



Final Report:

**Strengthening Community Research in
Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria**

Project Final Report

30 June 2012

Contributing author information

Judy Lovell, Senior Research Officer, Ninti One

Anna Marie Armstrong, Senior Community Researcher, Ninti One Ntaria Research Team

Mark Inkamala, Lead Community Researcher, Ninti One Ntaria Research Team

Ada Lechleitner, Lead Community Researcher, Ninti One Ntaria Research Team

Steve Fisher, Project Technical Advisor, Ninti One

Citation

Lovell J, Armstrong AM, Inkamala M, Lechleitner A and Fisher S. 2012. *Final Report: Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria*. A report produced for the Australian Government by Ninti One Limited, Alice Springs.

Acknowledgements

The Ninti One Ntaria Aboriginal Community Researchers

Residents of Ntaria Community, Central Australia, especially participants in the research cycles

Senior Traditional Owners, Wurla Nyinta Local Reference Group members, community organisation representatives, Shire and government staff who supported and assisted in the project

Staff of the Indigenous Policy Engagement Group of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and the Regional Operations Centre, Alice Springs.

Staff of the Business Development Unit of Ninti One.

Ninti One Limited

ABN: 28 106 610 833

PO Box 3971, Alice Springs, NT, 0871

Ninti One contacts:

General Manager Business Development: 0488 155 063 mark.ashley@nintione.com.au

Contents

Glossary	v
List of shortened forms	vi
Executive summary	vii
1. Introduction	9
1.1 Background and purpose.....	9
1.2 Ntaria.....	9
1.3 Ninti One research teams	11
1.4 Ntaria community researchers.....	12
2. The Ntaria community research project	13
2.1 Research questions or objectives.....	13
2.2 Participatory Action Research and researchers as learners	13
2.2.1 The cycle of research.....	13
2.2.2 Learning through PAR.....	15
2.3 Risk assessment	16
2.4 Limitations of the research.....	17
3. Developing the Community Research teams.....	18
3.1 Engaging the researchers	18
3.2 Researcher profiles	19
3.2.1 Length of contact of employment of researchers in 2011.....	19
3.2.2 Number of researchers active by month in 2011.....	20
3.3. Factors affecting recruitment.....	20
3.4 Skill development.....	21
3.4.1 Training workshops	21
3.4.2. Individual learning.....	22
3.4.3 Hamilton Downs Workshop.....	29
3.4.4 Development of further skills and individual assessment	30
4. Participatory Action Research cycles	32
4.1 Methods	32
4.2 Ethics, protocols and consent.....	32
4.3 Research project on vehicle safety: Research Cycle 1	32
4.3.1 Research subject.....	32
4.3.2 Participatory Action Research design	33
4.3.3 Research instrument.....	34
4.3.4 Research method	35
4.3.5 Results of Action Research Cycle One: A Safe Driving Survey at Ntaria	36
4.3.6 Safe Driving Survey Findings	40
4.3.7 Recommendations from Action Cycle One.....	41
4.4 Research project on vehicle safety: Research Cycle 1.2	42

4.4.1 Data collection	42
4.4.2 Analysis of data	44
4.4.3 Focus group findings.....	50
4.4.4 Links between the focus group findings and the LIP	54
4.5 Background to the Wurla Nyinta Perception Survey – Governance and <i>Anparnintja</i>	55
4.5.1 The role and significance of <i>Anparnintja</i>	55
4.5.2 Wurla Nyinta, Governance and Leadership	56
4.5.3 Competing priorities	56
4.6 Research project on community perceptions of governance	60
4.6.1 Introduction.....	60
4.6.2 Informed consent.....	61
4.6.3 Demography	62
4.6.4 Data collected	63
4.6.5 Perception Survey findings	81
5. Recommendations to Wurla Nyinta.....	82
5.1 Association of research recommendations to LIP actions.....	82
5.1.1 Research Cycle 1.1 Safe Driving Survey (June 2011)	82
5.1.2 Research Cycle 1.2: Focus Groups on Vehicle Safety (September 2011).....	83
5.1.3 Research Cycle 2.1 Wurla Nyinta Community Perception Survey (September–November 2011).....	84
5.1.4 Further LIP outcomes.....	84
6. Project outputs.....	86
6.1 Development of skilled Aboriginal community researchers.....	86
6.2 High-quality research contributions to the RSD.....	86
6.3 Enhanced community contributions and participation in the strategic planning, implementation of and future capacity to contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the RSD.....	86
6.4 An outline model of local research, documented for potential use by government agencies and other communities.....	86
7. Further results achieved through the project.....	88
7.1 Local Implementation Plan.....	88
7.2 New project and employment opportunities.....	89
7.3 Individual and community development	89
7.4 Reaching a wider professional audience	90
8. Conclusions	91
8.1 Observations about potential research beyond the scope of this project	91
8.2. Vehicle safety and perceptions of governance	91
8.3 The contribution and value of community research.....	93
8.4 Implications for the RSD and government engagement with remote communities.....	94
References.....	97
Appendix 1: Profile of Ninti One.....	98
Appendix 2: Summary program of activity for project	99
Appendix 3: Presentation to Australasian Evaluation Society Conference, September 2011, Sydney	102

Glossary

Useful terms to understand when reading this report

Aboriginal Knowledge and Intellectual Property Protocol Community Guide (AKIPPCG) is a protocol developed in Alice Springs by the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC) and Waltja Tjuṯangu Palyapayi.

Anparnintja (un-baa-NIN-ja) is the *Arrarnta* system of mapping skin and kin relationships, which is still somewhat active at Ntaria.

Arrarnta (a-RUN-da) is a dialect of the Arandic languages, and spelled this way implies Western *Arrarnta* speakers. This is the first language of the majority of Ntaria residents; others have *Luritja* as their first language.

Business Development Unit (BDU) is the unit in Ninti One that employs the research teams, the Senior Researcher and the Community Researchers.

Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) is a partnership organisation of Ninti One that specialises in long-term research projects in remote Australia.

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) is the Federal Government department funding this project.

Government Business Manager (GBM), working with the *IEO*, is employed by FaHCSIA to keep all the Federal and Territory Government business running smoothly at Ntaria.

Indigenous Engagement Officer (IEO) is the Ntaria resident working for FaHCSIA to make sure that people coming to work at Ntaria understand cultural protocols and work towards strengthening the community. IEOs provide a critical role in supporting coordination and communication links within community.

Indigenous Policy Engagement Group (IPEG) is the office that commissioned this project. It is an office within FaHCSIA and was formerly known as the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC).

Kwertengerle (cor-TENG-orl) is a cultural custodian, or manager.

Local Cultural Awareness Program is a place-based induction program that Wurla Nyinta runs for visiting staff that are required to work at Ntaria. The pilot program was evaluation by the Ninti One Ntaria researchers in 2011.

Local Implementation Plan (LIP) is the plan that Wurla Nyinta and external agencies agreed to under the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership. It sets up who is doing what and when in the delivery of remote services.

Local Reference Group – see Wurla Nyinta

Ninti One is the company that FaHCSIA has hired to deliver the *Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery* project.

Ntaria (n-DA-ree) is the Western *Arrarnta* name of the community. Ntaria is also known as Hermannsburg.

Pmerekwerteye (Bmara-KER-chewa) is a traditional owner, or director.

Regional Operations Centre (ROC) is the Federal Government name for the single government interface that works directly with communities via the RSD agreement and LIP plans to improve services.

Remote Service Delivery (RSD) partnerships exist in 29 locations in Australia, and 15 of these are in the Northern Territory. Ntaria is one of these sites, and as such has agreed to aims that exhibit the ‘shared drive to promote and

foster personal responsibility and positive social norms, improve governance and community leadership, as well as increase social and economic participation' (OCGRIS 2011a).

Territory Growth Town is the Northern Territory Government (NTG) name for the communities it is working with. Territory Growth Towns are also RSD communities, but there are 20 Territory Growth Towns and only 15 RSD communities in the Northern Territory. The NTG aims to transform the 20 Territory Growth Towns so that they:

- have services, facilities and buildings like any other country town
- benefit from targeted investment in infrastructure
- are properly planned and designed.

Tjuwanpa (chew-UN-bah) is a resource centre on the other side of the Finke River from Ntaria. It is the name of a type of tree.

Wurla Nyinta (WOR-la nyin-DA) is the name of the Ntaria Local Reference Group (LRG). The term is *Arrarnta* and translates as all together, in a group. The role of *Wurla Nyinta* is to provide a single point of access between community representatives and all agencies associated with RSD.

List of shortened forms

CRC-REP	Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation
DKCRC	Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre
GBM	Government Business Manager
IEO	Indigenous Engagement Officer
ICG	Indigenous Coordination Group (formerly IPEG Indigenous Policy Engagement Group)
LCAP	Local Cultural Awareness Program
LIP	Local Implementation Plan
LRG	Local Reference Group
PAR	Participatory Action Research
ROC	Regional Operations Centre
RSD	Remote Service Delivery
RSD NPA	Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement
SRO	Senior Research Officer

Executive summary

This final project report summarises two research cycles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) undertaken by a local community research team at Ntaria. *Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria* was managed and facilitated by Ninti One at the request of the Office for Indigenous Coordination Group (ICG), formerly Indigenous Policy Engagement Group (IPEG), FaHCSIA and at the invitation of Wurla Nyinta, the Ntaria Local Reference Group (LRG).

Two research topics formed this project, the first of which had two research cycles:

1. Topic: Safe driving at Ntaria

- Research cycle 1.1: Survey – Safe driving survey at Ntaria (May 2011) (reported in Lovell et al. 2011).
- Research cycle 1.2: Focus groups and photo elicitation – Vehicle Safety Focus groups (August and September 2011) (Reported in Lovell et al. 2012).

2. Topic: Wurla Nyinta Community Perception Survey (September–November 2011) (Reported in Lovell et al. 2012).

The formal objectives of the project were described in the Official Order for Ntaria as:

To learn by doing an action research process that will support and build research knowledge, skills and competencies in Ntaria through individuals who will become identified community researchers, including:

- *A group of three to six Aboriginal people to be selected to become community researchers at Ntaria through a suitable process to be agreed by the community*
- *Research training, supervision, support and mentoring for the selected community researchers through a combination of formal workshops to be held in Alice Springs, the community and ongoing guidance and on-the-job support*
- *Participation in a program of research that enables strategic contributions to be made by community representatives to the implementation of Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) and future capacity to contribute to monitoring and evaluation.*

In this document, we report that the project has achieved the required outcomes in line with the contracted objectives, milestones and outputs. We illustrate the way that the project has engaged local community members in participatory action learning and research. The results include building the capacity of individual researchers and of the local community and local reference group to engage with the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement (RSD NPA) through addressing actions and making recommendations aligned with the Ntaria LIP.

The PAR research cycles were designed to inform aspects of the LIP, and Ntaria decided early in the project to use the research to support some selected community actions listed in the plan. Beyond the initial recommendations, there is now an opportunity for the local researchers to provide important detail to Wurla Nyinta about aspects of Safe Driving, Vehicle Safety and Community Perceptions about Wurla Nyinta.

For the research team, an early outcome was Ntaria community's awareness of the project and of the topics of research. The sustained interest from Ntaria residents is evidenced by requests we have received for more community research from a range of local people – including residents and workers, as well as Wurla Nyinta members – and by the levels of commitment and retention demonstrated by the research team.

In the context of this contract, the research findings and recommendations provide Wurla Nyinta with tangible, grounded information useful for monitoring, evaluating and prioritising the progress of specific actions in the LIP. Wurla Nyinta's role has been voluntary and advisory only, in the same way it has only an advisory role to the RSD NPA LIP process. Wurla Nyinta does not act as a steering committee for the research project, but it does receive

draft reports and is asked for comment. Research topics were also drafted and presented to Wurla Nyinta before they were applied in the community.

While the long-term outcomes that have been achieved through the work of local community researchers are yet to be established, the applied PAR project at Ntaria in 2011 has clearly demonstrated a strengthening of the LRG and asset base through local researcher knowledge and input into local decision making and governance based on rigorous and strong local research results. The results have been viewed positively by the local community and have attention of FaHCSIA staff at regional and federal levels.

The process of PAR has contributed to better communication and some partnership activity between several service agencies and the wider community through stronger local police engagement on the Safe Driving project, and engagement of the Ninti One Ntaria researchers on additional research contracts from FaHCSIA. The program has also increased the confidence of individuals, which in turn has strengthened leadership.

As a result of Research Cycles 1.1 and 1.2 in the Safe driving at Ntaria research topic, Ninti One Ntaria Research Team recommends that:

1. Wurla Nyinta asks the government to engage people in the community to participate in developing a viability study and business plan for a garage at Ntaria or Tjuwanpa, as a first step to establishing a safe choice for repairs and maintenance of vehicles within the community.

The outcome might be linked with LIP actions that support adult training outcomes, employment, local business development, youth diversion and community service orders, men's programs, Job Service Providers services and support, driver's licence training, tourism, and preventative driver training programs for young people.

2. The social, economic, governance and health needs of the community are considered in the viability and business plan

The community should be engaged in all aspects of the process of investigating and developing a strategic plan for a local garage.

As a result of the second research topic, Wurla Nyinta Community Perception Survey, Ninti One Ntaria Research Team recommends that:

1. Wurla Nyinta identifies opportunities for local people to engage in strong community governance through the RSD NPA and the LIP process.

Some agreement about roles and responsibilities relating to the work of Ntaria residents who are Wurla Nyinta representatives and other key local people such as *Pmerekwerteye* (traditional owner or manager) and *Kwertengerle* (cultural custodian or manager) should be discussed with the goal of ensuring there is fair sharing of the jobs required for the group to continue to be effective. This is a governance issue and is also affected by no resources being available to commit to developing a working representative governance structure.

As a result of this project other organisations have begun utilising this Arrarnta research capacity at Ntaria, either through Ninti One or directly. We have identified significant flow-on benefits occurring through local employment opportunities and Arrarnta engagement with research affecting Ntaria. There is potential benefit for further development of local research capacity at Ntaria and, indeed, other remote communities.

1. Introduction

This section introduces the scope of the project that the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) (the client) commissioned, which Ninti One¹ (the consultant) has facilitated with Ntaria (the partner). It describes the formal structure, where the research work is carried out, and introduces the key agencies that are stakeholders in the research.

1.1 Background and purpose

The work described in this report has been undertaken through a contract between Ninti One and FaHCSIA for the period October 2010 to June 2012. The project was designed to employ a team of Aboriginal community researchers at Ntaria, supported and mentored by a Senior Researcher based in Alice Springs.

The objective of the project was to learn by doing a participatory action research (PAR) process that supports and builds research knowledge, skills and competencies in Ntaria through individuals who become identified community researchers, including:

1. a group of Aboriginal people from each community to become community researchers through a suitable process to be agreed by the community
2. research training, supervision, support and mentoring for the selected community researchers through a combination of formal workshops held in Alice Springs, in the community for ongoing guidance and on-the-job support
3. participation in a program of research that enables strategic contributions and ongoing management for Ntaria community representatives to baseline mapping processes, the implementation of Local Implementation Plans (LIPs) and future capacity to contribute to monitoring and evaluation.

The outputs of the research were agreed to be:

1. six to twelve (6–12) skilled Aboriginal community researchers
2. a range of high-quality research contributions to the RSD through a formal local research project
3. enhanced community contributions and participation in the strategic planning, implementation of and future capacity to contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the RSD
4. an outline model of local research, documented for potential use by government agencies and other communities in the form of a short report on the project.

This report brings together and documents material we have generated in working towards the objectives and outputs above. It is designed to both meet our commitment to report in full on the project but also to serve as a resource from which other shorter reports, briefing papers and publications can be developed. As a final report, it describes and synthesises results from the whole project and can therefore be read independently; however, more detail about each stage of the research can be found in the progress reports (Lovell et al. 2011, 2012). A full list of project activities can be found in Appendix 2.

1.2 Ntaria

Ntaria is a Western Arrarnta community, 130 kilometres west of Alice Springs. It is a Remote Service Delivery site (RSD) and a Northern Territory Growth Town and is progressing through a coordinated service delivery plan, the Local Implementation Plan (LIP). Ntaria has an active Local Reference Group (LRG) called Wurla Nyinta that the research team has reported back to for the duration of the project. The scope of this project includes using cycles

¹ A brief profile of Ninti One can be found in Appendix 1.

of PAR to engage local community researchers to monitor, inquire about, report on and make recommendations regarding aspects of the LIP.

Local Implementation Plan

The LIP describes long-term service delivery strategies that aim to achieve community development and better service delivery outcomes for Arrarnta at Ntaria. The roll-out of the LIP involves coordination of Federal and Territory Governments, Shire Council, non-government organisations, local businesses and Aboriginal Corporations at Ntaria.

The LIP sets out Priority areas (COAG building blocks), Strategies and Actions. The actions list the responsible parties and when the action starts and finishes. The Ntaria LIP has a list of at least 100 actions associated with the combined service agreements supporting the RSD. These actions are monitored for outcomes in quarterly reports, and an annual LIP refresh was undertaken in April 2012 where old actions were removed and new ones placed onto the LIP. The Regional Operations Centre (ROC) and Australian Government staff coordinate and report the monitoring back to the community through Wurla Nyinta.

Wurla Nyinta Ntaria Local Reference Group²

Wurla Nyinta is the single point of access between community representatives and all agencies associated with RSD. Regular Wurla Nyinta meetings are the occasion that the community representatives (members) meet as a group to monitor the LIP and review RSD progress; accept reports from service providers, agencies and government representatives; or discuss proposals, plans and priorities. Wurla Nyinta is made up of Ntaria residents from across different family groups, genders and age groups. Membership and contributions to Wurla Nyinta are voluntary and there is no financial recompense for the members.

Wurla Nyinta is the overarching single point of reference for the community engagement in the RSD Agreement. Reports are presented at Wurla Nyinta meetings according to a pre-planned agenda. Meetings are coordinated by the Government Business Manager (GBM) and Indigenous Engagement Officer (IEO), and chaired by a member. Service delivery agencies can request time in the meeting if they wish to give a report. Wurla Nyinta will request reports from agencies if they require information. Wurla Nyinta has held regular monthly meetings in this format since February 2010. During that time the number of local members of Wurla Nyinta has increased.

Wurla Nyinta is an advisory body that represents the community as stakeholders in the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement (RSD NPA). The mechanism of consultation with Wurla Nyinta applies broadly to all the RSD activity as Wurla Nyinta 'set the community priorities for the Ntaria Local Implementation Plan' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010. p. 8). Research cycle reports and recommendations from this project are presented regularly by the Ntaria community researcher team.

It is important to acknowledge that there are other consultative mechanisms at Ntaria for specific programs. A number of local boards meet to steer operation of organisations including the Ntaria School Board, the Western Arrarnta Health Aboriginal Congress and the MacDonnell Shire board. The Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre is an Aboriginal Incorporation that auspices and operates programs and program partnerships. The GBM, the IEO and ROC staff from Alice Springs facilitate other priority-specific consultative meetings at Ntaria to facilitate agreed activities, research and evaluations as directed by the LIP.

The project partnership

FaHCSIA Indigenous Policy Engagement Group has a series of initiatives designed to strengthen community research about RSD through PAR. Ninti One brings experience of PAR and engagement of Local Community Researchers to the project. *Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria* utilises PAR to

² This is described in *Local Implementation Plan Ntaria* (Commonwealth of Australia 2010. p. 8).

engage Ntaria residents in doing community research that builds information and input from the community. The research recommendations are related to the selected LIP priority.

Following initial discussions and in-principle endorsement from the community, the Alice Springs region of the Northern Territory ROC proposed Ninti One work with Ntaria and Yuendumu through the FaHCSIA initiative *Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery*. Ninti One was then contracted by FaHCSIA to facilitate this project through the *Participatory Planning, Research, Evaluation and Training Panel*.

Ninti One Investments

Ninti One purchased equipment and software to support digital data collection and increased and extended the project-related travel to include conference airfares and accommodation. Vehicle use and other travel for the project was extended for workshops with other community (Warlpiri, Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara) researchers with trips to Yulara, Hamilton Downs and Alice Springs. The time allocated for a Senior Researcher officer has been extended beyond the wages increment in the contract. Ninti One sees this value-adding as an investment in remote community outcomes and in FaHCSIA, which is a partner organisation.

At Ntaria it is critical for Arrarnta with local experience to be heavily represented in community research about – and in the monitoring and evaluation of – the RSD agreement at their community. In this project Arrarnta researchers facilitate the community awareness and investment in the research and evaluation; they feed back to community as a stakeholder on their research findings and provide recommendations, which often support active strategies and practical outcomes.

1.3 Ninti One research teams

Under the provision of services to FaHCSIA for the *Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery* project, Ninti One provided a Senior Research Officer to work closely with a group of Community Researchers at Ntaria, and the group as a whole has become the Ninti One Ntaria community research team.

Developing good communication in the team included discussing the nature of Ntaria researchers as ‘insiders’ (Tuhivai-Smith 1999; Rabbitt 2000); that is, researchers who are working within their own social, linguistic and cultural environment. Not only do the words, ideas and skills of insider researchers contribute the local knowledge that shapes the research, but their engagement influences whether the project can develop and who responds to the research questions. This project team combines insider and trusted outsider researchers, who collectively have the capacity to apply intercultural and critical thinking; networking; skills sharing and development; and reflection and review throughout each stage of the research. A technical advisor is available for input as required, and to monitor the outcomes of the work against the contracted agreements.

The team working in Ntaria across the project comprised the following people:

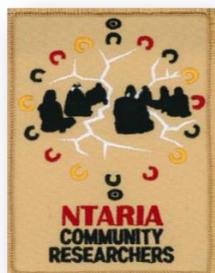
- Ninti One Ntaria Community Researchers: Ada Lechleitner (Senior Researcher), Mark Inkamala (Lead Researcher), Anna Marie Armstrong (Lead Researcher), Dion Dhamarranydji, Rachel Kantawara, Katie Abbott, Roslyn Raberabera, Elsie Patrick, Merissa Emitja, Carole Raggett and Judith Henderson
- Ntaria Cultural Mentor: Edward Rontji, IEO, ROC
- Ninti One Senior Research Officer (SRO): Judy Lovell.

We were further supported by Ninti One Business Development Unit (BDU) Project Technical Advisor Steve Fisher, and Ninti One BDU General Manager Mark Ashley.

The BDU supports similar community research projects conducted with FaHCSIA support at Yuendumu, where Sam Osborne and Lorraine King have worked as the Senior and Lead Researchers; and earlier at Amata and Mimili where Sam and Lorraine again worked as Senior and Lead Researchers.

In the Ninti One BDU office in Alice Springs, the teams were supported by Ange Vincent, Program Coordinator, and Apolline Kohen, Senior Researcher. These teams provided good intercultural and cross-regional skills, strong peer

mentoring and a broad base of skills necessary to take on work that produced tangible outcomes for the remote communities and for the funding stakeholders.



Katie Abbott (centre) and Anna Marie Armstrong (right) used the tablet computer with families who are camping for the Kuprilya Races

1.4 Ntaria community researchers

	Edward Rontji Project Cultural Mentor IEO, ROC		Mark Inkamala Community Research Leader
	Ada Lechleitner Community Research Leader		Anna Marie Armstrong Senior Community Researcher
	Rachel Kantawara Community Researcher		Dion Dhamarranydji Community Researcher
	Katie Abbott Community Researcher		Roslyn Raberabera Community Researcher
	Elsie Patrick Community Researcher		Merissa Emitja Community Researcher

	<p>Carole Raggett Community Researcher</p>		<p>Judith Henderson Community Researcher</p>
---	--	---	--

2. The Ntaria community research project

2.1 Research questions or objectives

The local research team played a critical role of informing Wurla Nyinta on aspects of LIP progress and provided tools and processes for Wurla Nyinta to identify issues.

Working in an environment where Wurla Nyinta is asked to make important decisions and contribute to community consultation for the range of LIP actions, the local community research team represented a small but significant asset. We designed the research cycles to produce outcomes that would impact on several of the actions in the LIP that are listed as being led by the community.

As the research process was participatory, it brought a degree of focus and community discussion to the topic and returned findings and recommendations that reflect practical outcomes sought by Ntaria residents.

This project had two research topics that were selected by the research team as being most relevant to current community concerns. One of the topics incorporated two cycles.

Topic 1: Safe driving at Ntaria

- Research Cycle 1.1: Survey – Safe driving survey at Ntaria (May 2011)
- Research Cycle 1.2: Focus groups and photo elicitation – Vehicle Safety Focus groups (August and September 2011)

Topic 2: Wurla Nyinta Community Perception Survey (September – November 2011)

As a skills assessment activity, a further survey was carried out on the topic of childcare. This survey was completed after the second topic of research was begun. It is discussed in more detail in section 4.6 of this report.

2.2 Participatory Action Research and researchers as learners

2.2.1 The cycle of research

Ninti One researchers have used PAR methodologies to undertake community research since 2003, and are familiar with widespread and localised developments of its theory and practice (Brydon-Miller 2001; Khan & Chovanec 2010; Lewin 1940; Wadsworth 1998).

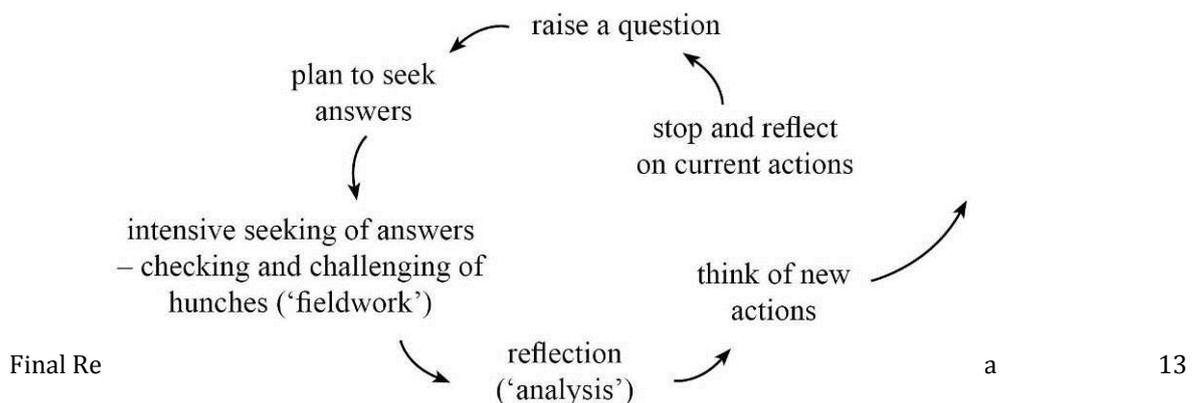


Figure 1: Simple Research Process

Source: Wadsworth 1998

The Simple Research Process diagram (Wadsworth 1998) shows a single cycle of PAR, which was the method used in the initial work of this project where researchers identified the topic (Safe Driving at Ntaria) and drew a set of survey questions from this complex issue. We planned the survey carefully and then took it to a wide demographic of residents to generate the data.

The recommendations to Wurla Nyinta from this first cycle of research were that the community needed improved driver instruction, improved re-licensing practices and drink-driver training.

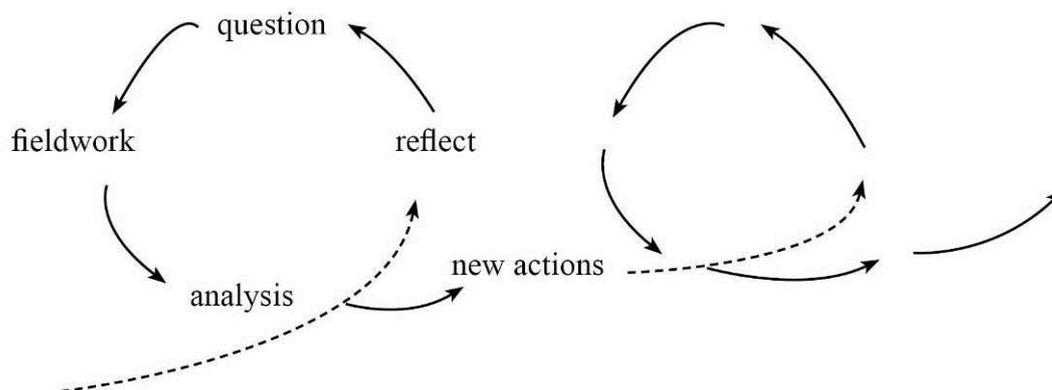


Figure 2: Cyclical Research Process

Source: Wadsworth 1998

The Cyclical Research Process (Wadsworth 1998) describes the flow-on from one cycle of research to the next. This is what happened with the results of the first cycle of research: the data raised further questions when we reflected on the findings, and we determined that a second cycle of research was needed to investigate vehicle safety and maintenance at Ntaria through focus groups and photo elicitation.

At Ntaria we followed the four primary steps of the PAR cycle, each one requiring specific actions, and then took two further outcome steps, each one involving moving to a new stage of inquiry and engagement, and potentially leading to the second cycle of the PAR method.

This list records the process of the research team at Ntaria as we modified and contextualised PAR for our research purpose.

1. Discuss, consult

In this step we asked open questions to help 'find' the potential research focus from the scope of the project:

- What is the client asking for?
- Who are the other stakeholders and which of their opinions are important?
- What can literature or information from other studies tell us?
- What 'gaps' in knowledge are there?
- What kind of research method would work best?

2. Plan, prepare

Craft and practise the research question/s.

Design informed consent processes and forms:

- Describe who commissioned the research
- Who is undertaking it
- Who the researchers are
- No-obligation statement for participants to be involved

Design permission to record audio and take photos.

Prepare the work:

- Who will do what, where, when and how?

3. Do it

- Introduce the research and explain the informed consent and options to participants
- Do the research the same way with each participant
- Keep a list of the target demographic as the research progresses
- Regularly discuss in the team how it's going, what it's like, what's working well, what's hard, etc.
- Talk about making changes if they are needed; decide carefully if they are
- Use the demographic information to guide which participants are chosen as the research progresses

4. Review, reflect

- Collate the research data
- Extract the trends and findings
- Make some analysis of what the research indicates
- Report the findings back to Wurla Nyinta

5. Recommendations

- Make recommendations for actions as a result of the research

6. Inform next cycle

- Critically review the process, language, questions, and other operational aspects to extract learning and best practice guidelines for the next cycle.

2.2.2 Learning through PAR

In this project PAR engaged the researchers and the community in making good decisions and engaging with the various actions detailed in the LIP.

At a personal level PAR models recognise that researchers and learners are in the best position to be able to identify areas to strengthen their own work. Applied at Ntaria, PAR situated the development, reflection, design, application, interpretation and recommendations with the researchers as primary actors, and it situated the community and Wurla Nyinta in the position of active recipients of the research. The community, through their Wurla Nyinta members, can put the recommendations forward towards outcomes through the structure of LIP review and delivery.

Our PAR relied on these cycles of inquiry being built upon each other, the first being reviewed in order to inform the second, which resulted in information that is useful to the broad selection of stakeholders who review and implement service provision on the community.

2.3 Risk assessment

A set of 'critical success factors' was part of the risk assessment for the project. The value of identifying critical success factors is that it enables Ninti One to understand and manage risk. Through an awareness of these factors we were better able to focus efforts on those aspects of the work that were central to achieving the objectives of the project.

Critical Success Factor 1: A good understanding is developed between Ninti One and the community

Ensuring that Ntaria community is supportive of the local research project is critical to success.

- Wurla Nyinta worked with the researchers to consolidate the research use for the community.
- Job Provider had some input to link two people into work.
- The School had discussions about a possible workspace, and also in relation to the community priority for developing a Knowledge Centre.
- The Strehlow Research Centre was linked with the school to facilitate aspects of the Knowledge Centre development.
- The Art Centre did not participate in any research beyond initial discussions about the project, as they have a busy schedule.
- The Historic Precinct was very helpful and supportive in allowing us room for meetings and accommodation.
- GBM and IEO were mainstay supports, offering good insight and interest in the 'daily' activities as well as longer-term strategic thinking when asked.
- The *Aboriginal Knowledge and Intellectual Property Protocol Community Guide* was referenced in our worksheets: 'What is Good Community research?'
- A very small temporary office workspace was made available at the GBM complex for storage of files and computers so researchers could start working independently of the SRO being on-site. The office doubled as a sleeping space when the SRO was on the community.
- Researchers were given regular reports to Wurla Nyinta about the project and received requests for particular topics to be researched from the community.

