Charles Darwin University
Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledges and Education

YOU or ME?

A Social Framework in support of Indigenous community organisation

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November 4 2011

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

BACHELOR OF INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (HONOURS)

Thesis Declaration

I declare that the views and work held within this piece are a product of my own investigations.

References to participants and information shared by participants have been approved by participants.

Ideas and work of other researchers have been acknowledged and referenced accordingly.

The work submitted in this thesis has not already been accepted, nor is being currently submitted, in candidature for another degree.

Acknowledgements

In support of this work, I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people:

The Larrakia Nation, on whose country I studied and lived whilst I wrote this thesis.

Dr Payi Linda Ford, for her cultural and academic guidance, and support to enter a space that may otherwise have remained inaccessible.

Mr Greg Williams, for his time and patience in supporting and guiding me to understand my thoughts and put them into words.

The Traditional Aboriginal Owners - Jida Gulpilil, David Kenyon, Margaret Daiyi, Calvin Deveraux, Barney Narjic, Djawa Yunupingu and Joe Browne - who trusted me to share their stories and allowed me to participate in their project to become more involved in the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry.

James Matthews, for his professional expertise and guidance to all involved in this project.

My friend and mentor Joan Meredith, for her strong leadership and flexibility which enabled this piece to be written.

Lauren Hargreaves, Emma Wooldridge, Catherine Wakelin, Maureen Beattie and Kevin Beattie, for their proof reading, valued critiques and support as I moved through the many learning curves experienced during this project.

Abstract

This research examines the individual practice methodology of a Community Development Practitioner (CDP) as he engages with a group of Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TAOs) with the desire to become more involved in the Northern Territory (NT) Crocodile Industry. Building on past international experience, the thesis shows how the CDP uses the concept of living theory action research to reflect and adapt local knowledge and history into his work practice, resulting in the development of a methodology that is thought will be more likely to enable him to support project participants' rightful access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing.

As a personal action research process, the practical element of this work is firstly contextualised by the CDP's previous experience in the international arena. Providing a base from which to monitor change in his practice as he engages in the Indigenous research context in Australia, the professional methods of interaction he brought with him from prior learning are defined in what he terms a Social Framework. As he interacts with local thought and knowledge on the history of Indigenous and immigrant relations in Australia, and Indigenous research methodology, he reflects on each of these methods in an effort to develop a Social Framework for his professional interaction in this context.

Adhering to this new Social Framework as he participates with the Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB), in their effort to establish their voice in the NT Crocodile Industry, a base is created to reflect on whether the methods concluded for his interaction did, in fact, support the TAOs to gain the autonomy and agency they were seeking. As part of the action reflection learning cycle inherent to action research, the data generated from this analysis is fed into the continued development of the CDP's Social Framework for future professional interaction. In essence, the processes presented here aim to validate a CDP's ability to know their practice and critically reflect on the methods of interaction they use to achieve their professional aims.

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Glossary

Aboriginal – 'inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times or from before the arrival of colonists; Indigenous; an Aboriginal inhabitant of a place; a person belonging to one of the Indigenous peoples of Australia' (Oxford University Press, www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/aboriginal, date accessed: 08/10/11).

Action research – a methodological approach to research which incorporates fundamental principles of participation, action/reflection learning cycles, practicality and transformation (Bradbury Huang 2010; Denscombe 2005; Lomax 1986; Somekh 2006; Stringer 2007; Wadsworth 1998). As part of this approach, participants research and develop solutions to problems they might be facing, implement those solutions in an effort to transform the problem, and analyse the success of the solution as part of a continuous action/reflection learning cycle.

Constructivism – an epistemological view that understands knowledge to be created as a 'social, communal activity' (Dancy and Sosa, 1992, p. 141) and 'a joint construction of stakeholder groups' (Stringer, p. 141). As part of these processes, meaning is seen to evolve gradually through the collation, discussion and interpretation of collected data. Compare with *objectivism*.

Community Development Practitioner (CDP) – in terms of this paper and my perception of my professional role, a CDP is defined as a professional who engages in community development projects with the aim of promoting 'human autonomy or agency – the capacity of people to order their world, the capacity to create, reproduce, change and live according to their own meaning systems, to have powers to define themselves as opposed to being defined by others' (de Certeau, 1986; Giddens, 1984; cited by Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 12).

Epistemology – 'the theory of the ways knowledge is created, especially with regard to its methods, validity, scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion' (Oxford University Press, www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/epistemology, date accessed: 26/05/11).

Indigenist research – a methodological approach to Indigenous research whose framework was originally formulated by Lester Irabinna Rigney. This methodology is defined as research undertaken 'by Indigenous Australians whose primary informants are Indigenous Australians and whose goals are to serve and inform the Indigenous struggle for self-determination' (Rigney, 1997, p. 637).

Indigenous – 'originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native' (Oxford University Press, www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/indigenous, date accessed: 08/10/11). In the case of this thesis, this term is used to refer concurrently to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

Interpretivism – a theoretical perspective that understands theory to stem from subjective meaning and the interpretation of that meaning (Connole, p. 105). In this view, people are seen to 'creatively explore ways of conceiving the situation in ways that assist them in resolving a problem' (Stringer, 2007, p. 189). Compare with *positivism*.

Living theory action research – Whitehead (1989; 2009) uses the concept of 'living theory' to describe practitioners who critically reflect questions of the type 'How can I improve my practice?' (1989, p. 1). Engaging in a personal and professional *action research* process, practitioners develop insight and conclusions which result in theory reflective of their daily profession. Seated on the preposition that all practitioners are in a constant state of learning, '[t]he living theory approach to generating theory and understanding in action research is distinguished by individuals producing explanations for their educational influences in learning' (Whitehead, 2009, p. 95).

In using the term 'educational influences', Whitehead makes reference to the dialogue (1989, p. 1), theory (1989, p. 7; 2009, p. 92) and practice (1989, p. 1) with which a practitioner interacts on a daily basis. Also referred to as 'materials of their situations' (Schön, 1987, p. 36) and 'everyday experiences' (Moore, 2002, p. 29), a practitioner's critical reflection of this knowledge is seen to develop ways of working that the practitioner perceives to be the most effective in achieving their stated aims. Using this interpretive approach to develop one's practice, it is observed that methods of interaction are more likely to be workable and relevant as they stem from the practitioner's local knowledge and values (McNiff, 2007, p. 223; Wood, 2010, p. 108 & 116; Lomax, 1986, p. 49).

Objectivism – an epistemological view that understands knowledge to be universal and to exist 'independently of consciousness and experience', resulting in the use of empirical means to obtain that objective truth and meaning (Crotty, 1998, p. 62-63). In this scenario, the validity of subjective and constructivist methodologies such as action research may be queried. Compare with *constructivism*.

Ontology – 'the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being' (Oxford University Press, www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/ontology, date accessed: 26/05/11). The term ontology is also used synonymously with the term 'worldview'.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) – A form of *action research* that is explicit in the participation of the traditional research 'subject' in the identification of the area of investigation, the design of the methods of data collection, and the implementation of solutions to change the situation or problem for which the research was initiated. Inherent to this process is PAR's insistence on participants' agency in emancipating themselves from their self-identified problems (Freire, 1996, p. 48), understanding that an external person's attempt to implement change on behalf of participants is to contradict their efforts to support participants in their quest for liberation (p. 36).

Positivism – a theoretical perspective which maintains that knowledge is 'impersonal and objective', and that a researcher is able to 'sustain a detached position from the object of investigation' (Connole, 1993, p. 56). In this scenario, it is the researcher who considers the relationship between the subject and the data as they assume the role of 'objective' observer and final analyst. Compare with *interpretivism*.

Propositional Theory – A type of theory which proposes a one-size-fits-all approach to learning (Whitehead, 2009, p. 90). In the propositional scenario, theoretical methods are imported and implemented top-down, and 'explanations for the actions and learning of individuals are derived from conceptual abstractions of relations between propositions' (p. 87). In this sense, a propositional theory's success is measured in terms of a learner's ability to adapt and learn from the external methods, not on the ability of the theory to support and adapt to learners' needs. As a result, and in sharp contrast to *living theory*, the positivistic nature of propositional logic can be seen to aim to produce 'an objective body of knowledge that can be generalised to large populations' (Stringer, 2007, p. 189).

Social Framework – The term used to group the methods of interaction used by a *Community Development Practitioner* to achieve their professional aims as outcomes of practice.

The only people who are able to describe within context
are the ones who have the lived experience of those being researched.

Winch, J. & Hayward, K. 1999, p. 25.

Introduction

In the following thesis, it is proposed that the Community Development Practitioner (CDP) is the best person to design the methods of interaction they use to enable their professional aims to be achieved as outcomes of practice. Denoting a shift away from traditional/propositional social theories that claim workability and relevance in all places (Whitehead, 2009, p. 90), the action research approach to knowledge creation enacted here validates a practitioner's critical and conscious reflection of their learning in an effort to create 'implicit practice-based theory as a guide for their community development practice' (Moore, 2002, p. 29). Also referred to as 'reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1987) and 'living theory' (Whitehead, 1989), this process of professional development observes practitioners in 'a reflective conversation' (Schön, 1987, p. 36) with their 'educational influences' (Whitehead, 2009, p. 87), ultimately resulting in a personal work theory reflective of their unique professional environment and accumulated knowledge.

Participating in Indigenous research for the first time, it is this concept of living theory action research that is used to theorise, critically analyse, develop and test the methods of my professional interaction from previous international experience. As a snapshot of my career which is understood to extend either side of this thesis, the developmental processes seen in this writing endeavour to show how a CDP internalises their learning and develops ways of working which they deem to be the most effective in enabling their professional aims to be achieved as project outcomes. In creating the base to do this, Chapter 1 firstly establishes that my own aims as a CDP are to support community development project participants' access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing, and outlines the philosophical and theoretical approach to development incorporated into my methods of interaction so as to achieve these aims as outcomes of practice. By listing and grouping these methods of interaction under the term 'Social Framework', a reference point is created against which to develop my living theory.

The conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2 shows that the idea of a Social Framework offers a base from which to critically reflect and develop one's current practice against new learning. This is put into practice in Chapters 3 and 4 when the relevance and potential effectiveness of my past professional experience is analysed against literature which explores historic relations between Indigenous and immigrant peoples in Australia, and the impact these relations have on contemporary thought around Indigenous research methodology. By critically reflecting this new learning against past knowledge and professional experience, my methods of interaction evolve to

form a new Social Framework which is thought will be more effective and appropriate in supporting Indigenous research participants' access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing.

Testing the ability of this new Social Framework to achieve my professional aims in this context, Chapters 5 and 6 show how I adhere to my updated methods of interaction as I engage with the Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB, or the Board) in support of their desire to become more involved in the Northern Territory (NT) Crocodile Industry. With the specific task of organising a developmental workshop for Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TAOs) to come together and solidify the foundations of the Board for future work, these chapters outline what I did and didn't do, practicing the question 'Who should undertake this task, you or me?'.

As a result of this interaction, a valid base is created in Chapter 7 to critically analyse whether the methods concluded for my interaction in this context did, in fact, enable my professional aims to be achieved as outcomes of practice. Learning gained from this analysis is then used to feed into the further development of my Social Framework for future interaction as a CDP.

In presenting this report, it is noted that critical and active narrative voice is used at various stages of this writing in an effort to incorporate the subjective and personal nature inherent to the development of a living theory. Although this 'calls into question the 'academic norm' of presenting reports with the accepted 'scientific report' sequence of separate chapters for literature review, methodology, research design, findings and conclusions' (Davis, p. 190), it is maintained that traditional forms of assessment 'harbour markedly positivistic connotations' (Heikkinen *et al.*, 2007, p. 5), and are therefore out of place as a means of assessing and capturing the essence of action research. In light of this observation, and in an effort to provide the means for this thesis to be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in Chapter 2 - historical continuity, reflexivity, dialectics, workability and evocativeness (p. 9-16) - critical first-person analysis of journal entries, personal communication and my Social Framework is central to the presentation of this thesis. In a literary sense, this style of presentation also aims to imbue the reader with the same sense of organic change I experienced as part of the action research presented here.

Chapter 1 – Defining my voice as a Community Development Practitioner

Exploring my voice and place in the context of Indigenous research in Australia, I identify myself as a Community Development Practitioner (CDP). In defining this role, I see myself as a professional who engages in community development projects with the aim of promoting

> ...human autonomy or agency – the capacity of people to order their world, the capacity to create, reproduce, change and live according to their own meaning systems, to have powers to define themselves as opposed to being defined by others (de Certeau, 1986; Giddens, 1984; cited by Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 12).

In supporting these processes, my knowledge and skills are used at the request of people who want to create spaces which allow them to assert their voice, participate in decisions which affect them, and conclude and take actions to change their situations. Supporting with these spaces, my aim is for participants to experience values of empowerment, self-determination and emancipation, integral to obtaining a state of autonomy and agency (Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 13). Also referred to as 'collective community action' (Popple *et al.*, 2002, p. 72) and 'grassroots development' (Eversole, 2003, p. 73), 'bottom-up' approaches to change stress the importance of 'self-help', 'felt needs' and 'participation' (Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 22-23), recognising that 'people know their needs best and are capable of joining together to craft their own solutions' (Eversole, 2003, p. 75; Koirala-Azad *et al.*, 2009, p. 1). In this sense, my skills and knowledge are used to the advantage of participants as they define their problems and work out appropriate and relevant ways to solve them.

In contrast, 'top-down' approaches to community development see projects 'set up *for* the clients, not *with* them' (Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 13). This is often done by bureaucrats, managers, government and outsiders who decide what is needed and how to achieve it (Eversole, 2003, p. 73; Moore, 2002, p. 26) in an effort to 'incorporate and integrate subordinate groups into the dominant ideology' (Popple *et al.*, 2002, p. 72). Bhattacharyya (2004) observes that agents of top-down change think that they 'know what is best for the people regardless of what the people think' (p. 21), maintaining participants' passivity in change and decisions that affect them. As a result, bottom-up approaches are often seen to be 'overtly political' (Popple *et al.*, 2002, p. 76) in their effort to redefine the status quo, redistribute power (Koirala-Azad *et al.*, 2009, p. 2) and offer 'an alternative politics, a truly democratic politics – non-impositional, non-manipulative, and respectful of the will of the people' (Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 21).

Incorporating a bottom-up methodology into my own practice as a CDP, the framework which best describes the way I choose to work is that of participatory action research (PAR), an approach to community development which supports traditional research 'subjects' to become participants in the research process (Erick *et al.*, 2008, p. 5), 'often in solidarity with external supporters' (Tsey, 2002, p. 280). In an effort to

> ...explore priority issues affecting their day to day lives, recognise their own resources, produce knowledge and take action to improve their situation (Tsey *et. al*., 2002, p. 280),

PAR insists on participants' agency in emancipating themselves from their self-identified problems (Freire, 1996, p. 48), understanding that a CDP's attempt to implement change on behalf of participants is to contradict their efforts to support participants in their quest for liberation (p. 36). In this view, freedom cannot be brought by someone from outside, but must emanate from an internal epistemological shift, as liberation is understood to result from one's own action and reflection, not through external imposition (Freire, 1996, p. 36-37). A CDP's agency in a PAR scenario is therefore to support participants' development of their problem solving capacity and self-reliance (Arieli *et al.*, 2009, p. 264), ultimately resulting in participants' experience of agency and autonomy (Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 22) and freedom from the problem under investigation.

