

Creating Livelihoods Through Indigenous Protected Areas: The Nantawarrina Experience



Kate Braham

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The Circle of Life

*“Man has a poor understanding of life,
He mistakes knowledge for wisdom.
He tries to unveil the secrets of our Great Father the Spirit,
He attempts to appose his laws and ways on Mother Earth,
Even though he himself is part of nature.
He chooses to disregard and ignore it for the sake of his own immediate gain,
But the laws of Nature are far stronger than those of Mankind,
Man must awake at last and learn to understand how little time remains,
Before he will become the cause of his own downfall.
And he has so much to learn,
To learn to see with the heart,
He must learn to respect Mother Earth,
She who has given life to everything,
To our brothers and sisters the animals and plants,
To the rivers the lakes the oceans and the wind.
He must realize that this planet does not belong to him,
But that he has to care for and maintain the delicate balance of nature.
For the sake of the well being of our children and all future generations,
It is the duty of man to preserve the Earth,
And the creation of the Great Spirit,
Mankind being but a grain of sand in the Holy Circle which encloses all of life.”*

- White Cloud, Indian Chief.

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List of Abbreviations

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics

ALT – Aboriginal Lands Trust

CDEP – Community Development Employment Projects

CRC – Cooperative Research Centre

DEWR – Department of Environment and Water Resources

ICUN – World Conservation Union

IPA – Indigenous Protected Area

NRDB – Northern Regional Development Board

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

Abstract

Conservation management of protected areas provides Indigenous people with an opportunity to protect and enhance biodiversity, culture, and build community capacity to sustain livelihoods. Recognition of the important role of Indigenous people in protected area management has seen the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Program become the fastest growing sector of Australia's Natural Reserve System. Entering into an IPA agreement is one of few avenues through which many Indigenous communities can pursue a viable social and economic enterprise with the assets and resources available to them.

Using community-based participatory methodology, this research examines the success of the IPA program in creating livelihoods, using the Nantawarrina IPA's impact on Nepabunna community as a case study. The research supports current literature that states protected area management can create livelihood benefits for communities. In Nepabunna this is notably through increased employment, health from working on country, and increased pride and well being within the community. However, the research also found that to ensure the future sustainability of Nantawarrina IPA, and the subsequent benefits for the Nepabunna community, significant governance issues related to accountability, transparency, and self-determination need to be addressed.

Statement of Authentication

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text.

.....
Kate Braham, November 2007

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First, a big thank you to Nepabunna community and the Adnyamathanha people for letting me come into your lives this year, and for sharing your knowledge and experiences with me. Without you, this research would not have been possible.

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Moreover, my sincere appreciation goes to the Indigenous Protected Area Program for their invitation to, and hospitality at, the 2007 IPA managers' conference. The three days were a great opportunity to learn more about the Program, and to see the conservation and development opportunities being employed by Aboriginal communities across the country.

Finally, thank you to my supervisor Dr Simon Bengier for his support and guidance throughout the year. Although this year posed many challenges, the support received from those mentioned here helped to create a thorough research document, which I hope can be used to further develop sustainable livelihoods for Nepabunna community, and other Indigenous communities involved in conservation management.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Photo 1.1: Welcome Sign to Nepabunna Community



Protected areas provide not only an opportunity to protect and enhance biodiversity, but also an opportunity to protect and enhance Indigenous culture and community. Indigenous people, both in Australia and around the world, represent one of the most disadvantaged groups in society, with many studies revealing they suffer from poorer health, lower levels of education, and higher levels of poverty (Burger, 1990; Furze et al., 1996). Their spiritual connection to the land and desire to care for country offers an avenue through which to address this disadvantage. New conservation partnerships such as the Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) program, mark a “breakthrough” in Australian Indigenous affairs policy (Davies et al., 2000), and illustrate a change in the structure of protected area management. They allow Indigenous Australians to assert control over the conservation of their land, and to explore related development opportunities to enhance the capacity of local communities to create and maintain sustainable livelihoods.

To evaluate the potential success of the IPA program in creating livelihoods through biodiversity conservation, this thesis focuses on the case study of the Nantawarrina IPA and its impact on livelihoods within Nepabunna community. An outline of the aim of this research, and also the specific research objectives, are presented at the end of this chapter. Nantawarrina was

selected as a case study as it was the first IPA declared in Australia, allowing for greater insight to both the immediate and long-term successes and difficulties encountered by Indigenous communities choosing to be involved in the IPA program.

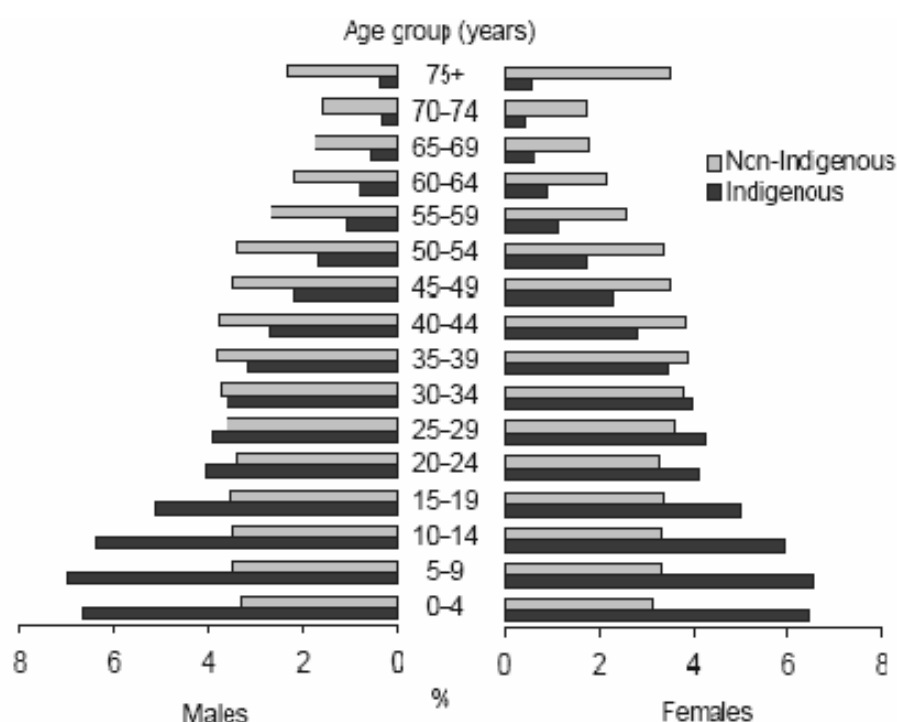
The aim of Desert Knowledge CRC's Core Project 1 to generate greater understanding of livelihood outcomes from participation in land management, allowed for financial assistance to be made available for this research. The research leaders from Core Project 1 also supported the research process by helping to establish relationships with Nepabunna and with assistance in developing methodology. Managing an IPA has great potential to create sustainable livelihoods for a community, as funding can generate employment, and working on country can improve health and well-being. The following two sections of the introduction justify this research with a brief introduction into the health and welfare of Indigenous Australians, and the relationship of Indigenous people to land and ecological knowledge.

1.1 The Health and Welfare of Indigenous Australia

While Indigenous people represent only 2.4% of the total Australian population (ABS, 2005), they suffer a social disadvantage which Dodson and Smith (2003: 5) describe as "one of the most urgent tasks facing Indigenous leaders, their communities, and State and Federal governments". This social disadvantage is demonstrated by lower levels of school completion, higher unemployment rates, and higher susceptibility to a range of behavioural and environmental health problems. Many factors related to colonialism and subsequent policies such as the denial of land rights, dispossession from traditional country, and the associated loss of spiritual and cultural values contribute to Indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage in Australia (McDermot et al., 1998; Burgess et al., 2005). In addition, Australia's Indigenous population is currently growing at a faster rate than the non-Indigenous population, creating a relatively young population profile with a median age of 21 years (ABS, 2005: xxi) (see Figure 1.1). Dodson and Smith (2003) suggest

such a population profile is likely to result in levels of Indigenous socioeconomic disadvantage remaining at their current height, if not increasing.

Figure 1.1: Population Profile by Indigenous Status, Age and Sex, 2001

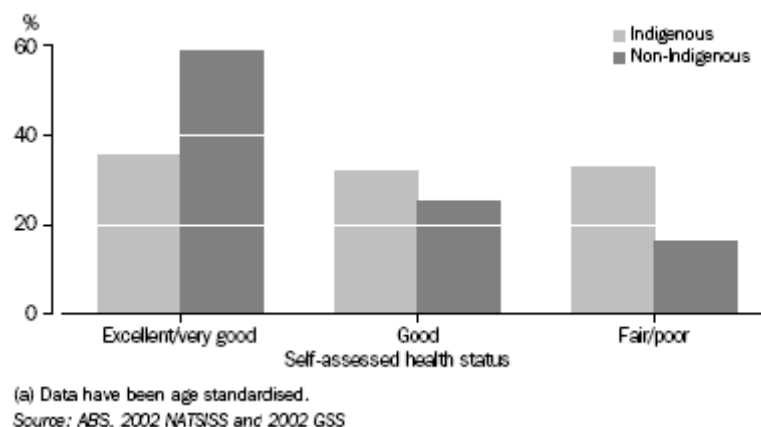


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p. 4

Health problems are a significant consequence of Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage with many Indigenous Australians suffering poor health across their life span. Common health issues range from low birth weights, to higher rates of suicide, injury, and chronic non-communicable disease (McDermot et al., 1998; Burgess et al., 2005). Over the period of 1993-2003 Indigenous mortality rates for endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases were recorded as around seven to eleven times higher than those of the non-Indigenous population (ABS, 2005), with Indigenous life expectancy currently 17-20 years less than the national average (ABS, 2005; Burgess et al., 2005). Environmental and behavioural health risk factors are considerable in

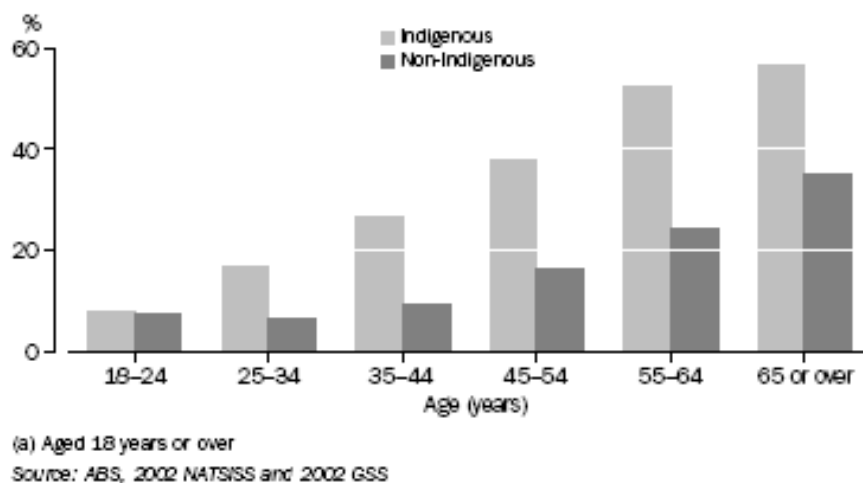
Indigenous communities with a large percentage of adult populations smoking on a daily basis, admitting to drinking “risky” levels of alcohol, and participating in low levels of physical activity (ABS, 2005: xxiii). The impact of these risk factors is clearly identified by Indigenous people, who, in a 2002 survey, were twice as likely as the non-Indigenous population to report their health as poor or fair (see Figure 1.2 and Figure 1.3) (ABS, 2005).

Figure 1.2: Self Assessed Health Status, 2002



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p. 92

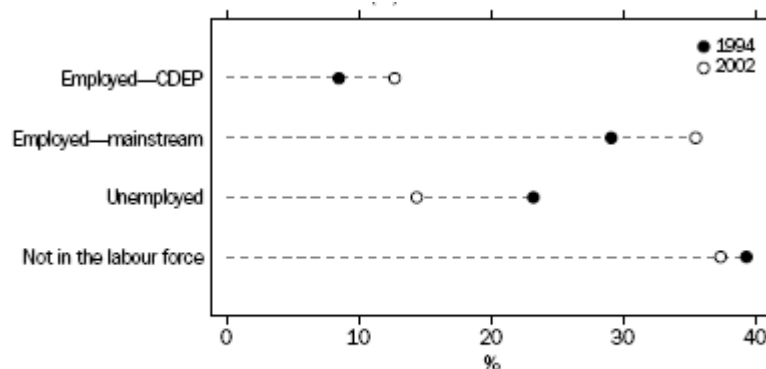
Figure 1.3: Persons with Fair or Poor Self-Assessed Health, 2002



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p. 92

In addition to the general health risks faced by Indigenous Australians, those living in rural and remote communities suffer from higher levels of poor health, as they often have limited access to essential services. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2005: xxiv) note that this access is limited by “the proximity of the service, availability of transport, affordability, availability of culturally appropriate services and the involvement of Indigenous people in the delivery of health services”. These limits transfer from the accessibility of health to other essential services such as those related to education and employment. Despite an increase in the proportion of Indigenous people in mainstream employment from 31% to 38% between 1994 and 2002, Indigenous Australians continue to be under-represented in mainstream employment and over-represented in rates of unemployment (see figure 1.4), with 13% of Indigenous people unemployed compared to 4.6% of the non-Indigenous population (ABS, 2005: xx). The result is a mean equalised gross household income of only \$394 per week for Indigenous adults, which represents only 59% of the income of non-Indigenous adults (ABS, 2005: xxi). In addition, while there have been significant improvements in participation in, and attainment of, education, Indigenous Australians are still around half as likely as non-Indigenous people to have non-school qualifications (ABS, 2005).