Critical Success Factor 2: Identification of suitable people who are willing and able to be employed on this project

Critical to the success of this project was the ability of Ninti One to be able to find people in Ntaria willing and able to be employed on this project. The project engaged with eleven researchers and retains access to seven of them as Community Researchers in Ntaria. Three of those have eight to eleven months' experience with the project.

Critical Success Factor 3: The community has the capacity to contribute to, and participate in, the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the RSD

Critical to the success of this project was the capacity of community members to participate in a meaningful way to the implementation and annual review of the LIP. The survey results for Safe Driving in Ntaria have influenced Wurla Nyinta discussions about safe driving, and the recommendations from the survey for increased training and access to driving school have been taken up with service providers to establish access for people in Ntaria to these services. The survey results have led researchers to undertake discussions with police about local statistics on driving offences, opening a new avenue of dialogue between NT Police at Ntaria and the local community.

Critical Success Factor 4: The research contributions are useful to the community and the RSD

In the short term the projects contributed directly to development and achievement of outcome priorities identified under the LIP and supported the principles identified under *What works to overcome Indigenous disadvantage* (Closing the Gap Clearinghouse 2011, p. 2).

- Final recommendations from cycles of PAR research in this project were provided to Wurla Nyinta during monthly meetings. A summary about how the activities link to RSD LIP management are in section 5.1.

Critical Success Factor 5: Completion of sufficient research to enable a model of research to be developed

The model achieved research results of high quality. It produced strong, reflective and active learning outcomes for building research capacity at Ntaria and provided useful recommendations to influence LIP outcomes at Ntaria.

The model also demonstrated strong suitability for other RSD sites (see Amata/Mimili report [Osborne et al. 2011] and similar work underway in Yuendumu by Ninti One) along with suitability to inform outcomes associated with monitoring and evaluating of the RSD initiative.

- The project supported Schedule B of the RSD NPA in the development of labour market opportunities and the potential for corporate investment/partnerships and business development, although further work would be required in this area.

2.4 Limitations of the research

The research we conducted at Ntaria represents a picture of the views of the residents over the short period in which the data were collected. The morale, focus and mood of any community is affected by the events that are current at the time. Ntaria is no different. The ongoing impacts, positive and negative, of the Northern Territory Emergency Response and its various policy and program initiatives, local government reform, investments in infrastructure and the rollout of national partnership agreements were apparent in Ntaria and in some way influenced the responses of people who participated in the surveys, focus groups and other elements of the research. The same applies to localised incidents and discussions within such a small community. So one limitation of the research is that it was a snapshot rather than a longitudinal study.

It is common in remote communities for people to express fatigue with research. Often, research is considered to be too far removed from actually solving problems. People can be weary of talking about the history and the challenges of remote living and remote services. Interestingly, we did not encounter research fatigue in Ntaria. We assume that the reason is that the research was conducted by local people, which was novel to respondents and also gave the impression that the research interpretation would be accurate and the findings would be directed towards local needs.

3. Developing the Community Research teams

3.1 Engaging the researchers

The involvement of Arrarnta community researchers is essential to mediate the cultural standpoints that are encountered when an external client, such as FaHCSIA, commissions research and evaluation *about* their community. The *Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria* project demonstrated how important local engagement is to focus the research, identify the community priorities and obtain the required demographic and linguistic representation in the data collection.

In this project Arrarnta researchers had direct influence over cross-cultural ways of working, which impacted on the expectations inherent in meeting external clients' requirements. It was equally important to have a range of linguistic skills, balanced gender make-up, and a range of ages among the researchers to achieve good engagement from the research respondents. This expert local knowledge ensured greater accuracy of research findings and analysis. The team included people confident and experienced in cross-cultural safety, with good levels of community engagement and the ability to meet the required research protocols, outputs and delivery. The position of local community researchers in relation to their status as community members was consolidated through work practice.

The employment selection criteria for the research team aimed to achieve balanced age and gender representation, and to include the skills of working bilingually: using spoken English well enough to make the translation from Arrarnta conversation or participant answers; and reading and writing some English, Arrarnta or Luritja.

Each individual did not require all of these skills, but everyone was expected to have the capacity to share skills and meet the workload. At Ntaria the longer-term community researchers have sustained their vision that the work is important to the community, beyond the benefits they feel individually. It emerged that the core researchers hold community wellbeing as an important priority, and are committed to the process of positive change at Ntaria.

The project plan aimed to enable a wide community engagement with the research cycles through a community research team of at least six Arrarnta. For Arrarnta, the influence of *Anparnintja* (skin and kin relationships) brings positive strength to community consultations, and we aimed to engage that strength. Similarly, the mix of age and gender across the team maximised the capacity of the researchers to identify data gaps and revisit those demographic profiles, both at the planning stage and in review throughout data collection.

In a sense, *Anparnintja* was one key for reaching broad demographic representation of respondents in the community and then for eliciting truthful or revelatory answers. It was also a key for Wurla Nyinta engagement as it provided members who represented the demography of their community with equity.

Community Researchers undertook to be reliable, motivated to work independently at times, and to keep in contact and be contactable by the research office in Alice Springs. At Ntaria the team also agreed to work in a job that involved developing new skills and applying them in a PAR framework.

In order to find potential employees to work as community researchers, Ninti One developed an advertising strategy summarised in the table below.

Action	Inquiries only	Recruitment
Ninti One purchased a recorded advertisement with CAAMA Radio, spoken in Western Arrarnta and aired for four days in February	0	0
Posters were placed in businesses, offices and service outlets	1 man	0
ITEC Work-placement Service was provided with recruitment details	1 man, 2 women	2 women
Word of mouth through the cultural advisor and others	4 men, 4 women	2 men, 8 women

3.2 Researcher profiles

Ntaria Community Researchers employed January–December 2011 consisted of ten women, and two men (two researchers, and an additional cultural advisor). Two other men were interested, but the work often conflicted with other roles.

The male and female long-term researchers were in lead researcher roles, allowing the benefits of their enthusiasm and belief in this work to impact positively for the whole team. The lead female researcher took up full-time work for a government agency as a result of (and during the course of) doing the research, which she stated gave her both the confidence and the capacity to take on a sensitive community job with a government agency, full time.³ As a condition of that employment she negotiated to be available to steer and support the research team, and to give reports and recommendations at Wurla Nyinta meetings.

Age groups of Community Researchers

18–19	20–24	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65+
0	1	2f 1m	3	1		1	2 m	1		

3.2.1 Length of contact of employment of researchers in 2011

- Researcher One: employed January, continuously
- Researcher Two: employed January, continuous when able (restricted by gender imbalance in team)
- Researcher Three: employed January–April, then again from June (balanced with another job)
- Researcher Four: employed January–March (family illness)
- Researcher Five: employed April, continuously
- Researcher Six: employed April, continuously to June (family left the community)
- Researcher Seven: employed May–July
- Researcher Eight: employed May–July
- Researcher Nine: employed July, ongoing
- Researcher Ten: employed July, ongoing
- Researcher Eleven: employed September, ongoing
- Researcher Twelve: employed September–November

³ A personal and professional achievement for the researcher becomes a risk for successful PAR projects, where staff who have trained to do research become attractive to organisations who may well be able to offer longer term and/or more permanent work than a short-term research contract offers.

- Other: Cultural Advisor – January, engaged as needed

3.2.2 Number of researchers active by month in 2011

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
3	5	6	6	7	3	9	6	6	6	6

In December 2011 the project finished the fieldwork with a total of six active researchers. The two leaders had been initially employed in January, the senior researcher in April, and three younger researchers in July and September.

3.3. Factors affecting recruitment

The ability of Ninti One to recruit suitable researchers required to undertake the project was influenced by:

- Terms and conditions of work
- Workplace support and training
- Opportunity to affect community outcomes
- Flexibility of roles within a work team
- Genuine desire to think, learn, do on the part of the researchers and the opportunities afforded by the project for them to do this
- Limited other options available locally for people interested in intellectual rather than retail, physical or administrative work
- Exchange of knowledge with other Aboriginal community researchers
- Opportunity to experience different work priorities and influence the direction taken
- Acknowledgement and valuing of Arrarnta culture
- Providing a service for Wurla Nyinta that made a difference to community decision making
- Through employment, having access to more information about what affects the community
- Rapport and relationships developed between the Ninti One Senior Researcher and the team.

The community researchers experienced the team work environment as motivating, and the work challenging and interesting. They reported that being treated as genuinely valued colleagues encouraged their autonomy and commitment to being reliable. They felt that the terms and conditions of the work offered made the work more 'real' than many other positions, including full-time ones, available locally.

Researchers reported being interested in the further application of their skills as community researchers and in undertaking more evaluation and resource development. The researchers were confident about mentoring people from other language groups and encouraging other communities to engage local research teams. The use of technology had some positive impact on engaging the men, both as researchers and as respondents.

Research reports delivered to Wurla Nyinta in Arrarnta became an engaging part of the reference group meetings and encouraged participation in discussion and review of findings. Men participated equally with women as research respondents and both were actively represented at Wurla Nyinta, where they were involved in the process of reviewing recommendations from this project. These respondents were not waged.

The less successful employment outcomes, for example where people did not stay with the work, were influenced by:

- Circumstances beyond control of the researcher, which included events affecting family that made a priority demand on the person
- Unforeseen and daily disruptions to their ability to work
- Perception of gender roles relating to job focus and team make-up
- Lack of self-confidence
- Job-ready skills: reliability, time management, being focused and alert at work
- Lack of motivation to work without continual supervision
- Literacy and numeracy in English

- Physical work environment.

The most significant barrier was engaging men to join the project team. Men were more likely to engage with the project activities if they felt they could work separately from the women, on a different research topic. This working style would preserve a traditional respect for the separation of elements of men's and women's roles.

Other barriers for researchers included a common perception that the work was in an English language-based environment, with requirements for written literacy and numeracy skills, and that the work itself would not produce tangible physical outputs. In fact, the team as a whole required English language skills, but these skills were not required of every individual. Research activity included being outdoors, walking, talking and being in the community precinct. However, the development of an idea or writing and re-writing a survey instrument and analysing or reporting findings may have seemed to be slow and unclear processes when unfamiliar to people considering applying to join the team.

As the project began to reach the end of its field work, we had to turn away potential researchers interested in joining the group as there was not time to undertake induction and sufficient training while finishing data collection, doing analysis and reporting findings.



Hamilton Downs research workshop: (left to right) Edward Rontji; Rachel Kantawara and Dion Dhamarranydji; Ned Hargraves, Edward Rontji, Mark Inkamala and Anna Marie Armstrong

3.4 Skill development

3.4.1 Training workshops

Ninti One facilitated training workshops in the research methodology, in the process of working through steps in the cycle of research, and in the analysis and development of findings and recommendations as the research progressed.

Participatory workshops allowed reflection and discussion about the context of community research in this project. Skill development workshops made space for the bigger picture questions to emerge and for the research team to situate their fieldwork and reporting outside themselves and the team. This allowed researchers to express the movements between their roles as insider researchers and their roles as community members, leaders and parents. The workshops also strengthened the practice of the team in being a questioning observer. The time to reflect and practise story-telling about the research was very important to this project and to the teams from the other community research projects.

The skills-sharing workshops were consistent with Ninti One protocols for engaging and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research capacity, recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Intellectual property and respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge. Staged learning echoed the practice of PAR and used a similar model of participatory action.

Two workshops were held:

i. Introduction for Ninti One Strengthening Community Research for Remote Service Delivery

Held in May 2011 at Ntaria, and attended by five Ntaria Community Researchers, this was an introduction to Community research. After the induction section the workshop discussed what an action research cycle is, talking about how the cycle progressed and what is covered with each step. The workshop explored common research terms and clarified how we use them.

ii. Group workshop for Amata and Ntaria Ninti One Community research staff

A similar project to the Ntaria Strengthening Community Research for Remote Service Delivery was being conducted concurrently at Amata, and a workshop held at Yulara in June 2011 brought these two groups of community researchers together for the first time. The benefit for community researchers meeting other researchers from different communities cannot be underestimated. Both groups provided excellent audiences for each other's research project reports, and gave really good feedback. This was the kind of opportunity for skill sharing which is only provided in inter-Aboriginal cultural exchange. Feedback from the workshop was strongly positive.

3.4.2. Individual learning

Keeping track of learning and professional development in the team helped researchers and their team members to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, and allowed people to track their growth over time. Tools for self-evaluation described each person's skills, and may have influenced the focus and methods used in the research cycles. Sharing the learning evaluations with others in the team gave an opportunity for listening to one another about how we each work.

The take-up of research jobs was affected by each person's hopes and confidence in their own ability to 'do' the job. As previously mentioned, one barrier to employment was English literacy and numeracy. There is a stigma of shame common to Aboriginal people whose first, and often second and third languages are not English. People are reticent to engage in processes where they feel their competency with English will be interpreted as reflective of their knowledge or intelligence. Therefore, to evaluate learning we used worksheet tools that aimed to be friendly to those with English as a second language: clear to look at and easy to talk about with others, in any language.

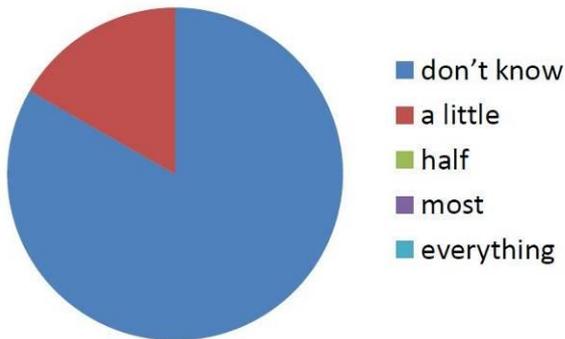
Working in a group, people talked about what the questions on the worksheets might be asking. The worksheets also fed into talking about other things that were important to people. The worksheets were designed like a survey instrument, with some multiple choice and some qualitative answers. The questions were presented in English, with graphics, as they would be in a community survey instrument. Conducting the learning evaluation this way provided the opportunity to talk about both the *content* and the *method* of the evaluation. The worksheets were discussed and clarified in Western Arrarnta, as researchers proceeded through the questions.

The results of the learning evaluation are included here not as a quantitative measure of learning in the group, but as a visual guide and report back to the Community Researchers about the results of their learning evaluations across both teams from Ntaria and Amata, and about how these results can be presented.

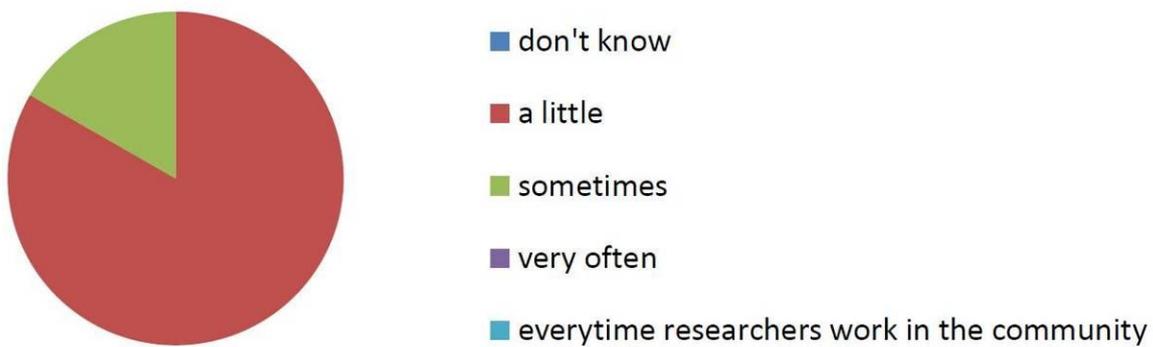
The two worksheets were given to all of the Ntaria researchers present at the Yulara workshop, and to the Amata researchers present. The first worksheet was reflective of how people felt when they began their employment, and the second, given out the next day, was asking about how people identified their learning since beginning employment.

Learning Evaluation Worksheet One

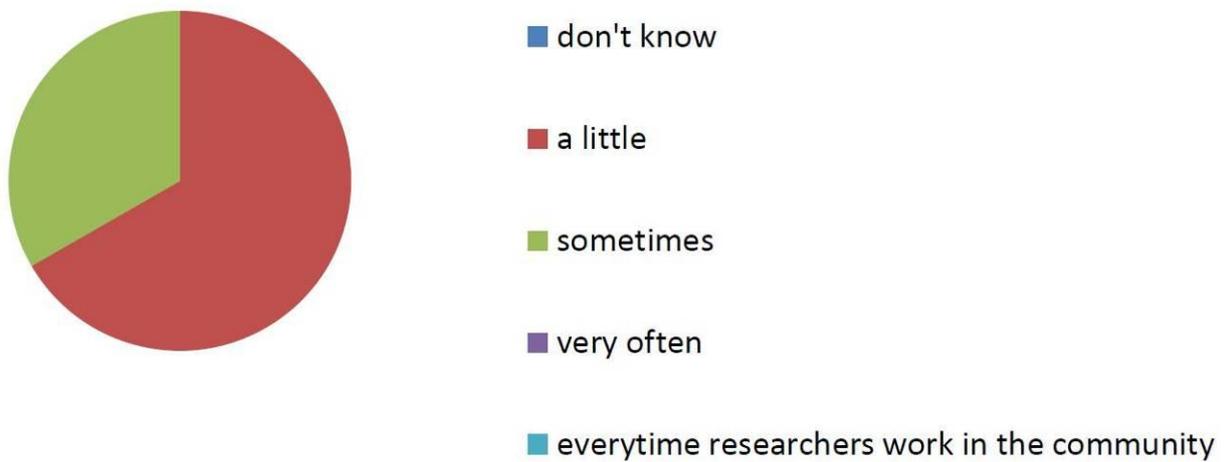
Question 1: I knew about being a researcher before I started work on this job



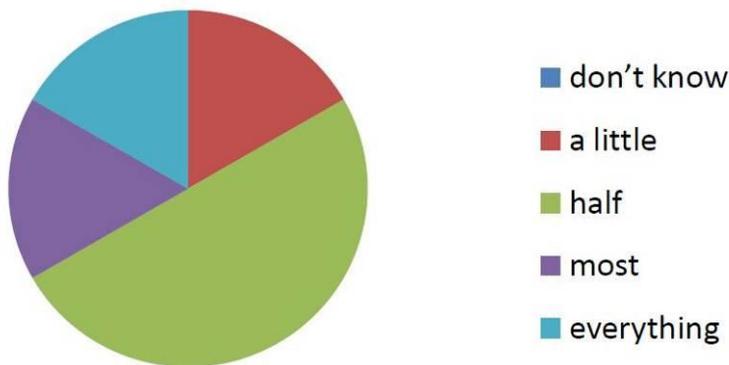
Question 2: Before this I have worked with researchers as a consultant, respondent, or other



Question 3: I have worked as a researcher or a co-researcher before



Question 4: I know I have good skills to share in a community researchers' team



The next set of questions were more qualitative in nature and required people to write responses to open-ended questions. Questions 5–7 concentrated on job-readiness, life skills or personal development and skills relating to the profession of researcher. This was an observation we made as a research group when reflecting on the responses of each individual.

We have added them here as thematic headings to the tables of answers below. Each answer given by all the researchers has been listed under a group heading and incorporated into the tables below.

Question 5: I think my best skills for working in a team are:

Job-specific Learning	Professional Development	Personal Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewing • getting more information • taking photos • using language • Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meeting other researchers from another place • learning how others work in their community • travelling together using interviewing and language skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share things • interest in learning • listening • helping

Question 6: Other work I still do, or have done is:

Life Experience	Professional Experience	Job-ready Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being a parent • listening to kids • job helping kids • being a family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school teaching • teacher assistant • director of Aboriginal organisation • public officer of Aboriginal organisation • working with groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drivers licence • language skills • interest in learning • ability to focus on tasks

Question 7: The most useful things I have learnt so far are:

Job Specific Learning	Professional Development	Personal Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing surveys • interviewing • listening • talking to local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doing research at the community • being a researcher • doing research with a group of researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interested in learning and working at Ntaria

Summary of Learning Evaluation Worksheet One responses

Questions 1–4 indicate that many of the community researchers employed in this project had little or no idea about what ‘research’ in a broad sense meant when they began work on the project; although most had had some experience with outsider research in their communities.

Many had at some time been a respondent or an informant, but the community researchers in this project had not previously been involved in the wider domain of research: in planning, designing, applying or steering research.

Despite this lack of hands-on experience the community researchers all identified good skills they brought to a research team environment.

Questions 5–7 indicate that personal development, job-related skills and life experience were all adding to the researchers’ ability. In their own words, the researchers described essential features of their work and were aware of how these are used.

3.4.2.1 Implications for skills development and employment from Worksheet One

The following observations are drawn from large group discussions based on Learning Evaluation Worksheet One.

Strongly positive

- The team represented good knowledge of community boundaries, kin and skin relationships, gender relation to jobs and power, bilingual communication, and deeply felt issues and undercurrents affecting service delivery and safety at Ntaria.

Could benefit from strengthening

- The capacity for steering research could be made stronger with more access to elders and other decision makers
- More men on the research team would bring added strength to the work.

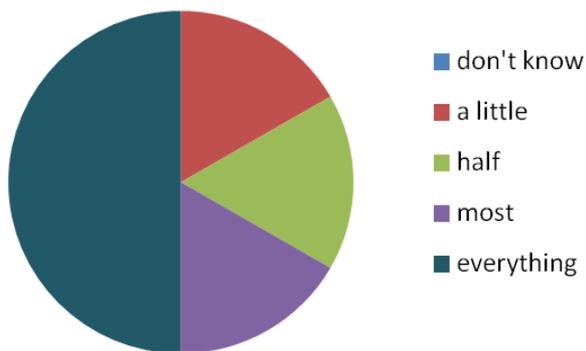
Areas of deficit

- Community researchers’ capacity to work vs. dealing with unforeseen life issues
- Access to transport for getting to work
- Skills and ability to access and use technology
- Conflicting priorities and responsibilities to other roles in organisations in the community
- The workplace environment
- Other agency support to extend learning and training opportunities outside employment.

Learning Evaluation Worksheet Two

The second worksheet was designed for researchers who had undertaken a cycle of research, or who had undertaken several weeks' work on an action cycle. It showed us how the process of applied research acts as useful learning for people, and how researchers describe skills they learn and share.

Question 1: I understand what Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery research project with Ninti One is:



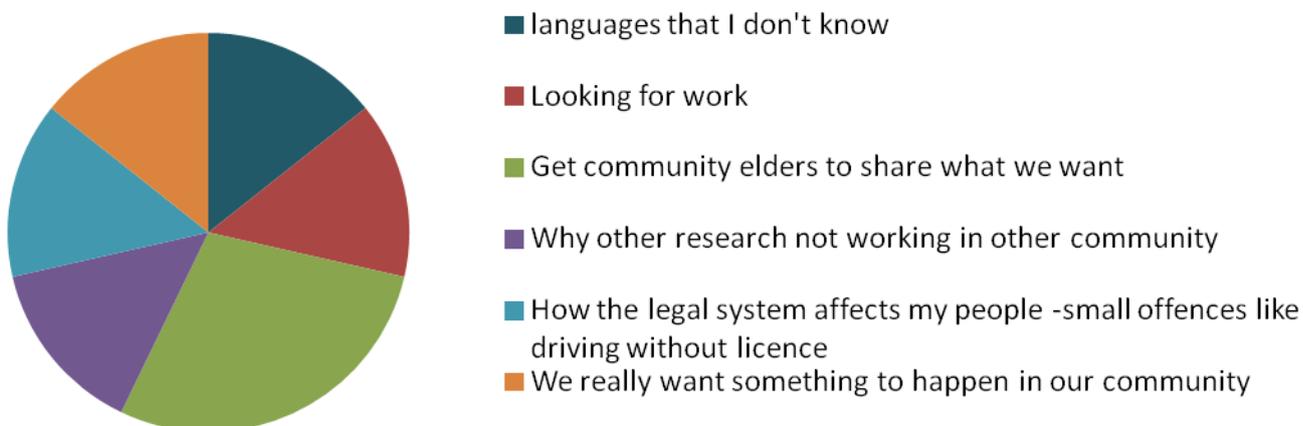
Question 2: Doing all of the research cycles gives me a chance to:



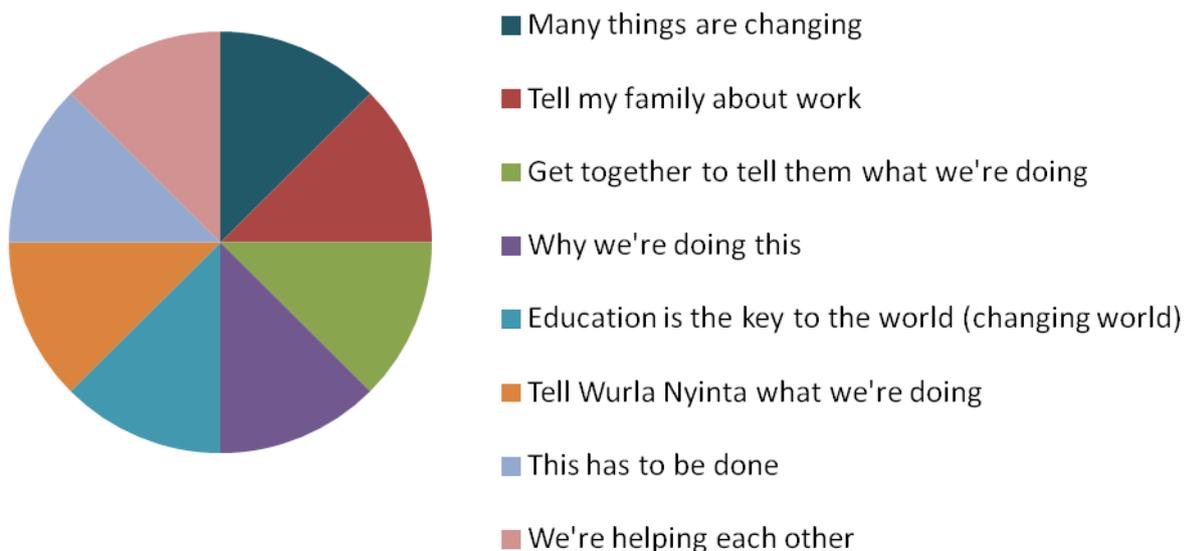
Other comments were added when the researchers discussed the worksheet results as a group:

Keep things on track, like keeping our information safe	1
Being strong at the community, in small conferences, around our people	1
Being confident	1
Sharing with each other	3
Communicating with others	2
Brainstorming	1
No answer as I haven't done one	1

Question 3: What I most want to find out more about is:



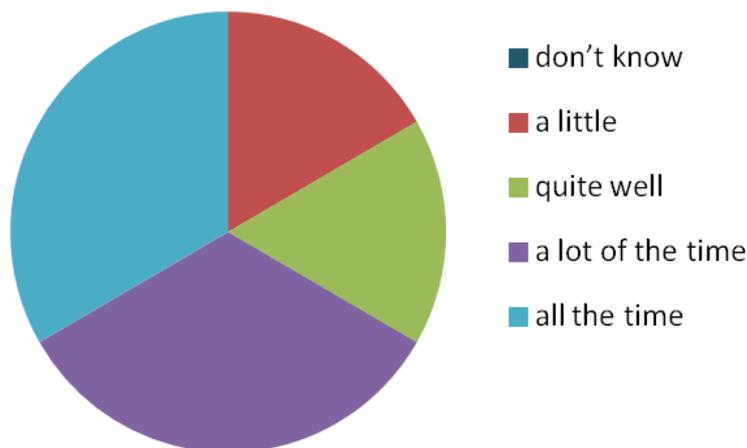
Question 4: What I most want to tell others is:



Question 5: The most useful things I have learnt so far are:



Question 6: I feel I am satisfied as a team with Ninti One:



Summary of Learning Evaluation Worksheet Two responses

This worksheet reflects that community researchers had:

- Gained an understanding of the cycles of research
- Identified learning from the experience of 'doing' research cycle 1
- Found group work and working with other community researchers useful for individual learning
- Ability to both teach and learn within the group
- A desire to influence the 'bigger picture' for community service delivery outcomes
- Ability to link the research activity to beneficial community outcomes

3.4.2.2 Implications for skills development and employment from Worksheet Two

The following observations are drawn from large group discussions based on Learning Evaluation Worksheet Two.

Strongly positive

- People were learning new things, and felt confident about applying this to their work
- There was a reasonably strong team dynamic supporting the work and learning
- People were extending their experiences and ways of thinking about work
- The team was achieving benchmarks such as completing first action cycle and planning second action cycle

Could benefit from strengthening

- More two-way communication with the wider community
- Communication with community leaders and decision makers about the research findings
- Communication with family and wider community about the potential benefits for people from employment, changes occurring in the community in relation to remote service delivery and a sense of new potential

Areas of deficit

- Maintaining a team learning environment when people are leaving and joining the team frequently is challenging for everyone
- Developing professional practice and work-ready skills without access to a suitable workplace environment is challenging
- Working independent of the Senior Researcher being on-site is not occurring very frequently
- Lack of access to transport, driving licences and other means of moving around the community are limiting independence of researchers and scope of independent or sub-group work
- Lack of suitable office.

3.4.2.3 Conclusions from evaluation of learning

There was clear evidence of skills and knowledge sharing, new learning and professional employment practices by the team. Monitoring and evaluating skills and learning is a process that researchers found helps them focus on what they have achieved.

3.4.3 Hamilton Downs Workshop

Following the success of previous research workshops, we decided to organise an additional workshop to bring together researchers from Ntaria, Yuendumu, Amata and Mimili, where Ninti One had been working on similar community-based research initiatives with people from the respective communities. The Hamilton Downs workshop enabled an exchange of knowledge and experience between participants and further evaluation of the work to date.

3.4.3.1 Skills development review at the Hamilton Downs workshop, June 2011

The Ntaria team undertook a research review workshop at Hamilton Downs, joining Yuendumu community researchers. Professional development through reflective evaluation engaged each researcher in a review of learning through scenario and role play. The focus was education, specifically school attendance. The workshop was attended by four Ntaria community researchers and the project cultural mentor.

Led by Ninti One Senior Research team, the group undertook a review of their learning related to the process of developing and applying a cycle of PAR:

- Discuss ethical practice, review key points
- Develop a research cycle
- Identify an idea
- Workshop the idea and review the options (school attendance)
- Narrow the options down to develop one question
- Identify the researcher's position (multiple roles as community member, leader, researcher)
- Define who or what the research is for
- Frame the questions to be used in the research
- Identify qualitative and quantitative aspects
- Design a survey tool.

Once the review and role-play topic of 'school attendance' was chosen, the researchers proceeded to:

- Use the survey tool to interview each other
- Collate the data
- Discuss the results, identify trends
- Reflect on the quality of the questions and data
- Review and change the questions.

The researchers reviewed common research terminology such as:

- Ethics
- Data
- Quantitative and qualitative
- Data collection
- Methodology.

The researchers discussed terminology across languages, comparing concepts, meaning and translations. They demonstrated sound understanding of the process and application of a research cycle. They were able to engage in discussion about ethics, with the special insight and skills of a bilingual team, across terminology and researchers' position. They demonstrated capacity to use their prior experience of research to work confidently across PAR cycles.

3.4.4 Development of further skills and individual assessment

Other opportunities for skills development occurred, including:

- Presentation at the *Australasian Evaluation Society Conference*, in Sydney
- *MacDonnell Shire Council Ntaria Child Care* data collection
- Mentoring of a new researcher for the Wurla Nyinta Community Perception survey
- Regular updates on the project at Wurla Nyinta meetings
- *Local Cultural Awareness Program (LCAP)* evaluation applied at the request of the Ntaria hosts
- Initial consultations with Alyawarr community researchers regarding the CRC-REP Plant Business project
- Presentation at the Futures Forum at Ntaria.

