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<td>ABCD</td>
<td>Asset-based community development</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>BOSHC</td>
<td>Bagot Outside School Hours Care</td>
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<td>CDC</td>
<td>Community Development Corporations</td>
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<td>CIYA</td>
<td>Corrugated Iron Youth Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>FONL</td>
<td>Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla</td>
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<td>LCLG</td>
<td>Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>LISC</td>
<td>Local Initiatives Support Corporation</td>
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<td>LNC</td>
<td>Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPCAN</td>
<td>National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.</td>
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<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
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Abstract

Creating and strengthening supportive networks is a cornerstone of social work practice with communities. Whilst there has been some exciting literature on network approaches to community development, there is little research about the application of such approaches, particularly from a critical social work perspective.

This study explores the processes and outcomes of a community project based in Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia. An overt network focus (integrating social network analysis) was applied to a strengths-based neighbourhood project in a culturally divided location. The “Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections” project involved a diverse network of people and organisations working together to “create community” and increase connections across cultures.

A variety of methods were embedded within a case study framework to provide an in-depth exploration of what happens when a focus on social networks is applied to strengths-based community work. Using social network analysis within the case study framework proved to be a particularly effective way of understanding project outcomes. Combined with qualitative narrative methods, and descriptive statistical data, this case study provides a rich exploration of critical social work practice with communities.

This study demonstrates that a network focus with communities is useful in a range of ways including: thinking about what a “community” is, linking up already existing resources, mobilising to create new resources, and creating flexible, non-hierarchical networks within which community work can occur.

It is argued that that focus on networks provides a useful framework for critical social work practice with communities. A social networks focus can shed light upon the way in which relationships between individuals, groups and communities form and are formed by broader social structures.
This thesis provides an exploration of how a social networks focus can contribute to both social work practice with communities, and the researching of that community practice.
Statement of Authorship

I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not currently being submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Gretchen Marie Ennis
Student number: 953980

Gretchen has completed the approved Doctor of Philosophy program at Charles Darwin University, and conforms to the common rules for this degree in which she is enrolled. The title has been approved by the panel. This thesis is properly presented and is ready for examination.

Dr Deborah West
Associate Professor of Social Work
Faculty Manager of Teaching and Learning
Charles Darwin University

Date:
Acknowledgements

Undertaking and completing this thesis has been an enjoyable and challenging experience and I have been very fortunate to have good company along the way.

Firstly I would like to thank Associate Professor Deborah West. As my primary supervisor Deborah has been my academic and professional mentor throughout the time of the PhD program. Deborah encouraged me to undertake this thesis and actually do the kind of social work I had been talking about for many years. Deborah was always patient and generous with her time and knowledge. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her.

Dr Martin Gibbs was the secondary supervisor for this study. He provided valuable assistance in critiquing the thesis as it developed, and providing guidance with the writing process. It has been reassuring to have input from a wonderful sociologist and friend.

One of the joys of undertaking this thesis was sharing an office with fellow post-graduate student Ms Maria Huddleston. Maria was a constant source of encouragement and enthusiasm. I thank her for listening, for being so much fun, so very thoughtful, and for proof reading the final draft of thesis.

My good friends; Debbie Hudson, Kris Keogh, Zeb Olsen, Mary Searle and Bill Searle also deserve warm thanks. They provided much appreciated inspiration, kindness and support all the way along. They shared the highs and lows, provided babysitting, fun and musical distractions. They are treasures each and every one.

I thank my gorgeous children, Dylan, Serge and Lindsay, for providing perspective, distraction, fun and love. My parents, my in-laws, my many siblings and their families have provided much needed support and encouragement too.
I could not have completed this thesis without my husband Rod Balaam. Roddy was part of “thinking up” the community project discussed in these pages, and he has been involved throughout. Roddy was always interested, patient, loving, fun, calm and wise. I love him dearly and I thank him so very much.

A huge thank you goes out to the all of the people and organisations involved in Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections (LNC). Bagot Community Council, Bagot Outside School Hours Care, Corrugated Iron Youth Arts, Ludmilla Primary School, Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group, Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla, Northern Territory Music School, Anglicare NT, Nemarluk School and Red Cross were all enthusiastic about “creating community” and provided time and resources to many of LNC’s events and activities.

Our past and present local members of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, Matthew Bonson and David Tollner also deserve thanks for their assistance with LNC Project. Particular thanks also go to some very inspiring “Ludmilla people”: Mick Purcell, Sheila White, Jane Tonkin, Joy White, Fred Vant Sand, James Gaykamangu, and Chris Capper.

Being involved in the Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections network and undertaking the research in this thesis has been a great excuse for getting to know my wonderful neighbours.
Notes to Readers

Much of this thesis involves narrative research methods. In the narrative tradition, some background about the writer is required, so that the reader has some understanding of where the writing is coming from.

I was born in Sydney in 1968. I come from a large, blended family, of mixed cultural heritage, but predominantly “white Australian”. On my mother’s side I am descended from a woman named Henrietta Scriven (daughter of convict Jane Langley). Henrietta was born on board the Lady Penrhyn, on its voyage to Australia as part of the infamous “first fleet” in 1788.

I grew up in Sydney in a street that was also home to 40 other children. We were constantly in and out of each other’s houses and lives, and much of our time was spent playing “on our street”. I think this is where my interest in “community” might have originally come from.

I came to Darwin as a teenager in 1986. It is a vibrant, hot, creative, challenging, multicultural place, and a place where I was first made truly aware of the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal people. Darwin was settled in 1839, more than 50 years later than the Southern parts Australia, and over one-third of the population of the Northern Territory is Aboriginal. I have spent many years “grappling” with my own convict-settler ancestry and the impacts of European settlement on the traditional owners of this land.

I met my husband in Darwin and stayed. I now have three sons aged 21, 12 and six years. I live in a little house with my family, two dogs, a bird, a snake, many fish and frogs in the rambling neighbourhood that is this subject of this thesis. I have lived in Ludmilla for nearly 15 years.

I studied social work as a mature aged student, and have been working in the profession for the past decade. Community work, research and teaching have long
been my passions. I am also a musician, and an active committee member of a range of local arts and community groups.
Chapter One
Introduction
Chapter One
Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the theory, practice and research of developing, strengthening and maintaining supportive networks in communities. Specifically it is about a neighbourhood project located within a culturally divided Northern Australian suburb. The project utilised the often discussed, but less well researched “network” approach to community work. The project aimed to understand, create and strengthen social networks between different cultural groups using a network approach and a “strengths” philosophy. This thesis provides a critical analysis of the processes and outcomes of that neighbourhood project.

The research is centred upon understanding how a social networks focus can contribute to social work practice and research with communities. To explore this two primary questions are posed: How does a network focus translate into community work practice? And; how can social network analysis contribute to our understanding about the outcomes and efficacy of a community work project?

Network ideas are embedded in a range of sociological theories which attempt to explain how small scale structures (relationships in families, between friends, colleagues, neighbours etc.) and large social structures influence and reproduce each other. Drawing upon such theories, social network concepts have been used in social work practice in different ways, from the broad and metaphorical to the specific use of network diagrams of various kinds. This thesis demonstrates that the systematic use of network concepts can assist social workers to maintain a critical and “person-in-environment” perspective in practical and usable ways.

I argue that a focus on networks in practice (similar to that articulated by authors such as Gilchrist, 2004, 2010; Hardcastle, Powers, & Wenocur, 2004; Trevillion, 1992, 1999) which incorporates the use of social network analysis (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982; Scott, 2000; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Wellman, 1983) is useful for critical social work practice with communities. In particular, such a focus is
useful for strengths or asset-based community work practice (Green & Haines, 2008; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

A social network focus can assist in defining and understanding communities, focussing community work processes, and linking these processes to the researching of project outcomes. As such, there are two main foci in this research. Firstly, describing and analysing “what happens” when an overt network focus is applied to community work practice, particularly strengths or asset-based community development practice. Secondly, exploring the use of social network analysis as an integrated method for understanding the outcomes and efficacy of network focused community work.

This thesis provides a critical exploration of the application of social network ideas and social network analysis in the field of community work. To undertake this exploration an in-depth case study using multiple embedded methods is used to consider the case of Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections, a project based in the suburb of Ludmilla, in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Case studies are generally “instrumental” or “intrinsic” studies. In an instrumental case study, understanding about a theory or phenomena is sought through examining a particular case. In an intrinsic case study the case itself is of primary importance, and theory is developed from the case (Stake, 1995). Whilst this thesis contains both instrumental and intrinsic elements, it is primarily an instrumental case study. I am interested in exploring the purposeful application of a network focus to community work. Potentially any community project could provide the “case” for such an exploration. For reasons outlined in chapters four and five, I selected a strengths-based project in my own neighbourhood, Ludmilla. However, because this case study is primarily instrumental, the theoretical issues are presented first (in chapters two and three) and the case itself is not introduced until chapter five.
1.1 Overview of the study

This thesis and the community work documented within, has been approached from a critical social work perspective. Critical social work theory is concerned with linking social work practice to broader political concerns; it has emancipatory goals requiring that social workers engage in ongoing critical reflection. I have adopted a critical social work theory that incorporates “contemporary” (McDonald, 2006) or “post” theories (Healy, 2001). This is the type of critical social work that has been proposed and explored by a range of social work authors (e.g. Allan, 2009b; Fook, 2002, 2003; Healy, 2000, 2001; McDonald, 2006; Mullaly, 2007; Pease, Allan, & Briskman, 2003; Pease & Fook, 1999).

Critical social work and the links to “network thinking” are discussed in chapter two. Network concepts and social network analysis are introduced and explained and it is argued that these concepts can assist in articulating social work’s “person-in-environment” understandings, and can provide a focus for the “doing” of socially-just practice.

Chapter three extends the discussion of network ideas to community work practice and research. The concepts of community, difference, culture and power are each considered from a critical perspective and in relation to social work with communities. Strengths-based practice (Saleebey, 2006b; Weick, Rapp, Sullivan, & Kisthardt, 1989) is the underpinning philosophy which guides the community work practice described in the case study. More specifically, an asset-based community development model (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) was drawn upon because of the strengths philosophy, and the potential for integrating network ideas within such an approach. Both the strengths perspective and the asset-based community development (ABCD) model are critically analysed in chapter three. It is proposed that integrating network thinking and social network analysis into asset-based community development models can strengthen the community work practice, and the understanding of its efficacy.

In chapter four the case study design is explained and proposed as a suitable vehicle in which to explore how a network focus contributes to community work. The case
study includes embedded social network, narrative and descriptive quantitative methods. These methods are combined to provide an in-depth understanding about the two research foci: How do network ideas translate into community work practice? And how might social network analysis assist in understanding the outcomes and efficacy of community work?

An in-depth exploration of Ludmilla, Northern Territory (the case study site), and the formation of Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections (the case) is presented in chapter five. A critical framework stresses the importance of context for practice and in building theory for (and from) practice (Fook & Gardner, 2007); as such the case and case study site are described in detail. Demographic, geographic and historical information are combined with media narratives and residents’ narratives to provide a window into the neighbourhood’s complex past and present.

The suburb of Ludmilla encompasses Bagot Community, a large Aboriginal community, which is socially isolated from the rest of the neighbourhood. Ludmilla is considered to be a community divided along Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal lines. As chapter five demonstrates, there has been minimal and troubled interaction between Bagot Community residents and others living in Ludmilla. In response to neighbourhood tensions and a desire to increase social connections between residents, a neighbourhood network was formed by residents from both parts of the neighbourhood (myself included). The formation of this network, Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections (LNC) is also explained in chapter five.

Briefly, the LNC is a grass-roots neighbourhood network made up of citizens and organisations living and/or working in the suburb of Ludmilla and Bagot Community. Between January 2009 and July 2010, the LNC network undertook a specific community project, adopting an asset-based community development model that focused specifically on network strengthening and building. The LNC project was facilitated by me, in conjunction with people in the LNC network. LNC held ten community meetings, highlighted and documented neighbourhood assets, linked up a range of people and organisations, and helped to mobilise the community to create positive change. This resulted in a number of events and activities taking
place including: a monthly neighbourhood newsletter, a local “edible garden”, the development and production of a neighbourhood DVD, and a range of local bushwalks, barbeques, family fun days and other events aimed at bringing diverse groups of people into dialogue.

The story of the community work (the LNC project) unfolds in chapter six. Narrative methods are used to explore and critically reflect on the processes, challenges and achievements of the LNC project. Field data and in-depth interviews are analysed to understand how a social networks focus, or “network thinking”, translated into community work practice.

In order to understand how social network analysis can contribute to understanding the outcomes and efficacy of community practice, a range of LNC networks are considered. Chapter seven provides an analysis of various aspects of the LNC network, using social network diagrams and analysis. Four sets of pre and post LNC project diagrams are presented to demonstrate changes to the LNC networks over the 19 month project period.

Chapter eight provides a consideration of the LNC project from the viewpoint of 58 residents and seven organisations. Qualitative feedback (and some descriptive statistical data), was gathered in a post project social survey and this data was analysed to explore participants thoughts about the LNC project and its future.

Chapter nine brings together the embedded elements of the case study presented in the previous chapters. The discussion centres on clarifying what this case study has demonstrated about using network thinking and social network analysis in strengths-based community practice. A discussion of the implications of the research findings is presented. This includes a consideration of what this case study means in terms of existing critical social work theory, and community work theory.