Figure 1.4: Labour Force Status of Indigenous Persons, 1994 and 2002



(a) Indigenous persons aged 18–64 years.
Source: ABS, 1994 NATSIS and 2002 NATSISS

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2005) *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, p. 10

The statistics of socio-economic disadvantage presented in this section indicate major developmental challenges for Indigenous Australians. Economic development is a key issue as incomes of Indigenous Australians tend to be low, and high levels of unemployment result in heavy dependency on the State as a source of income (Altman, 2001). Restricted access to services for Indigenous people residing in rural and remote communities exemplifies an already difficult obstacle for achieving enterprise development and economic independence (Altman 1990; Taylor 2000). Social disadvantage is one of the most urgent tasks needing to be addressed in Australia's Indigenous communities and economic development is one way in which to achieve this.

1.2 Indigenous People and Ecological Knowledge

Prior to European settlement two hundred years ago, Aboriginal people inhabited the vast Australian landscape, actively interpreting, using, managing, controlling, and renewing the natural and cultural resources of their traditional country for thousands of years (Sutherland and Muir, 2001). During the 40,000 – 60,000 years that they managed the Australian environment, a bond formed between the people and the land that was “integral to the Aboriginal existence” (DeLacy and Lawson, 1997: 157). For Indigenous people in Australia, and throughout the world, the geographical environment is entwined with spiritual relations including “movement, memory, encounter, association, and cultural identity” (Bradley, 2001: 305). As Wallace, an Aboriginal Park Ranger explains “the first thing you are taught as an original child of Australia is that you are part of the land. The land is your father and mother and if you don't respect it you will die...” (Wallace, 1992: 30).

As people active in the environmental movement have become increasingly aware of the strong bond between many Indigenous people and the environment, they have turned to Indigenous people as key informants, utilising their expertise in local ecology for resource management (Kalland, 2000). Unlike Western scientific approaches to environmental knowledge

based on theoretical models, local Indigenous knowledge provides unique data on local ecosystems which includes specialised information on climatic conditions, flora, and fauna, as well as the associated relations between these groups. Specialised information means that Indigenous land use practices are often developed exclusively to local environmental and ecological conditions. The localization of such knowledge has allowed Indigenous peoples to survive in diverse and difficult environments such as the Australian desert (Stevens, 1997).

In contrast to the Indigenous spiritual connection to nature are Western views of nature as the 'other', views which have had devastating effects on the Australian environment since European occupation. In fact, two hundred years of European occupation has seen greater modification and destruction of the natural landscape than in the 40,000 or more years of Aboriginal occupation (Blowes, 1992; Baker et al., 2001). Baker et al. (2001: 17) highlight this modification and destruction through "a marked loss of biodiversity, particularly among medium sized mammal species in the arid and semi-arid areas" during this period, due largely to the activities of "introduced predators such as foxes and cats and to competition from livestock and from feral herbivores, ranging in size from camels to rabbits". Yet, despite the degradation of their traditional country, a strong connection between Aboriginal people and the land continues to exist. Caring for country is linked to health and well being with many communities using country to realise and enhance their interests in "community living areas, cultural protection and maintenance, spirituality, traditional usage" (Sutherland and Muir, 2001: 25), as well as for enterprise development and the associated employment opportunities. For Aboriginal Australians caring for country is seen as "an integral part of living on their land", and helps to form a part of "the relationship individuals have with each other and with the land" (Rose, 1995: ix).

Recognition of the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge in environmental management is an important part of acknowledging Indigenous peoples' cultural significance and place within the global community (Kalland, 2000), as

well as reinforcing Indigenous peoples right to help in the protection and conservation of their traditional lands. It is only very recently that governments, and Western society, have begun to realise that “encoded in Indigenous languages, customs, and practices may be as much understanding of nature as is stored in the libraries of modern science”, and that it is necessary to employ this understanding to sustain local, national and international ecological health (Kleymeyer, 1993; cited by Furze et al., 1996: 132-133).

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The following research aim and objectives identify the scope and focus of this thesis. They were developed considering the livelihoods framework (see Chapter 3) and the aims and objectives of Desert Knowledge CRC’s Core Project 1, Livelihoods inLand™, who funded this research. Due to limitations of an honours timeframe, the findings presented in this thesis, although potentially relatable to experiences in other Indigenous communities, are specifically based on the literature review and time spent in Nepabunna community.

1.3.1 Aim:

The aim of this project is to evaluate the success of the IPA program in creating livelihoods, using the Nantawarrina IPA’s impact on livelihoods in Nepabunna community as a case study.

1.3.2 Objectives:

1. Identify community and agency perspectives on the role of the Nantawarrina IPA in creating livelihoods;
2. Examine what activities have been successful in positively influencing the economic, social, and natural resources which sustain livelihoods;

3. Identify how the community and government observe and measure these results;
4. Identify the effects of local rules and outside policies, for the management of Nantawarrina, on the livelihoods of the Nepabunna community.

1.3.3 Significance

Nantawarrina was the first IPA in Australia, declared in 1998. Since its establishment it has been successful in attracting recognition from local and international environmental conservation organisations, providing an example of success that has seen two thirds of the growth in Australia's National Reserve System since 1996 in establishing new IPAs (WWF, n.d).

While the program itself, and existing literature, recognise that IPAs can be successful in creating livelihoods, a large focus is placed on resource management objectives and outcomes rather than outcomes for the livelihoods of local community members. This project will build on current research by focusing more directly on the realisable livelihood outcomes, and challenges communities face to achieve these outcomes through environmental management agreements. This research is significant as livelihoods created through IPAs can help Indigenous communities maintain their cultural identity and social integrity, as well as add value to Australia's conservation network. Moreover, this thesis will add to the existing body of literature used by the Australian Government to continue to adapt and develop policy objectives relating to environmental management and the National Reserve System.

To realise the aims and objectives of the research a review of the key concepts (i.e. livelihoods) and subjects (i.e. Indigenous rights) central to this study is offered in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 then discusses the unique experience of research with an Indigenous community and participatory research

methodology. The background to findings of this research are told through two stories: the Nantawarrina Story (Chapter 4) and the Nepabunna Story (Chapter 5). The key findings that emerge from these stories and the participatory research conducted within the community are discussed in detail in Chapter 6, followed by the conclusion in Chapter 7.

Chapter 2 – Protected Areas, Livelihoods and Indigenous Communities

This chapter provides a review of the literature with reference to key concepts of creating livelihoods through protected area management. A review of the literature is important to justify the research within the scope of current bodies of academic work, and relevant government policy. It begins by defining what is meant by the term livelihood, and what constitutes a sustainable livelihood. This is followed by a discussion of Indigenous people's rights and the environment; different international examples of Indigenous involvement in protected areas; and the role of protected areas in creating livelihoods for Indigenous communities. The chapter then concludes with background information on the establishment and function of Australia's Indigenous Protected Area Program as an enterprise for Indigenous communities.

2.1 Defining Livelihoods

A livelihood is comprised of the capabilities, social assets, material assets, and activities required for people to make themselves a living (Chambers and Conway, 1992; Department for International Development, 2007; De Hann, 2000a). Sustainable livelihoods are a significant issue for marginal groups in society, such as Indigenous people in Australia, as they are often linked to social inclusion or social exclusion, particularly in relation to ownership of land, access to services, and opportunity for income generation (Singh and Gilman, 1999). As De Hann (2000b: 343) explains, "if a livelihood is sustainable it is synonymous with social inclusion; if not, it equates with social exclusion".

The concept of sustainable development became popularised in the 1980s with the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1983, and the release of the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report 'Our Common Future' (LaFlamme, n.d.). While previously concepts of development and the environment had been considered

contradictory (De Hann, 2000a), the Brundtland Commission Report promoted understanding of the significance of “the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability” (LaFlamme, n.d.: 3). The localised focus of sustainable livelihoods progressed into an “action agenda”, within the concept of Agenda 21, at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (Singh and Gilman, 1999: 540). Sustainable livelihoods form a significant part of sustainable development, addressing not only development opportunities, but also sustainable resource management and poverty eradication (Singh and Gilman, 1999).

The detail of what constitutes a sustainable livelihood can vary greatly across individuals or communities, as a livelihood is based on satisfying self-defined basic needs. However, to be sustainable a livelihood should be resilient to shocks and stresses, and consider the protection of natural resources in the process of increasing prosperity (De Hann, 2000a). While there are variations in what basic ‘needs’ form a livelihood; for example in non-Indigenous Australian society houses and cars are capital assets, whereas the focus of livelihoods for many Aboriginal people is centred around land and kinship (LaFlamme, n.d.); there has been a general consensus in literature that people need five vital resources to achieve a sustainable livelihood (Blaikie et al., 1994; Chambers and Conway, 1992; Chambers, 1995; Carney, 1999; De Hann, 2000b). De Hann (2000b: 344) lists these resources as:

1. Human capital: which can be labour, skills experiences, knowledge and creativity;
2. Natural capital: including land, water, and minerals;
3. Physical capital: such as livestock, artwork, tools and machinery;
4. Financial capital: in savings, loans or credit; and
5. Social capital: the quality of relations and support among people.

It is recognised that very few livelihoods qualify as sustainable across all these dimensions, however the livelihoods approach is a valuable resource in identifying constraints and opportunities available to all people in spite of ethnicity, geographical location and so on (Department for International Development, 2007).

2.2 Indigenous Peoples' Rights and the Environment

Our nation's history has had a major impact on Indigenous people's livelihoods, with colonisation and the doctrine of *terra nullius* effectively denying three crucial groups of Indigenous peoples' rights: autonomy rights, identity rights, and territory rights (ATSIC, 1995). Assimilation policies have "denied, overridden and collectively forgotten" the fundamental human rights of Indigenous people, a practice that continued into the construction of protected areas in settler societies (Price, 1996: 18). Removal from traditional lands to centralised settlements aimed at encouraging non-Indigenous systems of education, employment, technologies and language (Baker et al., 2001), rejected traditional knowledge systems and created dependency on new governments for basic support (Furze et al., 1996).

When European settlers arrived in Australia in 1788, along with the denial of the rights of the Aboriginal people, they also failed to recognise the Australian landscape as a managed ecosystem. Instead it was seen as the wilderness, a hostile environment that needed to be tamed (De Lacy and Lawson, 1997). The early establishment of protected areas, based on the Yellowstone model (see Section 2.4 for detail), excluded Indigenous people from their traditional lands (Stevens, 1997). During this time there was no consultation or negotiation with Aboriginal people over the conservation of their lands, a practice that continued through to the 1970s when joint management was introduced in Australia's National Reserve System. Moreover, it is only recently that many members of the global environmental movement have begun to recognise Aboriginal land rights and rights to economic self-determination through environmental management (Price, 1996).

In Australia Aboriginal rights were completely suppressed until 1968 when a referendum to change the constitution granted Indigenous people the right to vote for the first time (De Lacy and Lawson, 1997). Following this recognition of identity rights, began a positive period for the recognition of Indigenous land rights with the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Baker et al., 2001). As Baker et al. (2001: 5-6) explain, this legislation has

resulted in the recognition of “around half of the Northern Territory as inalienable freehold Aboriginal-owned land”, and has “provided a catalyst” for all Indigenous Australians to assert their rights to traditional lands in their home state or territory. Yet, perhaps the most significant legal recognition of Indigenous rights to land in Australia came with the Mabo case decision in 1992, in which the High Court overruled the doctrine of *terra nullius*, recognizing Indigenous people as the original owners of Australia (Baker et al., 2001). Recognition of native title has begun a new chapter for Indigenous involvement in Australia’s protected area system, forcing members of the environmental movement to create new dialogues with Indigenous communities (Price, 1996; Sutherland and Muir, 2001). Davies et al. (2000) note that Indigenous peoples’ involvement through co-management and the more recent Indigenous Protected Areas Program is “part of the reshaping of the ‘*terra nullius*’ institutions- the mechanisms established to manage land and resource management in the 200 years prior to the recognition of native title”.

Being involved in decision-making processes for co-managed protected areas, or owning secure land tenure for Indigenous Protected Areas, is vital for the protection of sacred sites and the subsequent protection of Indigenous culture (De Lacy and Lawson, 1997). Recognition of native title has forced Australian governments to rethink the role of conservation, and how Indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge can be more significantly accommodated in biodiversity conservation (Stevens, 1997; Sutherland and Muir, 2001). Increased bargaining power of Indigenous people allows communities to use their natural resources as a means to generate economic benefits, as well as a respect for their unique cultures, and recognition of the legitimacy and capacity of traditional resource management practices (Kemf, 1993; Williams, 1998).