The presentation at the Sydney Conference is summarised in Appendix 3. Descriptions of three of the other activities listed above are provided here:

Data collection survey

Ninti One agreed to undertake a survey about community use and quality of the crèche and give the data to MacDonnell Shire fee-free as a skills assessment. Mark Inkamala interviewed the local childcare provider, a MacDonnell Shire employee, about her request for a childcare survey. With the information Mark obtained, Anna Marie Armstrong designed and wrote a survey, which was loaded onto the computer tablets. The survey collected

data from a relatively small population sample, as time and budget did not permit administration of an extra survey across 20% of the demographic. As a training exercise it demonstrated the depth of familiarity required to work with a client to obtain a research scope, then to write and administer a service-based survey, then to provide data back to the client.

Mentoring

Anna Marie Armstrong mentored one new researcher, teaching how to conduct and then supervising some of the data collection for the second research topic in this project, the Wurla Nyinta Community Perception survey. The new researcher was then able to assist in writing the survey and collecting the data for the childcare survey.

Wurla Nyinta reporting

Ada Lechleitner and Mark Inkamala delivered oral reports to Wurla Nyinta on the progress, findings and recommendations of the research each time the reference group met. Through this forum Ninti One was asked to provide a scope and a quote for a community-based assessment of the first LCAP at Ntaria, funded by FaHCSIA. Ada, Mark, Anna Marie, Rachel and Dion all participated in the LCAP evaluation. The final report for the evaluation was submitted in March 2012.

The LCAP provided an opportunity to do an evaluation. This extended the skills of the research team, who experienced another way of influencing how remote service delivery is managed and monitored by the community at Ntaria.

4. Participatory Action Research cycles

4.1 Methods

The methods used for the research are described in detail in section 2.2.1. of this report. They followed a cyclical process that began with identifying the topic then doing a survey using questions designed to explore the key issues and gather relevant information. This was the first cycle. Reflection on the results of the survey enabled a second cycle to be designed to collect further data on specific aspects of the subject. Methods used were therefore a questionnaire-based survey for the first cycle and focus groups for the second cycle.

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ninti One Community Researchers 	<p>LIP recommendation for Social worker to help families get children to school.</p> <p>Researchers to investigate whether this job is better done by local people. If so, What training would be appropriate for the employee to be undertaking?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving school attendance; Increasing number of local people employed in professional and management roles
---	---	---	---

4.2 Ethics, protocols and consent

For this project Ninti One applied for clearance from the Central Australian Human Research Ethics committee (CAHREC).⁴ This permission from CAHREC meant that Ninti One and all the researchers it employed agreed to follow rules to make sure their work, their behaviour and their methods were *ethical*.

Additionally, Ninti One introduced community researchers, as part of their employment induction, to ethical practices underpinned in the publication *Aboriginal Knowledge and Intellectual Property Protocol Community Guide* produced by Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC) and Waltja Tjutangkku Palyapayi (Orr et al. 2009).

4.3 Research project on vehicle safety: Research Cycle 1

In order to identify the research topic for Research Cycle One we identified the information in the LIP which related to Wurla Nyinta taking a lead role to achieve a Community Action outcome, then triangulated it with the Ntaria Baseline Mapping information pertaining to those same areas, and the response of researchers, the cultural advisor and others to the ways research might be useful, important and relevant to informing the work of Wurla Nyinta in making decisions for the community. This led us to identify and discuss several options.

4.3.1 Research subject

Issues related to use of vehicles, driver disqualification, drink driving and driver training in the community emerged as the most important and relevant to the interests of the research team. The idea of a safe driving survey tested positively with others such as health, education, police and employment officers.

This topic is relevant to a number of COAG targets: Health, Economic Participation, Safe Communities, Governance and Leadership. The LIP includes Safe Driving as an intended outcome (Commonwealth of Australia 2010) in the current agreement signed on 2 March 2010:

⁴ See Ethics application - Intellectual property (Ntaria and Yuendumu), email to FaHCSIA Wed 2/02/2011 3:51 PM

- ***Less people die on the roads. In-community road safety driver training programs are provided. Ntaria community members learn safe driving practices, access driver training and acquire drivers' licences.***

Safe Driving is written into the LIP as a Community Action, in which Wurla Nyinta and the broader community are expected to take a lead role. Building the research around this provides leverage for Wurla Nyinta to engage service delivery to support programs for Ntaria that will assist in achieving this action.

The survey instrument for Safe Driving was developed and delivered to 20% of the demographic, against age groups ranging from 18 to 60. The exclusion of data from older people was made at the direction of the community researchers who indicated that very few people aged over 60 drive. The results of this survey are shown as **Action Research Cycle One: A Safe Driving Survey at Ntaria.**



Roslyn Raberrabera doing the Safe Driving at Ntaria Survey with local residents

4.3.2 Participatory Action Research design

In this project with Ntaria, Ninti One researchers developed the following PAR method that includes four primary steps, each one requiring specific actions.

1. Discuss, consult

This step involves thinking within the parameters of the research contract and asking open questions help to 'find' the potential research focus:

- What is the client asking for?
- Who are the other stakeholders and which of their opinions are important?
- What can literature or evidence from other studies tell us that helps?

- What ‘gaps’ in knowledge are there?
- What kind of research method would be best to achieve the outcome required?

2. Plan, prepare

- Craft the research question/s
- Design the participant information about who commissioned the research, who is undertaking it, who the researchers are.
- Draft Informed Consent to include the ethical and privacy statement, permission to record audio or take photos and a no-obligation statement for participants’ choice to be involved.
- Prepare the work plan for applying the research instrument: who will do what, where, when, how?

3. Do it

- Administer the informed consent and research instrument to participants
- Monitor the process so that it remains exactly the same with each application of the instrument
- Keep tally of demography and other important goals
- Regularly discuss in the team how it’s going, what it’s like, what’s working well, what’s hard, etc.

4. Review, reflect

- Collate the research data
- Extract the trends and findings
- Make some analysis of what the research indicates
- Report the findings back to Wurla Nyinta
- Critically review the process, language, questions, and other operational aspects to extract learning and best practice guidelines for the next cycle.

4.3.3 Research instrument

The decision to use a survey instrument emerged from looking at various examples of research that involved how numerical data can tell a research story.

Because there are many survey instruments applied to Aboriginal communities, this was also an opportunity to engage differently with the experience of being a respondent.

Most importantly, it provided an opportunity to rethink how a survey could be phrased so that people with English as a second language could better understand it. Then the researchers used their multilingual skills and translated the questions from simple English into Arrarnta.

The final survey instrument evolved from several workshops, practices and re-writes. The instrument was applied to a demographic that represented 20% of the target age range of 18–60 year olds, based on Census data from 2006.

Ntaria Driving Survey: age groups			
Age	Target to survey (=20% of Ntaria population as at Census 2006)	Actual numbers surveyed	Variance
18–25	28	29	1
26–30	17	15	-2
31–35	16	18	2
36–45	22	23	1
46–60	20	18	-2
Total	103	103	



Ada Lechleitner surveying staff at the Ntaria Safe house

4.3.4 Research method

The surveys were undertaken over two weeks, with a revisit in the third week to pick up a number of the target groups where shortfall emerged after collation was complete.

We made the following observations about the interactions between researchers and respondents:

- Community researchers elicited honest responses to questions that might otherwise not have been attempted – such as driving and drinking
- The respondents were positive about participating; at one stage they were lining up around the vehicle to have a turn at the survey
- Once the researchers explained in plain language what the research was to contribute to the LIP and how that might happen everyone agreed to participate, including unlicensed drivers.

Collating the surveys was challenging. Paper surveys and collation sheets were checked and re-checked, and one highlight was mastering the formula to create percentages from numbers. The calculators were easy to use, but the literacy and numeracy levels used to calculate and collate by hand restricted the number of researchers actively engaged in this process.

Those who had been involved in the process of development and delivery were best able to ‘make sense’ of the maths. Those who came into the process at a later point really struggled to get the concept until the results gave evidence.

The research results indicate some clear trends in findings. These were identified and the researchers were able to unpack them further in regard to developing a second cycle of work using different methods.

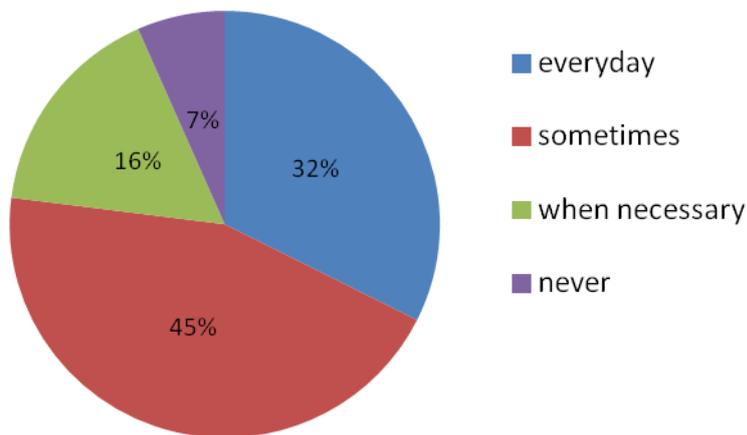
Making meaning from the data results was not difficult; the stages of the process were all achieved following an action research plan. The plan was brainstormed so people were as prepared as possible about working in a new way with each step. Reinforcing what was undertaken, and what was occurring at each step, added capacity for researchers to explain the work and its intentions.

Gauging the degree to which the community researchers have interpreted the meaning of the data in relation to being 'insider researchers', or whether this new way of looking at the issue affects daily life is outside the scope of this work at this time.

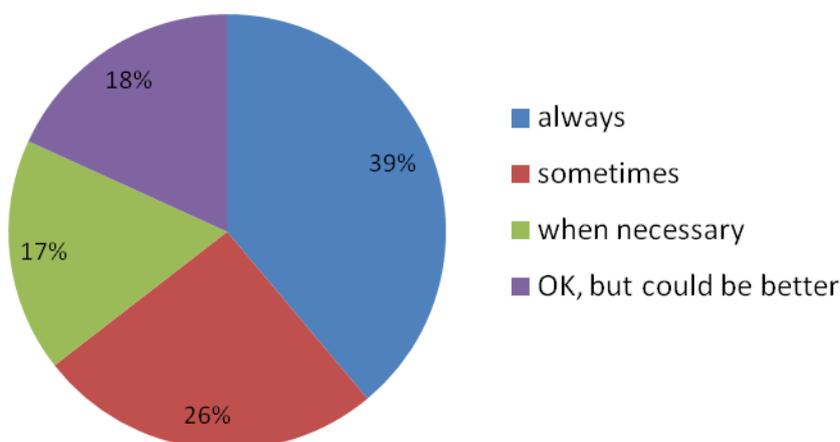
This is something which might be learnt from the research team during another monitoring and evaluation, but to some degree it is a perspective that could only be reliably tested over a long period of time.

4.3.5 Results of Action Research Cycle One: A Safe Driving Survey at Ntaria

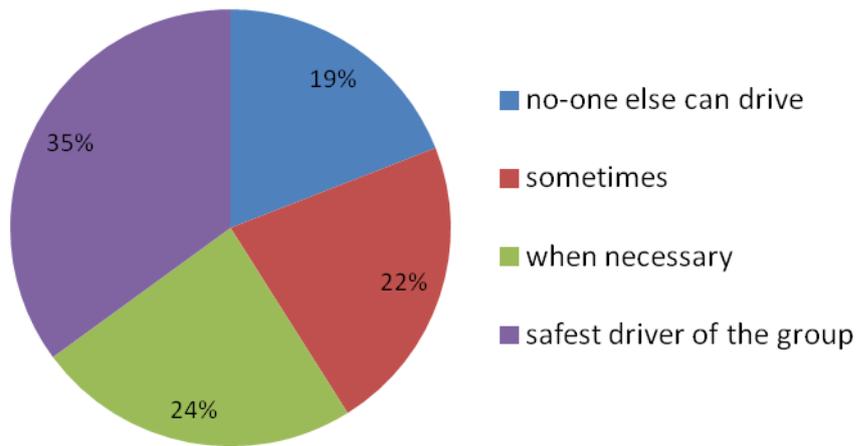
Question 1: How Often Do You Drive A Car?



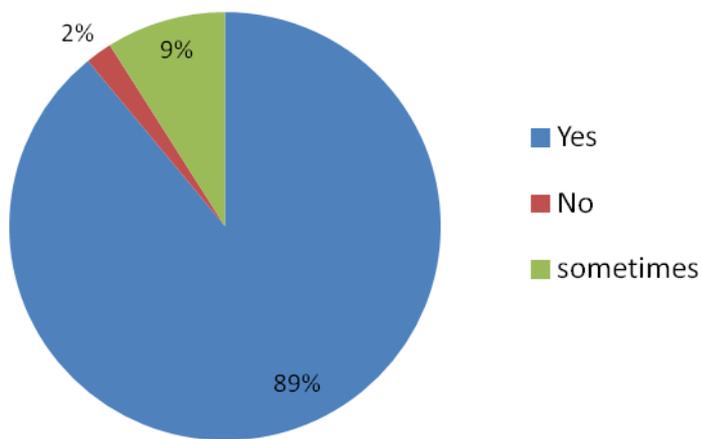
Question 2: Do You Think You Are A Safe Driver?



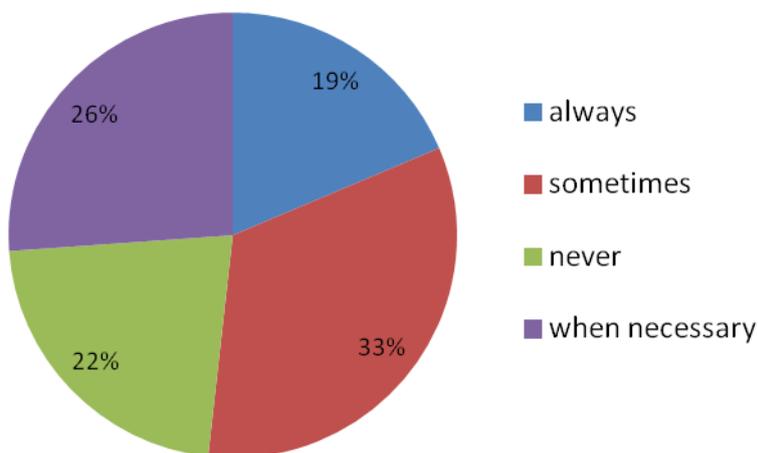
Question 3: Would You Drive Unsafe Because ...



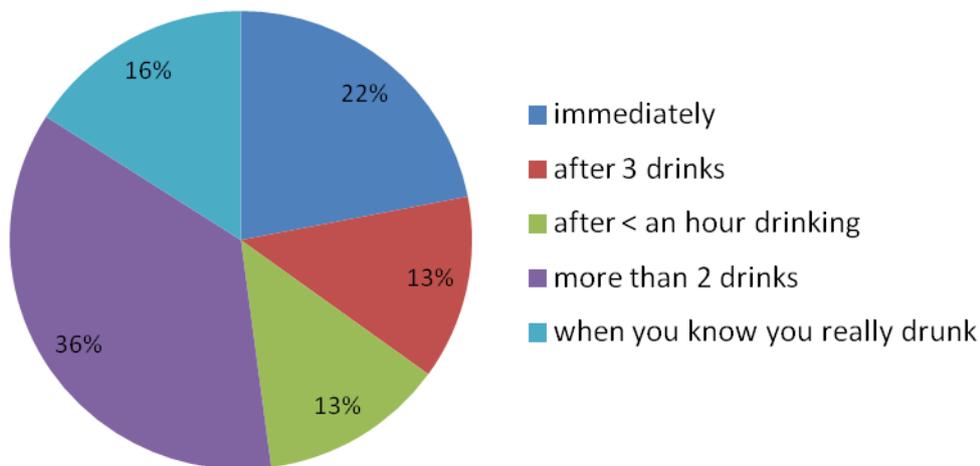
Question 4: You Do Safety Checks On Your Car



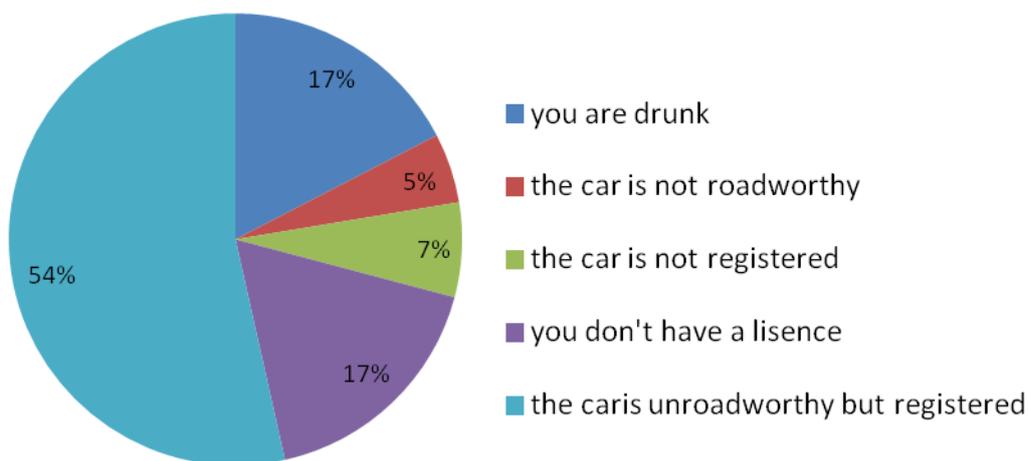
Question 5: How Often Do You Drive When It's Not Safe?



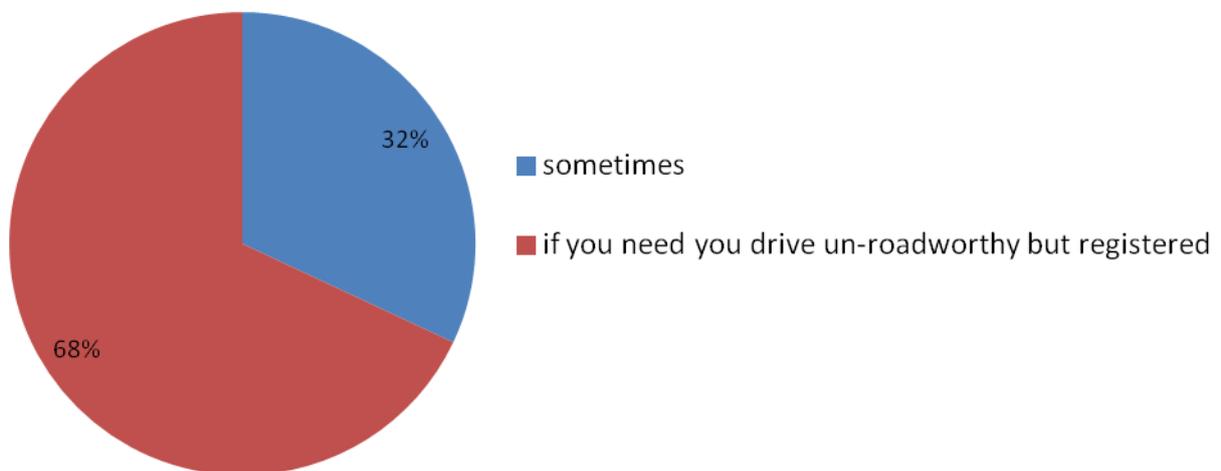
Question 6: When Does Alcohol Affect How You Drive?



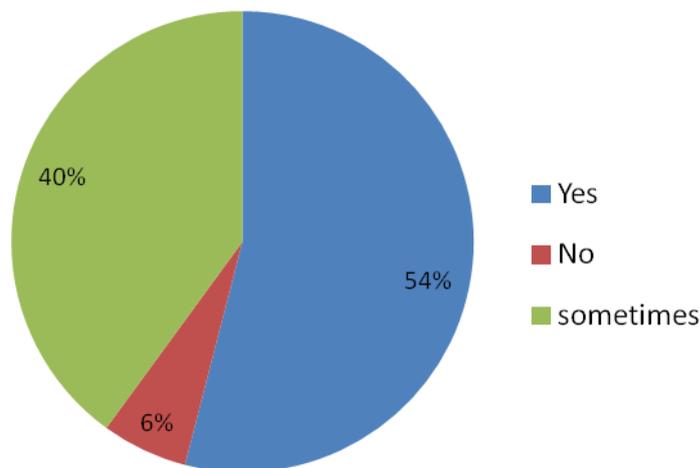
Question 7: Do You Ever Drive When ...



Question 8: How Safe Is The Car You Drive?



Question 9: The Car You Drive Is Always Roadworthy?



The survey results provided a profile snapshot of Ntaria residents' attitudes to aspects of driving and road safety. Cars play a significant part in the daily life of many Ntaria residents, whether they drive or not. Cars represent the only access to various homelands around Ntaria, for movement around the community itself – including to shop, health centres, friends, or work place – or to Alice Springs for regional services not available locally. Complex negotiations occur in relation to driving or being a passenger in a car and significant time is spent getting cars running for these purposes and to attend other less frequent events such as sports weekends in regional communities, sports, recreational and social events in town, funerals and other significant meetings.

The survey showed that 23% of respondents seldom or never drive. Of those who do drive, 35% felt they could drive more safely than they always do. Everybody surveyed reported that they would drive unsafely in certain circumstances (see below), although 22% do not drive unsafe otherwise. A large majority (89%) undertake regular safety checks on their vehicles.

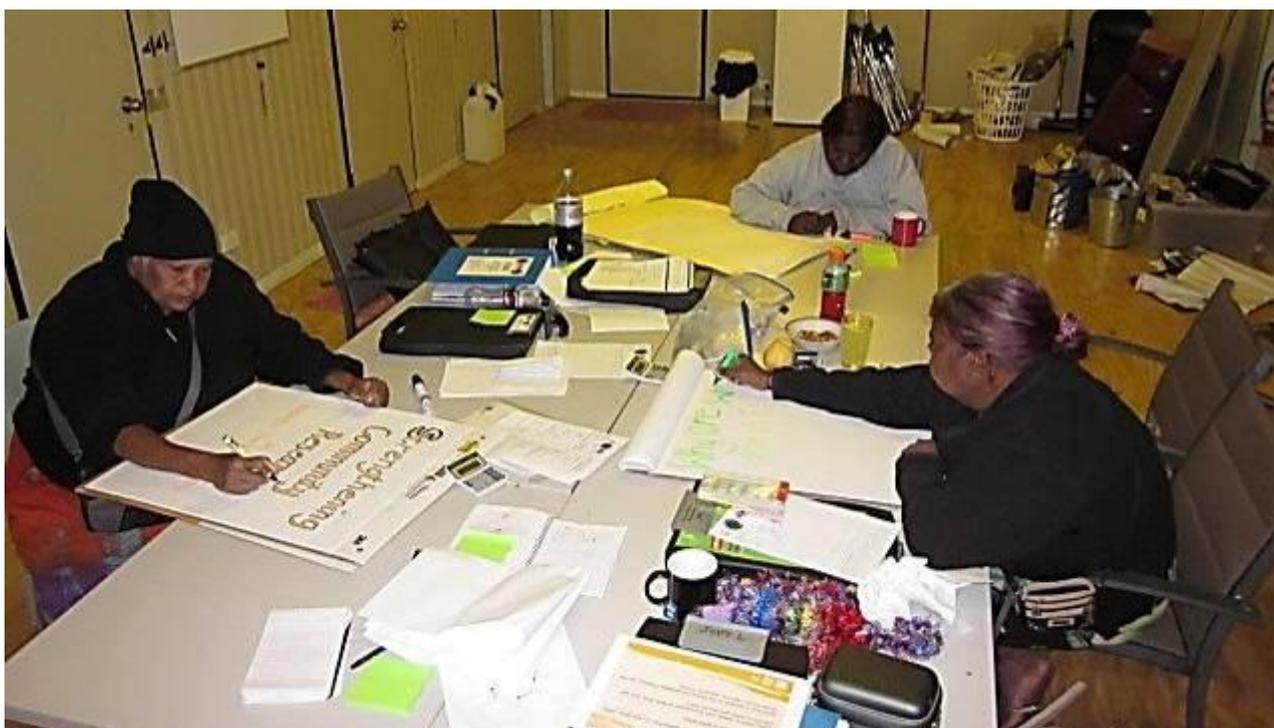
The study indicated a willingness of residents to drive unsafe vehicles in certain circumstances. It showed that 52% of respondents would sometimes or always drive when conditions are unsafe and 24% of respondents acknowledged that they would drive unsafe when necessary; this includes in response to a family emergency or perceived crisis, to attend an important meeting or treatment, or in the event of risk or perceived risk to personal safety.

The road from Ntaria to Alice Springs is bitumen sealed, and, although subject to a speed limit of 110 kmph, it is frequently travelled at higher speeds by all road users (Hermannsburg Police, pers. comm.). Two significant accidents affecting Ntaria have occurred on this road in the last five years, claiming a total of eight lives.

The Aboriginal Land Trust is prescribed as a no alcohol zone, and the boundary of the land trust is 50 kms from the community. At times the boundary is a popular place for enjoying alcohol, but it presents a real problem for driving safely. Buses and cars are not available to transport people where they might need to go.

Just over half of respondents (58%) understood that alcohol affects driving after two drinks or immediately, where 42% felt alcohol only affected their driving when they had had more than three drinks, or had drunk for more than two hours, or that they were only affected when they felt really drunk.

Results indicated that roadworthiness was considered a benchmark of sorts related to vehicle safety, but registration is considered a benchmark for legal driving. From survey responses it was clear that over half of the respondents understood that the condition of a vehicle might be below a roadworthy standard, but did not necessarily consider that a barrier to use of the vehicle.



Ada Lechleitner, Judith Henderson and Anna Marie Armstrong working in the office to prepare for Wurla Nyinta reporting session

4.3.6 Safe Driving Survey Findings

Trends that emerged from the survey include:

- 61% of the survey respondents felt their driving was sometimes less than safe
- 78% of people will drive when it is unsafe
- 46% of people felt the car they drive is not always roadworthy
- 89% of people do safety checks on their cars.

Survey respondents' comments in the Other Comments section of the survey suggested support for:

- access to more driver training at Ntaria
- alcohol driving courses for everyone from the start of their driving careers
- a driving school at Ntaria.

These trends need to be considered in light of several facts:

- There is no mechanical workshop, tyre repair station or access to vehicle tools and equipment at Ntaria.
- The closest place to go for repairs and maintenance is Alice Springs, 130 kms of sealed road away.
- Remote communities have a history of innovative bush mechanics. The skills are passed between younger people from elders, brothers, cousins, uncles and dads, and is a particularly strong aspect of male culture.
- The choice to drive a vehicle unsafe, or make repairs at the expense of aspects of safety – for example, cutting seatbelts out to make strong tow rope – is a matter of daily life.
- There is no public transport around the community or outstations and no public bus service to Alice Springs.

- In the case of medical emergency people can be required to transport the patient long distances or short distances to the clinic, as the clinic is not equipped with a stand-by vehicle and has a vehicle on the road to Alice Springs on a daily basis.
- Driving instruction at Ntaria is via the police station. Until recent times the police station has been avoided at all costs.
- Police are available to give people learner driving tests when they are not out of the station on other business; therefore appointment times are not always kept.
- Requests for a local driving instructor have not been implemented; rather, the Shire runs training specific to its employees, and their specialist equipment.

From these trends some significant questions arose about how access to resources might create opportunity for better choices to be made relating to road safety. A second cycle of research was planned to incorporate focus groups and photo elicitation to closely examine what people do and how they try to maintain their vehicles for safe transport.

4.3.7 Recommendations from Action Cycle One

Community Researchers presented the survey findings to Wurla Nyinta on 2 June 2011 with the following recommendations:

- Investigating how a local driving school at Ntaria might be progressed
- The driver rehabilitation program delivered in Alice Springs be run at Ntaria
- Broad community discussion about the relationship between vehicle maintenance, driver attitudes and safe driving at Ntaria.

Wurla Nyinta supported the researchers' request to progress with a second cycle of research to gauge attitudes towards vehicle maintenance, driver attitudes and safe driving at the meeting.

According to the LIP, the recommendations for local driving school and delivery of driver rehabilitation training at Ntaria fall under the management of several agencies, so a coordinated delivery model is required if the future establishment of a local driving school is to be realised.

Strengthening Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria researchers decided to pursue this topic for a second cycle of research, as there was more to be explored in considering the results, the trends from those and the context of the environment in which people manage their mobility. In undertaking a second action cycle further recommendations would be put forward that might contribute to influencing service delivery.

Community researchers held two meetings with local police about the survey, its finding and the plan for the focus groups. One outcome was to request specific data from police that could contribute to the research team's knowledge and understanding of facts surrounding driving accidents and charges incurred by Ntaria residents. The police were very willing to contribute.

4.4 Research project on vehicle safety: Research Cycle 1.2

Research Team: Judy Lovell, Ada Lechleitner, Mark Inkamala, Anna Marie Armstrong, Roslyn Raberabera, Rachel Kantawara, Dion Dhamarrandyji



Roslyn Raberabera and Anna Marie Armstrong (right)



Mark Inkamala (left) runs focus group with Tjuwanpa Rangers



Backyard photograph for focus group

4.4.1 Data collection

This research cycle made use of two data collection methods – photo elicitation and focus groups – that worked together to provide a rich qualitative response to the guiding research questions. The researchers asked small groups of people to discuss photos in light of the findings of the Safe Driving Survey (above, and Lovell et al. 2011). The researchers facilitated the discussion to cover key points. The benefit of the method was the flow of conversation that represented layers of information from participants. The researchers guided the conversations by bringing the group back to the *focus* on the topic using the photos or the key questions as needed. The method records detail, allowing the depth of the thinking and differences of opinion in each group to be captured as audio recorded data. This is called a focus group.

In order to start the focus group with everyone looking closely at the same everyday scenes, the researchers took photographs around the community that illustrated the focus of the discussion. The photos were used with each group, accompanied by the questions: ‘What do you see in these photos?’ and ‘What’s going on here?’ This is called the photo elicitation method (Kolb 2008), and can be used in focus groups, with other clusters of informants or with individuals.

The vehicle safety focus groups were run during August and September 2011 in response to the Safe driving survey from May 2011, which questioned local people about their driving habits and concerns. From analysis of the surveys some findings were identified as subjects for further enquiry. The findings indicated important points:

1. People will drive, if they have no other options.
2. People want to drive safe vehicles.
3. People want driver education and training at Ntaria.

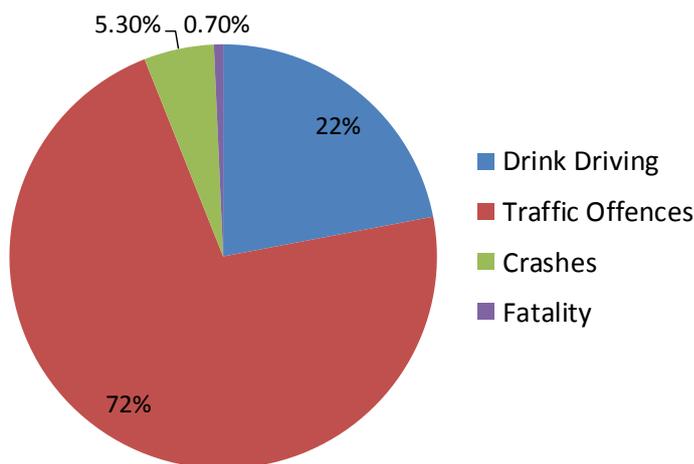
We learned that 45% of people surveyed suggested:

1. Driving education and training is needed at Ntaria.
2. Safe driving, driver fatigue, drink driving and license renewal programs are needed at Ntaria.
3. Young drivers need more training and skill development opportunities at Ntaria.

In light of these results we asked the Ntaria police if they would be able to give us information about the trend in vehicle-related offences and accidents in the financial year 2010–2011. We were given these statistics as ‘job’ reports. Each record of a job may include more than one offence and more than one offender, but those details are not recorded. The data from the Ntaria Police station should be read with this in mind.