Finally, chapter ten provides a thesis summary and conclusions. There is a discussion of some of the major strengths and limitations of this case study, and ideas for further research in this area are outlined.
As per the two research foci, the contribution to social work knowledge addressed by this thesis is two-fold:

1. To provide an in-depth case study of the application of network thinking in strengths-based community work practice.
2. To demonstrate the application of social network analysis in understanding the impacts and efficacy of the community work practice.

1.2 Use of first-person and the word “Aboriginal”.

This thesis is written in the first person. It is an in-depth, systematically researched, case study within which a range of qualitative and quantitative studies are embedded. Essentially it is a story of grappling with the idea of “creating community” in a unique and exciting setting, from my own social work practice perspective. Because the community work was facilitated by me, took place in my own neighbourhood, and was researched and written up by me, there is no escaping the “me” in this writing. Therefore, “I” am present throughout. I have also drawn from narrative methodologies in much of the research presented here. Such an approach generally demands the use of the first person voice, so that the author, and their influence, is present in the writing.

The term “Aboriginal” has been used throughout this thesis (and related material) at the request of the Aboriginal participants from Bagot Community.
Chapter Two
Social Work and Social Networks: Exploring Key Ideas and Links
Chapter Two
Social Work and Social Networks: Exploring Key Ideas and Links.

This chapter provides an overview of some of the main concepts involved in the thesis in a broad way, before narrowing the focus to a specific area of inquiry. To begin, there is a consideration of the social work approach adopted in this context. The discussion includes an outline of the critical philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the thesis, and the social work practice described within. The links between critical social work, the person-in-environment concept, and social network ideas are established. The multiple uses of the word “network” in social work literature are explored, and social network theory and analysis are explained. The concept of social networks is proposed as a useful one for social work practice, particularly from a critical perspective.

Network concepts can assist social workers (and the people we work with) to visualise and understand both the way our relationships form social structures, and the way in which our relationships are formed by social structures. Networking approaches to social work with communities are introduced into the discussion, and it is suggested that whilst there is exciting theory in this area, there has been little research exploring and documenting networking in community practice in a comprehensive way. The discussion progresses to outline the central purpose of the thesis, that is, to explore the application of network thinking and social network analysis to practice and research in a specific area of social work, (community development) within a specific context (remote Australia).

2.1 Exploring a critical social work approach
An entire thesis could be undertaken attempting to explore the nature of social work and defining a “social work approach”, but that is not the aim of this particular thesis. This section will however, provide a brief explanation of the way in which
social work, and a social work approach, is conceptualised here. A brief rationale for these choices is also presented.

2.1.1 What is social work?
For as long as there has been social work there has been ongoing discussion and debate about what it is. From the professions modernist roots, to the more recent challenges of integrating what Healy (2001) calls the “post-theories” and McDonald (2006) calls “contemporary theory” (for example: post structuralism and post modernism), social work has sought to define and situate itself in relation to a wide range of evolving philosophical, political, social and psychological paradigms.

Social work fields of practice encompass the micro (individual case work and psychotherapeutic work) the mezzo (group work, organisations and small communities) and the macro (large scale communities, social policy, political and global practice). Across this array of practice “levels”, there are multiple ways of practicing social work and multiple contexts in which practice occurs. Social workers draw upon a range of diverse theories, mostly from other disciplines, to inform and enhance their practice in these varying contexts.

Payne (2005) has argued that social work is what social work does, it is therefore many things. Whilst one social worker may be enforcing a government policy of the day, another may be facilitating protest action against the very same policy. Their actions might both be called “social work” and these practices construct what social work is at any given point. This is potentially confusing and contradictory, as Trevillion suggests “we have a situation where there are potentially many different social works, each of which may have more in common with the terrain associated with another discipline than with the landscapes of rival social work theories” (Trevillion, 2000b, p. 509).

This leaves us with the question; what is a social work approach to practice and research when seemingly incompatible practices are understood as social work? The International Federation of Social Workers definition of social work adopted by the IFSW General Meeting in Montréal, Canada, July 2000 states:
The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work (International Federation of Social Workers, n.d.).

The IFSW also acknowledges that social work is a “dynamic and evolving” profession, and as such, “no definition should be regarded as exhaustive” (IFSW, n.d.). This IFSW definition of social work will be adopted as a working definition to begin the discussion presented here. It is broad and flexible enough to include a range of practices; also recognising that social work is dynamic and therefore always changing.

The IFSW definition and many other definitions from social work associations worldwide include three core social work activities:

- Working towards empowering and liberating social change (which contains an assumption that society needs to change),
- working with the individuals and their environment, and
- subscribing to the principles of social justice and human rights.

In the following sections I critically explore aspects of these interrelated and overlapping ideas which help to define the professional practice of social work. It is acknowledged that these elements are not universally agreed upon; however I argue that they continue to form a strong basis for defining social work, particularly critical social work. An overview of critical social work is required before getting too far ahead, as this is the philosophical bedrock of the thesis as a whole. As critical social work is closely linked to critical theory, critical theory is discussed first in order to locate critical social work within its sociological roots.
2.1.2 Critical theory

“Critical theory” refers to a wide range of social theories primarily developed over the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century in Europe and the United States of America. Critical theory is social theory focused on both describing \textit{and} changing society. Critical theory stems from what Lyotard (1984), has called the “grand narratives” of Marx, Weber and Parsons, encompassing the “post-Marxist” Frankfurt School theorists, Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Habermas (Aggar, 1998) and moving through to postmodern and post structural theorists such as Foucault (1972, 1977) Derrida (1978) and Lyotard (1984).

Despite the vast differences in critical theorists ideas about society, what makes a social theory ‘critical’ are the underlying emancipatory goals, and concerns with linking personal experiences to the broader political, cultural, economic and social contexts. Critical theory evolves as previously ‘new theories’ about social change become accepted as mainstream. Mainstream ideas are critiqued by subsequent critical theorists, who might “find authoritarianism in the methods of its immediate predecessors” (Sim & Van Loon, 2009, p. 87).

In brief and over-simplistic terms, early modernist critical theory was based upon ideas of there being one particular theory of oppression that could be applied to all kinds of “oppressions” in all kinds of contexts (for example Marxism or structuralism). Post-modern and post-structural ideas (which I will now group together and called “contemporary theory” as per McDonald (2006, p. 79)) challenged the idea that one all-encompassing theory can be applied to all people all of the time. Contemporary critical theory claimed that attempting to understand or act upon all forms of oppression equally or in the same ways, was in fact oppressive in itself (Mullaly, 2007).

The work of Foucault is particularly important in regard to the concepts of oppression, knowledge and power (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1980). Foucault argued that power can be viewed as diffuse and located in various interactions, contexts or institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals, welfare agencies, prisons, businesses, communities). Rather than being something that is ‘held’ by one entity – power is
relational and exists when it is enacted. How oppression occurs and is experienced is not universal, and no single theory can provide explanations for oppression in every context.

Foucault draws attention to the many different ways of knowing, being and understanding (Foucault, 1972, 1980) and links this to the enacting of power and thus oppression. Along with other contemporary theories, he rejects universal, all-encompassing theories and ideals on the basis that no group should define the experiences or realities of others. Nor should any one group claim to know about, and speak for all others with a unified voice. To do so is to enact power over others. As Harvey (1989, p. 48) explains “all groups have a right to speak for themselves, in their own voice, and have that voice accepted as authentic and legitimate”.

Critical theory is important for social work because of the focus on not only describing society, but changing it. Drawing on Kellner (1989), Mullaly explains:

> Critical theory provides criticism and alternatives to traditional, mainstream social theory, philosophy and science. It is motivated by an interest in the emancipation of those who are oppressed, is informed by a critique of domination, and is driven by a goal of liberation (Mullaly, 2007, p. 214).

The following section provides an overview of critical social work, a distinct approach to social work practice which embraces the core concepts of critical social theory; emancipation, social change, and the linking of the personal experiences to social issues.

### 2.1.3 Critical social work

Critical social work is an approach to social work practice that draws upon critical theory. It is based on the premise that personal struggles are linked to social inequality. As with critical theory, there are different types of critical social work. Originally critical social work was based on modernist critical theories, such as Marxism and early Feminism. Critical social workers were able to apply these theories to oppressive situations and clearly identify sources of and solutions to
oppression of various kinds. The key values of social justice and human rights for all, which underpin the profession, fit well within this modernist paradigm of thought.

Over recent decades social workers have grappled with the newer paradigm of contemporary theory and the challenges of post-modern and post-structural theorists. The core struggle for social work is based upon the idea that if there is no truth, if everything is relative and context specific, then how is any value judgement to be formed? What of human rights? What of social justice? If we are to stop talking about empowerment, liberation and social justice as unitary goals, what do we have left in the fight against the disempowering and oppressive aspects of globalisation, economic rationalism, and extreme politics of either left or right persuasions? It has been claimed that “the simultaneous rise of neo-conservative ideology and postmodernist thinking is no coincidence; postmodernism is a very convenient framework for the legitimation of ‘market forces’ and for the erosion of a strong public sector” (Ife, 1999, p. 215).

The debates and tensions between modernist and contemporary critical social theory, and attempts to reconcile these, have been tackled by a growing number of social work theorists. For example, Fook and Pease (1999) argued that we need not throw away social work’s more traditionally modernist understandings, but rather we can complement and challenge them with the addition of contemporary (they use the term postmodern) theory. This kind of thinking depends on what kind of postmodernism one subscribes to. It appears that Fook and Peases’ kind of postmodernism is more along the lines of European postmodern thinking, as opposed to a more Americanised version.

As Aggar (1998) discusses, there are postmodern theorists who completely break with modernist thought, particularly Marxist theory. He uses the concept of “commodity postmodernism” as a version of postmodern thought that occurred upon its importation to American audiences. Aggar argues that because American theorists did not have the cultural background of Marxist and socialist ideology from which the German critical theorists (eg Horkheimer, Marucuse, Habermas) and the
French post modernists (eg. Foucault and Derrida) derived their work, they developed a particular form of postmodernism. Aggar calls this “commodity postmodernism” and outlines its use as a justification for neoliberal politics through to being a descriptive term for anything “cutting edge” (Aggar, 1998).

A range of critical social work authors have embraced the value of both the modernist and contemporary critical traditions in an attempt to resist the binaries of each in their extremes and to utilize the most useful elements of both traditions (e.g. Allan, 2009b; Healy, 2000, 2001; Ife, 1997, 1999; McDonald, 2006; Mendes, 2009; Mullaly, 2007; Napier & Fook, 2000; Pease, 2002; Pease, et al., 2003; Pease & Fook, 1999). Authors such as these generally argue that modernist and contemporary critical theories have the same aims of alleviating oppression, exploitation and domination.

When the term “critical social work” is used in this thesis, it is conceptualised in this pragmatic spirit. That is, embracing the value of both the modernist “roots” of critical practice and the challenges that contemporary theory brings to those roots. What this means in terms of social work practice is three-fold. McDonald (2009, p. 245) has argued that “in the contemporary Australian context, critical social work has three essential components”. Paraphrasing McDonald (2006, p. 95; 2009, p. 245), these can be understood as follows:

1. **A critical analysis**
   This involves attending “to theoretical accounts which attempt to appreciate the operations and impacts of an advanced capital accumulation system”. That is, we need a good grasp of the current political, social and economic environment and of critical theories which assist in understanding how they work and their effects (McDonald, 2009, p. 245).

2. **Critical reflexivity (combined with a critical consciousness)**
   This involves challenging the assumptions we make in our everyday practice. But importantly it also means engaging in a constant process of attempting to understand and appreciate “the complexities of power and our inescapable
contribution to the construction of identities which have greater or lesser degrees of distinction”. Critical reflexivity requires social workers to develop “will, capacity and strategies for destabilizing [themselves]” (McDonald, 2006, p. 95).

3. **Critical politics**

This requires social workers to make changes in their practice, in light of what they learn via critical analysis and critical reflexivity and “engage in whatever way we can with the resultant injustices in a manner which attempts to redress them” (McDonald, 2009, p. 245).

Whilst there are numerous authors one could draw upon to facilitate a critical social work analysis, McDonald (2006) argues that the theories of Pierre Bourdieu are particularly useful for critical social work practice. Pierre Bourdieu’s social and political ideas are original and difficult to categorize but he embraces what are essentially social justice values. McDonald argues that Bourdieu’s recognition of the power of social structure and of each individual’s capacity to enact change in their lives provides a strong theoretical approach for critical social work practice. Some of Bourdieu’s ideas will be further explored throughout this thesis.

With an understanding of the critical social work approach adopted in this thesis explored, I return to the related issue of defining social justice.

2.1.3 **Defining social justice**

A critical social work perspective aims to integrate the traditionally “universalist” notion of social justice so central to social work practice with a more contemporary understanding of the complexities of context, difference, multiple truths and perspectives. Van Soest (1995) outlines three popular and contemporary elements of social justice: Legal justice (our obligations to society), commutative justice (the obligations between individuals), and distributive justice (society’s obligation to individuals). It appears that distributive justice is the element of social justice most commonly evoked by social workers, and is often the focus of social workers’ social change activities (Birkenmaier, 2003; Mullaly, 2007).
In this thesis, and in my own social work practice, I have drawn from the work of Young (1990, p. 15) who asserts that “social justice means the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression”. This broad definition moves beyond the narrower “distributive” ideas of justice discussed previously, and fits with the emancipatory aims of critical social work broadly, whether modern or postmodern.