2.3 Creating Livelihoods Through Environmental Management

Our identity as human beings remains tied to our land, to our cultural practices, our systems of authority and social control, our intellectual traditions, our concepts of spirituality, and to our systems of resource ownership and exchange. Destroy this relationship and you change – sometimes irrevocably – individual human beings and their health.

Pam Anderson (cited by Burgess et al., 2005: 120)

In Chapter 1 it was mentioned that many Indigenous people have a spiritual connection to the land, and that the land often forms part of their self-identity. While Indigenous Australians are culturally diverse, with different communities living in different economic, political, and social circumstances; they share a common bond to their traditional lands and its respective natural resources (Davies et al., 2000). Following the growth of co-management in protected areas, and the recognition of native title giving communities back their lands, there has been increasing acknowledgement that Indigenous involvement in natural resource management can bring “significant economic and socio-cultural benefits” (Altman and Whitehead, 2003: 2).

Some benefits may vary greatly depending on the natural resources available, for example using wildlife produce as a food source for community health and economic development may not be viable in some areas due to drought conditions, overgrazing and so on. However, for all Indigenous people, caring for country can increase social capital, with communities bonding through group activities related to natural resource management such as seed collecting, revegetation projects or the construction of fences, bores and other infrastructure (Burgess et al., 2005). It can also be beneficial for increasing cultural capital with elders taking children to the land and passing on their knowledge, to ensure the future protection of sacred sites and stories. Moreover, while food produce may not be a viable source of economic development for all communities, natural resources can be incorporated into the art industry, or in many areas a popular source of economic independence has been the establishment of eco or cultural tourism businesses. Economic

and health related benefits of environmental management are particularly important as Aboriginal people are under-represented in the mainstream workforce in Australia, and suffer poorer health than the non-Indigenous population (ABS, 2005).

Nevertheless, while there are benefits to be gained through Indigenous involvement in natural resource management, there are also obstacles to overcome. While many Indigenous people have traditional knowledge on how to care for country, they face a challenge in acquiring adequate training for skills related to resource management planning, community driven enterprise development, and negotiating support from government agencies while retaining local control (Dodson and Smith, 2003; Negri and Nautiyal, 2003). It is for this reason that cross-cultural partnerships are rarely sustained, and that the need for an integrated approach to land management is essential (LaFlamme, n.d). Integrated approaches require the consideration of the social, economic and cultural dynamics relevant to local communities, levels of government, and the land. LaFlamme (n.d: 1) notes that Indigenous peoples' capacity for success in integrated resource management is promising as their worldview is "integrated and has always emphasised the interdependence of all elements in a local natural cultural system as a whole". Indigenous involvement in resource management provides an opportunity to realise Australia's goals of biodiversity conservation, recognition of Indigenous territory rights, and improved Indigenous socio-economic status (Altman and Whitehead, 2003).

2.4 International Approaches to Indigenous Involvement in Protected Areas

An area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.

Definition of protected area, (World Conservation Union, 1994: 7)

Protected areas, as suggested in the above quote, ideally protect and maintain biodiversity while accommodating the social, economic and cultural rights of the local communities who live in and around the area (Beltran, 2000). Currently many examples of Indigenous resource management systems and conservation practices are found throughout the world, however there are varying degrees to which these practices are adopted into protected area policy (Nepal, 2000). The construction and management of protected areas can and has severely impacted Indigenous “customary rights, values and beliefs, and livelihood support systems” (Nepal, 2002: 748). While in the first wave of national parks the primary concern was conservation of nature, it has become increasingly recognised that the needs of local Indigenous populations must be considered for the success and survival of natural reserve systems.

The establishment of national parks began in the United States with Yellowstone National Park, which set a precedent for the management structure of protected areas around the world. Yellowstone National Park was based on strict nature protection, prohibiting any settlement and any subsistence and commercial use of natural resources (Stevens, 1997). National parks were romanticised as places which people visited for recreation but in which people did not carry out traditional Indigenous activities of hunting, gathering or farming practices (Stevens, 1997; Nepal, 2002). This view of wilderness as a separate entity is in direct contrast to Indigenous views of nature in which people are an essential part of the natural world (Nepal, 2002).

Influences of the Yellowstone model continue to be seen in many areas of the world today, particularly areas of the developing world. In India protected area policy limits resource use and in turn the means of livelihoods for local communities (Negri and Nautiyal, 2003). Conservationist ideals by outsiders and top-down policies have forced relocation of local populations, a change in economic activities, and a breakdown of traditional management systems. Nanda Devi National Park in India is one example of the impact of protected area policy on local people. Traditionally people living in villages surrounding the forest have had the right to use forest resources, however declaration of the area as a national park has limited peoples rights in the area (Negri and Nautiyal, 2003). Conflicts between local people and park authorities have intensified as the government has failed to provide alternative livelihood opportunities despite removing tourism, grazing lands, and access to non-timber forest products, all of which the local communities depended upon. The struggles faced by these Indian communities are not isolated, Akha hill tribes in northern Thailand face threats of eviction from their homeland, and Ethiopia's Indigenous population has been precluded from participation in protected area management in order to protect wildlife habitats (Nepal, 2002).

The examples of India, Thailand and Ethiopia show that local communities have stakes in the natural environment, and that their livelihoods are connected with local natural resources. Other countries have acknowledged this interdependence and applied concepts such as community-based conservation and co-management in protected areas. Nepal (2002: 750) highlights that for many countries the application of these concepts reflects a change of time and development at a national scale, using the example of Canada where in the late 1980s and early 1990s there was "increasing empowerment of Indigenous communities, which was brought about by closely interconnected developments". Co-management is one of the first ways that Indigenous people have had the opportunity to establish their legal, economic, social and cultural interests in protected areas. In Australia's Uluru and Kakadu national parks local communities have seen significant benefits of co-management including employment, lease payments, empowerment through decision making, and education of the non-Indigenous population of

culturally significant park sites (Davies et al., 1999). Positive outcomes of co-management agreements in Australia and Canada have led to the uptake of co-management in protected area policy across the world from Nepal, to Zimbabwe, and Honduras (Nepal, 2002).

Despite many positive outcomes of co-management, critique of the approach suggests it represents a top-down structure of management accepted by Indigenous people to increase control over their traditional country in areas which the government has created protected areas, rather than entered into as a voluntary agreement (Davies et al., 1999; Muller, 2003). The goal of Indigenous involvement in protected area management is to achieve empowerment, equity and social justice (Davies et al., 1999). While co-management can achieve some level of this, there is a need for international standards to ensure awareness of global frameworks of biodiversity conservation and human rights (Davies et al., 2000). Recently the protection of intellectual property for Indigenous people entering into conservation agreements has been enhanced with the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (Daes, 2003). The challenge is to evaluate whether the principles of this convention, and other international guidelines on Indigenous involvement in protected areas, are being put into practice (Nepal, 2002). For this to happen national and international organizations must adopt a partnership approach, with consideration of how to overcome power imbalances in favor of governments who often have political power, greater access to economic resources, and cultural domination over Indigenous minorities (Nepal, 2002). The future success of Indigenous peoples' role in protected area biodiversity conservation is dependent upon genuine partnerships which encourage Indigenous empowerment and support the livelihood practices of local communities.

2.5 Indigenous Protected Area Program

The Indigenous Protected Area Program is Australia's answer to finding a balance between biodiversity conservation and Indigenous empowerment. Smyth (2001: 88) explains that Indigenous Protected Areas, the newest addition to Australia's National Reserve System, emerged as a result of the following developments which occurred in the early 1990s:

- a commitment by the Australian government in 1992 to establish a system of protected areas that is comprehensive, adequate, and representative of the full range of ecosystems in Australia by the year 2000;
- the development of a national bioregional planning framework to assist planners to identify gaps in the National Reserve System and to set priorities for filling these gaps;
- the development by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1994 of new guidelines for the establishment of protected areas;
- increasing interest from Aboriginal people in gaining assistance and support in the management of their land, large areas of which had been returned to them, particularly in central and northern Australia, through the land claims process of the 1970s and 1980s.

With the vision to create a national representative protected area system, the Australian government acknowledged that this could only be achieved through cooperation with Indigenous landholders. Pilot programs began in late 1995 with A\$500,000 allocated by the Australian Government Minister for the Environment from existing programs to develop the concept of an Indigenous Protected Area Program (Gilligan, 2006: 15). Following initial success, and acceptance by the Indigenous community, the IPA Program was established as a sub-program of the National Heritage Trust (Sutherland and Muir, 2001).

The declaration of Indigenous Protected Areas represents the first time in Australia that Aboriginal landowners have voluntarily accepted protected area status over their land (Smyth, 2001). The concept behind the program is that

Aboriginal landowners receive government planning and management assistance, in return for a commitment to manage their land with the goal of conserving biodiversity values, and the development of a plan of management. Smyth (2001: 89) highlights the appeal to both parties, stating they are “attractive to some Aboriginal landowners because they bring land management resources without the loss of autonomy... provide public recognition of the natural and cultural values of Aboriginal land, and the capacity of Indigenous people to protect and nurture those values...” and are attractive to government conservation agencies “because they effectively add to the nation’s conservation estate without the need to acquire the land, and without the cost of establishing all the infrastructure, staffing, housing, and so on” (see Figure 2.1 for a map of Australia’s IPAs).

National workshops on the experiences of participants in the Indigenous Protected Area program show many realisable benefits including (Nettheim et al., 2002: 423):

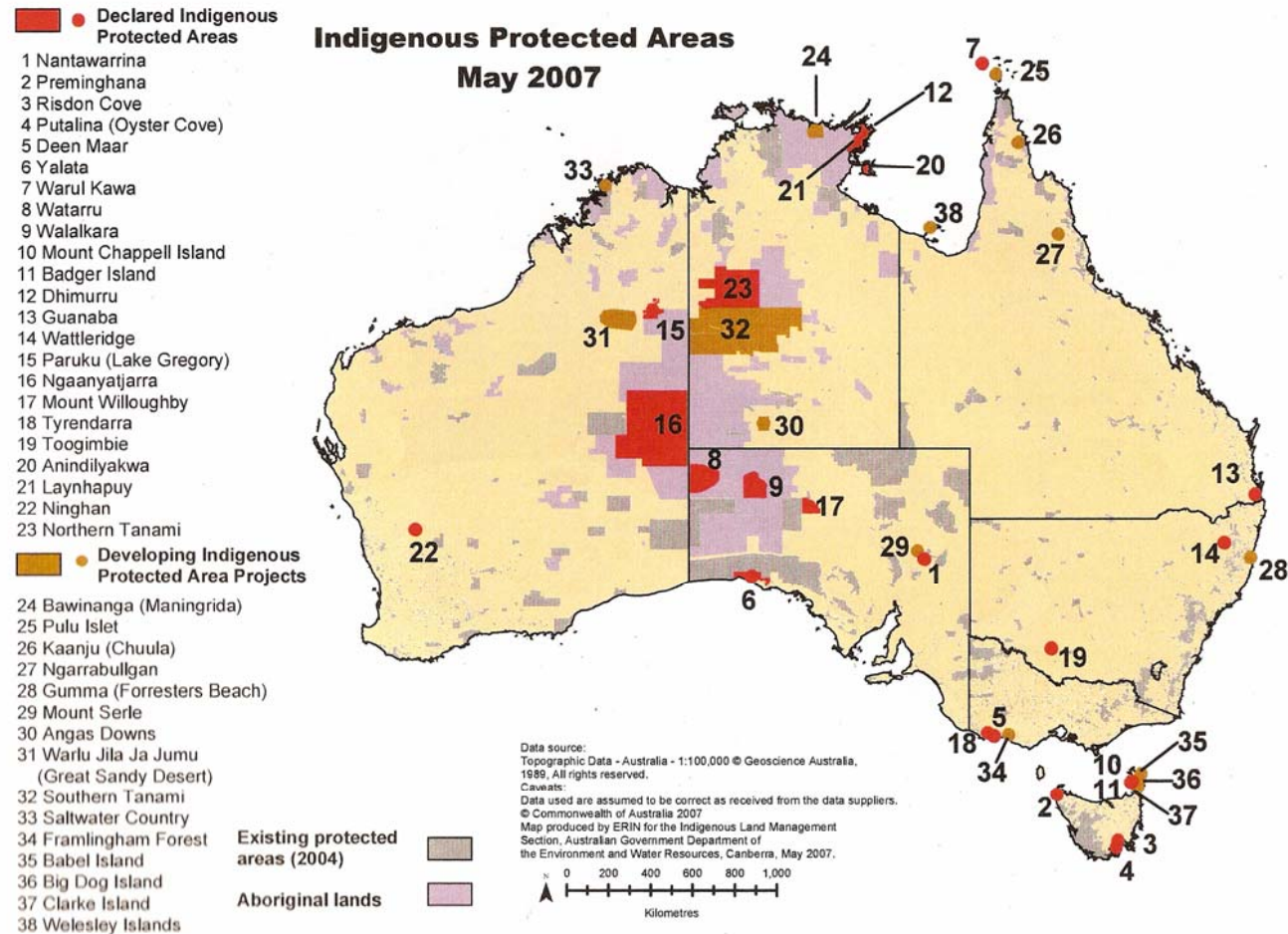
- Indigenous landowners being able to participate in preliminary and ongoing discussions about aspirations and responsibilities for IPA areas;
- The potential availability of additional support from government agencies for the development of management strategies for natural and cultural resources on Indigenous lands, including cultural site management and interpretation; habitat restoration and maintenance including revegetation, fencing, control of invasive plants and feral animals; and sustainable business ventures including ecotourism; and
- Recognition of Indigenous Australians’ rights to ownership and their traditional and other knowledge.