In the view of Popple *et al.* (2002), the PAR approach to development often 'hinges on the inherent conflicts that exist in society whereby certain groups...hold power and influence at the expense of others' (p. 76). By working with participants who have the desire to question the fatalism of their marginalising conditions (Bhattacharyya, 2004, p. 13; Bradbury Huang, 2010, p. 99), PAR teaches that 'conditions of injustice are not natural, but are produced and designed to privilege certain groups over others and conversely to oppress' (Koirala-Azad *et al.*, 2009, p. 2). In this sense, PAR aims to alter traditional power structures by demystifying the role of the 'expert' and enabling historically excluded people to access traditionally 'valid' and exclusive spaces of knowledge creation (p. 2). Although it is observed that 'some researchers are not comfortable having control transferred away from them' (Esler, 2008, p. 458), as is required when internalising a PAR approach, it is recognised that PAR is not just about the benefits of research outputs, but the empowering and emancipating benefits experienced by participants as part of the research process itself (Esler, 2008, p. 457; Bradbury Huang, 2010, p. 99). In this sense, for the full and positive effects of PAR to evolve, the PAR researcher must assume much less power than is held by a traditional researcher.

An example of an approach to community development that contributed towards PAR outcomes was a placement I held with a human rights organisation in Guatemala. In the case of this organisation, international volunteers engage in direct action by accompanying local human rights defenders (defenders) who have been threatened because of their political causes. By offering strategic and visible accompaniment to deter threats and enable defenders to continue with their work, the organisation takes advantage of the local perception that non-local people are connected to countries of power. The agency of a volunteer therefore revolves around presence, standing outside defenders' houses or meetings or travelling with defenders to different parts of the country. By positioning oneself in these strategic places and ensuring one's visibility, volunteers create a sense of security that enables defenders to continue to engage in reflective analysis of their situations and advocate for their causes. In any of the defenders' cases, the role of volunteers is generally non-verbal, as it is understood that only defenders can evolve relevant sustainable change.

As a rule, this organisation does not search for work and only accompanies defenders who petition the organisation of their own accord. By approaching the work in this way, the organisation makes sure that there is a grassroots need for the service and a local desire for the organisation to be 'in-country'. This way of working also ensures that local defenders are the ones to critically engage with the problems of their context, and that emancipating change grows from within, an example of PAR methodology. Although the organisation maintains principles of non-partisanship and non-interference, it is observed that the provision of international agency is inherently political in the way that that it ultimately enables the transfer of power from the oligarchy to the people.

Reflecting on the political nature (Popple *et al.*, 2002, p. 76) inherent to this approach to community development, the choice of a CDP to work in this bottom-up fashion might be seen to result from an ideological values-based decision. On my part, I choose this approach firstly because it encourages people's right to 'freedom of thought, opinion and expression' (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Articles 18 & 19), and their subsequent access to autonomy and agency, outcomes which have already been shown to be suffocated by top-down methodology. Secondly, it is understood that by supporting a person's participation in decisions and change which affect them, a bottom-up approach to community development also results in healthier people. In making this observation, attention is drawn to the connection between a person's control over their life and their state of wellbeing, and the contrasting impacts that top-down and bottom-up methodologies therefore have on individual and community health.

In elaborating on this second point, the World Health Organisation (WHO) refers to the Declaration of Alma-Ata (1978) for its definition of health which is seen as

> ...a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (p. 1).

In this definition, health is seen as a holistic concept in which a person is considered to experience wellbeing not only when they are physically well, but also when they enjoy good mental and social conditions. Further, when a person lacks control over their social environment, they tend to experience negative health outcomes (Devitt *et al.*, 2001, p. 11; Wallerstein, 1999, p. 40). In particular, Devitt *et al.* (2001) make a direct link between the poor health of Aboriginal people in Australia and Aboriginal people's historic experience of 'social inequality and powerlessness' (p. 11), a link which is sustained by WHO (2003) in a study on Social Determinants of Health. The study notes that

> [s]ocieties that enable all citizens to play a full and useful role in the social, economic and cultural life of their society will be healthier than those where people face insecurity, exclusion and deprivation (p. 12).

This impact of social inclusion/exclusion on one's wellbeing is also reflected in Henry's (2001) comment that 'empowered individuals are more likely to take proactive steps in terms of personal health' (p. 14). In an effort to offer guidance to reverse exclusionary practices, enable social participation and ultimately improve human wellbeing, a report by the Social Exclusion Knowledge Network (WHO SEKN, 2008) suggests: 'recognising the underlying relationship between social inclusion and human rights' (p. 16); 'promoting full and equal inclusion in social systems' (p. 16); and 'understanding the relationship between processes of exclusion and the creation and maintenance of health inequalities' (p. 21). In recognising these connections, my choice to incorporate a bottom-up PAR methodology into my work practice is seen to stem not only from an ideological view that each person has a right to experience autonomy and agency, but also from an understanding that access to this autonomy and agency is more likely to result in healthy people.

In his study of 33 CPDs from five countries, Moore (2002) found that individual practitioners develop unique methods of working to enable their varying professional aims to be achieved as outcomes of practice (p. 28). During his interviews, CDPs described how the methods of interaction they use to approach engagement with participants are continuously informed by community observation,

participant insight, reflection, discussion with people inside and outside the community, reading on related topics and practice itself (p. 26-27). Also referred to as 'reflection-in-action' (Schön, 1987) and 'living theory' (Whitehead, 1989), this process of professional development observes practitioners in 'a reflective conversation' (Schön, 1987, p. 36) with their 'educational influences' (Whitehead, 2009, p. 87) in an effort to design 'implicit practice-based theory as a guide for their community development practice' (Moore, 2002, p. 29). In this sense, as each CDP engages with their work in an effort to achieve their professional aims, they are understood to develop and enact a living theory reflective of their unique learning and accumulated knowledge.

It is a snapshot of the reflective analysis, testing and subsequent evolution of my own living theory that I will show through this thesis. So as to do this, I start by stating the professional methods of interaction that I brought with me when I first began to participate in the Indigenous research context in Australia. Grouping these methods under the term 'Social Framework', it is understood that they are a product of my past learning and previous experience using a bottom-up approach to community development.

Figure 1: Social Framework and subsequent methods of interaction reflective of my living theory when beginning to participate as a Community Development Practitioner in Indigenous research in Australia.

By grouping these methods of interaction under the term Social Framework, the aim is to create a reference point from which to explore and observe the evolution of my living theory through the conceptual framework presented in the next chapter. In effect, and as will be seen, the real value of a Social Framework lies in its ability to offer a visual and directional base from which to critically reflect and develop one's practice against new learning. This is to say that on the one hand, a Social

Framework offers a visual point of reflection to incorporate new learning and develop the methods entailed to reflect one's current context. On the other, it has directional value during practice by offering the CDP a strict guide for interaction that creates a base to know whether the methods entailed do, in fact, enable one's professional aims to be achieved as outcomes of practice.

Considering the methods of interaction in terms of both the roles of participants and myself, it is understood that there is incorporated a mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationship which requires both parties to act in certain ways. For participants to request my participation (Method 2) and ensure they maintain control over the project, for example, it is expected that I will wait for participants to ask me to support them. At the same time, in excluding myself from local decision-making (Method 4) to ensure that participants direct their project, there is an assumption that participants will be fully engaged and available to make their own decisions. As a result, the professional experience and learning I brought with me to this context, which is modelled on a PAR approach to change, can be seen to dictate certain expectations of both participants and myself for participants' access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing to be achieved as project outcomes.

Before using the concept of living theory in the next chapter to theorise the development and testing of my Social Framework in the context of Indigenous research in Australia, it is important to reiterate that the above Social Framework is a reflection of my own experience and learning. Although some people may identify with some or all of the methods of interaction as part of their own practice, the aim of this thesis is not to provide a strict guide of interaction for all CDPs. Contrastingly, in using this thesis to show the evolution of my thought and practice through my learning and experience, the aim is to portray an example of living theory and legitimise each CDP's unique learning and experience in the development of their own Social Framework.

Chapter 2 - A Social Framework for my community development practice

Whitehead (1989; 2009) uses the concept of 'living theory' to describe practitioners who critically reflect on questions of the type 'How can I improve my practice?' (1989, p. 1). Engaging in a personal action research process, these practitioners develop insight and conclusions which result in theory reflective of their daily practice. With fundamental principles of participation, action/reflection learning cycles, practicality and transformation (Bradbury Huang 2010; Denscombe 2005; Lomax 1986; Somekh 2006; Stringer 2007; Wadsworth 1998), it was seen that participatory action research (PAR) methodology puts research participants in a position where they develop solutions to their self-identified problems. As part of this process, the solutions concluded are implemented by the participant-researchers in an effort to transform the problem and create a new scenario. The success of this scenario is then analysed by participants as part of a continuous action/reflection learning cycle.

In the specific context of *living theory* action research, the 'problem' to be solved is considered the ability of an individual practitioner to do their job well. Seated on the preposition that all practitioners are in a constant state of learning,

> [t]he living theory approach to generating theory and understanding in action research is distinguished by individuals producing explanations for their educational influences in learning (Whitehead, 2009, p. 95).

In using the term 'educational influences', Whitehead makes reference to the dialogue (1989, p. 1), theory (1989, p. 7; 2009, p. 92) and practice (1989, p. 1) with which a practitioner interacts on a daily basis. Also referred to as 'materials of their situations' (Schön, 1987, p. 36) and 'everyday experiences' (Moore, 2002, p. 29), a practitioner's critical reflection of these materials is seen to develop ways of working that the practitioner perceives to be the most effective in achieving their stated aims. Using this interpretive approach to develop one's practice, it is observed that methods of interaction are more likely to be workable and relevant as they stem from the practitioner's local knowledge and values (McNiff, 2007, p. 223; Wood, 2010, p. 108 & 116; Lomax, 1986, p. 49).

Whitehead also explains the evolution of living theory in opposition to propositional (Whitehead, 1989, p. 2 & 4; 2009, p. 87) or traditional (Whitehead, 1989, p. 1) educational theory. Historically, he writes, 'educational theory could be constituted from the disciplines of education of philosophy, psychology, sociology and history' (2009, p. 91-92), and people who were not necessarily educators

were in a position to conclude the best ways for educators to be effective in their practice. In this scenario, propositional theoretical methods are imported and implemented top-down, and 'explanations for the actions and learning of individuals are derived from conceptual abstractions of relations between propositions' (2009, p. 87). This is to say that a propositional theory's success is measured in terms a learner's ability to adapt and learn from the external methods, not on the ability of the theory to support learners with their needs.

Whitehead (2009) notes that this is the 'fundamental mistake' of propositional theory (p. 90). In its effort to support all learners to learn,

> ...many of the operational principles...are generalisations from practical experience that have as their justification the results of individual actions and practices (2009, p. 90).

In this sense, the positivistic nature of propositional logic aims to produce 'an objective body of knowledge that can be generalised to large populations' (Stringer, 2007, p. 189). Based on the view that the creator of propositional theory is able to 'sustain a detached position from the object of investigation', knowledge is seen to be 'impersonal and objective' (Connole, 1993, p. 56). As a result, the imposition of theory from one place on another can be justified, as the human element of difference is not considered important for the theory's workability. In reference to discussion of Hirst (1983), however, and in the context of educational theory, Whitehead (2009) notes that this is the inherent irrationality of propositional theory (p. 90). While claiming to be relevant to all people, it is only the product of a few, and universality of a social theory cannot be maintained when the empirical data stems from a small segment of humanity.

The creation of living theory can therefore be seen to incorporate an inherent epistemological shift from traditional forms of knowledge creation. Creating meaning through the collation, discussion and interpretation of situated data, the purpose of action research

> ...is to build collaboratively constructed descriptions and interpretations of events that enable groups of people to formulate mutually acceptable solutions to their problems (Stringer, 2007, p. 189).

In the case of living theory, practitioners' continuous incorporation of their educational influences into their practice sees knowledge constructed as an ongoing 'social, communal activity' (Dancy and Sosa, 1992, p. 141) and a 'joint construction of stakeholder groups' (Stringer, 2007, p. 141). Even in

their opposition to the strict use of propositional theory, Whitehead (1989, p. 7; 2009, p. 92) and Wood (2010, p. 110) observe its utility in the dialogical construction of an individual's living theory, as it gives practitioners a point of reference on which to reflect their own experiences. This approach to knowledge creation can therefore be seen to be open, fluid and flexible and to 'emanate from an internal epistemological and ontological shift' (Wood, 2010, p. 113). This is a strict contrast to the objectivist epistemology of propositional theory which maintains that a researcher can conclude life's 'truth' as an object independent of human consciousness and experience (Crotty, 1998, p. 62-63).

In the context of this thesis, I adapt the concept of living theory to the development of my Social Framework for my interaction as a CDP in Indigenous research. With professional aims of supporting participants' access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing, I use this thesis to critically reflect on my educational influences in the Indigenous research context against the methods of my Social Framework presented in Chapter 1. More specifically, I use the question 'Who should undertake this task, you or me?', to reflect on my practice and structure the way I position myself with project participants. As a result, and depending on the learning that takes place, some methods of my Social Framework from previous experience might become invalid, whilst new methods might be added. Either way, the fluidity of living theory maintains that a Social Framework can grow, change and evolve through the critical reflection of a practitioner. Ultimately, this process validates the belief that the practitioner is in the best place to assess which methods are most likely to achieve the intended professional aims in the given context (Whitehead, 2009, p. 95; Laidlaw, 2008, p. 89).

It is noted here that it is the validation of one's ability to know their practice that is my specific attraction to the living theory approach to learning. Moving away from the strict use of propositional logic, the theoretical constraints experienced by the living theory practitioner promote, as opposed to constrain, an individual's creativity, intuition and ability to read a situation. In this sense, the type of education proposed by living theory reflects earlier discussions on PAR methodology. In PAR, practitioners are given the right to identify problems, critically reflect the materials around them, and configure methods of practice that they believe will help to achieve their professional aims. As a result, the type of learning I propose for myself can be seen to reflect the type of learning I promote for the people with whom I work. In the same way that I understand that a top-down approach to change impacts negatively on participants' ability to access autonomy, agency and wellbeing, I understand the same to be true for myself.

In evaluating living theory action research, it is observed that the base from which to measure its success should be seen in terms of whether one was able to achieve their professional values as outcomes of practice (Whitehead, 2009, p. 94), which in the case of this thesis are reflected in my professional aims of supporting people's access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing. Acting as 'living standards of judgement' (Whitehead, 2009, p. 96; McNiff, 2007, p. 225; Wood, 2010, p. 112), these values/aims create a base from which

> ...the validity of [a practitioner's] claims to improved practice [is tested] in relation to the extent to which the values that informed the practice have been realised (McNiff, 2007. p. 225).