Importantly Young’s definition also provides room for consideration of where power is situated and how it is produced and reproduced. There is also room to consider social work roles in these processes. By focusing only upon the distribution of material goods and services (as in a distributive view of social justice) we lose sight of the relationships, hidden social rules and processes which create unfair distribution in the first place.

The social justice definition selected in this thesis is that of Young, stated above. The reason for this choice is the breadth of the definition, which allows the aim of emancipation from domination and oppression to be realised using an integration of both modernist and contemporary critical ideas. Modernist critical theory provides an understanding of the commonalities between all forms of oppression and provides concepts for “a structural analysis of the global nature of capitalism, patriarchy, racism, and the like” (Mullaly, 2007, p. 223). Such an analysis assists people to understand impacts of these issues upon their lives, and makes the links between personal situations and the broader political environment. Contemporary concepts of power assist us to understand that whilst oppression may be universal, it is reproduced and experienced in very different ways. The multiple levels and locations in which political struggles occur are the focus of contemporary critical theory. The political and the personal are linked, and both the individual and the social are important, and “we are able to locate ourselves, reflexively, into a holistic contextual picture” (Fook & Pease, 1999, p. 229).

Using modern and contemporary critical theories together makes for strong analysis of oppression and the different ways this is experienced in various contexts. Similarly, McDonald (2006) has argued that embracing contemporary appreciations
of relativity and plurality does not mean abandoning social works ethical objectives, instead:

it merely renders those ethics more specific. It is enough, for example, to help someone feel a little happier with their circumstances, which hopefully, have been slightly improved or modified. This focus on small spaces and small things of practice reinvigorates the traditional social work practice nexus of person-in-environment (McDonald, 2006, p. 94).

The idea of a holistic contextual picture has often been expressed in social work practice as a “person-in-environment” understanding. The following section briefly overviews this concept.

2.1.4 “Person-in-environment” understandings

The “person-in-environment” concept (Green, 1999) has proven popular in social work and serves to remind workers to not only consider the individuals, groups or communities or societies with whom they are working, but to think through the various contexts in which this work is situated, from the micro to the macro. Social work is “social”, and thus demands a consideration of these links. The person-in-environment concept permeates social work literature of all persuasions. Whilst there are different conceptualisations concerning how broadly “environment” is interpreted, it has been argued that the imperative to link the personal and the political is what distinguishes social work from other related professions (Coady & Lehmann, 2001, p. 6). Webb (1981 p. 147, cited in Trevillion 2000b, p. 509) also makes this point clearly:

It has been suggested that all social work theorists, however much they may disagree with one another are concerned with ‘the links and interdependencies between the individual and society’.

In theorising the person-in-environment understandings, social work has borrowed from other disciplines and integrated these ideas into social work knowledge. It is in the various ways of conceptualising the person-in-environment, or the links between personal and political, that the concept of “networks” invariably arises.
Network ideas are embedded in a number of sociological theories which attempt to reconcile how small scale structures (relationships in families, between friends, colleagues, neighbours etc.) and large social structures impact, effect, influence and reproduce each other. Network ideas are used in both modernist and contemporary theories, and have had varying influence in terms of social work practice and research.

What is crucial for socially just practice however is an awareness of the multiple layers of networks and the possibilities for action in various locations within them. Trevillion calls this a “social network approach” to practice which is “best seen as an orientation to the social world which attempts to understand it in terms of sets, patterns and linkages” (Trevillion, 2000b, p. 514).

The word “network” and its close relations “networks” and “networking” are often used in social work theory. The following section explores the use of network ideas in social work literature.

2.2 The multiple uses of “networks” in social work practice and research

The word “network” has multiple meanings, and is fast becoming an elusive “catch-all” term to describe connections between various actors and entities (Giarchi, 2001). Even so, there remains great value in network concepts for social work. Various conceptualisations of “network” are outlined in the following section, however they will only be considered in terms of social sciences. Whilst acknowledging that there are links, I am not attempting to enter the terrain of networks in terms of the physical or computational sciences, or the online social networks of Facebook, My Space, Twitter or similar social networking sites.

The concept of networks is not a new one to social workers. Social workers have used social network ideas and concepts in a number of ways over many decades. This ranges from broad and sometimes vague use, to more specific use underpinned
by various theories. Before looking more closely at some of these theories, it is useful to initially consider the broader and everyday uses of the term “network”.

2.2.1 “Network” as a noun and a metaphor

The language of networks is often used in a broad way in social work practice and literature, often as a metaphor for connected and overlapping relationships of various kinds. In a broad sense, we might talk about social “webs” and “social fabric” in discussions about communities and society. We may “use our networks” to find information for ourselves, or the people we work with. In this broad sense networks generally are not defined, and are simply used to evoke the existence of connections between people and other entities.

Social workers also place importance on the networks of people we work with and for. Networks including family, friends, work colleagues, community organisations and broader structures can be viewed a source of support or perhaps as a source of problems. Practitioners might work with people to consider their various networks in a broad or metaphoric manner, or in more systematic ways. This is likely to be work undertaken through the lens of a specific theory such as systems theories, perhaps using tools such as genograms (Hartman & Laird, 1983) and eco maps (Hartman, 1978), or in relation to social capital concepts. These uses are discussed in more detail later.

2.2.2 “Network” as a verb: the practice of networking

The word “network” is also used as a verb, i.e., “to network” or engage in the activity of networking. Networking is a process of purposefully linking up with other people for particular purposes, whether they are professional or personal. As social work practitioners we talk about the value of networking - that is, of meeting others in the same field of practice, in the same area, with similar interests - or meeting others whose work, projects, services or ideas interest us, or could be useful to the people we work with. Networking is one way social workers might build and utilise their professional and community relationships.
The term “networking”, meaning the establishing and maintaining of networks, began to appear regularly in community work literature in the early 1980’s (Gilchrist, 2004). Networking is viewed as a key role in community development work, as explained by Gilchrist (2004, p. 25):

The development of ‘community’ is about strengthening and extending networks of relationships between individuals, between organisations, and just as importantly, between different sectors and agencies. Working to establish and maintain these networks is fundamental to effective community development work.

Within the critical framework adopted in this thesis, networking can be viewed as a key activity of social work related to social justice. If social justice is concerned with the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression then (as previously stated) the mechanisms and processes by which such oppression occurs must be understood, as these mechanisms and processes will vary according to the context.

There will be localised relationships and structures which produce and reproduce oppression and domination, (and in this social workers must include their own interactions with and for whom they work). Domination and oppression can occur in the ways in which institutions (e.g. schools, hospitals, and community groups) include or exclude people “different” to the dominant group in their decision making processes and networks. It can be argued that attempting to support, build and maintain networks that include and embrace difference, so as to open up the possibility of including representation from all possible groups, is a way of undertaking socially just practice.

2.2.3 Network ideas used in practice with individuals, families and other groups

The primary way in which network ideas have been used in social work with individuals, families and other groups has been in terms of “network therapy” and the application of ecological systems theory, particular in family therapy.
**Network therapy**
From the mid 1960’s, network therapy was developed in the United States. Network therapy was primarily used in family therapy work and the ideas of Speck and Attneave (1973) were particularly influential. Network therapy involved analysing “the structure of the invisible web of ties in which individual and family life are embedded” and mobilising these networks to help families and individuals through situations of crises, and build systems of social care (Sieikkula, Arnikil, & Esa, 2003, p. 187). Practice was focused on (often quite large) network meetings, where problems were discussed and various interpretations developed from the different perspectives of network members before coming to solutions involving the support of the network.

Whilst early network therapy was not overtly connected with contemporary theory, the acknowledgement of the multiple interpretations of events and issues, and the focus on opening up dialogue across a network of support has resonances with what are now considered post structural or postmodern approaches to practice such as narrative therapy (White & Epston, 1990), solutions focused therapy (De Shazer, 1985) and strengths approaches (Saleebey, 2006b; Weick & Saleebey, 1998).

**Ecological Systems Theory**
In practice with individuals and small groups social workers often work to understand the personal, professional and community networks that can be supportive or obstructive in people’s efforts to create change for themselves. Ecological systems approaches to social work practice utilise the language of networks, and a range of network mapping techniques have been developed from this perspective (Germain & Gitterman, 1981). Tools such as genograms (Hartman & Laird, 1983) and ecomaps (Hartman, 1978), and other small network mapping techniques (eg. Biegel, Shore, & Gordon, 1984) are used to visualise particular aspects of individual or family support networks. It has been particularly popular in the area of family therapy.
Ecological systems theory was introduced to social work in the 1970’s. Stemming from general systems and ecological systems theory, ecological systems theory has been useful for “highlighting how interconnected we are as people embedded in various social systems” (Rothery, 2001, p. 69). Important also is the idea that the various systems are in a constant process of “reciprocally influencing each other – ecological systems are inherently transactional in nature” (Rothery, 2001, p. 69).

Ecological systems theory is also considered a meta-theory in social work, used as a conceptual framework for eclectic social work practice (Coady & Lehmann, 2001, p. 6). The metaphors of ecosystems are used to assist social workers to “maintain this dual focus” on the person and the environment by making the links and interdependencies between people and their (more immediate) systems (O’Donoghue & Maidment, 2005, p. 32).

Some have critiqued systems theory use as being too abstract, confusing, and not able to be applied in social work interventions (Wakefield, 1996a, 1996b). This argument is sometimes countered with the idea that it is a theory which helps to describe and explain a situation, rather than a model or theory of intervention. Such explanatory theories can be useful in and of themselves in terms of consciousness raising and allowing people to understand problems and to identify potential resources in overcoming problems (Rothery, 2001).

2.2.4 Network ideas for understanding society

Network ideas abound in community development and social policy literature. Often these are closely related to concepts such as social capital (discussed in detail later). However, attention has also recently been drawn to the concepts of the “network society”, as well as complexity theory. Although rarely used yet in social work literature, actor-network-theory may also prove useful for sociological analysis of networks involving both human and non-human actors.

Network Society

Related to the previously discussed idea of “networks as metaphor” is the notion of the “network society”. This concept takes the metaphor of networks and applies it
systematically to the analysis of various size social systems. The work of
sociologists Barry Wellman, Manuel Castells and Jan van Dijk has been influential
in the conceptualization of the “network society”. Increasingly the term “network
society” has come to represent internet based networks, yet the concept began
elsewhere.

From the 1970’s, Canadian sociologist Barry Wellman began his career-long
exploration of using the concept of networks to describe and understand society (for
example Craven & Wellman, 1973; Tindall & Wellman, 2001; Wellman, 1979,
thinking is that “social systems are networks of networks” (Tindall & Wellman,
2001, p. 271). Wellman and his colleagues’ work on social networks, (incorporating
social network analysis, discussed later), including more recent work concerning
internet networks, has been influential in terms of how communities and societies
are defined in sociological terms.

Another leading sociological author concerned with the concept of the network
society, is Manuel Castells. Castells considers networks to be the basic units of
modern society. Indeed, he states that “networks constitute the new social
morphology of our societies” (Castells, 1996, p. 500). He is particularly interested in
new information technology, arguing that it “provides the material basis” for the
expansion of the “networking form of social organization” throughout the social
structure (Castells, 1996, p. 500).

Concerned primarily with new technology (internet) based social networks, Jan van
Dijk’s (2006, p. 2) work on the concept of the network society contends that
“networks are becoming the nervous system of our society”. His vision of the
network society is one in which internet and new media networks replace and/or
complement diminishing face-to-face networks.

Complexity theory
Complexity theory has been called a postmodern physical science (Sim & Van Loon,
2009). Evolving from general systems and cybernetics theory (Wolf-Branigan,
complexity theory uses the language of networks in a comprehensive way. Networks are the structures in which the complexity “happens”. They are the sum of the linked up elements which form part of whatever (unbounded) system is under consideration. “Networks generate complex and enduring connections stretching across time and space between people and things” (Urry, 2003, p. 11) and complexity theory seeks to explain what happens in networks.

It has been argued that complexity theory can provide “fresh insights into the dynamics of social connections” to assist with understanding the communities in which we practice social work (Gilchrist, 2000, p.265). There is much more to complexity theory than can be discussed here. In a very simplistic way, suffice to say that a complexity frame is useful for viewing systems (including communities) as dynamic social networks comprised of groups of people and/or organisations that are linked together by a common action or interest. Complexity theory contributes an understanding of how some parts of networks effect and change other parts through their links. Social network analysis (explained in detail later) provides one means of understanding how information and knowledge is spread through the interactions of actors in and across the various networks that form communities (Wolf-Branigin, 2009, p. 123).

Complexity theorists have suggested that homogenous, isolated networks with low levels of connectivity become stagnant and are unable to adapt to changes. The opposite of this are volatile systems that have a vast array of diverse connections and are unable to stabilise. What is required then is a midway ground. “Systems operate best within an intermediate zone along the continuum somewhere between rigidity and randomness. This has become known as the ‘edge of chaos’” (Gilchrist, 2000, p. 266).

There are a number of accounts of complexity, including the popular “chaos theory” from the physical sciences. Yet these theories do not allow for individual choice or multiple interpretations of events. As with systems theory, complexity theories provide an understanding of society which demonstrates the dynamic impacts and effects that various connections between people (or other “units”) can have.
Complexity theory is not a critical theory in that there is no normative conceptualisation of society and no impetus or direction for intervention within it. As Trevillion argues, “sociological accounts of complexity however sensitively produced are designed to further our understanding of society rather than to show us how to intervene in complex social situations” (2000b, p. 512).