There is also wide recognition that Indigenous Protected Areas have the potential to deliver significant social, educational and economic outcomes for Indigenous communities. Langton et al. (2005: 38) note that “the provision of training and capacity building for IPA managers and annual financial assistance have in many instances had the effect of empowering communities

and providing significant environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits". Because the community owns title of the land, IPA land can also be used for economic ventures which are consistent with conserving biological diversity, such as eco-tourism, bush foods, carbon trading and so on.

The primary concern relating to Indigenous Protected Areas is that of funding security and the level of funding granted. The 2006 evaluation of the IPA program (Gilligan, 2006: 26) suggests that at current funding levels "only very basic management of the lands is possible", despite there being a strong case for extra funding because of "the prominence of IPAs in the National Reserve System [and] the limited financial capacity of many remote Indigenous communities". Currently the average annual funding to each IPA is A\$110,000 per annum, however larger amounts of "ongoing and long-term funding" rather than the current short term grants over a 2-3 year period, are seen as one way of improving the program (Nettheim et al., 2002: 423). This would require a commitment by government to improve their current "fickle" history of funding for Indigenous land management programs (Langton et al., 2005: 37). Investment in new initiatives such as the Indigenous Protected Areas Program, which encourage Indigenous involvement in the protected area system, and have potential to create new pathways for sustainable livelihoods in Australia's Aboriginal communities, should be seen as an investment in the social, cultural, economic and environmental future of Australia.

Figure 2.1: Map of Indigenous Protected Areas, May 2007



Source: IPA Program (2007) Indigenous Protected Areas May 2007, *Handout from 2007 IPA Managers Conference in Leigh Creek*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra

Chapter 3 – The Research Story

Davies (in press: iii) suggests that to create effective research partnerships with Aboriginal organisations and people, researchers need to look at “how they develop and scope research projects, how they involve Aboriginal people in research, and how they communicate their research”. Conducting participatory research for this project was an introduction to the world of cross-cultural research. The process of planning and conducting community-based participatory research was both daunting and rewarding. This chapter provides detail of the methodological approach used for the research, providing personal insights into experiences of building relationships, collecting data, and the unique events that can occur in research with an Aboriginal community. The chapter begins with an explanation of what participatory research is, and the methods my project entailed.

3.1 The Participatory Research Approach

Community-based participatory research places an emphasis on creating partnerships with communities, recognising participants as active and equal partners in the research process (Holkup et al., 2004). It addresses power imbalances which exist in traditional research methodologies, with emphasis on the “injustice that arises when the construction of knowledge is taken away from ordinary people and placed in the hands of an elite” (Reason, 1996: 81). Some of the characteristics of community-based participatory research identified by Holkup et al. (2004: 163-164) include: “building on the strengths and resources of the community”, “achieving a balance between research and action that mutually benefits both science and the community”, and “long term commitment on the part of all partners”.

Participatory research is a preferred method for studies involving Indigenous communities as it explores local knowledge and perceptions while empowering people to evaluate their own situation. Having the community involved in the research process also adds to the project’s credibility in both the academic sphere, and within the local community. To successfully

implement participatory methodology, Holkup et al. (2004: 165) provide a series of guidelines for work in the field:

1. Be flexible but recognise that everyone has limits;
2. Be willing to collaborate by sharing authority, responsibility and credit for success;
3. Give thoughtful attention to the ethical implications of your actions; and
4. Apply the concept of culture in everyday working relationships.

In implementing these guidelines, however, researchers can be faced with many challenges. Self-awareness is needed, with the bottom-up approach requiring transparency of research intentions within a flexible and reflexive research structure (Cornwall and Jewkes, 1995). This structure varies from traditional research which is generally linear in process. The reflexive nature of participatory research also provides the greatest challenge for students attempting to use this methodology, as it is a very time consuming process requiring long term commitment from the research team (Holkup et al., 2004).

3.2 Participatory Research Methods

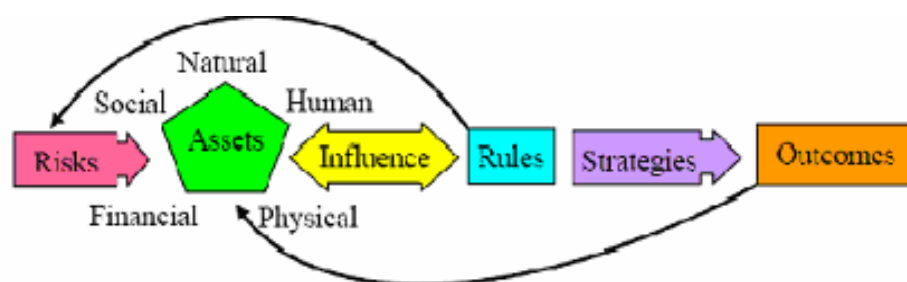
As mentioned in Chapter 1 this project was funded by Desert Knowledge CRC's core project 1, Livelihoods inLand™. Part of the funding was an agreement that, in accordance with ethical considerations, de-identified copies of the transcripts would be provided to Dr Michael LaFlamme to produce a livelihoods framework. This framework, together with the realising the aims of this thesis, were primary considerations in the development of appropriate research methods.

Prior to deciding specific methods, a primary consideration was creating a representative sample of participants, which included local community members, government, and mid-level agencies. As the focus area is Nantawarrina IPA the local community members were Adnyamthanha people

from Nepabunna and surrounds (see Figure 3.2 for a map of the region). The main government representation in the sample was the Indigenous Protected Areas Program, while other agencies identified as key contributors in creating livelihoods in Nepabunna included the Building Healthy Communities Project, Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP), South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust (SAALT), Northern Regional Development Board, and Pika Wiya Health Clinic. As Holkup et al. (2004: 168) explains it is important to be aware of the “culture of government bureaucracies and other institutions that influence the cultural groups as a whole and/or the development of a given project”. In this case the development of Nantawarrina as a sustainable project and its influence on community livelihoods was examined.

Engaging with Nepabunna community members and building a research relationship required a qualitative methodology. Because of the limited timeline of my honours research it was decided that the most effective form of data collection would be semi-structured interviews with two sets of base questions, one for community members and one for agency representatives. Once data was collected and transcripts were created, thematic analysis was then used to evaluate common themes of how Nantawarrina IPA affects livelihoods within Nepabunna community. Beyond this thesis, the data will be used to contribute to building a shared livelihoods framework for partnership across sectors and levels aimed at improving local capacity to sustain livelihood activities and objectives (see Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1 for details on the livelihoods framework). The framework is significant as it is a tool which can be used by both community and agencies in negotiating future arrangements and building a more sustainable future in Nepabunna. Valuing the importance of continuing a relationship with the Nepabunna community, as per participatory research guidelines, a copy of the framework, along with a copy of this thesis, will be presented to Nepabunna community on its completion. Additional details on how methods were employed in the research process are provided in the subsequent sections of this Chapter: 3.3. Building Relationships, and 3.4 Unique Challenges of Indigenous Research.

Figure 3.1: Simplified Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



A Sustainable Livelihoods Framework 'Story'

People have different types of beneficial Outcomes. If those Outcomes are Sustained, they build more Assets. All of this happens according to Rules at different levels that can increase investment in Assets or Risks to those assets, and that enable people use their Assets to Influence those Rules.

Source: LaFlamme, M. (n.d.) *A Cross-Cultural Framework for Sustainable Desert Livelihoods in Land*, CSIRO & Desert Knowledge CRC, Alice Springs, p. 6

Table 3.1: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework Categories Across Culture

SLF Asset Categories	Value	Aboriginal Examples	Settler Examples
Cultural	Shared Knowledge	Law, language, ceremony	Science, English, Anzac Day
Financial	Money as a store	Sharing income	Savings
Human	Individual ability	Knowledge, skill, responsibility	Health, education, job title
Natural	Natural resources	Country, productivity	Natural resources, productivity
Physical	Man-made objects	Family homes, tracks	Buildings, roads, infrastructure
Social	Group resources	Wellbeing, kinship network	Wellbeing, social and work networks

Source: LaFlamme, M. (n.d.) *A Cross-Cultural Framework for Sustainable Desert Livelihoods in Land*, CSIRO & Desert Knowledge CRC, Alice Springs, p. 7

3.3 Building Relationships

Photo 3.1: Sitting Around the Campfire at the Community Organised
Gymkhana, August 2007



“You may think they don’t like you but its not that they’re just wary and I think people that work in Indigenous communities got to know that, not just come up for a week and think these are nasty people. It’s just the way they speak, they’ll say you’re fat, it’s not meant to be offensive it’s just the way it is, they don’t cover things up like we do. Like I said it’s just experience you’ve got to live and work with people and get to know them.”

*- Aboriginal Health Worker**

Building trust and reciprocal relationships with an Aboriginal community is the most difficult aspect of cross-cultural research, particularly as a student entering into this field for the first time. Prior to beginning research, Dr Jocelyn Davies and I met with the community chairperson to consult with Nepabunna about our research ideas. Although excited about creating a personal relationship with an Aboriginal community, and the potential that the results of this research could have for establishing a long-term partnership, at this meeting I could not help but feel a little intimidated. It was clear from this early meeting, however, that past experiences of researchers coming into the community had prepared the chairperson with questions to empower the community’s decision of whether to engage in the research. Questions such

* Personal comment from primary data collected in interviews

as “has she done research with a community before?” and “what is in it for you?” were asked early in conversation. This discussion also brought up the issue of community wanting a continuing relationship with researchers, not for them just to come, collect data, and leave without reporting back to the community on the status of their results.

“You have to be really careful not to abuse it [their trust] or they are expecting to be told at the end of it at least what you came to and as I’ve already mentioned to you they had three or four researchers going through and none of them have done it yet so if they don’t trust you I wouldn’t be surprised, it’s not an account of you, it’s an account of 5 other researchers who go their degrees and Nepabunna community didn’t even get a copy of the write up”.

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

Greening Australia (2007: 2) highlight that “Aboriginal communities seem to have an endless stream of advisors and visitors and there are new people and faces all the time”, therefore “developing a long term relationship will really make your work more effective”. To create familiarity of myself in the area, and to learn more about the IPA program, I attended the national IPA conference hosted by Nepabunna community, while still in the process of obtaining ethical clearance. Once again I felt intimidated in a room full of people with such expertise in the field, and the ease of their ability to find common ground and form relationships with one another. Following my first two experiences of contact and watching how others interacted so easily, reflection of self and awareness of projection of self became a very important part of my process in building relationships. From this time communication with Nepabunna community increased through phone correspondence, and the first of three research trips was arranged for late June 2007.

Spending quality time in the community over three trips was important, as literature suggests in research with Indigenous people it is “essential to work at the grass roots and spend time getting to know people by sitting down out

on country and listening to people's view of the world and what they see as issues" (Greening Australia, 2007: 2). Although details of my first trip to begin building relationships had been arranged on the phone prior to my arrival, I was still questioned as to why I was there. Looking back now I believe this was to find out more about my research, and in attempting to apply the principles of participatory research I should have been more transparent about the aims and purpose of my research placing a poster in the window of the community office, which serves as a local notice board, or by communicating more effectively with the community chairperson on their ideas of best practice.

To begin the process of creating a genuine relationship with the community, I employed a local research assistant to aid in explaining the aim and purpose of the research, and to help in arranging interviews. While this worked well for the first trip as we exchanged ideas for a community barbeque to introduce me to the community, and toured around the local community and Nantawarrina IPA, my inexperience as a cross-cultural researcher together with my assistants commitments to community events such as the culture week gymkhana, led to the demise of this working relationship although we formed a good friendship. However, more time spent in the community led to greater understanding of community routines such as the morning coffee and cigarette out the front of the office, and the morning trip on the community bus into Leigh Creek. Becoming aware of community routines provided an opportunity to both familiarise myself with the community, and begin talking about the focus of my research in their comfort zone. It was only once relationships had been established, after two trips up to Nepabunna, that I was able to begin talking at length to people about Nantawarrina IPA and its impact on the livelihoods of local community members.

The following quotes are excerpts from my journal of the first two trips to Nepabunna; a journey to form relationships while remaining focused on the limited timeframe of an Honours year and the need to begin data collection.

