved in a variety of ways from within the family structure, which I do not condone or subscribe to. Finally, abuse of what constitutes being an Elder is also currently being aided and abetted by institutions in a process of laying claim or stating who is and who is not an Elder. I understand that this process is being achieved in superficial, manufactured, non-Aboriginal environments. I believe such forms of identifying, or choosing who is and who is not, an Elder in such a way is extremely dangerous, derogatory and disrespectful to my culture. This does not constitute an Elder in terms of the requirements in the above statement. It is my understanding that this process of institutions determining Elder status is certainly not in the spirit of Aboriginality or community from which the role evolved.

In relation to Aunty Jenny's discussion, she stated her language group as being Nanda. It is widely acknowledged that stating your language group is a process that one may use when meeting another Aboriginal person. In the following section, Aunty Jenny explains that she became an Elder due to the passing of her older brother. This process suggests movement through the family structure. This is a process that is not addressed as a ritual or declaration as such, but more of an unwritten structure, since there are no guidelines for the process of becoming an Elder. Movement within the family in this case was enacted through the loss of her older brother, which in turn triggered another phase requiring that Aunty Jenny as the second eldest sibling of this family group would eventually take on a respective sibling or parent's role as Elder or the eldest within the family group. Being the eldest member of a family group does not by any means constitute becoming an Elder. Moreover, the process of becoming an Elder should not be mistaken for being a loved one's substitute, as there are certain roles and expectations that the family require in order for elevation into a position of such.

As the interview unfolded I asked how Nanda people identify who is and who is not Nanda. Aunty Jenny went into silent thought before responding by first positioning herself within the broader family group's structures. She then confirmed

her love, respect and loyalty to the membership of this family and language group, exclaiming, *"And, to be, I feel really proud to be a Nanda woman and to try and pick up and revive our culture, our language, our culture, like Mum."* At this stage of the interview this Nanda Elder begins to express details of how she came to an understanding of her position. In order to comprehend her situation it is important to note that her mother, my grandmother, passed away when she was a young girl, and it is here that this Elder picks up the momentum:

> *I mean, my Mum never taught me anything, I was only eight year old, [when her Mother passed away] but her, her brothers – Uncle Ronny, Uncle Lenny, Uncle Doug, Uncle Ray, and Uncle Monty – they taught me a lot, but through word-of-mouth, they handed down all that (pause) information.*

Within this Nanda family group, roles will change and evolve over time, and in this case the roles of the uncles changed at the time of the loss of her mother. Moreover, roles also change upon the loss of siblings. In Aunty Jenny's case the change or movement came through the passing of her older brother. In the statement above we see the role of family members change to accommodate the situation, as did her role change as a young girl who had recently lost her mother. Such movements from members within the family are mechanisms that are adapted in accordance to their position and place within the family. The shift of roles and responsibilities are made evident in the account given by Aunty Jenny.

The Elders mentioned, her uncles, are in our culture her fathers, and upon the passing of her mother, my grandmother, another family group within the wider family, took on the parenting role on behalf of her mother. In comparison, Western society utilises this process of adoption through an agency or institute, regulated by Western laws, and locates a suitable family that can take on the responsibility of deceased or otherwise not available parent or parents of a child under the age of sixteen. Within this Nanda family group the model of adoption is instituted from within the family and has been embedded in our social system for thousands of years. This in itself is a model of transfer of knowledge and can be relayed as Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing.

In the section below Aunty Jenny explains how other members' roles within the family structure were also adapted in order for her to position herself as a young Nanda person and valued member of the family group explaining about her grandparents' children, her Cousin-brothers:

> *Victor, my cousin, my first brother cousin and Oldie Kelly, they taught me a lot. And for me, to be a Nanda woman and to accept that I feel very privileged and I'd like to carry that on for my Mother and I've come back to Country here, at Kelly's camp [pause] in Kalbarri [deep breath] to be back on Country, so that I can revive our culture.*

The above statements illuminate the shift in roles, not only from her uncles, [Elders/fathers] but also from her cousin-brothers who positioned themselves, as her older siblings. This process allowed for a smooth transition for my aunty that enabled her as a young girl to move from one family to another with ease as a young cousin-sister and valued member of this family group. She explains that they taught her; that is, they taught her who she was, and how she fitted into the Nanda family group as an individual member, and as part of the much larger family group. It is here that reference is made of acceptance and being accepted, as part of a much larger cosmos from which we can again garner a sense of belonging.

In explaining the significance of being on Country, Aunty Jenny began by exclaiming that her motive is *"to revive our culture."* Aunty Jenny confirms the cycle of teaching and learning within the Nanda family group, again elucidating how Nanda transfer knowledge of who is and who is not in the section below. This is achieved in her assertion of her role as a Nanda Elder, as a teacher, and upholder of our family cultural ways:

> *So I can teach my children, so I can teach my grandkids (deep breath). I mean, my kids, my kids might'n listen, but my oldest boy might, but, he knows a lot too cos he had a good teacher in Uncle Oldie and Victor Kelly, Victor Kelly and Oldie Kelly, my first brothers, my first cousins. And just to be here, back here on Country, I think I, well, I'm here. I want to revive the culture, and teach our grandkids, my kids. It's gonna die out, slowly and surely, it's gonna die. We're gonna lose it all, and if we don't make a stand now, we, we will never have that, knowledge. To be a Nanda woman I feel really proud!*

The above conversation constructs Nanda way of knowing, being and doing, all of which are instrumental in this family group's procedures of how we identify

individually and within the larger family group. Throughout this interview Aunty Jenny moves freely within the discussion and does so by constantly proclaiming her membership of the larger language and area group of Nanda. She positions herself by giving a brief history of her childhood in order to locate herself within the family structure. Examples given are detailed accounts of how she was incorporated by other family members into their respective family structure as a young child.

Aunty Jenny outlines how she has become an Elder, producing evidence of these procedures, both in the Western and Traditional frameworks (one by age and the other by the fact that she lost her older brother). Aunty Jenny then describes how transfer of knowledge is transmitted from Elders, citing that this was achieved through her older uncles/fathers and older cousin brothers teaching her Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing. This assertion was posited by her statement that she was being taught by them, which is highlighted in the example of how the family incorporated her into their family structure.

Aunty Jenny then explains her current obligations. This is achieved by speaking explicitly about how she now has to teach her children and grandchildren by passing on/teaching them the old ways. Aunty Jenny again acknowledges her membership of being a Nanda, proclaiming how proud she is to be a Nanda woman. The above conversation gives explicit details of Nanda identify, who is and who isn't "our mob." The evidence produced in this interview demonstrates that this is achieved through membership of family, which is steeped in Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing. The conversation above gives comprehensive insights into a complex, dynamic family group's interactions, and in doing so illuminates how we Nanda enact ways of knowing, being and doing. These structures are in place in order to guide and direct us as Nanda. Other items, such as transfer of knowledge, are delivered through a multifaceted platform by Elders, and then passed back and forward from family member to family member. This is a mechanism that has ensured the survival of members of this particular family group since time immemorial. Finally, the above section is explicit in providing evidence of how we as Nanda identify who is and who is not Nanda. The concept of this is based upon the same structures and processes achieved through Nanda ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing within this particular family group.

Transfer of knowledge through story telling (yarning)

As Nanda people have an oral tradition, passing on knowledge by word-of-mouth is enacted by all members of the family and is the key to the process of identifying and being identified as Nanda. In the previous section above I have given a comprehensive analysis of how Elders within this family pass on knowledge to young family members. This is achieved through the introduction of kin to the immediate and extended family. I then discussed how in turn this process assists in the development of a young Nanda person's identity, through socialisation and relationships. The process of socialisation through family relationships continues to be an integral component throughout the life of a Nanda person. Yarning is an essential process and through it we are constantly being connected and re-connected as members of a family group. Whilst yarning is a central component to the transfer of knowledge, it is important to point out, as previously stated, there are several components that assist yarning as a method, as yarning on its own does not cover the holistic approach to this particular family group's ontology. For example, our ways of knowing include several processes that serve to assist us to reproduce and pass on knowledge through the yarning method. These include "listening, sensing, viewing, reviewing, reading, watching, waiting, observing, exchanging, sharing, conceptualising, assessing, modelling, engaging and applying" (Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003, p. 9).

Other Indigenous authors, such as Atkinson (2002), insist on broad concepts she refers to as "Dadirri" when working in a community setting, which also apply to this research. These include, but are not limited to:

> a knowledge and consideration of community, and the diversity and unique nature that each individual brings to community ways of relating and acting within community a non-intrusive observation, or quietly aware watching a deep listening and hearing with more than the ears a reflective non-judgmental consideration of what is being seen and heard; and, having learnt from the listening, a purposeful plan to act, with actions informed by learning, wisdom, and the informed responsibility that comes with knowledge (Atkinson, 2002, p. 16).

Therefore, whilst "yarning" is central to members of this particular Nanda family group, it is through the procedures outlined above that are achieved with respect and reciprocity that may, over time, produce vivid, colourful stories that can be enacted,

mimicked, produced and re-produced to enhance or execute the desired effect the person holding the yarn would like. As one Elder explains:

> *Well isn't that, isn't that Aboriginal culture? That's Aboriginal culture, that's our way of preserving our history, and our culture, is word of mouth. Pass it down the line, so that, why are we the survivors? You know, because that knowledge will never die out. It'll never die out because, through our yarns and our stories, will always be passed down from generation to generation.*

Yarning is a conduit for Aboriginal people. It is a conversational process that is culturally acceptable and "involves the telling and sharing of stories and information" (Walker et al, 2014, p. 1217). In this case, yarning is being utilised by Elders to pass on knowledge, by sharing stories and information of their time and place as children growing up and experiencing life as they knew it back then. For example, in one interview, my aunty informed me of a yarn her father had told her. It was explained to me that this particular yarn was about a trip back to Country. The beneficiaries in this particular trip were some of my aunts and uncles and the trip was from Northampton to Willu Gulli, along the coast to Port Gregory and back to Willu Gulli, which eventually wound up at a particular place near Bowes River. Within this yarn, separate stories were entwined; however, the overall storyline was that her father, uncles and aunties would host the children on such camps by providing nutrition in the way of fish and crayfish, always teaching the elder children how to "live off the land." My aunty added that her father showed her and her cousins a particular spring, which is located at a place of significance to the family, informing her that her mother, and great grandmother, used to camp at this site: "*This where they all used to camp here, years ago*."

In performing the act of passing this family yarn onto me, my aunty continued the tradition of passing on a story from generation to generation. The story of her mother and grandmother, her aunts and our camping place came to me via my aunty after she was informed by her father. There are of course hidden messages laced within this yarn, but of significance is the transfer of knowledge. In my learning of this yarn I became a part of Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing. For example, the knowledge my aunty imparted in her yarn allows me to locate family members to a particular place of significance. The evidence gleaned by placing family members to named places, such as a significant camping site, provides intimate knowledge,

connecting my family members to each other and Country. This story anchors Nanda to place, as it is passed down through the generations.

Moreover, in time, I will pass this yarn on to other members of the family, possibly my son. The process will be the same. I will take my son to particular sites on Country – fishing, camping, yarning and showing – thus continuing our family's tradition. In doing so, I will be continuing this family group's worldview of exerting Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing. Knowledge of my family group's camping place and its significance simply would not come to fruition if I had not applied the principles laid out in the previous section, which encompass respectful considerations of my culture and Elders. This particular yarn was gifted to me from an Elder whilst I was on Country, and it is with respect that I hold it. Yarns are often told when sitting around with Elders and are a highly successful form of regulating children's movements at certain times, as one Elder points out:

> *Our grandparents used to sit around and um, Nanna used to tell us things, you know, um, stories about, um, Yinna-Gubbies [feather foot] I guess and um, stories about how travellers, travel and you just remember those things. But you don't talk about them a lot; you just know that is what's happened and so, we never used to be frightened, but we were always told, you know, to come in just as the sun was going down, it was dark, we weren't allowed out after dark…*

Transfer of knowledge by yarning and showing/observing

In this particular interview an Elder was demonstrating by yarning to me about how she had recently taken out another old aunty fishing with her on Country. Fishing and knowledge of secret fishing places are revered with Aboriginal people living near water throughout Australia. This particular family group also hold close to them secret fishing locations and as such are no exception to the rule. The Elder presenting this yarn was again passing on knowledge to me through the act of re-telling this yarn – just as she had done previously with her cousin-sister. She explained that she was saddened in the process of showing her cousin-sister the secret places due to the fact that her now deceased cousin-brother had previously shown her these very same secret fishing places:

> *Around about that time, and it was really good, we went fishing and everything. And it made me sad, too, thinking about when I was I was telling*

> *her all the stories, "See, I've been here; I've been there." I am showing her where I've been. She reckons that "I should have brought my tape."*

Showing or being shown how to do things is one of the many ways that illustrate how some members of this particular Nanda family group learn. This is explained by two Nanda men:

> *P.4: Yeah, they used to swim, Victor (his brother) and all used to when they got older, used to go and get under the things (reef) here and get all the crays, you know, swim and get them.*
> *P.5: They used to go through the holes out there, didn't they, the holes in the reef?*
> *P.4: Yeah, they must have, used to get it way back, the uncles and that, you know. They used to get all that, the little clams.*
> *P.5: Teaching everyone, yeah.*
> *P.4: Showing them how to do it, because they were brought up like that and they have been doing it all their life till they passed away, see.*

Observation as a method utilised for educational purposes is documented as being just one of the many fundamental parts utilised by Indigenous peoples throughout Australia (Harris, 1984; Harrison, 2012). It is important to note, as Hughes et al (2004) point out, there is no single Aboriginal way of learning. Observation as a learning process is merely one example of the many ways we Nanda learn. Learning by showing one how to do something is a process; we observe the practice of the person who is showing you. This form of education is inherent within this Nanda family group's makeup, and has been developed over time to be accepted as the cornerstone of Nanda existence, inherited from what is widely recognised to be to the oldest living practicing culture in the world. Earning the respect and trust of Elders for giving you the time to experience this process is extremely important and can be seen a rite of passage for some.

Within this Nanda family group, observation is a key to learning and exposure from an early age of how things are done are constantly being introduced and re-introduced over time. The cycle of learning within this family group is introduced by one's parents and core family members, who then introduce one to the larger extended family group. Children learn by being exposed to relatives of the larger family group. Socialisation of Nanda children from an early age exposes them to the larger family group and, in turn, teaches them how to identify others as well as identify themselves as a member of the family group. Showing and observing is continued throughout the life cycle and is fluid in all stages of this cycle. When asked about how things are

learnt, one Elder explained that, due to her mother passing away at an early stage of her life, other family members stepped in as teachers and role models: *"I got my oldest brother Victor and Oldie…Who showed me things."* Being shown how to do things has very explicit meanings within the family group. Who is showing you and why you are being shown are equally important.

Staying connected to family/how this is done

In contemporary times, and certainly within this particular family group, it is not expected that one has to stay connected with all family members. This would be unachievable due to a variety of reasons, some of which are the sheer size of the family group, previous government policies of taking children away and mobility, which I discuss in detail in a later chapter. However, we do stay connected to each other in a variety of ways, Yamanouchi (2012) suggests that many Aboriginal peoples experiences and understandings of the world are in fact based on relational or relations with beings. This relational aspect within most Aboriginal societies occurs when "both cultural knowledge and bodily substance are seen to undergo continuous generation in the context of and ongoing engagement with the land and the beings – both human and non-human that dwell within" (Ingold, 2000, p. 133).

There are a number of ways members of this particular family group stay connected through our relationships with each other. Some of the immediate family keep in touch with one another through their respective mother and father. As explained previously, Elders are an integral component of the family group and continue to stay connected with each other member by yarning and checking in on each other. We stay connected to each other through the family matriarch, patriarch or both. We connect with other members of the family, such as aunties and uncles, and other kin either directly or indirectly. As the family is a large network or community, members speak to each other and relay messages or information onto other members. For example, if by chance a member of the family has had a falling out with another member of the family group, and is not on speaking terms with a certain member or members, they will communicate with other members of the family group. Thus communication is fluid and constant within the family group.

The process of connecting and re-connecting with family is achieved in a formal and informal manner through gatherings, large and small, that incorporate

family members, at a certain time and place. As one Elder illuminates whilst recalling events of how family re-connect when reflecting on a distant past:

> *I remember ah, her ah, they used to try and, when it was really low with water and it wasn't good in the summer time, we used to have to go to the public well and pick up water and, on the horse and cart, in containers, big drums, and cart the water back to her house, and um, on the way back we'd try and shoot a kangaroo and have some meat and then we'd all share it with the rest of the clan that were there, the Councillors, and old Uncle Johnny and Aunty Rosie Councillor, Nanna [Nellie Wilson] would always give them something of what, you know, the uncles caught, and ah, if we went fishing, out at um, Willu Gulli, or in, in the caves there at Willu Gulli, we used to always catch fish, it was good.*

The significance of this yarn is evidenced through the practices of the family working in unison to access water from the public well before going out and hunting on Country. Connecting in this manner, the family members would spend time together developing what has been explained previously as shared lived experiences. Moreover, details emerge of our family's traditional culture being exhibited through the act of sharing food with other family members. Members of this particular family group would connect and re-connect over time in order to sustain their relationships through the practice of working, hunting and sharing together. This tradition continues to be integral to this family group's existence and has been for as long as I can remember. Other examples gleaned from interviews of when family members where family worked together are recalled by my uncle. He stated that family members worked together decades ago: *"Ronny Kelly, yeah. Uncle Ron. And there was Uncle Len there. They was all workin' around Northampton, before I went to Carnarvon. When, when old Pat took us to Carnarvon I didn't know anyone there."*

My uncle further added that it was when he as a young boy left Northampton to live in Carnarvon and didn't know anyone was where he felt most isolated. Continuing the discussion, he adds that it was during the time he spent in Carnarvon that his older cousin-brother would make endless road trips from Northampton to Carnarvon in order to stay connected with him. Recounting that it was:

> *From there then, all the rest of them years, until I was about, sixteen, sixteen, fifteen, then my cousin Boof, he took me home, he used to come up and ... [a family friend, name withheld]. In their little Cooper S and pick-me-up, took me back n took me down at, back down to, Aunty Eadie and Uncle Ronny's, and all the kids.*

Once more he provided evidence of the significance of connecting and re-connecting with family. Again, my uncle highlights the process by giving examples of how this is achieved from within the family group. In conclusion, my uncle adds that he has been:

> *Come'n' up, back and forth from Carnarvon to Northampton all the rest of my,*[sigh] *since I was, seventeen, eighteen and all that…And been finding out about, all my family, my mother and sisters, my father, brothers and the family, the rest of the family.*

My uncle's recollections above illustrate how reconnection and connection to family is a constant cycle, and, as a now sixty six year old Nanda Elder, he demonstrates that this cycle of continued learning is steeped in the process of Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing.

In another interview, my aunty also discusses travel as a necessary component of connecting and re-connecting with family members. The yarn below is one that was again passed down to my aunty from her mother and is of my aunt's mother's unsealed road trip as a young child from Northampton to Meekatharra. In this yarn there are several key components that signal the importance of re-connecting with family. My aunty informed me that her grandmother, my great-grandmother and the kids, her mother and her mother's siblings, travelled from Northampton

> *In a horse and cart all the way up there and she was gone for about a couple of months. And they got up there—and she told me that story, Mum used to tell me that—when they got near Meekatharra, Peak Hill, the family would, um - - The kids there now in that cart would cover their head over and get frightened, like Aunty Jessie and Aunty Marge, those oldest ones, see, Mum and Uncle Ronny.*

Travelling, sometimes over vast distances to connect and re-connect with family, has been a constant with members of this particular family group, and it is here that we can see evidence being presented about traditional Aboriginal practice:

> *Because they were getting close to Meekatharra and they was coming from behind the trees, her family was, see, peeping at them, sneaking up behind trees and peeping, and when they spotted who was coming back they started splitting their heads with a rock.*

These actions show how family members were received from other family members upon their return to their respective Country and family. In this case my

great-grandmother, Nellie Wilson, was returning home to her Country and her family members enacted the ritual of bloodletting upon being identified by her family members. Meetings of family members are a constant and are highlighted with a warm embrace at first, as a mark of respect to each other, and second, in the process of embracing each other there is also acknowledgment of the passing of family members, which I will discuss in the chapter on loss and renewal later in this thesis. In the following section I discuss the status of knowledge.

Status of knowledge

Within all societies knowledge is power and presents rights and privileges. Within this particular family group, knowledge and the context of knowledge is a powerful tool for gaining status or cultural currency of those who are the bearers of such knowledge. Within this particular family group the status of knowledge is on constant display and is contested with vigour at times. Heated arguments and disagreements over events and issues are often displayed publicly at any time, and are often more pronounced at the time of Sorry Business due to the fact that large members of the family congregate at such important ceremonies. Knowledge of family, place or Country, along with history or cultural knowledge, gives status to those who have acquired it. Being chosen to have knowledge instilled upon one by respected members of the family is revered.

Below is a section that outlines how this transfer of knowledge is achieved. It is presented by an Elder asked how such knowledge was bestowed upon her by her now deceased Cousin-brothers:

> *Yeah, heaps and that's where, I think that's maybe why, he picked me. He could tell me those things because I, I listen, where everybody else was just too busy with their own family life or they weren't there or, I don't know, but we spent lotta time together ay. Heaps of time. I admire him ay, and for what he told me, and otherwise if, you know what, what he told me, back in them days and what Oldie, well there's three of them. It was not so much Chicken, but Oldie and Victor, what they told me; that's why I'm here, and they not here to do it so, I'm doing it on their behalf. Because they taught me that, you know, they told me yarns, they told me stories see: "You wanna go here, but don't go there". You know, burial grounds and significant sites along the River. And I learnt from that you know. I learnt because I listened.*

The above quotation indicates that some members of the family are closer than others. I have previously cited membership and shared lived experience as a main

contributor to this. In this instance the Elder above had a close relationship with her older cousin-brothers and had shared long periods of time with them on Country: fishing, hunting and camping. The section above again highlights the importance of learning and being taught Nanda ways within the family and, in doing so, promoting and supporting the continuity of our Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing. The old ways of teaching are also on display here as this Elder also cites being taught through oral yarns, illustrating that her cousin-brothers chose her to pass on valuable knowledge because, *"Well he, he said to me, he said to me one day, 'You know what my sis?' he said, 'You know what, he reckon, you know what I like about you? It's because, you sit and you listen, you listen to what I say.'"* Secret knowledge is passed on from family members through our oral tradition and this Elder further provides evidence of this as she continues to explain how this process is achieved adding:

> *And he'd say "You know what, he reckon, you listen I'm gonna tell you this, I'll tell you that sister, you take notice". And I used to sit and listen to him. I took the time of day to listen to him you know and we had this bond I dunno what it is but, me and him had this bond. Because he grew up with my older brother, Johnny Swartz, and they had a really special bond and Charlie McDonald.*

The Elder continued with her reappraisal of how she came to be chosen as a holder of knowledge, which again elucidates the significance discussed in the previous sections above, such as respect, love, shared lived experience, and the cultural currency – all of which are found within this particular family group. For example, my aunty signals that this format is an extension of love and respect through the shared lived experiences of her kin in the following statement when making reference to her older brother and cousin-brothers: *"Those three* [cousin-brothers], *they grew up when they were kids together, and they were about what, well Johnny* [her older brother] *was about seven years older than me. And, I was their little sister."* Position within the family group is important, as is illustrated in the statement that her older brother had grown up with her two cousin brothers and they were close. She adds that, as she grew up, her older cousin-brother was her protector and always taught her what she could and could not do, as explained in this statement:

> *"Victor* [her older cousin-brother] *was always there protecting me, and my children, and he taught me kids and I, I admired him for that. I mean he was a hard man, stark fuckin' hard man. And he used to say, 'Don't do this and don't do that, and this and that and that.'"*

The Elder goes on to explain how her roles changed within the family, as has been illustrated in previous sections. She does this by demonstrating again that the shift of roles was achieved after losing family members. She again explicates how this is achieved, further adding:

> *"And I took all, his, like, when I lost my brother and then not long after that we lost him too* [Uncle Victor], *because they were so close. They were close and I think it's all come back to my mum, Marjorie Kelly."*

The Elder interviewed illustrates that knowledge transfer is passed down from Elders and is achieved through a variety of processes, ending the conversation by declaring this transfer knowledge was born

> *"When they was at Whale out camp and used to be Johnny, Victor and Charlie Mac, Those three. And I think, Mum, taught him a lot and what she taught him and what he learnt off his father, is my mother's brother Uncle Ronny Kelly* [sighs], *he's passed that down to me."*

This provides further evidence of Nanda traditional ways that continue to be present within this particular family group.

In this chapter I have provided evidence of how members of this particular Nanda family group are connected to each other. Evidence of this has been gleaned from a Nanda world view through the utilisation of Indigenist Methodology in order to elucidate Nanda ways of knowing (epistemology), Nanda ways of being (ontology), and Nanda ways of doing (axiology). The evidence produced was provided through this particular family group's genealogy, shared lived experience, and membership of the family, positioning, yarning, and other mechanisms, such as transfer of knowledge and how members of this particular family group communicate knowledge from one member to another. All have their place and are equally important in providing a platform in order to allow for the structures of Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing to be unpacked in order to explain how members of this particular family group connect to each other. In the following chapter, I provide further evidence of Nanda epistemology, ontology, and axiology as evidence of how members of this family group connect to Country, again demonstrating how this is achieved through my family members' connection to each other.

Chapter 4
Connection to Country

This chapter examines how members of this particular Nanda family group connect to Country. I begin the chapter by giving examples of how we, as a family group, are connected to Country through our family kinship ties. Myers (1986) explains that kin and Country correlate and are, essentially, one and the same. Through the analysis of interviews with Elders I provide examples of how identity and belonging for this family are inextricably tied to Country. This chapter builds on the previous one to demonstrate this critical link of people and place. I begin by examining pan-Aboriginal commonality: how Aboriginal people are connected to Country through and by their kinship to place. This discussion then leads onto my Nanda family members' accounts of our deep relationship to our land.

Identifying and being identified through family kinship ties to Country

Within this Nanda family group's existence there is a constant flux of identifying and being identified through family kinship ties to Country. There are constant demands on identifying family kinship ties to Country due to a number of variants that include, but are not limited to, births, deaths, and mobility, which will be discussed in more detail in the chapters on sorry business and mobility. Identifying and being identified as a Nanda person equates to where one fits in. It is in direct line with being exclusively attached or detached from the Aboriginal community at large, as well as within the family group, from a smaller group or an individual family member. For example, an Elder, upon being asked how we as Nanda identify and are identified though family kinship ties to Country, responded in this way:

> *Look, I was born in Geraldton, I was born in Geraldton. I was reared up in Mullewa, you know; that's Warajarri Country, but you know what? It's always like, me, I didn't have this, this real sense of belonging; it's like, you shift around and you, you got this feeling, this yearning you know. Nine years I lived in Geraldton. I been up here for what, last five years, five years. Because I seen my kids growing up now and they all fathers and grandfathers, but my little nannas (grandchildren) they need to know where they're from,*

> *you know, and Geraldton first place. I mean, all, all, always related to Geraldton, ah, Northampton, Mum's mum, I think Mum was born in Northampton. Mum was born in North. Yeah, Marjorie Kelly, yeah she was born in Northampton and I'm thinking and branch out up around here, because Dad always brought us up around here and I was thinking, I wonder why? And you know what, it's like, if anything like, my home was back Yallalong, when, when my childhood, when I was growing up but, and then I think about when Dad brought us back up here, I'm thinking, "Well, this is home, this is, I finally, took me what, forty years, forty years, you know."*

This Elder relates her story of being born and raised in Country not of her own; she acknowledges that it was on Wajarri Country that she was raised. This is a pivotal statement in that the Elder acknowledges her Countrymen and women, the Wajarri, as being the traditional owners of the Country that she was raised in. The facet of being on Country, and acknowledging the traditional owners, is intrinsic and should not be understated. I gave explicit details of this in the previous chapter by providing evidence of a sense of belonging to kin. This Elder recognises that, growing up, she did not have a sense of belonging, explaining that she was raised in other areas nearby, but not on her own Country.