**Actor-network theory**

Originating in the area of the philosophy of science, Actor-network theory (also called “enrolment theory” or “the theory of translation”) was developed in the 1980’s primarily through the work of Michel Callon (1986; 1986), Bruno Latour (1987; 1988), and John Law (1992). Actor-network theory has been described as “a form of ‘post-modern’ network analysis emphasizing the difficulty of establishing clear boundaries between network actors and connections, between agency and structure” (Breiger, 2004, n.p.).

Actor-network theory (ANT) attempts to bring together the previously separate concepts of agency and structure by bypassing them altogether. Perhaps most interestingly, ANT accounts for both human and non-human actors within networks, treating both as equals. Rather than considering technological networks and human networks as separate entities, ANT is concerned with both the technical and human aspects of a network and how they influence each other. Thus, ANT proposes a “socio-technical” account of networks, arguing that separation between humans and technologies is too difficult.

Actor-network theory is based upon three principles: agnosticism, generalised symmetry and free association. Thus there is no distinction made between the social, the natural and the technological (Crawford, 2004). An actor is not simply an object, but an association of heterogeneous elements which come together to form the actor (Gray, Plath, & Webb, 2009). When an actor appears to be like a single entity or “thing”, it has become what actor-network theorists call “black boxed”. In order to understand the entity, the black box must be opened and its contents (the heterogeneous elements) unpacked and examined.
As a critical theory it is primarily useful for deconstructing networks to understand how they are composed and how they emerge, are maintained, compete with other networks and how they succeed or disintegrate over time. Actor-network theory has only just begun to infiltrate social work theory. For example, Stanley (2010) has introduced an actor network theory analysis into social work with children and families, and Gray, Plath and Webb (2009) have used it to undertake a critical analysis of evidence based social work.

**Social capital**

Social capital theory has integrated the concept of the network and run with it, at times claiming to be able to show how and where to intervene in communities. This has meant that the two bodies of theory (social capital theory and social network theory) have developed alongside one another, at times mingling, or merging, over recent decades (Leonard & Onyx, 2003; Lin, 2001; Varda, 2011). This section briefly overviews the concept of social networks in terms of social capital theory.

Social workers and related professionals, particularly in the field of community development and social policy, have made links to social capital literature where networks are conceptualised as a key element of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001; Putnam, 2000). Whilst there has been much ongoing debate about definitions and applications of the concept of social capital, most conceptualisations involve the notion of social networks in some way. The concept of “networks”, that involve norms of trust and reciprocity are commonly used in definitions of social capital (Stone, 2001). Networks are generally considered to be the structural element of social capital, or the frame in which social capital can be located (Stone, 2001). A network view of social capital is often evoked and at times overtly utilized in community research (for examples see: Chia, 2011; Cote & Erickson, 2009; Titeca & Vervisch, 2008; Varda, 2011).

Some social capital literature has provided a comprehensive analysis of social network concepts, particularly the work of Lin (2001). Social network ideas are implicit in the discussion about different types of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking capital) as these are based on different kinds of relationships that form
specific kinds of networks (Coleman, 1988; Hughes, Black, Kalder, Bellamy, & Castle, 2007; Putnam, 2000; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Bonding networks consist of the strong ties between family and close friends. Such ties are considered important for mutual understanding and day to day support. Bridging ties are more diverse than bonding ties, and refer to relations with acquaintances distant friends, associates and colleagues (Putnam, 2000).

In his groundbreaking studies on job seeking in the USA, and in subsequent research, Granovetter (1973, 1983) demonstrated that “weak” (and generally bridging) ties, particularly those that linked people to others outside their own personal networks, were an important resource in making opportunities for mobility possible, as well as ensuring a community's access to new information and ideas.

Linking ties refer to relations between individuals and organisations, or the ties that organisations have with each other. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) extended the idea of linking ties to include the capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community. Linking networks enable communities to communicate directly with those in positions of decision making power, and theoretically, to gain access to the valuable information and resources within these larger networks (or at least begin to enter into a dialogue) (Hughes, et al., 2007). Thus, social networks are a critical element of the concept of social capital, by whatever definition.

**Bourdieu and social capital**
Because of his overtly critical approach, it useful to briefly consider Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital. Bourdieu analysed the way in which social and cultural capital is used to both perpetuate and resist relations of inequality. He believed that social networks were not a natural “given”, but they must be constructed through investment strategies aimed at institutionalising group relations so that they are usable as a reliable source of benefits. Therefore, the acquisition of social capital requires deliberate investment of both economic and cultural resources (Bourdieu, 1986)
For Bourdieu, social capital can only be understood along with other types of capital (cultural and economic) and is linked with the concepts of *habitus* and *field* (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998). Bourdieu describes habitus as “social life incorporated, and thus individuated”, and an attempt to move past the ago-old sociological tension between agency and structure, or the individual and society (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 15). Habitus is the set of “attitudes and dispositions” which a person acquires throughout their life (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. xii), it is the “tendencies and inclinations” one holds, and which “serve to integrate past experiences in and to the present” (McDonald, 2009, p. 253). A person’s habitus shapes their everyday lives, how they go about things, where they feel comfortable, and the contexts in which they have power and influence. These contexts are called *fields* and they both shape and are shaped by people and their relations to one another within them.

Bourdieu describes fields as “structured social space, a field of forces” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 40). Others have described fields as “sites of cultural practice” and “can be defined as a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations and appointments” which form the setting or space in which people are positioned (Webb, et al., 2002, pp. x-xi). For example, social work academia could be considered as a field. Within that field various people hold different positions of power and influence dependent upon how much cultural, economic and social capital they possess. Those who understand the way the field operates (that is, they have a habitus suited to the field) will gain more power and influence within that field, and in turn, come to shape that field. In this way, Bourdieu explains how inequalities are reproduced.

Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital is centred on the extent, quality and quantity of social actors’ networks and their ability to mobilise these within particular fields. Social networks are not perceived by Bourdieu as a natural, given state of affairs, but must be constructed through investment strategies (using both economic and cultural resources). That is, we need the disposition and the resources to enter particular fields and to learn how they operate. Bourdieu understands social capital as being a process of deliberately constructing sociability so that the benefits of being part of a group can be attained (Bourdieu, 1986). Those with the resources
(economic and cultural capital) can invest in strategies to acquire social capital – which in turn assists in generating more economic and cultural capital, and the cycle continues.

Those without the resources to make such investments might have difficulty building the social relationships that would enable them to generate social capital (i.e., gain access to resources held by their associates) which in turn means a lessened ability to acquire economic and cultural capital, and again, another cycle continues. Social networks become a mechanism by which social advantage and/or disadvantage are produced and reproduced.

2.2.5 “Social network thinking”

The previous discussion explained how networks have been used in social work and related literature. That discussion highlighted the way in which networks are considered a framework or structure in which actors and the relationships between them can be explored and understood. Whilst networks are recognised as a crucial element in a range of theoretical approaches, the value of purposeful network thinking in and of itself has not been fully explored in social work research.

Network thinking means an ongoing consideration of context in terms of networks. Individuals, families, groups, communities, organisations, nations, can all be considered actors in networks of various kinds. These networks help form the actors, and are also formed by actors in a reproductive process. This is not a static thing, as networks change, grow and collapse constantly. However, an understanding of the links and interdependencies between actors in networks of any kind is crucial to critical social work practice.

Social network theory and social network analysis are difficult concepts to separate as they draw upon each other in a circular fashion. That is, social network theory is informed by social network analysis; and social network analysis is organised around features drawn from social network theory. Often the two terms are put together under the title of “social network analysis”. However, the difference between the terms can be thought about in terms of a practice/theory focus and a research focus.
Social network theory can inform network thinking. Social network theory offers a broad understanding of social networks, their features, their uses and importance (or otherwise) and is useful for developing practice strategies and theorising. Social network analysis on the other hand, is a specific research methodology which provides the tools to analyse social network data and to generate social network diagrams or maps. Such diagrams can provide understanding of a particular network at a particular point in time.

It is proposed that network thinking, using concepts from social network theory, can provide some practical conceptual tools to “do” a critical social work approach; that is, to make the links between the micro and the macro, the personal and the political in meaningful ways in both practice and research. The theories outlined above are useful in thinking through or theorising the nature of connections between actors, and can inform discussion and thinking about aspects of social connections and networks from particular theoretical viewpoints. However, there is also value in considering the social networks themselves, and thinking through how a stronger understanding of social networks can assist in social work practice, particularly in terms of communities.

The central argument of this thesis is that ideas from social network theory and analysis have potential to assist social workers in their practice and in their research. Social network theory and analysis can assist social workers in taking the broad (and generally easy to grasp) concepts of networks and networking and integrating them more systematically into practice and research. In order to consider this further, social network theory and analysis will now be considered in more detail.

2.3 Social network theory and analysis

Much of section 2.3 is drawn directly from the article *Exploring the Potential of Social Network Analysis in Asset-based Community Development Practice and Research* (Ennis and West, 2010) which I wrote in collaboration with my supervisor, Dr West, whilst chapter two and three were being developed. The quotes from Ennis and West (2010) are formatted as per other quotes in the thesis (with large quotes
being indented and block justified), but should be read as part of the main body of the thesis.

2.3.1 Social network theory

Social network theory is not a formalised social theory (such as Marxism, or postmodernism or other critical or traditional social theories) in that it does not seek to explain or change society. Rather it is a perspective or cluster of approaches that hold an implicit set of assumptions about fundamental issues in sociological analysis such as the relationship between the individual and society, the relationship between “micro” and “macro”, and the structuring of social action by objective, “supra-individual” patterns of social relationships (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994, p. 1414).

Network theory rejects explanations of human social behaviour and processes on the basis of categorical attributes alone (e.g., age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, religious beliefs). Rather, network theory places importance on the patterns of social relations to explain why people and groups behave in particular ways. There is an understanding within network theory that whilst attributes (such as employment, income, health or education status) are important considerations, many attributes are temporarily held or possessed as a result of being located in particular positions within social structures (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994).

Social network theory is based upon the premise that relationships between individuals combine to form social structure. Where an individual “sits” in a social structure greatly impacts their access to resources and opportunities. Whilst positions in networks are fluid and changeable over time, social network theory posits that the events and activities of a person’s life are greatly influenced by the ways in which a person is linked into the larger web of social connections. Social network theory also suggests that the relative success or failure of organisations, communities, societies and nations often depends on the patterning of their internal structure, and their positions in even broader networks.
Within social network theory, social structure can be conceptualised as a network of social ties or relationships (de Nooy, Mrvar, & Bategelj, 2005). A social network is social structure which consists of two elements; these are generally known as actors (or nodes or points) and ties (sometimes referred to as links or relationships). An actor is most commonly an individual person, but it could be an organisation, a country, a community, or some other defined entity. A tie indicates a relationship between the actors. Any type of relationship may be represented, for example relationships of trust, referral, economic exchange, or friendship can, and have, been represented as a social network. Thus a social network is a “system or pattern of links between points” (Seed, 1990, p. 19). Networks may be small (e.g. trust relationships in a small family group) or very large (e.g. a city wide community and welfare services client referral network). (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 408)

The defined set of actors and the links between them is the network. Each individual is generally a member of multiple social networks, some networks may have many similar members (thus large amounts of overlap), while in others the individual is the only link between the networks. For example, a person may be part of a network of people who work together closely in a particular workplace. Some of these people may also be friends outside the workplace. They may be part of other networks unrelated to their work, such as interest or volunteer groups of various kinds. They may also have family networks which stretch across the globe and who are not involved in any of their other networks. These multiple connections make up the web or “weave” of society (or the social fabric). Commonly used metaphors such as “social webs”, and “social fabric” capture the essence (and complexity) of the overlapping and interweaving networks that are the social structures in which we live.

Thinking in terms of social networks assists us to understand social structure, and allows for the description of social life “in terms of specific ‘social fields’” (Barnes 1954, p. 43 in Trevillion, 2000b, p. 513). Visual representations of social networks, in the form of network diagrams or maps, can quickly demonstrate who (or what) is linked in any given structure, and how. Importantly, social network
diagrams can also show us who is not linked to who, in other words, which people, groups, communities or organisations are socially isolated from others. (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 410).

As Trevillion (2000, p. 513) points out:

Because it deals with open-ended patterns of social interaction one key element of the paradigm is that it encompasses differences as well as similarities and focuses on cross-boundary linkages rather than the analysis of clearly bounded social groups.

Social network theory and analysis allows an investigation of both the constraining and the enabling dimensions of the patterns of social relationships between actors in and across different systems or groups (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994).

Figure 1 is an example of a basic network map. This map represents five actors. For our purposes, let us say they are five community organisations within a geographic area. The map shows their relationship to one another in terms of who has “worked with” who in the past 12 months. The map shows us instantly that actor “a” has three links to others; actor “d” has four links, while “e” has only one link to this network via “d”. Of course, these five organisations would have other relationship with a range of other actors: however, in terms of the stated relationship (who has worked with who in a specific location), we can quickly see the links and the “structure” of this network.
This is a very simplistic example of a network diagram; however moving on to the discussion of social network analysis provides the framework for further consideration of network diagrams and their features.