Photo 3.2: Getting Prepared, Morning of the Gymkhana, August 2007



The trip out to Nantawarrina was a good chance to get to know each other better. She asked about my family, where I live etc. Our conversations are a lot less awkward than they were before

That is my only worry about this trip – that I don't really know anyone and haven't been introduced. I am the white girl – not Kate – so hopefully this changes. I think [my assistant's] realization that I am the same age as her daughter may help us to establish a stronger relationship? I hope so.

This morning I went down to the office where people seem to come to have their morning coffee. I figure by hanging around there I am likely to meet people and have them get used to my face and me being around. I'm starting to think that to build proper relationships you really need to more time within the community to establish trust before beginning research.

I am still getting funny looks from people who haven't seen me before but they all say good morning and the more I observe it seems like they don't always have a lot to say to each other either. On the other hand people who I have spent more time with have begun calling me Katie. I feel like I am beginning to be accepted into the community.

As tomorrow is Gymkhana – a culture week event – I spent the morning helping to organise and label the prizes for the races. I hope this kind of time

spent with different people and helping will make it easier for me to interview more people in the community and have them feel comfortable with me.

Today was the much anticipated gymkhana day. Working in the kitchen was good because it allowed me to meet more of the women. I hope my willingness to help is reciprocated when I begin my interviews.

3.4 Unique Challenges of Indigenous Research

Photo 3.3: Working Together

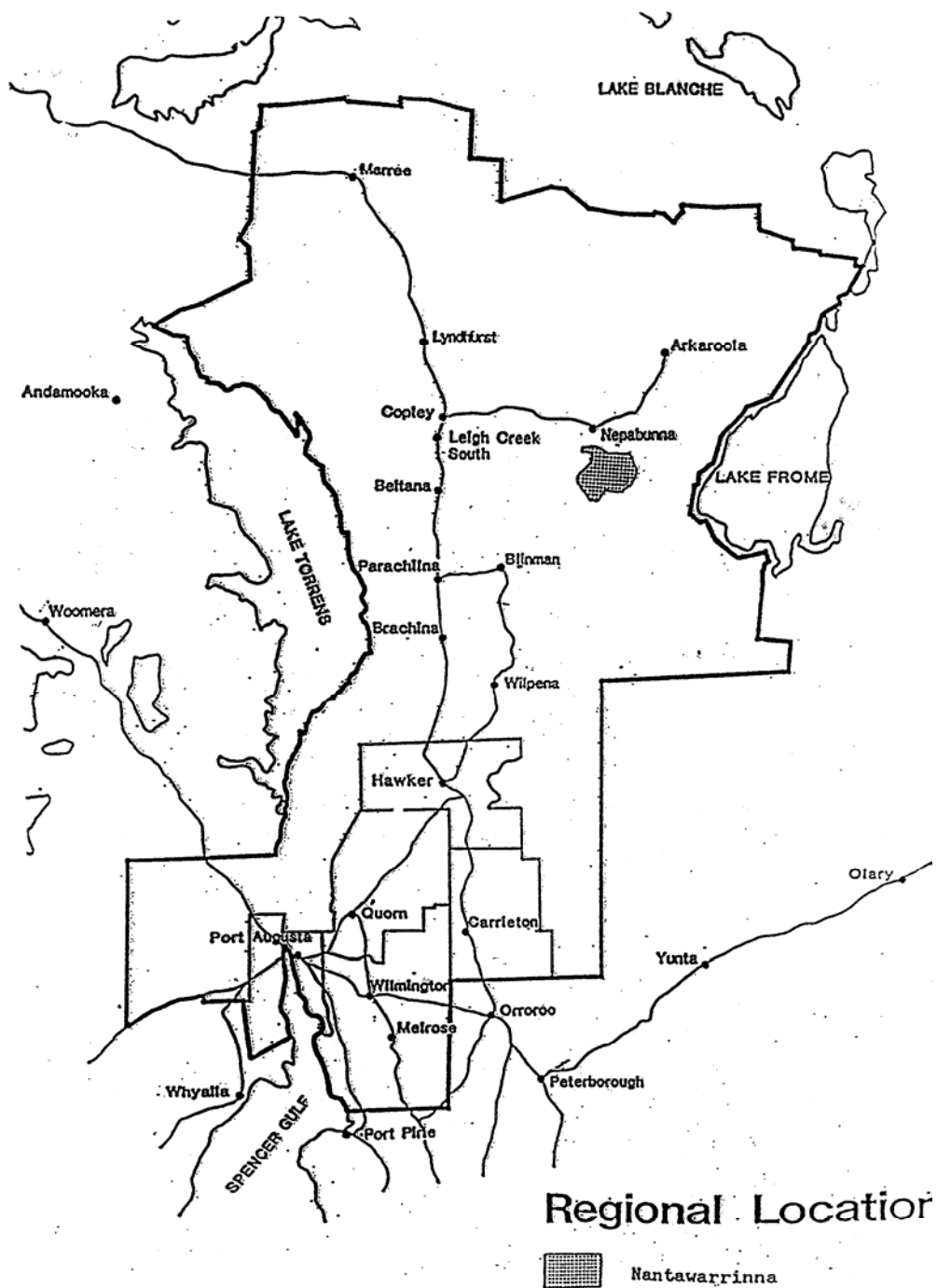


Understanding the cultural traditions and practices of the Nepabunna community created a challenge in both building relationships and conducting interviews with community members. It has been described that developing knowledge on the roles and approaches of Aboriginal organisations takes time, and is often made up of a “steep, and sometimes traumatic, learning curve” (Davies, in press: 89). Working with the Nepabunna community was certainly a learning curve teaching me about cultural practices related to effective means of communication and the need to continually communicate directly by phone or in person, to ensure a consistent level of understanding about the research; limitations on who is able to talk about country; and the impact the loss of an elder has on a community.

As De Lacy and Lawson (1997: 158) advise, Aboriginal people who have been dispersed from their country can find themselves in “country on whose behalf they cannot speak with authority”. I came across this with an Aboriginal resident in Nepabunna community and non-Aboriginal people involved in the community who did not feel it was their place to speak about Nantawarrina IPA and its impact on Nepabunna. Moreover, on my third trip to the community as I had begun interviewing people in the community, and arranged a community barbeque to act as a focus group for data collection, there was an unfortunate loss, with the eldest Adnyamathanha person passing on. The significance of this loss for the community meant that many of the residents, along with Adnyamathanha people from all over the region left to be near the hospital. It also meant that it was clearly not a culturally appropriate time for me to be in the community as residents entered the process of grieving.

In light of these events, the greatest challenge of my research was to create relationships and conduct interviews in a restricted timeframe, while trying to ensure that the research was participatory and flexible in nature. Davies (in press: vii) notes that “time and resources are required to establish effective partnerships and collaborative projects”. Due to the unique circumstances of my last data collection trip to the community, my research became more linear, rather than participatory as is more preferable for cross-cultural research, with time pressures limiting community-based data collection significantly and being the primary source of limitations. The key limitations of this research, therefore, were the inability to: practice flexibility; apply lessons learnt through reflection of the research process; and work around the unique challenges which may arise in cross-cultural research.

Figure 3.2: Regional Map of Nepabunna and Nantawarrinna



vi

Source: Aboriginal Lands Trust and Nepabunna Community Council (1998) *Nantawarrinna Plan of Management*, Aboriginal Lands Trust, Adelaide, p. vi

Chapter 4 – The Nantawarrina Story

“It means a lot to us, at least we got part of our land back and we run it ourselves in the community. We can go out there and get a kangaroo or just camp around, maybe take some tourists out there, take a group out there just for a days trip.”

- Female Community Member*

Nantawarrina was Australia’s first IPA, covering 58,000 hectares of land in the northern Flinders Ranges region adjacent to the Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park (DEWR, 2007). Nepabunna `Community Council currently manages the land with support from the South Australian Aboriginal Lands trust who have held the land title since 1982. Ownership of the land is a great source of pride for the local community, and consequently there has been uptake of both physical and cultural management of the land. This chapter tells the story of Nantawarrina, beginning with the history of land use in the region, and going on to discuss the land’s ecological and cultural significance, and the establishment of Nantawarrina as an Indigenous Protected Area.

4.1 History of Land Use in the Gammon Ranges

Prior to European settlement in the region, the Adnyamathanha people were mobile people who moved across the northern Flinders Ranges in search of food and water, to perform ceremonies, and follow cultural traditions such as moving camp after a death in the community (Brock, 1985). Living in connection with the land and its natural processes, it was not until first European contact in 1840 that significant alteration of the natural landscape began when explorer Edward J. Eyre came to the region in search of pastoral land. Within a decade of this expedition pastoralists had moved into the area,

* Personal comment from primary data collected in interviews

setting up camps and running their stock over traditional Adnyamathanha lands (Brock, 1985).

Establishment of the pastoral industry had a significant impact on the lifestyle of the Adnyamathanha people who had to adapt to the new industry, changing their patterns of movement across land, and finding new pathways of access to essential resources such as water (see Chapter 5 for more detail on livelihood impacts). Stock introduced by pastoralists interrupted natural ecosystem functions as they monopolised water supplies, ate native plants which had traditionally been harvested for seeds and fruit, and competed with native fauna, such as the yellow-footed rock wallaby, for food and water (Brock, 1985). Nantawarrina was one of many pastoral properties which suffered extensive land degradation, with grazing leading to such an “absence of perennial vegetation that sheet erosion and active gullying on slopes have occurred” (Muller, 2003: 35). This combined with the impacts of introduced species, particularly goats, has left Nepabunna community a great challenge to rehabilitate the Nantawarrina property. Owned freehold by the Aboriginal Lands Trust of South Australia since 1982 for the Adnyamathanha people, the declaration of Nantawarrina as an IPA has provided Nepabunna with an opportunity to restore the unique ecological and cultural value of the land for the benefit of generations today, and those in the future (Wood, 1996).

“It is good for people to go back and see how it was years before the white man bought their sheep and cattle in.”

- Female Community Member*

4.2 Ecological Significance

Set within the semi-arid mountain country of the northern Flinders Ranges, Nantawarrina is made up of four major ecological formations: “tall open scrublands, low chenopod scrublands, low open woodlands, and fringing woodlands of Eucalyptus along creek lines and flood plains” (Aboriginal Lands

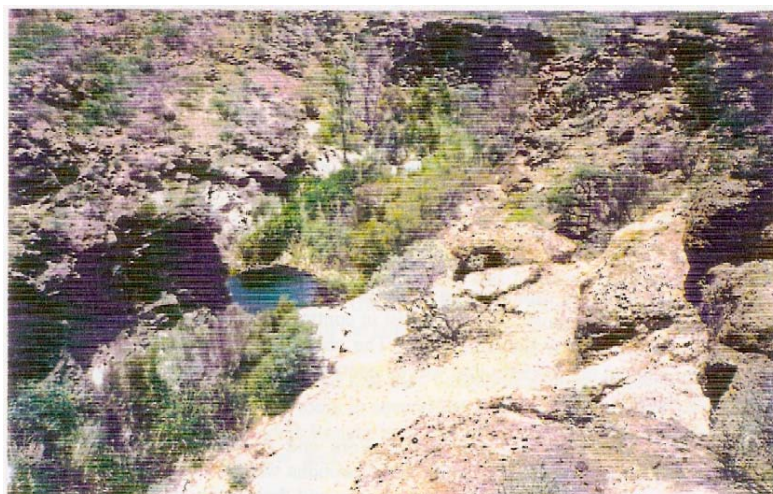
Trust and Nepabunna Community Council, 1998: 25). The area is popular among tourists for its contrasting geographical features from steep gorges and limestone hills, to intermittent creeks and hidden waterholes (Muller, 2003; DEWR, 2007). Although the area has been severely degraded by decades of overgrazing and the impact of feral animals, significant conservation values still exist on the property. Significant species include the yellow-footed rock wallaby (*Petrogale xanthopus*) and the Balcanoona wattle (*Acacia araneosa*) (Muller, 2003; Gilligan, 2006). Physical management for the restoration of the property is a key objective for enhancing and protecting biodiversity. Change of focus from pastoralism to conservation on the property has seen improvements in the ecology of the area:

“The bush itself, you know when I came first it was just the dry sticks poking out of the ground. These days they even have grass there and I spotted a Sturt Pea, something that had never grown there before, so the removal of goats clearly worked on the revegetation starting to grow again.”

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

4.3 Cultural Significance

Photo 4.1: Moro Gorge, Culturally Significant Site for the Adnyamathanha People



Source: Aboriginal Lands Trust and Nepabunna Community Council (1998) *Nantawarrina Plan of Management*, Aboriginal Lands Trust, Adelaide, p. 8

“Nantawarrina means a lot to us, I suppose because of the burial sites that are on the property and we go out there and do feral control and take the young ones out and teach them our ways you know our cultural ways like hunting Roos and how to survive in the bush.”