Knowing where one comes from is an important concept within my family group as it anchors us to place, which in turn provides a sense of belonging. The weight of significance of this is clear in this Elder's statement that she has returned to her mother's Country to live and pass on knowledge to her grandchildren of where they come from. However, it is through the statement of her mother being born in Northampton that the genealogical links of connection to Country are cemented by anchoring her to place. Connection to place through lineage is an integral component of how we, as Nanda, identify how we situate each other through our family kinship ties to Country. Another Elder explains that, due to knowing this family lineage, *"that's why, my bro, we can go to Munimaya anytime we like and they will say, 'Look! They greet us.'"* He concludes by saying,

> *I could go, you know, I could go out to the Murchison House. I could go out there and if I had a good four-wheel drive and everything I have got a property up there at Ajana. I own it.*

Identifying and connecting people as a member of a family group

It is well-known that Aboriginal people have a close affinity to land and place. Historians, anthropologists, and other social scientists have compiled large bodies of literature explaining and demonstrating how and why Indigenous people are strongly connected to Country (R. Berndt, 1999; R. Berndt & Tonkinson, 1988; Myers, 1986; Palmer, 2005). This research supports the unique relationship Indigenous peoples have with their surrounds. Similarly, Palmer (2005) demonstrates how the Secwepemc Aboriginal people of Canada, members of the Salish language family, substantiate their connection to Country by mapping the use of their territory for hunting and gathering practices.

Australian anthropological studies conclude that Aboriginal people are connected to Country or a particular place and do so by accepting that a local group or mob has significant claims and rights to such land. Anthropological accounts of Indigenous social organisation use the terms "group" or "band" to signify large Aboriginal family populations. The "band," as it were, held land ownership in a number of ways, primarily based upon patrilineal descent (Myers, 1986). As previously outlined, members of this family group anchor family to place through family lineage. Upon being asked to explain how members of our Nanda family are connected to place, one Elder replied in this way:

> *Pop Cornelius. So, he has had children, and where they have been, where they all lived, and they always come back to Northampton, you know. Because I feel that, that is their home, and it's our home too, and it is all the Kelly's home, not one. It is just everybody – like, old Pop Cornelius, he has had his wives, and his children had theirs, and it just carried on from there. So, when you look at it, it is just everybody is included. Yes, and that is the way we should, um that is the way we should have it and no arguments about this or that. Everybody come as one and everybody be happy, yeah.*

Radcliffe-Brown (1913) asserts that land ownership of the Aboriginal "band" or "horde" was based on the group's relationship with particular named places within a territory. The horde, as Howitt and Fison (1885, p. 1453) define the term, is "a certain geographical section of an Australian community which occupies certain definite hunting-grounds." When asked about named places and how Nanda people

are connected to such places, explanations given were about family coming back to particular areas to camp, fish and hunt for a period of days, and sometimes weeks.

In discussing this holistic sense of belonging that is grounded in a connection to Country, Toussaint (2014, p. 42) suggests:

> Knowledge about the widespread, intergenerational passion for fishing, and the sociocultural and emotional emphases that underpin fishing activities, also have the potential to provide a deepened understanding about the everyday value of local cultural life. None of the above activities can be separated from the integrated cultural whole: the act of fishing, and all that fishing embodies, represents a consistent and unifying theme for Fitzroy Valley families and communities.

The same can be said for Nanda, and an example of the everyday value of both camping and fishing, and how it underpins Nanda cultural life, is provided by an Elder who took me back to her childhood experiences with details of how things were then:

> *Well, like I said before, Dad always brought us back to Willu Gulli and all along the coast here. And he always used to come, we used to camp here, the old tent, and he used to put it up and we used to camp on the Bowes River, at Willu Gulli and he'd cook us a feed in the camp oven and he used to get up early morning and take off...So dad used to pile up the camp oven and fill that up and cook all these cray fish or fish 'n' we used to live off the land, and at Willu Gulli there. Dad, he showed us where the spring was and, he said, "This is where your mother used to, this is where your mum, as a little girl; this where her old, old mother, your old grandmother Nellie Wilson, Nellie Kelly. This where they all used to camp here, years ago, long time ago."*

Named places are significant to members of this family group and continue to be an integral part of anchoring people to place through re-enacting events such as camping, fishing and hunting at particular sites. Once one visits these places with Elders or people of knowledge about the place, one learns who they are and where they come from through yarns that incorporate people and Country. Yarning about one's family belonging to a place anchors one to place. This is achieved by binding lineage to historical evidence of one's belonging produced through oral narrative. For example, the spring that this Elder was shown by her father was one that her mother, grandmother and other family members of the family group had visited and camped at for long periods of time. So significant is this particular camping place to the family group that the soak or spring is today still recognised and spoken of in many

discussions from members of this particular family group (Jackson and de Grand, 1996).

Radcliffe-Browne (1930, p. 208) also added that the typical Aboriginal society was based on a patrilineal and patrilocal band, concluding that the children of the father followed his lineage or ancestry in order to lay claim or "inherits hunting rights over the territory of the horde." However, there are opposing views to Radcliffe-Brown's claims that Aboriginal societies are all patrilineal and patrilocal. For example, Wheeler (1910) concluded from his data on local Aboriginal organisation that the land owning group was in fact the local group, and he labelled this group the "undivided family." The body of anthropological evidence suggests that Aboriginal families and individuals had exclusive rights in land rights, concluding that "the most important unit is not the tribe, but the smaller local group, several of which groups make up the tribe" (Hiatt, 1962, p. 267). For the purpose of being respectful to my kin, I will refer to them as "my mob," "family," or "family group," irrespective of the terminology used regarding "the family" in early anthropological work. I point out here that what is important in this discussion is that early anthropological work highlights the significance of undivided family bonds of land-owning local groups, bonds that stems from a common descent or "apical." This particular Nanda family group stems from a common descent and, as such, are a land-owning local group. Elders from this particular family group maintain that they are traditional owners of Country and amidst these claims there are counter claims of who is and who is not. Discussions that follow correlate with the above statements about land owning groups having rights to Country. The classificatory system was clearly a contentious issue amongst anthropologists, with the outcomes of research carried in the early twentieth century suggesting there were sweeping generalisations and disagreement in relation to what lineage or classificatory system Aboriginal people followed.

For example, Radcliffe-Browne (1913 & 1947) suggests that, universally, Aboriginal people everywhere in Australia had a patrilineal system within the social organisation. However, Wheeler (1910) claims that Nanda actually had matrilineal lineage. In a more recent study, Goody (1961) refers to the usage of two classificatory terms as "double descent," and explains that there are actually four varieties of classifying human societies within their systems of descent: matrilineal, patrilineal, bilateral, and double descent. To make matters even more confusing, he further adds that these systems have different meanings within anthropology.

Analysis of interviews with several Nanda Elders indicates that, within this contemporary Nanda family group, we follow both patrilineal and matrilineal lineage, allowing for members of the group to lay claim to our territory or rights over territory on both sides of the family. For the purpose of this discussion, and in reference to any future discussion on this particular Nanda family group on descent, I will refer to the term "double descent." Moreover, evidence gleaned from interviews points to individuals within the family also having exclusivity in choosing what particular classificatory system or group they choose to follow, thus allowing for a certain amount of flexibility and autonomy being allocated for such decisions to alter, depending on individual circumstances. Personally, I follow both my patrilineal and matrilineal lineage, and would consider myself to belong to the group of double descent. Within the wider sections of this family group it appears that his practice also seems to be the norm.

For example, genealogical references to the Kelly family groups by anthropologists identify two "apicals" as Brindy and Mary Jane Batt. An apical is a direct descendent or descent group that links Aboriginal people to their lineage/ancestry. Parkin (1997, p. 32) explains that "descent groups are invariably ancestor focussed, that is, they consist of the line or lines that *descend* from the real or mythical ancestor or founder." Brindy and Mary Jane Batt are my great, great grandparents and Traditional Owners of Country in the Murchison region. Their son, Cornelius Kelly, my great grand-father, married Nellie Wilson, and together Cornelius and Nellie had nine children, six male and three female. All of their children had their own children, who also had children, both male and female, all of whom follow this particular family's inheritance. Most, if not all of the family members, follow their respective parent's lineage from outside of the immediate family, irrespective of their gender.

Naming rights

In traditional Aboriginal societies children are named after deceased members within the family unit, which supports continuity of the deceased family member's legacy being carried on through the naming of the next generation. In his research amongst the Gidjingali people, Hiatt (1962) suggests that their "genealogical memory was short." He further adds that "The natives had difficulty in recalling the name of

anyone they had not seen, and a few could only go back further than members of the grandparental generation" (Hiatt, 1962, p. 22).

Hiatt's statements imply that Aboriginal people placed little emphasis on genealogy and the significance of ancestors, and that long genealogical connection is of little importance in connecting to Country. However, Bell (1993, p. 90) argues that:

> The shallowness of genealogical memory is not a form of cultural amnesia but rather a way of focusing on the basis of all relationships that is, the jukurrpa and the land. By not naming deceased relatives, people are able to stress a relationship directly to the land. It is not necessary to trace back through many generations to a founding ancestor to make the claim. By stating that a person is of a certain country, usually be reference to a grandparent who was of that area, the identity of a person is known.

Within this Nanda family, the naming of children after the deceased is a mark of respect and implies acknowledgement and continuity. For example, when a key participant of this research project and respected Elder within the family group passed away suddenly, in 2014, her grand-daughter gave birth to a girl. Shortly after her daughter's birth, the grand-daughter gave the same full name of her grandmother to her daughter. In contemporary times we, as a family group, also name children after living family members. For example, I am named after my still-living uncle, who also has a son he has named after himself.

I have another uncle who lives in the northwest town of Carnarvon who carries the same name. As such, there are currently four living family members within my family who share the same name. To my knowledge, the naming of family members, both living and deceased, within the Kelly family is not a rare or singular event. Within this particular family group there are numerous family members that continue the practice. In the following paragraphs I provide evidence that this form of naming practice may have evolved from traditional naming practices, thus allowing for continuity of family members connection to Country. The Gidjingali from East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory spoke of naming sites within a particular place, indicating ownership to an estate by the site name. They also stated that they were born in that place, further substantiating evidence of their birth affiliation to place. Moreover, the Gidjingali were divided into land owning groups or "units."

Within the Gidjingali and other groups in east Arnhem land the overarching religious system was divided by two "patri-moieties" called Dua and Jiridja (Hiatt, 1962).

Within these two patri-moieties, the world and everything in it was divided into two – the sea animals and humans – all adding to the balance of life and sustainability, each in supporting the other or balancing the other to allow for continuity of this religious system (Keen, 1997; Warner, 1958). Under the umbrella of Dua Jiridja was a division of totems and, within these totems and each of the Gidjingali units, were assigned several totems. Some of the totems were shared and some were not. Whilst some of the shared totems crossed over to other units, the particular totems owned by a unit gave that unit exclusive associations (Hiatt 1962). From the body of research into Aboriginal social organisation, it is clear that traditional Aboriginal social life and organisation was complex and presented structured ways of identity.

Such was the complexity of structure within Aboriginal social organisation that it not only included themselves but all that existed within their environment. Identification of Aboriginal groups by anthropologists using terminology discussed above validated Aboriginal kinship to each other and to land. The use of terms such as "hordes" or "bands," named places, patrilineal lines or lineage, language groups and moieties, is popular amongst anthropologists in order to make sense of and explain the social organisation of traditional Aboriginal societies throughout Australia. In the following section I use the "social organisation of Aboriginal societies" to highlight identity, and how Aboriginal people identify with one another. Whilst it is clear that European and Aboriginal relations in Australia have been fraught to say the least, it is important to emphasise that it is not my intention to delve too intensely into race relations between the two converging worldviews over the passage of time. However, it is necessary for me to discuss (and give examples of) how and why European surnames were introduced by the visiting Europeans into traditional Aboriginal societies – both as a collective, such as a family group, and to Aboriginal individuals – in order to provide a basis for my argument.

This approach is taken for a variety of reasons: first, the attachment of European surnames to Aboriginal people was used as a way of identifying Aboriginal tribal groups; and second, Europeans simply had difficulty with the pronunciation of Aboriginal names. Irrespective of the introduction of European names, Aboriginal family groups have continued to anchor themselves to Country through the traditional

process of named places. In providing evidence of the following examples I suggest that the shift in language, from Aboriginal to English in relation to surnames and named places has direct links to Aboriginal social organisation and is a part of Aboriginal traditional culture and was utilised as a means to incorporate and accommodate Europeans at the time.

Upon entering Australia in 1788, the colonists set about forming terms to "identify" the first Australians. As mentioned, the use of surnames of family members from within tribal groups was introduced by early Europeans for a variety of reasons. One reason for this was that pronunciation of a foreign language was too difficult for the settlers, who could not speak the local language. Hence, upon entering Aboriginal land, the Europeans would then name the local Aboriginal people making it easier to identify them (Pepper & De Araugo, 1989). Another reason given for the use of surnames of European family members was to identify tribal groups within a particular area. This approach was due to the fact that Europeans were encroaching upon Aboriginal land to usurp their surrounds in order to either profit from them or indoctrinate them into their religion of choice. As a repercussion of the change of surname bestowed upon them by Europeans, contemporary Aboriginal societies throughout Australia can, in most cases, be traced as a single Aboriginal person to their immediate family and extended family through their surname (Sutton, 2003). I have referred to this single Aboriginal person previously as an apical.

From within that family group, one is identified by the many ways they are connected to family. For example, I am a son, brother, cousin-brother, uncle, nephew, pop (grandfather), father, and so on. I am identified as a Nanda person from within my family group and, in turn, I identify as a Nanda person, both individually and holistically, within my larger family group. Moreover, particular family groups are identified and acknowledged from other Nanda family groups through their attachment to each other as a whole. One of the ways this is achieved is through the oral genealogy of the surname. We Nanda are identified by our surname and are connected to a particular place or area by this process. As such, we identify other members from within, and are identified from other Nanda. I am aware that other Aboriginal people use this form of identity based on the same set of principles. For example, when meeting another Aboriginal person, one would ask: "What is your family name?" and "Where are you from?" Another example is to ask, "Who's your mob" and "Where you from?" This form of introduction does not include, "What do

you do for a living?" The aim for Aboriginal people meeting for the first time is to lay the foundations of connection, build relationships, and locate one another in relation to lineage, genealogy and place or Country. As Moreton-Robinson (2000, p. xv) points out, "The protocol for introducing one's self to other Indigenous people is to provide information about one's cultural location, so that connection can be made on political, cultural and social grounds and relations established." Therefore, this form of introduction is customary and used to identify one another and place each other within familiar family kinship structures.

Identifying an individual and family group by surname is an integral part of what constitutes being an Aboriginal person in contemporary Australia. Within this particular Nanda family group placing people to Country is achieved in a variety of ways. Members of the family will enquire about peoples' family surnames and mobs. They will also ask where they are from. The process provides a platform to conclude whether there is a connection at all and, if so, is it by family kinship or connection of an acquaintance known to the person asking? Knowledge of family genealogy, history and Country is an important form of cultural currency in such instances, and knowing who you are, and where you come from may assist one in being placed within the pan-Aboriginal network throughout Australia. The process of knowing details of how and where one is located within a family group and Country applies as much in cities, states, territories, and small towns. In the case of a small town like Munimaya (Northampton), one Elder explains it is *"because we are traditional owners…We have lived on the land all our lives. Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers have all lived there."*

Ways of knowing: Uncle Chicken's insights

Knowledge of this connection does give one cultural currency and particular rights from within the family group, as well as from other family groups. Knowledge of who is and is not Nanda is explained below in genealogical (surname), kinship (relationship to Country), and historical detail, which includes a place name from a Slim Dusty song. An interview with my Uncle Chicken (see Figure 12) initially began as a single interview before moving into a dual one, and took place at my Uncle Marshall Kelly's two-bedroom unit, in the north Perth suburb of Balga. Uncle Chicken (Leonard Ross Kelly) had flown to Perth from Batchelor in the Northern

Territory, some four thousand kilometres away. He was here to attend a lifelong friend's funeral. Having heard news of his arrival, and knowing it is extremely seldom that I see him, I seized the opportunity and made a phone call to touch base with him in order to request a "catch up" and to do an interview as part of my research project.

Figure 12. Far left and facing camera Littlie Pepper, an unknown Nanda man standing with blue cap, Naito Drage, Ross (Chicken) Kelly, another Nanda man and Shane Kelly leaning on car with back turned at a Native Title meeting at Munimaya (Northampton).

Uncle Chicken signalled that he was interested in participating in the interview and, after some small-talk we arranged a pick up time and place (Warwick train station), where we would then make our way to Uncle Marshall's unit. Uncle Marshall was away at this time on other Sorry Business in Carnarvon, eight hundred kilometres north of Perth, and both Chicken and his travelling companion, Naito, were residing for the short term at Marshall's unit, until returning to their respective permanent places of residence. Chicken Kelly is one of two remaining sons and several daughters of Ronald Kelly, my Mother's mother's brother. I refer to him as Pop or Grandfather Ron.

I left my home in Gosnells and drove north along the Tonkin Highway in order to arrive on time and pick Uncle Chicken and Naito up from the Warwick car park above the train station. The early April weather in Perth was beautiful; the sun is shining, and I felt good about snaring this interview, as I pulled my Holden Commodore into the Warwick train station car park. Looking around, I noticed that the train had just pulled in with passengers disembarking and making their way across the walk bridge that leads to the bus station and car park. I decided to pull my car up in front of the walkway and leave my ignition on for a quick getaway. I scanned the large group of people who were making their way toward my car over the footbridge when I noticed, at first, my cousin-sister, then another cousin sister and some other family members, including some young children. I then noticed my cousin-brother Bob, a young thick-set man of about twenty-three, also making his way over the footbridge toward the car park.

It was then that I noticed Uncle Chicken walking with another man – a thin, dark man, wearing a black cowboy hat, checked long sleeve shirt, blue jeans and black boots. I sat waiting until they got within earshot and yelled out to them, waiving my hand to catch their attention. As they approached my car I exited the front seat to greet them, saying hello to each of the sisters and brother Bob before gesturing for Uncle Chicken to enter the front passenger seat. Without saying a word, the tall, skinny, dark man accompanying my uncle embarked into the backseat of my car. As I stood by my car, Uncle Chicken shook my hand quickly before he opened my front passenger door and set himself down in the seat. I proceeded to make my way back to the driver's side of the car, getting seated, and fumbled with the car keys whilst Uncle Chicken introduced me to the man in the back seat.

We exchanged pleasantries and said our goodbyes to the mob of about nine young family members and began to make a hasty retreat back toward Uncle Marshall's unit in the suburb of Balga, stopping off at the local bottle shop, where Uncle Chicken purchased a carton of Carlton draught beer stubbies. I entered the small supermarket further down from the bottle shop and brought a full chicken, some salad and six wholemeal rolls. Naito had previously requested smokes, so I brought these for him. We made our way to the unit in Balga and both Uncle Chicken and I initially headed inside and sat in the lounge area. Naito sat outside of the unit smoking

and drinking beer, and I was aware that he may have felt excluded, but I carried on with my interview procedure with Uncle Chicken anyway. I asked that Uncle Chicken read and sign the consent form prior to beginning the interview and he was quick to oblige without hesitation. The overall mood that afternoon was relaxed and we were all joking and laughing. I am always happy to spend time with family, particularly after long periods of no contact. However, the beer and warm April weather may have also been an added factor to our upbeat mood.

The interview began in the lounge room between myself and Uncle Chicken; however, the situation quickly changed with Naito joining in on the conversation and, before long, the three of us decided to reposition to the front courtyard, seating ourselves in the cosy setting specifically designed for a small gathering of people to come together and yarn. Within the discussion, certain surnames were raised by Uncle Chicken, and when I asked where a particular family group came from, knowing they had lived in Munimaya for an extensive period of time, Uncle Chicken explained whilst seeking confirmation from Naito where this mob came from:

> *1st Elder: "Up the river. No, no, no, Yalgoo. Yeah, you know you have got the river that runs right up through that back Country. Yeah, yeah, the same as this mob, [pointing to Naito and stating their family group surname] they married into our family. The all come down. So that's it, yeah, the [family group surname] and that all come from up the river. What's that place, Naito? Where the [family group surname] come from up the river?*
> *2nd Elder: Yallalong*
> *1st Elder: You know where the Murchison River starts from?*
> *2nd Elder: Yeah, way up near Meekatharra, after Three Springs. They call it Three Rivers. Yeah, Three Rivers.*
> *1st Elder: Yeah, there is the Samson, the Murchison and the Gascoyne and Kumarina, that's what they call it. Do you know old, I remember this old Slim Dusty sang, that song… Three Rivers Hotel."*

The above section is just one example of how people locate other family members to a section of Country, but this is by no means the only procedure used to anchor family to place. Over the duration of this interview, the conversation, whilst performed in a relaxed and friendly environment, was very "matter of fact" and I observed my uncle's tone and posture change instantly from a slouching position to sitting in an upright position, chest out, head held high as he spoke in relation to all matters of this family group's connection of kin and Country. In a number of statements my uncle stated openly, both to myself and his companion, a friend and member of a Nanda claimant group, that he, along with another three family groups,

were not from this area. The two men interviewed had grown up together, are in their sixties, and consider themselves to be family. However, my uncle's distinction between who is and who is not Nanda was explained by giving examples of historical and genealogical connection. This was achieved by explaining that the two other family groups had come into this area, settled and married into Nanda, the traditional owners of this Country.

Again, this is one example of situating people to place. Whilst they may still acknowledge each other, and other members of the family, as Nanda people, there is a profound knowledge and understanding of this particular situation. It was made strikingly clear in this conversation that Elders know who is and who is not from Country. For example, my uncle spoke with authority throughout the interview, explicating his broad knowledge of family genealogy, shared lived experiences, and locating family surnames to place. There was no argument or resistance from the other Elder when my uncle gave examples of the above, including giving insights into how we locate kin to Country. Unfortunately, due to the many factors of colonialism and subsequent invasive policies and procedures that have been inflicted upon Aboriginal people throughout Australia, and in this instance the Yamatji region, the communities are fractured. Fink (1960) claims there have been major upheaval and integration, which is not only confusing but has had profound consequences for the traditional owners of Country due to politics. The interview with both of these men was both enriching and insightful and, as I listened to their yarns that lovely warm April day, it became evident that these two men have connections to each other through lineage and shared lives experiences. Both men exhibited Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing, providing rich details of how Nanda connect to each other and Country.

Re-connecting with family: Aunty Phyllis

This research has enabled me to spend time with many of my relatives, relatives I have rarely seen in the past decade. One such relative is my Aunty Biddy, pictured below in the wheelchair (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. From left: seated in wheelchair and wrapped in blanket Aunty Biddy, cousin-brother Fred Hamlet, cousin-sister Natasha Simpson, Aunty Phyllis McDonald seated at table, unknown lady.

Aunty Biddy passed shortly after this gathering, and to my regret I never got the chance to record any of her yarns. I was doing fieldwork at this time and arranged a picnic with my cousin-sister, Natasha. The interview was with Phyllis McDonald (pictured in a purple, white and light blue top). The interview took place in the front yard of Aunty Phyllis's unit in the Geraldton suburb of Tarcoola. Also present was her son, my cousin-brother, Fred Hamlett. The photo was taken at a park in Geraldton prior to the interview taking place, which was a good thing as it made the interview process less imposing. Aunty Phyllis is the daughter of my Grandmother Alma, who is the daughter of my great grandmother, Nellie Kelly. However, Nanna Alma's father is not my great grandfather, Cornelius Kelly, but the majority of my family and I acknowledge the McDonald family as our mob. There are the reoccurring themes that run throughout this interview, such as connection to family and Country, through to reliving childhood memories (shared lived experiences), and genealogy (yarning about Country and kin).

As previously stated, within our Nanda family group it has always been a given that the McDonalds are our mob. Aunty Phyllis was born and raised on Country, with my mother, her cousin-sister. Both grew up with their grandmother, my great-grandmother – Nellie Kelly (neé Wilson). Upon being interviewed, Phyllis McDonald recounted her childhood with sharp precision and fondness, recollecting her childhood years and shared lived experiences of a time when her parents returned to Munimaya, visiting her after a period of working away:

> *Oh, when they come back to Northampton and was living around there with me and Nanna, Nellie Kelly, I stayed there and went to school right up until around about nine years of age. It was me, Vernus, my other sister, Vernus. She is a Councillor now, and, um, another one was my brother Charlie—I just call him Sandy Mac—and Valerie. And we had been to Northampton school in that time, and in that meantime we lived around Northampton with Nanna. Old grandmother Nellie, she used to take us out everywhere and do a lot of shooting in an old horse and cart. We used to go out to, um, towards Chapman Valley camp out there and there was a spring out there and a lot of big gum trees everywhere, you know. We used to enjoy ourselves, kids. We used to run along the side of the horse, you know, the cart where she would sit in most of the time, a little sort of a thing. We used to run behind her, jump on the cart and make fun of the horse if he was, you know, in front of her, oh, you know, when they was fart along and all (laughs). We kids just make fun of all of it, you know?*

Illustrations of shared lived experiences from large family gatherings ran deep throughout this interview of sharing these stories with me through her aunty's yarns. My aunty spoke of spending time together with family on Country, as if it was some kind of special mythical time and place. Such yarns are shared with a fondness that radiates a profound love and respect for a particular person or persons prompted by simple moments, such as a child spending time with another close family member or members of the family group. Being on Country, and yarning about moments when certain members of the family were present, is evidenced by the stories shared by the storyteller. The reiterated yarns are strong within our family group. When yarning about being on Country an Elder will include the names of those close to them. In this case it was Nanna Nellie, her sister, and other significant family groups that were present at the time. Aunty Phyllis recounted yarns of yesterday with excitement, recounting how:

> *Nanna used to go out there and do her shooting, and live off the land, do all the shooting, you know, kangaroos…We used to go and live out there just*

> *about, you know, go and camp down next to the big trees. And there was us and there was the Councillors and the Corbetts, whoever used to want to, you know, from town used to go out there. We all, more or less, all been together, you know. And, uh, it was really good. We used to get there - - Yeah, old horse and cart. Some of them used to have a motorcar, an old crank motorcar, crank them up, you know.*

The evidence of being on Country is supported by who was there. This act is designed to then provide factual premise, signifying that those who were present and named as being present can themselves support the person relaying the initial yarn – a witness to events, if you will. For example, one might say, "Yes, this yarn is true and we know this, because we were there," before locating themselves into the yarn with intricate details that only those present know of. This is the magic of shared lived experience produces through the act of yarning. Yarning about being on Country allows for those who have gained the experience to recount such events. The process is then verified and shared by other members of the family, or those who witnessed a special moment or happening from a special time and place.

Significant Places

Deborah Bird Rose (1996) refers to special places for Indigenous Australians "nourishing terrains." The special places are part of special stories told by special people – all encapsulated in belonging to Country. During the interview with my Aunty Phyllis, she spoke glowingly of her childhood memories and growing up with family on her nourishing terrain, her County. In this yarn, Aunty relived a time spent camping at the below pictured Salt Lakes.

Figure 14. Pink Lake.

Pink Lake (Figure 14) is a significant camping site to members of the family. Below, Aunty Phyllis gives as illuminating description of her as a young girl watching her cousin's father walking on the salt lakes:

> *That's there the salt lakes, and we used to go out there camping. When we used to camp out there we would see, like pigs, you know, and they used to frighten us… I remember seeing through the day, I remember seeing Julie Mac's dad walking on the salt lakes, the Pink Lake, and I was only a little kid then, but you could see him going for miles, you know, across the salt lake. I can always picture that now today, you know, to see him.*

Figure 15. Road to Horrocks.

My earliest recollection of being on Country and visiting Munimaya (Northampton) for the first time was when I was a young child one summer holiday. Mum, Dad, and my three brothers and two sisters often took extras, whether they be friends or cousins, aunties, uncles – whoever was around at the time. I don't recall anyone else being present at this particular time. I do, however, recall staying in a beach house at Port Gregory, a small fishing town, west of Northampton. My Mother and her work colleague rented two holiday houses over the Christmas break with Mum's friend and colleague and her family staying in the holiday house next door to ours. Over that summer, we kids had a wonderful time, swimming in the Indian Ocean and fishing off the jetty. On the way back to Perth we stopped off at Munimaya. We also drove around and checked out the surrounding wheat farms. I remember thinking that the farms never seemed to end. Whilst we were driving Mum informed us kids that *"This is you kids' Country,"* explaining that she was born at the Northampton Hospital, grew up here, and her family come from here.

Mum pointed out where she grew up and retold yarns of her childhood and living in the area. She would tell yarns about all sorts of happenings. Mum relived the tragic story of when her oldest sister, Marion, broke her neck whilst diving off a jetty in Carnarvon. Aunty Marion died when Mum was young. I'm not too sure of the

details, but I think she died of pneumonia not long after the accident. Mum would reminisce about growing up in and around Northampton, yarning about certain occasions. My mother's yarns, such as the above mentioned, were relayed to me throughout my childhood, into my adolescent years and young adult life.