2.3.2 Social network analysis

As with network theory, Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994, p. 1414) contend that there is no one formal type of network analysis, rather, the term refers to a “broad strategy for investigating social structure”. Social network analysis is a cluster of research methodologies utilised in the social sciences as well as a wide range of other disciplines (Trevillion 2000). It is based on the work of researchers from the 1930’s, led by J.L. Moreno who called themselves “sociometrists”, developing a science known as “sociometry” (de Nooy, Mrvar, & Bategelj, 2005; Gilchrist, 2004). As the history of network analysis is beyond the scope of the current discussion, suffice to say that Moreno’s early techniques for drawing “sociograms” or “graphs” which mapped the dynamics of groups (Scott, 2000), have evolved to the current time where a wide range of computer programs are available to assist the contemporary researcher with the mapping of increasingly large networks.

The key point of social network analysis is that the focus is not upon individuals, groups, organisations or states as the unit of analysis, but upon the structure of the ties between actors, and how this web of ties, this structure, affects the actors and
their relationships (Linton, 2006). This makes social network analysis significantly different from other research methodologies.

**Figure 2. Example of a large social network diagram (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 413)**

Figure two is an example of a large social network diagram based upon networks described later in this thesis. This example diagram includes 83 actors. For our purposes let us say that these are members of a geographic community and the relationship is one of “lending”. That is, the actors have lent one another something in the past 12 months. From this diagram we can see that some actors are more tightly grouped together than others, some small groups are completely isolated from the broader network and there are some key actors (such as number 1) who link many diverse parts of the network together. To move from these broad observations to more in-depth analysis involves a consideration of a range of network features.
Hill (2002) draws upon the work of authors such as Mitchell (1969) and Wellman (1998) to outline the four key features of social networks which assist us in understanding them. Firstly, the structure of the network which includes network size, the connectedness of the actors, the concentration or dispersion of the actors, the accessibility of the network, the degree of clustering in the network, and the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the actors. Network process is also seen as a key feature. This includes network content (what is being exchanged or communicated in the network), contact frequency and degree of intimacy, the durability and intensity of the ties or relationships, and the direction of the ties (are relationships reciprocated or one-directional?). Third, the function of the network is considered, i.e. the purpose the network serves, both for the individuals in it, and the wider social functions (e.g. socializing children into certain cultural norms) (Hill, 2002). Lastly the composition of the network needs to be considered. In Western cultures we tend to find personal support networks are comprised of a small number of family and close friends, with obligations being primarily to those family and friends. In other less individualistic cultures, personal networks and the associated obligations are much broader and involve more people (McGlone et al., 1999; Phillipson et al., 2001 in Hill 2002: 241). (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 408-409)

The data gathered to undertake network analysis must be able to demonstrate both the actors and the relationship.

Social network data can be drawn from a wide range of sources, dependent upon what the researcher wants to understand or explore. Data can be either qualitative or quantitative, so long as it demonstrates or indicates a relationship between actors. Any network analysis requires two key elements: a defined set of actors and a defined relationship between them (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 408-409).
2.4 Social network theory and analysis: How has it been used in social work practice and research?

It was previously argued that social network concepts and ideas have been used in a broad way in social work practice. The following section focuses on the specific use of social network theory and analysis within social work.

2.4.1 Social network theory and analysis in social work literature

Network analysis has been embraced most enthusiastically in the fields of sociology, anthropology and organisational theory. Social network analysis assisted in the development of “a number of useful theoretical developments” in these fields, including “ideas around leadership, trust, decision making, coalitions and creativity” (Gilchrist, 2004, p. 32). There have also been a number of social work authors who have explicitly considered the concept of social networks in social work practice and research.

Interest in social network theory and analysis within social work literature appears to have peaked and waned several times. There was initial interest in the 1950’s, and then another short burst of interest in the mid 1980’s through to the early 1990’s. Since the mid 2000’s there has been renewed interest in the application of social network ideas to social work practice (for example Folgheratier, 2004; Pantucek, 2008; Webb, 2008). Whilst there have been some examples of the use of social network analysis ideas in social work with individuals and groups, social network ideas have rarely been used in social work practice or research with communities, and there appears to be few examples of the explicit use of network thinking or social network analysis in community practice.

Elizabeth Bott was both a social network pioneer and a social worker (Seed, 1990). In 1957 Bott published *Family and Social Network*, a book which was embraced by sociologists rather than social workers. Bott’s (1957) work was highly influential and is recognised as an important contribution to the area of social network theory (Seed, 1990). However, possibly due to the increasingly theoretical and mathematical literature on social networks, this approach to conceptualising groups
and communities had little currency in modern social work from that time (McIntyre, 1986).

It was not until the mid 1980’s that network approaches to social work practice started becoming more documented and theorised. For example; support networks for “the elderly” were considered using networking ideas (Biegel, et al., 1984). A model for working with the “institutionalized elderly” based on linking networks was successfully trialled in a location in the United States (Wells and Singer, 1985). A year later, Eileen McIntyre discussed the “potential for practice” which social network analysis held, particularly for “developing new approaches to enhancing social interaction and social integration” (McIntyre, 1986, p. 424).

In 1990 Philip Seed published a book which attempted to introduce basic social network concepts to a social work audience. This approach was focused primarily on investigating the personal social networks of individual clients to determine what resources were available to them, and what else may be needed (Seed, 1990). Seed published a number of social work and welfare practice books based on network ideas, however none focused on community development work specifically.

In the early 1990’s a networking approach to community care was articulated by Steve Trevillion (1992) from the United Kingdom. Trevillion developed a networking model of community care which integrated network therapy ideas and focused on the development of community partnerships. He updated this approach and integrated an even stronger network focus (drawing upon social network analysis) in 1999 (Trevillion, 1999).

Elizabeth Tracey and her colleagues (Tracey, 1990; Tracey & Bell, 1994; Tracey & Whittaker, 1990) advocated the use of social network mapping for assessing social support within the field of family therapy practice. In more recent times, Hill (2002) discussed the use of network assessment and diagrams in social work practice and education, yet focusing only on personal or ego networks, and Webb (2008) considered a network analytic model for “evaluating the degrees of service use participation in social care agencies” (2008, p. 269). Pantucek (2008) has
discussed the uses of the network analytic tools developed by him and his colleagues in Austria. Both the “network card” and the “inclusion card” involve the mapping of client networks of various kinds. Encouragingly there has also been a chapter on social network analysis written by Deirdre Kirke (2009) included in a relatively recent general social work “theories and methods” text edited by Gray and Webb (Gray & Webb, 2009).

The use of social network analysis as a research method within social work research is also fairly limited. “Social network analysis has been used only occasionally in social work research (for example see Auslander & Litwin, 1988; Thompson & Peebles-Wilkins, 1992; Tracey, 1990) and it is rare to find examples of its use in researching community development undertakings of any kind” (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 412).

2.5.2 Social network theory and analysis in social work with communities

In terms of social work with communities, social network theory has been acknowledged as a useful theoretical framework for practice by very few authors. Hardcastle, Powers & Wenocur (2004) devote a chapter to social network ideas, and Henderson and Thomas (2005) discuss the use of social networks in terms of social capital theory (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 411).

Social network analysis has been discussed as a potentially useful method to facilitate developing a community profile and to provide information for mobilising community networks and creating new supportive ones (O'Connor, Hughes, Turney, Wilson, & Setterland, 2006) It is the work of two other authors from the United Kingdom; Steve Trevillion (1992) and Alison Gilchrist (2000, 2004) which “has made strong inroads into the use of social network ideas in community work” (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 411). However, it appears that to date, these ideas have not been extended to include the use of social network analysis in research exploring the efficacy and outcomes of community work.

Trevillion (1992, 1999) has provided very useful “how to” knowledge for social workers interested in community partnerships and networking approaches. His work
in this area has focused on considering the ways social network concepts can assist social workers “bring new insights to bear on familiar problems and lead to an interactional and situational approach to the making of community partnerships” (Trevillion, 1992, p. v). Trevillion provides an in-depth consideration of networking in terms of neighbourhood work, inter-agency work, case management, community care, and community assessment. The networking ideas are framed within an empowerment perspective.

Gilchrist seems to have picked up the thread of earlier community network ideas and run with it in her “networking approach to community development”. Using concepts from complexity and chaos theories, her “understanding of modern society is one of increasingly complex interlocking flexible networks around a variety of interests and identities” (Gilchrist, 2004, p. 95).

Gilchrist (2004, p. 95) argues that the network model of community “proposes a complex, almost postmodern vision of an integrated and dynamic network of diverse connections”. She states that “the purpose of community development is simply to support and shape formal and informal networking in order to facilitate the emergence of effective and empowering collective action”.

“Social network concepts assist us to understand the complexities of communities. Based on research undertaken with community work practitioners in the United Kingdom, Gilchrist considers how networks are shaped and sustained by using concepts from social network theory” (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 411). Gilchrist focuses on the meso-level of collective activity, considering how effective networks can be established and managed for a variety of purposes. Meta-networking is introduced as a way of networking the networks in order to create larger informal networks which serve as linkages “within complex and dynamic situations that enable new organisational arrangements to emerge and adapt to changing circumstances” (Gilchrist, 2004, p. 84). “Because networks provide the conditions from which community organisations and action can grow, it is vital to understand how social networks operate and how power and resources flow within them” (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 411).
Networking models of community care and development articulated by Trevillion (1992) and Gilchrist (2004) have been informed by and developed from social work and community care practice experience and knowledge. However, it appears that there has not yet been any research undertaken on the efficacy and impacts of an intentionally network focused community work project. This thesis is interested in applying these network ideas to community work practice in a purposeful way, and exploring the process and outcomes of this.

2.5 Limitations of social network theory and analysis in terms of social work practice & research

There have been two main criticisms of social network theory in relation to understanding social systems. These concern the lack of engagement with concepts of culture and agency, and the overuse of the term “network”. Both are considered here.

2.5.1 The issues of agency and culture

The study of social networks is primarily concerned with understanding social structures, and has not been particularly useful in considering concepts of individual meaning, agency or culture. This is problematic when considering the contemporary critical social work approach I have adopted in this thesis. As previously explained contemporary critical approaches focus our attention upon identity, meaning and culture (as well as, and in relation to, structural issues).

Wellman (1983, p.156) stated that the major limitation of network analysis was that “It deemphasizes analyses of why people act and emphasizes the structural constraints on their actions”. A decade later a more complex critique of network analysis was made by Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994), a critique that captures the essence of the strengths and limitations of network theory and analysis.

Back in the mid 1990’s Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994, p. 1411) called social network analysis “one of the most promising currents in sociological research”, however they also outlined some significant issues with its use at the time, and these
issues are still relevant today. One of the major criticisms Emirbayer and Goodwin detail is a “lack of interest in situating network analysis within the broader traditions of sociological theory” (1994, p. 1412). Whilst the theoretical precursors to network analysis (particularly Durkheim and Simmel) are often acknowledged in literature about network analysis, such analysis generally lacks a strong theoretical background utilising or integrating relevant sociological theorists.

Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994, p. 1413) argue that the network perspective has provided inadequate conceptualisations of both human agency and of culture. They also developed an in-depth critique of the relationship between structure, agency and culture in network theory. They note that impact of culture and identity upon the formation of, and changes in, networks is often excluded from network analysis. Whilst some network analysis has attempted to consider the meaning of networks, “meaning” is often “tacked on” and restricted to stories of individual actors.

Emirbayer and Goodwin argue that whilst culture and structure can be viewed as intertwined and difficult to separate, there is a “sense in which cultural discourses, narratives, and idioms are also analytically autonomous with respect to network patterns of social relationships” (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994, p. 1438 italics in original). They argue for the cultural and symbolic aspects be conceptualised as “cultural structures” (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994, p. 1438).

Cultural structures (e.g. norms, idioms and ideologies) affect social structures in pervasive ways. Just because “culture and social structure are mutually constitutive” does not mean they cannot be “untied”. In fact, it has been claimed that untying social and cultural structures allows for better analysis of both. Cultural structures are significant and crucial for analysis because, as with network structures, they both constrain and enable individuals to act (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994, p. 1439). Actors shape structures and structures shape actors. For example, because of cultural factors (entrenched sexism and racism), until recent years it would have been almost impossible for anyone other than a white male to be president of the United States of America, regardless of what networks they belonged to, and their position within them.
Ultimately Emirbayer and Goodwin conclude that whilst network analysis provides a very useful means for converting metaphorical networks into something more concrete and useful, its limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations can be addressed however, by combining network analysis with other discursive analysis which sheds light on norms and ideologies. Whilst this unties culture and structure at the analysis level, the two analyses need to be brought back together within a sociological framework.

2.5.2 Overuse of “networks”

In terms of community development, Giarchi (2001) provides a turgid critique of the use and over-use of the concept of “networks” in social work and community development literature. He believes the concept has become a synonym for “community” and he finds this problematic. Giarchi also cites Bulmer (1987, in G) who expressed concern that network analysis techniques were becoming ends in themselves and far too over-elaborate. Giarchi (2001, p. 66) further adds that:

There is also a danger that when need is addressed or empowerment is raised in social care or community development contexts, ‘network’ is wheeled in to solve everything, like the old tin effigies of the gods that were hoisted onto the state to rescue the afflicted in Greek theatres.