In this sense, and in an effort to develop a more functional and effective way of working, it is my adherence to the methods of my Social Framework, and the subsequent ability of these methods to support participants' access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing, that is described and critically analysed through this thesis.

As a values-based process of evaluation, the practitioner is seen to be the best person to assess whether or not their aims were achieved as outcomes of practice. As a result, the practitioner 'should play a central role in their research as the main informant and the one best able to set the standards against which to judge success' (Lomax, 1986, p. 43 & 44). Laidlaw (2008) concurs with these ideas when she writes that it is 'important that we show how we are accounting for these values in our actions' (p. 70). In this sense, it is the responsibility of the practitioner to design methods to explain and analyse how they attempted to enact a particular value, why they chose that method, and whether or not they were successful. In the case of this thesis, it is the explanations associated with the evolution of the methods of my Social Framework, and my adherence to these methods in a practical scenario, that provide the base necessary to receive feedback and evaluate whether my living theory enabled my professional aims to be achieved as outcomes of practice.

In their writing, Heikkinen *et al.* (2007, p. 5) maintain that critical narrative is a legitimate way to incorporate these transformative and reflective characteristics of action research into an evaluation report. Although the critical narrative approach 'calls into question the 'academic norm' of presenting reports with the accepted 'scientific report' sequence of separate chapters for literature review, methodology, research design, findings and conclusions' (Davis, p. 190), it is maintained that traditional forms of assessment 'harbour markedly positivistic connotations' (Heikkinen *et al.*, 2007,

p. 5), and are therefore out of place as a means of assessing and capturing the essence of action research. In her experience, Davis (2007) notes that

> ...change [in action research] does not just happen at 'the end'...it may change shape over time, even unexpectedly, as participants focus and refocus their understandings about what is happening and what is important (p. 189).

In an effort to reflect this unpredictability, Heikkinen *et al.* (2007) further promote the use of critical narrative when they suggest five principles for the assessment of this type of writing. These include: 1) historical continuity, which 'recognises the historical evolution of action' (p. 9); 2) reflexivity, which sees the action researcher as 'a philosopher consciously reflect[ing] on his or her pre-sights' (p. 11); 3) dialectics, which recognises the interpretive nature of action research by offering a constructivist dialectic from different sources of information (p. 13-14); 4) workability, which questions whether the research 'has given rise to changes in social actions' (p. 14); and 5) evocativeness, which understands that 'good research awakens and provokes a person to think about things in a new and different way' (p. 16). In asserting these principles, critical narrative reports gain merit as an effective and legitimate way to present and assess the reflective, subjective and personal processes inherent to the evolution of a living theory. In observing this view, there are various times during this presentation when I use critical narrative and first person voice to reflect, develop and analyse the Social Framework presented earlier against new learning in this context.

Chapter 3 – Developing my Social Framework through Australian history literature

In accordance with the idea that a practitioner's living theory evolves through critical reflection of their 'educational influences' (Whitehead, 2009, p. 92), Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis review literature that explores historical relations between Indigenous and immigrant peoples in Australia, and the impact these relations have on contemporary thought around Indigenous research methodology. Reflecting on and analysing my relationship with this literature, I grow, change and develop the methods of the Social Framework presented in Chapter 1 to create a new Social Framework to be tested and analysed in my practice as a Community Development Practitioner (CDP) in the context of Indigenous research in Australia.

It is noted firstly, however, that the information presented here will not reflect the experience or beliefs of all Indigenous peoples in Australia. Secondly, in using the term 'Indigenous' in the Australian context, it is recognised that this term refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Unless otherwise specified by the refereed authors, or this author, this has been a purposeful manoeuvre to contextualise this research within a 'whole-of-country' colonial framework. Local contextualisation will take part in Chapter 5 once a research project has been identified for practical engagement.

In the colonial account of Australian history, the role of Indigenous people was often excluded (Stanner, 1968, p. 25; Taylor, 1996, p. 4; Heffernan, 1996, p. 5 & 6; Smallacombe, 1996, p. 38; Reynolds, 2000, p. 136-137). Drawing attention to the research practices used to construct Australian historical accounts, Heffernan (1996) writes that

> [c]olonial Australian history relied upon this emphasis of 'facts', of there being one true white history of this continent since 'invasion' (p. 5).

As part of this objectivist epistemology, privilege was given to written data sources, effectively denying the wealth of information found in Indigenous oral tradition (Taylor, 1996, p. 4-5). As a result, Indigenous peoples' knowledge, opinions and experiences were excluded from mainstream consciousness and debate (Taylor, 1996, p. 4; Heffernan, 1996, p. 5 & 6; Smallacombe, 1996, p. 38), leading to a misinformed public (Taylor, 1996, p. 4-5; Heffernan, 1996, p.5) and defining Indigenous truth on behalf of Indigenous peoples (Winch *et al.*, 1998, p. 25; Martin, 2001, p. 2; Rigney, 1997, p. 634).

Evidence of this is seen in Stanner's (1968) research when he shows that published Australian history between 1939 and 1955 tended to make either no reference or only token reference to Aboriginal people and culture (p. 23-24). Naming this phenomenon 'the great Australian silence', Stanner observes this period as 'the story of the things we were unconsciously resolved not to discuss with them or treat with them about' (p. 25). Reynolds (2000) provides an example of this process with his investigation into the myth of a 'peaceful Australian settlement'. In his analysis, he shows various examples of published historians from the early 1800s through to the 1960s which exclude Aboriginal story and perspective. As a result, European colonisation in Australia is presented to be 'uniquely free of conflict' (p. 135-137). On further investigation, however, Reynolds found various records which show Aboriginal people defending their land. Likened to guerrilla warfare, Governor Arthur in Tasmania wrote, '...they suddenly appear, commit some act of outrage and then as suddenly vanish' (p. 147). Wanganeen (2002) also makes reference to this defence by Aboriginal people of their land when he refers to themes of 'massacres, death, cruelty, racism and resistance' in Aboriginal oral histories (p. 2).

In her writing, Smallacombe (1996) reflects on this exclusion of Indigenous voice in historical research practices in terms of historical power relations between Indigenous and immigrant peoples in Australia. She writes that

> [t]he Australian colonisers have relied on written sources and most written sources give the views of the past 'from above' that is, from the view of the powerful. Therefore, written sources do not give the views of those who are not in positions of power such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (p. 38).

In demonstrating these power relations, reference is made throughout the literature to various Australian government policies which were imposed on Indigenous peoples 'for their own good' (Dodson, 2000, p. 268). Referred to as 'subjugation' (19th century), 'protection' (until the early 1950s) and 'assimilation' (1950s to early 1970s) policies (Mercer, 1997, p. 191), some examples include the prohibition of Indigenous languages (Dodson, 2000, p. 267; Eveline, 2001, p. 156); the forced removal of Indigenous people onto missions and stations (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993, p. 37; Eveline, 2001, p. 144; Stanner, 1968, p. 27); the chaining up of Indigenous people to become indentured workers (Dodson, 2000, p. 267; Lippmann, 1994a, p. 14-15); the imposition of different denominations of Christianity (Dodson, 2000, p. 267; Lippmann, 1994a & b, p. 9-13 & 21); and the removal of Indigenous children from their families (Council for

Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993, p. 37; Smallacombe, 1996, p. 38; Eveline, 2001, p. 144 & 155). As a result of this social landscape,

> Aboriginal people and communities had no control over [the] discourse [of Aboriginality] and, hence, no voice in the domain of Australian historiography (Heffernan, 1996, p. 6).

In this light, government policy can be seen to have disempowered Indigenous peoples from accessing and participating in the research practices which defined their 'truth'. As a result, there was a dissemination of history and research which excluded and misrepresented Indigenous worldview and experience. Coming into the 1960's, however, these practices began to change as people began to see history as a subjective discipline. Windschuttle (2002), for example, observes that

> [t]he most influential single idea about history that emerged from the 1960s was...the notion that history was 'inescapably political'...It turned the traditional role of the historian, to stand outside contemporary society in order to seek the truth about the past, on its head (p. 61).

Stanner (1968) also makes note of this move away from objective historical accounts when he refers to people in universities and research institutes re-writing Australian history, and the end of 'the great Australian silence' (p. 27). This 'renaissance in Australian history-writing' (Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993, p. 37) is also referred to by Taylor (1996) when she observes that 'historians all over the world have gradually begun to see the value of oral history' (p. 34). The establishment of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies in 1961, and the 1964 project 'Aborigines in Australian Society' sponsored by the Social Sciences Research Council of Australia (Lippmann, 1994b, p. 31; Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1993, p. 37; Mulvaney, 1986, p. 6), were also evidence of the changing view that Indigenous experience and voice are an integral part of the Australian story.

It should be noted, however, that this inclusion of Indigenous voice in Australian historiography did not mean equality of Indigenous voice in all facets of Australian society. Evidence of this is seen in the number of Aboriginal organisations which were formed from the 1950s through to the 1970s 'to press the case for civil and land rights' (Lippmann, 1994b, p. 29; Moreton-Robinson, 2000, p. 152; Anderson, 2007, p. 151). In Anderson's (2007) view, this political movement advocated

> ...a set of values which in different ways coalesced around notions of autonomy: self-determination, sovereignty and community control (p. 141).

One example of this movement was the 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petition in which Aboriginal people from Yirrkala[1] protested against bauxite mining on their country. In the petition, it is maintained that more than 500 people of various tribes in Yirrkala are 'residents of the land excised from the Aboriginal reserve in Arnhem Land' (Yirrkala Bark Petition, 1963), and that these people were not consulted in regards to the use of their land (Howie-Willis, 1994, p. 101). Taking this claim to the Northern Territory Supreme Court in 1970, Justice Blackburn concluded in 1971 that 'they could not succeed unless they could show that there was a doctrine in their favour, co-existing with the rights of the Crown' (Unknown, 1971, p. 1). This is to say that the 'Anglocentric legal system' required the Yirrkala tribes to argue their 'ownership' in terms of 'strict property rights', an impossibility considering their doctrine explained their relationship with the land in a very different way (Mercer, 1997, p. 195).

The 1965 'Freedom Ride' led by Charlie Perkins is another example of the Indigenous rights movement which can be seen as evidence of the inequalities that existed between Indigenous and other Australians. As 'a new way of promoting rapid change in racial attitudes in Australia' (Perkins, 1995, p. 101; Anderson, 2007, p. 141), Perkins led a group of students from Sydney in a bus across country New South Wales. Stopping in different towns on the way, the group protested against apartheid-style racial divisions, including a picket outside the RSL in Walgett where Aboriginal people were not allowed to enter (Perkins, 1995, p. 103-105), and a protest outside the town baths in Moree that were exclusive to white people (Munro, 1995, p. 53-55). Munro reflects that as a young person in Moree at the time,

> ...this is where and when some of us learned all about direct action. This is what the confrontation meant. Because if we'd stayed back, we wouldn't have got anywhere. It would have been a very long time before we ever got into the baths (p. 55).

Even with this push for autonomy, however, it was not until the establishment of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in 1973 (Baker, 1999, p. 96; Moreton-Robinson, 2000, p. 155) that government policy began to move away from assimilation towards enabling Indigenous self-determination

[1] The Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TAOs) that submitted this petition were 'members of the Balamumu, Narrkala, Gapiny, Miliwurrwurr people and Djapu, Mangalili, Madarrpa, MagarrwanaImirri, Djambarrpuynu, Gumaitj, Marrakulu, Galpu, Dhaluangu, Wangurri, Warramirri, Naymil, Rirritjingu tribes' (Yirrkala Bark Petition, 1963).

(Baker, 1999, p. 96; O'Donohue, 1994, p. 7; Mercer, 1997, p. 194; Anderson, 2007, p. 142). Defined as what Indigenous people want for Indigenous people, what Indigenous people see as their futures, and what Indigenous people understand as their place on country (Dodson, 1996, p. 2), Indigenous self-determination moves away from the top-down management policies of the past and asserts Indigenous agency in decisions which affect Indigenous peoples (O'Donohue, 1994, p. 7; Anderson, 2007, p. 138).

A good example of an institution established during the era of self-determination (O'Donohue, 1994, p. 5; Anderson, 2007, p. 138) is the now-abolished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). Established in 1990, and run by Indigenous people, ATSIC was divided into 60 regional councils which were 'responsible for the allocation of resources within their jurisdiction and the election of the Commission's 20 board members' (Anderson, 2007, p. 138). A distinctive feature of ATSIC was that it formulated policy for the programs it administered (Anderson, 2007, p. 143; O'Donohue, 1994, p. 10) such as housing and infrastructure, cultural heritage and native title (Anderson, 2007, p. 143). In O'Donohue's (1994) view, the structure of ATSIC was 'a radical advance in the application of self-determination principles' (p. 10). In 2004, however, ATSIC was dismantled (Phillips, 2004, p. 5; Grattan, 2004, p. 58; Anderson, 2007, p. 146), and its $1 billion budget was 'redirected into mainstream programs' (Phillips, 2004, p. 5). In the media of the time, the abolition of ATSIC equated to the failure of self-determination (Phillips, 2004, p. 5; Anderson, 2007, p. 149), an observation which was also made by the then Liberal Prime Minister John Howard (Anderson, 2007, p. 138 & 149).

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), however, ratified by Australia in April 2009, gives credence to the continuing observation that self-determination should be central to rhetoric and action on Indigenous policy (Arabena, 2010, p. 28; Gooda, 2010, p. 32; Reynolds, 1994, p. 13-14; O'Donohue, 1994, p. 9). Three Articles of particular relevance to this discussion are:

> Article 3 – Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
>
> Article 4 – Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.

> Article 18 – Indigenous people have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Recognising this right to self-determination, the Declaration acknowledges the importance of Indigenous people's agency at local, regional and global levels (Malezer, 2010, p. 22). Mick Gooda (2010, p. 33), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, and Kerry Arabena (2010, p. 28), former Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples (Congress), also recognise the Declaration as a vehicle to legitimise and enhance Indigenous voice. In her capacity as Congress Co-Chair, for example, Arabena (2010) observed that 'the Declaration is self-determination in practice' (p. 28), and offers a means to support the Congress' aim to 're-engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the decision-making processes in this county' (p. 28). Gooda (2010) also notes his intent to use the Declaration in his role as a means to empower Indigenous people to reach their potential (p. 32). In this sense, Indigenous agency and autonomy continue to be seen as of central importance to Indigenous processes of change and development in this country.

Reflecting on this historical overview, and in an effort to acknowledge the above voices so as not to propagate historical discriminatory practices, it is recognised that in the development of my Social Framework for practice in this context, my methods of interaction will need to be positioned within a framework of self-determination. Expanding on these thoughts in the next chapter, I will be guided to support Indigenous research project participants' self-determination and their rightful access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing.