I have returned to Northampton on many occasions since I was first introduced to Country by my mother all those years ago. Over the years I have spent countless days and weeks in the area. One particular occasion was when a big mob of us "Kelly Gang" went out to Willu Gulli via Northampton and camped out in the open on the beach, under the stars (see Figure 17). We didn't have tents or any of those flash things, like sleeping bags. This was roughing it at its best. I was about twenty-eight years of age at the time and had recently purchased a silver Nissan Patrol, a 3.3 litre, diesel, short-wheel base four-wheel drive. I don't remember how we came to make the decision to go to Willu Gulli. I do remember most of the family members that attended what I hold to be an extremely memorable and thoroughly enjoyable occasion. I had with me, in my short-wheel base, my young sister Michelle and her two daughters, Jacinta and Kiara. Michelle had moved from Perth to Geraldton to make a go of it with her partner and father of Jacinta and Kiara.

I would visit my sister in Geraldton whenever I could once every couple of months or so. On this occasion, it just turned out that a mob of us headed out to spend time on Country. We drove by convoy: three cars one behind the other (with plenty of space in between one another, but not too far so as not to get lost on the way, and close enough to see and react, if by chance the car in front would make a turn off, or braked suddenly). We cruised the sixty or so kilometres from Geraldton north to Munimaya, turning left and heading west, before turning left onto an unsealed road and heading west again and into Willu Gulli.

Figure 16. Nanda camping ground.

The above photograph (Figure 16) shows the sandbank between the Bowes River and the ocean where the Kelly family camped at the time of this fishing and camping trip. I am aware of other members of the family camping at this site and, as such, it is significant to the wider family group. It was at this time and camping site that my Uncle passed on knowledge of kin and Country to me through oral yarns. However, the section below will focus only on the process of this fishing and camping trip.

I was last in the convoy, with Michelle seated in the front passenger seat and her two daughters sitting in the back. We stopped at a place not far from where the mouth of the Murchison River meets the Ocean; far enough away so as not to be spotted and annoyed by rangers or any other authorities. The weather was warm; it must have been late in the year or early in the New Year that this trip occurred, as there was really no need for tents, or sleeping bags. Those that attended were: Aunty Jenny and her partner; Aunty Jenny's son and daughter; my younger cousin-brother and sister, Derrick and Nicki, along with her young son; my uncle (deceased I will refer to him in this case as V.K.); another younger cousin-brother T. K. (dec) who is

the son of Uncle V.K's younger brother (also now deceased); and Uncle (Oldie). Uncle V.K and Uncle Oldie are sons of Ronald Kelly, my grandmother Jessie Kelly's oldest brother.

Figure 17. Willu Gulli: Mouth of Bowes River a Nanda fishing and camping ground.

I felt a variety of emotions and mixed feelings over the period of time we spent there – two days and a night on this occasion. Upon arrival, and as it was my first time camping with my mob, I felt all at the same time overawed, inspired, privileged and certainly humbled by the fact that this really was my Country – my people's, or "your Country" as Aunty Jenny and Uncle VK repeatedly exclaimed. I recall feeling an overwhelming sense of belonging, belonging to family and Country. I also felt honoured. I believe these feelings were heightened by the fact that I was with family – my mob. This really is a different place; the intense colours seem to jump out at you. I looked around observing the surroundings. I recall seeing an eagle flying majestically in the distance, against the bluest of blue skies (a welcome to Country from the ancestors perhaps, I thought), as I took deliberate steps in different directions. I still, to this day, vividly recall thinking, "It doesn't matter where I walk, or which direction I walk, my ancestors had already walked on this Country and had

done so since time immemorial." There was nothing new I could do here, nothing that hadn't been done before. Upon initial examination of this Country, I guess I was of the state of mind that this is pristine Country, but I couldn't have been more wrong, could I. I felt the company of my ancestors all around me.

The land in this particular camping area at first overwhelms your vision. I was exposed to the bright colours and openness of the place. On the one hand, it is as though there are contradictions all around here, because upon examining the landscape, one sees the endless blue sky, the roaming hills, and uncompromising harshness of an arid desert region, displaying radiant red sand that abruptly changes to clear white beach sand and turquoise Indian Ocean. This sublime backdrop is all set with the Bowes River snaking through the landscape and almost meeting the ocean, which takes some time to get used to. However, within a short period of time, and upon adjusting oneself to the tremendous visual surrounds, this camping place seems to be in complete harmony with itself.

Fishing and learning

On this occasion, I cherished every moment allowing myself to be immersed by the sheer beauty of the place. I stood watching as Aunty Jenny pulled out a small, white bucket from the boot of her car. I ambled over to where she was standing, noticing that she was pulling out hand lines from the bucket. I was keen to "have a crack" at fishing with her, or at least ask if I could borrow one of her prized hand lines. She was checking out a couple of hand lines all differing in size and colour, some old and shabby looking, some newer, all differing in thickness of fishing line width. She chose a thin, small hand line and began to rifle through her fishing tackle, examining hooks and weights. I asked, "Can borrow one Aunt?" "Course," was her response, and she handed me the bucket to allow me to choose which of the handlines I would need to catch a fish. As I was looking in the bucket picking one and then another handline out, I asked, "Where are you going fishing?" "Over there," she replied, pointing to a bend in the Bowes River, not far from where we were parked. "Ok, and what sort of fish are we after Aunty?" I asked. "Black bream," she exclaimed, with a glint in her eye and a big grin. We yarned about our approach to catching the bream, and as we did I observed Aunty Jen examining the river, checking out where she would likely catch her bream. I was also watching the way Aunty Jen

rigged her line. This was new to me and I sensed Aunty could tell that I had no idea of fishing for Black bream. I eventually found a suitable small hand line. I knew bream were not that big a fish, and was going through the hooks and weights, trying to keep up with Aunty Jen, who was masterfully now tying the hook to the line. I stopped what I was doing and watched her, paying close attention to her hand movement with the thin hand line. The weight was tied with a simple double knot, about twenty centimetres from the base of the thin fishing line. Aunty Jen then quickly and intentionally threaded the thin fishing line into a rather small hole in a rather small fishing hook.

Whilst holding the line and hook in her right hand, she then raised her left index finger and her thumb to her mouth, licking, both allowing for saliva to spread over them, before rubbing them and her middle finger together. Changing hands to hold the line and hook with her left hand, and holding the base of the hand line between her thumb, index and middle finger, she began rubbing, rolling the line between her thumb, her index finger and her middle finger, akin to rolling tobacco, only using the one hand instead of two in order to make a hand-made cigarette. She did this quickly and effortlessly, getting a good grip of the base of the thin fishing line. Once she felt she had a good grip, Aunty Jen then made a quick action with her thumb, index and middle finger, as if to click her fingers. This fast flowing movement shot-putted the end of the thin fishing line up causing it to double up on itself like a noose. Aunty Jen allowed for around two to four centre metres of the fishing line to be jutting out above her fingers and thumb, adjacent to the fishing line. She again flicked her fingers and thumb, so that the base of the fishing line twisted around the fishing line itself. With the remaining two to four centimetres of fishing line that was deliberately left protruding, Aunty Jen gently threaded this into the noose, before pulling tightly with one hand on the shaft of the fishing line that adjoins the reel and the other hand holding the hook. The hand line was now rigged and ready to be used for catching Black Bream.

Whilst I was bungling my way through this newly learned technique, which I had not quite grasped, and was struggling to hold my composure and certainly my temper, I noticed Aunty Jen was now cutting up the bait. She had a wooden cutting board sitting on the boot of her car, a plastic bag, with which the bait was held, and a sharp thin knife. Aunty Jen was cutting into a large piece of red meat. This was done be first slicing a chunk roughly the size of the palm, then slicing that palm sized piece

of meat into thin strips, turning the meat in opposite directions to dice into small cubes of bait, roughly the size of the small dice ones used to roll in a board game. I asked what the bait was and was surprised by the response given. Aunty Jen Looked up and said, *"The best bait for catching Bream, Steve, Marlu!"* [Kangaroo]. I thought, "That makes sense, being on Country and using the resources from Country."

Upon the completion of this task, Aunty Jen scurried away in the direction of her chosen fishing spot on the beautiful Bowes River, without so much as a "see you later." I was left still struggling with my lot. By now there were several family members gathering around assembling their own rigs, laughing, joking, sharing their techniques, and being ridiculed for it, by others "in the know." Amongst this assembly of chaos, my thoughts were to focus on rigging my line and getting the job done with minimal fuss. My young sister, Michelle, was lucky enough to have had Uncle VK rig her line, and she too left in a hurry trying in vain to catch up to Aunty Jen, who was now in her specially selected position, and had her line in the water, no doubt concentrating, almost willing the Bream to take the bait, so she could have first bragging rights. The mayhem that proceeded was always the way, with many shared lived experiences, fishing being no exception to the rule. For example, a family member would be "yarning up," bragging about their catch, telling their story, in the same way that they had heard other yarns being carried out. In the re-telling of their story they have witnesses who vouch for them in their quest to establish themselves as being the best at a particular activity (in this case fishing) amongst family members. All of the sudden, Aunty Jenny, who is my mother's cousin-sister, her mother being Marjory Kelly, my mother's, mother's older sister, let out a scream of delight, and whilst all eyes were on her, Aunty Jen quickly and efficiently hauled in her first (of several) Black bream for the day.

Figure 18. Bowes River.

In the image above (Figure 18), the site on the bend on the right is roughly where Aunty Jenny cast her line, with my sister Michelle locating herself a few metres away from her. As if on cue, and almost simultaneously, my sister Mitchell was reeling in her line, yelling and screaming, both in shock and delight over her sudden unexpected catch. By now there was a mob of us heading toward them, some keen to move in and steal their spot and others to get a good look at their catch. In my case it was the latter, I now had visual evidence of what size bream I would need to hook in order to participate in the Nanda Black bream fishing competition, if I was ever to acquire any such bragging rights. Earlier, I had been shown by Uncle VK, my mother's cousin-brother and one of several sons of my grandfather Ronald Kelly, my mother's, mother's older brother, how to rig up a line for Bream only, not as flash in style as Aunty Jen has exhibited earlier. Uncle VK was a good teacher and actually took the time out to make sure I understood the method. He was a quiet, intelligent Nanda man, who had the ability to somehow make the difficult look easy.

I have fond memories of Uncle VK and a healthy respect for the way he conveyed himself, as my uncle. What stands out most of all in my memory of him was the way he would always ask younger kin what they thought of situations. He

was genuinely interested in and wanted to know what our thoughts were on issues, never agreeing or disagreeing with our answers. Uncle VK actually enjoyed going through the process of teaching his young nephews. I am also aware that this was the way things were done in our culture; for example, older men teaching younger men, and older women teaching younger women. Aunty Jen was an exceptional teacher; however, my uncles generally have a way of connecting with the younger boys and men that is innate, allowing for learning to be a two-way process.

For an example of this teaching capacity, I will recount how Uncle VK taught me the task of rigging a hand line making it manageable, even for a novice like me. He slowly and steadfastly followed the same process as Aunty Jen had done in the early stages of rigging her line. Uncle VK patiently secured the sinker on the line first, leaving enough length (around thirty centimetres) at the base of the line, before threading the end of the thin line through the tiny hole of the hook. He then made the shape of a noose, as Aunty Jen had previously done, but this time Uncle VK used two hands to manage this manoeuvre, taking us young fellas through this process step-by-step. I noticed that throughout this task he was regularly looking up and making eye contact with us from time-to-time to make sure we were following the process – his way of teaching. He made the noose and simply held the end of the line adjacent with the line attached to the reel in his left hand, before pinching the hook between his thumb and index finger, hook pointing away from him, and slowly turned the hook in a clockwise action, again as if clicking his fingers, but without the flashiness as was shown earlier.

The line had in effect turned on itself causing it to spin around, three, maybe four times. He then proceeded to thread the base of the line he held in his left hand down through the noose, before tightening it, as Aunty Jen had done earlier, but again in a slow and deliberate manner. I still recall quite vividly how he looked up at us during and after he was teaching us, engaging us as he showed us his way of rigging a Black Bream line, always reassuring us and nodding his head as if acknowledging what we were doing was right. It was as if Uncle VK was saying to us, “See, it’s not that hard to do; I have faith in you and your ability; there is no shame here; you will learn how to do this and you will in turn teach your younger sons, brothers and nephews the same way I have taught you.” I always felt comfortable around Uncle VK.

I always felt like he listened to me, appreciating my opinions, not once ridiculing me, and never persecuting me on whatever I was saying, whether he agreed or disagreed. I felt there was no right or wrong with Uncle VK; in fact, I think he enjoyed listening to younger people's views more than he did from some of the "Elders." As I have previously stated, I am of the opinion that he was a great teacher and leader; however, I also now understand that he epitomised what it means to be a Nanda Elder in our society. I understand that his teaching style and how he conducted himself were, in part, learned experiences based on Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing, and handed down to him by his Elders and so forth. I eventually applied Uncle VK's rigging technique and, after a couple of attempts, got the gist of it. Some two decades later I continue to rig hand lines up like this, and will teach my son, when he is ready, to do just the same. I don't recall catching a Black bream, therefore I must not have. I recall fishing on the reef whilst the tide was out, again using a hand line, not the same set up as used previously the reef rig I made was with a heavier sinker with a larger hook. I also recall much laughter and joking, the weather being warm and sunny, and I recall a feeling of content that comes with such experiences of being in the moment with family on Country.

On this particular camping and fishing trip I also recall driving my short wheel base Nissan Patrol on the beach with my sister and her two daughters Jacinta, and Kiara (see Figure 19). In this instance we were driving away from where the mob were situated and ventured some five hundred metres before eventually turning back around in order to head back to our camp (see Figure 20). Whilst on the way back I braked, coming to a sudden stop. I asked Michelle, who had not acquired her driver's licence and didn't know how to drive a car let alone a 4 wheel drive on the beach, if she wanted to "have a go." "Okay," was her response and she opened the passenger door stepping down into the soft beach sand, walked to the back of my Nissan and around to my door.

Figure 19. Track above where I taught my youngest sister, Michelle, how to 4-wheel-drive on a camping trip, on Country with family almost two decades ago.

In the meantime, I had taken the car out of gear and pulled the hand break up so there was no movement at all; this allowed the motor to idle without stalling. I then slid to the left of me from where I was seated to the front passenger seat, to where Michelle was seated and settled in. Whilst Michelle was organising herself into a comfortable position, adjusting the driver's seat and examining the gadgets in front of her, I began to slowly and deliberately explain the gears and how they worked. I then explained what the foot pedals were and what they were used for. Further explaining that, in a manual, you have three foot pedals, the clutch is on the far left, the break is in the middle and the accelerator is on the right. I pointed to the black knob that sat on top of a long steel rod and disappeared into the floor of my four wheel drive and into the gear box that sat directly underneath it.

Figure 20. Beach track near Nanda camping and fishing ground.

There were the numbers, 1 to 4 in a H position: 1 on the top left side of the H, 2 at the bottom left of the H, 3 in the top right of the H, and 4 in the bottom right of the H. I explained this to Michelle, engaging her by making eye contact. I asked her to put her left foot on the clutch and push it all the way down to the floor, pointing to the clutch pedal to the left of the break, as I explained the process. Michelle did as I instructed, putting her left foot right down to the floor and holding it there whilst I guided her hand with mine on top of hers onto the gear stick. I worked the gears from neutral, moving our hands left to right adjusting the gearstick to the left and pushing forward. I then moved the gearstick back down toward us into second gear and back up to the middle of the H and into neutral. I then pushed the gear stick right toward Michelle, until there was no more movement in the gear stick, before pushing the gear stick forward away from us and into third gear. Finally, I pulled the gear stick back toward us and into fourth.

We replayed this motion a couple of times, and as we did this I began making the sound of the change of tone the motor would make whilst going through the gear change. I explained that when you begin driving you always begin in either first or second gear and move through the gears until hitting a certain speed and so on.

I also explained that all you have to do is take your foot off the accelerator, pointing to it, and put your foot on the brake pedal in order to come to a stop. After this explanation, I gave her a nod allowing her the space to re-enact the process shown earlier. Michelle picked driving up easily and it was a fantastic time had by all.

Nanda religion and connection to Country

In this section I discuss Nanda religion and give examples of how religious practices are still carried out today by this and other Nanda family groups. In doing so, I draw on evidence provided from archival records, related documentation, and interviews from Elders to assist with the task of specifying how this particular family group continues to connect to place and Country through our religious and spiritual practices. The Country "speaks to" Aboriginal people. It tells us stories in a variety of ways, with each story having a variety of meanings. The tracts of land that often unveil the secrets of a certain place are a part of our cosmos and are spoken of in story, sung about, danced to, and felt in profound ways amongst the people that have lived in a particular area for millennia (Perkins & Langton, 2010). There is a great deal of research that has been done on Aboriginal people and their connection to Country. The evidence collated concludes that Aboriginal people are inseparable from Country and that these strong connections to Country derive from the Dreaming or Dreamtime (R. Berndt, 1999; R. Berndt & Berndt, 1974; R. Berndt & Berndt, 1980; R. Berndt & Tonkinson, 1988; M. Charlesworth, Kimber, & Wallace, 1990; Coombs, 1994; Myers, 1986). Whilst the Dreamtime or Dreaming is a shared commonality found within Aboriginal societies throughout Australia lending itself to a shared identity, it is important to note that each and every language group has its own cultural practices with their own defined territory, kinship system, along with their own religious law (Charlesworth et al., 1990).

The religious Lore and stories that stem from the Dreaming anchor Aboriginal people to place and are "maintained and renewed by an ordered ceremonial life and which, even when apparently lost or destroyed, remains at least as a vivid reminder of the bitterest of their dispossession" (Coombs, 1994, p. 3). Dreaming stories such as these locate and situate Aboriginal people having been passed down by Elders over time reveal how "ancestral beings" created the land and life, and they are tied to particular tracts of land.

Knowledge and beliefs tied to the Dreaming inform the present and the future. Within this system of beliefs, there is scope for interpretation and change by individuals through dreams and their lived experiences" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, pp. 11&12). The philosophy of how the world was created is further explained by the Aranda people from central Australia, who insist that the earth and the sky have always been here; it was just flat, featureless and dark. They add that, due to the barren surface of earth, there were also no plants or animals. Aranda also maintain that supernatural beings have always lived beneath the earth in slumber, and upon earth lay half-developed infants who were joined together but could not develop or grow into men and women. The Aranda add that, when time began, these supernatural beings awoke from their slumber, breaking through earth: "The supernatural beings that 'had been born out of their own eternity' (altjirana nambakala) varied greatly in appearance. Some rose in animal shapes, resembling kangaroos, emus, and the like. Others emerged in human guise, looking like perfectly formed men and women" (Strehlow, 1978, p. 15).

In the beginning, women and men were both represented equally by these supernatural beings, both being linked intrinsically to their natural surrounds, such as animals, plants and other natural phenomenon, including the wind, sun, clouds and water. Therefore, the Dreaming stories that link men and women to Country do so by unifying humans and their natural surrounds as part of their cosmos. This phenomenon is referred to as totemism and it is designed to allow for an individual Aboriginal person to belong to a group, further creating unity and clarity on their standing in the world (Cowan, 1992). Finally, at the time of creation, "there were a few sacred sites which had given birth to human-shaped supernatural beings that were linked with neither plants nor animals, though there were in all other respects the equals of the earth-born totemic ancestors" (Strehlow, 1978, p. 16).

Ancestral beings also created the moral code for its social institutions and patterns of activity; how one may act within society (Bell, 1993). For example, social aspects of moral code may regulates one's behaviour, and are used to guide one in the most basic of settings, such as meeting a single relative, or knowing how to conduct oneself in a larger gathering. Within these social norms there are formal and informal structures, each having a particular process that knowledge of is paramount, reflecting the standpoint and cultural currency of an individual in relation to how they conduct themselves and within a particular setting. The processes vary, from leading into

more in-depth codes of conduct including, but not limited to, strict ethical conduct; for example, son-in-law/mother-in-law avoidance, marriage law, naming taboos, relationship conduct and the like. These forms of moral conduct are imperative to Aboriginal social life and are certainly an integral part of the Kelly Nanda family group's existence, which I have discussed in the previous chapter. As explained above, the ancestral beings provided social rules for what is done through both good and bad behaviour. In the following section I will demonstrate how such social rules set in the Dreaming continue to apply to members of this particular Nanda family group. The provision of such demonstrations will be achieved by providing additional examples through the analysis in order to further elaborate how members of this particular Nanda family group connect to our Country (see Figure 21) through religion and religious practices that continue today.

Figure 21. Nanda Country.

Country provides materials to use for shelter and fire to keep us warm at night, Country speaks to us through our ancestors and our Dreaming stories, releasing her secrets, informing those with the correct knowledge of location, where they can and cannot go. The secrets of Country are held with the traditional owners of Country and

are protected, cherished, upheld and nurtured by members of this particular family group.

Members of this particular family group have deep religious aspects embedded in us from an early age, as we are taught about our Lore through stories that have been passed onto us by our Elders. In the previous chapter, I explained that stories are passed down from generation to generation orally from the Elders. Stories of Nanda religion are also passed down from generation to generation from Elders with the Dreaming being explained as encompassing all aspects of our life, and as being multifunctional. The rules generated from the Dreaming uphold the very foundations for the survival of the people it serves, and in doing so has allowed for the people it serves to be credited as the possessors of the oldest practising culture in the world.

Figure 22. Nanda Country in the Kalbarri National Park region.

The landscape of our Country was created by mystical, mythical beings that are still recognised today. Figure 22 above, to an outsider, is an image of landscape that, whilst captivating in itself, does not represent the way we see, feel about, and relate to this Country. In a very profound way, the land is in us and we are in the land. We have a responsibility for the land. These mystical, mythical beings tell of stories of how we as humans were created, and how the Lore must be upheld through ritual practices and acknowledgement. The Dreaming informs Lore, and Lore informs

the people. These attributes combined are intrinsically significant factors that bind people to Country. In order for us as a people to continue with these traditions, we must continue to acknowledge and pass on knowledge of, not only our beginnings, but also how our world came to be. As previously stated, Aboriginal people throughout Australia have multiple and varying stories of how the world was created, and whilst these stories may have some similarities, they are owned by the people from specific Country. A significant symbol of this particular Nanda family group's religion is what is commonly referred to as the "Serpent."

The serpent or snake is significant to this and other Aboriginal groups, as it is believed that she/he is the creator of the earth, our world, and all that is living on it. Early records specify the locals from Northampton spoke of spirits and serpents on Country, and in the water (Oldfield, 1865). Within the wider Murchison region this serpent is referred to as *Beemarra* (see Appendix D). It is believed that *Beemarra* is the creator of the Dreaming tracks and is revered as almost God-like from the people of this region. The *Beemarra* story, as Joan Martin (cited in Shaw (2011) explains, involves four snakes/serpents – two male and two female – that came from the east crossing over the terrain before separating and taking different routes. Each of these snakes/serpents made their way to their final destinations, including the Murchison region where *Beemarra* moved through Yamatji Country, until it finally made its way to Bowes River south of Munimaya (Northampton).

Figure 23. Murchison River snakes through Country as viewed from the escarpment.

Members of this family group also refer to this particular serpent as *Beemarra*. Our story begins with her entering the Murchison River and winding her way through Country, re-shaping and changing the landscape, as she made her way west toward the ocean (see Figure 23). This story as told by Elders, not only provides us with evidence of her being, but supplies Nanda with the tools required to unlock the secrets of Country, a map if you like that *Beemarra* our creator has left for us. Although multilayered in meaning, this particular *Beemarra* story signals her journey through the landscape revealing the secret locations of water holes, one of the world's most precious resources. When we Nanda look at Country, we look past the visually pleasing aesthetics of Country and see what Mueke (1984, p. 102) refers to as a "series of tracks and in terms of underground sources of water. These things are sacred."

Figure 24. Jeebenwajar site.

This photograph (Figure 24) is of the *Jeebenwajar* (see Appendix D) site taken from near where the Kelly camp site is located. Note the red ridge that is included in this story below. It is here, after traversing through Country, *Beemarra* came up at this hill. This site is located on the northern side of a place called Paradise, which is a camping ground positioned on the outskirts of Murchison Station. The mythological story of the mystical *Beemarra* expounds that it was here at the *Jeebenwaja* site that she slithered out of the Murchison River, coming up out of the earth between the red ridges of sandstone. This is a visibly noticeable site and can be seen from a great distance which is distinguishable by the contrasting white sandstone above the red ridge. The story continues that it is here, roughly in the middle of the red ridge, after coming up that she could hear the sounds of the ocean crashing against the cliffs: "The curiosity of the serpent was aroused and she followed the creek and then disappeared underground tunnelling her way to the coast" (Jackson & de Grand, 1996, p. 41).

Beemarra re-surfaces at a site called Nunginjay (also spelt Nanginjay). In this case I will refer to the latter spelling as Nanginjay located "on the south west slope of

a steep valley in the coastal cliffs" (Jackson & de Grand, 1996, p. 21). It is at this site that *Beemarra* first saw the ocean where "she was confronted by the huge waves crashing against the cliffs and was afraid. In terror she fled back to the safety of the Murchison River, travelling through the hills" (Jackson & de Grand, 1996, p. 41). I made some enquiries about the *Beemarra* story, as I was aware of the general theme, but needed to verify this story with other family members. I made a phone call to an uncle who advised me to call an aunty, who advised that I call another Elder. Whilst on the telephone to my aunty, I began asking questions in relation to the *Beemarra* story and if she had any knowledge of it. Her initial response to my question was that she "was unaware of any such stories." I sensed a reluctance in her voice and promplty changed my approach. I then began by giving a vivid description of the land around what is known as Kelly's camp. This particular area is situated along the Murchison River and my reasoning for this approach was to jog her memory. I continued my enquiry using details of Country in order to situate the *Beemarra* story, describing the familiar landmark of the Jeebanwajar site, without naming this site.

My decision not to name sites comes from being aware of naming sacred sites and gender issues around these and other stories that are kept secret. They are not to be discussed by certain members of the family, as there may be serious ramifications for those who discuss or violate these laws. As I was describing the land around the *Beemarra* track and in the midst of a detailed description of the surrounding markers, my aunty interupted exclaiming, *"Nanginjay!* [pronounced Nanyin-jay], *that's* [name withheld, her brother, now deceased], *that's his Dreaming site, that one."* My aunty repeated this to me, and upon more questioning advised me to speak to one of three male relations who could assist me further in yarning about this story.

The following section developed from a phone interview between my uncle and I, which occurred after the discussion above. I asked who named my now-deceased uncle, "that name," and the response from my uncle was that "*It was from the old people. I don't know if it was Uncle Len…It wouldn't be Dad, it would be old Con Kelly, your great grandfather, my grandfather."* Further discussion took place about other family issues, until I pressed my uncle again. First, I asked him if it was okay to use my now-deceased uncle's name in this format. He agreed to my request,

stating that it was alright to do so. I then asked when my uncle was given this particular name. He stated that he didn't know exactly when he was named:

> *I know he was named after Nanginjay Spring, but he, he wasn't born there; but as far as we know, he could have been conceived there see. You know what I'm saying? Because they lived on the, on the River, ol' Con Kelly and, ah, Nellie Wilson, they lived up there* [in reference to my great-grandparents].

The discussion then continued to centre around the movements of the family, where they lived and grew up, with my uncle citing signficant place names – such as Gelena, Kalbarri, Northampton and the Murchison River – in relation to places that members of this particular family group frequented. He stated that they would often spend periods of time at a certain place before moving on, reasoning that "*Dad grew up on Gelena and Murchison and all that see, and ol Con Kelly and Nellie Wilson, well that's their first grandson, named him after Nanyjay Spring on the Ocean side."* The family recognise that my now-deceased uncle was named after Yanginjay Spring, accepting that the Beemarra story is a part of our creation and Dreaming story that anchors the family group to Country. Stories about Yanginjay Spring and my uncle are told and retold allowing for his memory to survive and continue throughout space and time.

Paddy Roe (Benterrak, et al, 1984, p. 99) makes similar statements about his Dreaming place, which is located in Western Australia's far north Kimberely Region. Roe's Dreaming is called Mimiyagaman Springs, and he explains that "This all the spring this all my spirit too…You know anytime I go to sleep I want to come in dream I come here I never go any other place." The snake Roe refers to in his Dreaming story is called Yunguruga. Roe also discusses what is labelled a "metamorphosis" manner when making reference to a particular place. For example, in his explanation of the set of springs called Miniyagaman Roe exclaims "That's the boss! (laughter). That's the boss, *Miniyagaman.*"

This statement can been seen as Roe making reference to himself. As previously discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, the earth was shaped and humans were not developed but became developed and grew out of the earth, giving rise to what is known as the metamorphosis of human and Country or sacred place. Merlin (as cited in Charlesworth, Dussart, & Morphy, 2005, p. 116) explains that the "productive quality of human relationship with country is often imagined as a

metamorphis of body into place.” In the case above, I concur with Paddy Roe’s statement – that the human spirit is also connected to special places, as do members of this family group.