- Male Community Member*

The connection between Indigenous spirituality and land is present at Nantawarrina, which holds some sites of significance in Adnyamathanha Dreaming stories, as a birthplace, and traditional tribal territory (Wood, 1996; DEWR, 2007). Although a majority of the Adnyamathanha language was lost during the time of missionary control, the community has worked with linguists and the Education Department on Adnyamathanha education programs for their children (Brock, 1993). In addition to recording language, the Adnyamathanha community has worked with the Aboriginal Heritage Branch of the Department of Environment and Planning to report sites which are important to them, and the Adnyamathanha dreaming stories which record important environmental history of the area. These stories reveal a lot about the pre-European environment including mammals which were once in the Flinders Ranges such as: “the scrub wallaby, bandicoots, possums, stick-nest rats, the native cat, and they suggest that at least one bird now seldom seen in the Ranges, the wild turkey was common”, as well as once permanent waterholes which are temporary or dry (Turnbridge, 1988: xl). Preserving the cultural significance of Nantawarrina helps to provide a sense of community for the Adnyamathanha people, and an avenue through which to ensure that remaining traditional cultural practices are passed onto future generations. Outside of conservation, the primary use of Nantawarrina by Nepabunna community is for cultural purposes such as hunting and camping, and telling stories (Muller, 2003)

“We take them out to the waterholes and tell them the dreaming stories – how Arkuru the rainbow serpent came into the gorge and formed the mountains and rock holes”

- Nantawarrina Manager, cited by DEWR (2007)

“They can get their native tucker, but the experience of the weather, the drought of the last 10 years, there hasn’t been much out there to gather”

- Project Manager for Nantawarrina IPA*

Photo 4.2: Keeping Culture Strong, Sharing Dreamtime Stories at Culture Week, 2007



Photo 4.3: Painting of an Adnyamathanha Dreamtime Story Featured in Nepabunna Community



4.4 Establishing Nantawarrina Indigenous Protected Area

Photo 4.4: Nantawarrina Bore, Source of Water for Revegetation Sites at Nantawarrina IPA



Source:

‘The IPA is the biggest thing for us. It has turned everything around.’

- Nepabunna community, cited by DEWR (2007a: 5)

Nantawarrina was the first Indigenous Protected Area in Australia, proclaimed in August 1998. Yet while today many members of the community have a lot of pride in their IPA, originally there was a lot of “skepticism and speculation” by the community about the government taking control of their lands from them with the agreement, as in other forms of protected area management like co-management agreements (Muller, 2003: 39).

“It was almost inevitable that the two came together. Not by choice but by necessity on both sides. It wasn’t quite welcomed to start with, you know the change to biodiversity conservation management because people thought they would be losing on it... It was not, I don’t think it was first choice for anyone but you know as often it happens in these circumstances the constellation was right and we just fell into it together.”

- Indigenous Protected Areas Program*

Following the establishment of a relationship of trust with the IPA program, Nepabunna Community Council have strengthened their caring for country initiative by entering into additional collaborative agreements with the Federal and State Government's *Bounceback 2000* program, aimed at feral animal control and revegetation, and South Australian Department of Environment and Heritage and Aboriginal Affairs which manages the adjacent Gammon Ranges National Park (Langton et al., 2005). These agreements would aid the community in achieving the objectives outlined in Nantawarrina's plan of management (Aboriginal Lands Trust and Nepabunna Community Council, 1998: 2):

- To achieve an acceptable level of ecological sustainability for Nantawarrina;
- To maintain and protect the interest of the Nepabunna community in cultural heritage and traditional beliefs for present and future generations; and
- To promote economic sustainability for present and future generations.

"IPA is a good program, it gives the opportunity for the community to undertake self-management, getting back to country, and related to social, cultural and economic."

- South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust*

As mentioned earlier, the Adnyamathanha people primarily use the land at Nantawarrina for traditional cultural practices, but it has also provided an opportunity for developing economic ventures such as tourism (Muller, 2003). Early research into the outcomes of the IPA suggest the Nepabunna community's efforts have "the improved conservation of the area's cultural and natural values, particularly in relation to revegetation, weed control and feral animal management" (Langton et al., 2005: 38).

"Now the goats we used to count in thousands, these days if I count a couple of hundred of them over a few days I am telling myself there are too many of them."

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

“The way we benefit we see how things come back you know we see the trees and the bushes that once wasn’t there all coming back. It makes country good it makes us feel good that things are coming back.”

- Male Community Member*

“The difference in the country now after doing all that work: feral animal control, re-veg programs, fencing, property management planning, and direct seeding, particularly getting rid of the goats, eradicating them to a level where you know it’s manageable we’ve noticed a mark change in the growth of native vegetation. The Yellow-footed Rock Wallabies both in the south of the property and in the north of the property have increased. We’ve noticed that more kangaroos have entered the property because there is more feed.”

-South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust*

A highlight for the community in managing the IPA to date was the recognition of the community’s conservation achievements when the United Nations Award was awarded to them on World Environment Day, 5th June 2000 (Muller, 2003). In addition to the biodiversity outcomes of the IPA, Nantawarrina has provided a focus for the community, especially as there is little employment in the area. Community leaders use working on country as a “mechanism for disciplining and motivating young people with behaviour problems” (Gilligan, 2006: 32). Cultural knowledge is shared between generations with children becoming involved in activities such as seed collection, and the elders teaching young people bush tucker skills (Gilligan, 2006). Incorporating culture and development activities into their day-to-day existence creates an opportunity for the Nepabunna community to “exert control over their economic, cultural and spiritual needs throughout their activities at Nantawarrina” (Muller, 2003: 36).

Chapter 5 - The Nepabunna Story

Photo 5.1: Entrance to Nepabunna Community Office



Prior to European settlement in the Gammon Ranges, the Adnyamathanha people of today were divided into four different groups: Wailpi, Kuyani, Yadiyawara and Pirlatapa (Brock, 1993). Although divided, the people spoke similar languages, and all groups' life and culture were closely associated with their shared natural environment. In the early colonial period the groups merged under one name, Adnyamathanha, meaning hill or rock people referring to the unique geology of the area. This chapter is the story of Nepabunna- the community centre of the Adnyamathanha people, from its establishment, to its health and employment characteristics, and governance structure. Included in this story is the relationship of Nantawarrina with each of these important components of the Nepabunna community.

5.1 Establishment of Nepabunna Community

Following the establishment of the pastoral industry in the region, to maintain their culture and as much of their traditional lifestyle as possible, the Adnyamathanha community settled together at Minerawuta, or as it is commonly known Ram Paddock Gate (Ross, 1989). Ram Paddock Gate was occupied between 1920 and 1929, and while many European influences can

be seen in the structure of the camp, the traditional social structure of the community was retained through the practices associated with initiation ceremonies, birthplaces and burials. During this period missionaries from the United Aborigines Mission joined the community at Ram Paddock Gate signifying the beginning of a “period of uncertainty and insecurity” for the Adnyamathanha people (Brock, 1985: 49). Ram Paddock Gate was situated on the pastoral property of Burr Well, and over time the owners of the property feared the effect the Aboriginal community's stock and dogs would have on their pastoral interests.

After years of the government inaction, the missionaries finally negotiated with the owner of Balcanoona station for some land near the Nepabunna rock hole (Brock, 1985). In 1931, the Adnyamathanha people moved to Nepabunna which today remains the central location of their community. The United Aborigines Mission ran the community from 1931 to 1973, after which time the government took control of the community following letters from the Nepabunna community to the Aborigines Department asking them to take over due to poor living conditions (Brock, 1985). Today the Adnyamathaha people have freehold title of the Nepabunna land, and the former pastoral leases of Mount Serle and Nantawarrina, through the Aboriginal Lands Trust (Brock, 1993).

Socio-economic issues in Nepabunna are similar to those experienced in other Indigenous communities around Australia. From the time of European settlement, health care has been a major issue for the community with increases in problems such as diabetes which emerged as a result of the diet they were issued through government rations (Brock, 1985). Unemployment is also a major issue at Nepabunna. Work was readily available in the region until the pastoral industry became less labour intensive in the 1970s (Brock, 1985). Since that time, apart from limited employment through the Community Council, the only major source of employment has been small contracts through the Aboriginal Lands Trust or government conservation agencies employing Nepabunna residents to reconstruct infrastructure in the community and on surrounding properties (Wood, 1996). Furthermore, poor

education has been prominent in the community with children having to be bussed into the Leigh Creek school for education, a one and a half hour bus trip each way, following the closure of the local school (Brock, 1985).

Photo 5.2: Playground in Nepabunna



Photo 5.3: Revegetation and Houses in Nepabunna Community



5.2 Health and Welfare

“The health and standard of living improves in a community if you actually work on country. It doesn’t improve you know if you’re sitting around the community despondent, you know have no direction. But if community is given direction and supported in that direction eventually the health and standard of living of community members and thus through getting back to country improves”

- South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust*

The legacy of colonialism and the influence of missionaries left a considerable mark on health and welfare of Nepabunna community. Government rations set up to feed the Aboriginal people drastically altered their health, changing from an organic diet to distributions of flour, sugar, tea and other foods which were “neither nutritious or wholesome compared with their traditional diet and [were] often of poor quality” (Brock, 1985: 27). In addition to the impact of a poor diet, was the impact of new introduced disease to which the local community had little natural resistance. New health problems created a new dependency on European forms of health care, just one element of dependency on European systems including education and employment. As discussed in Chapter 1 there is a correlation between well-being and levels of education and employment. The closure of the local school and the subsequent long-distance travel required to receive an education in Leigh Creek, together with the lack of employment opportunities have led some local families moving to larger centres like Port Augusta to pursue more sustainable livelihood opportunities.

“Ten years ago it was a dust bowl. These days people have their own houses, there is no petrol sniffing or anything like that going on.”

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

* Personal comment from primary data collected in interviews

"Its given them a lot of self-esteem of what they've done out there and its probably helped the community in ways like fixing the area back to what it used to be."

- Community Development Employment Projects*

Trudgen (2000: 172) makes a keen observation that all people need a sense of purpose in life to sustain mental health, particularly people in a minority group who are more likely to "see themselves as less privileged and less human" leading to destructive social behaviour. Managing land at Nantawarrina has provided some Nepabunna community members a sense of purpose through their employment on the property. Moreover, in addition to being a source of income, work on the property addresses many social and behavioural problems that arise from boredom (DEWR, 2007). Increased funding and the pride associated with Nantawarrina have helped to develop a clean well-established community over the past decade.

"Probably in the last 10 years I've seen huge progress there in terms of the tidiness and the cleanliness around the general community you know. If you compare it with the other north-west communities, a lot of those communities are rubbish dumps, you know in quite a terrible state but Nepabunna is a tidy town in comparison."

- Male Community Member*

"Working it builds the self esteem and a holistic approach to health is good because when people are not working they are depressed and just no good their sort of health suffers. If they got something to do and the boys work over there I think it's good to get out of the house and I don't think there are many problems with the people that work over there."

- Pika Wiya Health Worker*

"Have a look at the dogs in the community. That's a good indicator of sort of how things are in the community, all the dogs are healthy, not many of them are attacking you so that's bloody good."

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

Photo 5.4: Pika Wiya Health Clinic, Nepabunna



5.3 Employment Opportunities

“I think they feel good because they working on their own place and they benefiting themselves not working for somebody else”

- Pika Wiya Health Worker*

At the peak time of the pastoral industry from 1870–1930 station work was the major employer of the Adnyamathanha people, who had to adapt to new European concepts of livelihood and employment for their survival (Brock, 1985). When the pastoral industry became less labour intensive in the 1970s, it signified the first time that employment was not readily available for the Adnymanathaha people, and the beginning of unemployment as a major issue at Nepabunna. Employment opportunities within the community were limited to office duties and work the Community Council, and although opportunities for employment in the mining industry have become available, they are often attached with the need to move away from Nepabunna to pursue them.

“They prefer to work with the land and with what they know, not being stuck inside and this all contributes to a healthy lifestyle.”

-- Pika Wiya Health Worker*

Since the acknowledgement of native title and Indigenous rights to own and manage land, conservation management has emerged as one of the few viable economic activities for rural Indigenous communities (Muller, 2003). Even prior to its declaration as an IPA, Nantawarrina was a source of employment for the community with contracts organised by the Aboriginal Lands Trust to maintain fences, feral animals, and so on, providing employment for a variable group of 10 to 20 Nepabunna residents over time (Wood, 1996; Nettheim et al, 2002). Since declaration of the IPA one full time position has been created for a local manager, with other residents gaining CDEP top-up for their work on the property. Training provided for the conservation management of Nantawarrina has also generated employment contracts elsewhere with some residents utilizing their knowledge by working in conjunction with Vulkathunha-Gammon Ranges National Park. However, while employment is helping the livelihoods of some community members, there is still a need for more community-driven economic ventures which generate employment in the community. This would ensure that the benefits experienced by those working on Nantawarrina can be extended through to more residents within the community, and into sustaining the livelihoods of future generations.

“The best thing we ever done is the IPA under protected lease. There is work out there for the boys, we can apply for some funds, if they want top up money they you know they might get another \$200 on top of their CDEP or something.”