Chapter 4 – Developing my Social Framework through Indigenous research methodology

Reflecting discussions of the previous chapter, and promoting the importance of Indigenous self-determination in Indigenous research, it is suggested that the role of Indigenous people in the research context be to assert their agency so as to subvert the colonial and positivistic practices which have historically undermined Indigenous worldviews (Winch *et al.*, 1998, p. 26; Ford, 1997, p. 13; Working Party of Aboriginal Historians, 1981, p. 7-8) and defined Indigenous truth on behalf of Indigenous peoples (Martin, 2001, p. 2; Rigney, 1997, p. 634). As part of this approach, it is thought important for Indigenous people to identify the area of investigation (Martin, 2001, p. 5; Howitt *et al.*, 1990, p. 2; Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1999, p. 3; Tuhiwai Smith, 2007, p. 127; Hecker, 1997, p. 785), design the research methods (Martin, 2001, p. 1; Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1999, p. 3; Winch *et al.*, 1999, p. 25), conduct the research (Martin, 2001, p. 5; Howitt *et al.*, 1990, p. 2), analyse and interpret the data (Martin, 2001, p. 6; Tuhiwai Smith, 2006, p. 127; Hecker, 1997, p. 785), and control and implement how knowledge and conclusions are used (Howitt *et al.*, 1990, p. 2 & 3; Martin, 2001, p. 6).

Reflecting earlier discussions on participatory action research (PAR), the enactment of the above roles observes Indigenous 'participant-researchers' assuming a PAR approach to knowledge creation. Resulting in an inherent epistemological shift (Martin, 2001, p. 2; Rigney, 1997, p. 636) that moves away from the top-down generation of 'truth' seen in the historic analysis of the previous chapter, Indigenous participants 'direct and control their research' (Boughton, 2001, p. 2; Wallerstein, 1999, p. 41; Freire, 1996, p. 64), define themselves and their situations (Working Party of Aboriginal Historians, 1981, p. 8; Rigney, 1997, p. 636), and transform problems which affect them (Hecker, 1997, p. 785).

In his writing, Rigney (1997) incorporates the above ideas into what he terms an 'Indigenist' research methodology. Defined as

> ...research by Indigenous Australians whose primary informants are Indigenous Australians and whose goals are to serve and inform the Indigenous struggle for self-determination (p. 637),

Indigenist research draws on libratory epistemologies such as critical feminist theory and the pedagogic thought put forward by Freire (1996), understanding that for Indigenous liberation to be

experienced, it must be undertaken by Indigenous people themselves (Rigney, 1997, p. 636). By enacting this approach, participants gain the ability to deconstruct the negative connotations associated with Indigenous identity and culture which were formed through processes of colonisation and Western research practices (Tuhiwai Smith, 2006, p. 146; Martin, 2001, p. 2). In this sense, the Indigenist approach to research is specific in its resistance of Indigenous people to top-down positivist methodologies that validate the colonisation of knowledge about Indigenous peoples (Saunders, 2010, p. 2; Martin, 2001, p. 2; Rigney, 1997, p. 636). As a result, Indigenist research can be seen as a space for Indigenous people to reclaim themselves and their identities.

Considering these ideas, there is question around the role of people who are not Indigenous in Indigenous research. Although Rigney (1997) points out that anyone can make a valuable contribution to critical research, he emphasises that it is 'inappropriate' for research that aids the 'political cause' to come mainly from people who are not Indigenous (p. 636). As already noted, it is also understood that when the above research roles are assumed by outsiders, Indigenous people are denied the opportunity to empower and emancipate themselves from the conditions causing the reason for investigation. Tuhiwai Smith (2006) also considers the place of people who are not Indigenous in Indigenous research, recognising that there will always be people who are not Indigenous with a desire and interest to participate. As a result, she poses the following questions for reflection at this cultural interface: 'Who defined the research problem?', 'For whom is this study worthy and relevant?', and 'To whom is the researcher accountable?' (p. 173). In reflecting these questions, Tuhiwai Smith promotes thought around power and control of Indigenous knowledge, aiming to ensure that the role of people who are not Indigenous supports Indigenous people to experience self-determination and liberation.

In maintaining these ideas, it would seem appropriate that this thesis is used to analyse my own work practice, as opposed to the actions and culture of the Indigenous people to whom I offer support as a Community Development Practitioner (CDP). In maintaining this position, I am conscious that it is not my role to talk for Indigenous participants or analyse their processes on their behalf. As a result, I understand that the only person I can speak for in this context is myself, and so use this opportunity to tell my own story. In doing this, I believe that I extricate myself from propagating the positivistic objectivist practices which were seen in Chapter 3 to contribute to the marginalisation and 'voicelessness' of Indigenous peoples in Australia. At the same time, I also believe that I better position myself to support Indigenous participants to use Indigenist PAR methodology to access autonomy, agency and wellbeing.

Applying the idea of living theory to integrate the above discussions into my Social Framework, and in the context of the question 'Who should undertake this task, you or me?', the seven methods of interaction already presented can be seen to be of equal importance in this context. In line with my previous experience of incorporating bottom-up PAR methodology into my practice, the information presented here also promotes participants' agency in their research as a means of subverting disempowering historical processes and enabling participants' autonomy. In doing this, it is suggested that Indigenous participants identify the area of investigation and ask CDPs to support with their processes while remaining at the centre of their project. At the same time, an Indigenist approach requires that the CDP be excluded from participants' decision-making, be perceived as a tool for local advancement, act as a listener as opposed to a talker, and advocate for people's right to access creative developmental spaces. By positioning oneself in this way, the CDP does not assume roles which might impinge on participants' ability to empower and emancipate themselves from historical misrepresentation and discrimination.

In addition to the methods of my Social Framework already presented, and in specific reference to the Indigenous research context, the above discussions suggest that as part of the epistemological shift inherent to a bottom-up Indigenous research methodology, Indigenous participants design and implement the methods of data collection, analyse and interpret the data, and control and implement how the knowledge generated by the research is used. In further enabling the self-determination of participants, it is also suggested that the CDP be directed by, and accountable to, local participants. Using the concept of living theory to integrate this information into my methods of professional interaction, my new Social Framework for my participation as a CDP in Indigenous research looks as follows:

SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

METHODS OF INTERACTION OF PARTICIPANTS:

Method 1 To identify the community development project.
Method 2 To request the participation of CDPs.
Method 3 To be at the centre of the project.
Method 4 To design and implement the methods of data collection.
Method 5 To analyse the data.
Method 6 To control and implement how knowledge is used.

MY METHODS OF INTERACTION AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER:

Method 7 To exclude myself from participants' decision-making.
Method 8 To use my skills as a tool for participants' advancement.
Method 9 To be a listener as opposed to a talker.
Method 10 To advocate for participants' right to access creative, developmental spaces.
Method 11 To be directed by, and accountable to, participants.

Figure 2: Social Framework and subsequent methods of interaction reflective of my living theory after analysis of literature pertaining to Australian Indigenous history and Indigenous research methodology, and prior to my participation in an Indigenous research project. Underlined methods indicate that they are new.

With the aim of creating the base necessary to critically reflect and analyse whether the methods of this Social Framework enable me to achieve my professional aims as outcomes of practice, the next two chapters show how I adhere to the above methods of interaction during my identification and participation in an Indigenous research project.

Chapter 5 – Identification of an Indigenous research project

In the following chapters, and in an effort to reflect the constructivist interpretivist and personal nature inherent to living theory action research, the Indigenous research story told and analysed here is from my perspective as a Community Development Practitioner (CDP). As part of this process, direct reference is made throughout the text to each of the methods of my Social Framework as they were implemented and enacted during my participation and observation in this Indigenous research scenario. In doing this, the intention is to show how each of the methods were enacted during the project so as to create a base from which to analyse whether they enabled my professional aims to be achieved as project outcomes.

Searching for an Indigenous research project, Winch *et al.* (1998) suggest to 'listen to people, send out messages on the 'bush telegraph' [and] let people know that you are interested in writing about something which is important to them' (p. 27). Approaching the identification of a project in this way, it could be assured that the area of investigation would be identified by participants (Method 1), and that the participant-researchers would want someone like me to become involved (Method 2). As I let people know my intention to write a thesis from an Indigenous research project, three organisations approached me to talk about how I might fit in with their work. In the first case, I was considered for a project in East Arnhem Land. After preliminary consultation with the community, however, the facilitators reported that the project would not start for at least a year, and that they would not be able to fund my travel. Turning down this project, it was noted that even if the timing had have been right, it would have been difficult to be accountable to participants (Method 11) and a tool for participants' advancement (Method 8) without the means to travel to the community. In the second case, I met with a Darwin-based Aboriginal organisation where we discussed my desire to support with an already-identified research project. There was, however, a conceptual gap in the perception of my role, as the organisation expected that I identify the area of investigation. In this case, Method 1 could not be met and I did not accept the organisation's offer to participate.

In the third case, I was approached by the Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB, or the Board) to support with their desire to become more involved in the Northern Territory (NT) Crocodile Industry (Methods 1 & 2). Eventually accepting this role, the history of the Board shows that it was formed in 2009 during a workshop organised by the Northern Territory Government (NTG) Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS), to develop the *Northern Territory Farmed Saltwater*

Crocodile Industry Strategy (RMCG Consultants, 2009), referred to hereafter as the *Strategy*. In a series of two workshops, NT Crocodile Industry stakeholders were consulted on 'issues around understanding the needs of stakeholders, understanding future risks and trends, licensing regimes, marketing, communication between stakeholders, etc.' (NRETAS, pers. comm., *Email*, 25/02/09).

Held on September 17 2008 and March 4 2009, the workshops included the participation of the Northern Territory and Federal Governments, crocodile farmers, the Northern Land Council (NLC), independent researchers and ten Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TAOs) representing five different countries[2]. TAOs were only invited to the second workshop, at which the NLC did not attend. During the afternoon session of this second workshop,

> ...NRETAS requested that two TAOs...have [continued] input into NRETAS' 'Development of the NT Saltwater Crocodile Industry Strategy'. At that point, the TAOs deferred from the seminar room and held a meeting amongst ourselves as to who should be representing TAOs on NRETAS' Northern Territory Crocodile Management Board. The TAOs decided to form our own Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Letter*, 10/03/09).

In a later conversation with Board Secretary Dr Payi Linda Ford, it was revealed that the Board formed because the TAOs present at the workshop did not feel that two TAOs could represent the diversity of Aboriginal culture and country as it relates to saltwater crocodiles, as was the request of NRETAS. The NLC's failure to attend and represent TAOs[3] was also stated as a reason for the creation of the Board (Beattie, pers. comm., *Meeting*, 25/04/09). In regards to this second point, the NTTAOCMB writes that

> [the] Northern Land Council (NLC) failed to attend [the March 4 workshop] and join in on assisting to properly provide an equal representation of Northern Territory's Traditional Land Owners involved in the Crocodile Industry. Both groups [TAOs and crocodile farmers] at the

[2] 'Country' in this sense refers to the Aboriginal concept of country whose limits are defined by language, tribe, clan and/or ceremony.

[3] The NLC's roles and responsibilities as prescribed by Section 23 of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (ALRA) include: 1) finding out and expressing the wishes of Aboriginal people about the management of their land and legislation about their land; 2) protecting the interests of Traditional Aboriginal Owners of, and other Aborigines interested in, Aboriginal Land; and 3) consulting Traditional Aboriginal Landowners and other Aborigines interested in Aboriginal land about proposals for the use of their land (NLC website, date accessed: 02/05/10).

> workshop raised a concern of not having the key NLC representatives attend the workshop (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm*., Media Release*, 23/04/09).
>
> At the workshop, inside the seminar room, there were lots of comments criticising the NLC and its ability to support the TAOs and the crocodile business on TAO country (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Letter*, 10/03/09).

Moving forward, the Board informed NT Crocodile Industry stakeholders of their formation and their desire to become more involved in the industry. As part of this process, they sent out an invitation to attend a workshop on March 18 2009 specifically related to the development of the NTTAOCMB. In attendance at this workshop were Board Members, the NLC, NRETAS and other interested TAOs. Points discussed during the meeting included: NTTAOCMB membership; governance structure; roles and functions; advocacy; research; training; input into the *Strategy;* and feedback into the NTG's (2009) DRAFT *Management Program for the Saltwater Crocodile in the Northern Territory of Australia, 2009-2014*, referred to hereafter as the *Program* (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Meeting*, 18/03/09). Public actions taken as a result of this workshop included a Media Release (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm*.,* 23/04/09) and Radio Interview with 105.7 FM on April 23 2009. Amongst other things, the Board was quite specific in its desire to feed into the DRAFT *Program.*

The current *Program* is the result of efforts which began with 1980s NTG conservation and economic policy, and has the aim of addressing 'the balance that is required between conservation goals, sustainable harvest, growing industry and maintaining public safety' (NTG, 2009, p.4). Different to the *Strategy*, the *Program* has an emphasis on the science of maintaining a healthy crocodile population, setting the boundaries within which the commercial goals of the *Strategy* take place. In response to a public notice to submit feedback to the DRAFT of the 2009-2014 *Program*, the Board submitted two documents to NRETAS in June 2009 (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Email*, 07/06/09; NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Response to Program 1*, 25/05/09; NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Response to Program 2*, 25/05/09). Within these documents, the Board suggested ten areas for the participation of the NTTAOCMB and/or Aboriginal people in the NT Crocodile Industry including:

> 1) Participation in the allocation of permits (mentioned twice).
> 2) Support with guiding other TAOs as to compliance regulations within the NT Crocodile Industry (mentioned twice).
> 3) Support for research focusing on the collection and importance of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (mentioned twice).
> 4) TAOs to educate visitors to their country.

> 5) Involvement of TAOs in negotiations on compensation for problem crocodile removal (mentioned twice).
> 6) Direct involvement of the NTTAOCMB in the development of the *Strategy* and *Program* (mentioned twice).
> 7) Assistance by TAOs in the development of public awareness campaigns and information (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Response to Program 1*, 25/05/09).
> 8) Close monitoring of egg collection practices to ensure transparency.
> 9) Negotiation of a Territory-wide benchmark price for eggs.
> 10) Education and training of TAOs in value adding such as incubation and sale of hatchlings to farms (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Response to Program 2*, 25/05/09).

On review of this information and the developmental processes experienced by the Board, and in specific reference to my Social Framework, it could be seen that the NTTAOCMB had many ideas about how to further engage Aboriginal people in the NT Crocodile Industry (Methods 1 & 3). In this sense, Board members were observed to be people who already owned and would remain at the centre of their research (Method 3), would make their own decisions (Method 7), and would allow me to interact as a listener as opposed to talker (Method 9). As a result, I saw that I would be able to engage in a way that reflected my Social Framework and accepted the Board's offer (Method 2) to support with their developmental processes (Method 8), a collaboration which was solidified on receiving a Letter of Support from the Board stating that

> [t]he Board expects Michael Beattie, in his role as honours candidate, to work with Board members to identify the risks associated with the processes, development and existence of the NTTAOCMB in the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry. At all times the candidate's research progress will be guided by the Board (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., 19/07/09) (Method 11).