Ntaria police local statistics regarding traffic offences July 2010 to June 2011

Traffic offences includes unlicensed, speeding, unregistered, uninsured, etc.	108 jobs
Drunk drivers	33 jobs
Crashes 4 uninjured, 1 injured, 1 disqualified, unregistered and driving under the influence (DUI) 2 were awaiting results at the time of these statistics	8 jobs
Fatality 2 passed away 1 seriously injured	1 job
The total number of traffic related charges involving Ntaria residents with workforce capacity for the period 1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011	150 jobs

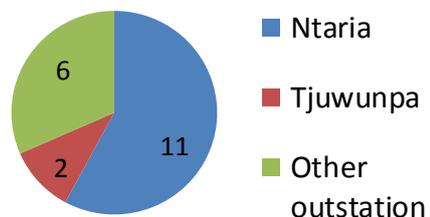
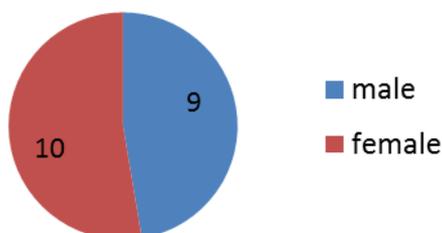


These Ntaria police statistics tell us that on the main highway within a 50 km radius of Ntaria, 72% of charges between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011 were related to preventable traffic offences.

This includes unregistered or unroadworthy vehicles, unlicensed, disqualified drivers, or unsafe driving (seat belt, speeding, etc.).

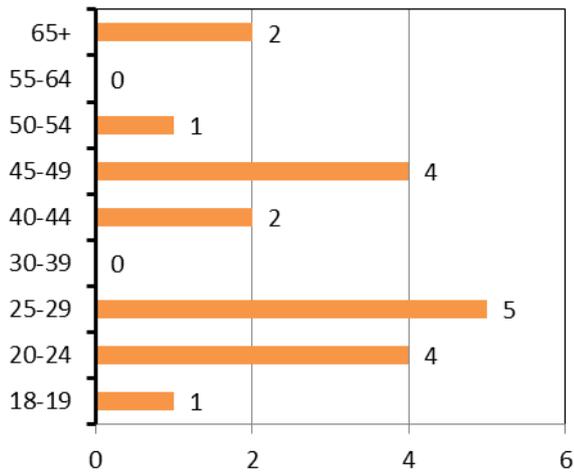
We used these statistics to generate discussion in the focus groups.

The charts below describe the demographic details of the 19 people who participated in the three focus groups held during August and September 2011.

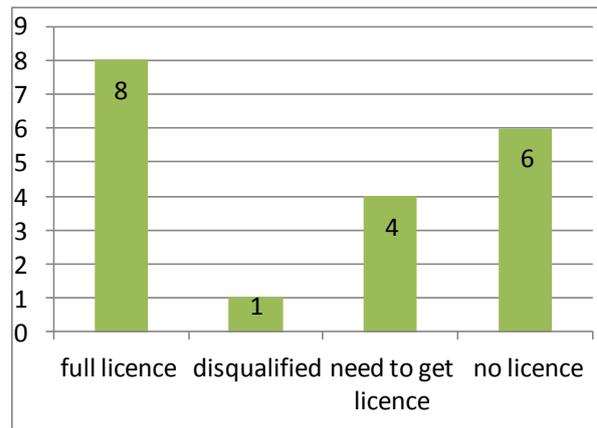


19 people participated in the discussion: 9 men and 10 women.

This chart shows us where those people live.



This chart indicated the age groups of people who participated in the focus groups



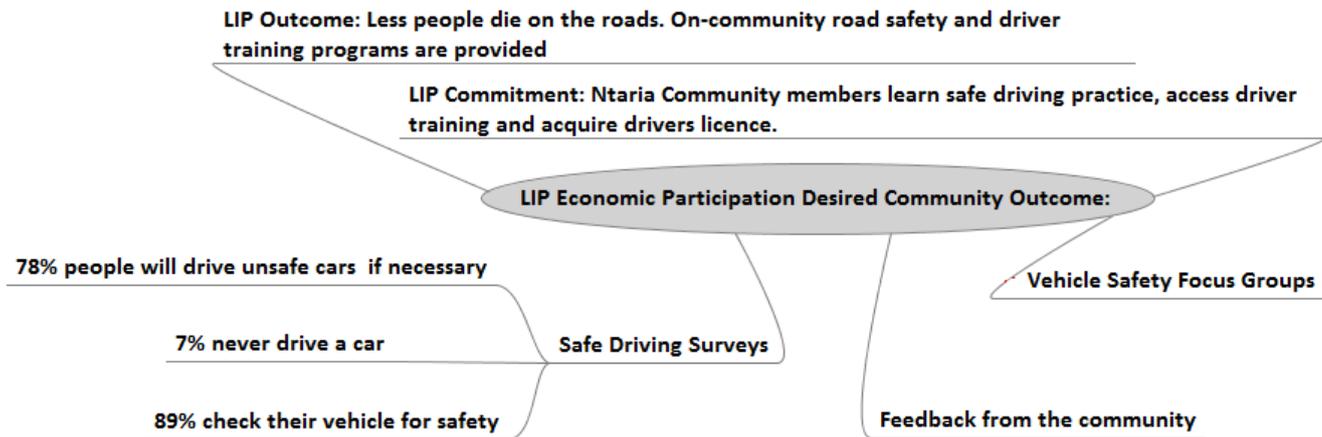
This graph shows us how many people in the focus group held a full licence, were disqualified, or needed to get a licence. The final column shows how many people had never held a licence.

These demographics describe the research participants in a way that is *quantitative*; that is, they use numbers to tell us how many, of what. The focus group data collected in this research is *qualitative*; that is, the researchers used conversations in Arrarnta to discuss a theme the researchers identified. The background information used in designing the research is the *quantitative* data from the Safe driving survey (Lovell et al. 2011) and the *visual data* made by the researchers for photo elicitation. A series of mind maps is used here to report the *themes* of conversation, as revealed by listening to the recordings of the focus group discussions.

4.4.2 Analysis of data

This section ‘unpacks’ each of the *action research cycle* steps by using mind-map diagrams. Mind-maps give us a visual way of working with a lot of different points. They each represent part of the structure of how the research was approached, what the researchers did, what the focus group participants told us and how we interpreted these results to write the recommendations. At the conclusion we set out the findings and recommendations the researchers will provide to Wurla Nyinta.

a) Overall FaHCSIA project: LIP Economic Participation Desired Community Outcome

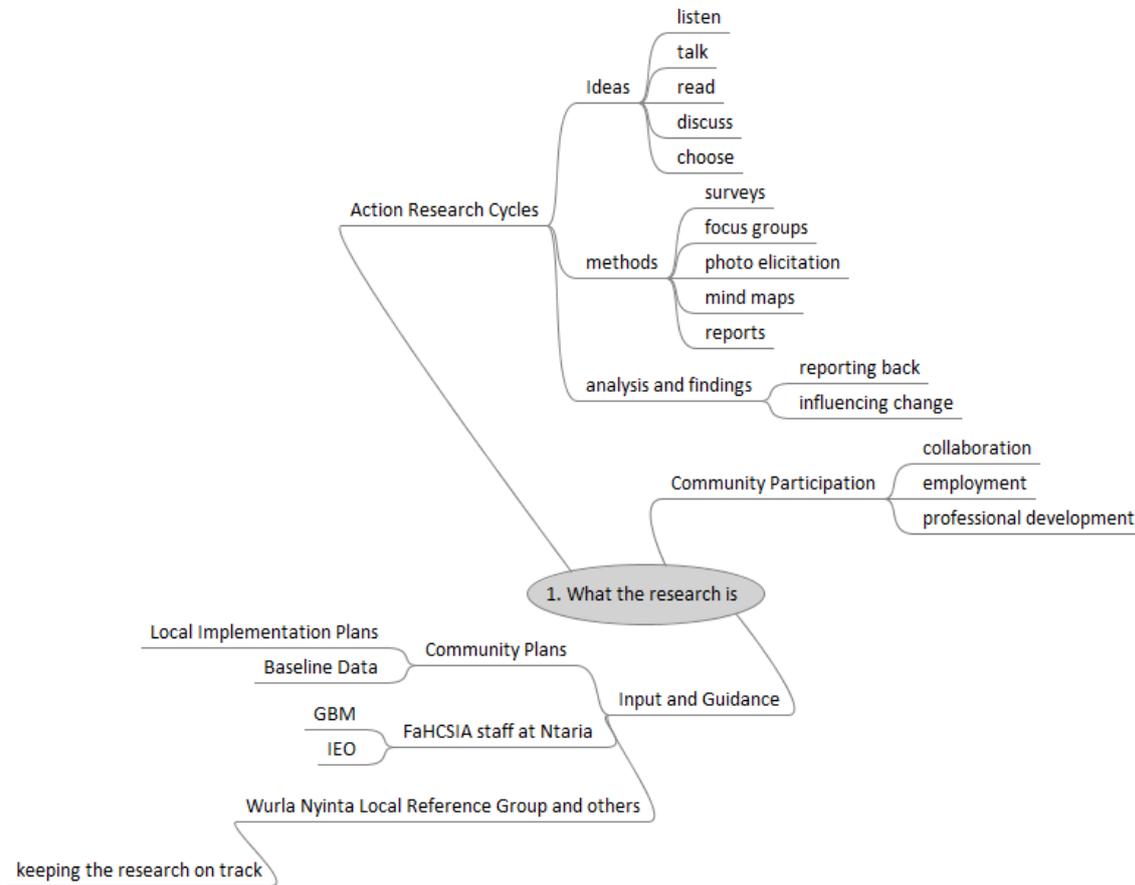


b) Overall project leads to Vehicle Safety Focus Groups – using the PAR model the researchers worked through these four steps:



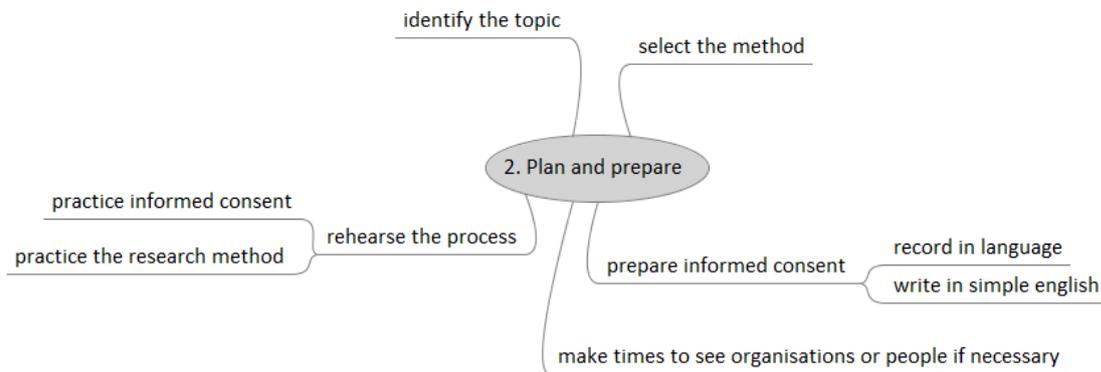
c) 1. What the research is

The benefit of PAR in this focus group inquiry into vehicle safety was that researchers regularly checked back with Wurla Nyinta about what the research was showing, what the gaps in collection might be and if or how the work could be adjusted to get the best outcomes.



The focus groups intended to discuss and understand with more detail how Ntaria people manage maintenance, repairs, preparation and safety when driving both locally and longer distance. The Safe Driving surveys indicated that people would drive unsafely *when necessary*. In response to these findings, the researchers wanted to establish *how* vehicle safety relates to making everyday plans and deciding where and when to travel. The researchers were interested in what choices, if any, residents could identify regarding their mobility, vehicle maintenance and services when living at Ntaria, Tjuwanpa or the related outstations.

c) 2. Plan and prepare

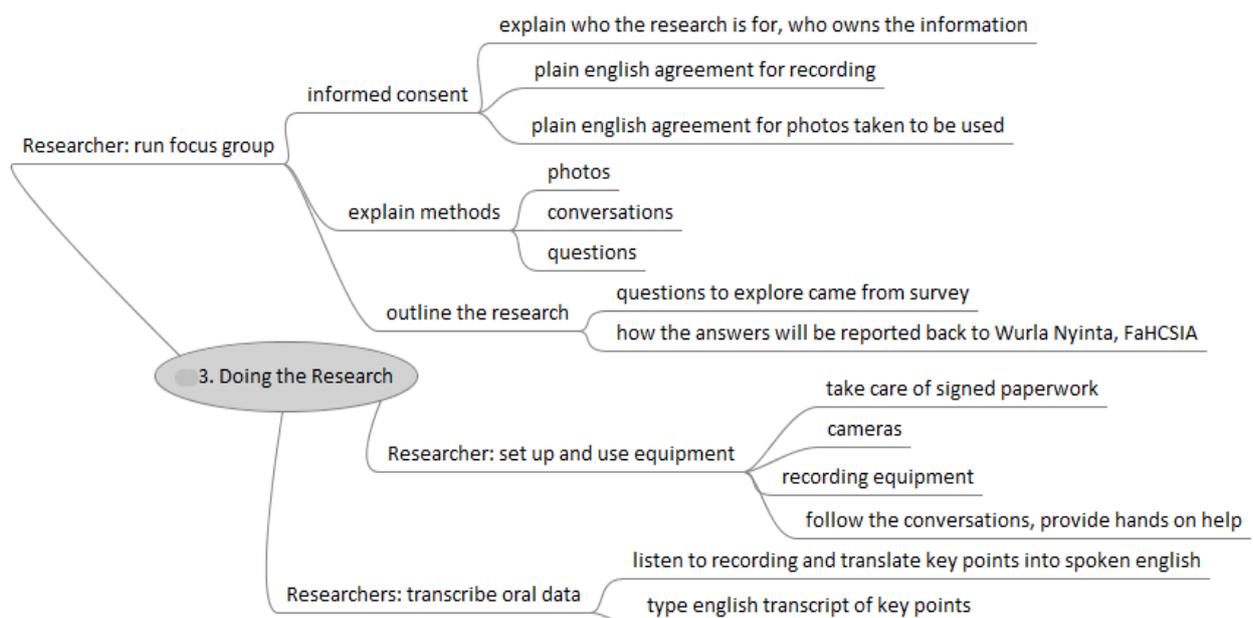


Informed consent is an important rule for researchers to follow. *Informed consent* is the tool that ensures that people participating in research make a free choice to do the research or not. Informed consent ensures that they know exactly who the research report is for; are certain the information they provide will be kept safe, private and protected; and know who to contact to raise any concerns they have. Informed consent requires the researchers to be very clear about the right of participants not to participate or to pull out of the research.

The Ntaria researchers wrote and recorded a Western Arrarnta version of the Plain English informed consent form to use when they were undertaking the research. These ‘scripts’ had to be rehearsed so that the researchers were confident about what to explain, and could carry through the same process over and over again with participants.

For this cycle of the research, focus group discussions and photo elicitation were selected as the methods to bring the topic to the groups. The community participants were asked to think about what the survey on safe driving found, and identify why it showed a large number of people travelling in unsafe vehicles.

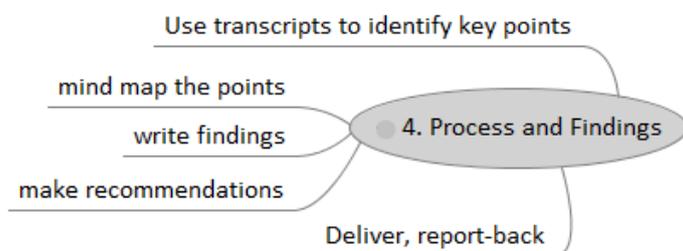
c) 3. Doing the research



The mind-map above shows the process of *doing* the focus groups, and how the data from them were made useful for analysis. The facilitation worked best with pairs or small teams of researchers working together. At this stage in the research cycle the researchers' jobs included:

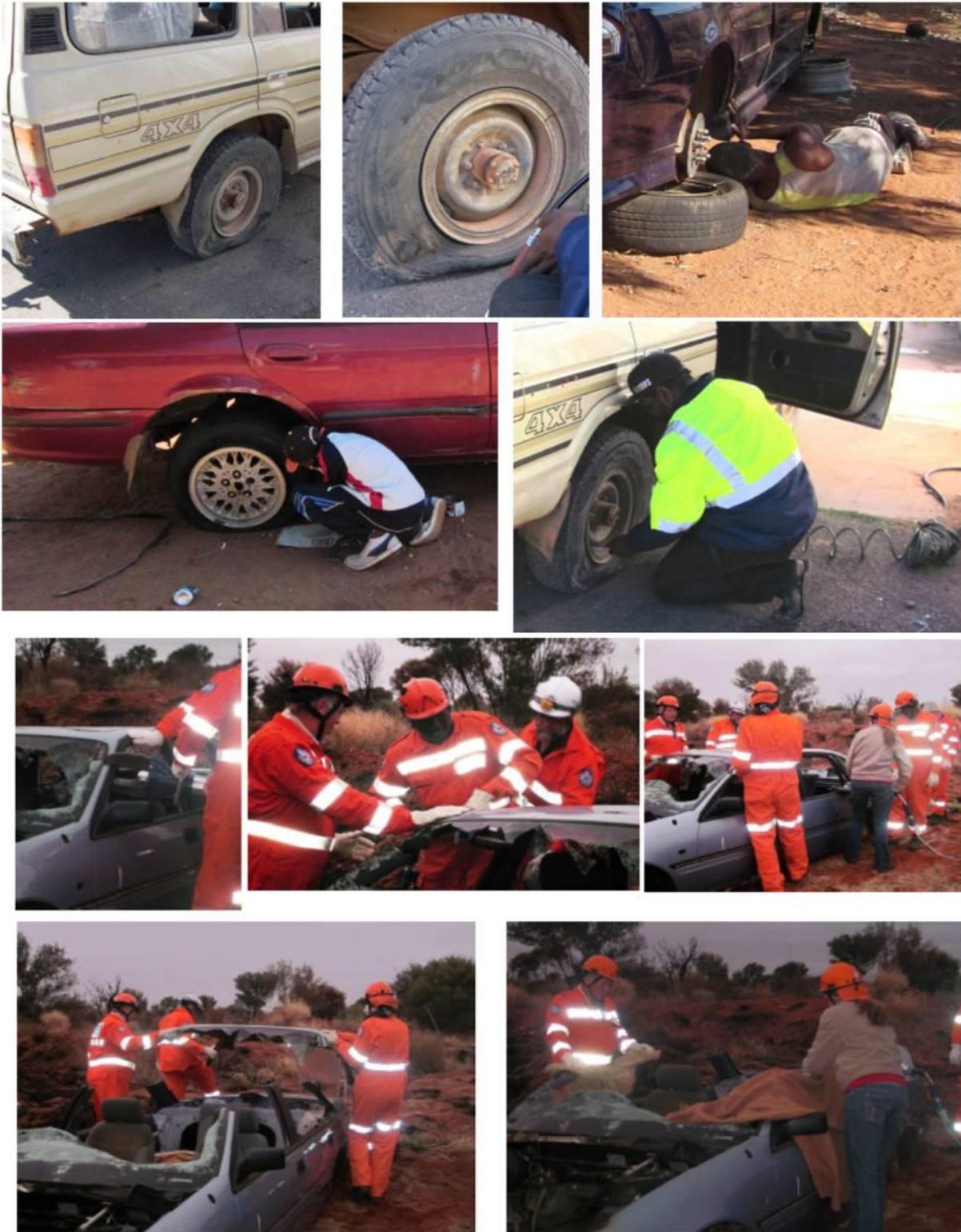
- *Facilitating* – the person who asked the questions, showed the photos and kept the group on track in the discussion
- *Recording* – the person who set up and ran the audio recorder, took photos of the procedure, collected and managed the signed paperwork for the informed consent from participants
- *Transcribing* – the people who played back the audio, and translated the sentences into English for the person typing up the focus group notes.

c) 4. Mapping the process

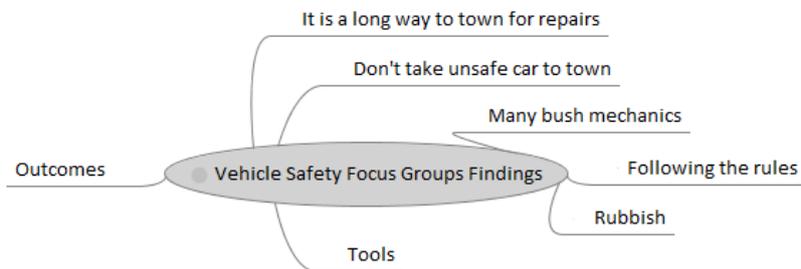


The photos below were the photo elicitation sheets the researchers used to guide the focus group discussions and help bring people's attention to the topic. We then used transcripts from the focus groups to create the mind maps below that show the findings of the research cycle. They were useful in bringing key points of concern and idea for actions to the attention of the researchers.





4.4.3 Focus group findings



The findings from the focus groups are described under the headings in the diagram above, which represent the key points that emerged. The most significant early response to emerge came in the form of comments from the women invited to participate. They showed that their concerns around vehicle safety and maintenance included problems in domestic spaces because so much vehicle maintenance is carried out in people’s yards.

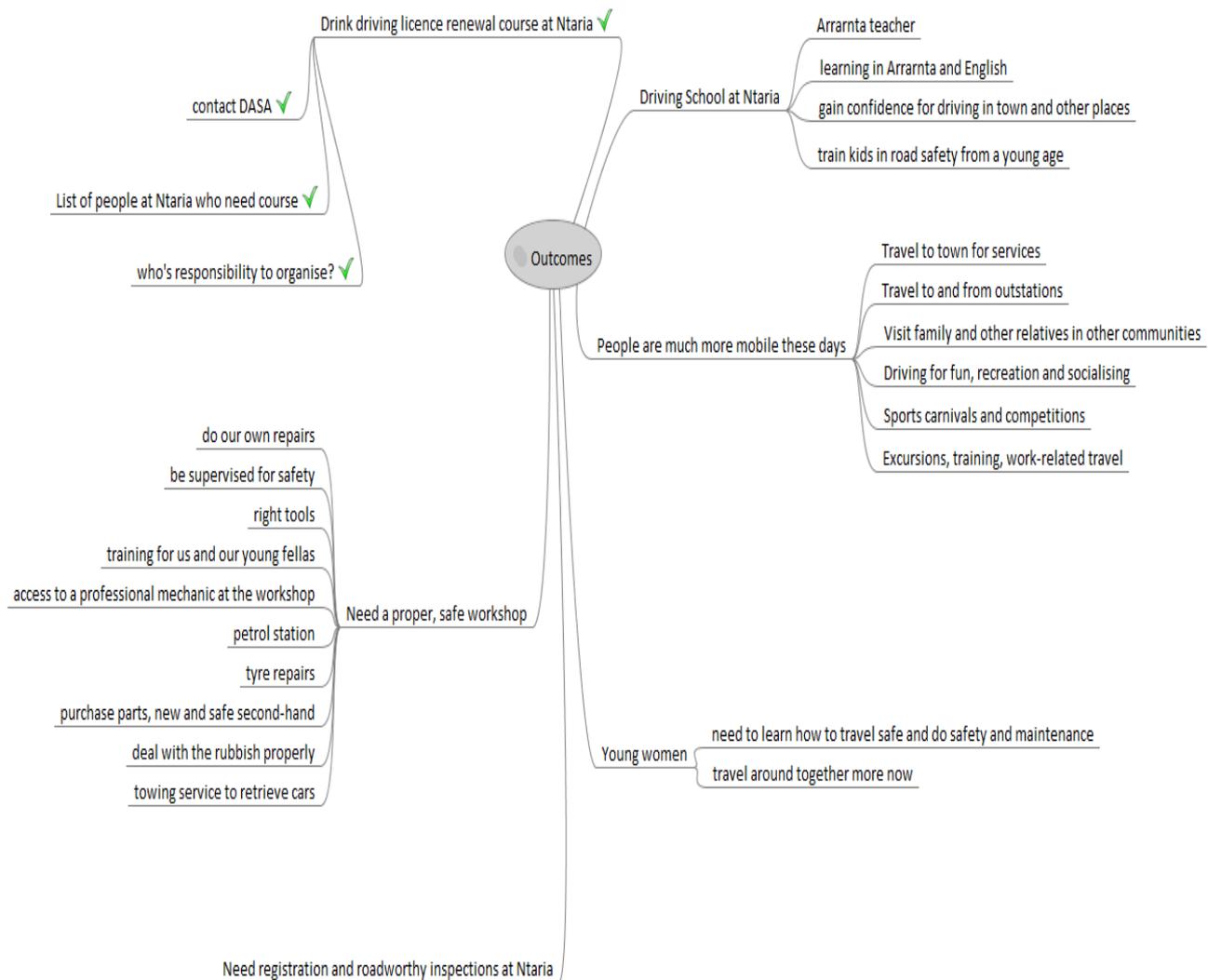
In recent years it has become difficult to access the type of equipment required to transport old car bodies or heavy parts to the tip for disposal or recycling, and so the parts pile up in spaces where families live. Wrecks attract snakes; old batteries introduce poison and potential for serious burns; broken glass and sharp metal all increase risk of cuts.

Presented with the response of the first women’s focus group that the photos were really more about jobs and activities they related to as men’s work, the researchers made another photo sheet, clearly identifying some of the hazards present in domestic spaces where vehicle maintenance is undertaken. The photo sheet the researchers made in response to the concerns regarding safety in domestic spaces follows.

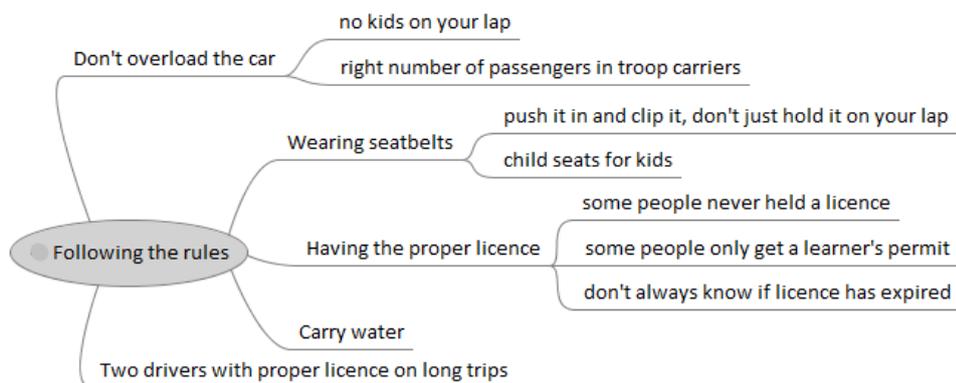


Photo elicitation: Health and safety concerns were identified by many of the women, and researchers made these photos for further discussion and reporting

Outcomes: The outcomes of analysing the transcripts of focus group discussions are illustrated in this mind-map. As the map indicates, one of the relevant outcomes has been achieved, with a drink-driving retraining program delivered at Tjuwanpa in November 2011.



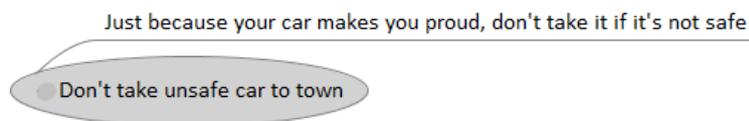
Other findings that emerged in relation to the use and maintenance of vehicles are presented in the following mind maps: **Following the rules**, **Don't take the unsafe car to town**, **It's a long way to town for repairs**, **Bush mechanics**, **Tools** and **Rubbish**. The first three deal with the facts that people discussed in relation to safety considerations when travelling. The last three document some of the challenges, skills and service delivery gaps present, particularly in relation to maintenance of vehicles.



Following the rules: The theme of following the rules raises some issues in relation to driving licences. People may never have obtained a licence for a number of reasons, but often confidence in spoken English language is a barrier.

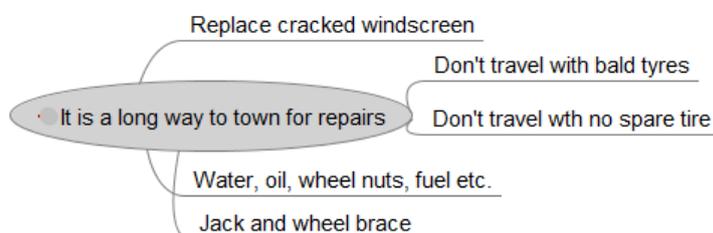
If a licence expires or is revoked through loss of demerit points the owner may not receive notification through the mail, and not realise their licence is not valid.

Many people don't bother to progress their licence beyond a learner's permit.

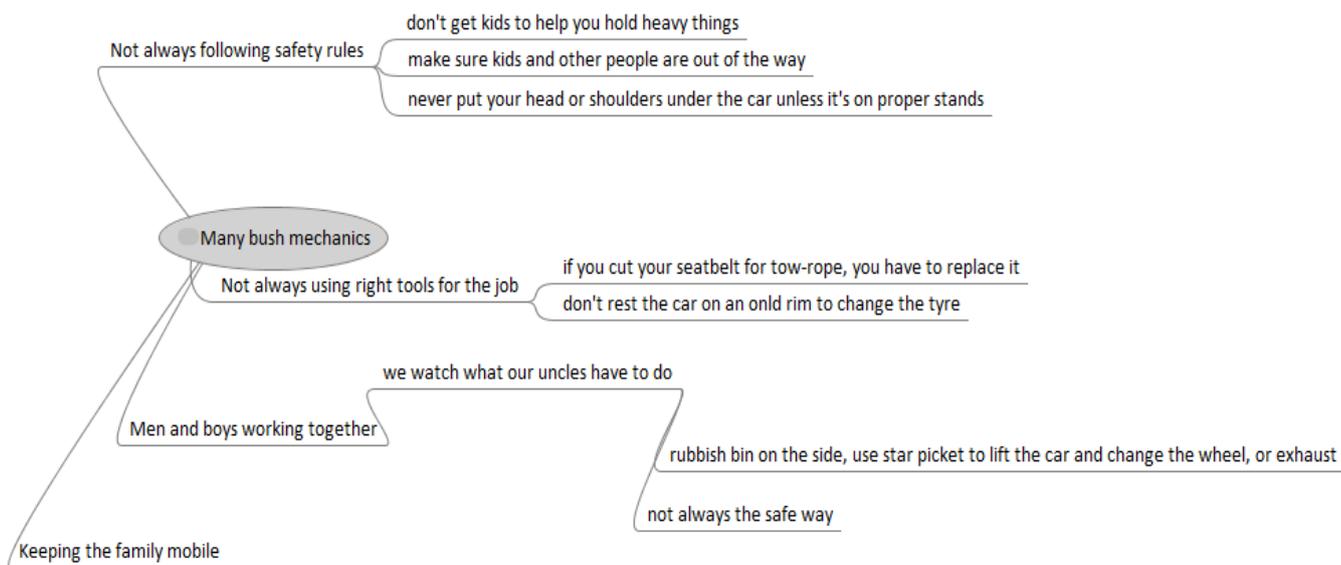


Don't take unsafe car to town: Sometimes the owner of a car might be very proud of their vehicle, and be tempted to drive even if it's not safe or legally registered. That's not very wise.

When a car is unsafe, un-roadworthy, unregistered, or the driver is unlicensed or illegally driving, everyone in the car is at risk.



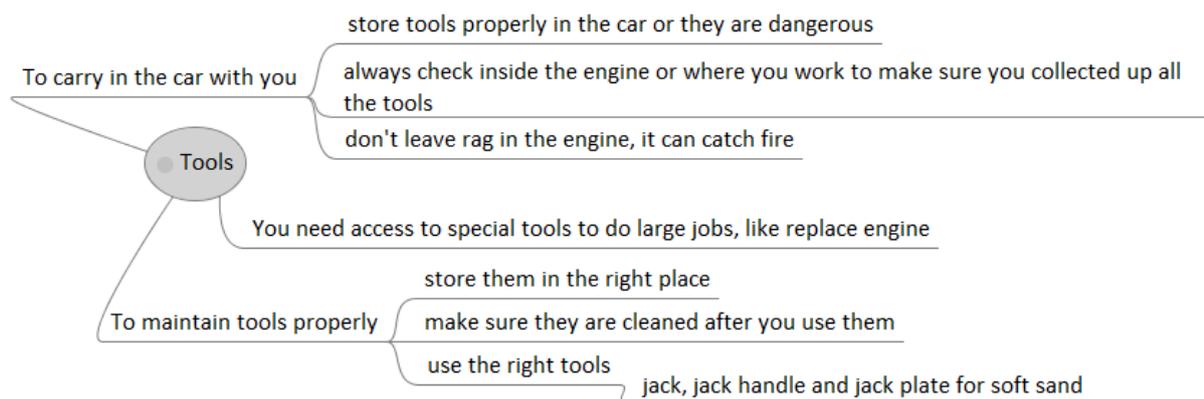
It is a long way to town for repairs: When a car is running badly and must be taken to town, then drivers must be very careful to take safety gear with them, if they must use the car.