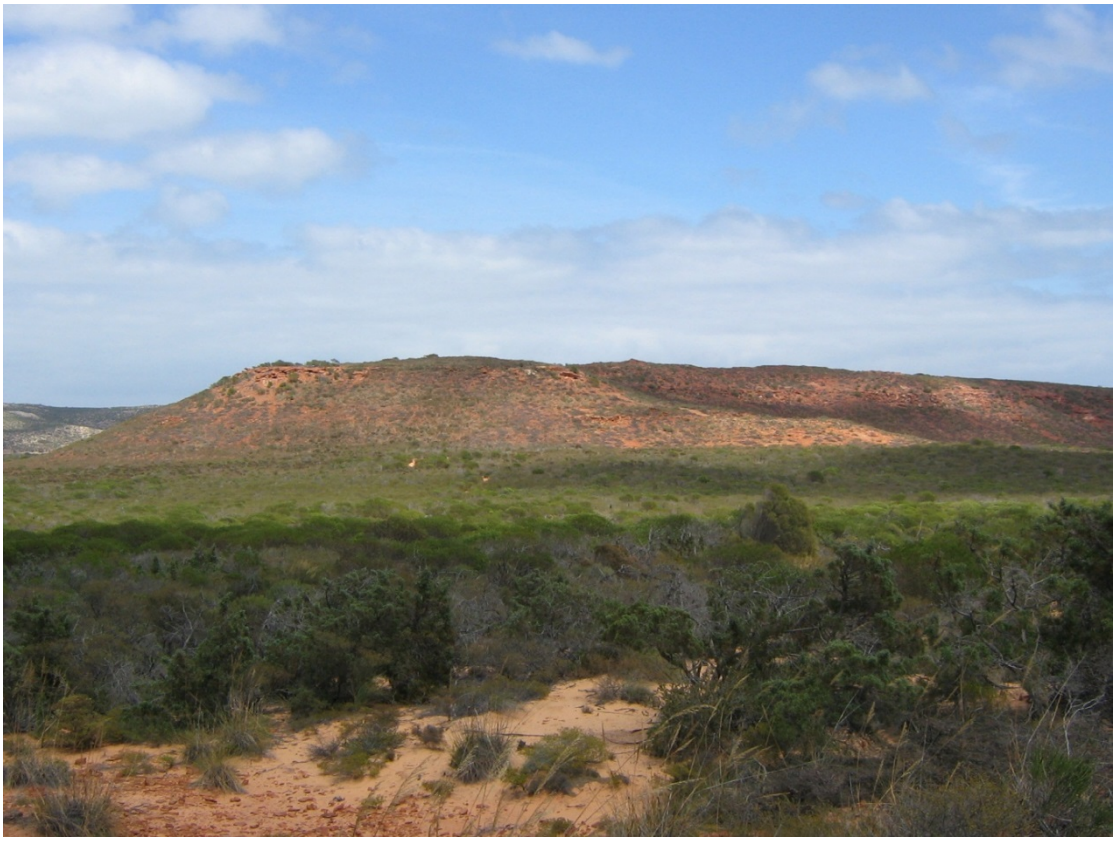


Figure 25. Country situated near the *Beemarra* track.

The *Beemarra* Dreaming story continues, revealing that she fled back toward the sandstone hills, where she left behind evidence of her track as she made her way back to the Murchison River. It is here at other red sandstone outcrops that she tunnelled her way into the hill (see Figure 25). Making her way through this “outcrop of red sandstone,” we still see evidence of where she left her mark on Country, providing the signals utilised in this story, song line, or track for Nanda who, with knowledge of the *Beemarra* Dreaming story, are then enabled access to resources whilst making their way through Country. Walking on Country equipped with the knowledge of the *Beemarra* Dreaming story permits one to look at the land as a living construct that guides, protects, and sustains those who obey the lore informed by Dreaming stories. Today, Nanda continue the practices set out by *Beemarra*, allowing

for Country to open up and speak to us, as we in turn speak back to Country through the telling and re-telling of this story. Again, our Country is nourishing terrain.

Reading our Country, and being guided by the stories that have been handed down from generation to generation, has ensured this particular Nanda family group's survival. This has been achieved by upholding our religious beliefs and continuing our cultural practices given to us from *Beemarra*. The *Beemarra* mythological story slowly unfolds leaving clear reference to specific named places in the narrative. For example, the story weaves in significant sites and markers such as Jeebanwajar and Nanginjay sites where she stopped, leaving behind clues of her existence, in this instance coming up at significant sites that are highlighted by their noticeable scars or tunnels pictured below.

Figure 26. Country along the *Beemarra* track.

The *Beemarra* Dreamtime story is completed when the narrative depicts *Beemarra* making her way back to the Murchison River, leaving more evidence of her existence, as she made her way through County. The clues left behind were her way of instilling her being into the soul of Country. Knowing the story of *Beemarra*, and

reading Country through story, instils her soul into Nanda who, when adhering to the rules set out by *Beemarra,* were then given access to these sacred places of Country.

This Dreamtime story concludes by stating that, after fleeing in terror from the ocean, she tunnelled down into the hills. The mythological story of *Beemarra* states that she continued her journey back from the Nanginjay site where she rested, leaving behind many fresh water springs and soaks.

Thus, knowledge of this particular *Beemarra* Dreaming story allows us to read Country in terms of sacred locations in the form of life-giving water holes – knowledge which has been handed down from generation to generation through a religious Dreamtime story. As stated, the step-by-step guide incorporated in such Dreaming stories allows for Nanda to be guided through Country. Following the principles and rules instructed by *Beemarra* and other Dreaming stories that inform Lore, we are in turn informed. These principles are in direct relation to the reciprocal nature of our culture. The significance of this particular story is that *Beemarra,* the serpent, whilst traversing throughout Country, releases her secret locations of life-giving sustenance, in the way of fresh water holes and springs, gifting these and other secrets of Country to the people living on the Country that when Lore is upheld through story, allows for the Nanda people's very existence and survival. Knowledge of our Dreaming stories, along with the particular secret, sacred locations are still passed on and shared today, with Elders highlighting the need to protect and nurture these and other sacred locations. For example, whilst on one of the many fieldtrips I undertook as part of this research, and upon visiting a relative who was living on Paradise Reserve at the time, she spoke freely with me about the locations of freshwater springs that *Beemarra* left for us. In one of our discussions, this Elder highlighted the importance these springs still carry, and the need to protect and look after them, explaining:

> *Our spring water down here, right now the Paradise Spring, what them wajella's [Europeans] said, "we can see the pigs been there". That's what they said unna [yes]. And they desecrate our spring waters; you see this one down here, Nanny Goat Spring? You seen it bubbling out here in the ground? You seen it bubbling out there in the ground. You probably drive; you probably drove straight past it. I'll show you tomorrow, I'll, I'll take you down there and show you. And you know what? High tide it goes under the water now, tomorrow, you actually see it running up.*

As explained by Chris Drage (as cited in Jackson & de Grand, 1996, p. 41), the *Beemarra* Dreaming story concludes in this way: “Beemarra came to rest at Ellendale Pool, near Geraldton, which is believed to be bottomless. Here she still lies today.” There is no doubt that the story is picked up by the people living in the Geraldton region, allowing for continuity of this religion to be upheld and passed onto other Aboriginal groups, as she meandered her way over Country. Some members of this family group have stated that *Beemarra* extended her journey tracking across our Country, making her way northward onto Kelly’s soak (see Appendix E). Of course, these are extensions of the much larger Dreaming story that are held within the Kelly family. As suggested, each group and territory has their own definition of events of their “Dreaming.” What is inexplicable and certainly intriguing with such Dreaming stories is that the broader religious aspect of this Dreaming Story is a shared commonality upheld by Aboriginal people throughout Australia. A strong commonality is that the serpent made his or her way over vast tracks of land, overcoming vast obstacles of language and distance, to instil a religious phenomenon that has been passed on orally through space and time for eons.

Ritual

As discussed above, this particular family group continues to hold and pass on knowledge of our Dreaming stories of the *Beemarra* serpent with intimate knowledge and respect. Ritual practices around water continue with oral stories still being carried forward onto the next generation with as much vigour today, as was done in the past. The principles laid down by *Beemarra* are today still being observed, practiced and complied with amongst members of this particular Nanda family group. In one interview with my uncle, who was fifty eight years at the time, he declared that he has always lived in the region, spending significant amounts of time in areas such as Kalbarri and Willu Gulli. He added that *Beemarra* was significant in his childhood and continues to be an important component today, explaining that *Beemarra*, the Lore and our Dreaming, still impacts upon him and other members of the family. He also pointed out that stories in regard to water, including the Murchison River, are still carried and passed down by Elders today.

Figure 27. Murchison River.

When asked to explain some of the significance about the water and specifically the Murchison River, his reply was *"Because my old people said, you can't go across the river… Well that's what I was told...That is all Nanda peoples."* He further added that a young man (my cousin-brother) who had recently fallen ill went across the river, continuing:

> *Well, I think, I think that what* [name withheld] *might have done, I think he done that. He went across the river and he…Yeah, and went to a place and started touching things, that's what I reckon. And me, I went across the river, but because I'm a Nanda person, I'm allowed to go there, but not touch anything. No, no, what I mean to say, another thing, I want to tell you too Steven, is that when you go towards that river you have got to chuck sand in there, you know.*

When asked to explain why one must throw sand in the river, he informed me that this was done to *"let the old people know you are there."* As a member of this Nanda family group I understand the different references made in conjunction with throwing sand into the water. We perform this ritual for a variety of reasons. For example, we may do this to introduce ourselves to *Beemarra* and our ancestors; this is a mark of respect and a religious practice carried out over time.

Another example of respect for *Beemarra* is that a Nanda person introduces themselves by speaking out loud or quietly to themselves when coming close to the water. The ritual involves first giving one's name and their language group, followed by stating where one comes from – who your mob are. As previously discussed in the *Beemarra* story, another motive in performing this ritual, as confirmed by this Elder, is to ensure that one is provided with sustenance from the water or river, in this case a good catch of fish:

> *See, with me, like me, you know, like I'm a traditional Nanda man, or whatever you like to say, like yourself, we just chuck sand in the water and when we go up the river, we just chuck a bit more sand in, and so we just say to the old people, "Oh old people, we just come here to get fish, that's all, you know, get all the fresh water fish, you know."*

This ritual would also be performed when going onto other peoples' Country. For example, I would introduce myself and state where I come from as a mark of respect and to conclude that I mean no harm. Another example of such rituals being carried out today is when one acknowledges the traditional people's Country, both past and present. Thus we introduce ourselves on our own Country as well as on other traditional owners, ancestors and other spirit beings' Country.

The above section illustrates the significance of throwing sand into water, to ask for assistance from the old people in providing sustenance, in this case to catch fish prior to fishing in the water. Moreover, members of this family group perform the ritual of throwing sand in water prior to drinking fresh water, signalling cultural continuity by way of religious practices. As this interview continued another Nanda Elder joined in on the discussion with the two men presenting their stories regarding the ritual of throwing sand into the water. The second adding that the process is also designed to *"let people know that you are there, sort of thing, yeah, and you just along up that river there, have you been up that river there from Kalbarri."* He continued, adding that there was a place they call

> *Gregory Rocks and before you get to Gregory Rocks there are two springs there. There are Cement Springs and Sand Springs, you know. And you sit there and you have got to grab a handful of sand and chuck in there.*

The first Elder agreed, nodding his head and asking, where was this particular place where the water bubbles up? The second Eder again replied, *"Sand Springs,"*

reiterating, *"You have got to chuck sand in because that water starts bubbling to let you know that you have got to do it."* When asked if this has anything to do with *Beemarra,* the response was a short, *"Yeah,"* with both men nodding their heads in agreement. Finally, the second Elder added, *"Yeah, well I think so, that's it. That is more or less like your introduction, you know. If you don't, if you don't do that, well, you mightn't come out of there."*

Oral stories/yarns having been passed down for generations confirm that Nanda do have a set of religious beliefs, including ritual practices, which anchor us to Country. Such stories correlate with and are confirmed by early non-Aboriginal people who visited this area some one hundred and fifty years ago. In his published article on the Australian Aborigine, Oldfield (1865, p. 239) describes how "The aborigines [sic] avoid a bubbling spring; for there can be no doubt but this is caused by an underground serpent, which continuously spews up the water." These and accounts given above support the continuity of culture through this family group's religion and rituals further enhancing evidence of how this particular Nanda family group connect to each other and Country.

This chapter has followed on from the previous one to further provide examples of how my family group connects to Country. In the previous chapter, the material presented demonstrated that it is through membership and the social organisation of the extended Kelly family group that we connect to each other. Extensive evidence of how this is achieved clearly reveals how we connect to each other stem from Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing. In this chapter I have again laid the foundations that signal this connection to Country through people. I have explained family kinship ties demonstrating that kin and Country correlate and are as one. This was achieved by first discussing how Nanda identify and are identified through family kinship ties to Country. Examples given have been drawn from a discussion about not having a sense of belonging due to being raised in another Country, not of one's own. In this analysis I illustrate how growing up on Country other than your own can be seen as displacement or losing one's sense of belonging. I further illustrate how members of this family anchor themselves to place and Country through genealogical links of kin and as family members. I have examined anthropological research on Nanda traditional concepts of connection to Country, through terminology such as horde and band, adding that in this instance "family group" would suffice. I have given clear examples of named places. In this instance, I

sought to utilise evidence of people-to-people connections to place that have been integral to this family group's continuity over time and space. I achieved this by giving examples of oral histories provided by Elders that stipulate that my great, great grandparents camped at particular sites as we do today. I have briefly discussed patrilineal-matrilineal processes concluding that, within my family group, it is customary and quite within reason to follow both, allowing for what has been coined "double descent." The discussion then led into naming rights and I provided details of how members of this particular family group continue with the traditional practices of naming rights, using Gidjingali from Arnhem Land as a platform to outline how Nanda practices closely match these traditional practices. I then cited historical evidence describing the European practice of naming Aboriginal people, pointing out how this renaming has in effect been adopted by members of my Nanda family, further developing exemplars of how the practice has been incorporated into Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing by the use of surname anchorage to place, such as "Kelly's Soak."

Chapter 5
Sorry Business

Being connected to Country by birth and to family by respect for time-honoured practices has been the primary focus of this thesis thus far, but this chapter focuses on the way loss binds Aboriginal people together. More specifically, I will explain how this Nanda family group's loss and grieving link us to each other and our land. Who is responsible within the family for the organisation of a formal funeral service and the informal wake reveals much about us, as does how births are managed and celebrated. The cycle of life is much more strongly connected to Country than it is in most Western capitalist cultures. Important to Nanda is the shared experience of Sorry Business that is attached to the importance of place and the representation of us as a group, as we share our grief and sorrow (Myers, 1986). We share a commonality with other Aboriginal Australians in that "'sorrow' unquestionably carries over into all extensions of the dead" (Myers, 1986, p. 134). Collectively, we mourn the loss of relatives and support each other through such emotionally-laden times.

Dealing with loss

Nanda relatives support one another through what is a collective process of Sorry Business, and in doing so the Kelly family produce what Bolt (2009) explains as a shared identity through a collective process. An example of the Kelly Nanda family's shared lived experience of Sorry Business includes, but is not limited to, the mitigating rights given to the immediate family of a relative who has passed away. The immediate family, in particular the parents or Elders of a loved one, are ultimately responsible. They take full responsibility of how the ceremony will be conducted, where the burial will take place, time schedules, and other fundamentals such as the wake and all other requirements of a funeral service. Sorry Business is a process that requires the support and guidance of grieving family members, from the beginning of hearing of a loss of a relative, to arranging the funeral service. Fundamental to Nanda ways of doing business is the guidance of Elders who are "close relatives," and who often discuss matters of importance and guide those who are in the arrangement party.

In summary, all formalities rest with the immediate family and in particular the parents or other Elders within the family unit to organise. This includes the service, wake, and any other family business that may need to be tended to. It is the parents or Elders within the family unit that have the balance of power. If it is an Elder that has passed then the rights of the funeral procedures are handed to their children. And, if this is not achievable for one reason or another, other Elders within the family may be required to organise the procedure.

To explain this in more detail, the section below is an extension of a previous field trip in January 2014, where I explained that I had, for the first time, met my nephew who sadly lost his battle with leukaemia and passed away shortly after my return to Perth from a fieldtrip I had completed in Geraldton. My nephew is the son of my cousin-sister, Dianne. Dianne's mother, Biddy (now deceased), is the sister of my biological father. Prior to January, I had never met my nephew. In contemporary Australia, Aboriginal people tend to have large families and so face the death and illness of family members frequently. These sudden losses mean that grief and mourning are prominent in Aboriginal people's lives. Whilst death is a given within any society, the regularity and significance of losing a family member, and how we as a Nanda family deal with loss and mourning, needs to be explained. All indicators point to my nephew living a healthy lifestyle; he played football and was a relatively healthy young man. While no one knows exactly what caused the disease that took his life, there is an appalling and confronting high rate of mortality for contemporary Aboriginal Australians.

My mob, sadly, suffer the same fate as many other Aboriginal people and add to the dreadful statistics. Moreover, Aboriginal Australians also suffer from lower levels of life expectancy at birth than that of non-Aboriginal people, as captured in the revised estimates for expectation of life by the ABS published in 2013 (see Figure 28 below).

After adjustment for the underestimate of the number of deaths identified as Indigenous, the ABS estimated that Indigenous males born in Australia in 2010-2012 could expect to live to 69.1 years, 10.6 years less than the 79.7 years expected for non-Indigenous males. The expectation of life at birth of 73.7 years for Indigenous females born in Australia in 2010-2012 was 9.5 years less than the expectation of 83.1 years for non-Indigenous females ("Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (2017). Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2016,"). The higher than normal death rates and lower life expectancy within contemporary Aboriginal

people in Western Australia means we live, on average, 15 years less than non-Indigenous people.

Jurisdiction	Indigenous status/sex		
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Difference
Males			
NSW	70.5	79.8	9.3
Qld	68.7	79.4	10.8
WA	65.0	80.1	15.1
NT	63.4	77.8	14.4
Australia (unadjusted)	67.4	79.8	12.4
Australia (headline)	69.1	79.7	10.6
Females			
NSW	74.6	83.1	8.5
Qld	74.4	83.0	8.6
WA	70.2	83.7	13.5
NT	68.7	83.1	14.4
Australia (unadjusted)	72.3	83.2	10.9
Australia (headline)	73.7	83.1	9.5

Notes:

1. This table includes two estimates for Australia. The ‘headline’ estimate includes adjustments based on Australia-wide census-related information. These estimates should be used in all situations except those requiring comparisons with the estimates for the states and territories, for which Australia-wide census-related information could not be applied. The unadjusted Australian estimate should be used in situations requiring such a comparison.
2. Australian estimates are based on deaths in all states and territories.
3. Differences are based on unrounded estimates.

Figure 28. Expectation of life at birth in years, by Indigenous status and sex, selected jurisdictions, Australia, 2010-2012. ("Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (2017). Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2016," 2017). Source: ABS, 2013 [2].

Lower life expectancy is attributed to, but not necessarily in order, poverty, low levels of education, low employment rates, overrepresentation within the prison system, poor diet, and barriers to accessing health services. This is all propelled by a lack of physical exercise due to a predominately sedentary lifestyle found in most contemporary communities, as opposed to the hunter-gatherer lifestyles of the past. Sadly, these factors all play a part in contributing to abnormal mortality rates. Moreover, the above-mentioned aspects coincide with other contributing factors in relation to the poor health of Indigenous Australians, including colonisation, and historically racist and oppressive policy and procedures (Atkinson, 2002). Regretfully, all of these factors merge into what are disturbing mortality rates, which are all too prevalent in contemporary Aboriginal Australia.

In my case, having spent ten years away from Perth studying and travelling, I was not expected to, and simply could not, attend all family funerals. Although I did return on occasion to attend a small number of funerals, I was in the main physically removed and in a sense protected from the stark reality and constant systematic grieving that my family members have had to endure over long periods of time. Upon my return to Perth to live, however, I found myself hurled back into my mob's dreadful, unrelenting cycle of grief and mourning. I recall my initial shock and disbelief of the sheer weight of numbers and severity of my family members who were passing away. For example, the sudden loss within my family was that of my thirty three year old cousin-brother, who passed away after having a massive heart attack.

My cousin-brother was not obese, but did, unfortunately, make unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as excessive substance use, coupled with a poor diet and lack of exercise. I will now explain how, with the constant of loss and grief, my family draw strength from uniting as one, allowing for the healing process to begin. Uniting as a family group is a necessary component that somehow seems to carry us through such critical and constant periods in our lives. Each of the steps of Sorry Business allows for members of this family group to move into a healing stage in order to support us in our endeavours to move on with our lives after suffering the loss of a family member/s. I will unpack some of the issues that are presented at such times by using notes taken from my field work. This approach builds a more personal understanding of how members of this Nanda family group connect and re-connect with each other

in what is an otherwise deeply disturbing phenomenon within contemporary Aboriginal Australia.

The journey home for Sorry Business

In this section I will discuss in detail Sorry Business (funerals) and I will demonstrate the processes of how my family conducts the formal and informal "business" that holds us together as a people, and has done over time immemorial. I stress the importance of respecting our culture and will comply with the tradition of not naming deceased persons, as I give examples of how my family connects and re-connects with each other on Country through this integral practice. I begin with my field trip to Geraldton, Western Australia. To capture this sense of yarning and storytelling, I've used a different font below to keep the naturalistic essence of these voices.

I am driving by myself in my own car due to the fact that, on this occasion, money is short and hiring a car is expensive. I don't like leaving my wife and children without transport, but this is my only option at this point in time if I am to make this particular trip. I dropped my children, Sarah and Kadan, off at school and day care respectively at around 9 and 9.15am and, as I have decided to take my own car on this trip I make my way to the petrol station in Gosnells to check the water, oil, and to fill up with fuel. I first check the water level, which is low, and I try filling the radiator whilst the car ignition is on, noting that the water I pour into the radiator is bubbling back up overflowing and spitting back out the top of the radiator spout. After realising this, I turn the car ignition off and proceed to check the oil level, which is also very low.

I then proceed to fill my tank with fuel before heading into the service station where I purchase five litres of synthetic oil, pouring 1.5 litres into my motor before waiting for a few minutes for that to settle. A few minutes later I start the engine and start to pour water into the radiator. All good, no more regurgitating water and I begin making my way toward Tonkin Highway. I keep an eye on the temperature gauge throughout the trip and thankfully it doesn't give me any more trouble. It's now 11am and, due to the previous

issues with the car, I'm still not out of Bullsbrook, a northern suburb of Perth. The drive is nice, however, and as there is substantial cloud cover the day is cooler than normal, which works in my car's favour.

The drive is enjoyable and I make steady progress toward Geraldton, making only the one toilet stop along the way, as I have water and food to keep me going. I'm just out of Dongara, south of Geraldton when my phone rings and I pull over to the side of the road to take the call. The lady on the other end is from Curtin University's postgraduate support. I inform her that the call keeps dropping out and I'll call her in about an hour when I get to Geraldton. The call drops out permanently and I begin to make my way to Geraldton not bothering to call her back as I know the coverage is not very good for the next ten to twenty kilometres from here. I pass the town of Dongara and make my way through the last leg of the journey and into Geraldton. I arrive at the backpackers accommodation at around 3:30pm, booking in and making my way to my room. I try to call the postgraduate support lady regarding the Annual Progress Report (APR) and get the answering machine, where I leave a message. I then log onto my laptop and check my emails. The postgraduate support person in the meantime has emailed me with an update of what's happening with the APR. At this stage, I begin writing an email requesting an extension, as I have just received the email requesting that I complete the report in the next few days, which is impossible for me to do as I'm in the field. I then email the support staff back, suggesting that she copy in my supervisors with updates on my extension request. It's now 4.12pm and I'm sitting on the double bed writing notes.

Once the notes are completed, I shower and change before making my way to my cousin-sister's house in the suburb of Spalding. I stop off at Coles shopping centre along the way and purchase a $50 gift voucher. I reason that I will forward this onto my Aunty Phyllis in lieu of payment for a previous interview I've conducted with her and decide that I'll take this to her after my business is finished at my cousin-sister's house. After making the purchase I head straight back to my car and again begin driving to my cousin-sister's house. Before long I have reached my destination, where I pull into the driveway and notice four people, three men and a lady sitting on chairs in the front yard of my cousin-sister's house. I immediately recognise two of the four,

as my Uncle Charlie and Aunty Eadie (my father's brother and sister). Parking and getting out of the car, I slowly make my way over to them, acknowledging them with a solemn look of sorrow prior to shaking hands and hugging them for a short period of time. I hug at first my uncle, then my aunty. I am then introduced to the two men, one of whom is my aunt's husband and the other, my cousin-sister's husband. I acknowledge them both with a "Hello," before shaking hands. We sit and talk for a short time; nothing important, just small talk. Within five minutes I am then led into the house by my Uncle Charlie. He opens the fly screen door and enters with me following closely behind. There are a large number of people, both in the lounge and kitchen area, and I don't make eye contact with anyone, as I am focussed on where I am walking as the room is dimly lit. Uncle Charlie introduces me to Dianne who is sitting on a chair with a large wooden frame and ample back support. Dianne sits and waits for me to go to her. Dianne looks exhausted and limply extends both her arms to greet me as I close in to embrace her. I whisper my condolences in her ear and she nods in acceptance of my offer of support as she keeps a hold of me, for what seemed longer than it actually was, a few minutes at best.

Dianne is sobbing and at times wailing; I squat down to the side of her and absorb her pain, taking my time with this process and allowing for her to break her hold when she is ready. I breathe as if meditating, in and out, concentrating on my breathing, and nothing else. Once our hold is broken, Uncle Charlie takes me around the lounge introducing me to family members', some I've met, some I haven't. We repeat the customary process of acknowledging our loss and offering condolences by holding one another. Both the lounge and kitchen areas are full of family members and there is a steady stream of people entering the lounge room area in order to offer their condolences. I slowly and deliberately make my way through what seems to be a never-ending supply of people, paying my respects. The silence between the sobbing is quite eerie and is only broken when a familiar face enters the front fly screen door – it's my cousin-sister, Rosanne. I wait patiently for her to go round the room in the same manner I have just completed before we meet and embrace. Rosanne whispers her name to me and I acknowledge and thank her for this, as I don't always remember my mob's names (too many).

Eventually, Uncle Charlie and I walk back toward the front door, walking past a constant flow of people who continue to enter to pay their respects in much the same way as I had, and we make our way back to where Aunty Eadie is sitting. We are seated for around ten minutes when one of the younger men comes up to us and says, “Dad’s out the back,” gesturing for me to go with him. The young thirty-something year old, is my nephew and his father, Jack, is my cousin-brother. Jack is the only living son of Aunty Biddy, my Father’s sister. I walk with my nephew toward the back gate to the side of the house and see that there is large group of people sitting in a circle; some I have met previously, some not; some drinking Emu Export beer or of cans, some not; they are a mix of men and women of all ages. I sight Jack and make my way toward him embracing him once in reach. After our embrace ends Jack leads me by the hand introducing me in no particular order to some men and women. He is naming them to me and introducing me by my name to them before stating to some “This is Uncle Basil’s son.” Some of the mob I am introduced to I already know from a previous visit, but I appreciate the sensitivity of Jack’s approach, as there are a lot of names and faces to adjust too. I stay for a little while and make small talk with Jack before saying goodbye to them all and waiving as I leave.

I walk back toward the front of the house through the back gate and re-join Uncle Charlie and Aunty Eadie who are sitting together and speaking intermittently. I stay with them for another five minutes, before saying my goodbye and making my way back to my car in order to drive the short distance to my Aunty Phyllis’ house at the end of the street. It’s getting dark now and I pull the car into the driveway before exiting and making my way to the front door of Auntie’s house. I knock hurriedly on the door and am greeted by Aunty Phyllis. I don’t enter, but do give her a big hug and exchange the gift card, thanking her for her input and promising to forward a previous interview transcript to her once it’s completed. I let her know that I’m in a hurry and can’t stay, as I say goodbye and make my way back to my car. Aunty Phyllis is thankful that I gave her the voucher and wishes me well. I’m tired and I start the car and head straight toward the Geraldton CBD area. I park my car in the car park at the rear of the backpacker accommodation and walk through the back entrance toward the large white wooden doors, pulling one of them

and making my way onto the main street of Geraldton. I stop off at Toppo's on the Terrace, a small café-type restaurant a couple of buildings down from where I am staying where I order a steak, salad and chips for dinner. Toppo's is a small but cosy place, and sitting down I feel compelled to take field notes on the events of the day. So I do this whilst I wait for my order. After dinner I make my way back to my room and, as I have a big day tomorrow, decide a quiet night is in order.