The main crux of Giarchi’s argument is that the metaphor “network” cannot be used to discuss two different things – formal and informal organisations. Giarchi argues that networks should be used only to discuss formal organisations (e.g. businesses, statutory serves, voluntary agencies, and faith based organisations). The metaphor, “social circle” is the preferred one for use with informal groups such as between family members, friends, neighbours or acquaintances. He contends that “appending ‘social’ to ‘networks’ does not take from the fact that networks are inherently systemic, uniform and designer-led, whereas social action is affective, self-led and typically spontaneous” (Giarchi, 2001, p. 67).
Within the community context there is such blur and crossover between different layers of relationships, involving citizens and formal organisations alike, that it is increasingly difficult to define who is “in” and “out” of a circle and where the circle joins to, or becomes a formal network. It seems an unnecessary confusion to add the element of “social circle” to what is a tool for examining structure, whatever that structure may be, that is, a network. However, I will hold this tension and other criticisms of network theory and analysis in mind, and consider them again in the discussion chapter.

2.6 Chapter Summary

2.6.1 Social work, social networks and community work
This chapter has explored some of the foundational concepts used throughout the thesis. The critical social work approach has been overviewed and from this perspective, the core value of social justice, and the person-in-environment perspective have been defined. Various uses of the term “network” were overviewed, along with social network analysis. Network thinking was introduced and described as an approach to practice that recognises the complex, intertwining links and interdependencies between actors of all kinds in society. Network thinking provides means of understanding the ways in which small interactions are connected to large ones, that is, how the micro, meso and macro are intertwined and influence and shape each other. Network thinking is a way of understanding the “person-in-environment”.

A discussion of the ways in which network ideas have been integrated into social work and particularly social work with communities was presented. It is within this area of practice, community work, that attention is now focused. It is my belief that, building upon the work of authors such as Trevillion and Gilchrist, there is exciting potential to further explore the use of network thinking and social network analysis in community development practice.
2.6.2 Identifying a gap in social work knowledge

Whilst a network focus in social work practice with communities is interesting and appears potentially useful, there does not appear to be any research currently available on the processes and efficacy of such approaches. An exploratory case study, involving the application of network thinking to social work practice would therefore be a useful contribution to social work knowledge in this area.

In this thesis I am interested in considering what happens when network thinking unfolds in practice and ways of measuring and exploring what happens. I am interested in examining the use of social network analysis as one method for understanding the process and outcomes of the network focused practice.

Perhaps any aspect of social work practice might have been selected to “try out” a network approach to practice, however I have focussed my attention on community work. This is because of my own personal and professional interest in community work as social work, and also because there has been some exciting foundational work in terms of network ideas in this area.

Before moving on to a specific research focus and questions, some further foundational concepts need to be discussed and defined. The following chapter provides an in-depth discussion of “community” and “community work”. It is argued that community work from a social work perspective requires a strong value base, and that whilst network thinking provides useful tools for community work, it does not necessarily have an overt value base or philosophical frame. A strengths-based approach to community development (also known as “asset-based community development”) is critiqued and selected because of its empowerment and social justice aims. The way in which network concepts might be integrated into asset-based community development practice and research is overviewed. It is argued that integrating a more comprehensive and overt network focus into asset-based community development practice and research goes some way to addressing the limitations of each approach.
Chapter Three

Communities, Community Work and Network Ideas
Chapter Three
Communities, Community Work, and Network Ideas

As discussed in the previous chapter, the critical social work approach embraced in this thesis requires an ongoing consideration of agency, culture, social structure and the interplay between these. An overview of social network theory and analysis was also explored in chapter two and it was argued that network thinking provides a useful way of enacting social work’s person-in-environment understanding.

Whilst network thinking and social network analysis can potentially lend stronger structural and relational understanding to social work practice, a critical approach requires consideration and interpretation of phenomenon from a range of perspectives where possible. Therefore the critical approach taken in this thesis requires more than a network focus on structural issues. A consideration of individual agency and culture requires paying attention to more discursive elements. That is, how are communities and the people and groups within them constructed? How are they spoken and written about? And, how might these constructions impact, or be impacted by social network structure?

One approach to community work that encourages thinking about how communities are constructed, and how they construct themselves via discourse is a strengths-based approach, often called asset-based community development (ABCD). Strengths approaches align generally with social work values and ideals, and the framing of communities in terms of their “positives” makes the approach attractive to communities. ABCD also has a strong focus on network building and mobilising, thus there would appear to be some common ground between ABCD and the network approaches to community development described by authors such as Trevillion (1992, 1999), Gilchrist (2004, 2009) and Hardcastle et. al. (2004).

This chapter provides a critique of strengths-based practice, and presents a rationale for the selection of this philosophical underpinning to the LNC project. A discussion of how a network approach (using social network analysis) and the strengths
approach to community work articulated in the ABCD model might be integrated becomes the focus of the second half of the chapter. It is argued that the integration of a strong network focus into ABCD has potential in terms of being able to practice critically and to research the efficacy and outcomes of this practice.

In order to develop these ideas this chapter provides an examination of the concepts of “community” and “community work”. These key concepts require in-depth exploration, as they underpin the entire thesis and the social work practice that sits at its centre. Before moving into the exploration, a brief rationale for framing community work as a type of social work practice is provided.

### 3.1 Community work as social work.

The relationship between social work and community work, in particular community development, needs to be briefly overviewed in order to provide a rationale for the claim that community work is a mode of social work practice. It is acknowledged that there is ongoing debate about whether community work is part of social work practice, or a separate profession (Mendes, 2008). I argue that while community work is not the dominant form of social work practice, it has been a core aspect of the profession since its beginnings, and a focus on community is one of the defining features of the profession.

Social work as a professional activity originated in the second half of the 19th Century from two separate, but related developments. In the United States of America (USA) “friendly visiting” organised by the Charity Organisation Society, was the forerunner of what is now known as social casework (Hare, 2004). At a similar time, the settlement house movement began in London at Toybee Hall in 1885, and this idea was taken up by Jane Addams in the USA who established Hull House in Chicago. Hull House focused on community, education and social change activities, and has come to represent the social action and community work aspects of current social work practice (Hare, 2004).
Whilst both the case work and community work elements of social work continue to characterise the profession, the case work end of the continuum (working with individuals, or small networks such as families or small groups) has been the dominant area of social work practice during the past half century (Hare, 2004; Lynn, 2006). The focus on the more micro levels of practice has had the effect of relegating the consideration of, and intervention in, community and more broadly ‘society’ to the sidelines of social work practice (Lynch & Forde, 2006; Lynn, 2006; McDonald, 2006). Indeed some social work authors make a clear cut distinction between social work and community work based on individual versus collective value orientations, rather than viewing community work as a type of social work practice (Jordon 2004 in Lynch & Forde, 2006).

To counter these arguments it can be claimed that the profession of social work has rarely held a monopoly over any specific functions or roles that the profession itself identifies as ‘social work roles’ (Idit Weiss-Gal, 2008). Whilst community work is a less dominant mode of practice, it remains part of social workers practice and social work university curricula in Australia; often expressed in the form of community development, social development, social and political action and social policy. This provides a broader outlook for social workers to contextualise the work they do. Payne (2005) discusses this idea when he argues that community work can be framed in terms of social work practice, yet it “is a distinct form of practice, which calls upon a theoretical and knowledge base that is more sociological and less psychological than casework and group work.” (Payne, 2005, p. 50).

The sociological viewpoint is a crucial one for critical social work practice. Holding fast to the links between people and the communities they are part of, ensures the “person in environment” imperative (as discussed in section 2.1.4) is retained. Such an understanding is what differentiates social work from other professions. Hardcastle, Powers and Wenocur, (2004, p. 50) are insightful in stating that “Communities are always the context, if not always the content, of social work practice”.
3.2 An exploration of community

This section presents a critique of the term “community” and discusses some of the implications for practice of various definitions of the term. The tensions between the seemingly popular idea of cohesive, inclusive, homogenous community; and other conceptualisations that place value on plurality, heterogeneity and “difference” are discussed. Finally a conceptualisation of community, using network ideas, is outlined. It is this definition which underpins the community work practice which is the focus of the case study.

3.2.1 What is community?

The concept of community is a powerful yet ephemeral one. In the Australian context community evokes wide ranging and generally “feel-good” notions related to a sense of belonging, safety, friendly neighbourhoods, families and shared public spaces. There is an air of nostalgia conjured by the notion of community, and perhaps a longing for connection with others.

Yet defining community has long been problematic, as there is no shortage of conceptualisations available. In the 1950’s, American sociologist George Hillery Jnr., found 94 different definitions of community which encompassed 16 different concepts (Hillery Jr, 1955). What has become apparent in the field of community work however, is that not providing a clear definition of community at the outset of community projects can have adverse effects on the outcomes of such undertakings and negatively impact the communities involved (Kadushin, Lindholm, Ryan, Brodsky, & Saxe, 2005; Morrissey, 2006). If social workers are unclear about what they are working with, how can they plan their work, and understand the processes, impacts and effects of the community programs?

When reviewing social work literature on community work it becomes clear that aside from noting that there are communities of differing kinds (communities of location or communities of interest), there is little discussion of what a community actually is in many community work texts. Some exceptions to this are Fellin (2001) and Hardcastle, Powers and Wenocur (2004) (who draw upon Fellin), and
argue that “the elusiveness of the concept of community derives from its multidimensionality” (Hardcastle, et al., 2004, p. 91). Fellin (2001, p.1) provides a useful, definition to begin the consideration of community. Communities are considered to be:

Social units with one or more of the following three dimensions:
1. A functional spatial unit meeting sustenance needs
2. A unit of patterned interaction
3. A symbolic unit of collective identification

This definition is useful because it is not emotive, or normative, it does not imply there is something inherently good or worthy about communities, they are just social units. This “neutral” conceptualisation of community is important. It draws awareness to the ways in which the word “community” has been embraced by groups with vastly different ideologies for purposes ranging from empowerment to social control. Community has become the target of a wide range of conflicting practices and interventions. Therefore, defining “the community” in our community work becomes crucial.

3.2.2 Critically examining assumptions about community

A critical perspective encourages social workers to consider the multiple ways in which any concept is understood, and unpack or deconstruct the assumptions behind these understandings. In an attempt to further understand “community” in social work practice, Margaret Lynn (2006) examines the literature (she does not specify which literature, however it appears to be social and community work literature) to understand how competing discourses of community are used politically. Lynn identified ten discourses of community and outlines how each discourse offers varying roles for social work. These discourses are normative understandings of community, that is, constructions of what community “should be” (dependent upon the author’s political views). It is when particular understandings of community are embraced without consideration of whose construction of community is guiding the work, that community workers run the risk of simply perpetuating oppressive power structures (Morrissey, 2006).
Lynn’s (2006) understanding of community discourses varies from the purely economic rationalist to the social democratic. The economic rationalist construction is one in which the state has devolved social responsibility to the individual and community is merely the site for economic transactions. Roles for social workers in such a construction of community would be restricted to those of private therapists. At the other extreme is the advanced social democratic construction of “radical communitarianism” (Lynn, 2006, p. 116). Radical communitarianism embraces a “new democratic politics of community” (Lynn, 2006, p. 116) which values social justice, cooperation, altruism, diversity and difference. The structures that divide people are challenged and differences between people are constructed as opportunities for “a new approach to democratic process rather than a problem that democracy must overcome” (Lynn, 2006, p. 116). Contradictions in logic between community values and market logic are acknowledged and community is protected from economic rationality. The state has a role in working with communities to assist in their development, as this must not be left to the market, because the market has no concern for social exclusion. Social work roles in this discourse are those of activist, facilitator of dialogue, negotiator and community development worker (Lynn, 2006).

The way in which social work has defined (or not defined) community has greatly impacted the way in which social workers have worked with communities. The impact of ill-defined or uncritical use of the term ‘community’ is illustrated to devastating effect in an article concerning the delivery of health services to Aboriginal people in Australia’s Northern Territory (NT). Morrissey (2006) traces the etymology of the term community to point out a long term and frequent confusion in sociological literature “in relation to the concept of community between ‘what is (empirical description)’ and ‘what the sociologist feels it should be (normative prescription)”’ (Morrissey, 2006, p. 233 all emphasis in original).

Morrissey criticises the “continuous and unreflective use of the term” community (and related processes and concepts) by policy makers and health providers (Morrissey, 2006, p. 232). If community is not defined, then community
development, community-capacity, community-controlled, community-based (and all the other “community” terms) are meaningless, or worse still, used to reproduce unequal social arrangements as the victims of social process are blamed for not having the capacity, or enough social capital to correct them. Morrissey argues that communities can best be defined as a process operating through networks rather than place (Morrissey, 2006).

If social workers are unaware of the way community is constructed within the organisations (or within the communities) in which we work, the professions values of social justice are at risk. Of particular concern to some social work authors is the community of neo-liberal ideology. These concerns are evocatively summarised by Burkett and McDonald (2005, p. 177) who claim that the community of the neo-liberal project is:

a seductive community that binds people to particular identities and commitments seemingly beyond the sphere of the state, and ostensibly ‘free’. It is the community invoked by governments engaged in the silent and insidious surrender of public responsibility for human well-being. It is the abandoned community of the urban fringes and the decimated community of neo-colonialism drawn into a politics of self-regulation and discipline. That community is the community of the New Right and the World Bank, one which does little to address the real effects of economic globalisation, and which offers little hope for just and sustainable futures.