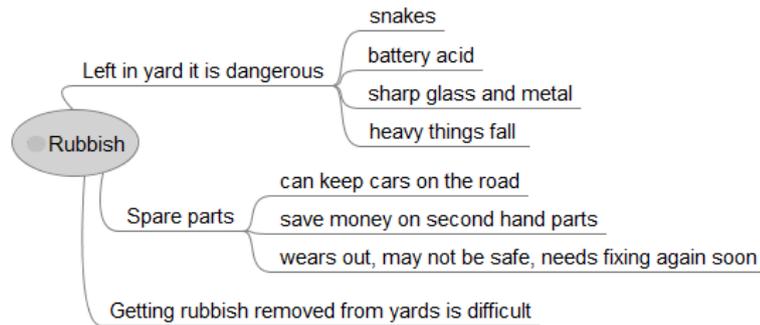
Bush Mechanics: The role of knowledge in maintaining vehicles and keeping families on the road generally falls to the men. Many men spoke of learning from their uncles and of teaching their children and grannies (grandchildren). Because in past days even fewer resources were present in the community, many men spoke about how complex and dangerous jobs were undertaken with lots of innovation, but also lots of risk.

Some spoke of injuries received while doing simple things, such as tyre changes, when standard equipment fails. Everyone gave the strong message that their contemporary knowledge about health and safety practices led them towards taking safety around vehicles very seriously.

The education and training in safety, tools, driving, and vehicle maintenance was a very high priority for the men, as was maintaining and teaching emergency bush repair their skills to younger ones.



Tools: The men and women who participated in the focus groups all recognised the requirement for access and storage of tools required for car maintenance and also the need for formal training as well as bush mechanics skills in how to use, store and care for tools.



Rubbish: The women were particularly concerned about how rubbish relating to vehicle maintenance was piling up around houses.

The main dangers in their assessment are from snakes nesting in old cars in the yard, glass and sharp metal, battery acid in old batteries, and the risk of heavy objects falling or collapsing.

4.4.4 Links between the focus group findings and the LIP

In this section, we describe the strategies and actions defined under each Activity statement of the LIP and provide a commentary on the relevance of the focus group findings in each case.

LIP Activity. Economic Participation Priority 1: Local people in local jobs (Commonwealth of Australia 2010)

Strategy 1.1: Local businesses and jobs are developed.

Action 1.1.11: Explore partnership opportunities in the private sector, with a particular emphasis on building formal links with industries operating in the region. These partnerships could include (but not be limited to) training, employment, infrastructure and community development.

Strategy 2.1: Ntaria residents acquire the skills required to find and take up jobs

Action 2.1.7 Ntaria community members learn safe driving practices, access driver training and acquire driver's licences

After enquiring, researching and reflecting upon the findings from the fieldwork from Research Cycle 1.1: Safe Driving Survey at Ntaria (Lovell et al. 2011) and 1.2 Vehicle Safety Focus Groups (Lovell et al. 2012), Ninti One Ntaria Research Team recommends that Wurla Nyinta request an investigation of how a combined service approach, as represented by the RSD NPA, could support developing a local garage. The outcome might be linked with LIP actions that support adult training outcomes, employment, local business development, youth diversion and community service orders, men's programs, Job Service Providers services and support, driver licence training, tourism, and preventative driver training programs for young people.

The team has identified the following actions for progressing safe driving futures in the community of Ntaria:

1. Wurla Nyinta asks the government to engage people in the community to participate in developing a viability study and business plan for a garage at Ntaria or Tjuwanpa.

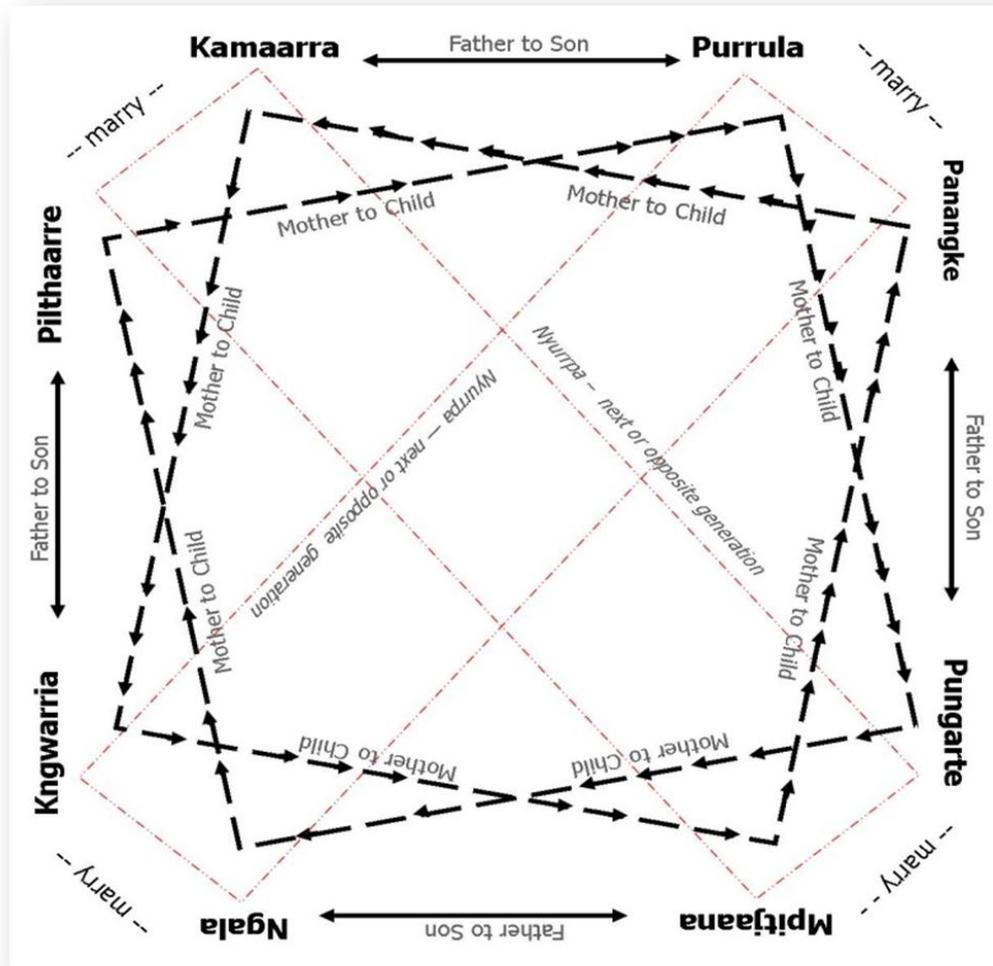
Wurla Nyinta requests the viability of a commercial and training garage be investigated as a first step to establishing a safe choice for repairs and maintenance of vehicles within the community.

2. The social, economic, governance and health needs of the community are considered in the viability and business plan

The community should be engaged in all aspects of the process of investigating and developing a strategic plan for a local garage.

4.5 Background to the Wurla Nyinta Perception Survey – Governance and Anparnintja

4.5.1 The role and significance of Anparnintja



An illustration of the Arandic system of kin and skin relationships, *Anparnintja*. (Adapted from IAD Press, 1996)

Ntaria has been part of the recent history of change instigated in the Northern Territory since 2007 when the Northern Territory Emergency Intervention arrived and the amalgamations of Local Government Councils into the new Shires began. This research report introduces the notion of an overlap between the systems of governance introduced and required by external agencies and the pre-existent Arandic system of kin and skin relationships, *Anparnintja*.

There are significant differences and overlaps between the model of community governance represented by the Remote Service Delivery agreement and the Local Implementation Plan and the pre-existing cultural framework of *Anparnintja* at Ntaria. In the first place, *Anparnintja* is not a governance structure; it is a cultural structure for organising, enacting, managing, owning, relating and respecting the land and people. It impacts significantly on daily life, inheritance, ownership, responsibility and maintenance of land, people and cultural activity. *Anparnintja* underpins Arandic language groups, and transfers to Warlpiri, Luritja, Pintupi and other groups. Throughout central Australia and to the north, Aboriginal language groups commonly have structures that either overlap or in some ways replicate, the function of *Anparnintja* in Arandic groups. Each child inherits their skin name according

to the relationship map. In the past this was a rigorous system ensuring correct management and ownership of land, family relationships and responsibilities, cultural maintenance and transmission.

Once disenfranchisement from country impacted upon people, *Anparnintja* was diminished. It has always continued to exist, but as has often been the case where there is no cultural equivalent, the concept remained hidden. *Anparnintja* is still the underlying fabric by which Arrarnta can navigate the land, relationships, responsibilities and kinships.

Wurla Nyinta members represent the community at the interface with Federal and Territory Governments, the Shire and other agencies. Wurla Nyinta ideally consists of members of all the family groups at Ntaria, which is also representative of the structure of *Anparnintja*, although this is not overtly stated. Although Wurla Nyinta acts like a board of management in providing advice to the government agencies represented at the community, they are not constituted and membership is voluntary and fluid. Wurla Nyinta 'is the main way Ntaria consults and negotiates with government on the Local Implementation Plan' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010 p. 8). In the Arrarnta sense, while Wurla Nyinta is an introduced entity it is underpinned by the fabric of Arandic culture. Most government and agency staff interacting with Wurla Nyinta do not know very much about how the kinship systems influence work, lifestyle, living arrangements and areas within the community boundaries.

There are overlaps between *Anparnintja* and the capacity of the community to engage in governance and leadership. It is the intention of the Federal Government to promote stronger local governance but there is little awareness from those new to the Arrarnta cultures that the two systems impact one another. To Arrarnta and some people familiar with this system, it is clear that the introduced structures of governance and leadership do not represent the same authority or meaning that *Anparnintja* represents. Some PAR about the contemporary influences of these two systems was identified as a useful extension of local community research, with benefits to all LIP priority areas.

4.5.2 Wurla Nyinta, Governance and Leadership

While there are no formal mechanisms defining the impact of the Local Reference Group (LRG) on Government or agency decision making in RSD, Wurla Nyinta represents the only single access point for agencies to a community advisory group. In his November 2011 review (OCGRIS 2011b) for the Federal Government, Mr Brian Gleeson, the Coordinator General, announced that strengthening community governance is a priority. In a presentation to the Institute of Public Administration Australia (WA) in November 2011 (OCGRIS 2011c), he said that the coordinated RSD reflects progress such as: 'greater recognition that new ways of working are required, including enhanced engagement and ownership by communities in developing the agenda of change and hence recognition of the need to support community capacity development'.

Currently, LRGs such as Wurla Nyinta depend on ROC and FaHCSIA staff to provide the administration, planning and coordination of the meetings and of business arising from them. While community input is sought and recorded at the Wurla Nyinta meetings, government is not obliged to accept that direction or advice from Wurla Nyinta.

In the event that their direction or advice is not taken, the only recourse an LRG has is to write letters to the Board of Management representing the ROC, Shire and Governments. Failing satisfaction from the Board, they can escalate the issue through requesting meetings with government officers and administrators. The Board of Management that oversees the coordination of RSD LIP actions has no LRG representatives on it.

4.5.3 Competing priorities

The table below shows the key events during the period of the research. Significant events in the community include school holidays, the summer break, cultural business and significant government policy decisions affecting governance and change to fundamental services such as Centrelink, CDEP, MacDonnell Shire and the Northern Territory Emergency Response.

From November 2011 to March 2012 a significant number of changes and consultations for changes that affected the community were scheduled to occur, yet this is the time of year when cultural business, summer holidays and the Christmas break are significant influencers on local activity. Traditionally, many of the service delivery staff working at Ntaria from elsewhere leave the community for extended breaks, and locally, travel and activity is restricted by cultural business.

This table indicates some of the significant events across the calendar since 2007 and includes some of the planning for 2012 that affected Ntaria and other remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. The table shows the levels of consultation, decision making and participation that is requested of Wurla Nyinta and the wider community during the 2011–2012 summer period and highlights the overlap of cultural business responsibilities, high mobility for community residents and restricted availability for government business demands.

	NTER	RSD/COAG	NTARIA	CDEP	SHIRES/NTG
2007					
	NTER: Racial Discrimination Act suspended			CDEP ends	Community consultations for Local Government Council to roll into Shires
	13 other measures introduced			Work for the Dole introduced	
	Federal election and change of government				
2008					
				Work for the Dole stops	Shires set up
				CDEP restarted	NTG Election
2009					
	NTER redesign consults	RSD model starts	Local Reference Group and Local Implementation Plan in discussion	Job Service Agreements extended	Shire Elections
		Regional Operational Centre starts			
2010					
	Income Management changes	LIP consultations: LIP introduced	LIP consultations: LIP introduced	CDEP providers extended	LIP consultations: LIP introduced
	Racial Discrimination Act restored	Local Reference Group Wurla Nyinta meeting regularly since Feb 2010	Local Reference Group Wurla Nyinta meeting regularly since Feb 2010		Local Reference Group Wurla Nyinta meeting regularly since Feb 2010
	Federal election	LIP drafted	LIP drafted		LIP drafted
November		New GBM inducted	New GBM inducted	New GBM inducted	
			Ninti One Ntaria Research Project accepted by Wurla Nyinta		
			Cultural Business begins at Ntaria		
December					School holidays

	NTER	RSD/COAG	NTARIA	CDEP	SHIRES/NTG
2011					
			Wurla Nyinta meets 10 times / approximately monthly in 2011		
January			Ninti One Ntaria Researchers begin field work		
February					Return to School
March		LIP signing	LIP signing		LIP signing
April			Cultural Business finishes at Ntaria		
July	Post-NTER consults				
September				New workforce participation	
November	Stronger Futures announced	Stronger Futures announced	Local Cultural Awareness Program (LCAP) piloted	CDEP consultations	
		SIHIP housing discussions start with Territory Housing	Cultural Business begins at Ntaria	SIHIP housing discussions start with Territory Housing	SIHIP housing discussions start with Territory Housing
December	Consultation for Stronger Futures	LIP refresh consults	Ninti One Ntaria Researchers finish field work	New Shire Services Manager starts	School Holidays
2012					
January		New GBM inducted	New GBM inducted	New GBM inducted	
February			Wurla Nyinta meets regularly from February		Return to School
March	New legislation to parliament	New LIP sign off	New LIP sign off Ninti One Ntaria LCAP evaluation to FaHCSIA		Local Government Elections and Statehood Referendum???
April			Cultural Business Ends at Ntaria		
June	NTER ends / Stronger Futures begins (10 year framework)	New SIHIP workforce agreements		New workforce participation arrangements	NT election due???
	Federal Government 5-year lease on settlements ends		Ninti One Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria evaluation report complete – end of project		

4.6 Research project on community perceptions of governance

Research team: Judy Lovell, Ada Lechleitner, Mark Inkamala, Anna Marie Armstrong, Rachel Kantawara, Dion Dhamarrandyji



Katie Abbott with computer tablet and Anna Marie Armstrong (right) surveying residents



Mark Inkamala surveying a member of the Tjuwanpa Rangers group



4.6.1 Introduction

This was a survey of 20% of people over the age of 18 living at Ntaria, Tjuwanpa or another outstation. The survey was designed by the Ninti One Ntaria researchers with input from some members of Wurla Nyinta, the Ntaria Local Reference Group (LRG). Wurla Nyinta and the researchers were interested in how local residents understand the role and work the LRG undertakes for Ntaria community. In designing the participatory action research cycle, significant overlaps in the concepts relating to Arrarnta organisational protocols and introduced governance models surfaced. This impacted on how the survey was designed, the findings interpreted and the tone of the recommendations.

Wurla Nyinta acts as the governance organisation for the wider community through their communication and decision-making role in coordinated remote service delivery (RSD) at Ntaria. Wurla Nyinta representatives explain that they take this responsibility seriously, and it is widely accepted that LRGs are intended to represent the whole community. Exactly how they do so, or if they do so has not been formalised. At Ntaria the community researchers and Wurla Nyinta members wanted to ascertain if there are gaps in community representation, as well as which families might attend to strengthen broad representation and which community members were undertaking the greatest voluntary, governance, organisational and representational roles at Wurla Nyinta.

Wurla Nyinta represents the whole community in this important work, but how much does the wider community understand about this work, or the influence it has on RSD? The survey was designed to get a snapshot of how this gets discussed, who talks with whom about what, and how the wider community connects Wurla Nyinta decision making with planning and change at Ntaria. From the researchers' analysis of the survey results we can report about:

- How Wurla Nyinta gets feedback or direction from the community
- Who knows, and who does not know, what Wurla Nyinta does on behalf of the community
- Who represents the various families, age groups and organisations
- Who is missing from the decision making
- What might encourage people to have a strong voice through Wurla Nyinta
- How external agencies involved at Ntaria might consider their roles and the role of Wurla Nyinta in RSD plans and implementation
- Introducing the overlap of *Anparnintja* and Community Governance.

4.6.2 Informed consent

Each time someone was surveyed, they were told important information about who the survey was for, why it was being done, and what the likely benefits might be for the community, the participant, the researchers and the client who was paying for the work (FaHCSIA). The person could then choose to continue with the survey or not; it was a free choice. The script for this survey was in Western Arrarnta and English. This process is known as ***plain language informed consent***.

Wurtai yinga Anna Marie rrangkerra kala nuka kaltja. Yinga workerrema researcher nhanha Ninti One strengthening community research pmara nhanha-ala and etna antjanama pmerratjika nthakenha rrangarra itelarama workapuntja nhanha Wurla Nyinta-ala pmaremala-anha.

Hello, my name is Anna Marie. I am a researcher with Ninti One Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery. The survey asks what you think about the work Wurla Nyinta does.

Nhanha nurna intalilema ngkatja rrangarra-akanha Wurla Nyinta and fahcsia ntjarraka. Nhanha etna kurla fund-amelama project nhanha. Rela ntjarrala nthankin-paka yia etna-aka ilarjina nanha ekura tharra pmarra nanha Ntaria-eperra. Nurna ntama pmarrama rrangarra-anha nthankin rela-ala italarama urrkaapuntja nanha-eperra Wurla Nyinta-aka and fahcsia ntjarra-aka ilajika.

From the surveys we will write a report for Wurla Nyinta and FaHCSIA, who fund this project.

Ninti One nanha-ala nurna-anha employ-melama and etna nurna-anha itirrenja etna-akanga nthama. Nurna intalilama rretnya rrangarraka and arranama rela arrpapuna-ala itja arrajinala.

Ninti One employs us and they are responsible for the survey data and report writing. The surveys will give us your opinion but your name will not be recorded, so your privacy and confidentiality are protected.

Unta-paka antjanama iwena-alela paka ngkatjika nthankin rrangarra itelaramalanga worka nanha-eperra rrangarra ringamelijika Judy Lovell senior researcher 0408081813 or Steve Fisher technical advisor 0390056124 arrapanha Mark Ashley general manager 0488155063.

If you want to talk to someone about how the survey is done, who it is for, or anything else, you can call Judy Lovell, Senior Researcher on 0408 081 813, or Steve Fisher, Technical Advisor on 03 9005 6124, or Mark Ashley, General Manager on 0488 155 063.

4.6.3 Demography

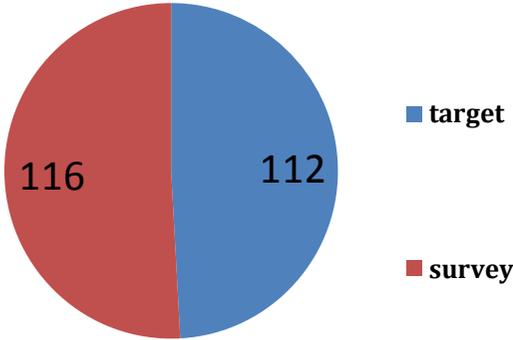
This table shows how many people in each age group equals 20% of the total community population in each age group at Ntaria. The statistics we used to work this out are listed in the *Remote Service Delivery Baseline Mapping Report Hermannsburg (Ntaria)* (FaHCSIA 2010).

Age	Target	Survey
18-19	8	8
20-24	20	26
25-29	17	20
30-34	16	12
35-39	13	8
40-44	8	17
45-49	9	9
50-54	7	6
55-59	4	2
60-64	4	5
65+	6	3
TOTAL	112	116

In this table, the **Target** is the number of people that equals 20%, or 1/5 of the total population in that age group.

The **Survey** is the actual number surveyed in each group.

The Target and the Survey numbers are the same or quite close, so we can say that we have surveyed approximately 20% of residents aged over 18.



In this pie chart the **Target** is the total number of people that equals 20% of the population at Ntaria who are over 18.

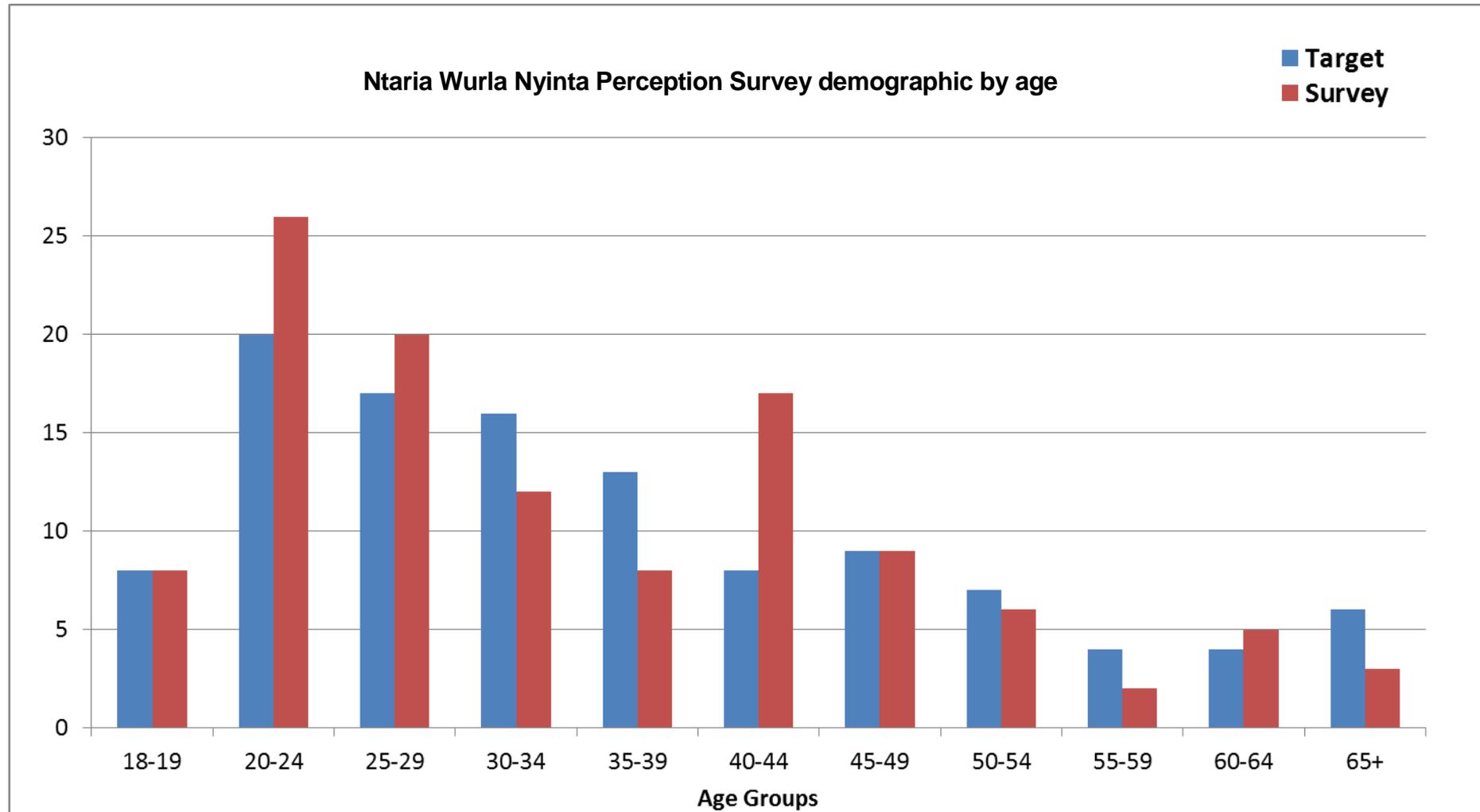
The **Survey** is the total number of people surveyed.

Comparing them shows us that the survey data collected slightly more (4) people than needed to match 20% exactly.

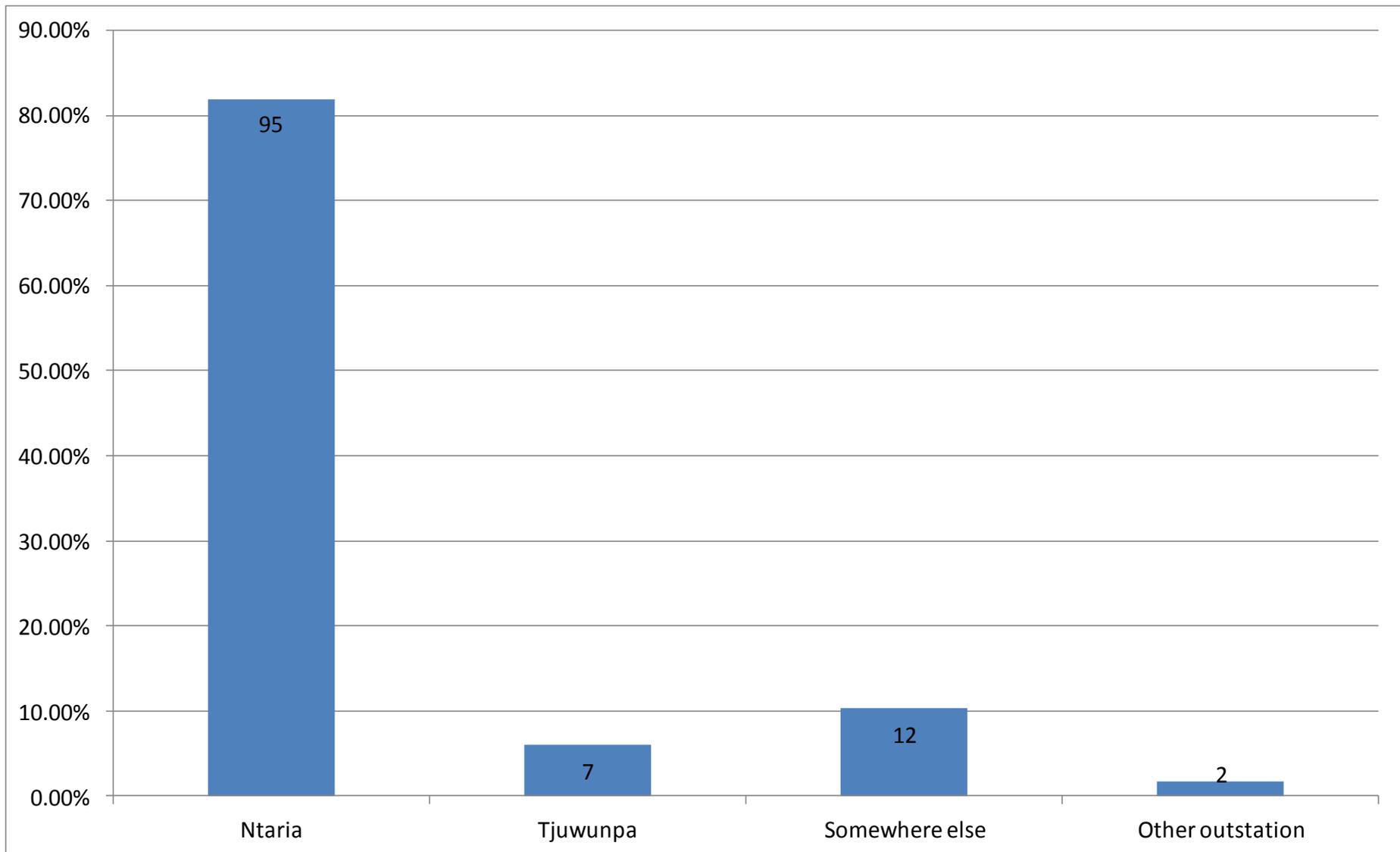
4.6.4 Data collected

1. Unta antjanama ankajika awa or etja (Please answer YES if you want to continue with the survey.) 97% answered YES, Responses, n = 116 people

2. Iwenha age unkwanga (Age Groups) (n=116)

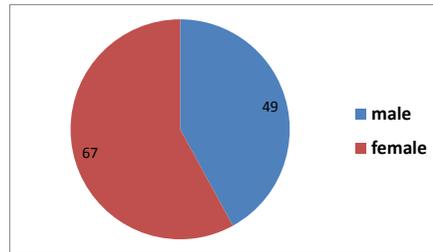


3. Nthanala unta nama (Where do you live?) (n=116)



4. Male-artwa / Female-arrkutja (n=116)

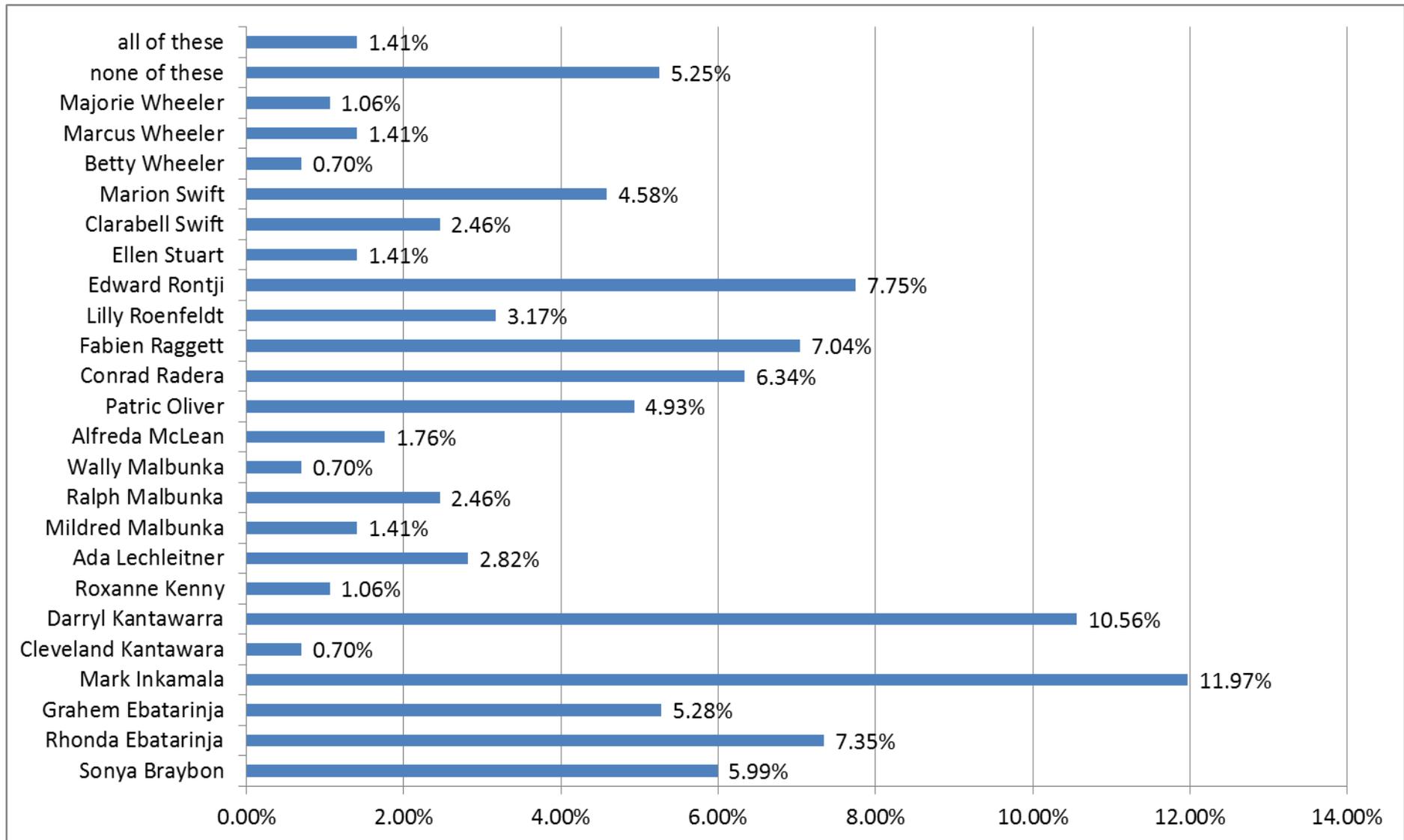
This pie charts show the number of males and females over 18 who responded to the survey.