The formal church service

My family have strong ties to differing religious denominations due to the indoctrination of mission life directed through the policy of Assimilation, today recognised as the Stolen Generation period. The Stolen Generation period was administered throughout Australia between roughly 1909 and 1969, and it was within these years that Missions housed Aboriginal men, women and children who were removed from their respective families and countries and were utilised as a means of cheap labour. Friday the 28th the funeral service will begin at 1:30pm and is being held at St Francis Xavier Cathedral, one of the larger churches in Geraldton. I feel sick. I'm flat and rundown, and I know it's going to be a big day. I drag myself out of bed and shave and shower before slapping on a pair of shorts and tee shirt. I then drive the short distance to a small café in the local shopping mall where I order bacon and eggs. After breakfast I note that it's only around 10am and I have plenty of time, so I decide to buy the paper and go back to my room to relax a little after all the rushing around. Back at my room whilst lying down reading, I fall asleep and wake up at 1.30pm! I'm rushing now and quickly get dressed. Thankfully, the church is no more than five minutes' drive from where I am based and I arrive some ten to fifteen minutes after the scheduled time of the proceedings. The church is full with some three hundred people, most wearing blue (as this is the colour requested), I'm dressed in a white collared, long sleeved shirt and feeling a little bit embarrassed, as I should know better. I console myself by reasoning that I have just driven the four hundred kilometres from Perth and feel better in knowing that I have made it to the service at all.

I'm standing at the back of what is a full church, when I notice to my right that my cousin-sister is standing alone in arms reach of me and I reach out to her with my right arm, resting my hand on her shoulder. She looks to the left of her to where I am standing and nods in acceptance, greeting me with a little smile. I then feel a hand on my shoulder; turning I am greeted by Tasha, another cousin-sister. I feel comforted by this and allow her to move past me by turning slightly to my right gesturing with my hand to a free space in the pew in front of me. Tasha quickly and quietly rushes past me, head down, sitting in the pew and I place both of my hands on her shoulders comforting her for a little while. I then decide to walk to my right and along the side of the church in search of a seat and I see a few other members of the Kelly family, Aunty Hazel and her son Wayne. I acknowledge them with a nod as I walk past them. Having no luck in finding a seat, I return to my original place and stand. I listen to the stories about my nephew's life and watch with interest, noting the photos being presented on a large screen as music plays in the background. Stories about Australian Rules Football [a national sporting code] abound in conjunction with photos with family and friends, and although I didn't know this young man, I am full of pride by the way in which he lived his life.

The stories of his love of footy and family hold strong and I feel the connection through familiarity; I feel as though I did know him or at least could relate to him. I listen intently and take in how much he and my family are respected from within the community, both here in Geraldton and away. My nephew lived in South Australia and had been living there right up until he was diagnosed with cancer (around half a dozen footy mates made the journey to attend his funeral). It was only after he was diagnosed that he decided to make the move back to Geraldton to be with his family in his final weeks. I feel flat again and possibly overawed by the occasion. After about fifteen minutes I retreat back to my car and slowly drive to the backpackers, doing so knowing the question will be asked of my whereabouts from family members later that night. Once I arrive I head straight to bed and sleep for a couple of hours. I wake at around four thirty and watch TV, before showering and getting dressed to attend the wake at my cousin-sister Dianne's house in Spalding. I know it's going to be a big night and still feel flat.

Attending a wake: Sorry Business

I arrive at the wake at 6pm and there is a large crowd at the front of the house and I drive slowly past the house flicking my eyes left and right, as children are running around everywhere and I'm aware they won't stop for a car. Cars are parked in every space available with lots of people coming and going, entering and exiting the many differing groups of people huddled together, some young teenage girls, three and four to a group, some teenage boys. I also note some older groups of people are a mixture of men and women, some just men only. All form semi and full circles, some lean up against cars, where their liquor is stashed out of sight from those who might come to "cadge" a charge (drink), or of the police. I drop my car off at Aunty Phyllis's place, asking her if it's okay to park there and, with her approval, I then ask if she would watch my car. She nods and I make my way back to Dianne's with my soft drink in one hand and a litre bottle of water in the other. I walk straight to the side gate of the house and enter the back yard noting the large number of people in the back yard. I estimate there are a couple of hundred people all up, front and back.

I steadily make my way through the constantly moving crowd that resembles the steady flow of people one might find when one is walking in a busy shopping mall, brushing up to you as both you and they go about their daily business. I also notice that people are seated all along the side of the fence line to the right of me and there is plenty of movement in all directions, as food has been placed on tables at the back of the house, several salads of sorts in large bowls. The BBQ to the left side of the house is pushed up against the fence and has just recently been turned off, but still emits the burnt, smoky smell of overcooked meat that wafts through the cool night air filling my nostrils, as I make my way through the maze of people. Sitting in front of me a metre or two I notice four women seated and eating, one of which is another aunty, my father's sister, Aunty Cathy. I walk over to her and say hello allowing her time to adjust her eyes and recognise me, before embracing her.

She tells me that she has been in hospital with pneumonia and other ailments and needs to go back by a certain time. One of her daughters is supposed to take her in her car, but she hasn't come yet (Aunty Cathy is actually asking me if I could take her to the hospital). In between this conversation, Dianne, the mother of my nephew enters into the group requesting assistance of me to fix a spot light that needs an extension cord. I offer to take her to the shop to buy one and quickly let Aunty Cathy know what we are doing. I advise Dianne to meet me at the front of the house, as I have to pick up my car and walk off in the direction of the front yard, without breaking stride to stop and yarn with familiar faces as I make my way to my car (I won't leave there otherwise). I choose to do this task as I realise it will be the only time I will have to spend alone with Dianne. Picking up my car I head straight back to the house where there is a large number of people huddled in groups at the front yard and spilling onto the road. Sighting Dianne standing solemnly alone, I stop the car and Dianne embarks, directing me to the local shopping centre. Dianne states that she didn't see me at the service today and I quickly point out that I was there and provide evidence by naming those family members I had seen at the church. It's important for me to be at the service and I can and will be examined and cross-examined by family as to whether or not I am meeting my obligations. Family are always being questioned on their whereabouts at such times and if they can't be in attendance, another family member should be there. If not, serious reprimands are made. The outcome of a lack of appearance is generally a very public shaming and one that I would recommend be avoided at all cost.

On our short drive to the shops, I ask how she is holding up, and she replies, "I'm exhausted and just want to sleep." I also comment on the large number of people at the service and wake. Dianne agrees, but doesn't go into too much detail, so I don't pry. We pull up into the car park of the shopping centre and both Dianne and I get out of my car and walk slowly to the front of the shopping centre entrance in order to purchase the extension cord, before returning back to her house and dropping her at the front yard, before I go onto park my car at Aunty Phyllis's place. I promptly return to the house with the extension cord, assisting Dianne and another man by pushing the cord through a hole in the bedroom window flyscreen. I then spend about

five minutes adjusting the spotlight, so as not to point it in the eyes of the people in the back yard. Once this task is completed I head back to the table where Aunty Cathy is sitting and notice she is looking irritated. Aunty Cathy explains that her daughter has not yet arrived to take her back to hospital, so I calmly offer to take her, as I am not drinking and would like to spend a bit of quite time with her. Whist we are etching out the details of where the hospital is I hear my name being called from within the crowd. A faint calling of my name at first and I look up, but can't see anyone I know, so I continue with my conversation. Again, I hear my name being called, and this time, looking around, I notice it's coming from a group of people seated directly in front of me, at a distance of about four metres. I raise my head adjusting my eyes in the hope of getting a better look and I notice my uncle looking at me with a big broad grin.

Excusing myself, I stroll the short distance and we greet each other with a hug. My uncle then takes me around, introducing me to family, and this time they're Kellys. First is my Aunty Anne Kelly; her husband Frank; her son, Frank Junior; and other family members, all seated in a group. I shake hands and embrace my other mob and we laugh and joke for a while. More family come up and I am introduced to them; some I know, and others I don't. It's a good atmosphere and the introductions go on for about fifteen minutes before I suddenly recall my previous commitment. I let the Kelly mob know of the duty that I am to perform, and without haste head back to the table collecting Aunty Cathy and her walker and we slowly make our way to the front yard. I again ask that she wait for me as I quickly make my way to my Aunty's house, returning with my car. Pulling up and parking, I quickly sight Aunty Cathy and get out of the car to help place her walker (a small red-framed gadget with wheels on the front) into the back passenger seat.

I fold it up and force it in, having some difficulty, as I have my children's seats still in place and have to adjust it as is necessary. I assist Aunty Cathy in getting into the car and we are on our way. The hospital is about a ten minutes' drive and Aunty Cathy directs me in between our small talk on the way. I enjoy our, albeit short, time together, as I haven't really seen or heard from her in the past ten years that I've been away. We arrive at the hospital and I walk with her through the front emergency doors, where I say goodbye

before embracing her, promising that I will come back and visit her before I go back to Perth. This formality out of the way, I head back to Dianne's house, again parking at Aunty Phyllis's place. The place is packed and people are everywhere; cars are driving to and from the house with adults and children alike walking, running and stumbling in all directions. I re-enter and renew contact with the Kelly family members and we spend our time laughing and yarning about past experiences and what not. I thoroughly enjoy the moment and meet and greet more family as time goes on. I meet and greet a big mob on both sides of my family: Tasha, and other cousin-sisters, family from the Kellys and Mahers. I am swamped with family and time disappears, awash with this time spent with family, yarning and enjoying the moment, until some of us make our way to the front of the house.

This is the second stage of the night; where to from here? We stand together in a circle, men and women laughing and joking, drinking and meeting more family members as they come and go. My cousin-sister, Tasha, has a large seven-seater white van and is keen to head over to the block (another family member's house), where there is a band playing and I like the sound of this, so I agree to drive as I'm sober. Organising this is slow, as people are coming and going and I just relax and let it unfold. I receive some information that one of the band members is Jack's son, my nephew, and am keen to meet him, amongst others. But still no one is organised and things just seem to roll on as they were. About a half an hour later the mob moves over to Tasha's van. I have just received the keys from Tasha and unlock the van doors to allow the motley crew of passengers to embark. With family members coming and going, the van has become a stop-over for anyone wanting to yarn and enjoy the night without going anywhere. Around 30 minutes later it is decided that we should make our way to the block, and those who don't want to come or have made alternative travel plans disappear back into the crowd. Tasha is in the front passenger seat with a carton of beer sitting on the floor. In the back are my two cousin-sisters and their partners, Uncle Charlie (my dad's brother), and another two young men, who have decided to join us.

We make our way slowly to our destination and I'm being directed by Tasha out of suburbia and into a semi-rural area. As I'm deaf in my right ear I

have to concentrate and really pay attention to the instructions, as there is music playing and a lot of background noise from the mob in the back. I drive on and, in around fifteen minutes, we arrive at the block. Turning left into a long limestone track we continue to drive a few hundred metres to the front of the house, where there are a number of cars parked with people gathered around the open driveway to the side of the house. There are a large number of people and they are coming and going. Some make it over to the van to say hello; others are just walking around aimlessly, whilst there is a big congregation around the car park driveway with cars lined up in a semi-circle a little bit back from the main crowd. Here, there are people sitting in the parked cars and leaning or sitting on the front of them.

I get out of the van and allow the others out by sliding the backdoor open. We're all out of the van and slowly make our way over to where the main group of people are gathered. Some of us stop along the way to say hello to some of the mob at the block. I observe that there is a drum set and guitars sitting idle in the car park driveway, as we make our way in that general direction. We are constantly stopping as a group or being stopped, and I am being introduced to people by either Tasha or one of the other family members. The lighting is poor and my hearing is not good, so I smile and say hello. We make it over as a group to the larger group gathered around the car park driveway and I am whisked away to a car where Jack is seated with his wife and some others. We greet each other again, and I sit on the bonnet of his car with him and the others. Jack offers me a drink from an esky sitting on the ground and I decline his offer exclaiming, "I'm skipper tonight." He smiles and accepts my knockback, before adding, "Is Uncle Charlie with you?"

I nod and point him out in the crowd to the right of us. We sit and yarn for a little while and I notice a young man tuning one of the guitars. Whilst he is doing this, some other men make their way into the area and begin setting themselves up to play. In no time, they are away and the music is pumping, loud and of a pretty good standard. The band is made up of a drummer, bass guitarist and two electric guitarists, one of whom is the main singer. They play a mix of country and blues and they're all jamming along as if, what seems to me, to be without a care in the world. More people head into what I liken to a mosh pit right at the front of the band. They are dancing, singing and getting

into the groove. Jack points to one of the young men playing guitar, before adding, “That’s my son.” I’m impressed with this talented young man and feel a sense of pride, even though I’ve not met him.

We stay at the large gathering for a few hours yarning, singing, dancing, and enjoying each other’s company. I am on the move for most of that time, either talking to or meeting family members and I’m really enjoying myself. The night is clear, with an abundance of stars shining brightly above, and the night temperature is pleasant for this time of year. Time flies, and soon enough our group decides it’s time to call it a night. The process from that first decision to making it to the van takes about forty five minutes. I take on the role of mustering up intoxicated family members, as I’m getting tired and need sleep. Some don’t want to end the night just yet and keep slipping back into the crowd to have another dip at partying, dancing, yarning and generally enjoying themselves with family. I’m relaxed and go with the flow. Most of us make it back to the van and we spend about another thirty minutes waiting for one person or another, as they have either gone to the toilet, or taken off and disappeared back into the crowd. Those who are in the van yarn and sing along with the background music. I’m sitting in the front driver’s seat and yarning with this one or that about everyday stuff and notice one of my cousin-sister’s partners walking off after they have exchanged a few words. I don’t get involved and now we are waiting for him and someone else to return. He doesn’t return. However, in the meantime, Uncle Charlie does and we as a group decide to leave my cousin-sister’s man at the block. My cousin-sister is furious with him, and I suspect he’ll be sleeping in the dog house upon his return home.

Meanwhile, Tasha decides that she doesn’t want to go home right now either and wants us to stay. We decide as a group that we want to go and she walks off back into the crowd to continue with partying. We are set to go and I start the van, relieved to finally be on our way. I drive back to Dianne’s house, being instructed by certain family members. The mood in the van is generally relaxed, with the occasional flare up from my cousin-sister about the type of retribution that will be directed at her man once she has him in her sights. I pull into a 24-hour service station and receive ten dollars from one of the cousin-sisters and am informed that it takes unleaded, and with this advice

proceed to add the unleaded fuel from the bowser and into the tank. Once this action is completed and I've paid at the counter, we make our way off to designated drop-off sites. I drop the family members at their respective homes and I make it back to Dianne's house, quickly dropping the keys off and getting into my own car and driving back to my accommodation, arriving at around 3am. I'm buggered! This trip has been a highly emotionally-charged one and it has taken its toll on me. No sooner than I return to the backpackers, I fall asleep.

It's Saturday and I'm awake around 9.30 am. I shower and dress before heading off to get a much-needed cup of coffee. I'm at the shopping mall in the CBD of Geraldton around the corner from the backpackers and decide to check my bank balance in one of the ATMs opposite the shopping centre car park. My reason for this is that I'm not sure how much cash I have and need to set some of it aside, so that I have enough to make it back to Perth. Shortly after checking my balance at the ATM, and as I am slowly making my way back toward my car, I notice a grey-haired woman (Aunty Hazel) making her way toward me. She spotted me at the teller and hits me up for some money straight away. I hand twenty dollars over after giving her a hug and decide to strike while the iron is hot, by requesting an interview with her (bingo – reciprocity!). She agrees to this and I get her new home address, forewarning her that I'll pay her a visit tomorrow morning around "nine." We part ways, and I make my way back to the backpackers hoping that my twenty dollar investment will be worth it.

Back at my room, I receive a phone call. It's Uncle Charlie, and he's inviting me to another family get-together, this time at my cousin-sister Coleen's house (older sister to Dianne and Jack) (see Figure 29). I get the address from him, scribbling it onto some scrap paper and I advise him that I'll be there soon. I have a GPS in my car and have no trouble finding Coleen's house. Upon arrival I walk straight through the open car park drive way and into the backyard. There's another mob here and I walk around greeting, by now, familiar family members. Some of them are looking a bit worse for wear from the previous night's endeavours. I have a yarn with Uncle Charlie and he wants to go and get some beer and, of course, I oblige his request. My mob don't just come out and ask me to do something for them, it's done like this: "I

want to go the pub and get some beer," during general conversation. I offer to take him and we discuss a rough plan with an exit time for our departure. My initial response was, "No worries, Unc, I'll take you in about fifteen minutes, as I want to catch up with Brother Jack." This exchange is important as I am positioning myself into my Dad's family as a member that has been on the outside for a long time. I then make my way over to Jack, stopping to acknowledge other nephews, cousin-sisters and other family along the way, with the usual greeting of "Hello," a handshake, or a hug. Finally, I make my way to Jack and give him a hug, before sitting alongside of him for most of the time I'm there.

Figure 29. Inset: Cousin Brother Jack Egan second man on his right is Uncle Charlie Maher wearing grey t-shirt and glasses.

People are coming and going; there is a mixture of men, women and children here today and the mood is pleasant. After around fifteen minutes, Uncle Charlie and I head off to the bottle shop and return some ten minutes later with a mixture of alcoholic beverages, which includes a carton of beer, a bottle of white rum, and some other assorted bits and pieces, as requested by particular family members. Not long after our bottle shop run and return to

Coleen's house, I notice a man in his thirties beginning to slowly and gently strum an acoustic guitar. In no time at all, and to my immediate surprise, what follows is best explained as a full-on music session unfolding before our eyes and ears. I sit, relaxing and enjoying the entertainment.

At this stage I'm mesmerised by the standard of the musicianship and quickly become deeply immersed in the moment, enjoying this impromptu display of talent. I'm simply being swept away by what is a profound moment. Suddenly, as if being jolted back into reality, I quickly come to my senses, realising that this is a great way to capture the moment in order to help assist me in explaining why and how we do things as a family. I needed to capture this special moment and swiftly make my way to my car to retrieve my voice recorder and camera.

After I enter my car I quickly grab the voice recorder from the pouch and begin to make my way back to where the music is playing. Whilst pressing the little button of my remote door lock and walking slowly toward the backyard, I begin to examine and check the recorder to make sure the batteries are okay and it is in working order. All good! I then steadfastly make my way to where the man is sitting and playing, before waiting patiently, slightly to his side, for him to finish his song. I'm still checking the recorder and camera when the man stops singing after completing his song and I ask him if it is okay to record. He just nods and continues to strum the guitar, seemingly not too concerned with my request.

Figure 30. Unnamed musician at a family gathering.

The music and harmonies are extremely uplifting and I head straight back over to sit with Jack, recording and taking photos of this beautiful melodic display. The repertoire of songs played that afternoon included ones about Country, and returning to family and Country. Some of the mob join in and sing with the man, all the while drinking and generally having a good time. I'm impressed by this ceremony and remember thinking at this point in time that I might finally be starting to get a clearer notion about doing this ethnography thing. Eventually, I walk back over to the man whilst he is having a break and replay the previously-recorded song back to him. Others mill around listening, and the man says in a surprised manner, *"Oh, you been recording me,"* realising what I had asked him earlier. I answer, *"Yep, is it okay?"* He agrees, nodding his head, whilst one of my nephews takes over from me as the new recording person. I'm happy for this to happen, as I want and enjoy the fact that people are getting involved, and I quietly retreat back to my position seated alongside Jack. I'm now free to enjoy the moment, move around and mingle, if I like. I then proceed to take photos and yarn with Jack, Uncle Charlie and other family members. I think this is the ultimate aim

of ethnography: doing participant observation and recording events whilst still being able to enjoy this important time with family, without feeling like I am being rude or an intrusive insider/outsider. “Why not?” I think as I watch impressed with the display of my nephews participating in the session by recording and joining the man on guitar with a harmonica and backup vocals.

Figure 31. Healing through song.

Our strength is drawn from coming together at times of loss and this coming together, as part of our culture, allows for the process of Sorry Business to go through the transitional stages from grief and mourning, time together at this important period allows for family members to build strength and resilience, and finally from strength and resilience, we can then move safely into the healing phase. The ritual of Sorry Business begins when family come together to grieve for a lost family member as a family unit. Sadly, in contemporary Aboriginal society, this process can be quite traumatic and the family members are often in shock due to the sudden loss of their loved one. These processes begin by the main family members of a loved one staying in one place to comfort and support each other. During this time, other family

and friends visit and pay their respects, offering support to the family of the deceased. This is done in the days and weeks in the lead up to the funeral. We can then make the transition into the next stage, as we are constantly re-connecting and becoming a part of a larger family group as we near the formal place and time. All the while the momentum is gathering as we become one, or united as a family. We continue to draw strength from each other as a core group and then transcend together as family into the next stage. As a unit, we are moving into and through the cycles presented above during and after a funeral and into the wake. During the wake it is a time to catch up and re-connect with family again in a less formal setting.

This stage allows family to meet new additions or members of the larger family unit, or re-connect with familiar family members. Spending time with each other allows time for each family member to reflect and celebrate the life of a loved one. We are creating and re-creating our realities of who we are as a people through shared stories. This is also a time of negotiating one's position within the family structure; the evolution of understanding one's position is a natural process brought about by the previous cycles. It is important to note that these cycles are not as straight forward and structured as I have stated. I think it is more fluid, and as a family unit, we traverse back and forward, and in and out, each of these cycles throughout the whole of the process. For example, while one may still be grieving and still in the process of moving into another stage of the cycle, spending more time with a particular family member or sitting with (spending time with and supporting those most affected), changes where we are personally. The cycle of Sorry Business continues and the process of healing is made possible through resilience. I feel that resilience is drawn from the previous processes and gives us strength to move forward in life after losing a loved one. This process can only be achieved after Sorry Business.

From a state of shock and grief, we as Nanda begin the process of healing by, firstly, coming together as a core family unit. From here, family and friends arrive at a particular place to pay their respects and support the core family members. This process allows the family time to come to terms with, and draw strength from, those who visit and perform the necessary requirements of Sorry Business. These processes all combined are designed

to assist us as a family to transfer from one cycle to another, thus enabling us to begin the healing process. The above-mentioned then may, but sadly not always, allow for the family to move on with their lives. Family members who come together to grieve and pay respect to family members of lost ones may travel over extraordinary distances and may have to leave other family members who rely on them back in their homes and states respectively. For example, Uncle Charlie (far right corner of the photo below) lives, and has lived, in Alice Springs for some thirty years. He has children and grand-children there.

Figure 32. Family gathering.

I feel the stress and sadness slowly descending, and am glad to be spending time with family and being able to soak up the atmosphere, enjoying the musical talent on display and yarning, getting to know and bonding with family members.

I stay for a couple of hours before heading back to my room at the backpackers. Having just arrived and getting ready to catch some well-deserved rest, I receive a phone call from Natasha Simpson (cousin-sister).

Tasha wants her van and, as she is at her house nearby, I offer to take her and drive over to her house, which is located about two kilometres from my accommodation to pick her up and take her to her van. Arriving at her house, I have to adjust the “kiddy” (child safety) seats as she has her two older children with her and they don’t require them. I place both of my children’s seats in the boot of my car and we head off to pick up her van. The mood is relaxed; Tasha is nursing a severe hangover and I prod her about telling me all the gossip of last night’s after-party. She does and gets excited whilst yarning with me, going into detail about the proceedings of the previous night at the “block.” All good and no issues; plenty of fun and laughter abound with the relayed version of the developments of last night, though. I drop Tasha off and don’t bother getting out of the car. I’m done and need to get back and rest. I sleep well that night and I’m up and about reasonably early the next morning. I catch up with Aunty Hazel at her house that morning.

Thus far, the interviews I have conducted capture one or two of the children of my grandparents and children of my great grandparents, Cornelius and Nellie Kelly. They are as follows, and are in no particular order: Aunty Phyllis McDonald, the daughter of Alma; Marshall and Gladys Kelly, the son and daughter of Jessie Kelly; Hazel Kelly, the daughter of Doug Kelly; Jenny Cooper, the daughter of Marjorie Kelly; and Ross Kelly, a son of Ron Kelly’s. This interview with Aunty Hazel Kelly caught me off guard and was not planned, as I had, and never have had, any intention of interviewing anyone at Sorry Business time, irrespective of my standing as an anthropologist and researcher. Personally, I don’t think this is an appropriate time for interviewing family members. However, on this occasion, the loss of my nephew was on my Father’s side and this, in my mind, allowed for the interview to commence in the manner in which it did.

As stated earlier, I had briefly caught up with Aunty Hazel Kelly at a shopping centre car park in Geraldton whilst I was there to attend my nephew’s funeral. After about five minutes of having a brief discussion of the usual, I asked if she would be interested in having a yarn with me about our family and our connection to Country. She agreed on the spot and gave me her new address whilst we organised a rough time for me to go to her house for the interview. Aunty Hazel is the daughter of Doug Kelly, my mother’s

mother's brother. I arrived the following day at Aunty Hazel's Augustus Street unit at around 9:30am and entered through the carport directly adjacent to the unit building, before being met by an unknown Yamatji man. I greeted him with a "Hello," introducing myself before asking if Aunty Hazel was home. The man nodded and quickly retreated, making his way back up the side path that leads to the back yard of the unit. Alone, I shuffled through my bag, and made my way to a chair at a table, before taking a seat and waiting for Aunty to present herself. The area I was seated in was an allocated common area, suitable for large gatherings of friends and family who visited from all over.

As I waited, I unpacked my note book, pen and voice recorder. Preparing myself, I could hear the soft shuffling feet and voices that steadily became louder as they got closer. Turning my head to where the noise was coming from, I first noticed the grey-haired, weathered woman leading the man as she made her way to me. I stood and turned to her, opening my arms in expectation of a warm embrace. We exchanged pleasantries and I began to brief Aunty Hazel on what I was doing, noticing that, whilst I was talking, Aunty was directing the man standing and listening in to go along, tilting her head back and pouting her lips back in the direction of the back yard. "This is family business," Aunty stated in a no-nonsense manner. Within seconds, the man quickly retreated back along the side path making his way to the backyard and away from our private discussion. I continued to explain the hows and whys of what I was attempting to do without missing a beat, in the realisation that Aunty Hazel already knew why I was there, obviously through word-of-mouth. At this stage, I'm quietly buoyed by the openness from family members and their eagerness to yarn about family and connection to Country. We yarn for a little while and I begin to proceed with the interview.

After completing the interview with Aunty Hazel, I head back out to Spalding for a final visit to Dianne's house. I sit with Dianne and the others for what will be the last time I see my much-loved Aunty Biddy, for she passed away in June 2014.

I stay for about half an hour before saying my goodbyes and making my way to the hospital for one last visit. This time it's back to see Aunty Cathy Maher. All good, as Aunty Cathy is sitting up watching her beloved Eagles (losing again), and is coaching them from her hospital bed. I stay with Aunty

Cathy for about half an hour before saying goodbye and then head back to Perth.

This fieldtrip trip, whilst emotionally, mentally, and physically draining, was also an enjoyable and uplifting experience for me. From the outset I had hoped to relay as much as I could in my notes, interviews and recordings to allow for a robust insight into the lives of a Nanda family group, and Yamatji people in general, at a time of Sorry Business. I understand it can be hard to keep up with all the comings and goings, and the flicking between the respected families; for example, mother's and father's sides. But this is normal practice for us, and I felt it was needed to highlight the dynamic and seemingly chaotic lifestyles in order to address the question of how we connect with each other and Country.

This first-person narrative above has been used to express a more evocative, in-the-moment, lived experience account of events unfolding. Sometimes it is the least mediated and raw accounts of the little things in everyday life – even for big events such as Sorry Business – that capture an authentic, naturalistic sense of how we relate to each other as family. Writing culture sometimes loses the detail in extracting and abstracting larger themes and structures. Australian culture generally has changed rapidly over the decades, but the culture is not seen as less authentic. Indigenous Australian culture changes too (Prout, 2008), but retains the devotion to Country and kin described in this thesis.

Chapter 6
Mobility – Getting back to Country

Colonisation progressively fragmented many Indigenous Australian groups and families, moving them off Country in many places, making it much harder for people to remain closely connected to each other and maintain our ways, especially for important ceremonies like funerals. However, the previous chapter described how we continue to sustain deep connections and return to Country, especially at key times for our families and communities.