Related to the notion of being bound to “particular identities” in order to belong to particular communities, is the work of Iris Young. Young (1990) provides an important critique of ‘the ideal of community’ as one that is presented as a remedy for, or opposition to, the notion of individualism. However the desire for community can come at the expense of those considered “others”. Young (1990, p. 227) argues:

The ideal [of community] expresses a desire for the fusion of subjects with one another which in practice operates to exclude those with whom the group
does not identify. The ideal of community denies and represses social difference.

Community can reproduce disadvantage and oppression if the concept is not used critically. The “warm and fuzzy” ideals of belonging, support and kindness can mask conscious or unconscious desires for homogeneity, and the exclusion of people in minority groups. This exclusion may serve to force people to become more like the dominant community in order to fit in and “belong”. Diversity is lost in the attempt to gain the social unity of cohesive community.

A postmodern understanding of community provides further fuel for unsettling any assumptions about being able to determine exactly what community is. Community as that to which one affiliates may be spoken of as one of interest, of subject identity, or of geographical location, but it is also an imagined community. Leonard (1997, p. 155) draws upon Bauman (1992, p. xix) to explain that:

> It is the discourse of community, its practices of identity formation and its production of a sense of belonging which, under postmodern conditions, is sought as a replacement to that belief in universal reason and progress which no longer seems convincing. Communities are imagined insofar as ‘belief in their presence is their only brick and mortar, and imputation of importance their only source of authority’.

From this viewpoint, communities are constructed; they come into being by evoking, identifying or acknowledging them, and by identifying and locating oneself as part (or not part) of them. As will be discussed later, far from being an idea that undermines community work, this notion of imagined community can be a very powerful one.

In this thesis, no assumptions are made about community being something intrinsically valuable or good. Whilst recognising a certain longing for notions of trust, togetherness and unity among some people in geographic areas, I appreciate
Young’s (1990) critique of the unconscious homogenising desires many people hold, and that are given expression in terms of “community”.

In terms of normative ideas, I prefer the idea of what Lynn (2006) has called “radical communitarianism”. As with Young’s “politics of difference”, Lynn’s radical communitarianism, places value upon difference and diversity, and encourages dialogue in and across the various networks people are part of. There is no forced sense of unity or sameness, but rather an ability to open up and maintain dialogue and channels for information, opportunities and resources to flow.

3.2.3 The definition of community used in this thesis

A combination of Morrissey’s previously defined concept of communities as “processes operating through networks” (Morrissey, 2006) and Fellin’s (2001) previously discussed definition will be used in this thesis. I am defining communities as: Social units comprised of processes operating through networks, with one or more of the following three dimensions:

1. A functional spatial unit meeting sustenance needs
2. A unit of patterned interaction
3. A symbolic unit of collective identification.

This definition provides a good starting point, because it does not contain value laden assumptions about the “good” of communities, nor does it make any claims about people needing to be united or homogenous. This definition also provides the room needed to explore the different kinds of process and the different kinds of networks that combine to form different kinds of community. Some communities (and/or the relationships within their networks) can be considered empowered or empowering, others disempowered. This brings the discussion to the concept of power.

3.2.4 The concept of power

The concept of power in social work theory has been greatly enriched by the work of the late philosopher, Michel Foucault. In discussing Foucault’s work, Fook and
Askeland (2006 p. 44 quoting Foucault 1990, p. 93) provide the following understanding of the links to critical practice:

Power is not structural or an institution in itself. Power is not something people have or can acquire, but something they exercise. ‘[I]t is the name one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society’. It is everywhere, and only exists in relationships, on micro as well as macro levels. How power is exercised is often disguised, and we therefore have to hunt for it using a process of critical reflection to help reveal it.

There are many ways to conceptualise power. It is important to be clear about what is meant by power if terms such as “empowerment” and “disempowered” are to be used. Foucault views power as an action, something to be enacted or exercised. Power comes into being through exercising it. In this way, power is not an object, or the reward of action, power is an action. Foucault considers power be neither an intrinsically positive or negative action. It is fluid and always being negotiated and renegotiated. It is dynamic and shifting, as opposed to being statically located within particular places and within particular structures. Institutions are not in themselves powerful, but rather “the people within them can be either directly authorised to enact powerfully, such as judges, or they take it upon themselves to act as authorities” (Ford, 2009, p. 18).

The important core of Foucault’s understanding of power lies in the possibility for dialogic spaces to emerge (Falzon, 1998). “Power is not fixed, and neither are relations of power, it is dynamic and there is the potential to change and be influential” (Ford, 2009, p. 18). Power can potentially be exercised by anyone. It is the emphasis on potentiality which needs attention. As discussed by Bill Healy and Jan Fook (1994) it is important to consider that Foucault’s conceptualisation of power can be used to empower both “more” and “less” powerful groups. Healy and Fook (1994 cited in Parker, Fook, & Pease, 1999, p. 154) identify three important ideas requiring consideration when thinking through the emancipatory possibilities of Foucault’s analysis of power:
1. In order to develop strategies to contest current dominant discourses and practices, we clearly need to understand the many ways in which discourses interrelate with other discourses, and with the power relationships which both produce and are produced by the discourses.

2. A multifaceted analysis, such as Foucault’s, suggests many possible points of choice and resistance.

3. As this analysis recognises the presence of contradictions, uncertainty and changeability it might better be able to deal with the specific practice dilemmas faced by social workers.

Empowerment, from this perspective, has resonance with a strengths philosophy, or approach to practice. A strengths approach (as detailed later) focuses on contesting oppressive discourses through focusing on alternative, more empowering ones which acknowledge the achievements, strengths and assets of people, groups and communities (McCashen, 2005). From this basis people can become empowered and mobilised to make choices and change through identifying (often local) points of resistance.

I will now consider how critical approaches to community work, with such a definition of power, have been conceptualised in social work literature and practice.

### 3.2.5 Communities and difference: Critical approaches to community work

Community work is perhaps the field of social work most associated with radical social work and critical sociological theory. Mendes (2009) traces the origins of contemporary critical social work back to social work pioneer, Jane Addams and her focus on the social basis of individual problems. Other than a handful of notable exceptions, it was not until the 1970’s that social work as a profession became more involved in left-wing critiques of society and organised efforts to change it.

Fook (2003, p. 125) has also described the development of critical social work, noting important radical critiques of society and social work from authors such as Bailey and Brake (1975), and Corrigan and Leonard (1978). Radical approaches however, were subsequently critiqued on the grounds that they “may also be viewed
as recommending a utilitarian approach – that is, using people as a means to an end, rather than respecting the ends and wants of individuals” (Mendes, 2009b, p. 22). By emphasising the links between the personal and the political, important theoretical additions to critical social work were developed in the 1980’s by feminist writers (e.g. Dominelli & McLeod, 1982), and in the 1990’s by structural social work writers (e.g. Mullaly, 1993).

As Mendes (2009, pp. 24-25) argues the critical perspective was characterised by two major themes: the structural basis of personal and social problems, which included an awareness that many problems are not amenable to individual, family or sub cultural solutions; and secondly, the need to work at both the personal (through individual consciousness-raising that connects private troubles with structural sources) and political levels to challenge oppressive and inequitable structures (Thorpe & Petruchenia 1990; Healy 1993; Mullaly 1993).

It was however, the incorporation of “contemporary”, theories that has provided a different analysis of power which in turn provided opportunities for more creative critical practice. There is some interesting theory in relation to contemporary critical practice with communities, much of it drawn from practice with communities (for example see Butcher, Banks, & Henderson, 2007; Ledwith, 2005), yet there appears to be little in-depth research exploring the processes, efficacy and outcomes of this theory in practice.

In 1999 Mary Lane explored the enacting of a “postmodernism of resistance” in community development work, using vignettes from community development projects in Western Sydney (New South Wales, Australia) to develop her ideas (Lane, 1999, p. 135). The postmodernism of resistance Lane writes about is similar to the idea adopted in this thesis (chapter two), that views postmodernism as a continuation of (rather than break with) modern critical theory. “[K]eeping some of the modern within the postmodern” (Lane, 1999, p. 137), an idea reminiscent of Habermas’ defence of modernity as an unfinished project (1987 cited in Lane, 1999). Lane (1999, p.146) comments that in community development work, this means that:
The rationale for the work is to challenge injustices and seek changes which will benefit disadvantaged groups of people. The approach reflects a postmodernist openness and uncertainty; responsiveness to context; resistance to imposed agendas and values; respect for diversity and celebration of difference; and rejection of arrogant professionalism which privileges the skills and knowledge of a few over lived experience.

Lane acknowledged that this kind of process oriented community work is under siege, as outcome driven, top-down agendas come with funding for community projects. A decade later, not a lot has changed in this regard. This is why Lane has framed this kind of critical postmodern community work as an example of resistance or counter-practice.

Lane (1999, pp. 140-146) elaborates on four aspects of community development practice from this perspective. These are paraphrased here:

1. Listening to Context:
   Using a range of methods (and perhaps creating your own) to meet community members and learn about the community.

2. Resisting imposed agendas:
   Top-down agendas, often imposed by funding sources, can be narrow and conservative in their nature. If the community has different ideas about the focus of the community work, negotiation is required. This can mean losing or refusing funding from sources with particular agendas.

3. Holding on to our ethics: Difference and community:
   This requires the ability to respond to the context whilst holding on to our personal ethics. Lane acknowledges the inherent tension in this proposition. That is, can there be enough agreement in terms of everyone’s personal ethics so that agreement on aims and purposes can be achieved? Lane addresses this tension by drawing our attention to feminist authors who have deconstructed the modernist/postmodernist binary. Community is
understood as fragile and temporary but also potentially emancipatory, and negotiation is key.

Emphasis on a subjective, negotiated community, rather than belief in community as an objective reality (which then imposes identity upon people), allows people to construct their own identity and promotes the inclusion of previously excluded voices in the decision making. The tensions and conflicts associated with recognition of diverse values and interests are then not denied, but rather acknowledged and made part of the negotiating process. It is difficult, painstaking work, but as community development workers have found, such work increases the chances of finding common meanings, even where there has been much conflict (Mahtani, 1996, p. 51-51). The search for common meaning lives with dissent, and grows from it, rather than subduing it (Lane, 1999, p. 145).

4. **The “art” of community work:**

Drawing on the work of Elphick (1980) Lane uses the concept of the “cultural animatuer” who responds to context, respects differences, and focuses on network-building community work. They do this by seeking “change through relationship building, encouraging people to meet, to form networks and to express their needs, desire and aspirations through creative forms of expression” (Lane, 1999, p. 146).

Lane’s community work research was undertaken over a decade ago, and as Mendes (2009) discusses, there remains very little in the way of research about critical approaches to social work practice. Mendes advocates the need for case studies of critical practice in order to add to social work’s knowledge base about this kind of practice.

Before moving on to examine some of the available research about community work generally, the concept of “culture” needs to be addressed, particularly in relation to the notion of “difference” that has just been touched upon throughout the chapter.
3.2.6 The concept of culture

When discussing the concept of “culture”, Ford (2009, p. 17) makes the point that: “Discussion about race, ethnicity and culture together with racism, and culturalism, is replete with semantic slippage – conflation and ambiguity abound.”

The concept of culture is used in this thesis because it is how most participants in the LNC project have discussed differences within the neighbourhood, and this is explored further in chapter five. I acknowledge that by focusing on culture and asserting that there are cultural differences, as well as facilitating a community project that has aims concerning cross-cultural relationships, I am also participating in the construction of difference.

As Quinn (2009, p. 98) acknowledges, “[t]he boundaries of cultural groups, where they begin and end, are blurred and changing”. In recognition of this, in this thesis I am using a broad definition of culture as “the play of signifying practices; the idiom in which social meaning is constituted, appropriated, contested and transformed; the space where the entanglement of subjectivity, identity and politics is performed” (Brah 1996, p. 234 in Ford, 2009, p. 28).

Whilst there is an array of cultures in the neighbourhood I am primarily focused on the largest two cultural groups in the area, that is, Aboriginal people in Bagot and Minnarama communities, and non-Aboriginal people in the rest of the area. I recognise that I am grouping together many smaller cultural groups within these two major cultural groups, and by articulating “Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal” I am discursively creating difference.

I have done this however because within the suburb of Ludmilla these differences are striking and have significant consequences. These are detailed in chapter five. The differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents are visibly obvious (that is, people generally live on one side of a large fence or another, and people on either side of the fence have “physical markers”, such as skin colour, that are different from one another, the housing and “street scapes” are also very different on either side of the fence). It can also be argued that these two cultural groups
generally hold dramatically different worldviews and they generally sit at different extremes of the socio-economic spectrum.

With a preliminary understanding of the concept of culture explained, and the need for more research about critical community work that embraces difference outlined, the discussion turns now to what is known about community work in terms of research.

3.3 Research about community work

A review of research literature in the area of community level projects reveals very little from a social work perspective, and even less from a critical social work perspective. The available research mostly comes from a range of related disciplines and the projects documented tend to fall into two broad categories; single issue community work, and more holistic, non-issue specific community development. Because the LNC Project documented in this thesis concerns more holistic, generalist community work, the single issue research is only considered briefly. Two main things become apparent in considering community work research. Often the research is descriptive only, with little analytical depth. Secondly, findings tend to indicate the value of enhancing and building social networks that are non-hierarchical, flexible, supportive and strengths-based.