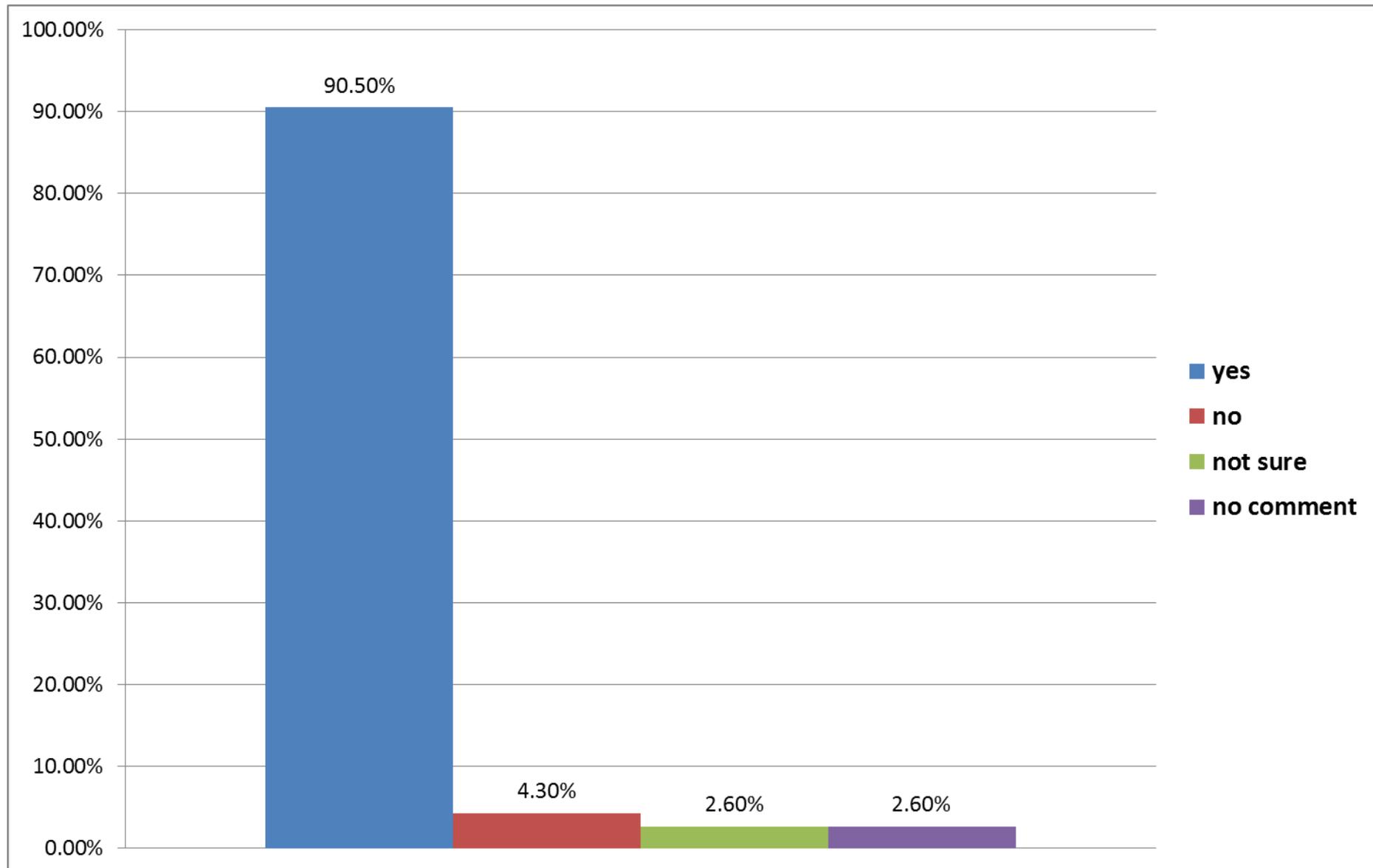
There was variation in our survey data; the actual population in Ntaria is 51% female and 49% male (FaHCSIA 2010).

This pie chart shows that 67 of the 116 respondents (58%) were female, which is 7% more females than would be indicated by their representation in the community.

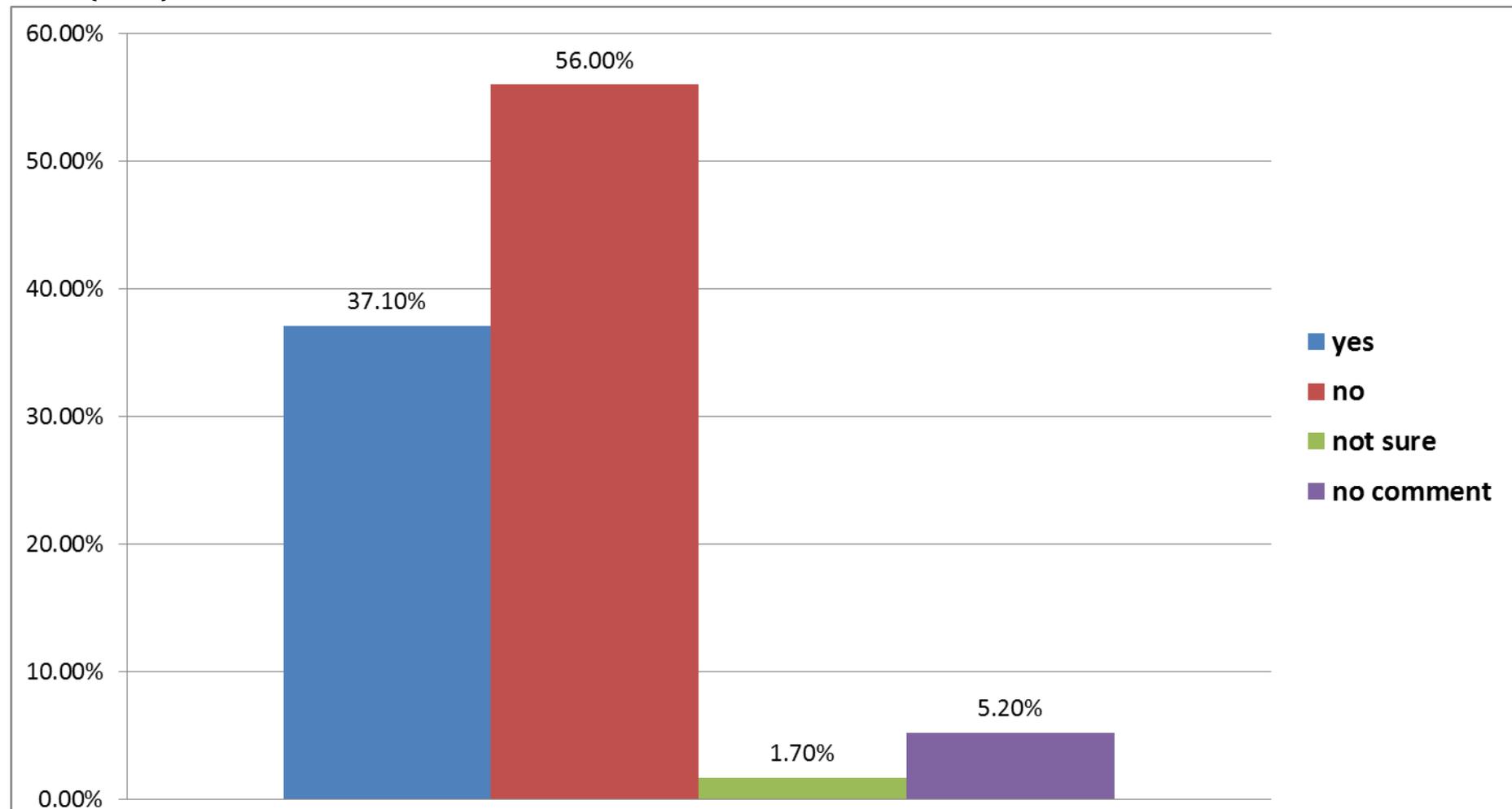
5. Rela ngwenha-alela paka unta ngkarmari Wurla Nyinta-aka work nanha-eperra (Which of these Wurla Nyinta members do you talk to about their work?) (n=116)



6. Ira tjina unkwanga (Are you related to of any of them?) (n=116)

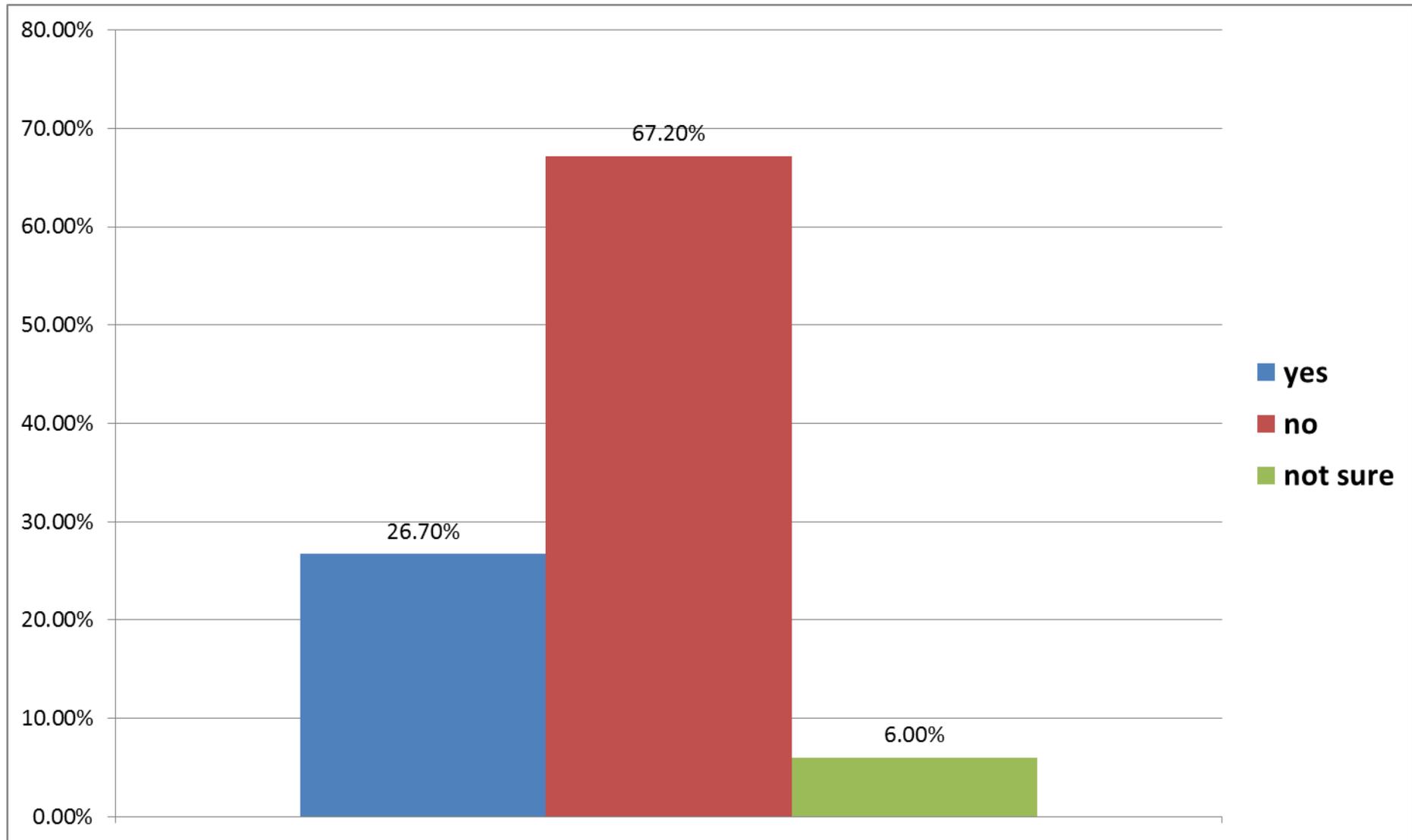


7. Unta ekura-alela nama pmara-ala or motor car ekur-anaka ntyema (Do you share a house, or a car, or a family with any of them?)
(n=116)

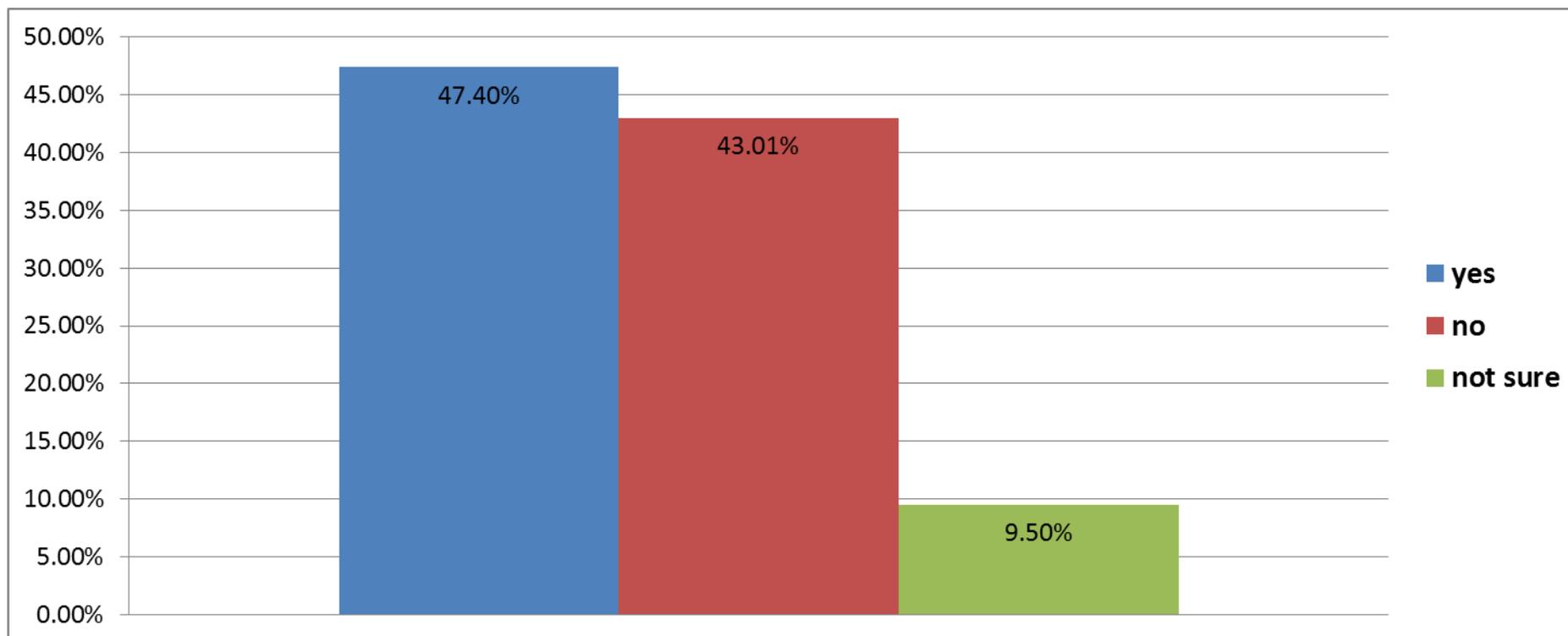


In Q. 6 and Q. 7 the researchers included the option for 'no comment'. Testing the survey revealed that Q7 did not describe the way some people understand the basis of sharing, and did not reflect Ntaria's social structure in the choice of answers. Feedback was that sharing is governed more by *Anparnintja*, the system of kin and skin relationships, as reflected in the answer to Q6, where 90% of responses identified at least one relative.

8. Unta etna-akela ultha purtala use-amelama (Do you share any other responsibilities with any of those people; for example School Board, Land Trust, Outstation, etc.?) (n=116)



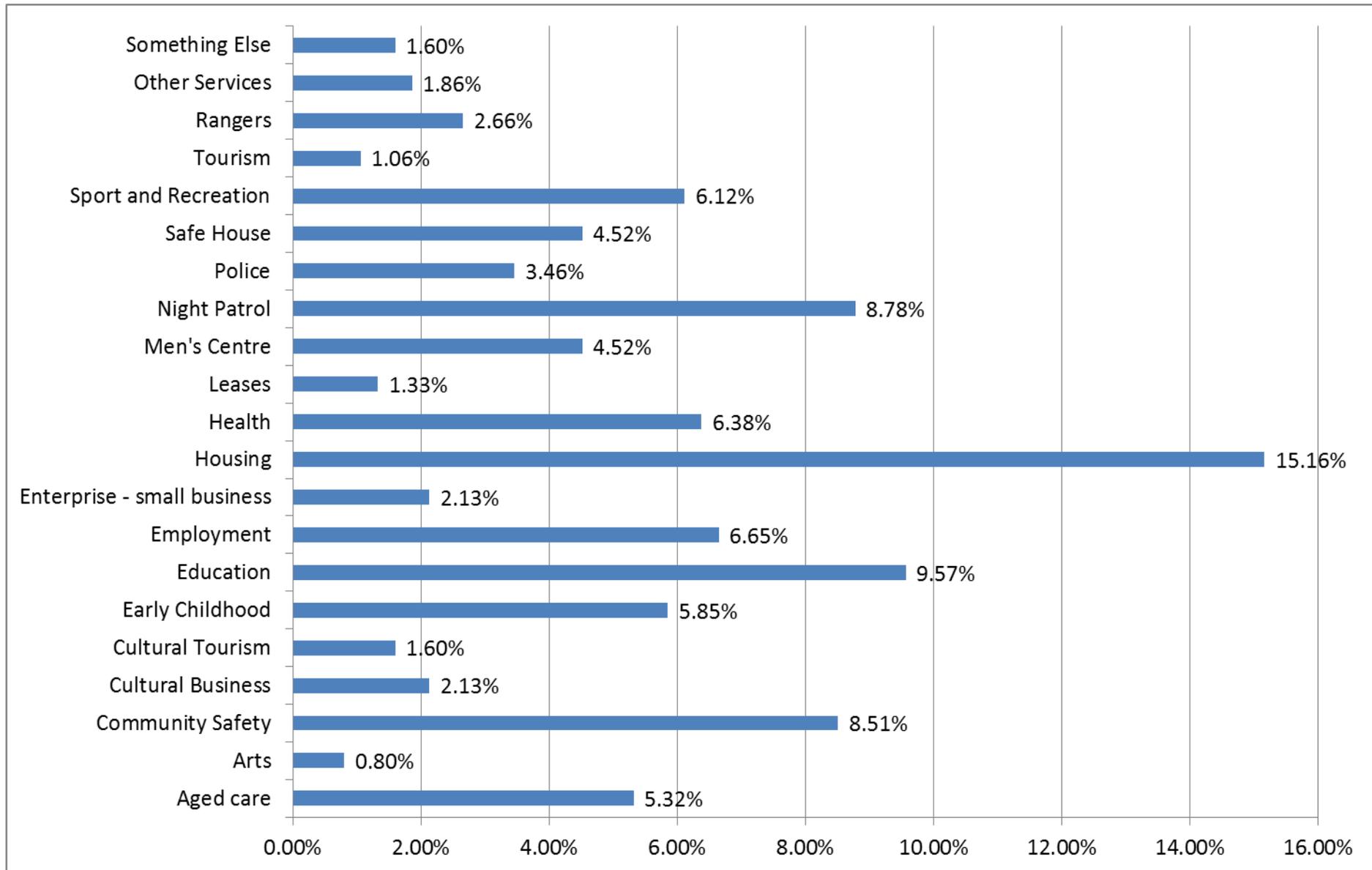
9. Unta-paka Wurla Nyinta ntjarra-alela ankarjika ankarjika antja nanha pmarra nanha-eperra (Do you talk to any of the Wurla Nyinta representatives about Ntaria community business?) (n=116)



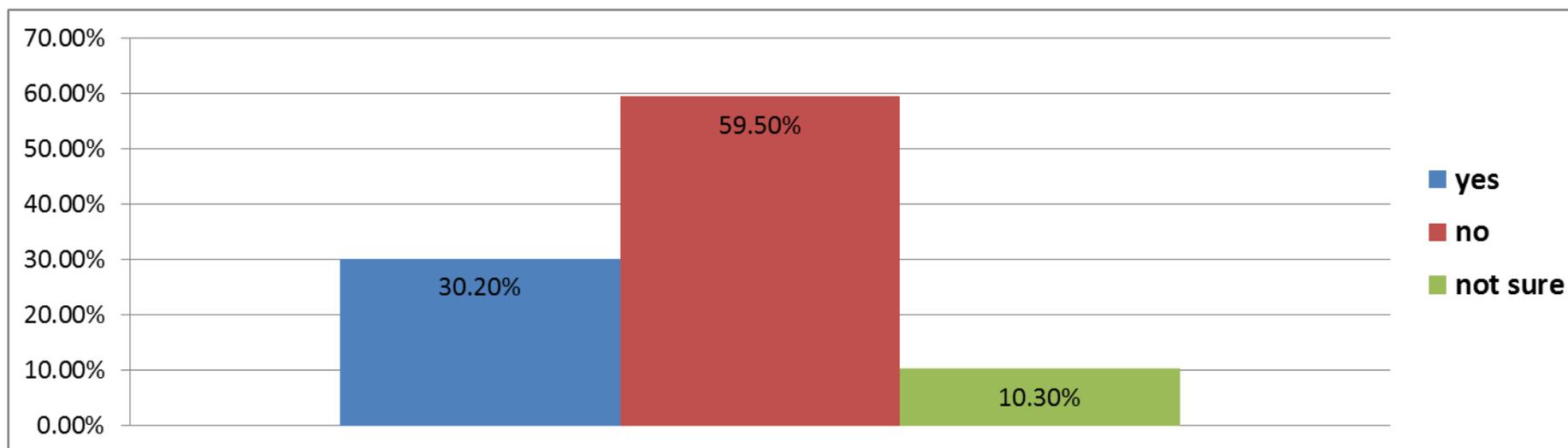
90% of people in the survey knew they were related to at least one Wurla Nyinta representative (Q. 5), and 47% of people knew that they talked to a member about Wurla Nyinta business. Through analysis of the data the Ntaria Community researchers identified some gaps in community representation at Wurla Nyinta meetings, and in the equity of work undertaken:

- Some families were underrepresented: Pareroutja, Williams, Emitja, Coultheard, Raberabera, Abbott and Minari.
- Young men and women were underrepresented.
- *Pmerekwerteye*, Traditional Owners and *Kwertengerle*, Custodians, should inform the decision making and share the workload associated with community governance more evenly.

10. Awa-paka nanha eperra unta wurrarai (If yes, select the topics you talk about)(n=37)



11. Unta paka rela nanha ntjarra-alela ankaranha-ankaranha (Do you talk to other people about Ntaria business? For example the Government Business Manager, the Shire Services Manager, Health Service staff or other?) (n=116)



The research identified that:

- 30% of people talked to at least one person, other than another resident or family member, about Wurla Nyinta business (Q. 11)
- Local residents were 16% more likely to talk to local Wurla Nyinta representatives than to talk to an external person or agency representative (Q. 13)

In analysis of this data the Ntaria Community researchers identified communication primarily or only in English language as a significant barrier to the participation of various Ntaria community members. The languages of choice for Ntaria residents were Western Arrarnta and Luritja. While many people speak and understand English, a significant number of community members are not confident in use of English language and often self-select out or are omitted from consultations involving non-local, English speaking representatives.

In the analysis the researchers also indicated the significance of *Anparnintja*, the complex Arandic kin and skin relationship system that describes people's inheritance and identity within the structure of family, land and language systems. *Anparnintja* is a lens through which Arrarnta people view themselves, other people, other systems and processes. It is the position from which they engage with or resist the concepts and events brought to them from elsewhere. Given that in Q. 6, 90% of respondents recorded being related to a member of Wurla Nyinta, it is easy to see how fundamental this concept is to all interactions in Ntaria.

12. Awa-paka nanha eperra unta wurrarai (If yes, select the topics you talk about) (n=275)

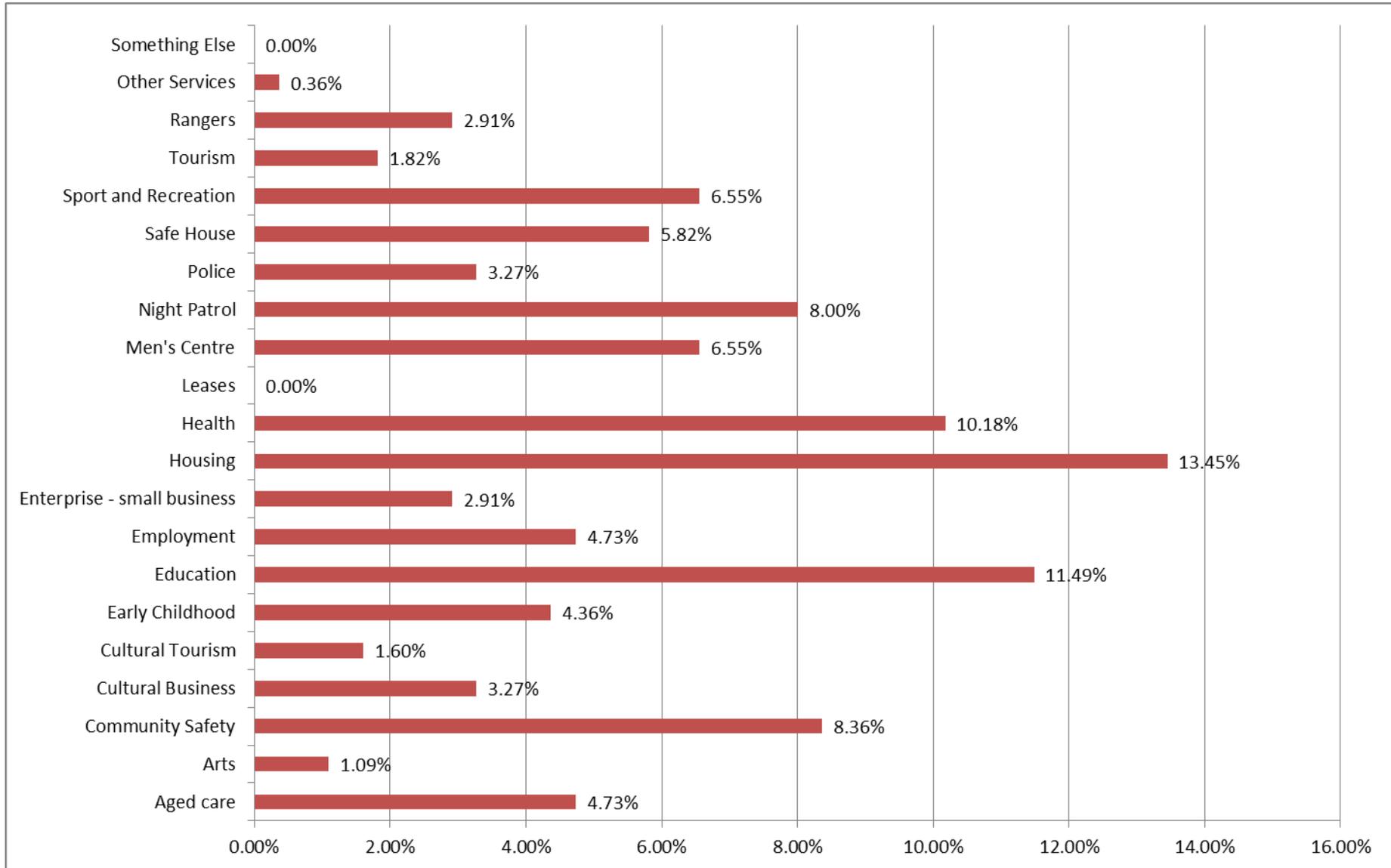


Table A: This table compares the topics people spoke to Wurla Nyinta representatives about with the topics they spoke to other people about.