Since first contact between Aboriginal people and Europeans, the movement of our people has been a major area of interest. In fact, some Europeans viewed the mobility practices of Aboriginal people problematic, random and unproductive (Young & Doolan, 1989). Contemporary Australian policy discourse on and around Aboriginal movement still tends to see "mobility as unstructured and unproductive" (Dockery, 2016). There has been discussion on and around Aboriginal population mobility addressing different aspects of Aboriginal mobility (Smith, 1980; J. Taylor, 1990; Walter, 2015; Young & Doohan, 1989), and some important work has been done on how eastern states Aboriginal connections are derived from "beats" and "runs" (Beckett, 1988; Birdsall, 1988).

In this chapter, I outline how contemporary forms of mobility are vital in assisting members of our Nanda family group maintain connection with each other and Country. Mobility is an important component of this family's continuity of connection and is not a random act that demonstrates laziness. This section draws upon daily, sometimes weekly, notes I wrote between December 2012 and mid-2016. The setting for these notes evolved from meetings I had with my supervisors. The focus is on how Indigenous mobility, kinship ties and connection to Country are forged upon and strengthened through an integral part of Indigenous culture – yarning. The sharing of such stories and memories as expounded throughout this thesis or "yarning" has been used as a method to acknowledge my ancestry, which is founded on an oral tradition.

I begin with a journey back home that incorporates yet another yarn of a road trip – an event that happened in 1998 – and includes my now-deceased grandmother. It is a yarn retold by two Nanda people, myself and my Aunty Carly (not her real name, my grandmother's only daughter). Both Aunty Carly and I begin our yarn on a road trip from Perth to Geraldton, Western Australia, in December, 2012. This road trip occurred due to a family meeting that was held as part of an end-of-year Nanda native title meeting. The yarn is, at times, told by the two of us, adding to and taking turns in the telling and re-telling of our yarn. This highlights the power of entwining biographies and touches on the therapeutic properties that, I believe, fuel Indigenous resilience in contemporary Australia.

Connecting and re-connecting with family on road trips

I received a phone call from my Aunty Carly asking if I would like to go to Geraldton with her to attend the final Nanda meeting for 2012, before the Christmas break and, of course, I took her up on the offer and rounded up the wife and kids and left Perth at around 5am on Saturday morning. As explained, Carly is the daughter of Lisa, who is my mother's mother's older sister. In the Nanda traditional kinship system, Lisa is my grandmother and her children are my mother's cousin-brothers and sister, therefore, I refer to them as uncle and aunty. However, everyone in the family affectionately referred to Lisa as "Aunty." In the European kinship system, she would be referred to as my great aunty. Aunty Lisa was the last surviving member of ten children born to Cornelius and Nelly Kelly, my great grandparents. She passed away in May, 2011, and was the matriarch of the Kelly family as well as the driving force behind the Kelly families' Nanda native title claim. After her passing, my mother, Gladys, then took over as the eldest surviving Kelly and matriarch.

I was still living in Melbourne at the time Aunty Lisa passed and returned to Northampton to attend her funeral, so it was the first time I had had the chance to catch up with Aunty Carly since Aunty Lisa's funeral. I looked forward to this trip and found that having Aunty Carly in the car was a fantastic opportunity to re-connect and yarn about all sorts of things that have been happening in the past ten or so years. Our discussions touched on past

events as we relived some of the good times we shared on road trips, recalling some of the fun times with Aunty Lisa. As Aunty Carly was the only daughter of Aunty Lisa she had struggled even more so with the loss of her mum over the past year, and so the trip was made that much more significant and gave me the opportunity to sit and listen to her stories whilst reflecting on where I was at with life and where things were heading. When I left Perth in Easter 2001, I left alone and now, some ten years later, I was returning with my wife and two children on a road trip to Geraldton with Aunty Carly.

It was good to spend this time with Aunty and it gave me insights into how she was faring at this point of her life. It was also a very important time for me to listen to her stories, as I think losing family and loved ones is such a personal, private journey that we all face, and one which can be an extremely lonely and painful process. This is especially so if we have nobody to reach out and yarn to about how we feel and what we are going through. I think that the one thing we Indigenous people have in common is that we do have such large extended families, and wherever we are in Australia we can connect with other Indigenous people who genuinely feel our pain and sorrow at such times. From my observations, I think the only time people really connect and can relate to death and loss en masse in the wider community is when it is a well-known personality, or someone whose end may have made the news for one reason or another. I think this is a bit of a shame, but at least it isn't totally lost (we still connect), albeit for someone most of us don't know and are not related to.

This was my journey as much as it was Aunty Carly's and it was good just being a part of it. The whole family has been rocked in such a profound way with the loss of Aunty Lisa. I doubt we as a family unit will ever really get over her loss. However, the trip turned out to be extremely therapeutic in that there was plenty of laughter about some of the times we spent together. For example, my Uncle Kim, Carly's youngest brother, who is three months older than me, married a local Darwin girl in Darwin in 1999. I attended their wedding and of course fell in love with Darwin, returning two years later to live and study there for several years. After the wedding, and whilst we were sitting around the pool having some refreshing drinks in the stifling heat in the month of October, known to the locals as the "build up," Aunty Lisa, Aunty

Carly, Liam (Carly's only son) and I hatched a plan to hire a car and drive to Oenpelli (Gunbalanya/Kunbarllanjnja), the language name of an Aboriginal community north of Jabiru, and three hundred kilometres east of Darwin. Jabiru is the main town that caters to the local Aboriginal communities and outstations, as well as being the central town for jaunts into Kakadu National Park and east Arnhem Land. Aunty Carly had a friend she wanted to catch up with and I had a cousin I had never met who had lived in Jabiru, so it all seemed like a great way to meet and greet family and friends.

The next day, all four of us made the short walk to the car hire office and picked up an incredibly small, red two-wheel drive car to take us on our road trip to Jabiru. Aunty Lisa, Aunty Carly and Liam are all rather large and both ladies sat in the front, leaving Liam and me the back seats to position ourselves. It was cramped, but we had air-conditioning and we made several stops along the way to stretch, which helped get the blood flowing in our legs. One such stop was at the scenic window on the wetlands where we had great 180 degree views over the swamp plains. This view gave us insights into the abundance of birdlife in the region, as well as the diversity of plant and animal life in the area, including crocodiles. Road trips with family members are mostly enjoyable times that assist us in connecting and reconnecting. I recall much laughter and light-hearted banter on the many times I have spent with family in the confined spaces of cars, either going to or from a certain place and this was no different. Before long, we had arrived at our destination and found the address of my cousin, Ian, where we said our goodbyes and made quick arrangements for a pick-up time the next day before making our way to "G."

It was an exciting time for me as I, one, had never met cousin-brother Ian and, two, had never been to an Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory. The next morning my Aunty Lisa, Carly and Liam arrived on time and we set off to "G." My Cousin-brother, Ian, and his wife, who was from "G," had long before our arrival decided that they would take us to G, as we had no idea as to how to get there. They were also familiar with that country and made us all feel safe and accepted. Moreover, we were unaware at the time but all visitors must have permits to access G from the Land Council, so it was great to have family to take us there, also protocol. We set off to G –

Ian, his wife and kids leading us in their own car – before arriving at a river crossing around fifteen to twenty minutes later. The water was clear and inviting in the "build-up" heat and as we contemplated crossing in our cars I noticed some men fishing on the crossing. I got out of the car to take a better look. I remember feeling both amused and intrigued at seeing that the road across the river was under about a foot of water, particularly as this was the N.T. and there was the added danger of crocodiles.

As I watched the men fishing, I plucked up enough courage to venture out, in part curiosity and in part just it being too damned hot! I walked down the hill to the crossing and made my way out slowly to the first of the men. The water was extremely cool and refreshing as it licked at my ankles. I remember looking to the left and right of me almost instinctively, ever on the lookout for a large man-eater that could at any moment lunge out and grab me in its powerful jaws. I made it to the first man and felt extremely relieved with this accomplishment. He was standing at about seven metres of what was around a thirty metre crossing and had a bucket tied to his waist. Looking down at the bucket, I asked, *"Catch anything?"* His response was something like, "*Nah, nothing…Looks like I'll have to come back tomorrow."*

I recall just standing in the water and wanting so much to dive off the road crossing into the lovely cool water, but instead made the sensible decision to sit down on the crossing and with both of my hands cupped the cool flowing water, before splashing it on and over my head and body. Just as well, as later I had heard that a few weeks earlier a man fishing in the same area was swept downstream and decapitated by a croc. So, all in all, it was fairly safe to stay on the crossing and keep an eye out. After about five minutes of my being in the water the aunties were calling me back to the car, so I made my way back to them feeling refreshed and like I had just conquered the jungle. We had a laugh about my sitting in the water and not being eaten alive before starting the car and slowly following my cousin Ian and his family, who drove across and made way for us city slickers to follow behind. We followed and had no difficulty in making the crossing. We headed off to G and arrived at around midday.

The canteen was open and the line was spilling out from the canteen onto the footy oval. We waited in the car whilst Ian, his wife and kids

disappeared into the crowd. Ian came back after about five minutes and led us to an elderly man sitting with his back facing us. First, my Aunty Lisa approached the man saying hello, before shaking his hand and making her way back to us. Next, it was Aunty Carly. Then, I slowly made my way to the dark-skinned man and stood by his side. He was sitting on a picnic table in the shade. He put his right hand over his left arm reaching out to shake my hand without moving his head to make eye contact, as is done in the Western way of meeting and greeting. I shot out my hand shaking his and saying, "Hello uncle," and thanking him for letting us come onto his Country. I recall making a comment on how beautiful his homeland was. He nodded in agreement. As I let go of his hand and walked back to join our group I brushed passed Liam as he made his way forward for his official "Welcome to Country". Once the business side of our visit was completed, it was time to look around the community and meet some of the locals. Ian and his wife took extreme care of us, inviting us into people's houses and introducing us to his, and now our family. After about an hour and a half it was time to leave G. I remember the aunties yarning in the car shortly after we had left G, about the "the old man," who as it turned out was a senior lawman and them being a little scared of this. I felt privileged.

We drove the short distance to the river crossing and, upon our arrival at the crossing, noticed to our shock and amazement the rapid and sudden change in the water colour. The river was now flowing stronger, with a deeper body of water now rushing over the crossing; the colour of the water now was a brackish, muddy brown. The tide was coming in, and fast. I got out of the car to have a closer look and couldn't see the road crossing anymore. We were stuck and feared being swept away in our tiny red car if we dared try crossing over at this time. It was at this stage that Aunty Lisa daringly yelled to me to *"Have a swim now Steve…Go on, jump in,"* she taunted. I turned to her as if to say, "You first," before shaking my head and mumbling, *"No way."* I walked back to our car, got in, and we all had a laugh about being stuck with no knowing of when we would be able to cross the river and make our way back to Jabiru and then onto Darwin.

Fortunately, about ten minutes later a long wheel base four wheel-drive with a family from G turned up and I got out to ask them for help. The man

who was driving said, *"Follow me."* I agreed and hurried back to our car. I informed every one of the man's request and we slowly made our way behind the four wheel drive. The man seeing that we were behind and ready to go made his way down to the crossing and converged easily with the water gushing over the crossing. We followed closely behind. The crossing was made easily as the four wheel base had left a channel for our tiny car to follow with waves backing onto the shallow rapids coming down stream. We all breathed a sigh of relief as we made our way up the hill on the other side of the river and continued our journey on to Jabiru.

The short drive back to Jabiru was relatively quiet with not much being said by anyone. Speaking for myself, I was buggered after what had been a full on day of driving and meeting people from another Country. We arrived in town and went to the local coffee shop/café and all things in between and bought some refreshments before heading back to Ian and Rowena's house. Ian and Rowena were both there and unpacked. I waved goodbye to the mob in the little red car and smiled as they drove down the road heading to their sleeping spot (a friend of Aunty Carly's) for the night. I walked to the open front door, knocking as I entered, and settled in for the evening.

Later that evening we drank beer at Ian and Rowena's house, just the three of us, and yarned about the events of the day; me re-telling and reliving "our" yarns from the day's journey with gusto. I remember Ian's full belly laugh as we relived the yarn about meeting the senior law man and how scared we (Nanna Lisa and Aunty Carly) were about the whole process. This is understandable as it was not our Country and we were in unfamiliar territory among unfamiliar people. The next morning as I sat in the lounge room sipping on a strong cup of coffee, I heard the beeping of a car horn and made my way to the front door. I stood at the doorway and waited for Ian who was standing in the kitchen area. We said our goodbyes and I thanked him for his hospitality, adding that if he's ever down in Perth to look me up if he was ever in need of a bed and a feed. We shook hands as we made our way to the car. Ian acknowledged everyone in the car with a big smile and a nod of his head.

Both Aunty Carly and I shared our memories of this story on our drive to Geraldton, each taking it in turn and telling different parts or segments of

our road trip to G. Laughing, sometimes in unison and sometimes at differing moments, we relived each memory and at the way our road trip played out. I felt that there was an air of heaviness lifted by this therapeutic storytelling that had just been played out by two relatives on a sequence of events that had happened some twelve years previously. It was as if it was yesterday and I personally felt the sorrow of losing Aunty Lorna dissipate as we shared our story.

For my mob, getting to know family is spending time with them. This can be done is so many ways, sometimes on road trips, and fishing or camping. We connect in profound ways when we gather and spend time together, particularly when we meet at funerals. I know this is Sorry Business, and whilst these moments are deeply sad and can be marred by tragedy, there is always a new addition to the family to meet and old familiar ones to greet with a long, warm embrace. The wake is usually the time when we catch up, and whilst they begin in extremely sombre moods, the yarning and acting out of such stories as I have just told generally have all in earshot in fits of laughter. Yes, comedy is therapeutic and it is extremely entrenched in this family group. I feel that comedy and laughter, through storytelling (yarning) and acting out, fuels Indigenous people's resilience, lifting our spirits in such a way that we, as a proud people, can face anything life throws at us. I think "the proof is in the pudding" as I have often experienced this happening.

Perth to Geraldton: Fieldwork narratives

The following section is transcribed from recordings of my thoughts whilst driving alone and I pick up on the 5th after my stay in a caravan park the previous night. This is captured in a different font to my written fieldnotes, for it captures the direct nature of the recording's "stream of consciousness."

On this, my first fieldwork trip, I leave my home in the South Eastern suburb of Perth with my wife and kids in tow to pick up a hire car a few kilometres away. My wife drops me off and heads off with my two children, who are both ill with the flu. It's Monday the 4th of November and I am running late and really need to get a move on if I

am to get to Geraldton at a reasonable time. I eventually begin heading toward my destination at approximately 10:45am and arrive in the seaside city some four and half hours later that afternoon.

Yeah, it's the um, Tuesday the 5th I think; I'm not really sure of the date. Ah, its 8:42, and I'm just coming back from the airport. I have my four wheel drive, but I didn't insure it, so I thought, and my wife more to the point thought, that we better insure it, which is a smart move. I just paid the extra thirty dollars, twenty seven um, per day, for four days on it, so I feel a lot better with it. Had a bit of a slow start with this run, um, yesterday; just obviously with the kids, getting them up and ready. Sarah was crook with the flu, um, didn't leave Perth until a quarter to twelve, so it's not what I wanted to do. I wanted to head straight off in the morning no later than nine. Unfortunately that didn't happen, but anyway shit happens, that's life. So, I camped in a caravan park on the beach last night. It was lovely.

I pitched the tent and, you know, I'm a little bit anxious about going out here, because I haven't been able to get in touch with my aunty. She's working, but I don't think it's going to matter that much. I mean, I'm just sort of like easing into this and I guess I'm sort of like creating that space, the field work space, as Raymond (Madden, 2010) puts it. I think that's part of the process, um, yeah. But a lot goes through your mind of the "what if's," if this goes wrong, or I can't get in touch with certain people. I haven't been up here for three years and I've only been up there once where I camped, so there's a lot of bush tracks. And easy to get lost, so I'm a little bit anxious about that, putting the old memory to test. Hopefully it'll be right. I've got contact numbers there to ring up, so I'll just try and see how we go today, but I'm actually heading back from the airport into town. I've got to do a little bit of shopping to do and will buy some toothpaste. I haven't got any toothpaste and soap, and a bit of tucker, maybe just top-up with fuel, cos it'll be pretty expensive out here.

And then, just cruise. From there, I've got to go out to the caravan park and pick up a receipt, so that I've got my receipt, so that I will get reimbursed on ah this. So, just gotta make sure that I keep all of my receipts and everything intact, and it's quite a job actually, you know, on the road trying to plan ahead, and um, you know, do these little bits 'n pieces, which is totally foreign to me in regards to just being, travelling on my own time. I'd just get up and go, you know, and not worry about if

I've got the cash. I'll just go to a certain point and, you know, make sure that I've got a couple of dollars put away. But this is a lot different in regard to, you know, just having to be reimbursed and trying to plan out what really is, you know, managing what really is unmanageable, I think, because it's just like flying by the seat of your pants stuff. But that's all good, and to make matters worse, I suppose, it's um Melbourne Cup day! So, I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing, but I'll try and get down and chuck a couple of bob on a, um, winner today if I can in Kalbarri.

Anyway that's me for now and I'll, ah, just let this go, but yeah, what else was there? I haven't done any notes and that's why I thought about talking into this thing. It'll be a lot easier, um, just talk as I go because it just seems to be, you know, when you're driving and unplanned things happen. And, you know, particularly as I said, mentioned, a minute ago, a few seconds ago, how it's unmanageable and planning is very difficult. It's easier just to talk into this little machine and then I can write it down later on, which is great! My voice is a little bit husky because I've got a bit of a chest cold. Outside of that I'm alright. I had a bit of a headache yesterday and that's probably why I was so slow to move, you know. I've been a bit crook myself. The kids have been crook and I suppose it's just the build-up to this. It's finally come around and um, yeah, just looking forward to getting out on Country. I love coming back to Geraldton, having a bit of a look around. It's changed a lot; the roads have changed a lot, the, you know, the set up. Um, yeah, so just looking forward to getting out to Kalbarri and I'm not really sure whether I'll go to Willu Gulli from Northampton and make my way up, or go straight to Kalbarri on that road. I'm not. I think it's the Kalbarri Road, whatever it is. I think, like, I'd like to have a good look around and just take my time so, maybe, I dunno, who knows?

As I said, we'll just see how things pan out; no set plans, which I do like. And I think that's something that I'm used to doing and, you know, just go with the flow I think that's really important. Um, so anyway, I'm hoping to catch up with my aunty and just have a yarn with her. I'm not really sure whether I will interview her. At this moment in time, I, you know, I just feel I want to ease into this with my mob and just hang out and reconnect, and just probably explain a little bit about what I'm doing, where I'm at, cos I know there's a little bit of confusion about it. Um, people aren't you know, um, I might have sent information out to the (Nhundar Watchinar Parnba

Community Aboriginal Corporation) Committee, but they might not go to a meeting or what not, so you know, you gotta get a lot of hearsay and, you know, just information not getting out there. So I think that's important just to start from scratch again with that and just hang out, I suppose, and see if I can record a few things. But um, outside of that, no, I think it's all a matter of setting up that fieldwork space. So yeah, it's all good, so from here on in I'll (sighing) be speaking, um, intermittingly and, um, just filling you in, me in, on my day-to-day events, cheers.

Leaving Geraldton

The time is 9.45am. I'm on North Coastal Highway, Northampton…just leaving Geraldton, um, Moonie Mia's 44km up the road here. Um, I've just picked up a bit of shopping, had to go as I said out to the airport um, sort my insurance out, come back into Geraldton, do a bit of shopping, um, pulled back into the caravan park where I stayed last night and picked up a receipt, due to the fact I was late coming in last night I, or the system, was down so I couldn't get a receipt. Um, so yeah, just heading off now, cruising ah, feeling pretty good. It's a nice 24 degrees outside, um, yeah just cruising along. About a hundred Ks, I should get there, half an hour or so. And then, yeah, I'll suss out whether I go to Willu Gulli. I might go to Willu Gulli. I think it'll be a nice trip. It's all sealed road, so it's all good. I forgot to mention just, in the previous recording, um, just doing errands, running errands, and I think I've made a point of writing that down. My uncle wanted to come up here and there's a little bit of drama about that. He's got to, he had to go to the Doctor's today; wanted me to hang back and just, you know, I just wanted to get this done. I'd already paid for the car-hire so, you know, I just explained, next time it'll be...I'll bring him up with me.

So, anyway, um, hmm (clearing throat) that, that's a possibility, why Aunty Jen's not answering the phone or something, and I know she's working and I think the attitude, sort of like is, "Who the fuck is he coming up here and you know, demanding." And I'm not really demanding; I'm sort of like re-connecting with mob, and I dunno, I'll just wait and see and play it by ear. I don't want to, as I said earlier, push the issue; it's more just me creating that space, slowly, slowly and, ah, just cruising with it. Um, yeah, and I don't mind doing this either because, like this is, ah,

coming from me as a Nanda man and getting back on Country myself, so if I can give some insights there then that's great too. I think that's important and just to give a very, um, robust (clearing throat) study I suppose, um. So yeah…pretty good. Anyway, um, what else was I going to say? Ah, just cruising, gotta go, if I catch up with Aunty Jen, I catch up with Aunty Jen; if not, you know what, it doesn't matter. I have, ah, brought a stereo up for Trevor, Uncle Marsh's mate, Aunty Jenny's mate, and um, bits and pieces from Uncle Marsh's place.

Had a cup of tea with him [Trevor] yesterday afternoon, after dropping this stuff off, ah, trying to get information as to where this was (Aunty Jen's camp). I think I got led, led astray there a little bit, misled, or he just doesn't know himself either. Um, but I have picked up also mail for Aunty Jenny so, you know, this is a part of the actual process, I suppose, of my mob bringing me back into the, um, family. You know, you gotta do errands and do this; bits 'n pieces 'n, yeah all of that, so, you know, I'll, I'm happy to let it run, but I don't want it to become sort of like overwhelming, where it's going to be a burden for me. I've got to really, really be strong here, and just make sure that I'm not here to just run people around. I mean, look, that's another part of, another story to be told here. I think um, but ah, yeah look, I'm just happy just to run with this at the moment and, um, see how, let things play out. On that I'll say goodbye. I've gotta go get fuel, just top this car up and then cruising along, cheers!

Yeah, me again, just quickly, I'm at the Gull Petrol Station and this is purely for logistics, um, unleaded is $1.55.9. I've just put $20.30 in; topped it up – 13.2 litres, so, um, that should last me a little while. I'm hoping to get through and back to Geraldton doing my run. I may need to top it up in Kalbarri, but I'm pretty sure it'll be pretty pricey out there so, um, yeah, it's best to try and just fill up and keep that fuel, um, topped up from the major cities or towns, wherever. Anyway, I'll sign off now cos I'm heading off. The time is 9:54 am, cheers!

Coming into Country

Yes! Here I am again, um. Thought I'd have a bit of a squiz and let this just roll, let it [the recorder] roll. It's between my lap and, ah, whilst I'm driving into my

Country! And I'm just looking at the rolling hills and plateau at the background on the right of me, I've got the Indian Ocean, which I've lost sight of at the moment to the left of me, as I'm heading north to Northampton, Munimaya. And ah, it's quite beautiful Country…Um, yeah very nice, very nice to see and it's, ah, wheat farms on the left I can see, and I think, you got a lot of area, lot of space out here to grow wheat. Um, but yeah, it's nice, very; rolling hills. And, you know, twenty five degrees, at 10:05. Just cruising along, um, Kalbarri's just up the road here. And I think I will go to Willu Gulli. I think I will go the scenic tour, as I've got time and I'm not rushed – it's great. North, there you go, Northampton's a twenty five kilometer drive up the road here. Um, yeah, and I've got plenty of time on this recorder, so I'm just going to let it roll. There might be lots of silence in-between, that's cool. I'll get a little bit sick of hearing myself talk, rant (laughing). Coronation Beach, I'd like to go and have a look down there.

But I won't just yet, there's plenty of time for that. It's eight kilometers off the Highway, to my left, another time. So yeah, it's quite a ... I'm just looking at the, ah, flora and it's got like this little short, what, about up to ten foot high green leafy bushes, don't know what sort of, spindly. They look very spindly but, yeah. Goody's Eco Camp, I've just passed that, to my left, um. There's a couple of houses around the place, property for sale. Um, but yeah, you've got obviously the red underneath, the gravel from the road here, I'd say that is, but you've still got that red ochre sort of colour in the soil, when you have a look, properly on the under... beneath the undergrowth there, it's quite dry. Then you've got that green bush, thick green bush; but, ah, I don't know what sort of trees they are. I'll have to find out; I wonder if there's a Nanda name for them, and if they are, um, indigenous to the area. Should go and get, ah, Terry to, he's a botanist, Nanda fulla, to give me a little bit of a heads-up on this stuff, my old friend Doe. So we're just passing, coming into the Shire of Northampton now, Shire of Munimaya (long pause).

It's quite hilly country here, not flat; meandering roads, weaving up and down, left and right. It's quite a nice drive. I'm stuck behind a truck and a trailer here. The trailer's got a little Back hoe [small crane used to dig] of some sort on it. So, I'm down to ninety kilometers, which is cool, just cruising. Looking directly in front of me at a couple of hills as the road leads into it, and it'll probably curve away

obviously, as we get a bit closer to it. I'm pretty sure it goes away to the right up here. But um, quite hilly, sort of like area, and to the left of me, we've got Oker Bella, Elephant Hill Lookout, three kilometers. And again, I'll go and have a look at that later on. Just want to get out to Willu Gulli, Northampton, get out to Willu Gulli. It's funny these, ah, the plateaus because, like, some of them are hills and them some of them are just flat.

It reminds me of some of those old American Indian-Western movies that you see; you know, with the plateaus in the background there, and I'm waiting for a bit of a smoke signal. I wonder if my mob would have; they would have done that no doubt. Smoke signals and all of that sitting on the hills there watching mob coming in, the Dutch, I'm sure if they were up here, Grey [George Grey, an explorer] and the like. Yeah, plenty of vantage points to be able to look out and see who's coming and going, movement and, ah, I think a lot of my mob would have been doing a lot of that. Heading back out, getting away, further away from the, ah, so called "settlers." I hope this comes up so I can hear it. I haven't tried it yet, so I could be doing this in vain, but anyway. So, I'm just slowing right down here. The trucks have slowed down here, so I'm back down to sixty, starting to amp it up again…I might just switch this off.

Coming into Munimaya (Northampton)

Yeah, I'm just coming into Munimaya now. It's about one and a half kilometers away. Thought I'd just say that – announce that we're coming into Munimaya, deadly! And this is quite a significant town to Nanda people, my family. In particular, and I'm only speaking on behalf of my family, the Kelly's. Um, I'm sure that all Nanda people are, you know, quite familiar with this area. A lot live in the town here and around, but ah, for me, my mum grew up here, lived here as a young girl and her mother lived here, was born here, so my mum was born here... here... Mum was born here. Mum's father; Mum's, mum's father, was born here, Con Kelly, and my great, great, great grandfather, Brindy, an apical and traditional owner here, from here, from Nanda mob, um, was born somewhere on Country. Don't know where. That would be interesting, but I don't think they have records of that – it's a little bit too old for that. I don't even think they would have had a hospital set up

here at that time. Anyway, we're in Munimaya and, ah, quiet; just a one-street town, old buildings; nice old buildings they are. The convent here, heritage, budget accommodation to the left of me, old sacred convent they reckon, it's not a sacred site, might be, you never know. Um, TAB, (Totalisator Agency Board) and there's three pubs here, bottom, middle and top, in this small town. My pop, old Wadjella (Anglo Australian) man, Bunny Morris, used to ... Bunny Morrison, Morris or Morrison, I can't remember; anyway, Bunny used to drink down the bottom I think. That's where the monarch (police) used to flog him all the time; pick him up and…anyway…I've gotta turn off here somewhere here I've just passed the old RSL (Returned Servicemen League), Memorial Hall and I will go, like to go in there. I've gotta get back, too, find out how to get back to Willu Gulli; it's just straight behind me; I think I'll turn around here. But anyway, it's all good; I'm in Munimaya and not hanging around. It's just one of those little, come in and get going, town's; get out of town's for me; don't want to stay here. I want to get away from towns and get out on Country. So, that's it. I just wanted to let everyone know, made it here safely.

The road trip to Willu Gulli

So, I'll let it play again. I've just turned down to go to Willu Gulli, um. I think it's the old Northampton, Kalbarri Road. There's a cemetery to the left of me. Lots of road work or not road work bits and pieces that they're doing around the place, so I've just got to drive easy here. I've got to pull over. I just want to see how this is turning out, so I'll keep talking for a little while, as I head to Willu Gulli and just to give a bit of description of the place. Um…the vegetation is very similar, with those green, thick bushes on the side of the road, but then you've got, sort of like, um, eucalyptus, kind of eucalyptus trees back that way, on the river bed there or something. Rolling hills, wheat, wheat, lots of wheat, to the right of me coming down, there's wheat farms to the left, Glendale farm (long pause). The wheat stalks are about half a metre high; looks like a bumper crop; big bucks for the farmers – the cockies (Australian colloquial when referring to farmers) are gonna love it! Just passing old brick buildings, old rock buildings, half fallen down; but, you know, just seeing a lot of the old with the new, old well and old windmill here on the right of me.