In particular, my role became to organise a workshop whereby TAOs could come together to analyse risks and draw conclusions for decisions pertaining to the Board's development (Methods 3, 4, 5 & 10). In a meeting with Dr Ford, she made specific reference to the workshop as a space to discuss the Board becoming a legal entity, concluding a Terms of Reference and developing an activity plan (Beattie, pers. comm., *Journal Entry*, 13/07/09). In a journal entry from the time I wrote that

> I have skills that can be used to others' advantage and this is what I offer the NTTAOCMB...My skills are generic and diverse – from logistical organisation and report writing, to budgeting, funding applications and PR (Beattie, pers. comm., *Journal Entry*, 25/06/09) (Method 8).

Understanding the workshop as TAOs' chosen method for the NTTAOCMB to collectively analyse data for the Board's development (Methods 4 & 5), my role would be to create a workshop space that reflected TAOs' needs, visions and desires (Methods 10 & 11). In doing this, Interview Topics (Appendix 1, 18/07/09) were developed so as to: 1) gain an understanding of each TAO's relationship with the crocodile on their country; 2) understand the importance of the NTTAOCMB for each person; 3) know what members saw as the Board's functions; 4) gauge how each person wanted the Board to move forward; and 5) know the risks that each person perceived for the Board's development. Using this information to structure the workshop, I positioned myself in a way that I was directed by, and accountable to, project participants (Methods 9 & 11).

Chapter 6 – Participation in an Indigenous research project

On April 10 and 11 2010, almost nine months after receiving the Letter of Support from the Board, the workshop took place. In attendance were eight Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TAOs) including Jida Gulpilil, Ramingining; Dr Payi Linda Ford, Wagait Land Trust; David Kenyon, Wairuk community, Humpty Doo; Margaret Daiyi, Wagait Land Trust; Calvin Deveraux, Wagait Land Trust; Barney Narjic, Wudupuli, Wadeye; Djawa Yunupingu, Gumatj Corporation, Nhulunbuy; and Joe Browne, Larrakia Nation. Also in attendance were workshop facilitator Kate Andrews; Larrakia TAO Tania Williams (Welcome to Country); Northern Territory Government (NTG) Minister for Natural Resources Karl Hampton (opening comments); NTG Minister for Indigenous Development Malarndirri McCarthy (opening comments); lawyer James Matthews (entire workshop); Larrakia Ranger Cos Tambling (entire workshop); two partners of two TAOs (observers); Keith Saalfeld, Parks and Wildlife (presentation); Brett Easton, Acting Director for Conservation and Wildlife (presentation); Vicki Simlesa, Department of Resources (presentation); and myself.

In preparing and organising the workshop, I made 47 phone calls, sent 60 text messages, wrote 161 emails and attended 34 meetings[4] to ensure that my work was guided by the ten TAOs that formed the Board in March 2009 (Methods 3 & 11). Of these ten TAOs, three attended the April 2010 workshop – Board Chairperson Jida Gulpilil; Board Secretary Dr Payi Linda Ford; and Board Member David Kenyon. TAO Margaret Daiyi also became involved in the lead-up to the workshop. Representing three countries, these four TAOs became my main guide to understanding the context within which the Board was formed. The information shared by these TAOs also enabled a workshop to be structured that reflected their thoughts on potential functions, perceived risks and ways to establish a strong foundation for future work (Methods 3, 8, 9 & 11). As will be seen later, conversations with other industry stakeholders also contributed to the Workshop Agenda (Appendix 8, 08/04/10).

In an effort to show how Methods 3, 7, 8, 9 & 11 were enacted as part of the project, the following summaries give an overview of the information that was shared during meetings and interviews with TAOs for the development of the workshop and the Workshop Agenda.

[4] These figures only reflect communication with the original ten Board members. They do not show the communication that took place with other TAOs and NT Crocodile Industry stakeholders.

Jida Gulpilil, Ramingining

Meeting with Jida, he spoke about the peripheral role that Aboriginal people have historically played in industry in the Northern Territory (NT), stating that they should now be at the centre of industry so as to be able to pursue outcomes which relate to their aspirations. His belief is that Aboriginal people need space to be able to come to conclusions about what it is that they want, and stated that the Board could provide the perfect opportunity for this to happen. In terms of practical measures to do this, Jida suggested different possibilities such as becoming an Aboriginal Corporation under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) (CATSI) Act 2006, and/or becoming a non-government organisation. Either way, his vision for the Board was to gain the autonomy necessary to apply for funding to enable future work.

In terms of the Board's functions, Jida suggested different ideas such as forming a cooperative to regulate the price of crocodile eggs and ensure that Aboriginal people are remunerated fairly; working as an advocacy body for TAOs wanting to be more involved in the NT Crocodile Industry; supporting people on country to develop crocodile-related economic opportunities; working as a mechanism to reflect and enable people's traditional lore, custom and protocol; developing employment and training opportunities; and supporting cultural research. In essence, Jida saw the NTTAOCMB as offering Aboriginal people the opportunity to be creative about their participation in the NT Crocodile Industry (Beattie, pers. comm., *Meeting Jida Gulpilil*, 19/07/09; Beattie, pers. comm., *Meeting Jida Gulpilil*, 03/09/09).

Dr Payi Linda Ford, Wagait Land Trust

In discussions with Dr Ford, she observed that the NT Crocodile Industry is mostly driven by government policy, which has the effect of disempowering TAOs through lack of consultation. In her view, the existence of the NTTAOCMB could subvert this fact by 'giv[ing] Aboriginal people a voice', offering a 'platform for Aboriginal people to air their grievances', and enabling Aboriginal people to have 'more input into the crocodile industry on Aboriginal land'. In this sense, Dr Ford saw the group advocating for Aboriginal people's generic right to make crocodile-related decisions on country, not as a group to advocate for different countries' specific goals. As a result of the Board and the assertion of Aboriginal voice, she said that she hoped that crocodile-related policy would begin to be more relevant to Aboriginal people's needs and desires.

Dr Ford also observed that communication costs, geography and lack of funding were potential risks for the Board's development. She also noted that conflict between TAO opinions could be another

risk. For example, 'there are some people interested in safari hunting...and other groups opposed to that' (Beattie, pers. comm., *Interview Dr Payi Linda Ford*, 13/02/10).

David Kenyon, Wairuk community

During my meetings with David, he spoke about the different amounts paid to different TAOs for their crocodile eggs, and referred to the way that some crocodile products sell for thousands of dollars, of which Aboriginal people do not see very much. Although he agreed that he would like to see Aboriginal people at the centre of industry, he observed that if this is to eventuate, training support would be vital.

With regard to risks, David agreed with others when he observed the potential conflict that might arise from the diversity of Aboriginal voice. At the same time, he also reflected that it is important for the Board to represent all TAOs from NT crocodile country. In saying this, he was quite specific about the participation of people who are not Indigenous in the workshop, saying that although they might offer useful information for the Board's development, equal participation of these people might compromise the Board as a space for TAO voice (Method 5).

In terms of structure, David said that the Board could look something like the NLC, with an Executive Committee overarching Representative Committees from different regions (Beattie, pers. comm., *Meeting David Kenyon*, 25/10/09; Beattie, pers. comm., *Meeting David Kenyon*, 27/02/10).

Margaret Daiyi, Wagait Land Trust

Echoing the observation of Dr Ford, Margaret also stated that two potential risks for the Board's development would be communication and geography. In her view, the continued existence of the NTTAOCMB would require regular contact - 'once a week, twice a week' - and the need to 'work as a team'. In maintaining this 'contact' and 'team', however, Margaret noted the need for funding to pay for phone calls and travel, particularly when there is the need to consult with people hundreds of kilometres away.

In predicting other risks, Margaret said that when you bring together TAOs from different countries, there is the potential for historical conflict to get in the way of business. At the same time, she observed that it is important to work this out so as to fulfil the Board's potential to 'get in amongst the brains in town...to see why they're trying to push things above us'. In elaborating further on this point, Margaret said that the Board might be able to 'help them [the government] in our way of

thinking', thus ensuring that the industry is managed in a way that is relevant to Aboriginal people (Beattie, pers. comm., *Interview Margaret Daiyi*, 27/02/10).

In an effort to bring these thoughts and observations together in a workshop, Dr Ford facilitated a contact with the NTG to negotiate funding (Method 3 & 6). As part of this process, the Board asked that I put together a workshop outline and budget which were emailed to the NTG on July 30 2009 (Beattie, pers. comm., *Email,* 30/07/09) (Method 8) and discussed face-to-face on August 18. Although support for the workshop concept was shown, it was explained that the NTG could not support a group that might be seen to compete with already existing bodies. In particular, a Letter of Acknowledgement would need to be obtained from the Northern Land Council (NLC) for the NTG to provide funding. After discussion with Dr Ford post-meeting, I made an appointment for the Board to meet with the NLC to request this Letter of Acknowledgement (Beattie, pers. comm., Meeting, 18/08/09) (Methods 3, 8 & 11).

On August 27 2009, Dr Ford met with two senior NLC officials. Explaining that the Board was formed partly due to the lack of representation by the NLC at the March 4 2009 *Strategy* workshop, Dr Ford presented the NTTAOCMB's request for a Letter of Acknowledgement (Appendix 2, 27/08/09) and an outline of the proposed workshop (Appendix 3, 27/08/09) (Methods 3, 6 & 9), both of which were prepared by me at the Board's direction (Method 8 & 11). In response, it was explained that under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) 1976 Act (ALRA), the NLC has a 'statutory obligation' to represent TAOs in matters pertaining to land use. This comment was made in specific reference to Aim 2 of the Workshop Outline, 'to discuss creating a legal entity where Board Members can formally represent TAOs involved in the Crocodile Industry' (Appendix 3, 27/08/09).

At this stage of the meeting, the NLC inquired about the potential of doing a presentation during the workshop on ALRA and Land Council responsibilities, and whether TAOs representative of the NLC would be able to participate. Dr Ford responded that this would be fine, and the NLC advised that they would cover any costs incurred by their participation. In finishing the meeting, a tentative date for the second week of October 2009 was set for the workshop. In terms of the Letter of Acknowledgement, it was said that this would need to be approved by the NLC's CEO (Beattie, pers. comm., *Meeting*, 27/08/09). Meeting with Board Chairperson Jida Gulpilil on September 3 2009, and in reference to the above suggestion that it is the NLC's obligation to represent TAOs, Jida said that the Board would need to investigate its legal rights, as his understanding was that under Section 28A of ALRA, Aboriginal people are able to assume NLC responsibilities so as to self-govern. As a

result, and on recommendation by Dr Ford, lawyer James Matthews was engaged in the project (Methods 3, 4 & 6).

On October 20 2009, the Board received a Letter of Acknowledgement signed by NLC CEO Kim Hill. The letter stated that

> [a]s you would appreciate, the Northern Land Council is bound to support the views and aspirations of all of its Traditional Owners within its region.
> Within this constituency, Traditional Owners have very diverse views on crocodiles from those for whom the crocodile is a totem and sacred animal, to those who are keen to get involved in all manner of industry with crocodiles.
> Notwithstanding this, the Northern Land Council is pleased to support your organisation's proposal to conduct a workshop on crocodile management (Northern Land Council, pers. comm., 20/10/09).

Meeting with the Minister for Natural Resources, Karl Hampton, on November 11 2009, as arranged by Dr Ford (Method 6), the Board submitted this Letter of Acknowledgement along with a letter outlining the Board's history, purpose and aspirations (Appendix 4, 02/11/09); a variation of the Workshop Outline (Appendix 3, 27/08/09); and a Meeting Agenda (Appendix 5, 11/11/09). Each of these documents was prepared by me at the Board's direction (Method 8 & 11). In attendance at this meeting were Board Secretary Dr Payi Linda Ford; Board Member David Kenyon; TAO Margaret Daiyi; the Minister's Adviser Andrew Buick; and myself.

With the purpose of informing the Minister of the Board's development and obtaining support for the workshop, Dr Ford explained that to continue to represent the diversity of TAOs in a participatory way, the Board would need to access funding to overcome geographical and communication barriers. It was then said that if funding could be obtained for the workshop, attendees would have the opportunity to discuss options for the Board's incorporation, solidify its potential functions and analyse risks (Method 3 & 9). The Minister suggested that the Board might also like to consider one of its functions to be a grassroots voice to advise him on crocodile-related strategies, programs and policies.

After requesting that the Board use the workshop to discuss where they see themselves fitting in with the Minister, the Land Councils and NRETAS, and confirming that the NLC would be included in the Workshop Agenda, Minister Hampton affirmed his support for the workshop and directed the

Board to speak about grant options with Kym Nolan, Senior Business Development Officer of the Indigenous Business Development Program. At the suggestion of Dr Ford, the Minister said he would be happy to open the workshop if he was available (Beattie, pers. comm., *Meeting*, 11/11/09). In December 2009, and at the request of the Board, I completed and submitted the grant application to Kym Nolan (Methods 8 & 11). This application included an Executive Summary (a variation of Appendix 3); quotes for accommodation, food and a facilitator; a DRAFT Agenda; the NLC Letter of Support; and Outcomes of the Meeting with Minister Hampton (Appendix 6, 11/11/09). This funding was signed off in March 2010.

On approval of the workshop by Minister Hampton, the Board asked that I engage a workshop facilitator. Accepting the role was the Board's first choice, Kate Andrews (Methods 2, 3, 7, 8 & 11), with over 20 years experience working in the natural resource sector as a consultant with remote and regional communities across Australia (NRETAS, pers. comm., *Media Release*, 07/11/08). In particular, Kate was 'the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of the Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Group, a cross-border regional Natural Resource Management (NRM) group, and was the first Knowledge and Adoption Manager for Land and Water Australia' (NRMB, pers. comm., *Newsletter*, 07/11/08). At the time of facilitating the NTTAOCMB workshop, Kate was also Chair of the NRM Board NT.

Leading up to the workshop, I met with Kate twice to hand over the information that I had collected up until this point. In particular, I compiled the information presented in this chapter in a document entitled 'Information to Structure the Workshop' (Appendix 7, 21/03/10). The aim of this document was to support Kate in finalising a Workshop Agenda (Appendix 8, 08/04/10) reflective of TAO and stakeholder voice and desire (Methods 3, 8 & 9). This was particularly important considering the only people Kate was able to meet with prior to the workshop were Dr Ford and lawyer James Matthews.

Engaging an external workshop facilitator, I was conscious that the methods of Kate's Social Framework might be different to the methods of my own Social Framework. This, however, was not the case, and in my observation Kate worked in a way that reflected my own methods of interaction. At the start of the workshop, for example, Kate described her role as such.

> I'm a guest, so I'm not going to have opinions about the actual concept, but I am going to have opinions about how to get the job done (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Workshop Footage No. 1*, 10/04/10, 25min 28sec) (Methods 3, 5, 7, 8 & 9).