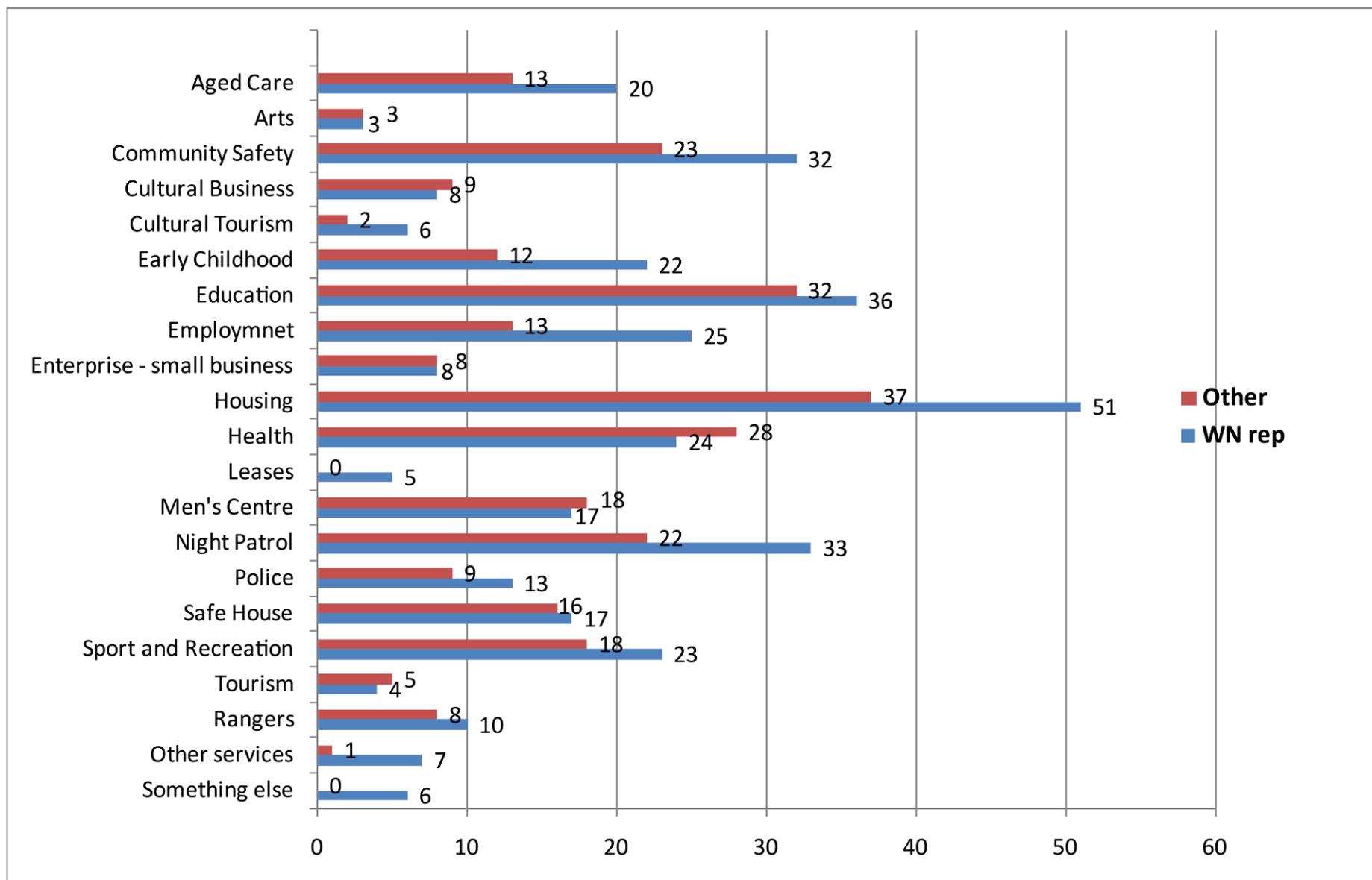
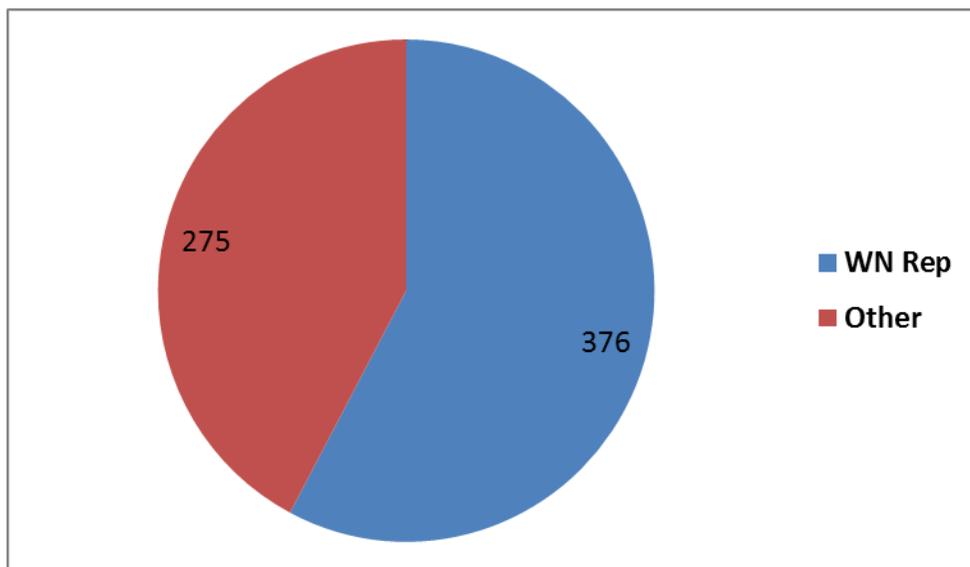


Table B: The total number of services that people speak to Wurla Nyinta and other representatives about:



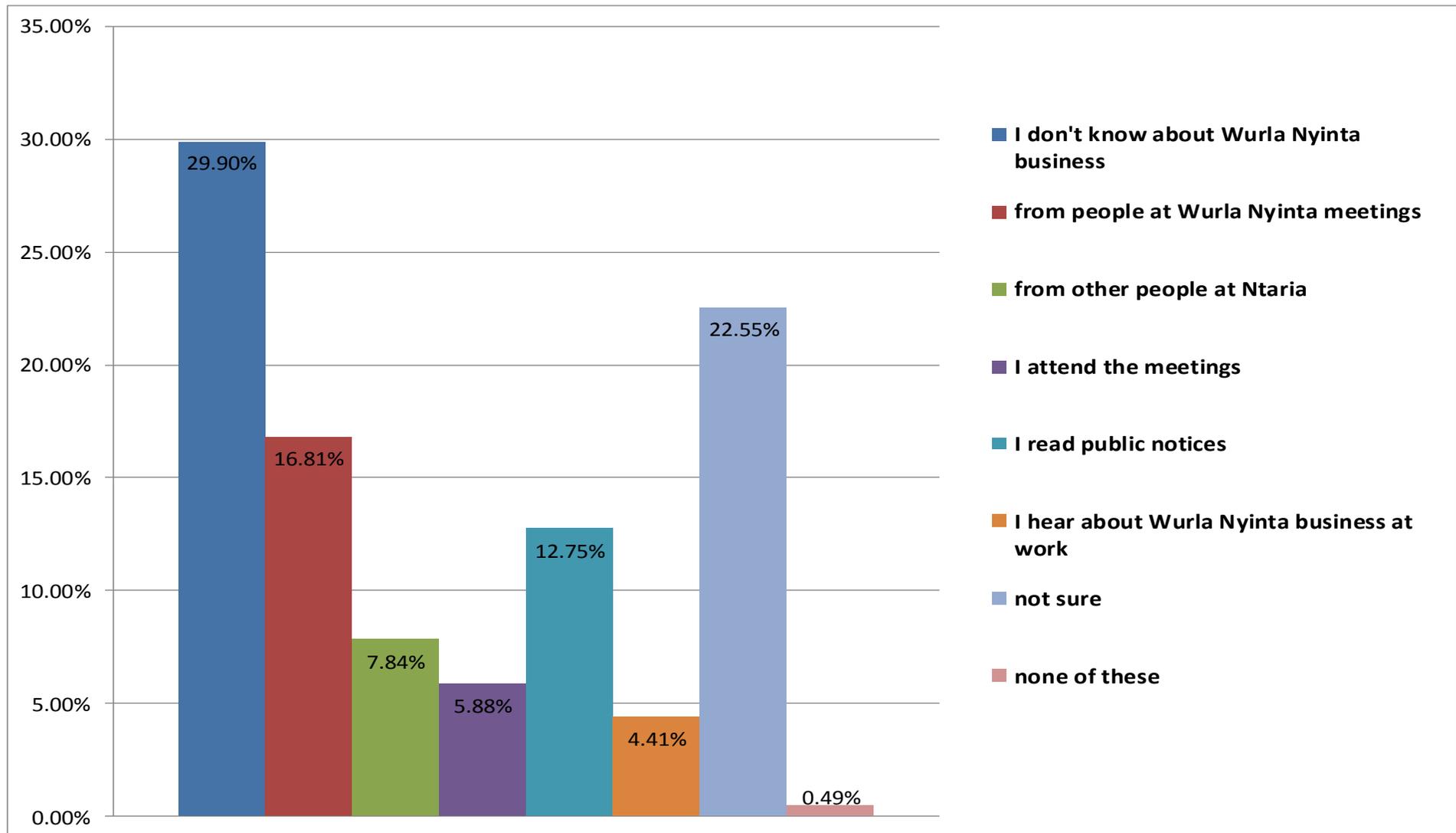
In total the survey showed 651 conversations; 58% of them were with local Wurla Nyinta representatives and 42% with non-local others. The people surveyed spoke most about Housing, Community Safety, Night Patrol and Health.

In analysis of this data the Ntaria Community researchers made links between conversations taking place among local residents and the topics discussed between local and non-local people.

The researchers identified the lens of *Anparnintja* as the primary influencer of the position a person takes in public or open conversations regarding certain subjects. For example, the data shown in Table A indicate that Leases and Cultural Tourism were not discussed with non-local people. While *Pmerekwerteye* (traditional owners) and *Kwertengerle* (custodial managers) have identified, restricted and public roles, women and others would be reluctant to take part in public discussion of topics such as cultural tourism or leases because of the Arrarnta systems of land management and ownership associated with them.

The significance of Arrarnta identity and lens should not be underrated in relation to processes of decision making, expectation of engagement, or language of communication used by external agencies involved in remote service delivery.

13. Nthankin-paka unta etarama Wurla Nyinta nanha etna-ala ngkerramala-eperra (How do you find out about the business discussed at Wurla Nyinta meetings?) (n=204)



14. Unta arama Wurla Nyinta-ala change-amelakala Ntaria-anha (Do you feel things are better worse or no different now, than they were four years ago at Ntaria?) (n=116)

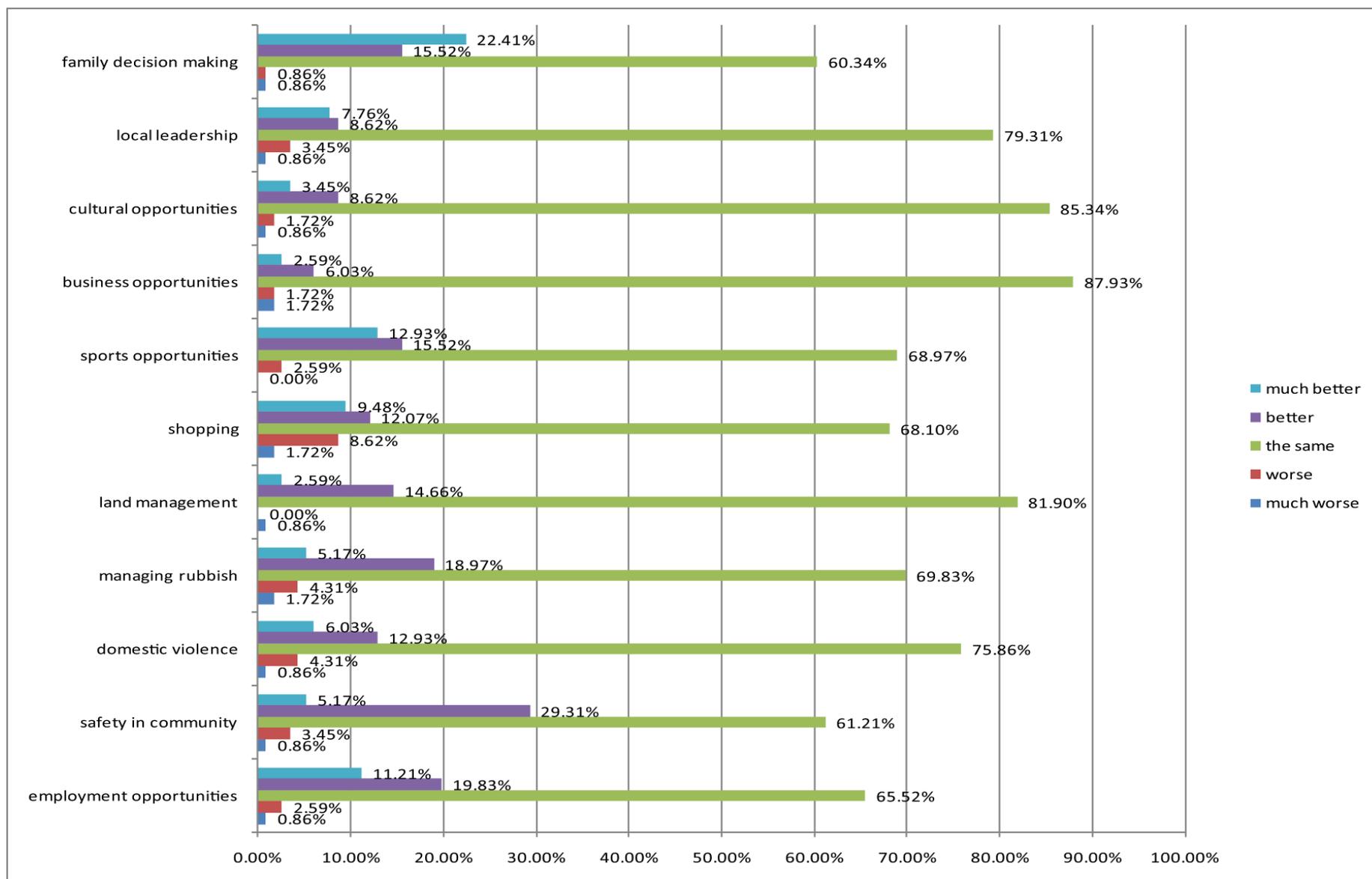


Table C: This chart represents how the 1279 responses from 116 people in Q. 14 were spread out between the options of no change, better or much better, worse or much worse. The biggest number equals 71%, who felt nothing had changed for better or worse during the last four years (the topics of these responses are detailed below in Table D). One quarter of the responses registered a better or much better change and 4% of the responses indicated a feeling of things being worse or much worse.

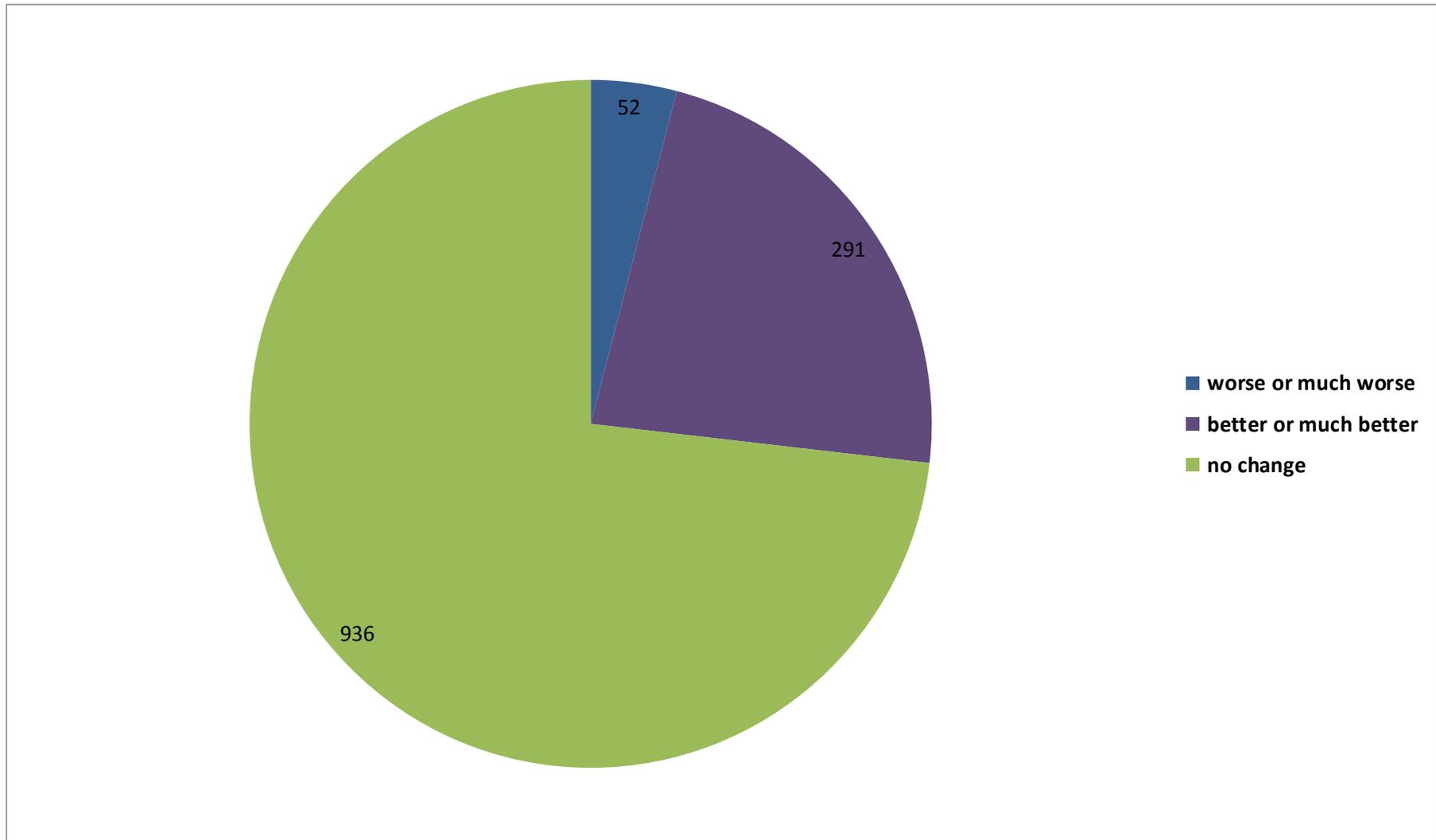


Table D: This bar chart shows for the results of each topic where the choice was no changes in any way. It represents 73% of the responses.

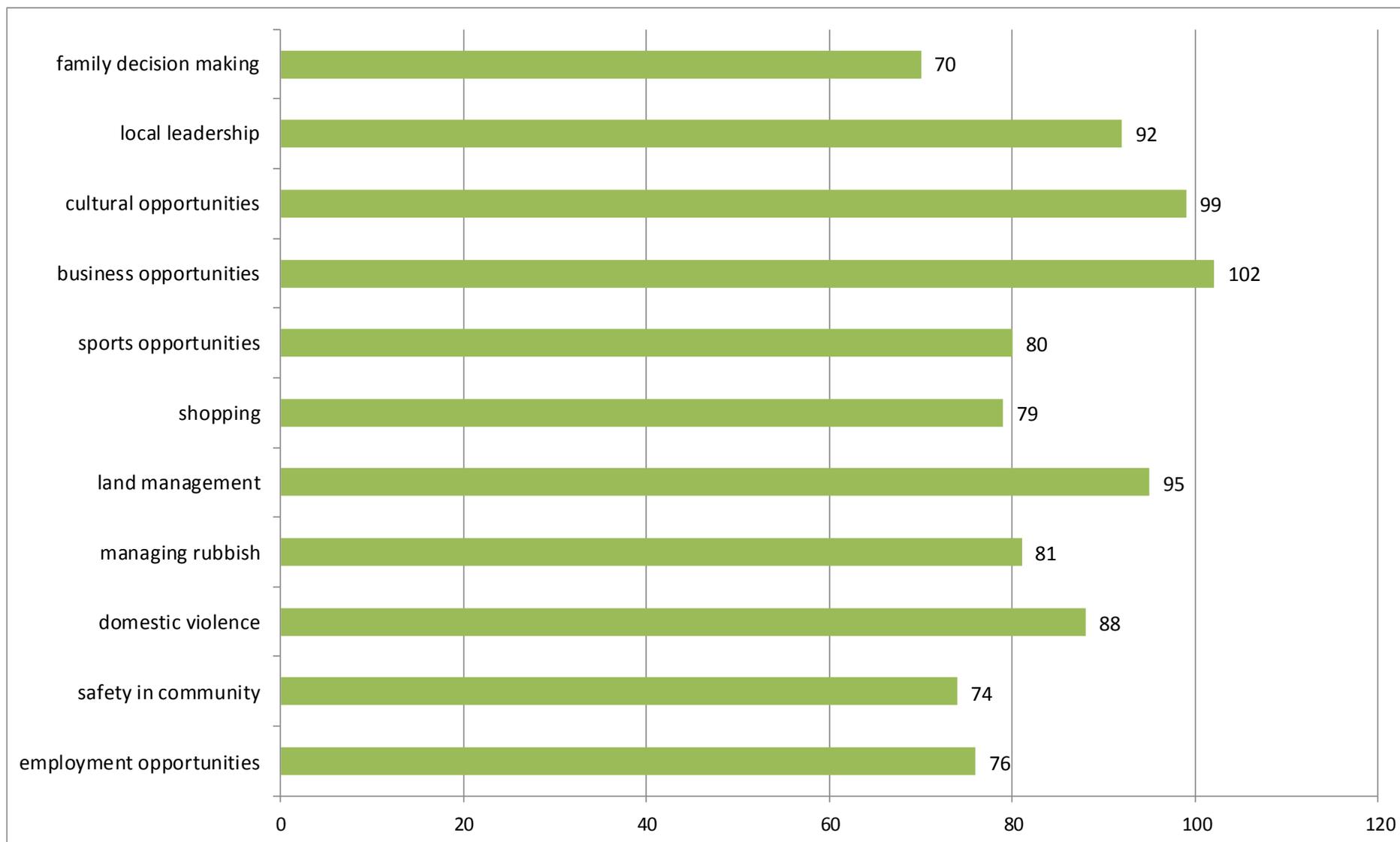


Table E: The results for the question of how things might have changed show us that the people surveyed mostly felt things had not changed significantly positively or negatively in the last four years. Where there was feeling of change the trend is small. Looking only at the numbers the data show that:

The most positive changes in the last four years were thought to be:

- Family decision making 2 people felt it was worse or much worse, and 44 people felt it was better or much better
- Safety in the community 5 people felt it was worse or much worse, and 40 people felt it was better or much better
- Employment opportunities 4 people felt it was worse or much worse, and 36 people felt it was better or much better
- Sporting opportunities 3 people felt this was worse, and 33 people felt it was better or much better

The least changes in any way in the last four years were thought to be:

- Business opportunities 14 people felt there had been a change, and 102 people felt it had remained the same
- Cultural opportunities 17 people felt there had been a change, and 99 people felt it had remained the same
- Land management 21 people felt there had been a change, and 95 people felt it had remained the same
- Local leadership 24 people felt there had been a change, and 92 people felt it had remained the same

Less positive experience of changes in the last four years were thought to be:

- Shopping opportunities 12 people felt it was worse or much worse, and 25 people felt it was better or much better
- Managing community rubbish 7 people felt it was worse or much worse, and 27 people felt it was better or much better
- Domestic violence 6 people felt it was worse or much worse, and 22 people felt it was better or much better
- Safety in the community 5 people felt it was worse or much worse, and 40 people felt it was better or much better

It must be noted that the numbers are comparative, but not indicative of significant trends until we interpret the comparisons by using ratios. Safety in the Community registered as both significantly better and significantly worse than people remember it being four years earlier. However, the trend toward improvement in community safety was 8 times stronger than the trend towards experiencing the community as less safe than four years ago. These ratio findings are a snapshot only.

In summary, the tables showing the most and least positive changes indicate that:

- in the categories where most positive change was recorded, the ratio of positive:negative change was 1:11; where for each one person who felt things were worse, eleven people felt they were better.
- in the categories where there was the least change in any way recorded, the ratio of change:no change was 1:5; where for each one person who felt there had been a change, five people felt there was no significant change in the last four years.
- in the categories where there was the least positive change recorded, the ratio of negative:positive change was 1:4; where for each one person who felt things were worse, four people felt they were better.

4.6.5 Perception Survey findings

The survey showed the high level of opportunities for interaction between Wurla Nyinta members and other people in the community through family connections, sharing of houses and cars or shared responsibilities within management of governance arrangements for other bodies within Ntaria. Respondents reported that 47.4% talked with Wurla Nyinta members about the business of the group and that each of the 23 members had some interaction with other residents, with the member mentioned the most having interaction with 12% of respondents and the least mentioned member having interaction with under 1% of respondents.

The data show that 6% of people attended Wurla Nyinta meetings and another 17% discussed Wurla Nyinta business with representatives who attend. Thirteen per cent of people read the notices put up on notice boards, 8% talked about Wurla Nyinta with others in the community, and 4% knew what was going on through their workplace business. According to both Wurla Nyinta members and residents, the topics most frequently discussed with members by residents were housing, health, education, night patrol and community safety. In spite of this, the data also indicate that 53% of Ntaria residents surveyed did not know about or were unsure about what Wurla Nyinta does.

Regarding the extent to which Ntaria has changed for the better during the last four years across a range of opportunities, (business, employment, cultural and sport), safety, leadership and decision-making and shopping, 73% of respondents reported no change, 23% reported a change that was better or much better than before and 4% reported changes for the worse or much worse.

The draft of the Wurla Nyinta Perception Survey was delivered to the meeting through a presentation made by the research team in November 2011. Wurla Nyinta decided to hold over discussion of the survey until there was time to consider its implications, and in line with reviewing other significant Governance and Leadership research due for community feedback in 2012.

5. Recommendations to Wurla Nyinta

This section of the report brings together findings from the first research topic on Safer Driving (research cycles 1.1 and 1.2 [Lovell et al. 2011]) together with initial findings from the second research topic (Stage 1) on Community Perceptions of Governance (Lovell et al. 2012 and reported in section 4.6).

In keeping with the principles of PAR methods – that is, a *process* that engages partners (the community and researchers) in investigation, education and actions that lead to social transformation – the Ntaria Community Researchers selected research actions from the LIP priorities that identified both Wurla Nyinta and the community as the lead agency (refer to section 5.1 for specific discussion of these LIP action items [Commonwealth of Australia 2010, pp. 41–45]).

The Safe Driving Survey was the first research topic undertaken for the *Ntaria: Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery* project. In keeping with the cyclical nature of PAR (see section 2.1.1), the research team then completed a second cycle of research (Vehicle Safety Focus Groups) to further inform the Safe Driving Survey results.

The second research topic, Community Perceptions of Governance (section 4.6), was designed and initiated in response to conversations with Wurla Nyinta members. Consideration and reflection of the initial results from this survey was delivered to Wurla Nyinta in March 2012 noting that a full second research cycle would not be completed due to exhausted funding for the project.

The research findings and recommendations demonstrate a formative step towards a local governance and leadership style that reflects the strengths of Arrarnta culture and language in Ntaria. Each of the two research projects (Safe Driving and Community Perceptions of Governance) identified recommendations relating to actions identified under Ntaria’s LIP priorities and the LIP review process as led by the local community and Wurla Nyinta.

5.1 Association of research recommendations to LIP actions

5.1.1 Research Cycle 1.1 Safe Driving Survey (June 2011)

LIP Activity. Economic Participation Priority 2: The working-age population has the depth and breadth of skills and capabilities required to enter the labour market (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, pp. 42–44)

Strategy 2.1: Ntaria residents acquire the skills required to find and take up jobs.

Action 2.1.7 Ntaria community members learn safe driving practices, access driver training and acquire driver’s licences.

The LIP update for September 2011 shows this action as **in progress**. “Community researchers have undertaken a survey of driving practices and reported results to LRG. Next stage will be focus group discussions to create strategies to improve licencing and driver safety. Recommendation will be made to LRG for their consideration.”

Outcome: Recommendations were made to the LRG in the first cycle progress report, particularly requesting that disqualified drink driver licence training be undertaken at Ntaria. This training occurred at Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre in November 2011. Individuals who undertook the course were all men. Additionally, the police, with the MacDonnell Shire Council, undertook to compile a list of people requiring driving licences and the shire has delivered training required to its staff.

The subsequent research cycle (Vehicle Safety Focus Groups 1.2) involved deepening the inquiry about safe driving in response to these survey findings. This cycle also impacts on LIP Priorities, and research recommendations should be considered in the review of the LIP related to actions for 2012. The data report, analysis and findings are contained in section 4.4 of this report.

5.1.2 Research Cycle 1.2: Focus Groups on Vehicle Safety (September 2011)

Schedule A: Local Implementation Plan Priority Actions Priority 2. The working age population has the depth and breadth of skills and capabilities required to enter the labour market (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, pp. 42–44)

Strategy 1.1: Local businesses and jobs are developed.

Action 1.1.11: Explore partnership opportunities in the private sector, with a particular emphasis on building formal links with industries operating in the region. These partnerships could include (but not be limited to) training, employment, infrastructure and community development.

Strategy 2.1: Ntaria residents acquire the skills required to find and take up jobs

Action 2.1.7 Ntaria community members learn safe driving practices, access driver training and acquire driver's licences

After enquiring, researching and reflecting upon the findings from the fieldwork from both research cycles – Stage 1.1 *A Safe Driving Survey at Ntaria* (Lovell et al. 2011) and Stage 1.2 *Vehicle Safety Focus Groups* (Lovell et al. 2012) – the research findings have identified the following action for progressing safe driving futures in the community of Ntaria.

As a result of Research Cycles 1.1 and 1.2, Ninti One Ntaria Research Team recommends that Wurla Nyinta requests an investigation of how a combined service approach, as represented by the RSD NPA, could support developing a local garage. The outcome might be linked with LIP actions that support adult training outcomes, employment, local business development, youth diversion and community service orders, men's programs, Job Service Providers services and support, driver's licence training, tourism, and preventative driver training programs for young people

The recommended actions from the Ntaria Community Researchers are that:

1. Wurla Nyinta asks the government to engage people in the community to participate in developing a viability study and business plan for a garage at Ntaria or Tjuwanpa.

Wurla Nyinta requests the viability of a commercial and training garage be investigated as a first step to establishing a safe choice for repairs and maintenance of vehicles within the community.

2. The social, economic, governance and health needs of the community are considered in the viability and business plan

The community should be engaged in all aspects of the process of investigating and developing a strategic plan for a local garage.

5.1.3 Research Cycle 2.1 Wurla Nyinta Community Perception Survey (September–November 2011)

The detailed report for this second research project can be found in section 4.6.

Schedule A: Local Implementation Plan Priority Actions Governance and Leadership (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, pp. 48–49)

Priority 1: Ntaria leaders and elected council members have the skills, tools and information to effectively govern their community.

Strategy 1.1: Enhance and improve local peoples' understanding of governance and leadership practices.

Action: 1.1.2 Work with the community to build upon existing strengths to further develop an integrated and strategic program of community governance and leadership support that suits the needs of the men, women and youth of Ntaria. (FaHCSIA led action 1.1.2.)

Strategy 1.4: The GBM and the ROC will support the LRG to monitor the progress and timelines of the Ntaria Local Implementation Plan.

Action: 1.4.1 The Ntaria Local Reference Group and the ROC will work in partnership to progress Local Implementation Plan actions and report back to government. (LRG and ROC led action 1.1.4.)

Ninti One Ntaria Community Research Team recommendation is:

1. Wurla Nyinta identifies opportunities for local people to engage in strong community governance through the RSD NPA and the LIP process

This issue identified in the perception survey:

Some agreement about roles and responsibilities relating to the work of Ntaria residents who are Wurla Nyinta representatives and other key local people such as Pmerekwerteye (traditional owner or manager) and Kwertengerle (cultural custodian or manager) should be discussed with the goal of ensuring there is fair sharing of the jobs required for the group to continue to be effective. This is a governance issue and is also affected by no resources being available to commit to developing a working representative governance structure.

Further recommendations are:

- Families not represented are asked to attend and are followed up before the Wurla Nyinta meetings.
- RSD outcomes for young people and young adults are discussed in each meeting, and young people are invited to provide feedback to the meetings.
- A local newsletter is produced to regularly inform the community about Wurla Nyinta and other activities.

5.1.4 Further LIP outcomes

Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria contributes to further LIP priorities at Ntaria:

Schedule A: Local Implementation Plan Priority Actions Priority 2. The working age population has the depth and breadth of skills and capabilities required to enter the labour market (Commonwealth of Australia 2010, pp. 42–44)

Strategy 2.1: Ntaria residents acquire the skills required to find and take up jobs.

Action 2.1.3. In partnership with community champions, hold/participate in Futures Forums that provides information on employment options and business development services available to community members. Provide information on opportunities arising from potential private sector involvement.

Action 2.1.4 Deliver Training for Work: targeted to meet employment needs that assist community members in gaining employment and advancing their careers.

The researchers attended the *Futures Forum* and spoke about their employment and training as community researchers with Northern Territory Government Ministers, advisors and staff and Ntaria residents.

Other skills development opportunities that occurred include:

- Presentation at the *Australasian Evaluation Society Conference*, Sydney
- *MacDonnell Shire Council Ntaria Child Care* data collection
- Regular updates on the project at Wurla Nyinta meetings
- *Local Cultural Awareness Program (LCAP)* evaluation for the Ntaria hosts
- Initial consultations with Alyawarr community researchers regarding CRC-REP Plant Business project
- Presentation to the Office of the Coordinator General via video link

The community researchers undertook skills development, peer learning and mentoring as part of their employment. The effect of their training and employment has led to further employment. The value of these benefits is discussed more fully in section 8.3.

6. Project outputs

6.1 Development of skilled Aboriginal community researchers

The results of this part of the work have exceeded our expectations in the sense that a greater number of researchers have been trained than were envisaged at the outset. As described in sections 1.3., 1.4. and 3.2., twelve researchers worked in the Ntaria team as opposed to the four–six that were originally included in planning for the project.

While the quantitative measure of progress is good, the quality is equally important. Many of the individual researchers have taken on the work in a way that has demonstrated tapped potential within themselves and in the community. With suitable oversight from Judy Lovell, as the Senior Researcher, their contributions to the entire research cycle have been essential to the results achieved. This includes advice on every aspect of the work, including the physical settings in which surveys and focus groups should take place, the form of questioning, the sample methods, approaches to analysing the material produced and, most significantly, extensive work to interpret information collected. This process of interpretation required researchers to work out, for example, the background to comments made by respondents to surveys, or to pick up trends in data coming from different places, or to determine what people meant by unexpected responses to questions. This work required a depth of local knowledge and understanding that was a real strength of the work of the team.

In essence, the development of skilled Aboriginal community researchers harnessed their existing skills and knowledge in the service of the project. But it also located this knowledge within established social research methods for which they were trained by Ninti One. This combination was the basis for the achievements of the research team.

6.2 High-quality research contributions to the RSD

We believe that standards of quality required by Ninti One in all its work were also attained through the Ntaria project. The evidence is contained within this report.

The design of the research, the qualities of the individual researchers, the research methods and processes used in the project and the analysis of the data have led to a set of findings that represent new knowledge of high quality and relevance to the RSD. This knowledge is available through the LIP and the work of Wurla Nyinta as well as the submission of this report to FaHCSIA.

6.3 Enhanced community contributions and participation in the strategic planning, implementation of and future capacity to contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the RSD

The extent to which community-based research has so far become integrated into processes for reviewing progress of the LIP at Ntaria is encouraging. This speaks well for the local capacity to conduct research in a focused and practical manner that has been developed through the project.