To the left that looks like a river bed there. There's all them old gumtrees aligned, thick around it. Horrocks, Willu Gulli turn off is two hundred metres to the left, so I'm heading to Willu Gulli and, ah, so, I'll just cruise down here. Oh, it's good that they've actually got the name there –"Willu Gulli" (and Horrocks sign) – the Aboriginal name, Nanda name, that's good. I think they should start doing a little more of that up here, it's good. So, the sign Horrocks is it says eighteen kilometres and I'm just upon it now, Willu Gulli. A lot of wheat, more wheat, and to the left of me a wheat farm. My old grandfather was a cockie up here; his father old wheat farmers. And, of course, in those days they weren't... Wadjella's weren't allowed to mix up with my mob, black fullas and, ah, he hooked up with my mum's mum and got in a bit of strife for it. Police used to pick him up all the time and harass him, give him a bit of a hard time. No doubt cos he used to mix up with a lot of my family (clearing throat), obviously in the days of prohibition with Aboriginal people: weren't allowed to drink, weren't allowed to vote, and had absolutely no rights in their own countries. Um, were classified under the flora and fauna Act, as part of flora and fauna, and I don't think that's been changed. I think they're working on the constitution as I speak, to change that, to get us recognised nationally as a people, which is a bit of a strange feeling in regard to, you know, 2013, and we're still not deemed, um, you know, human beings in the eyes of the Western legal system.

It's, ah, quite ironic and, ah, contradictory. I think it's just the way these mob have worked around Aboriginal people. And um, looking around me, I see a lot of wealth from the farms and, you know, brand new tractors and harvesting tractors; and, you know, and this that and the other, and expanses of land, which is my Country. Um, fundamentally, um, and ah, you know, I see that, and it's just ah, it's a very sombre feeling. To think that, for the history of settlers here in Munimaya, and elsewhere, all around Australia, you know fences were put up and Aboriginal people were pushed to the outside of that into the background. Classified as flora and fauna in their own Country, and I just think there's, it's an ongoing story isn't it... an ongoing yarn. I think that's what's brought me back here, you know, to tell a bit of a story about us, from our side, our perspective: Nanda perspectives of who we are, where we come from and how we're connected to each other and this Country! This beautiful Country that has pretty much been stolen from us.

But hopefully, through the legal system, we can prove that we are original owners of this Country, and I know we're up against it. But anyway. gotta give it a go, have to give it a go; gotta believe in something I suppose. So I'm just cruising down the road, having a bit of a yarn, and it's good, it's good, it's nice, you know. I'm looking at the hills in front of me. These properties, you know, a lot goes through your mind out here [long pause]. Yeah, it's big country, it's a big country. You can see just rolling hills to the right of me, to the left, and I can see the clouds rolling in from the coast, you know. I can see some massive storms way back I reckon, just rolling in, beautiful. I hope to spend a bit of time out here, or I will be spending time out here, so I hope to encapsulate some of that in some ah film and photos as part of my ethnography. So yeah, just getting out into the field and creating the field um, and it's quite exciting, an exciting time. It's been a big year; it's been a big six months prior to that, so eighteen months up to this point, you know. I was getting a little bit tired there, doing a lot of leg work. People don't understand the background stuff that you've gotta do.

The research, it's just the heavy reading heading into the archives and, you know, the libraries, and just burying yourself in books and trying to make sense of how you can write up your proposal and argue your candidacy, and how you're going to do your research, you know, as an anthropologist and Aboriginal anthropologist, and ah, it was always going to be ethnography. But um, you know, how I was going to do it, and re-connecting with family, um, re-connecting with Country. You know, I've been away for ten years, this time around. I, um, haven't had a lot to do with family in that time. I've been away and studying and travelling; I'm married now with kids, coming back home. I've been in Perth for a couple of years now, and I don't mind it; it's good, it's always good to catch up with family, love my family, but um, I also like my freedom and I think that, that's something that I really have very strong feelings about, you know, that I like my autonomy, and I, I'm a very, I suppose, independent bloke. And, I'd like to just be able to do this and write it up and hopefully get some really, really, really – and I'm sure I will get some – robust, um, yarns that are full and rich about Nanda people and you know, I can see it; I can see it developing already with, from interviews from Mum and a little bit from Uncle

Marsh. I mean, obviously he was taken away, or went away as a young fulla, and he came back as a teenager, he was telling me.

It would be good to get him back up here and spend a bit of time with him, and that's what I'm kind of looking at with this. Just to, you know, spend a bit of quality time with family, cos they're all getting old; we're all getting old, and spend some time with them on the road on road trips and just yarning and having a good time, I think. You know, just talking about Country, being on Country, catching up with family, um, you know, because I, I don't know whether I'll be here in five years' time. I could be anywhere. And I think that's really important for me to come back here and do my doctorate on this particular, um, project; you know, it's ah, quite a surreal feeling to be able to do that, and I'm very fortunate, extremely lucky and appreciative, to be able to do this because I think, you know, where else can we do this? How can my people make statements that can be put down in writing in a thesis and published?

And ah, you know, going to conferences and having a thesis written about them, and I think that, that's just awesome, it really is deadly! I hope that they can see that... that I'm here to, sort of like, work with them – not rip them off. I sense there's a little bit of that coming from them, and I sense that there will be. Um, and I just hope that I can, um, be a positive influence and (clearing throat) get them involved in a proactive way. And it's slightly different to what they've been doing, which I think, through the education system, this is really a way forward for us, for all Aboriginal people! And this is probably what I am sort of really, really, ah, inspired about: just to be able too, you know, have funding to get up here and hire a four wheel drive and talking into this thing now while I'm driving, whilst being on Country, um, you know, to go and catch up with family members and talk about our connection to Country. It's simply unheard of, you know, we don't, we've never been given the opportunity for much at all, so, I think it's, um, it's... it's a good time, and it's a great opportunity to be able to do that. Um, and I think, in time, you know, as this ethnography grows, um, my mob will sort of like, yeah, be coming along and jumping on board, which I really hope that they do. Because it's great, it's a great opportunity for them and myself and Nanda people, and Aboriginal people right across the board, I suppose, because it's us speaking on behalf of ourselves and I,

you know, I think that's really significant, and um, extremely important. So, anyway, I've just been ranting on for a little while now. It's good, it's good just to talk shit and carry on like that there.

So I've gotta slow down here and I can see the ocean, on the horizon there, the Indian Ocean, got Port Gregory, Kalbarri turn off, Whitecliff road to the right of me, I've just passed that. But I'm gonna go down here and have a bit of a look around because I came down to Willu Gulli around seventeen years ago, with Uncle VK; Aunty Jenny; big mob of us; Michelle, her two girls; I think Derrick Cooper was here; TK (recently deceased); I can't remember who else, but there was a few more people there. It was good and it's a beautiful little place this little Willu Gulli 'ere. What a beautiful place. No wonder all these Wajella's want it. Look, they got big houses, flash houses on the hills here, right on the coast, overlooking the Indian Ocean there. Um, just amazing! Amazing place! In fact, I might go back up the lookout and take a couple of photos there. I'll go in here and have a look and see if there's a shop or anything; I don't think there's much here. I want to try and find that um, little spot where we were camped; don't know where it was. So I'm just leaving Willu Gulli, heading north to Kalbarri. Um, I'm not going back into Munimaya. I've just turned along the road here to go, cut it straight along the coastline, which will be good. It's a nice drive as I've got the Indian Ocean to my left again, um, looks like farms to the right; yep, sheep there. So I, yes, now I can see the Indian Ocean it's beautiful, a beautiful scenic tour I'm taking here, magic! It's good to be back home. During this fieldtrip I spent time with my aunty where I procured a lengthy interview and stayed on Country for a week. Some of the interview material is used in this thesis in support of my mother's details of how we connect to each other and Country.

Field notes narrative: Yarning up about a field trip

The following section is taken from field notes of a second fieldwork trip to Geraldton from the 23-26th of February 2014. I begin as I leave my home in Gosnells in order to begin this particular journey Perth to Geraldton.

It's Sunday, 23rd February and my wife, Opal, and son, Kadan, drop me off at the AVIS car rental company in Welshpool at around 9:30am. It's

Sunday and AVIS close at 10:00 am, and I make it just in time to fill in the paperwork and check the car, a Toyota Camry, out for any damage or scratches. I overslept this morning and am running late because I had mum and dad over for dinner last night and I didn't get to bed until midnight. I have also forgotten to take out some extra cash from the ATM and have to double back to the Gosnell's ATM to access some extra travel money. No problem, I have time and get the cash and finally head off, going north along Tonkin Highway. I decide to go the coast road as I have to make one more stop to do some shopping for the road trip. I stop off first of all at McDonalds (a staple for road trips, when in a hurry) and order my breakfast of one bacon and egg muffin, one sausage and egg muffin, a hash brown, and a large cappuccino. I have one more stop to do before I make it to the open road and have a clear run to Geraldton along the scenic costal road. I pull into Coles and park in the undercover parking bays before heading upstairs and into the shopping complex. I enter Coles and quickly decide what I need for this particular trip (a fairly straight forward one). I purchase: 2 x 1.5 litre bottles of water, a few apricots, a couple of plums, some bananas, and some dried fruit and nuts.

I'm glad to be finally heading off now as I make my way back to the car in the undercover parking bay and drive out of the shopping complex turning right onto Wanneroo Road and heading north. From here I cruise, enjoying the open road and hassle-free ride. There have been a few setbacks with this fieldtrip and I was contemplating cancelling the trip, but as I had already organised the time around my wife's shift work, I decided I would continue through with the original plan and try to catch up with one family member in particular, Aunty Phyllis Hamlett (neé McDonald). Aunty Phyllis is the daughter of my grandmother, Alma, who is the oldest daughter of my great grandmother, Nellie Kelly (neé Wilson). Great grandmother Nellie took Alma with her to the Mogumber Mission when she left Peak Hill (Wiluna area) in 1920.

There have been some issues in regard to this in our native title claim, as under native title these people are not deemed our mob due to the fact Alma's father is not Cornelius Kelly (see interview notes for Aunty's extremely dignified response to these claims). I am also looking forward to catching up with Aunty Biddy again (my father's sister).

The setbacks came in waves, one after another, just a day away from my leaving, and I wonder if this is a sign for me to stay home, as it might turn out to be a dud trip – or someone or something is saying "not now." I feel good about it: no gut feeling saying not to go, so I go. I know as social scientists we are here to be analytical and all that, but I am a big believer of trusting my intuition. The first setback came via a phone call from my mother, Gladys, stating that the YMAC Elders meeting due to be held on Tuesday the 25th had been cancelled due to the loss of an Elder from one of the other claimant group's family. Fair enough I thought, and I have plenty of other work to do. The original plan was to take Uncle Marshal with me to Geraldton and catch up with some integral Elders after the meeting to firstly meet them, and maybe if they were up for it have a yarn (interview) with them before catching up with Aunty Phyllis. The next setback came with the cancelation of our family's committee meeting, which was to be held on Sunday the 23rd. I would have liked to have gotten more on this field trip regarding family get-togethers, but I know there will be plenty of other opportunities in the future for this. In the meantime, I speak to Mum and she and Dad are staying put. I then call and speak to Uncle Marshal and let him know that it's okay for him to stay in Perth as I have some other business to take care of, before reassuring him that he and I can take another trip another time.

As I stated earlier, I've already booked the car, accommodation, arranged the finance from my previous fieldwork re-imbursement, and had made arrangements with my wife two weeks prior to making this trip through her being able to reorganise her shiftwork times around my monthly fieldwork trip. There's a great deal to do logistically and, with a young family, one has to be organised (talk about negotiating my way through this PhD). Moreover, I generally don't have the contact numbers of those I want to yarn with, so it's all impromptu. I am about five Kilometers from Dongara when my phone rings and I pull over thinking it's Opal as she has been having car trouble. However, the call is from my older brother, Darren, who lives just north of Geraldton. Darren works as a FIFO (fly in-fly out) Loco (Locomotive) driver for BHP Billiton in Port Hedland, and is married with four daughters. He asks me where I am and I tell him. We make plans to catch up and I hang up the phone before embarking on the final leg of my journey. I head straight for my

accommodation the Foreshore Backpackers, parking the car around the back car park at around 3:45pm before collecting my backpack, shoes and laptop, and heading upstairs to book in. I wait in the seating area for around ten minutes as reception doesn't open until 4pm.

The Foreshore Backpackers is an old two-story building with a large number of rooms ranging from sleeping one or two in a double room, to sleeping up to four people in single beds in the one room (for the well-versed and cash-strapped world traveller). There are communal toilets and shower blocks both in and out of the building, along with easy access to all of Geraldton's bars and restaurants in the CBD, all with the added bonus of having the beach right across the road. It's an affordable, clean and friendly environment, and compared to other accommodation and prices in Geraldton, I think this one is one of the better ones. Once the reception is open I quickly fill in a form complete with all my details, including licence number and home address.

I collect the keys and make my way to my room, quickly scanning the room for any defects. I'm happy with it and head straight for the double-glass doors that lead to a small balcony overlooking Geraldton's main street. I have deliberately asked for a double room with a balcony as the breeze that you get up here is extremely cool and refreshing in the summer months, and I don't have to use the fan. The room itself is large enough to accommodate a couple and has an old wooden desk supporting a small flat screen TV, an old wooden cupboard with coat hangers placed for any clothing one would carry worth hanging up, an old open fireplace (not in use), a double bed, and a ceiling fan that dangles up high. I unpack some of my clothes and place a bag with my toiletries above the unused fireplace, where ornaments would usually appear. I head for the shower and get cleaned up, changing into fresh clothes and heading out to visit my brother. The drive to his house is around ten minutes from where I am and I have no trouble getting to a particular point, just passed the Gull petrol station north of Geraldton, before I call him and get instructions on how to get to his house. After a quick chat with Darren, I finally find his house (which is more like a mansion) that sits on an acre block in the suburb of White Peaks. The house is large with white tiles throughout, other than in the four bedrooms, which all have white carpet. There is an

extremely large double shed/garage out the back of the house that houses all of Darren's toys, such as a quad bike, BBQ, and assorted fishing gear. There's also a double carport at the front of the house allowing the passenger/s to dismount from their cars and enter the hallway leading them to the kitchen and entertaining areas. The house also has a recently-installed below ground swimming pool with large square brick paving around the pool and patio areas. I pull up to the front of the find "Daz" sitting alone gazing at his Harley Davidson in the front carport and slowly make my way to him, saying "Hi," as I reach him and extend my right arm for the expected handshake.

I've been informed by my mother the night before that Daz had broken his arm on his quad bike and, as we yarn for a while, he tells me how the accident occurred. I see his right arm is in a plaster cast as he informs me that, "It's broken in three places," pointing with his left index finger to the exact positions, whilst describing in detail how it came to be. He tells me he has to wear the plaster cast for six weeks, and is off work for that time. He is also trying to sell his house and move back to Port Hedland, where it is easier for him to live and go home after completing his twelve hour shifts. Our conversation turns to dinner and Daz mentions that he has some crayfish in one of our uncle's freezers back in Geraldton. Some of the brothers had gone out a little while back and caught them off the reef during low tide. I don't need too much encouragement and support him on making a phone call to check in with the uncle. We drive back to the Geraldton suburb of Rangeway. I know this area, as I lived here when I was young and we have family dotted all around here.

We arrive at Uncle Des and Aunty Skinny's house. We make small talk as we sit at the front of the house. Aunty Skinny (Irene) is one of several children of my grandfather, Ronald Kelly, who is the brother of my mother's mother, and one of several sons of Cornelius and Nellie Kelly. After about half an hour we say our goodbyes (I'm starving by now) and make our way out of town back to Daz's house with our prized bag of Crays! Upon arrival, we put all five cooked but frozen Crays in hot water in the kitchen basin to thaw out and go and enjoy an ice cold beer while we wait. Some ten minutes later, Daz heads into the kitchen with me following closely behind, and proceeds to

make a salad, which consists of lettuce and tomato. We check out the crayfish and decide they're right to eat, before cutting the crayfish tails off with a sharp kitchen knife and placing the tails on a kitchen bench hard shell down, leaving the softer underbelly exposed. Daz simply places the sharp knife over the top and presses down with his free hand on the blunt end of the blade splitting it in two and making it easy to peel out the white flesh of the Geraldton Cray. I stay for a couple of hours before heading off back to my accommodation in Geraldton.

I wake around 8am, shower and check out Geraldton by car, looking for a feed. I find a little café in a shopping mall and order bacon and eggs with all the trimmings, along with a cappuccino. After eating, I head back to my room and have read the paper before heading out again, this time for a swim at the beach. Before I go to the beach, I head back to the shops and purchase some sunscreen and a litre of iced coffee. The beach is a good idea. It's a nice warm day and I stay for about an hour, just swimming and relaxing in the sun. Before I know it, it is 12:30 and I decide lunch is needed, so slowly begin walking back to my accommodation across the road. I shower before dressing and making my way out the large white front doors of the backpackers and onto the main street in the CBD of Geraldton. I begin checking out cafés and pubs, hunting for specials. I really feel like a steak and head into a corner pub to look at their lunchtime menu. I quickly place the menu down as the prices are exorbitant. I need to get off the main street and go back a couple of blocks where I'll get the same feed at a cheaper rate, and quickly make my exit from the bar turning to my right and begin the short stroll back down a block or two when I am confronted by a white van tooting its horn with the person driving, waving frantically at me.

I try to make out the driver by hunching down a little and adjusting my gaze. The windows are tinted and all I can make of the person, initially, is that it is a female. I then realise the driver is my cousin-sister, Natasha (Tasha). Tasha is the daughter of my father's sister and, upon my identifying her, I make my way around the front of the van to the driver's side where the window is all the way down. Here, I lean in and give her a big hug. We yarn and laugh for a few minutes before I notice that that traffic is banked up four-deep behind us. I point to a parking bay across the road and instruct Tasha to

pull in and park so we can have a yarn without causing an accident or blocking the road. I cross the road as Tasha pulls in and disembarks from the van. She has a girlfriend with her and introductions are made before we head for the shade of a tree in a grassy area, where we decide to sit. We happily yarn for about forty minutes and I enjoy the time spent with her. I inform Tasha of what I am doing and state to her that I had been out to Aunty Biddy's unit earlier but she wasn't home. We make plans to go back out to Aunty's place and visit her a little later. Tasha also informs me that she knows where Aunty Phyllis McDonald lives too – around the corner from Aunty Biddy's place, she explains. I'm glad to hear this and happy to have met up with Tasha as it will save me a lot of running around. Tasha's friend leaves and we continue to yarn and laugh, catching up and just enjoying the afternoon sitting on the corner under the shady tree at the end of Geraldton's main street.

I mention to Tasha that I'm feeling a bit peckish and need a feed. Again, Tasha's common knowledge of the area and people comes through and she lists about four different places within walking distance where we can go to and get a good feed for a good price. We begin walking back toward my accommodation, south of where we were sitting, and check out different places to eat at. We are spoilt for choice on the different eateries. Unfortunately, it's around 2pm and things in Geraldton at this time are moving very slowly, and there's not much on offer in regards to lunchtime meals at this time of the day. We continue to walk and yarn. I am just enjoying the moment and sense that Tasha is too. It's a great feeling to be in-the-moment of catching up and just being in each other's company (it's been a long time, too long). We walk on and as we are undecided on what to eat, turn our conversation onto planning to catch up again later on. We agree in unison that I'll go over to Tasha's house at 6pm and we will drive over to both aunties' houses respectively to try and catch up with them. Without any more than a shrug and a sudden pause in our conversation, Tasha gives me a hug and says, *"Seeya later then bro."* I reply, *"No worries Sis,"* acknowledging her with a smile, as we begin to go our separate ways, Tasha heading back to her car and I continuing on my way back toward my accommodation.

I walk casually back down the main street pleased with how things are turning out. I know I'm right now and won't have too much to worry about from here on in. I eye a noodle shop across the road about ten metres from where I am staying, and make my way inside where I select six mixed rolls of sushi and reason that this will tide me over for a couple of hours. I then make my way across the road and into my accommodation, practically running up the stairs to get back to my room, where I quickly turn on the television and lay down on the double bed watching it whilst eating my meal. I eat and flick through the channels. After eating I slowly doze off. I wake a couple of hours later and watch some more television, for about half an hour. It's around 5:30pm now and I decide I best make a move to the shower and get cleaned up before heading over to Tasha's house. Within ten minutes I am back in my room and getting dressed, leaving within a further five minutes. I drive the short distance to Tasha's house where she greets me with a wave and opens the passenger seat, giving directions to me on how to get to our destination.

I'm reasonably familiar with Spalding and make my way toward the suburb. On this trip we head straight to Aunty Phyllis's place. We arrive a short time later (Geraldton's not too big and it's easy to get from one place to another in a short time). Auntie's place is a small one-bedroom unit and Tasha leads the way, knocking on the screen door, peering inside the open front door which is fully open, allowing for the cool breeze to meander through the small unit. Tasha asks a man lying down on the couch in the lounge room, *"Is Aunty Phyllis home"?* He says, *"Yes,"* and calls out to her from where he is laying and watching television. I am looking over Tasha's shoulder at this time trying to make out who this person is and am having trouble identifying him, as the room is dimly lit and he has just begun to sit in an upright position to gather himself before making his way into the solitary bedroom and speaking to Aunty Phyllis. He then instructs us to come in, waving his right hand as we make our way through the tiny lounge area, before standing at the doorway of the bedroom. Aunty Phyllis comes out of the bedroom and extends a warm welcome as we greet her with hugs.

We sit and yarn, and I focus my attention back on the man. Neither of us has recognised the other at this stage, until I finally click and say, *"How ya going, Fred"?* Fred is one of Aunty Phyllis's son's and, again, I haven't seen

him for a few years. Fred lives in Broome and is down visiting his mum. He gives me a big smile and says, *"Oh you Steven; how you going brother"?* We yarn and laugh reminiscing about the time I visited and stayed with him for a couple of days at his house in Broome several years ago. It was around the time of my birthday, and I was on mid-semester break whilst doing Honours at Charles Darwin University. On this occasion, I was visiting my mother, who at the time was living and working in South Hedland. Mum, Uncle Marshal and I made a trip to Broome for an uncle's funeral, and whilst it is always sombre at these times, it is always good to catch up with old family members as well as meet new members, spending and cherishing time together.

I then turn my attention to Aunty Phyllis as I know I don't have much time to persuade her into doing an interview with me. Aunty tells me she has business to attend to at the Aboriginal Medical Service tomorrow and is without an appointment, so she is not sure of when she will be finished up with them. As we yarn, we begin to plan a BBQ in the park. Tasha states which one (Point Moore); she knows her way around and I let her lead on this. We eventually agree, after bouncing a few times around, that 4pm is a good time for me to come over and pick Aunty Phyllis up. I extend the invite to brother Fred, which he accepts and we make our way out of the small unit, saying our goodbyes on our way to the car. I sense that everyone is looking forward to our get-together with a good feed and catch up.

Tasha is by now explaining to me about what food she is going to make up for our BBQ. I hear her say, *"And I'll make the salads and marinate the Marlu* [Kangaroo]*."* I get involved with her planning out aloud and state that I'll get some snaggers [sausages]. Again, I realise the excitement in both our voices as we begin to drive down the street making our way slowly back to Aunty Biddy's place. We drive some fifteen metres down the street when Tasha yells for me to stop. I do. Tasha is pointing to three people sitting at the front of a house, while explaining that this is our cousin-sister Dianne's house. Dianne is Aunty Biddy's daughter. As we are pulling into the driveway, Dianne and Tasha begin to engage in discussion about where Aunty Biddy is? It turns out the old girl is sitting in Dianne's lounge with her feet up, and has been all day.

We both get out of the car and make our way to the two ladies and the man sitting together. Both Tasha and I say hello to them all. The two ladies are both daughters of Aunty Biddy and I have really only just recently met them. The fella is the husband of one of the daughters; I don't recall her name at this point in time. Dianne continues to explain that her mum (Aunty Biddy) is in the house, gesturing for us to enter as we make our way up to the front door of the house. Tasha knocks on the fly screen door and Aunty beckons us into the house, automatically acknowledging Tasha and me. I sit down next to her and we yarn about not much. Aunty wants to know when I came up. I tell her and, while I am at it, explain that we are having a BBQ tomorrow; if she is interested she is welcome to come. Aunty Biddy nods her head, as Tasha chimes in stating, *"Aunty loves prawns."* I agree to buy some prawns and am happy to do this, as I don't know too many people who don't like prawns. We agree on the arrangements and continue to yarn when Dianne enters the house and invites me into the kitchen area, which is all open-planned. I make my way toward a thin Aboriginal man, not more than thirty in age, sitting lethargically in a wheelchair. Dianne, standing ominously beside his wheelchair introduces me, stating *"This is Duane, Steve, this is your nephew."* I shake his hand and say hello to him. We exchange greetings, and I am acutely aware that he is not well enough to carry out any in-depth conversation, and I utilise my time with him for as long as I feel is respectful without pushing too much for conversation. My nephew Duane has cancer and will pass away one or two days after this, our meeting for the first time. I make my way around the kitchen being led by Dianne and am introduced to some of the other members of the family. I don't remember their names and am polite, acknowledging them as family members by shaking their hands and addressing them as sis, brother, nephew, niece, uncle or aunty. I make my way back into where Aunty Biddy is sitting, propped up in her chair by pillows. I sit down next to her, again yarning with her a little more. It's time to leave and we say our goodbyes before heading back to the car and waving as we drive off.

I'm extremely happy with the way things are panning out and yarn some more with Tasha about tomorrow's event. Again, we plan on what she and I will do before I ask, *"Where's a good place to buy prawns?"* Tasha

advises me that there is the fresh seafood shop around the corner from where she lives and this is where I should go and purchase the prawns. I drop Tasha at home and make my way back to my own accommodation, driving past the seafood shop on the corner. Tonight, all I have to do is work on making some changes to the questions, and I do this without too much trouble. I am excited and looking forward to the BBQ, and continue to go over the possible events and what can go wrong, or how the day might turn out otherwise.

I'm up at around 9am and have gone over my interview questions and had breakfast when I decide to take a quick trip to Tasha's house to make sure all is going to plan. I knock at her front door upon my arrival and am signalled to come into the kitchen, where I make my way toward the banging noises to the area where Tasha is working diligently. I check out what she is doing and am impressed with how organised she is. I haven't even gone to the shops to buy the prawns, sausages, bread rolls or drinks yet. Tasha has made some awesome salads and is showing me the marinated marlu meat in a large bowl. I'm stoked and decide to get a wriggle on myself. I ask if Tasha needs anything as I make my way out toward the front door. She says she's right, and I leave. It's around 11:30am and I head straight to the seafood shop around the corner where I purchase 2 kilograms of large frozen green prawns.

I pay in cash and take them back to my room where I leave them on the balcony to thaw out. I have a light lunch and at around 12:30, make my way to Coles' shopping centre, which is no more than 3 minutes drive from where I am staying. I purchase a bag of twenty fresh bread rolls, two 2-litre bottles of cool drink, two kilograms of sausages and a bag of ice, before making my way back to my accommodation, where I check my recorder and make sure I have a note pad and pens to take with me. In the meantime, I've spoken to my brother, Darren, on the phone and have invited him to come along, and he agrees to this. I have no idea how today is going to play out, but I'm happy to roll with it.

I decide to pick up the aunties and Fred, and drive over to Spalding at around 3:30pm. The aunties and Fred are all where they said they'd be and ready and waiting for us to arrive. We head back to Point Moore and I'm directed by Aunty Phyllis as I haven't been to this park before. We pull into the parking bay at the picnic area and I can see Tasha standing next to a picnic

table with a group of four ladies who are all seated on the table top and visibly drunk. There's lots going on here; they're drinking from cans of beer with the tops cut off. I will later come to realise the liquid they are drinking is bag Riesling or "goon." I note that the tops of the cans are folded down, so as not to cut the lip of a drinker, as one sips the liquid from the can or makeshift cup.

One of the ladies is holding an acoustic guitar on her lap and is strumming the strings, whilst singing a rather colourful rendition of "who stole my flagon." The other ladies all follow with hoots of approval, howling, nodding and laughing wickedly in accordance to the lyrics, which are now loudly echoing throughout the park from the extremely talented and gifted lady with the guitar. We pull up next to the white van and begin to disembark and unpack our goods, moving to the next free table just down from where Tasha and the ladies are stationed. Tasha comes over and greets everyone before quickly moving over to begin preparing the BBQ and getting ready to cook.