- Female community member*

“Land management, especially conservation management isn’t always exciting finding of new undiscovered species. You know it is going day after day looking after bore holes and roads and making sure the car works and fences are ok. You know so there is not much excitement in it. We are trying to involve the young generation now so that will spark that work on land a bit wider.”

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

Photo 5.5: Former Nepabunna School Buildings



Photo 5.6: Sign for Tourism Activities Offered by Nepabunna Community



5.4 Community Governance in Nepabunna

“The Council is combined of all the members of the community and all the members of that community sit around the table and discuss things and a decision is made by the Nepabunna Council, not individuals.”

- South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust*

The Nepabunna community is run by Nepabunna Community Council, an organisation elected biannually by members of the local community (Wood, 1996). Since missionary control of the community was abolished in 1973, residents of Nepabunna have had to create a system of governance based on their social, cultural and political needs. Establishment of the Community Council has created a representative body which negotiates and enters into agreements with many different government departments and funding bodies at federal and state levels (Brock, 1985). Responsibility associated with negotiating funding and other new roles of the Council have created tensions between different family groups (Brock, 1985). While this raises issues of one family retaining control and the level of transparency in community governance, the power to negotiate and manage their agreement means that the community can control their own lives and make important decisions about the future of their community.

“The council makes decisions. Sometimes at meetings, sometimes you need to do it quick you know when the agency says you gotta have this money spent inside things sometimes you don’t go to the council, sometimes you gotta do it quick.”

- Male Community Member*

Funding provided through the IPA program has fuelled tensions between some community members, but it has also empowered the community who have control over where the money needs to be spent. With an approximate budget of \$750,000, there is pressure to manage funds effectively so the Council has employed a non-Indigenous person to administer project budgets in a “robust and auditable manner” (Gilligan, 2006: 37). Gilligan (2006: 37)

highlights that a critical success for Nepabunna community enterprises is “the scale of the activities and the matching of governance arrangements with the local family and clan structure”. Self-determination and control over livelihood decisions is essential for the success of community health, employment and governance in Nepanunna.

“Community are welcome to go there and see what is going on but Community IPA manager control that place, he just go and, they might bring something up in a community meeting, the community members and they’ll tell them exactly what is going on.”

- Female community member*

“We definitely when we structure agreements here we are not paying salaries, we provide money for construction of fence, road building, upkeep of fences and removal of goats. You know the way they structure it internally is something that we don’t have right to come into. That is an internal community decision and if they achieve that then we’re happy. If they don’t achieve that then ok you have to finish the work before we provide you with the next funding.”

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

Chapter 6 – Research Findings

The aim of this research is to evaluate the success of the IPA program in creating livelihoods for the Nepabunna community. As previously outlined Nantawarrina IPA has added to Nepabunna's capacity of building sustainable livelihoods through human, natural, financial and cultural capital. However, while this research supported the literature in its claims that conservation management can benefit community's socio-economic welfare, it also revealed obstacles that must be overcome for long-term sustainability of livelihoods in Nepabunna to be achieved. This chapter gives insight into these obstacles, from dependency on government funding, to investing in self-determined development opportunities, and the need for transparency in community governance.

6.1 Community Dependence on Government Funding

"We don't know where all our funding is going to go at the moment. We had one of our fundings stopped a couple of days ago so I don't know whether we can get it back or not. We don't know where the future lies for the people."

- Male Community Member*

The history of Nepabunna and the dependency of the Adnyamathanha people on the pastoralists, missionaries and now government institutions to survive within the non-Indigenous economy, have created an economic dependence that continues in the community today. Trudgen (2000: 169) explains dependency as a product of learned helplessness, which "occurs when people lose their economic independence and become dependent on welfare programs". Nepabunna is dependent upon the government for funding, and dependent upon a non-Indigenous person to assist the community in applying for grants and to manage community finances. Applying for funding grants requires constant submission writing and engaging formalised application

* Personal comment from primary data collected in interviews

processes which Indigenous people with little education in these administrative process find difficult to decipher (Hollinsworth, 1996). Changes in community governance are currently occurring, with the current non-Indigenous person managing finance leaving the community. Moreover, recent funding cuts are causing distress among some community members, with their current reliance on external funding generating uncertainty about the future capacity of Nepabunna to provide livelihoods for the Adnymanathanha people.

“You got to have money to run the IPA. No one’s going to do it for nothing. The government give good money, funding, but who’s going to be there to do the next lot of funding, grants?”

- Female Community Member*

6.2 Accountability for Funding Expenditure

“Now the program has been running for 10 years and we are basically expected to provide the funds for doesn’t matter what they’re doing. It kind of brings in a little bit of complacency about what, you know a sort of she’ll be right sort of approach.”

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

Funding the community receives for the management of Nantawarrina IPA is one source of money that Nepabunna depends upon for employment and its subsequent livelihood benefits; in addition to conservation goals for the Nantawarrina property. Dodson and Smith (2003: 7) critique government service delivery and policy for Indigenous communities as being “poorly coordinated and inefficiently delivered”, with funding being “stop-start, scattered across numerous departments in different program buckets, and lacks transparency and ‘downward accountability’”. Currently funding for Nantawarrina IPA is given directly to Nepabunna Community Council who decide on the use of that money at their own discretion. Following ten years of this funding process at Nantawarrina, the need for greater accountability

through the IPA funding agreement is beginning to be questioned. Accountability is important to ensure that money is being spent on relevant projects, and to relieve concern rising amongst community members that money is being used for the purchase of racehorses rather than on the conservation of Nantawarrina.

“It is the fault of the departments who hand out funding because they haven’t expected enough accountability. There needs to be accountability, if they give you money you need to do what they gave you to do with it.”

- Building Healthy Communities Project*

“It’s just money spent by the Commonwealth Government, Department of Environment and Heritage, it’s just a heap of money spent there and to be honest with you no-one is checking up on what is going on. I’ve already sent a report in. And I do work for Australian Bush Heritage too and their work is accountable for. Not all the work for IPA is accountable and IPA now are just starting to realise”

- Male Working in Community*

“See the government is supporting it a lot because they are giving them money to control the feral animals, there’s no, I suppose they are not scrutinizing the expenditures. No accountability. They are given an order book like open cheque to buy fuel to go out to Nantawarrina. They buy fuel but they go up to Innaminka for the races. No accountability.”

- Male Community Member*

6.3 Capacity for Realising and Adopting Development Opportunities

“I hope the young people get up and do things too. We want things for young people to get up and do it. If we die who is going to do it for us. We hoping they will, we thinking if we die they probably move away but we don’t know.

Then again they might stay there.”

- Female Community Member*

To one day attain economic independence and abolish welfare dependence Nepabunna community needs to realise and adopt development opportunities that are viable to their community and the environment they live in. Altman (2001: 10) notes that for Indigenous communities development possibilities will not happen quickly as there are three primary challenges to overcome:

- To understand the nature of the economy, plan for sustainability, and nurture the hybrid economy in ways that mesh with Indigenous values;
- To shift the political debate to ensure a recognition of customary contributions provided by Indigenous people to regional and national economies and industries, and ensure appropriate financial underwriting by those who benefit; and
- Market opportunities in many remote localities are rare, so when new opportunities arise they must be quickly harnessed by Indigenous interests.

Support networks through the IPA program, South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust, and the Northern Regional Development Board currently exist to assist Nepabunna in realising development opportunities. However, community members feel that they need to establish trust for these relationships to work, a process they find difficult when each time an organisation comes to visit the community they send a different representative.

“Currently we’re in the middle of drawing up community economic development plans where the community has been asked to put forward their ideas on economic development in terms of where they see possibilities for community owned businesses or where they see opportunities for training needs to gain employment in local industries.”

- Northern Regional Development Board*

“We want to do our own bush garden, we just talking about that yesterday when NRDB were here they come to ask us what we want to do but we been down this track before and every year we get different person and they go back and telling different stories.”

- Male Community Member*

As mentioned throughout this thesis the role of conservation as an economic development opportunity is becoming increasingly recognised. While the integration of development with conservation ideals can be problematic (Furze et al., 1996), the two are interdependent as “development must conform to conservation principles in order to be sustainable and lasting” and “conservation measures are doomed to failure if they do not pay adequate economic attention to increasing – and often increasingly needy – human populations” (Negri and Nautiyal, 2003: 173). After attending the IPA managers conference earlier this year it became evident that development opportunities can be successfully incorporated into IPAs, with communities investing in projects such as eco and cultural tourism, carbon trading, and wind farms.

Nantawarrina, however, does not appear to have been overly successful in achieving significant economic gain for the Nepabunna community. In the 1998 Plan of Management, community enterprises to be developed on the Nantawarrina property included a cultural centre, horseback tours, camping, bush walking, 4x4wd tours, Aboriginal cultural tours, heritage site interpretation, accommodation for tourists and backpackers at Nepabunna and Nantawarrina homestead, boardwalk interpretation at Moro Gorge, and brochures (Aboriginal Lands Trust and Nepabunna Community Council, 1998: 11). Ten years on some tourism infrastructure has been developed on the property, although not all community members seem enthused about the work that is generated by tourists such as cleaning up camp sites, removing rubbish, and so on, once they leave. It is widely recognised by both agency staff and community members that Nantawarrina has potential to be developed for economic gain. The next step is for Nepabunna community to decide on what opportunities would best suit their economic and livelihood goals, making use of the natural and human resources they have.

“I don’t see the potential being developed as it could be. I think there is huge scope for things to happen out there for example the idea of tourists going into the area.”

- Building Healthy Communities Project*

“If it was used in a constructive manner, there is some beautiful land there, come beautiful terrain. Tourism could be one way of opening up the place and certainly that would generate income too. Just opening up the place a bit more for tourism.”

- Male Community Member*

“I think it’s a pity we can’t be a bit quicker about opening the tourist trade. I think maybe it would have been a good idea to employ a couple of people as guides to take people over there and show them where they can go and where they can’t go in the region. I think tourists can go there but they’ve got to have a permit and there’s not always people around the office to issue stuff and whatever.”

- Pika Wiya Health Worker*

“It’s not just Nantawarrina that people need to become passionate about its about all the possibilities I suppose. Just in terms of tourism, ideas like an art and craft centre there, a bush food place in the kitchen over next to the clinic. I’ve been kind of hassling them about that one for a while. I’d love to see that happen.”

- Building Healthy Communities Project*

““They would like to have tourists come in and buy tickets from the office but cleaning toilets after them and fixing roads after them, that’s not in the scope of their idea of what tourism is about. They did have the 4wd clubs and some school coming so if someone ask them can we come they say yes, but you know to advertise or be proactive in it, that’s not happening.”

- Indigenous Protected Areas Program*

6.4 Complacency within Current System

Welfare dependency and consequent relations of passivity and dependence have created a level of complacency within many Indigenous communities. Reliance on the state can be explained by the lack of commercially viable

enterprises in remote locations such as Nepabunna (Altman, 2001), and a learnt mentality which has restricted the capacity of communities to assume responsibility for themselves (Martin, 2001). Although Nantawarrina does provide opportunities for development and conservation, the realistic outlook is that the state as a financial provider will “loom large in most situations for many years” (Altman, 2001: 10). Learning how to operate efficiently within government systems has meant that Nepabunna residents now know how to use the system to suit their current livelihoods, creating complacency toward work or developing new enterprises. While Nantawarrina provides economic independence for those who work on the property, the lack of accountability for funding expenditure means there is growing complacency toward work on country as pay is virtually guaranteed no matter how often, or how much work is done.

“Employment itself can lead to complacency, you know that is what is happening currently with the team member there, that he is employed so he gets money whether he works or not... Community IPA manager just about 2 days ago he went to racing, horse racing but that didn’t happen and he did get paid.”

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

“I think they’ve forgotten how to work from 9 till 5 because they haven’t done it in that long now if they do get a job they don’t like being told what to do and I mean we all got to be told what to do. I think that might need to be another thing, they might need to learn how to work 9 till 5, 5 days a week not just a couple of hours whenever they feel like it. I mean it’s the same everywhere.”

- Pika Wiya Health Worker*

“If government funding still operates like it used to I can see a future for our kids and our grandkids. They can rely on keeping our country strong you know. Money for employment and for the older ones while the older ones are still here they can teach the young ones these things as well.”

- Male Community Member*

6.5 Community Self-Determination in Development

“You can’t tell somebody what is best for them. When they can see what is best for them then there is a better chance they’ll take it on.”

- Male Community Member*

Self-determination is a major component of Indigenous struggles for social justice and cultural autonomy (Hollinsworth, 1996). It is somewhat paradoxical that the Australian government has in the last thirty years created self-determination and self-management policies which have actually “increase[d] state supervision and threaten[ed] cultural independence” (Hollinsworth, 1996: 114). Limited benefits of these policies have included the expansion of Indigenous budgets, and growing legal and political acknowledgement of the status of Indigenous people. However, the marginalised socio-economic status of communities such as Nepabunna means they can “rarely contribute effectively to protected area management unless they are resourced by governments to do so” (Davies et al., 2000). Fortunately the IPA program allows for high levels of self-determination as specific funding allocation is decided within the community; in the case of Nantawarrina, by the Nepabunna Community Council.