Of course, the positive impact of research is only as effective as the decision-making processes to which it contributes, which are usually beyond the influence of researchers. An important step forward would be for research to be seen as a key element of a process of planning and development into the longer term.

6.4 An outline model of local research, documented for potential use by government agencies and other communities

The content of this report represents a model of research that has the following components:

- A process for engaging, recruiting and employing local researchers
- Methods for working with researchers to develop their research skills and incorporate their knowledge into the research design
- An action research method that draws on established practice in this field and adapts it to local conditions and context based on cyclical processes and social research techniques such as surveys and focus groups
- Approaches to analysing research data and presenting findings as a contribution to strategic policy and governance processes.

The detailed 'story' of the development of this model is the content of this report. We see great scope for further reflection on it, especially through the further projects in which the Ntaria team will be involved (see section 7.2). Of course, the workshop at Hamilton Downs described earlier in the report and the experiences of community researchers at Amata, Mimili and shortly in Lajamanu, also contribute to the development of a research model.

We therefore propose to formalise and describe the model of community research in a short publication, using this report as a basis for it and after suitable discussion with FaHCSIA and Ntaria on the way in which the model should be attributed and presented externally.

7. Further results achieved through the project

7.1 Local Implementation Plan

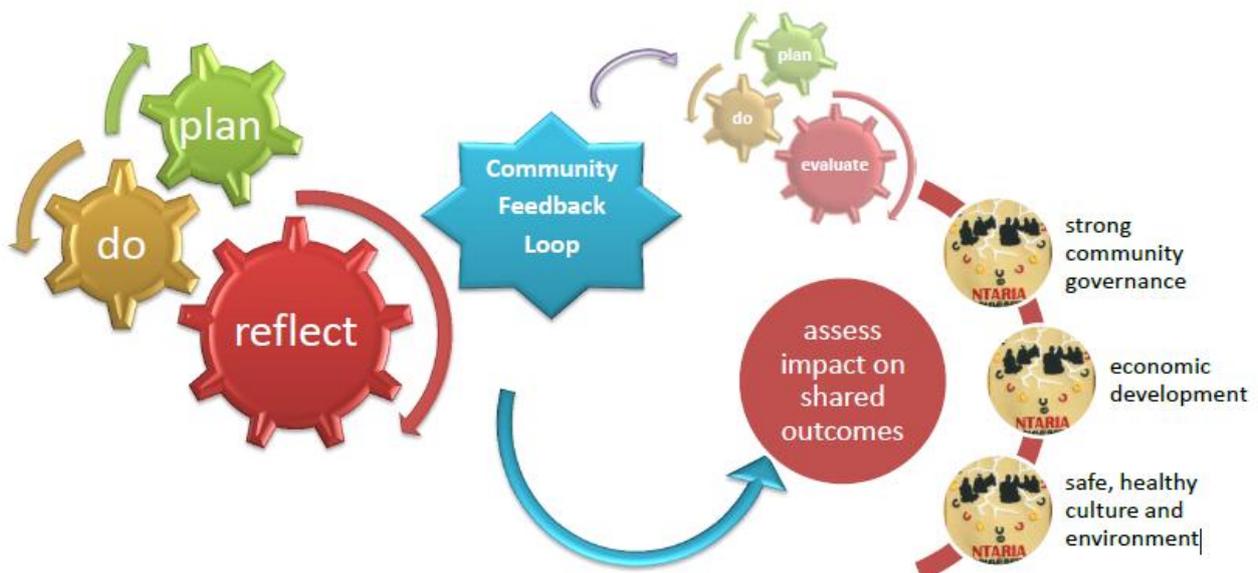
Following the progress made under the project that is the subject of this report, Ninti One was invited by FaHCSIA to contribute to a review of the LIP for Ntaria in a process called the LIP Refresh. The scope of work required consultation with communities to determine what they believe service delivery priorities should be, how well these priorities have been met by the LIP in the past and how they would like the LIP to address these priorities in future. This work was designed to complement the direct engagement with the community of the Regional Operations Centre (ROC), the Wurla Nyinta Local Reference Group (LRG), government agencies (including local government) and community-based service providers.

To conduct this work, we coordinated and led a series of consultations in Ntaria to survey and report on community priorities for service delivery in the LIP centred on the following questions:

- What have/has been the major achievement(s) of the LIP in Ntaria?
- What have/has been the most significant new or improved service(s) in Ntaria in the last 12–18 months?
- What are some of the major promises made in the LIP that have not been delivered?
- What is the biggest need for Ntaria in terms of service delivery right now?
- What has been the best outcome from the work of the Wurla Nyinta Local Reference Group?
- What priorities should the LIP focus on delivering in the next 12 months?

A workshop with LRG members was also conducted on the above research questions.

Through the work, we developed a model that describes the way that local community action research cycles (plan, do, reflect, feedback) support a community development framework and can impact upon long-term and shared goals through applying a logics model to assess outcomes in relation to long-term goals. The model is illustrated below.



The diagram is a double-loop process to enable each research cycle to be assessed against the ultimate long-term agreed and shared goals of Wurla Nyinta. The double loop is a way of assessing how a process might be expected to affect the planning and goals both short and longer term.

The involvement of the research team in the LIP Refresh was an opportunity to further enhance their skills and also contribute to the strategic evaluation processes that were conceived of in the project objectives.

7.2 New project and employment opportunities

The development of skills within the research team at Ntaria and its existence for a period of over eighteen months while the research work was conducted has led to interest on the part of researchers in further work of this kind and the emergence of new opportunities.

The first new project was the research work carried out for the LIP Refresh process, which is described in section 7.1 of this report. It involved consultation, survey and findings to represent community views on the LIP for Wurla Nyinta to consider in the next LIP iteration for 2013.

The team was also engaged by FaHCSIA to work on the Local Cultural Awareness Program (LCAP) evaluation in which they worked with community members to arrive at recommendations for Wurla Nyinta on the future of the program.

The Mobility Research Project of the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP) has invited the research team to work on their pilot consultation. It is likely that the team will be involved on occasions for the full term of the research, which is five years.

The PlantBiz Research Project of CRC-REP has also engaged the team to work on their program, which could also involve periods of work over the next five years.

In addition, Ninti One has included the Ntaria researchers in tender and bid processes for six additional commercial projects that are either in the process of negotiation or pending approval from the client.

We consider these developments to be a positive indicator of the employment potential that can be generated through building local research capacity in a remote community such as Ntaria. Most importantly, it represents recognition of the skills and knowledge of the team members themselves.

7.3 Individual and community development

A full assessment of the contribution of the project to individual and community development is beyond the scope of the research. However, we have gathered some observations on the subject that we consider important enough to include here. They stem from conversations with community researchers, the responses of community members to the research and other observations we have made during the process of planning and conducting the research. In summary, we have noted the following:

- The community researchers achieved a high profile for their work locally. This is perhaps logical given the need for them to speak to quite a large number of people in the course of the research. But, more than this, the visible presence of local people doing work that would normally be considered the business of outsiders is significant in contributing to local perceptions of the skills and knowledge that exist locally. In some ways, the researchers acted as strong role models for younger people in the community.
- The research created opportunities that are rare in remote communities: space and time to work through complex questions in a way that was facilitated by local people and directed towards both community governance and formal government audiences.
- At an individual level, all researchers have continued their employment in other roles. Two people have used their research skills and experience to take on increased responsibility within their jobs. Other researchers have reported to us that their confidence has grown as a result of their experience in the Ntaria research team and that

this has enabled them to consider employment opportunities that they might have overlooked before. One aspect of research work of this kind is that it often does not fit a full-time pattern of work. This tends to suit Aboriginal people with other community and family responsibilities to manage.

7.4 Reaching a wider professional audience

A possibility we were not expecting at the outset of the research was that it would attract the interest of people engaged in research more broadly, either as researchers, academics or field practitioners.

Encouraged by the enthusiasm for the work expressed by a range of people within the networks of FaHCSIA and Ninti One, representatives of the research team, Judy Lovell, Ada Lechleitner and Mark Inkamala participated in the Australasian Evaluation Society Conference in September 2011. The presentation they made is summarised in Appendix 3 and the full presentation is available from Ninti One.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Observations about potential research beyond the scope of this project

Further areas of related research that should be considered but are outside the scope of this research relate to the roles that motor vehicles play in relation to community safety and wellbeing.

Given a choice, most people seem to select travelling in a car, even short distances, rather than walking in the community. A car represents an extended social space, where the passenger feels safe, and part of a group. Accessing a ride in a vehicle shows belonging.

Away from communities the exposure to outside elements presents known and unknown risks. For example, many people are concerned by wild camels, dogs or other animals. There is anxiety and caution in relation to making oneself vulnerable to less tangible aspects of life too; particularly concerning the Arrarnta cultural world where animals, winds, and other natural events can signify meaning that 'outsiders' don't understand. On the other hand, in a car only the driver is in control; once a passenger has accepted a lift, there may be no way to know where the ride will take them.

Not many large purchases are made in most remote central Australian communities. Cars represent prosperity. They are disposable, representing the status-of-the-moment rather than an investment that is to be maintained. A newer car next time is a more realistic goal than caring for this one now.

Equally, there are people who purchase good cars which they keep well-maintained. Further research could show the range of values – social, emotional, financial and practical – attributed to cars.

There is a great potential for men at Ntaria to be recognised and resourced for their knowledge and skills exchange which occurs between one another, and between men and boys, based on cars, maintenance and safe driving. In considering how successful football-based education and training programs have been in engaging young men and boys, it might be time to broaden the scope and engage directly with men, boys and vehicles.

Small business and employment outcomes would be significant for Ntaria if a workshop was able to provide basic repairs, access to tools, parts and tyre repair service. The community already supplies travellers on the tourist circuit with very basic supermarket and accommodation options, but none of the current operators offer vehicle-related services. A feasibility study could assess how a training-based enterprise might be set up for local employment, training and economic participation to support a new business.

8.2. Vehicle safety and perceptions of governance

Safe Driving Survey

The survey results provide a profile snapshot of Ntaria residents' attitudes to aspects of driving and road safety. Cars play a significant part in the daily life of many Ntaria residents, whether they drive or not. Cars represent the only access to various homelands around Ntaria, for movement around the community itself including to shop, health centres, friends, or work place; or to Alice Springs for regional services not available locally. Complex negotiations occur in relation to driving or being a passenger in a car and significant time is spent getting cars running for these purposes and to attend other less frequent events such as sports weekends in regional communities, sports, recreational and social events in town, funerals and other significant meetings.

The key points that emerged are:

- 61% of the survey respondents felt their driving was sometimes less than safe.
- 78% of people will drive when it is unsafe
- 46% of people feel the car they drive is not always roadworthy
- 89% of people do safety checks on their cars.

Survey respondents' comments suggested support for:

- access to more driver training at Ntaria
- alcohol driving courses for everyone from the start of their driving careers
- a driving school at Ntaria

The study indicated a willingness of residents to drive unsafe vehicles in certain circumstances. It showed that 52% of respondents would sometimes or always drive when conditions are unsafe, and 24% of respondents acknowledged that they would drive unsafe when necessary; this includes in response to a family emergency or perceived crisis, to attend an important meeting or treatment, or in the event of risk or perceived risk to personal safety.

Results indicate that roadworthiness is considered a benchmark of sorts related to vehicle safety, but registration is considered a benchmark for legal driving. From survey responses it is clear that over half of the respondents understand that the condition of a vehicle may be below a roadworthy standard, but do not necessarily consider that as a barrier to use of the vehicle.

Focus Groups on Vehicle Safety

- A leading safety consideration is the need for people to follow the rules of vehicle use, including obtaining a licence. However, many people are aware of the difficulties of obtaining and maintaining a valid driving licence.
- It is also important that people do not take unsafe or unregistered vehicles to Alice Springs, whether for general use or to seek repairs, since this places the occupants at risk.
- Another key finding was that there needs to be greater awareness of the risks of driving poorly running vehicles to Alice Springs due to the distance involved and the need for safety equipment.
- In turning to needs for services and facilities, many men described the value of learning bush mechanic skills as a way of keeping cars on the roads, while some spoke of injuries received when standard maintenance equipment fails.
- Education and training in safety, tools, driving, and vehicle maintenance was a very high priority for the men, as was maintaining and teaching emergency bush repair skills to younger ones.
- Contemporary knowledge about health and safety practices has led to much more awareness and better practices in safety around vehicles.
- The focus groups recognised the requirement for access and storage of tools required for car maintenance and also the need for skills in how to use, store and care for tools.
- Many women expressed concerns of the impact of vehicle safety and maintenance in domestic spaces because so much vehicle maintenance is carried out in the yards of houses.
- Many car parts are left close to houses due to limited access to equipment required to transport old car bodies or heavy parts to the tip for disposal or recycling.
- Car wrecks attract snakes, old batteries contain poisonous chemicals and have the potential to cause serious burns, and broken glass and sharp metal all increase the risk of cuts.

Perceptions of governance

- Extensive opportunities exist for interaction between Wurla Nyinta members and other people in the community through family connections, sharing of houses and cars or shared responsibilities within management of governance arrangements for other bodies within Ntaria.
- Almost half the residents make use of these opportunities to discuss Wurla Nyinta business with members of the group.
- Other avenues are used by local people to inform themselves about the work of Wurla Nyinta, including attendance at meetings, reading notice boards and talking with others in the community and at their place of work.
- According to both Wurla Nyinta members and residents, the topics most frequently discussed with members by residents are housing, health, education, night patrol and community safety.
- A small majority of Ntaria residents did not know about or were unsure about what Wurla Nyinta does.
- Around three-quarters of residents of Ntaria perceive no improvements in key aspects of the development of the community and its services in the last four years, while almost a quarter see changes for the better, while one in twenty people consider that the situation in Ntaria has worsened.

8.3 The contribution and value of community research

The content of this report describes many of the benefits of community research. These include the potential for greater accuracy and precision in data collection and analysis, the building of local skills and capacity and the enhanced communication between community members and external agencies that can result.

Wadsworth describes PAR as a premise that underlies the application of all social science research:

I have come to conclude that pretty much all of the research we are involved in is more or less an approximation in the direction of 'it'. That is, every piece of research is more or less participatory. It more or less enables action as part of the process. And it all involves more or less critical reflexive, sceptical and imaginative inquiry.

Wadsworth (1998:2)

In developing her theory of PAR, Wadsworth identifies the need for ideas to be tested, and experience to be reflected upon in order to posit 'new' ideas or actions as a response to the preliminary question:

Instead of a linear model, participatory action research thus proceeds through cycles, 'starting' with reflection on action, and proceeding round to new action which is then further researched. The new actions differ from the old actions – they are literally in different places.

Wadsworth (1998:5)

The nature of this approach to research is its engagement with, and changes in relation to, the social and place-based context in which it is practiced. In the context of Strengthening Remote Community Research, the method invites participation, and investment by the researcher team, the participating residents and the LRG, to whom research findings are presented.

The investment by the community residents themselves is one reason that the PAR project resonates. The method of working engages intellectually, creatively and multi-modally with the researchers, the community participants and the LRG. We have observed that the creativity and reflective skills develop as the research team itself progresses, as the process proceeds and the communication of the group of researchers becomes more attuned to the inquiry and the daily occurrences within the process of doing research.

The model that Wadsworth describes includes four conceptual parties involved in the paradigm, which is representative of the parties engaged at Ntaria. She suggests these are:

1. The researcher/s
2. The researched
3. The researched for (in the sense of having the problem the research is to resolve) – in this case, Wurla Nyinta, the LRG.
4. The researched for (in the sense that they might benefit from better information about the situation – they may be trying to care for those with the problem, or provide, administer or fund the problematic thing or an activity or service which addresses the matter or tries to manage, treat, ameliorate or prevent it, and so on).

Wadsworth (1998:8)

Drawing parallels with this project, the four parties involved in the project at Ntaria include (1) the Ninti One Ntaria Research Team; (2) community residents of Ntaria, Tjuwanpa and outstations; (3) Wurla Nyinta LRG; and (4) FaHCSIA, ROC and SGI staff.

The initial motivation for the PAR project at Ntaria was driven by the funding stakeholders, FaHCSIA, ROC and the SGI staff (4). After completion of the initial research cycle, Wurla Nyinta (3) became engaged to some degree in providing feedback and helping to elicit the subject for the second and third research cycles. Wurla Nyinta is a group of people who are made up of, and represent, the community of people represented in groups (1), (2) and (4). Ninti One Business Development Unit staff are represented in groups (1) and (4).

Our conclusion is that the use of PAR as the basis for the project has led to a larger number of insights of the kind described above and that contribute to a wider body of knowledge and evidence on effective community-based research. Feedback from local people includes requests for research to inform community priorities about:

- Smoking habits: motivators and enticements to quit
- Housing: particularly perceptions held among residents about what conditions are reasonable, and a comparison with Territory Housing expectations
- School attendance: the barriers and enablers, community attitudes
- The use of first languages: protocols and cultural awareness relating to local governance, leadership, decision making and expectations from external agencies
- Strengthening Arrarnta culture: cross-cultural resources, training and *Anparnintja*

The community understands that Ninti One has no capacity to make a commitment to consider these projects at the present time, due to the end of existing program funds. The research cycles undertaken in terms of this contract have been met; these further requests are the result of community perceptions and experience with the research process and learning cycles. The project has shown the potential for good results to be achieved from further research.

8.4 Implications for the RSD and government engagement with remote communities

The work undertaken through this project at Ntaria represents an approach to achieving change in the way external agencies engage with remote Aboriginal communities to achieve better social, governance, employment and community development outcomes.

It is apparent that residents with local experience should be represented strongly in community research, monitoring and evaluation of the RSD agreement for their community. At Ntaria, Aboriginal community

researchers have facilitated an increase in community awareness and investment in the research and evaluation. They actively develop community representation in governance and decision making by providing tangible recommendations to the LRG or other community governance boards or organisations. They provide information to the community as a key stakeholder on their findings and provide recommendations that support active strategies and practical outcomes relating to Local Implementation Plan (LIP) actions.

In considering future potential, we have observed a number of additional benefits to government work with communities including:

- The PAR process fosters greater community engagement with decision making processes through participation and steering of research projects
- The development of ways to explore divergent community aspirations and identify key community development issues
- Interest of community members in ways that participatory methods can explore and repair entrenched community conflict, disaffection and disengagement
- Describing cultural standpoints that influence the way that most community members engage with service delivery, external stakeholders and government policy.

A considered overview of relevant aspects of the policy landscape for RSD communities illustrates how the expectations of those communities are driven by the continued coordinated engagement of the Australian Government.

- RSD towns: Most RSD communities commonly host numbers of external researchers visiting or revisiting to engage in research that requires local input. At times, there can be a number of separate consultants on-site engaging a community in various types of research for a range of external clients. The mechanisms for these external researchers to provide feedback to the community regarding process and recommendations are extremely unclear.
- Territory Growth Towns: This is the Northern Territory Government (NTG) name for the communities it is working with. There are twenty Territory Growth Towns and fifteen of these are RSD communities in the Northern Territory. The NTG aims to transform the Territory Growth Towns so that they:
 - are properly planned and designed
 - have services, facilities and buildings like any other country town
 - benefit from targeted investment in infrastructure
- Local Implementation Plan (LIP): The LIP describes long-term service delivery strategies that aim at achieving community development and better service delivery outcomes for RSD communities. The roll-out of the LIP involves coordination of Federal and Territory Governments, Shire Council, non-government organisations, local businesses and Aboriginal Corporations.
- Local Reference Groups (LRG): The community LRG is the single point of access between community representatives and all agencies associated with RSD. Regular meetings are the occasion that the community representatives (members) meet as a group to monitor the LIP and review RSD progress, accept reports from service providers, agencies and government representatives, or discuss proposals, plans and priorities. The engagement of community members in these reference groups varies widely from one community to another. The mechanism of consultation with LRGs applies broadly to all the RSD activity as the LRGs 'set the community priorities for the Local Implementation Plan' (Commonwealth of Australia 2010. p. 8).

There often exists a gulf between policy development and the engagement of residents in policy. Ninti One recommends the further development of remote community research teams to foster a network of key sites across remote Australia. Where multi-lingual community members undertake high quality research, the research is of direct benefit to those communities, and may be made available to a larger inter-cultural audience.

The ongoing, sustainable growth of this network would build on the success of projects undertaken in the previous Desert Knowledge CRC, and maximise new opportunities for Aboriginal community researchers. Developing

research, monitoring and evaluation capacity will advantage place-based Aboriginal knowledge, leading towards more diverse economic outcomes for remote communities.

Of course, community researchers can do more than basic research and could be translators and interpreters for visiting officials, as well as conducting applied research that will enhance the work of staff of government agencies and improve resulting outcomes. Specifically, we envisage that researchers will work with visiting staff both before and after the visits themselves. This will establish long-term relationships and continuity of work, providing for longitudinal studies and comparisons between communities, as well as sustainable results in the longer term.

Establishing a sustainable web of remote research centres will maximise the contribution of specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge that includes multiple literacies, languages, cultural protocols, inter-cultural processes, the communities' 'corporate' knowledge, and daily lived experiences. The wider impacts will include positive benefits to health, education, economic development, and increased participation in cultural maintenance and transmission. These are all recognised as significant targets in the Overarching Bilateral Indigenous Plan between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Northern Territory of Australia to Close the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage 2010–2015.

References

- Brydon-Miller M. 2001. Education, research, and action: Theory and methods of Participatory Action Research. In DL Tolman & M Brydon-Miller (Eds.), *From subjects to subjectivities: A handbook of interpretive and participatory methods* (pp. 76–89). New York University Press, New York.
- Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (AIHW, AIFS). 2011. *What works to overcome Indigenous disadvantage: key learnings and gaps in the evidence*. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra & Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne.
- Commonwealth of Australia. 2010. *Local Implementation Plan Ntaria*. Retrieved from <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/indigenous/pubs/communities/lips/ntaria/Pages/default.aspx>
- FaHCSIA. 2010. *Remote Service Delivery Baseline Mapping Report Hermannsburg (Ntaria)*. Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Canberra.
- Khan C and Chovanec D. 2010. Is Participatory Action Research Relevant in the Canadian Workplace? *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 5(1).
- Kolb B. 2008. Involving, Sharing, Analysing – Potential of the Participatory Photo Interview. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, North America, 9, sep. 2008. Available at <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1155>. Date accessed: 22 July 2011.
- Lewin K. 1940. Action Research and Minority Problems. *Journal of Social Issues*. No.3.
- Lovell J, Lechleitner A and Inkamala M. 2011. *Progress report Ntaria: Strengthening community research in remote service delivery – August 2011*. Unpublished report for Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Ninti One Limited. Alice Springs.
- Lovell J, Armstrong AM, Inkamala M and Lechleitner A. 2012. *Progress Report: Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria – December 2011*. Unpublished report for the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. Ninti One Limited. Alice Springs.
- OCGRIS (Office of Coordinator General of Remote Indigenous Services). 2011a. *What is Remote Service Delivery?* Retrieved from <http://cgris.gov.au/site/rsd.asp>.
- OCGRIS (Office of Coordinator General of Remote Indigenous Services). 2011b. *Six Monthly Report, September 2011*.
- OCGRIS (Office of Coordinator General of Remote Indigenous Services). 2011c. *What progress has been made in Indigenous Remote Service Delivery? Presentation to IPAA WA, 24 November 2011*.
- Orr M, Kenny P, Gorey IN, Mir A, Cox E, Wilson J. 2009. *Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre Aboriginal Knowledge and Intellectual Property Protocol: Community Guide*. Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, Alice Springs.
- Osborne S, King L and Fisher S. 2011. *Strengthening Community Research on Remote Service Delivery: Change Factors and Priorities for Community Development of Local Implementation Plans at Amata and Mimili*. Unpublished final report to the Adelaide Regional Operations Centre. Ninti One Limited. Alice Springs.
- Rabbitt E. 2000. *Oral History: The insider becomes outsider*. Edith Cowan University Publications, Perth.
- Tuhiwai-Smith L. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Zed Books, London.
- Wadsworth, Y. 1998. *What is Participatory Action Research?* *Action Research International*, Paper 2. Available on-line: <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html>

Appendix 1: Profile of Ninti One

The business structure of Ninti One Limited (Ninti One) has changed since its beginning in 2003 when it was established to operate the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC); in 2006 Ninti One business was separated from the DKCRC and became part of an unincorporated joint venture. Since 2010 Ninti One has operated as an independent company. This was driven by its success in attracting substantial commercial income and by the requirements of the Australian Government for signing contracts for the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation (CRC-REP).

Ninti One is governed by a Board of Directors, which includes the Chair and Deputy Chair. Under our constitution, at least two Directors must be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent and either the Chair or the Deputy Chair must be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Directors are appointed by the Members by election at an annual general meeting. The Managing Director is appointed by the Board and is also a director. For names and details of current Ninti One Board members, please consult our website: www.nintione.com.au. Currently, 50% of our Board is made up of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Ninti One creates value for its partners and for remote Australia by delivering new knowledge in the form of research results. We enable our partners to build their own internal research capacity and to train their own staff and members. We also deliver intellectual property, commercial outcomes and information in a form that facilitates its adoption.

Appendix 2: Summary program of activity for project

Activity date	Deliverable	Process
2010 November 2010 December		Start-up: Introduce <i>Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria</i> project to Ntaria Local Reference Group, Wurla Nyinta.
		Wurla Nyinta agrees to Ninti One staff undertaking collaborative action research, but request work not start in the community until February 2011.
	Work Plan and Contract	Establish Risk Management strategy
		Agree and sign off operational plan and contract for Ntaria with FaHCSIA
		Corporate Knowledge: Develop protocols for the collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consultation with external stakeholders and partners
15 December	Deliverables met	FaHCSIA, Ninti One and ROC meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver and discuss report
2011 January	Ethics	Write application for Human Research Ethics Approval to support action research collaboration for <i>Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria</i> project
	Researcher recruitment	Commence Ntaria visits to establish core working group on-site
	Assess skills and develop research team training material	Developing action research cycles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin workplace skills development
2011 February	Develop Research Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm ideas for research topics Triangulate information from Baseline Mapping data, Local Implementation Plan and input from community representatives
	Ethics	Request for further information for ethics committee
28 February	Deliverables met	FaHCSIA, Ninti One and ROC meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver and discuss report
2011 March, April	Ethics	Ethics approval granted by Central Australian Human Research Ethics Committee (March to September 2011)
	Skills Development Workshop	What is Good Community Research? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ninti One resource discussing action research undertaken by local community researchers on their own communities (insider researchers)

Activity date	Deliverable	Process
	Introduce Ninti One Researchers' Best Practice	Establishing Protocols for ethical research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and using Informed Consent forms, Understanding Privacy • How to use forms for obtaining permission to reproduce photographs
	Introduce Action Research Cycles	What is Quantitative Research? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to surveys and number stories in action research • Planning and Writing a survey instrument
2011 May	Action Research Cycle 1.1 Development	Doing Qualitative Research: Safe Driving Survey at Ntaria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, deliver, collate, reflect on and feed back
11-12 May	Skills Development Workshop	Ninti One Researcher Induction Training
23 May		FaHCSIA, Ninti One and ROC meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss project
2011 June	Action Research Cycle 1.1 Safe Driving Surveys	Deliver research report to Wurla Nyinta about Safe Driving Survey at Ntaria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose Safe Driving Action Research Cycle 1.2 Qualitative Research Focus Group and Photo Elicitation • Propose Wurla Nyinta Community Perception Survey (Action Research Cycle 2.1)
8-10 June	Skills Development Workshop	Researchers' Group Training at Yulara with Amata, ROC Community Researchers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation to Ninti One Community Research Cohort by Ntaria Researchers
	Self-Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring and evaluating own learning
2011 July	Action Research Cycle 1.2 Vehicle Safety Focus Groups	Doing Qualitative Research: Vehicle Safety Focus Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop framework for Vehicle Safety Focus Group discussions • Use researchers' photographs for photo elicitation
		Talk with Ntaria Police <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for local data relating to vehicle safety and driving offences
2011 July	Action Research Cycle 2.1 Development	Write Survey Instrument 2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wurla Nyinta Community Perception Survey
18 July		FaHCSIA, Ninti One and ROC meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss project
1 August	Deliverables met	Progress Report : Action Cycle 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver written progress report
2011 August	Skills Development Workshop	Researchers' Group Training with Yuendumu Community Researchers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review action research methods • Review action research cycles to date
	Action Research Cycle 2.1	Workshop and finalise Community Perception survey

Activity date	Deliverable	Process
31 August – 3 September	Professional Development	Australasian Evaluation Society Conference, Sydney <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation about Ntaria Community Research and FaHCSIA Strengthening Community Research in Remote Economic Participation
12 September		FaHCSIA, Ninti One and ROC meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss project
15 September	Wurla Nyinta Perception Survey (Action Research Cycle 2.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • survey draft to Wurla Nyinta meeting for feedback • Report on project at Wurla Nyinta
2011 September – October	CAHREC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension to ethics clearance
	Trial Wurla Nyinta Perception Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial using computer tablet and bilingual text • Report survey findings
	Vehicle Safety Focus Groups Action Research Cycle 1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete focus groups • Compile findings • Write recommendations for Wurla Nyinta • Evaluate findings against actions in LIP
2011 November	FaHCSIA Report	
2011 December	Professional Development	Community researchers' self-evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare survey for Ntaria Cultural Centre (children and aged care provider, MDSC)
15 December	Wurla Nyinta	Deliver final recommendations from research for consideration as LIP actions Present final draft of interim progress report
16 December	Deliverables met	Interim Progress Report 2: Action Cycle 2.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver written progress report
2012 January	HOLIDAYS	PROPOSED REPORTING FRAMEWORK
2012 February	Develop final report	
2012 June	Ninti One Sign Off	General Manager sign off
30 June	Deliverable met	Deliver final report: <i>Strengthening Community Research in Remote Service Delivery at Ntaria</i>

Appendix 3: Presentation to Australasian Evaluation Society Conference, September 2011, Sydney

Ninti One supported four members of the community researcher team to attend this international evaluation conference. Mark Inkamala, Ada Lechleitner, Judy Lovell and Sam Osborne attended the three-day conference.

Mark and Ada each developed a script about facilitating the focus group with Tjuwanpa Rangers and the momentum for the safe driving surveys:

Hello, my name is Mark Inkamala. I think this work is really important because community researchers can really talk and speak to others at Ntaria in language, and people trust us to listen to what they really mean. Then we can take this to Wurla Nyinta and to FaHCSIA and tell them how things can change in our community.

When I run the focus groups or talk to community about research I speak Western Arrarnta because it's the easiest way to get through to people. I get better stories and information because people open themselves easily to talk about the questions I ask. They feel comfortable.

We work outside when we can, in a circle.

In this focus group I used photos that the research team took. We did that because the photos get people thinking and talking about the same thing – looking at the same thing together.

This group are Tjuwanpa Rangers, and you can see they work together as younger and older men in a group.

In the focus group we are thinking and talking about safety, about the dangers they have experienced and about ideas for the community as ways to improve things around safe driving. The main ideas so far are:

- *To have a mechanic and workshop on the community, and make it accessible for people living there to learn and to do better maintenance on their own cars*
- *To get better driver training for young people, young women, girls, young men, boys*
- *To have license training and road rules and safety taught in Arrarnta as well as English, for people to learn safety in their own language and understand that way first.*

These are ideas we take to Wurla Nyinta – our Local Reference Group. They are telling us to keep going with the research, and develop these ideas up more.



Hello, my name is Ada Lechleitner and I was born at Ntaria. I do this work because I am most concerned about family members that are branded by having no licence for driving and other charges that stay on their record for all the rest of their life. By doing this research in our own language then people really talk, and that's how they change.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a method where community researchers participate in all parts of the research. It shows how we work as local researchers, how we can bring our skills into community research.

The Safe Driving survey findings were presented in Western Arrarnta to Wurla Nyinta. Speaking now about Ntaria Community Research we can say that the researchers have brought high quality research findings to Wurla Nyinta, the Local Reference Group, to assist in community decision making. We always take our research back to them for comment and feedback.