I reach into the eski [cooler] to grab a beer for myself and hand one to my cousin Fred, as we continue our yarn and catch up. I keep a watch on Tasha to ensure that she is okay and that I will catch her signalling me if she needs a hand. Some five minutes later Tasha makes her way over to us and sits down for a yarn. In the background we hear more renditions of country and western songs and laughter before Tasha ushers me over to the picnic table where she introduces me. I am happy to meet the talented lady with the guitar and her friends, and I nod, smiling as I acknowledge their brilliant musical artistry, before heading back to our table. Over the next five to ten minutes they come over, one by one, first the guitar player, then the others. My brother arrives just as I have my recorder out recording "who stole my flagon." I look up at him and we both laugh out loud, as he makes his way over to the mob.

It's a carnival atmosphere and I'm stoked. The only downside is that Aunty Biddy is cold from the strong breeze and I realise that I will have to take her home soon, as it is not good for her to be out in this weather. For the next half an hour we eat, drink and sing. Tasha's children arrive in another car and come over to join us, and Tasha introduces me to them. I had only met the young twenty-something girl when she was young. We stay for about an hour, all up eating, drinking and being merry. I have a quick chat with Aunty Phyllis

and advise her that it will be better to do the interview at her place. She agrees. We begin to pack up and head off, thanking Tasha and the ladies for a lovely afternoon. We make our way back to Spalding where I first drop Aunty Biddy off at Dianne's house before going to Aunty Phyllis's place and proceeding with an interview. The setting is relaxed, but I sense that Aunty is nervous in relation to speaking into a recorder.

Fred is present and encourages his mother throughout the interview. It takes about an hour and, once completed, I say my goodbyes assuring Aunty that I will keep in touch and forward the interview notes back to her once I have written them up. I am more than happy with how the events of this fieldtrip have unfolded and make arrangements on the phone later that night with my brother Darren to pick him up and drive with him back to Perth the next day. I pick Darren up from his place at around 10am. He has packed a small bag and throws it in the back seat before climbing into the front passenger seat. Darren has some business to tend to in Perth and the drive back down is relaxed and enjoyable. We yarn about life in general and reflect on the events that have taken place in the past four days.

Tensions and flexibility: The fieldwork experience.

This detail about travelling back to country explains the process of "fieldwork." The process involves planning and organisation, but also being flexible and open to changes. If basic protocols of respect and building relationships are not observed, then even family will not be open to sharing or yarning at a level that goes beyond the everyday.

My recorded field notes capture the journeying process – both the physical mobility and the pathways of my thoughts and feelings. Sometimes, there are real tensions between belonging to family and one's own autonomy; tensions between the collective shared experiences of family and those personal experiences of life, such as formal education and employment that are pathways that often only you can take. There are tensions between sharing and inclusion and drawing boundaries of exclusion and withholding information and knowledge; tensions between trust and wariness about motivations, interests and benefits. These tensions and mixed feelings are evident in the raw recorded narrative of my travels back to Country – mostly filled

with excitement, joy and appreciation, but the trepidation, uncertainty and concerns are there too.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

This thesis has provided a rich descriptive account of how members of a Nanda family group connect to each other and Country. I have given insights into our social organisation and shared lived experiences, which have been presented through a collection of yarns by Nanda Elders and my own interactions with my family to capture the minutiae contemporary everyday life. The cultural knowledge produced in this thesis is clearly understood to members of this family group and I have woven these yarns throughout the chapters to deliver a rich tapestry of our people's practices. These codes and conventions embedded in our everyday lives link the past with the present in our struggle for survival and to maintain a strong sense of culture and Country in contemporary Australia.

A study by Nanda, for Nanda, carries great significance for members of this family group as it promotes a greater sense of awareness about the logic and meaning of what we do and our self-determination. The thesis is also significant as it provides academic insights into a specific group of people. So, rather than being mere objects of study, we can be active participants who have contributed in all facets of the research process, allowing for marginalised people's voices to be heard by providing a platform for participant's voices (Jackson, 2013; Jackson & Piette, 2015).

The research project was organised and produced in collaboration with community support (Arcidiacono & Brodsy, 2015; Sonn, 2000), a community-based collaborative approach. As a qualitative study, it was driven by the researcher's positioning as a Nanda person. From this standpoint, I have given insights into insider/outsider perspectives of Nanda connection to each other and Country that include the ways in which we connect to each other through our shared membership. Myers (1986) explains, "Those who are relatives belong together and share identity."

The specific insights of Nanda perspectives in relation to connection to kin and Country, and what it means to be a Nanda person in contemporary Australia, provide a shift of the lens from what has largely been a non-Indigenous perspective of historical and Western-anthropological accounts of Nanda people – our culture, our connection to Country and each other. Native title is a platform for Indigenous people

to apply for their rights to traditional lands to be acknowledged by the Western Australian State Government. That system is structured by a Western legal system and relies on a "connection report," which is generally produced by anthropologists and native title lawyers. The Western Australian State Government does recognise native title through connection reports and they have different processes in place for this (Guidelines for the Provision of Connection Material, 2012).

There are opportunities for much greater formal involvement in future native title claims with governments. This would mean creating employment opportunities for Elders who could be remunerated for their consultancy roles. A more progressive approach would be for Land Councils and their employees to play more of a facilitator role, with native title anthropologists shifting also. This process would then see a variety of very tangible positive outcomes for Aboriginal people. Firstly, Elders would be remunerated and respected for their roles within the native title framework. Secondly, the positive flow-on effects would mean that the cycle of poverty is broken and benefits flow onto their families. Thirdly, through meaningful employment, we would actually see a form of self-determination again having a positive flow-on effect for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies. Whilst evidence produced within this thesis has been with the support and knowledge of my Elders, it is clear that the real knowledge holders are being left out of this process. Genuine inclusion, recognition and respect would assist in "closing the gap" (Calma, 2010) that Aboriginal people face in our life expectancy, poverty, health and wellbeing, and our education and employment opportunities.

This study of my family group's experiences will be valuable for Nanda people more generally in revaluating and reclaiming our positioning in contemporary society, as it provides us the opportunity to fill what has historically been regarded as an "empty space" in colonial Australia. For the first time, a qualitative study by Nanda people, for Nanda people, has produced evidence of our connection with each other and Country by describing how the extended Kelly family group understands our identity, our land, and how we remain closely connected based on long-standing traditions. This perspective must not be under-valued as it provides an original standpoint for a people and region.

The methodology chosen in this study supports and promotes self-determination, and was designed to continue the development of an Indigenist methodology. It functions as a model for enabling growth and flexibility by engaging

in robust and reflexive discussion on and with Aboriginal people and our culture. The findings in this research follow on from other prominent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars (Besserab & Ng'andu, 2010; Fredericks, 2007; Martin & Mirraboopa, 2003; Moreton-Robinson, 2000; Nakata, 2007; Oxenham, 1999; Sommerville et al., 2010), to name a few, who explain the value of this approach. In summary, this thesis represents culturally respectful ways of working within an Aboriginal context as part of community-based and inclusive research. While incorporating some of the key values highlighted by Arcidiacono et al (2015), this study has essentially been developed and carried out to promote self-determination in research (Rigney, 1999; Schanarch, 2004). This inclusive way of working with people is respectful of people, practices and protocols. My decision to seek out Elders from this family group and research our connection to each other and Country has been a revelation that I hope does justice to my people, past and present, in our quest to be recognised as traditional owners of what we call and have called ‘our Country’, for as long as I can recall.

The autoethnographic perspective, which is also a feature of this research, is based on new theoretical developments. Indigenist methodology, standpoint and methods, together with an interpretive theoretical approach, provide rich insights into Nanda epistemology, ontology and axiology. The Indigenous standpoint is designed to locate and position myself as an Aboriginal researcher whose intention is to highlight the importance of utilising a culturally appropriate methodology within qualitative research. The field trip narratives provide accounts that include my first-person thought processes, offering evocative insights into my lived experiences of re-connecting with Country and kin. The complexity and tensions of doing field work, even as an insider, is evident in this thesis.

The research conducted privileges Nanda voices and achieves outcomes that provide a rich tapestry of knowledge about our culture and values from a collection of yarns from Elders. Stories, Jackson (2013, p. 15) explains,

> Are a way we recount and rework events that happened to us, that simply befell us. We do this firstly by sharing our experiences with others in a form that they can relate or respond to, thereby reaffirming and consolidating our sense of belonging to a family, a circle of friends, a community or even a nation.

In this thesis I have demonstrated how a sense of belonging is created by members of the Kelly family group; for example, being "told" who you are from an early age and being introduced to the larger family group helps shape our identity. Sansom (as cited in Berndt, 1982, p. 136) refers to this as "repetitive reassertion", whilst Sutton (2003) speaks of the remarkable cultural values and underlying principles of Aboriginal social organisation of which the concept of Aboriginality is born. Barwick (1998) insists it is through the very act of birth that a child born to a particular mother or father inherits his/her position within the family group. These factors are indicators of how we are born into our Aboriginality. As such, the process of being Nanda is apparent prior to birth, and it is through acts of socialisation and conditioning we Nanda learn how to connect to each other and Country as we move through the cycle of life. The interconnectedness created through these processes is achieved through love and respect for family members, which is then carried forward throughout time and space by the act of storytelling, or by yarning about events from the past. These, together, assist in creating a Nanda worldview of Nanda ways of knowing, being and doing. We share moments as a family group, and we continue this practice by telling and re-telling stories, thus allowing for a transfer of knowledge to be passed down from generation-to-generation. This thesis provides strong evidence of how Nanda connect to each other and Country.

My overall experience with fieldwork has proven to be profound and significant in this research project for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, in my culture, it is crucial for one to be present and, as such, when doing research with Nanda, one must be available to build longstanding, trusting relationships. The results of this thesis have been achieved by sitting on Country for long periods of time with my mob. As a Nanda person it was imperative that I reconnect with family members, and the experiences and perceptions described in my accounts could only have been achieved through fieldwork. I simply could not have achieved the rigour, authenticity and exceptional insights from Elders without having the luxury of spending time with my mob on Country.

Unfortunately, some Aboriginal research has been conducted "on the clock," with little or no rapport with participants – the result being a misrepresented, or skewed or rushed, account that only fulfils the funding requirements whilst benefitting the researcher/s alone. The implementation of fieldwork in this research project was designed not only to benefit myself and academia, but more importantly my people.

Spending lengthy periods of time in the field with Elders has produced an abundance of rich and powerful yarns, creating an illuminating body of evidence about my people and my Country. This thesis confirms that Nanda connect to each other and Country through our identity, an identity that is produced and reproduced by a sense of belonging through our shared lived experiences.

I have found the overall process of doing this research project empowering. The findings of my research are consistent with a traditional culture that dates back forty thousand years or more. My hope is that, in time, my family will be empowered through the results of an extended body of work on the lives of an extremely resilient, proud people – a people who still today hold to and practise traditional ways and know who they are and where they come from.

Appendix A - Glossary

Note: The spellings of many Aboriginal words can be highly contested issues in some Aboriginal communities. I apologise to any groups I exclude by my selections. Moreover, the meanings of these words can vary in different contexts and communities. The glossary has been placed here for reader convenience, and to foreground some of the themes that emerge in the thesis. It draws on a range of commonly accessible sources, directly and indirectly.

Aboriginal/Indigenous

In the Western world, the words used to identify the first nations peoples of Australia are Indigenous and Aboriginal. I understand that there is contention around the use of the word "Indigenous," and in this thesis I use the word "Aboriginal" and "Indigenous" when speaking broadly, or if it is used in a citation. I utilise language group names when referring to a specific group or location.

Amungu

According to Tindale, Amungu are the language group situated at Champion Bay; from Chapman River and the southern vicinity of Geraldton south to Hill River; inland to near Mullewa, Morawa, and Carnamah. The southeastern boundary is not well defined, somewhere north of Moora.

Ancestors

These are considered not to be part of the past, or of mythology, but the eternally present ones who have gone before, who constantly guide us through signs and messages. They are revered and respected entities whose exploits often appear in the Dreaming stories.
Synonyms: old people, old ones, old fullas.

Apical

Refers to the last common ancestor of an entire group, such as a species (biology) or a clan (anthropology).

Business

"Business" refers to a framework of processes, activities and Lore that have tremendous gravity and significance. It can refer to specific activities in which people meet to develop or use customary knowledge, or to discuss matters of great significance, spiritually or culturally. It is capitalised to distinguish it from the English economic meaning of business.

Cleverman/woman

This is a European title for people who have supernatural knowledge or skills. In the thesis I refer to the synonym, yinna gubbi (pronounced jinagubbi), which when translated in English is featherfoot.

Country

"In standard English this may mean nation or countryside, but in. Aboriginal English it refers to different abstracts involving political, spiritual and cultural claims to land and place." Concepts of Lore are tied in with this, and when "on Country" one must adhere to protocols that include, but are not limited to speech, behaviour and thought.
Source: https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/10974/2/01thesis.pdf

Cousin-brother/sister

Within the Western kinship structure cousin-brother/s or cousin-sister/s equates to first cousins. Under the traditional Nanda kinship structure; first cousins are referred to as cousin-brother/s or cousin-sister/s and are acknowledged as one's brother/s or sister/s.

Dreaming

"Dreaming refers to the continuous action of creation in the present as well as the past, a dynamic interaction between the physical and spiritual worlds."
Synonym: Dreamtime.
Source: https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/10974/2/01thesis.pdf

Elder/s

Refers with respect to our old people, such as Grandparents, Uncles and Aunties.

Fulla

(Fuh-lah) Aboriginal English derived from “fellow.”

Gindjingali

An Aboriginal land-owning group situated in East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia.

Gunbalanya

This word is also spelt Kunbarllanjnja and was historically referred to as Oenpelli (which is in reference to the large and uncommon Oenpelli python). It is an Aboriginal community in west Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Kinship

“In anthropology, kinship is the web of social relationships that form an important part of the lives of most humans in most societies, although its exact meanings are often debated. ... The study of kinship is the study of what man does with these basic facts of life – mating, gestation, parenthood, socialisation, siblingship etc. … Human society is unique in that we are working with the same raw material as exists in the animal world, but [we] can conceptualize and categorize it to serve social ends. These social ends include the socialization of children and the formation of basic economic, political and religious groups.”

Source: Ember, C. & Ember, E. (2015). *Human culture: Highlights of cultural anthropology, 3rd edition*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Marlu

A common term meaning kangaroo, also referred to as Yawarda.

Marlpa

Refers to a collection of language groups based in the Pilbara region in the northwest of Western Australia. The language groups in the Pilbara region are: *Banjima, Jurrura, Kariyarra, Kuruma Muthurdunera, Ngarla, Ngarlawangga, Ngarluma, Nyangumartu, Nyiyarlpi, Palyku, Puutu Kunti, Karrama and Pinikura, and Yinhawangu.*

Martu

The Martu (Mardu) are a people who are residents of the Western Desert region. *Martu* means “one of us,” or “person.” Their traditional lands are a large tract in the Great Sandy Desert, within the Pilbara

region of Western Australia, including Jigalong, Telfer (Irramindi), the Warla (Percival Lakes), Karlamilyi (Rudall River) and Kumpupirntily (Lake Disappointment) areas. Outsiders only became aware of the Martu name and identity during the 1980s.

Munimaya

Pronounced (Moonie-Mia), this refers to the small township of Northampton located four hundred and sixty kilometres north of the city of Perth, Western Australia.

Noongar

"Noongar are made up of fourteen different language groups (which may be spelt in different ways): *Amangu, Yued/Yuat, Whadjuk/Wajuk, Binjareb/Pinjarup, Wardandi, Balardong/Ballardong, Nyakinyaki, Wilman, Ganeang, Bibulmun/Piblemen, Mineng, Goreng* and *Wudjari* and *Njunga*. Each of these language groups correlates with different geographic areas with ecological distinctions. Noongar have ownership of our own *kaartdijin* and culture. Not all Noongar cultural history and *kaartdijin* can be shared." Source: https://www.noongarculture.org.au/noongar/.

Watchandi

(Also spelled *Wadjandi, Wadyandi, Watchandie, Watjandee, Watjanmay, Watjandi, Watjanti, Wattandee, Wattandi*). Watchandi is a Nokaan term (Nokaan are from the Curbur, south on the plateau country west of the Murchison to Yallalong and Coolcalaya; south toward the inland vicinity of Northampton. They only extended to the coast in earliest contact times. Watchandi is the Nokaarn term for the Nanda and means "westerners."

Wajarri

People who are Wajarri speakers, or who are descended primarily from Wajarri speakers also refer to themselves as *Wajarri*. The word for "man" in Wajarri is *yamaji/yamatji*, and this word is also commonly used by Wajarri people to refer to themselves. *Yamaji* has also been used to refer to other Aboriginal people, particularly people from the Murchison-Gascoyne region.

Wudumala

The Aboriginal name for the area of Kalbarri has been recorded as "Wurdimarlu." Is believed to be named after a prominent member of the Aboriginal people known as the Nanda who lived in the area. It is also similar to the name of an edible seed "Kalbar," which is commonly known as the woody pear tree.

Yorta Yorta

The Yorta Yorta are an Indigenous Australian people who have traditionally inhabited the area surrounding the junction of the Goulburn and Murray Rivers in present-day north-eastern Victoria and southern New South Wales. The Yorta Yorta comprise a number of separate family groups, which include the *Bangerang, Kailtheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna,* and *Kwat*. Their language is the Yorta Yorta language.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yorta_Yorta

Appendix B – Project information statement

Curtin University

Media, Culture and Creative Arts
Social Sciences and International Studies

GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

13 April 2017

Project Information Statement

My mob, our Country: A qualitative study on how a Nanda family group connect to each other and Country.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research project.
Researcher-Steven Kelly

This research is an investigation into how a Nanda family group are connected to each other and Country. We would like to find out how this particular family group of Nanda people from the Murchison region of Western Australia are connected to each other and Country. We would like to hear from you in regard to family genealogy and how we are connected to Country. If you are interested in having a say about this, we invite you to take part in this project and have a yarn about your experiences either growing up on country or listening to our elders yarn about us as Nanda people and our connection to Country. We will spend time yarning about family and your experiences, this will be recorded by interviews and oral yarns. We will be asking you questions such as;

1. **How are you related to me?**
2. **Tell us about why you think you as a Nanda person are connected to Country?**

Whatever information you provide will be confidential. Even if you agree to take part now, you can also opt out of the project at any time. There may be a small possibility that you may find talking about your experiences upsetting. If this happens, please let the interviewer know, and the interviewer can stop the discussion immediately. No names or personal information will be given to people outside the project or in any project reports. All the information you provide will be given codes to make sure that there is no way any information can be connected to you or any other person. However, there is a small possibility that someone in the community may still be able to identify you from project reports because of the family members involved in the project. The project will be carried out in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (NHMRC).

To make sure we record all the valuable information you provide, we will need to audiotape the interview. If you wish, you may read the notes or listen to the audiotape. Any comments you made that you may wish to change will be changed. Please let me know if you do not want the discussion to be audiotaped and I will record the discussion in writing. We will be inviting you to a feedback session once the project is finished to let you know what we found. A short summary of the project results will also be available to you if you would like a copy. We hope to put the information together and get it written up in a journal or present the information at a conference. This will help others understand, how we as a Nanda family group are connected to each other and country and what works for us. All information in this project will be kept safely and securely in Curtin University, for seven years from the time the project is completed and after all reports and papers have been written. After that it will be destroyed. If you want to find out more about this project, please contact Dr Philip Moore on Ph: 08 9266 7483 or email: p.moore@curtin.edu.au .

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number HR 152/2013). The Committee is comprised of members of the public, academics, lawyers, doctors and pastoral carers. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 9266 2784 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au

Appendix C – Consent form

Curtin University

Media, Culture and Creative Arts
Social Sciences and International
Studies

GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

13 April 2017

Consent form

Title: My mob, our Country: A qualitative study on how a Nanda family group connect to each other and Country

Researchers- Steven Kelly, Philip Moore, John Fielder

This is a form indicating that I agree to participate in the interviews for research purposes

I_____, agree to take part in the research project-My mob, our Country: A qualitative study on how a Nanda family group connect to each other and Country.
I have read the project description and/or had the project explained to me. I understand that if I take part, it is voluntary and I will:

-be present for interviews
-agree to an audio recording of the interview
-talk about connections to family and country
-have an open discussion

I understand that:

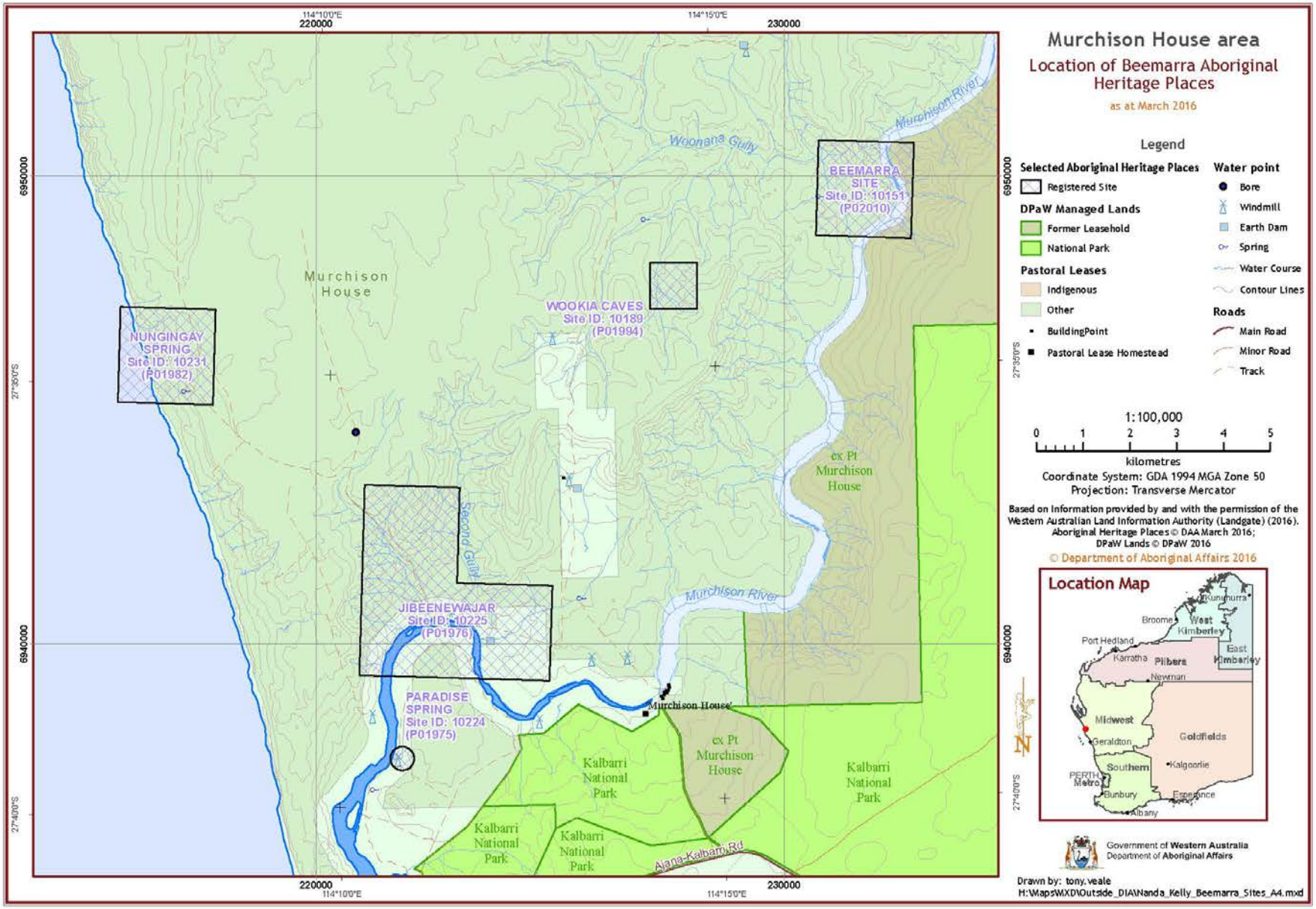
- I am free to withdraw my consent at any time and any data associated with me;
- The recording of interviews will only be used for the purpose of this project;
- I agree to be recorded, filmed and/or photographed.
- No identifying details will appear in any document related to the project;
- Data stored will comply with Curtin University policy regarding the Management and Guidelines on Research Practice available at: www.uim.curtin.edu.au under The Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA).
- No names or personal information will be given to people outside the project or in any project reports;
- All information I provide will be given codes to make sure that there is no way any of the information can be identified with me or any other person; however, there is a small possibility that someone in the community may still be able to identify me from project reports because of the small number of people involved in the project;
- It is possible for data to be subject to subpoena, freedom of information request or mandated reporting by some professions.

Please complete the following:

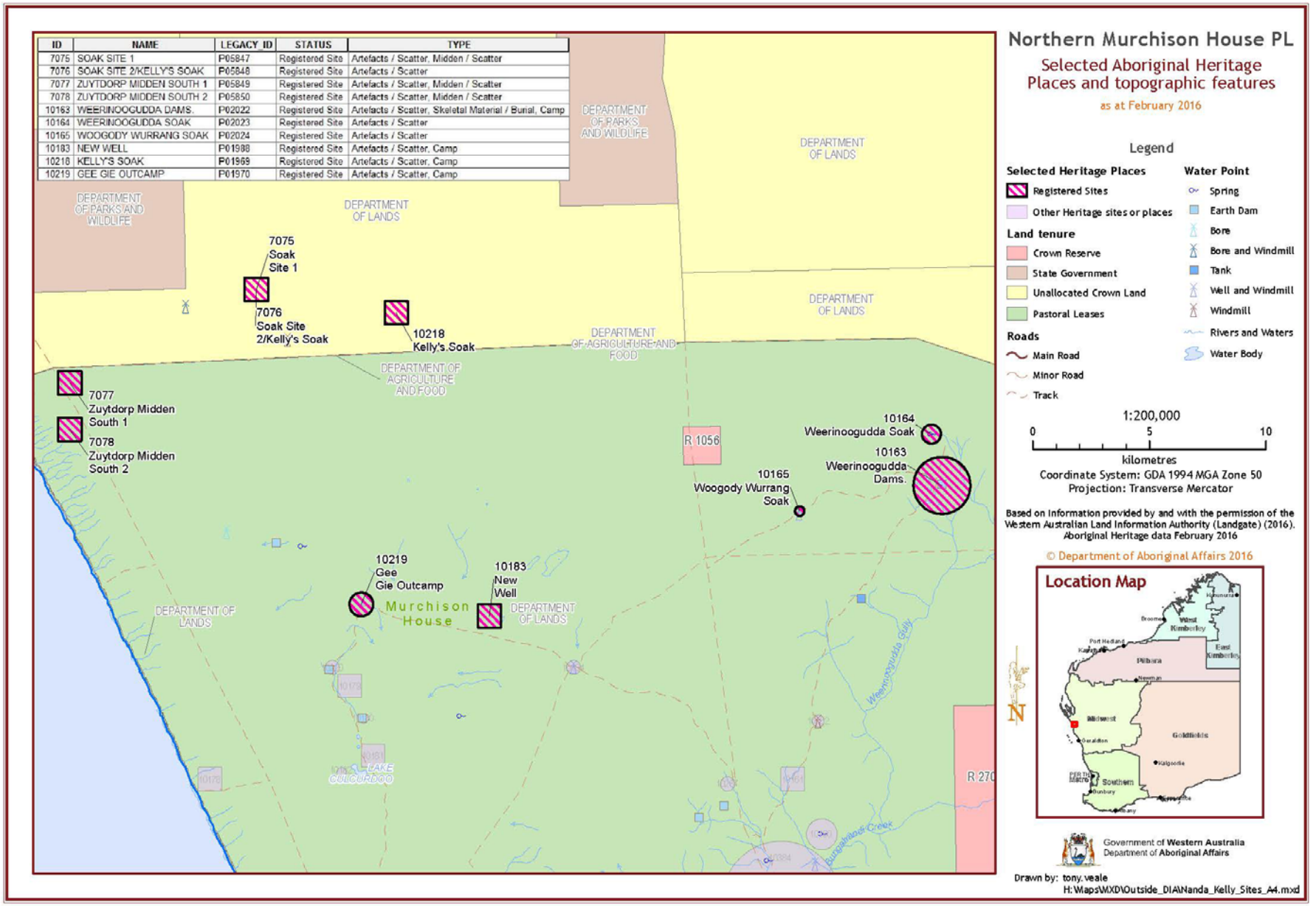
Participant's Name: ..... (Please Print)

Participant's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Appendix D – Murchison House map



Appendix E – Northern Murchison House PL map



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