> Even though I'm going to boss you around, I'm gonna make sure that everyone gets a say. So that means that if you're not speaking a lot but you've got a lot to say, I'm gonna make it okay for you to speak up. But if you're saying a lot, and other people aren't getting a chance, then that might be when I become a bit bossy and that might be when I try to shut you up a bit (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Workshop Footage No. 1,* 10/04/10, 25min 53sec) (Methods 3, 5, 7 & 8).

Throughout the workshop, Kate was explicit in mediating conversations, summarising TAOs' discussions, and checking back to see that participants were happy with the way things were moving. She also asked that TAOs correct the summaries she made so as to ensure that she understood what people were saying (Methods 3, 5, 7, 8 & 9). She said

> [y]ou give me all of that feedback because I'm here to do this for you guys, I'm not here to do it for me (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Workshop Footage No. 1*, 10/04/10, 26min 55sec) (Methods 3, 8, 9 & 11).

> This is about you achieving your goals, so if there's anything that's in the way or anything that's been left out, we'll change it (NTTAOCMB, pers. comm., *Workshop Footage No. 1*, 10/04/10, 48min 45sec) (Methods 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11).

As part of the workshop processes, Kate also broke away with individuals to work one-on-one on different tasks. This work was then brought back to the group for analysis, further development and consensus. This information was also read aloud to counter any potential literacy and numeracy barriers (Methods 3, 4, 5 & 8).

During the workshop, people who were not TAOs also participated to provide information so that TAOs could make informed decisions for the Board's development. These people included: James Matthews, who provided legal information around the different options and requirements for the Board's incorporation and the development of an NTTAOCMB constitution; Cos Tambling, who shared information around networking, field experience and funding options; Brett Easton, who presented on the systems in place to monitor egg collection quotas and the allocation of egg collection permits; Keith Saalfeld, who discussed the objectives of the *Program* (NTG, 2009); and Vicki Simlesa, who presented on the commercial requirements of the NT Crocodile Industry. It should be noted at this point that the NLC was also invited to participate but did not attend. In my case, I took video footage, liaised with venue staff, and supported TAOs and Kate whenever needed. Participating in this way, the data presented was analysed exclusively by TAOs, helping to ensure a

bottom-up approach to change and that conclusions and solutions were workable and relevant (Methods 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 & 9).

As part of these processes, there were many robust discussions. One of these was around the purpose and potential functions of the group, reflecting TAOs' individual and shared desires and motivations. One person, for example, said that the group should let TAOs on country know about information pertaining to crocodile management. Another said the group should be a one-stop-shop for the provision of information to feed into crocodile-related policy, while another said that that the Board should provide the Minister for Natural Resources with a united TAO voice and perspective. There was also discussion around the role of the Board in advocating for training of Aboriginal people so as to take a more central role in the crocodile industry. In assuming these functions, however, it was observed that the current system of saltwater crocodile management excludes Aboriginal voice and knowledge. It was questioned, for example, why independent scientists are necessary to verify the knowledge that Aboriginal people have known for thousands of years, and why there is no recognition of TAOs' crocodile ownership when 'problem' crocodiles are removed from Aboriginal land (NTTAOCMB, *Workshop Footage No. 2*, 10/04/10) (Methods 3, 5, 6, 7 & 9).

Further analysing their purpose, the group asked themselves why they were making this commitment to come together for the workshop, to which Dr Ford made the following comment.

> Because we're sick to death of being marginalised and pushed aside and put in a box. We don't want to be silenced anymore, we want to have a voice, we want to have our say (NTTAOCMB, *Workshop Footage No. 2*, 10/04/10, 00hr 50min 30sec).

Developing on this sentiment and in an effort to solidify the group's purpose, the TAOs workshopped ideas around a 'one-liner' that would tell people why they had formed and what their role was. In doing this, participants broke down into two groups to write what they perceived to be the purpose of the Board. This information was then brought back and presented to the group, before being workshopped to come to a final consensus on one overarching purpose (NTTAOCMB, Workshop Footage No. 3 & 6, 10/04/10) (Methods 3, 5, 6, 7 & 9). The final purpose concluded by the group reads as follows:

> To secure a better future for our communities and country by establishing an alliance for self-determination and economic development, recognising spiritual affiliation, through

> sustainable management of crocodiles for current and future generations (Workshop Report Appendix 9, 11/04/10).

Coming to this consensus, the group was then able to come back to the discussion on functions, and identify those which aligned with their purpose for future work (Workshop Report Appendix 9, 11/04/10).

Another concern that the TAOs discussed was the type of entity the Board would become, and the structure that would be entailed within. In particular, it was stated that for the Board to undertake its functions, it would need to access funding, and for this to happen it would need to become incorporated. With support from lawyer James Matthews, TAOs had access to expertise which enabled them to decide which legislation would most suit their purpose and resources. It was discussed, for example, that conditions under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) (CATSI) Act 2006 are more stringent than those under the NT Associations Act. At the same time, it was acknowledged that it would not cost the Board to become incorporated under CATSI, and that CATSI would provide the group with free training support. In saying this, it was concluded that if the group's only reason for incorporation was to gain the autonomy necessary to access funding, then the less stringent requirements of incorporation under the NT Associations Act would be more appropriate (NTTAOCMB, *Workshop Footage No. 7*, 10/04/10) (Methods 3, 5, 6, 7 & 9).

Confirming information for the group's constitution, there were many opinions on who should be eligible for membership. These opinions revolved around traditional ownership, Aboriginality, the ability of an organisation to become a member as opposed to an individual, members' voting rights, associate membership, the geographic range of the group, a minimum member age, and membership procedures. After much discussion, the group came to consensus that any TAO 18 years and over from NT crocodile country could become a member. Discussion on associate membership would be revisited at a later date, and new membership would require certification by already existing members. There would be an unlimited member base and an elected Governing Committee of 5-11 members. The Executive Committee would comprise of 3 Governing Committee members (NTTAOCMB, *Workshop Footage No. 7*, 10/04/10; Workshop Report Appendix 9, 11/04/10) (Methods 3, 5, 6, 7 & 9). It is noted also that during the workshop, the Board changed its name to Crocodile Country - the Traditional Owner Crocodile Management Association (TOCMA), referred to hereafter as Crocodile Country, the Association or TOCMA.

In summary, these descriptions of the workshop show that the Board took advantage of the space to create the base it was seeking for future autonomous participation in the management of the saltwater crocodiles in the NT. The next chapter will analyse whether the Social Framework enacted by TAOs and I contributed to these outcomes.

Chapter 7 – Analysis of my practice to further develop my Social Framework

The success of a Social Framework should be seen in terms of its ability to guide the Community Development Practitioner (CDP) to achieve their professional values/aims as outcomes of practice (Whitehead, 2009, p. 94). Acting as 'living standards of judgement' (Whitehead, 2009, p. 96; McNiff, 2007, p. 225; Wood, 2010, p. 112), these aims create a base from which

> the validity of [a practitioner's] claims to improved practice [is tested] in relation to the extent to which the values that informed the practice have been realised (McNiff, 2007. p. 225).

In the example of this thesis, it is the Social Framework (Chapter 4) which serves as the reference point of my values/aims and creates a base against which to analyse whether the application of the methods of interaction supported Crocodile Country to access autonomy, agency and wellbeing. By reflecting on the enactment of these methods by TAOs and I against project outcomes, outputs and observation, specific data will be generated to know whether they were appropriate and effective in achieving these aims. As a next step in the action-reflection learning cycle inherent to action research (Bradbury Huang 2010; Denscombe 2005; Lomax 1986; Somekh 2006; Stringer 2007; Wadsworth 1998), the knowledge generated from this discussion will feed into the continuous development of my living theory.

In analysing my support of TOCMA, it is observed that the methods of the Social Framework did support the group to access autonomy and agency within the Northern Territory (NT) Crocodile Industry. Forming partly due to the failure of the Northern Land Council (NLC) to represent Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TAOs) within their jurisdiction, and partly due to the request of the Northern Territory Government (NTG) for only two TAOs to represent all TAOs in the continued development of the *Strategy* (RMCG Consultants, 2009), Crocodile Country requested that I organise a workshop for TAOs to establish their self-governance within the NT Crocodile Industry. In doing this, and at the group's direction, I met with the Northern Territory Government (NTG) to discuss the potential of funding, and organised a meeting with the NLC for TOCMA to request a Letter of Acknowledgement. In supporting with the mechanics of these processes – administration, public relations, document writing – I was able to support the Association to enact its agency and tell the NLC of its desire to become incorporated and self-representative, thus asserting their agency and moving closer to obtaining a state of autonomy.

Further evidence of how our enactment of the Social Framework supported the Association to access autonomy and agency was seen after TOCMA was told by the NLC that it is the NLC's 'statutory obligation' to represent TAOs, suggesting an impossibility in the group's goal to 'formally represent TAOs involved in the Crocodile Industry' (Appendix 3, 27/08/09). Believing that they had been misinformed, TAOs expressed their agency when they asked that I seek legal advice from one of the TAO's contacts, lawyer James Matthews, who forwarded the following information.

> There is no restriction on TAOs forming an incorporated entity with the purpose of ensuring that the wishes and opinions of Traditional Owner groups are represented in relation to the development of strategies, programs and policies in relation to the crocodile industry. The TAOs can undertake these actions without approval or endorsement by the NLC.
>
> If the TAOs wish to obtain statutory recognition for performing these roles and functions under the ALRA, there are two mechanisms for TAOs to perform functions from the Land Council. The first involves appointment to a committee of the Land Council (see Sections 29 (2) and 29A of ALRA). The second is by incorporation and registration under the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act (Cth) 2006 ("CATSI") (Section 28 (2) of ALRA), and then applying to the NLC for a delegation of powers under Section 28A (James Matthews Legal, pers. comm., *Email*, 19/10/09 & 28/10/11).

As a result of this direction by the Association, information was obtained which reaffirmed TAOs' agency and ability to create an autonomous entity within the NT Crocodile Industry. In particular, it is interesting to note that after receiving the above information, TOCMA decided to continue on its path to become incorporated and not to become a sub-standing committee of the NLC, as this would only have given the group an advisory status and undermined their potential autonomy. This adherence to the methods of the Social Framework also supported Crocodile Country's access to autonomy and agency in the lead-up and during the meeting with the Minister for Natural Resources, Karl Hampton. By disseminating information and preparing documents, I was able to support TOCMA to use the meeting to promote the importance of TAO agency in the management of crocodiles on country, and the need for funding to support the development of a self-representing body. The importance of this agency and autonomy were then endorsed by the Minister when he gave support for the developmental processes presented by Crocodile Country.

At the direction of TAOs, I completed the funding application and organised the workshop. In doing this, a creative developmental space (the workshop) was created whereby TOCMA was able to assert their autonomy, practice their agency and gain consensus on the group's values, functions,

purpose, name, and governance structure (Workshop Report Appendix 9, 11/04/10). This use of agency was particularly evident as TAOs enacted methods of the Social Framework to analyse information presented by non-TAO participants to come to consensus on membership, strategies to disseminate information, relationships with other industry stakeholders, sustainability and media policy. In moving forward as an autonomous group, a list of post-workshop actions was compiled and tasks were allocated to individuals for public promotion, consultation with other TAOs, and meetings with other industry stakeholders. At the request of TAOs, lawyer James Matthews also completed a draft Constitution to solidify the legitimacy of TOCMA's autonomy.

As well as these outputs, TAOs' responses to a post-workshop questionnaire (Post-Workshop Questionnaire, Appendix 10, 11/04/10) also confirm that the methodology incorporated into the development and running of the workshop supported Crocodile Country's access to autonomy and agency. In terms of content, for example, one TAO noted that it was TAOs who 'controlled the information that went towards the development' of the workshop, another observed that 'the purpose of the meeting allowed the discussions to incorporate the TAOs' thinking', whilst another noted that 'participants expressed genuine concerns and problem solving (solutions)'. Contributing to these outcomes, the six responding TAOs noted that they felt comfortable in the workshop space to talk openly about what they were thinking. In particular, one TAO wrote that they felt 'extremely comfortable', whilst others noted that the 'physical location of the venue', 'layout of the meeting room' and workshop facilitator were contributing factors to this comfort. In summary, feedback from participants shows that the space created by Kate Andrews and I at the direction of TAOs enabled participants to feel at ease to speak freely, vital for one's enactment of their agency and subsequent access to autonomy.

In analysing the success of the Social Framework in enabling TOCMA's access to agency and autonomy, it is acknowledged that there was also a dependence on my support for the ongoing development of the project. As was explained to me, there were internal historical and/or political barriers to some of the ten original TAOs' continued participation (Beattie, pers. comm., *Interview Dr Payi Linda Ford*, 13/02/10; Beattie, pers. comm., *Interview Margaret Daiyi*, 27/02/10; Beattie, person. comm., *Meeting David Kenyon*, 27/02/10), and some TAOs were observed to be committed to other projects that did not permit their time for the continued development of the group (Beattie, pers. comm., *Journal Entry,* 10/11/09). Costs associated with geography and communication were also observed to cause some TAOs to become disengaged (Beattie, pers. comm., *Interview Dr Payi Linda Ford*, 13/02/10; Beattie, pers. comm., *Interview Margaret Daiyi*, 27/02/10), resulting in my role

becoming more central to the project's sustainability (Beattie, pers. comm., *Journal Entry,* 10/11/09; Beattie, pers. comm., *Journal Entry,* 06/02/10; Beattie, pers. comm., *Journal Entry,* 25/02/10).

In making this observation, it is not the ability of the Social Framework to support the group in exercising its agency that is questioned, but its ability to support participants to obtain the autonomy necessary to achieve the abovementioned results without support from an external party. Although the very participation of a CDP in a community development and/or research project implies that they will contribute agency to its development, it is recognised that the methods of the Social Framework tested in this thesis could be developed in a way that makes them explicit in their aim to support participants' access to a more independent state of autonomy. This is not to undermine the value of the work that took place in this project, but to recognise that in implementing a project based around libratory PAR and Indigenist methodological principles, the result should be a sustainable outcome that continues without the CDP's participation. In making this observation, it is noted that the project's momentum has slowed down since my participation ceased. As a result, it is suggested that some methods of the Social Framework should be changed, while others should be added.

In reference to Figure 2, and based on the above observations, there would seem to be a conflict between Method 6, for participants to implement their own conclusions, and Method 8, for the skills of the CDP to be used as a tool for participants' advancement. Although it was seen that my actions were guided by the conclusions of TAOs, it is also noted that due to varying barriers to TAO participation, I often worked alone. In this sense, there was a heightened dependence on my skills for the maintenance of the project. As a result, it is suggested that future practice be more explicit in defining the roles of both participants and the CDP, and that a more collaborative approach be incorporated into the methodology to help ensure the long-term sustainability of outcomes. In doing this, it is proposed that methods of interaction be changed or added to include the importance of collaboration when implementing conclusions and when using the CDP's skills for participants' advancement. It is also suggested that a method be added to ask participants to maintain regular contact with the CDP. By approaching a community development and research project in this manner, it is thought that there will be less dependence on the CDP as participants maintain a more central role, subsequently resulting in more autonomous and sustainable outcomes.