“The main thing and important thing is the change of lifestyle.. and the attitudes about looking after country have changed in the community, self-determination and motivation in the community has been really good”

- South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust*

To apply successful self-determined development enterprises in Nepabunna the Community Council will need to agree on “what kind of local economic development system they want to support”, and “which economic strategies and activities they will pursue to achieve that” (Dodson and Smith, 2003: 18). In Nepabunna there is a lot of talk about possible enterprises the community could invest in with some suggestions including a bush food café for tourists travelling between Copley and Balcanoona or beyond; an improved eco-tourism business; and an improved bush foods garden. It is important that if

these enterprises are developed, the community control the decision-making processes investing their human capital into the success of the project. If not, they are likely to follow former development projects initiated by outside developers, such as the current bush food garden, in apparent demise. Moreover, communities need to see what is happening on other IPA's and how they could incorporate those ideas into their management of their own properties. It appears that tourism is the avenue many communities choose to follow because it is the most common example, however, as seen in Nepabunna it is not always suited to the community because of the level of maintenance involved, distance from the community to the IPA, capacity for marketing and so on.

"You can't tell someone what's good for them. They actually went in and said you need this bush tucker orchard and we will fund it because you need it at \$50,000... Not one of those orchards is working now because it is somebody else's idea."

- Male Community Member*

"You see the bush food garden no one goes out and does any work on it, it has collapsed pretty much but you know people haven't been motivated to go out there and work on it and basically wait until oh yeah there is a bunch of greenies coming out we'll get them to go out there. Exploitive you know. How do we get people motivated."

- Building Healthy Communities Project*

"Nothing beats going out and having a look at the best that has been done before you make a start because at least you have a benchmark otherwise it'd be like trying to reinvent the wheel from scratch. You need to get people out there to have a look at what is there that is good and with some assistance from the right professionals to develop a concept."

- Building Healthy Communities Project*

6.6 Educated Community Members Move Away

“When I first started there were a lot more young people in Nepabunna, that’s where the action was when I first began but most of those families have now moved down to Port Augusta, I think that is a reflection of opportunities for their kids. There’s not as much happening in the youth area.”

- Building Healthy Communities Project*

Like many remote Indigenous communities, Nepabunna has a problem retaining educated members within the community. Because of the lack of employment and higher education opportunities available in the local community, many Adnyamathanha people wanting to expand their potential options are lost to Port Augusta or Adelaide in hope of a more prosperous future. It is for this reason that Indigenous community organisations lack the human capital that “usually underwrites successful economic development and also lack the means to develop human capital”, leading to “substantial infrastructure gaps and high rates of capital deterioration” (Dodson and Smith, 2003: 7). For the future sustainability of the community and their ability to manage projects such as Nantawarrina IPA, Nepabunna needs to find a way of enticing educated people back into the community. This process would increase human capital and community self-determination, alleviating dependence on non-Indigenous people for assistance in management of funding, applying for future grants, and developing viable enterprises.

6.7 Need for Ongoing Training

“The community have done a lot of training programs and are involved in property management and they will benefit from the skills to look after land after some of the old ones move away. You know, stay in the community.”

– South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust*

In addition to retaining educated community members, there needs to be a greater emphasis on training those people who live and work, or want to work,

in the community. Training is an important part of ensuring the future of Nepabunna community, and the community wants to learn more about the practices that will help them manage both Nantawarrina and their local office at Nepabunna. For funding of a project to be successful it must be paired with appropriate management training and support (Hollinsworth, 1996). A key provider of training programs for Nepabunna community is the South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust who hold the title of Nantawarrina for the Adnyamathanha people. The Lands Trust have used the CDEP program to create a three day community training contract, with two days of CDEP top-up. This system was very effective and used was in fencing and other training programs for Nepabunna community, however, recent changes to CDEP means there needs to be full-time employment, restricting the benefits of training programs benefits as they only last three or four months, and they can only earn a certain amount of money. While Gilligan (2006) suggests more training is considered to be of little use without jobs at the end, my research found that the Nepabunna community wanted on-going training to build community capacity and teach the younger generation valuable skills.

“The other issue is the capacity, you know there is still the problem of training and understanding of issues is not as good as it could have been or as it should be after 10 years.”

- Indigenous Protected Area Program*

“The community is better because like we got up quite a few programs like when we first went on CDEP we was doing the training. Like we had all this training where you learnt management, people, office training, you know we had a grant for that, we had CDEP plus top up from that money. We was getting paid every week.”

- Female Community Member*

6.8 Inequality and Concentrated Control in Nepabunna Community

“In any small community there are always hassles between different community members and that’s a bit of a problem when some people think that some are getting more than others. That’s half the problem too but I don’t know how you change that because that goes on everywhere and has always gone on here.”

- Pika Wiya Health Worker*

There is clearly a difference in socio-economic status amongst some members of Nepabunna community. Those people who work out at Nantawarrina, in the community office, or for the Nepabunna Community Council receive employment and benefits from that employment which other members of the community do not receive. These people who work for CDEP top-up provide labour for community projects and public works, however allocation of who receives these roles can heighten inequalities within the community (Hollinsworth, 1996). In the case of Nantawarrina questioning over whether the benefits workers are receiving are justified or if there is exploitation of community resources is currently occurring. Proving or negating these claims is made difficult the fact that a 4wd vehicle is required to access the property, and those who are asking the questions are those without such resources.

“Sort of if you are looking at it from the point of view from person in the community who isn’t working on an IPA, he sees that a person like Community IPA manager who is working on an IPA is getting wages, he is getting motorcar, you know he does things and becomes important person and you’re not. And you’re thinking we all got money for IPA but I don’t get any so the money that he has got he must be stealing. People don’t realise that whoever gets the money, gets the work.”

- Indigenous Protected Areas Program*

“They’re all on social service. To be able to run cars back and forth to gymkhanas as far away as Innaminka and Birdsville and then to pay for the

feeding of the horses. Do you know how much it would cost to keep a horse? It cost a lot of money. And to be able to drag all the horses around. Where are they getting the money from? What work are they doing? They must be getting good wages hey to be able to do that regularly. It's hard."

- Male Community Member*

To overcome these accusations, Nepabunna community needs systems and processes which "prevent those people who exercise legitimate powers from using that power for their own personal gain and from changing the rules to suit their own interests" (Dodson and Smith, 2003: 15). In Nepabunna there is clearly one family who have monopolised employment and control with staff in all community run projects from the same family group, and making up key positions on the Community Council. Concentrated control is causing conflict in the community, with accusations of corruption and the need for accountability and transparency in community governance. For the future sustainability of Nepabunna opportunities for the whole community to be involved in Nantawarrina and community decisions are essential. The 1998 Nantawarrina Plan of Management suggests that conservation activities should be governed by the Community Council, but "operated through participation and interaction by various family partnerships" to "ensure the continuation of programs and enhance future prospects" (Aboriginal Lands Trust and Nepabunna Community Council, 1998: 63).

"Probably everything that happens in small communities certain families tend to associate their main area of interest and that may then exclude other families from wanting to be involved."

- Building Healthy Communities Project*

"They want it in their control because by having total control they look after their own pockets, and that has happened in other communities too, where a few take control."

- Male Working in Community*

“New people have new ideas, new enthusiasm. You know they want to. The people who have been at Nepabunna haven’t challenged them. That’s the way they operate, that’s the way they dictate others.”

- Male Community Member*

“The motivation has to be there. If the control was taken out of the hands of those people who dictate in Nepabunna at the moment you would find that a lot more things would happen a Nepabunna and Nantawarrina. Whilst its in their control Nepabunna and Nantawarrina is going to be stagnated, it’s not going to go anywhere.”

- Male Community Member*

6.9 Building Effective Community Governance

“You see if all the books, when you go into a council whether it is Quorn or anywhere else you can look through all the books and files, they can’t stop you, they are for you to look at. You can say how much money did we spend on such and such a street, and the people can then ask questions about it. But when you got no paper work and no-one knows what is going on it’s frustrating and worrying”

- Male Working in Community*

All the themes raised in this chapter relate to community governance and the need to build effective community governance as a valuable input to creating sustainable livelihoods for the Nepabunna community. Dodson and Smith (2003: 1) define governance as “the processes, structures and institutions (formal and informal) through which a group, community or society makes decisions, distributes and exercises authority and power, determines strategic goals, organises corporate, group and individual behaviour, develops rules and assigns responsibility”. Good governance means a community is capable of planning for the future, resolving problems, realising planned objectives and taking action (Dodson and Smith, 2003). Nepabunna faces the generic challenges of many Indigenous communities in developing and improving

governance, generating the need for “transparency, certainty of resources and authority, equity and fairness, flexibility and choice, internal and external accountability, procedures for appeal and redress, efficiency and effectiveness, legitimacy and mandate, participation, leadership, strategic vision and capacity” (Dodson and Smith, 2003: 13). Currently in Nepabunna there is great uncertainty surrounding community capacity to provide sustainable livelihoods for its people under the existing governance structure. This uncertainty is exasperated by control concentrated in one family group within the community, and the general consensus that Nantawarrina is not being used for its potential of providing a level of economic independence and increasing human and natural capital of Nepabunna community and the property itself.

“Divisions within the community choose not to go out there [to Nantawarrina]. And its been going on as long as I can remember. Do you get bogged down in politics and nothing happens or do you move on and achieve what they achieve, you know world renowned recognition presented at the UN?”

- South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust*

“I worked at Nantawarrina for the first two years, I built sheds out there and all. There has been a lot of money spent, on their horses. A lot of people aren’t very happy and can’t do anything about it. Just like when the government man came up the other day. Three people just told him straight out we don’t know what’s going on. No paper work, no nothing. All that people want to know is what is going on.”

- Male Working in Community*

“We used to have our meetings the proper way and everything used to go back through the community but now it doesn’t, only through the board members meeting but it doesn’t go back through to the community. The board members meeting they have now makes the rule and that’s it, and this is where they’re wrong, they’re making up a lot of rules there and it never goes through the community.”

- Male Community Member*

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

Australia's Indigenous community faces a major challenge to overcome current socio-economic disadvantage, an issue which urgently needs to be addressed to ensure the future sustainability of communities across Australia (Dodson and Smith, 2003). Due to a lack of viable economic development opportunities, and the spiritual connection of many Indigenous people to their land, conservation management is an ideal avenue through which people can care for their country while receiving livelihood benefits such as improved income, employment, health and well-being in the local community. The opportunity for Australia's IPA program to provide sustainable livelihood outcomes is evident in Nepabunna where working on country is seen as beneficial for mental health, generating employment, and keeping culture strong.

Nonetheless, while there are unquestionably benefits to be gained through conservation management and the IPA program, there are also issues to be addressed. To improve human and natural capital existing community governance structures need to be reviewed and supported in their on-going development (Hollinsworth, 1996; Dodson and Smith, 2003). In Nepabunna this process would involve creating a more equitable representation of family groups in decision-making and community employment, greater transparency and accountability for funding expenditure, and building capacity for the community to expand self-determined development ideas into viable economic enterprises. Rather than just providing funding to communities, agencies need to invest in supporting communities through ongoing training, and educate communities on sustainable development opportunities viable with their resource base. Self-determination and increasing human capital are vital components required in building community capacity to make informed decisions for sustainable livelihoods and growth and independence of their community in the future.

The methodology used to conduct this research was an important factor in the success of this project, but was also the primary source of limitation for the study. Building a research relationship and establishing trust within an Indigenous community can be a difficult task. Participatory methods allow participants to become part of the research process and generate a better understanding of the research aims and objectives within the community (Holkup et al., 2004). However, to ensure adequate levels of community participation requires flexibility of time and reflection in the research process. The experiences of this research show that in cross-cultural research a flexible time frame is important as unfortunate events, such as an elder passing away during the primary data collection trip, cannot be accounted for within the short-time frame of an Honours year. Moreover, conducting cross-cultural research, particularly first time experience in the field, requires reflection of what research strategies are working, and how to constantly improve the methods to suit the structure and needs of the community. It is hoped that in addition to the potential for improving livelihood outcomes, this thesis may provide future researchers, particularly students embarking on cross-cultural research for the first time, with a better understanding of the practical considerations of applying participatory methodology, and of establishing relationships in an Aboriginal community.

In summary, this thesis has successfully completed the stated aims and objectives of the study through a series of steps. First, by understanding the scope of the study through an extensive review of prior research within the broad research topic areas; second, by using participatory methodology which ensured appropriate ethical conduct in research relationships with both community and agency participants; third, by analysing the data using thematic analysis and the use direct quotes as a form of narrative; and finally, by drawing out key findings throughout the research process, and consequently the chapters of this thesis. This thesis provides a case study for the livelihood benefits Nantawarrina IPA has created for the Nepabunna community; however the findings outlined here may extend into the governance and livelihood structures other Indigenous communities looking to conservation management as a development opportunity. The role of this

research is therefore to add to the current body of international research on the relationship between conservation management and livelihoods, providing detail on the benefits and struggles that one community has faced in their journey to care for country.

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