Although the Workshop Agenda did include discussion on sustainability, my reflection is that it would have been beneficial to have insisted that the group discuss exactly how they were going to fill my

role post-workshop. In an effort not to dominate the situation, however, and to adhere to Method 9 and be a listener as opposed to a talker, I generally remained silent so as not to impose external thoughts and ensure that the project remained a genuine product of TAOs. As a result, however, discussion of how my role would be filled post-workshop did not happen, and measures were not put in place to fill the gaps created by my departure. In turn, it is now proposed that this method recognise that the role of the CDP is to be more active in providing information and suggesting discussion for participants' analysis, particularly when these suggestions pertain to the project's sustainability. In addition, it is proposed that a method be added which makes explicit the timeframe of the my participation, thus helping to ensure that measures can be taken to prepare for my departure and further enable a project's longevity.

In measuring the success of the Social Framework against participants' access to enhanced wellbeing, it is recognised that due to the short timeframe of the project, it would be impossible to measure whether the Social Framework did, in fact, support Crocodile Country participants' access to this aim. At the same time, it could be assumed that the way in which Methods 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11 all supported Crocodile Country to decipher their social context and stake their autonomy and agency in the NT Crocodile Industry, that TAOs subsequently gained access to some form of enhanced wellbeing. This is to observe that by maintaining power and control over their research and identity, TAOs ensured their social inclusion and maintained control over their environment, processes which are understood to result in healthier people and enhanced wellbeing (Devitt *et al.*, 2001, p. 11; Wallerstein, 1999, p. 40; World Health Organisation, 2003, p. 12). As a result, none of the methods mentioned in this paragraph will be changed as part of a future Social Framework.

In concluding this analysis of professional interaction against project outcomes and outputs, the Social Framework developed for my future practice as a CDP looks as follows. Note that due to the additions, some of the numbers of methods have changed from the previous Social Framework:

SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

METHODS OF INTERACTION OF PARTICIPANTS:

Method 1 To identify the community development project.
Method 2 To request the participation of CDPs.
Method 3 To be at the centre of the project.
Method 4 To design and implement the methods of data collection.
Method 5 To analyse the data.
Method 6 To control and implement how knowledge is used.
Method 7 To work in collaboration with the CDP when requesting support to implement a solution.
Method 8 To maintain regular contact with the CDP to share information and provide direction.

MY METHODS OF INTERACTION AS A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER:

Method 9 To exclude myself from participants' decision-making.
Method 10 To work in collaboration with participants when using skills for participants' advancement.
Method 11 Whilst privileging participants' voice, to recognise my agency in providing observation, insight and suggestion for participants' analysis.
Method 12 To advocate for participants' right to access creative, developmental spaces.
Method 13 To be directed by, and accountable to, participants.
Method 14 To be explicit about the end of my participation.

Figure 3: Social Framework and subsequent methods of interaction reflective of my living theory after participation in an Indigenous research project. Underlined methods indicate new or changed methods.

Summary

By adapting the concept of living theory action research to the field of community development, the Community Development Practitioner (CDP) is validated as the best person to know their educational influences and the methods of interaction most likely to achieve their professional aims as project outcomes in the given context. Moving away from the one-size-fits-all approach of propositional theory, the interpretive and constructivist nature of living theory methodology enables a CDP to develop a Social Framework based on their evolving knowledge and experience. As a result of this subjective freedom, it is understood that the methods of interaction enacted by the CDP are more likely to be relevant to the locality and the needs, culture and history of participants, ultimately leading to more sustainable outcomes.

In the case of my own practice, previous international experience led me to see my role as a CDP as someone whose skills are used at the request of people who want to create spaces which allow them to assert their voice, participate in decisions which affect them, and conclude and take actions to change their situations. Recognising that my attraction to this approach stems from both an ideological view that each person has a right to experience autonomy and agency, and that access to this autonomy and agency is more likely to result in enhanced wellbeing, the methods of interaction incorporated into the Social Framework I used before engaging in the Indigenous research context aimed to achieve these ends. As I engaged in Indigenous research in Australia for the first time, it was these methods that gave me a base to critically reflect on my practice in this new context.

Exploring local literature on Indigenous/immigrant relations and Indigenous research methodology, I grew to understand that the exclusion of Indigenous experience from Australian historiography, combined with discriminatory and disempowering government policies, led to the historic misrepresentation and 'voicelessness' of Indigenous peoples in this country. Using Indigenist research principles as a tool to combat this, Indigenist thought provides direction that is specific in its resistance to the top-down positivist methodologies that have historically validated the colonisation of Indigenous knowledge and identity. More specifically, Indigenist methodology supports Indigenous participants to direct and control their research, define themselves and their situations, and transform problems which affect them. Acknowledging these ideas and incorporating them into the methods of my Social Framework, I aimed to develop my practice in a way that would extricate me from propagating the behaviours seen to contribute to the marginalisation of Indigenous peoples.

After participating with Crocodile Country, I concluded that the methods of interaction for my participation did support participants to subvert historical research practices and access their rightful autonomy, agency and wellbeing. Critical reflection of the type of autonomy achieved also resulted in the development of my Social Framework for future practice. Cultural exchange, practical learning, development of leadership and governance, attainment of social justice, strengthening of identity, assertion of place and understanding of the NT crocodile management system are also good outcomes that resulted from this project. Having used this learning and the concept of living theory to develop the methods of my Social Framework, I predict that greater and more sustainable access to autonomy, agency and wellbeing will result from my future practice.

In summary, the living theory action research approach to knowledge creation acknowledges that we are all learning, that each context is different, and that individual desires and worldviews vary. By moving away from propositional, top-down and positivist logic, this approach to learning empowers a practitioner to know their practice and the methods of interaction most likely to achieve their professional aims. In constant reflection of questions such as 'Who should undertake this task, you or me?', the value of living theory for a CDP lies not in the conclusion of a universal truth that is applicable in all scenarios, but in the recognition of the inherent complexity of the interaction that takes place in the field of community development, and the necessary independence of each CDP so as to interact appropriately and accordingly to achieve the desired ends.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Topics

PROJECT TITLE: Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owner Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB) development workshop

PURPOSE AND USE OF INTERVIEW TOPICS: To collect information to create a workshop space that would reflect TAOs' needs, visions and desires. The following interview topics aim to: 1) gain an understanding of each TAO's relationship with the crocodile on their country; 2) understand the importance of the NTTAOCMB for each person; 3) know what members saw as the Board's functions; 4) gauge how each person wanted the Board to move forward; and 5) know the risks that each person perceived for the Board's development.

INTERVIEW TOPICS:

1) Can you talk about crocodiles on your country?

2) What is your relationship with the crocodile and what does it mean to you? Do you have a totemic relationship?

3) Can you tell a story from your past, perhaps from your childhood, where a crocodile played a role?

4) Why are you a good person to represent crocodile management in the Northern Territory?

5) What do you think about the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry? How do you feel as a TAO within this industry?

6) Why are you part of the NTTAOCMB? Why is this important for you?

7) What do you see as the role of the NTTAOCMB?

8) What do you hope the Board will achieve for you and your country?

9) What do you see as the risks for the NTTAOCMB?

10) Where do you see the Board fitting into the wider social, Indigenous and natural resource sectors?

11) Where would you like to see the NTTAOCMB in three years time?

12) What would you like to have changed within the NT crocodile industry for Aboriginal people in the next three years?

Appendix 2

NTTAOCMB Request for Letter of Acknowledgement from the Northern Land Council

The Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board
Jida Gulpilil; Chairperson; mb/0000 000 000

Northern Land Council (NLC)
Mitchell Street, Darwin
August 27 2009

To whom it may concern:

The Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB or the Board) writes this letter to request a Letter of Acknowledgement from the Northern Land Council (NLC).

The NTTAOCMB was formed in March 2009 to provide a Traditional Aboriginal Owner (TAO) voice representative of TAO diversity across Top End crocodile country in the Northern Territory. Its initial aims were to feed back into the Northern Territory Government (NTG) 'DRAFT Crocodile Management Program' and 'The Northern Territory Saltwater Crocodile Industry Strategy' and four separate documents have been coordinated to meet this purpose. The Board now wants to develop itself into a legal entity and advance its capacity to function as a communication system for TAOs who are interested in participating in the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry.

At present, the NTTAOCMB is planning a 2-day workshop (see attached document) for Board Members to discuss the place of the Board within the wider social, Indigenous and natural resource sectors, as well as to develop an Activity Plan to give direction to the Board once it has become a legal entity. It is the Board's belief that becoming a legal entity will help create an autonomous decision-making structure which is important for self-defining people. At the same time, the NTTAOCMB understands that some of its work may cross-over with the current role and responsibilities of the NLC and that it is with this knowledge that the NTG has requested a Letter of Acknowledgement from your organisation.

We look forward to discussing this letter in more detail during our meeting on Thursday August 27th.

Yours faithfully,

Signed:
Name: Jida Gulpilil
NTTAOCMB Chairperson
Email: 000@0000000.com
Mobile: 0000 000 000

Signed:
Name: Linda Ford
NTTAOCMB Secretary
Email: 000@0000000.com
Mobile: 0000 000 000

Appendix 3

NTTAOCMB Workshop Outline

Aims: The aims of this workshop are:

1) to encourage and facilitate effective and open communication between NTTAOCMB members on behalf of Traditional Aboriginal Owner (TAO) involved in the Crocodile Industry;
2) to discuss creating a legal entity where Board Members can formally represent TAO's involved in the Crocodile Industry;
3) to form a strong base for the NTTAOCMB to work from into the future in the Crocodile Industry by developing the Board's Terms of Reference;
4) to strengthen the Boards role in the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry and give effective representation to TAO's involved in the Crocodile Industry;
5) develop a 5 year action plan and business plan and
6) review the effects that Action Research facilitation has on the development of the NTTAOCMB.

Project Description: The first step in the development of this workshop will be to consult with Board Members on an individual basis and interested TAO's actively participating in the Crocodile Industry gather information pertaining to perceived risks and individual/collective hopes. These responses will be used to help structure the workshop and process any issues identified by participants.

The workshop will be for NTTAOCMB Members and TAO's actively participating in the Crocodile Industry and will focus on the development of solutions to mitigate perceived risks, NTTAOCMB Terms of Reference, a 5 year Activity Plan and Business Plan and discuss how these will be reviewed and whether the Board wish to apply for legal status. Other areas of discussion will be the definition of the Board as perceived by Board Members and the place of the Board within the social, Indigenous and natural resource sectors.

The proposed workshop will assist to develop the TAO's and NTTAOCMB's capacity to function as a representative body to communicate effectively to represent and report back to the TAO's who are interested in participating in the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry.

Date of the activity: 2 days in September 2009 (weekend).

New or existing activity: The NTTAOCMB was formed in March 2009 to provide a TAO voice representative of TAO diversity across Top End crocodile country in the Northern Territory. Its initial aims were to feed back into the Northern Territory Government (NTG) 'DRAFT Crocodile Management Program' and 'The Northern Territory Saltwater Crocodile Industry Strategy'. Since its inception, the Board has coordinated four separate documents to meet this purpose in consultation with TAO's. These have been forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) and are available for review on request from the Board.

To maintain the TAO's and the Board's role and responsibilities, the Board sees it necessary to discuss the status of the Board from which to carry out its functions and responsibilities to the

TAO's, their country and their crocodiles. Through the development of solutions to mitigate risks, a Terms of Reference, a 5 year Activity Plan and Business Plan will be sought.

Target Group of this workshop:
Directly: TAO's and NTTAOCMB Members involved in the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry.
Indirectly: The wider network of TAO's and Aboriginal people living on crocodile country and other stakeholders in the Northern Territory Crocodile Industry e.g. Crocodile Famers & CF Association, NT Government, NRETAS, & Commonwealth Government (Other?).

Expected activity outcomes:

1. To seek from the NTTAOCMB and TAO's whether or not to apply for legal status to develop its Terms of Reference, 5 year Activity Plan and Business Plan structure;
2. Increase in communication between TAO's and Board Members;
3. Definition of TAO's and NTTAOCMB;
4. 5 year Action Plan and Business Plan;
5. Mutual understanding of risks associated with the Board;
6. Increase TAO membership.

Expected activity outputs:

1. NTTAOCMB Risk Analysis that will be included in the workshop discussions the following:
    - NTTAOCMB apply for legal status?
    - NTTAOCMB Terms of Reference?
    - NTTAOCMB 5 year Activity Plan and Business Plan?
2. List of tasks to be completed by NTTAOCMB members.

Appendix 4

NTTAOCMB Letter to Minister Hampton

The Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board
Jida Gulpilil; Chairperson; mb/0000 000 000

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS)
Parliament House, Darwin

October 25 2009

The Minister Karl Hampton:

The Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB or the Board) writes this letter as a precursor to our meeting on November 11 2009 at 10am.

The NTTAOCMB was formed in March 2009 to offer the Northern Territory (NT) Crocodile Industry a Traditional Aboriginal Owner (TAO) perspective representative of TAO diversity across NT crocodile country. Its initial aims were to feed back into the Northern Territory Government's (NTG) 'DRAFT Crocodile Management Program' and 'The Northern Territory Saltwater Crocodile Industry Strategy'. Since its inception, the Board has coordinated four documents in consultation with TAOs to meet this purpose. These were sent to Gae McKay and Greg Leach at the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS) on June 7th 2009.

The NTTAOCMB is currently looking for financial support for a 2-day workshop (see attached document) so that TAOs can come together and discuss: 1) the possibilities for incorporation – Federal or Territory legislation? The Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (CATSI)) Act or the Corporations Act?; 2) the role of the Board within the wider social, Indigenous and natural resource sectors; and 3) the Board's activities and functions as envisaged by Board Members. The proposed workshop will assist to develop the NTTAOCMB's capacity to function as a representative body and report back to TAOs participating and interested in the NT Crocodile Industry.

We look forward to discussing this in more detail during our meeting on Wednesday November 11 at 10am.

Yours faithfully,

NAME AND POSITION	SIGNATURE	DATE	PHONE

Appendix 5

NTTAOCMB Meeting Agenda with Minister Karl Hampton

- Jida, as Chairperson, to lead meeting on the part of the Board. Linda, as Secretary, to lead if Jida not present.

- Introductions. Opportunity for people to briefly present themselves and their involvement in/with the Board.

- Presentation of the NTTAOCMB and its brief history (Jida or Linda to talk).

- Refer to the documents sent to Minister (Michael to read if Minister has not had time):
  - letter to Minister
  - Workshop Outline
  - NLC Support Letter

- The workshop – the best way for the Board to move forward is to come together and discuss incorporation, potential risks and functions of the Board. The best thing for Aboriginal people involved or interested in the NT Crocodile Industry is for TAOs to represent other TAOs (Jida or Linda to talk).

- Support from the Minister and NRETAS - $9,950 for a weekend workshop with professional facilitator (Jida or Linda to talk).

- Open for discussion and questions.

Appendix 6

Outcomes of Meeting with Minister Karl Hampton

Present at meeting: Minister Karl Hampton, Andrew Buick (Minister's Advisor), Payi Linda Ford (NTTAOCMB Secretary), David Kenyon (NTTAOCMB Board Member), Margaret Daiyi (Traditional Aboriginal Owner) and Michael Beattie (CDU Honours Candidate and NTTAOCMB support).

Date: November 11 2009

Meeting outcomes:

- In regards to the NTTAOCMB's request for financial support for a developmental workshop, the Minister said he can see potential in the concept and affirmed his support.

- The Minister said that the he would like to see the following three areas of discussion in the workshop in terms of the Board's functions:
    - Seeing that Board as an advisory group that feeds grassroots information back to the Minister. This might be related to egg collection, poaching or any other areas of concern for TAOs;
    - Grassroots feedback on the effectiveness of different government crocodile management strategies such as the Crocwise safety strategy that is currently being rolled out; and
    - The Board working jointly with Parks and Wildlife in the management of crocodiles.

- He directed the Board to talk with Kym Nolan from the Department of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources to discuss the grant application for workshop funding. He asked that her department provide him with a Ministerial Briefing.

- At the suggestion of Linda Ford, the Minister agreed that he would be happy to open the workshop if he is available on that date.

Signed:

Name: Dr Payi Linda Ford, NTTAOCMB Secretary

Appendix 7

Information to Structure the Workshop

Information gathered by Michael Beattie from conversations with the following people between May 2009 and February 2010:

- Jida Gulpilil, NTTAOCMB Chairperson
- Payi Linda Ford, NTTAOCMB Secretary
- David Kenyon, NTTAOCMB Director
- Margaret Daiyi, Traditional Aboriginal Owner
- Colin Deveraux, husband of Margaret Daiyi
- Kym Nolan, Senior Business Development Officer, Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services
- Greg Leach, former NRETAS advisor
- Minister for Natural Resources, Minister Hampton
- Office of Registrar for Indigenous Corporations (ORIC)
- James Matthews, private lawyer of "James Matthews Legal"
- Megha Raut, Statistician, Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services
- Syd Stirling, Senior Policy Advisor, Northern Land Council

Who are the TAOs?

- Traditional crocodile farmers. They maintain habitat to allow for nesting, egg collection and the rest of the industry. Crocodiles are a TAO resource.

Potential functions of the Board.

- The Board could, if it wanted, focus on all wildlife, not just crocodiles.
- To feed into government crocodile *Program* and *Strategy* to ensure a balanced and inclusive document.
- A Mission Statement and Terms of Reference are necessary to put the functions of the Board in place.
- To enable the ability to police own rights and interests to pursue development outcomes, whatever they might be.
- To create employment and training in the crocodile industry for Aboriginal people.
- The Board could be a company and have a gift fund and offer scholarships to Indigenous people.
- It could support the formation of a cooperative to regulate the price of eggs – different collectors would give eggs to a central body and farmers would buy from this place.
- To represent TAOs from different countries in their unique interests within the NT crocodile Industry. Do this through membership.
- To support TAOs already involved in the NT Crocodile Industry.
- To help people gain economic development through the NT Crocodile Industry.
- To advocate for the rights of Aboriginal people within the NT Crocodile Industry.
- Different functions of the Board might be: 1) cooperative/business arm; 2) community development/training arm; 3) cultural research and protection arm; and 4) scholarships/philanthropy/financial/credit union arm.
- To take over the role of royalties.
- To feed back to the Government re. Crocwise Safety strategy.
- To help to monitor egg collection and ensure that TAOs aren't being ripped off.

- As an advisory role to feed grassroots information to NTG pertaining to egg collection, poaching, etc.
- Joint management of crocodiles with Parks and Wildlife.
- A safety net for TAOs that have problems with crocodiles.
- 'An integral instrument for Aboriginal people to be able to raise the issues that concern them, in obtaining a say and have more input into the crocodile industry on Aboriginal land'.
- 'It's more of a platform for Aboriginal people to come and air their grievances or have a proactive say in what's happening within the crocodile industry on their country'.

What type of body will the NTTAOCMB be?

- A sub-standing committee of the Land Council. Sub-standing committees of the NLC work as advisory boards and decisions are recommendations only. A sub-standing committee is not an autonomous structure. TAOs need to believe that the NLC will represent them well if they take this path, otherwise better to start their own space.
- A legal entity.
- A company under the Corporations Act or the Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006 (CATSI).
- No costs associated with becoming a Corporation under CATSI. Aboriginal culture is covered within the roles of this Act, it is supportive of Indigenous needs and reporting requirements are less stringent than mainstream.
- To be a not-for-profit organisation.
- To be a Board or a Peak Body.
- A mechanism people can use according to lore/custom/protocol.

Membership and governance

- Individual or corporate membership?
- Get as many TAOs involved as want to be involved.
- Key people in each community need to be involved in this process.
- TAOs only.
- The governance structure could look something like the NLC in that it could have a directive and then representatives from each clan and community.
- Non-TAO participation is important in terms of resources.

Risks

- The varying opinions amongst TAOs due to diverse cultures, language and history.
- Maintaining the continuity of Board Members.
- Outside connections of Board Members influencing their decisions – inability to leave histories outside and focus on reasons for participation in NTTAOCMB.
- Other world crocodile industries and how these could potentially flood the Australian market in the future.
- 'Given the remoteness of Aboriginal people that are interested in crocodile harvesting, or just looking after the crocodiles and the habitat on their country, on Aboriginal land, it's really difficult as a Board to be able to communicate with all the Aboriginal stakeholders, without the resources that are needed just to communicate with people, either by travelling out to visit them or by phone or by fax or by email'.
- '...different interests in how to manage and harvest crocodiles. There are some people interested in safari hunting...and other groups are opposed to that'.

NLC's role and relationship of Board with NLC

- '...inside the seminar room there were lots of comments criticising the NLC and its ability to support TAOs and the Crocodile business on TAO country. We (NTTAOCMB) are seeking collaboration with NLC Land and Sea management section in the first instance, and secondly, to get full support and backing from the NLC'.
- 'There's right across the board, from farmers to the current traditional Aboriginal owners, there's not much confidence in the NLC'.
- TAOs don't feel like they're being represented by the NLC or that they're being consulted as much as they could be.
- 'The NLC wouldn't be there if it wasn't for us', they are the middle man between the TAOs and the government.
- Are the functions of the Board seen to compete with those of the NLC?
- Statutory obligation of the NLC under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA) to represent TAOs in their business.
- The thought that the NLC would not have a long-term role in the NTTAOCMB.
- Looking at the idea of one organisation representing ALL Aboriginal people – the NLC didn't do this for the crocodile plan and strategy.
- '...it [the Board] gives the bureaucracy like Land Council and Government an area that specialises in the crocodile industry for Aboriginal people'.

NRETAS'/NTG's role and relationship of Board with NRETAS and NTG

- To monitor egg collection and follow up if something illegal happens.
- 'It should be an industry that is more inclusive of the cultural significance of crocodiles to Aboriginal people. It wasn't until last year that we actually had an input into the DRAFT Crocodile Management Strategy and Crocodile Management Plan and our response to those documents was that they didn't reflect the cultural significance of crocodiles to us'.
- '...it [the Board] gives the bureaucracy like Land Council and Government an area that specialises in the crocodile industry for Aboriginal people'.
- 'In meeting with people from NRETAS, they actually go out and do monitoring and go out with crocodile farmers and go and check the GPS sites, but that's only just come in recently'.

Sustainability of the NTTAOCMB

- Utilise other CDU honours and masters students to continue to support the development of the Board.
- Memorandum of Understanding between NTG, NTTAOCMB and NLC.
- Employment of someone to continue in the role that Michael has been in.

Future tasks

- Meet with the Crocodile Farmer Body once Board is established.
- NTTAOCMB newsletter.
- NTTAOCMB membership form.

Appendix 8

NTTAOCMB Workshop Agenda

Meeting objectives:

1. To agree upon the role and functions of the Board
2. To define the structure and governance of the Board
3. To identify what support is required for the Board
4. To plan the way forward

Guest speakers:

Minister Karl Hampton MLA – opening
Minister Malarndirri McCarthy MLA - opening
NRETAS
Department of Resources

Saturday, April 10, 2010	
9:00 am	**Welcome to Country – Larrakia Nation**
9:10 am	**Opening – Minister Karl Hampton MLA and Minister Malarndirri McCarthy MLA**
9:30am	**Welcome to the NTTAOCMB - NTTAOCMB Chair Jida Gulpilil**
9:40 am	**Introduction and Context [Linda]** – Purpose and outcomes of meeting. Introduce Michael and Kate **Outline agenda [Kate]**
10:00 am	**Participants' introduction – round the table** (Where are you from? What work you do on country with crocodiles?)
10.15 am	**Role of the NTTAOCMB – Purpose and functions** • What should be the **purpose** of the Board? *(What needs will it fill that aren't being met?)* • What should be its **functions**?
11:00 am	*Morning tea*
11:30 am	**Role of the NTTAOCMB** (continued) [**Decisions/Actions?**]
12:15 am	**Values of the NTTAOCMB – What values should guide the Board** [**Decisions/Actions?**]
12:45 am	*Lunch*

1:30 pm	Guest Speakers – NTG Dept of resources & NRETAS

2:15 pm	**Structure of the NTTAOCMB** –
	• Given the proposed role what should be the **structure** of the Board?
	  ○ What sort of legal entity should it be?
	  ○ What governance structure does it need?
	  ○ What membership should it have?

3 :15 pm	*Afternoon Tea*
3:30 pm	**Structure of the NTTAOCMB** (continued) [**Decisions/Actions?**]
4:30 pm	**Re-visit day's decisions & actions**
5:00 pm	**Close of meeting**

Sunday, April 11, 2010

9:00 am	Re-cap Day 1
9.10 am	**Membership of the Board –** Who will be Board members for the next period?
9:30 am	**Relationships** – • With the NLC? • With the NT Government? • Others? [**Decisions/Actions?**]
9:45 am	**Risks –** • What are the risks? • How would we manage them? [**Decisions/Actions?**]
10:30 am	*Morning tea*
11:00 am	**Required support** – What kind of support does the Board need to function? • What logistical support is required? • What resources are required? • Where might they come from? [**Decisions/Actions?**]
12:30 pm	*Lunch*
1:15 pm	**Preparing for the next draft management plan and strategy**
2 :30 pm	**Next steps and actions –** Pull together actions developed throughout mtg • What? • Who? • When? **Including communications such as the media**
4:15 pm	**Close of meeting**

Appendix 9

Workshop Report

On the 10th and 11th of April 2010, Northern Territory (NT) Traditional Aboriginal Owners (TAOs) met at the Darwin FreeSpirit Resort to discuss the development and way forward for the Northern Territory Traditional Aboriginal Owners Crocodile Management Board (NTTAOCMB).

Workshop Objectives:

1/ Agree Upon the Role and Functions of the Board;
2/ Define the Structure and Governance of the Board;
3/ Identify what support is needed; and
4/ Plan the way forward.

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP WERE:

Name and structure

The group will be associated under the Northern Territory Associations Act and will change its name to CROCODILE COUNTRY – The Traditional Owner Crocodile Management Association. It will have an unlimited member base, an elected Governing Committee of 5-11 members and an Executive Committee comprising of 3 Governing Committee members.

The following Governing Committee members were elected as the Executive Committee:

- Chairperson – Jida Gulpilil
- Deputy Chairperson – David Kenyon
- Executive Committee Member – Calvin Deveraux

The Financial and Secretary roles will be outsourced as required.

Purpose

'To secure a better future for our communities and country by establishing an alliance for self-determination and economic development, recognising spiritual affiliation, through sustainable management of crocodiles for current and future generations'.

Functions

CROCODILE COUNTRY will pursue its purpose through the following:

- Engaging TAOs;
- Working in partnership with Government and other organisations;
- Influencing Territory and Federal Government policy and management decisions;
- Using Traditional Knowledge to inform policy and management;
- Encouraging training, education, employment and business opportunities;
- Sharing information; and
- Building transparency in the crocodile industry.

Values

The values of CROCODILE COUNTRY are:

- INCLUSIVENESS
- DIVERSITY
- TRANSPARENCY

- EQUITY
- OPPORTUNITY

Actions

This month

- Letter and update on development to Top End TAO organisations
- Meetings – NLC, NAILSMA and Ministers
- Media Release
- Find in-kind support of part-time Project Officer
- Incorporate the group
- Develop contacts list

Before 6 months

- Governing Committee meeting (four months)
- Develop DVD about CROCODILE COUNTRY and distribute to encourage participation
- Website including video footage
- Funding applications – larger and longer term e.g. Part-time project officer
- Develop organisational plan – e.g. on country meetings

After 6 months

- AGM and public forum
- Education – "Croc Club"
- Communications
- Lobbying
- Seek Business Scoping study

Appendix 10

Post-workshop Questionnaire, April 11 2010

Of the 8 TAOs present at the workshop, 6 responded to this anonymous questionnaire.

1) Are you happy with the workshop? What did you like/dislike?
6 Yes, 0 no

- Well organised and facilitated excellent.
- Workshop was well planned and facilitated. Participants expressed genuine concerns and problem solving (solutions) with cohesive group agreement.
- It was positive.
- Larrakia welcome by Tanya and agenda good.
- Gender balance – more women needed.
- Everyone got on and agreed with the planning of the croc. Workshop.

2) Is there anything you would change for next time? What?
1 yes, 5 no

- More participants.

3) Is there anything you would like included in a future workshop? What?
2 yes, 4 no

- Representatives from NLC (being Land Trustees) to be present.
- Formation of long-term plan and develop a strong working party.
- I think that the purpose of this meeting allowed the discussions to incorporate the TAOs thinking about the issues in the croc. industry.

4) Did you feel comfortable in this space to talk what you were thinking? What helped/didn't help with this?
6 yes, 0 no

- Extremely comfortable. Facilitation gave that space to every participant.
- It was good because we all identify/identified with issues across the board.
- Physical location of venue; layout of meeting room; a good facilitation to keep the flow of the topics covered in the agenda.

5) Did the workshop allow the TAOs present to come to decisions for the Board's development? What helped/didn't help with this?
6 yes, 0 no

- TAOs actually controlled the information that went towards this development!
- Although it would have been better for more TAOs to be present. I hope the next meeting has more representation from Crocodile Country.
- The workshop was good.
- Kate Andrews being the facilitator.

6) Do you think the workshop and the Board will help to increase the participation of Aboriginal people in the NT Crocodile Industry?
6 yes, 0 no

- Every objective identified at the beginning was met by the end.
- The Board couldn't come at a better time.
- This has been identified by the group.