3.3.1 Single-issue community work

There are multiple examples of research concerning single issue community work projects that are applicable to social work. For example; Taylor, Cheers, Weetra and Gentle (2004) report on South Australian research into Aboriginal understandings of family violence in order to identify and devise holistic solutions at the community level. Other examples include projects to increase family economic well-being (Allen & Miller, 2010); reduce suicide (McCormack, Mohammed, & O'Brien, 2001); develop culturally sensitive curriculum (Arnold & Fernandez-Gimenez, 2007); and to develop a supportive on-line community in Sweden (Ferlander & Timms, 2007). The analysis in such research is generally focused on the impact of the intervention.
upon the “issue” at hand and upon understanding the extent to which defined aims and objectives were met (e.g., did suicide rates fall?).

Greenaway and Witten (2006, p. 144) call single focus community projects “community action” projects rather than community development (which they consider more generalist and holistic in focus and approach). Greenaway and Witten undertook a meta-analysis of ten community action project case studies in Aotearoa, New Zealand. One of their key findings was that “fundamental to all ten projects was the importance of building relationships that are transformative” (Greenaway & Witten, 2006, pp. 152, italics in original.) They also found that reflective practices (when used), contributed to the development of the community action projects by building knowledge used for planning, problem solving, information gathering, decision making, reviewing and documenting work. While useful in a general sense, it is more appropriate in the context of this thesis to look at the research around more generalist community work.

3.3.2 Generalist community work

Over past decades, generalist community work projects (most often called community development programs) have often aimed at creating, building, strengthening, or in enhancing a community in broad ways. Research about generalist community programs ranges from reviews of government community capacity building strategies (e.g. Funnell, Rogers, & Scougall, 2004), through to evaluations of specific local initiatives (e.g. Cameron & Gibson, 2005; Campbell, Wunungmurra, & Nyomba, 2007; O'Meara, Chesters, & Han, 2004). A review of this research brings up three main issues. Firstly, there is a lack of in-depth research analysing processes and outcomes in community work. Secondly, it appears that focus on building new networks and strengthening existing ones plays a key role in the success of community work programs. Lastly, the nature of relationships between the various stakeholders has a significant impact on the program’s success; the more equal and power-sharing these relationships are, the better for communities.

In an article which discusses the need for a strong research base in Aboriginal community development health interventions (in Australia, New Zealand and
Canada) Campbell, Pyett and McCarthy (2007) provide insight into the difficulties of locating useful community development research. One major issue is that many projects are defined by their creators as “community development”, yet are not strictly speaking, community development projects. Of 335 studies identified in their literature search, “only 17 were identified as having an explicit empowerment objective” which met the authors criteria for consideration as community development (Campbell, et al., 2007, p. 306).

In terms of methodology, two of the 17 pieces of research were classed as single-community action research; only one used a pre and post evaluation method covering 10 communities (with four control communities). The remaining 14 studies were primarily formative or process evaluations and Campbell et al. conclude that in general “the ‘level of evidence’ described in these papers is low” (2007, pp. 308-309).

After their review of the methodological issues, Campbell et al. identify a number of factors which appear critical to the success of the community development work with an empowerment focus in Aboriginal settings. Some of these include: formation of local committees and active involvement of these in all aspects of the community development process; development of trusting and respectful partnerships between community members and others over time; and availability and access to resources from outside of the community (Campbell et al. 2007, p. 311). Although Campbell et al. do not explicitly state this, the success factors they identify are concerned with social relationships: the building and maintenance of relationships, the quality of the relationships and access to opportunity and resources that social relationships can bring.

An example of the lack of analytical depth discussed above is demonstrated in Cameron & Gibson’s (2005) report providing an account of a two year asset-based community development (ABCD) project in Victoria. Whilst this report provides interesting learning in terms of events and activities, it is essentially an outline of the project. Analysis of processes and the impacts or effects on the community itself (other than participation in activities) is not discussed. Importantly, the authors note
towards the end of the paper that “in retrospect, one crucial aspect of this approach to community and economic development that we had underestimated was the importance of building strong relationships with local institutions such as councils, churches and unions” (Cameron & Gibson, 2005, p. 283). It appears the lack of network building had serious effects on the sustainability of the various initiatives set up during the project life span.

Munford, Sanders and Andrew (2003) document a strengths-based community project that used a participatory action research framework in New Zealand. Their findings also stressed the importance of building strong family and community networks (both enhancing existing networks and providing foci for creating new supportive networks), and found that the strengths-based philosophy assisted workers in their network building practice, and in their research. In a similar vein, Tesoriero, Boyle and Enright (2010) report on a strengths-based project in South Australia called the ‘Community Connections Project’ which focused on creating supportive networks and acknowledging and celebrating the diversity and multiculturalism in the Onkaparinga area. At the time of publication of their article (2010) the project was in its second year. The authors believed the project was contributing to a “stronger community which more fully embraces social inclusion” (Tesoriero, et al., 2010, p. 37). They argue that their “approach enables outcomes to be sustainable because it strengthens the social relations within communities and uses the strengths within communities.” (Tesoriero, et al., 2010).

Similarly in terms of networks, research involving an analysis of two American “Comprehensive Community Initiative” case studies (from the Neighbourhood and Family Initiative project in Milwaukee and Hartford), Chaskin (2001) found two different approaches to community capacity building. Firstly, reinforcing currently existing networks of community organisations, and secondly, developing new organisations in the neighbourhood to “build capacity”. Chaskin (2001, p. 318) ultimately found that:

Community capacity tends to be spoken of as a unitary thing, as a generalised characteristic of a neighbourhood social system. But it resides in a
community’s individuals, formal organisations, and the relational networks tying them to each other and to the broader systems of which they are a part. Strategies for building capacity must therefore focus on these components.

O’Meara, Chesters and Han (2004) discuss the evaluation of a three year community capacity building project in a town southeast of Melbourne (Victoria, Australia). Their evaluation is based upon data from 24 resident surveys, a review of the local newspaper, observation and interviews (they do not state how many). Whilst they acknowledge their survey sample numbers were “disappointing”, there is valuable information in their evaluation. The “lessons learned” section is particularly useful, and provides a good argument for a critical approach that strengthens local networks.

The project was marketed as an example of best practice in community development and achieved a high profile throughout Australia and made strong linkages with external bodies. While the project operated in a very professional manner, it is clear in hindsight that its operation could have worked more effectively if it had consistently engaged with a wider spectrum of the community. This could have been achieved through a participative process that helped local networks to be formed across like-minded and dissimilar groups, and encouraged more risk taking (O’Meara, et al., 2004, p. 138).

The authors also note that the project only really “came alive” after the threat of a nearby prison being closed down. Residents rallied together to protest the closure, which in turn helped to foster a sense of belonging and community. This prompted O’Meara, et al. (2004, p. 139) to reflect that:

In retrospect, it may have been better if the project had encouraged small community groups to initiate programs that could be supported through the project ... Relatively modest funding may have been all that was required to encourage existing groups in the community to achieve great things.
Another key lesson was that the “requirement to join” the project, and thus feel committed and obligated to it, actually discouraged potential community participants. The authors thought perhaps smaller, discrete activities or projects would have been more interesting to people. Related to this was potential participants reluctance to become involved in a hierarchical structure which they felt in many ways mirrored the already existing power structures in the area (O’Meara, et al., 2004, p. 139).

There has been criticism of Australian federal, state and territory government-led community capacity building approaches and some of the assumptions behind them (Morrissey, 2006; Mowbray, 2005). For example, in his critical analysis of the Victorian government’s Community Capacity Building Initiative program, Mowbray (2005) argues that the program was seriously flawed and primarily served to promote the Victorian government rather than assist positive community growth. He does not critique the actual community projects, but rather the way in which the Victorian government “restrains their scope and rhetorically reconstructs their character and impact” (Mowbray, 2005, p. 259).

Research closer to home in the Northern Territory of Australia has demonstrated that a community project was salvaged only after a process of critical reflection changed practice in a remote Aboriginal community (Campbell, et al., 2007). Outlining The Child Growth Project in Gapuwiyak (North East Arnhem land, 600 km from Darwin, Northern Territory); Campbell discusses the way in which community development principles such as empowerment and social justice were talked about, but not actually used in practice. That is, whilst espousing participatory and inclusive ideas, each key phase of the project was actually defined and determined by non-Aboriginal health professionals. Campbell et al.’s (2007, p. 156) argument highlights the ways in which:

this reluctance to share power, together with the deeply embedded power inequalities that exist between non-Aboriginal health professionals and Aboriginal participants, limited the achievement of community action and empowerment outcomes.
However, after almost two years and a process of ongoing critical reflection, Aboriginal community members “were able to take control over implementing a strategy to improve child development”. The authors argue that whilst this was a significant achievement, “the full potential of the community development process was not realized” (Campbell, et al., 2007, p. 162).

Combined together these studies about community work interventions indicate that there is value in ‘network thinking’, that is, in enhancing and building local social networks. The available research also demonstrates the importance of respectful relationships and non-hierarchical structures, access to resources, and of critically reflecting upon practice.

### 3.3.3 Social capital concepts in community work research

In the introduction to their now classic community organising study, Gittell and Vidal (1998, p. 14) made the point that a “virtual industry of interest and action” has arisen from Putnam, Leornardi, & Nanetti’s (1993) social capital research in Italy and the United States. This research demonstrated links between the social and community infrastructure of a society, and economic development (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Gittell and Vidal’s comments were made over a decade ago, and subsequently there was a wave of international research attempting to measure and understand particular communities by examining bonding bridging and linking social capital, and considering the relationships between these types of social capital and outcomes such as crime rates, unemployment, social cohesion and inclusion (Jones in Walter, 2006, p. 318).

Since 1998, there has been a move towards understanding the ways in which stronger communities are “built” and social capital is “created” in research literature (Walter, 2006, p. 23). Some of this research has explored the impact of particular activities (such as sport, community gardens, internet and other adult education classes) on levels of social capital (for example; Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Walter, 2006).
Whilst providing an understanding of social capital creation in various contexts, these studies still tend to provide a “snap shot” of social capital, and its creation at a given point in time (generally after a particular program aimed at enhancing it). There appear to be few studies examining social capital or social networks both before and after a particular program aimed at increasing it. This problem was stated back in 1998 when Gittell and Vidal noted that while there is “increasing recognition of the potential of social capital and social network frameworks in community work, there is little research evidence of what occurs when these frameworks are put into practice” (Gittell & Vidal, 1998, p. 13).

Gittell and Vidal made a substantial contribution to the community work evidence base with their 1998 publication documenting their research into the large scale community development program, *Local Initiatives Support Corporation* (LISC) in the Northeast, Midwest and West Coast of the United States of America. This project was primarily concerned with housing issues in low-income areas. The project attempted to use community organising as a strategy for community development.

With an overt focus on building bridging social capital (and a theoretical framework based in a large way on both Putnam’s ideas about bridging capital, and Granovetters “strength of weak ties” theory) the project sought to establish community development corporations (CDC’s) which “crossed racial, ethnic, and class lines and brought residents together with business owners and managers from local non-profit organisations” (Gittell & Vidal, 1998, p. 15). Coalitions of CDC’s were also encouraged in order to form bridging links across low income communities. Gittell and Vidal (1998, p. 20) found that:

One of the key deficiencies in many low-income communities is the lack of linkage to the larger metropolitan area opportunity structure, including financial, technical, social, and political resources. Following Granovetter’s logic suggests the efficacy of community development efforts, such as the LISC demonstration that help establish a network of weak ties to organisations and individuals outside the inner city from whom individuals
and organised groups in the inner city could garner resources (e.g. financial, personal, and professional expertise) and political support.

Gittell and Vidal also emphasise the usefulness of Ronald Burt’s (1992) sociological social networks construct of “structural holes” to community development work. Structural holes are the gaps in social networks that isolate one section of a network from another. They are the “yet to be made” weak ties in Granovetter’s frame or “individuals not benefiting from connecting with others and with resources that could be beneficial” (Gittell & Vidal, 1998, p. 20).

Burt’s (1992) analysis of structural holes is focused on the way in which they may be exploited by “entrepreneurs” who bridge the holes (or span divisions) to their advantage. Depending upon the motivations for the bridging, it can have positive or negative consequences. Gittell and Vidal recognise the significance of the theory of structural holes for sections of networks (be they individuals, small groups, or whole sections of communities) that are isolated from broader networks. They suggest that the challenge for community workers is to locate appropriate organisations or individuals to bridge the structural holes.

Gittell and Vidal argue that it is equally important to gain an understanding of how and why these structural holes exist in networks, as they may be being maintained or bridged by those who benefit from such a situation (1998, p. 21). Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital as a mechanism which produces and reproduces inequalities is useful in thinking this through further. As previously discussed, Bourdieu argued that social capital (of which social networks form the structure) can only be accumulated via investment of other forms of capital. Thus those who are disadvantaged in terms of economic and cultural capital are likely to have much more difficulty participating in actions that bridge structural holes between their networks and other networks with different resources (Bourdieu, 1986). The important issue for community workers is how bridging and linking networks can be created or fostered in such circumstances.
In summary, Gittell and Vidal (1998, p. 21) found that:

The greatest potential value of the LISC demonstration was its effort to strengthen the foundation on which community development depends by instituting processes to increase social capital bonds and bridges and fill structural holes in the community political and social space to the benefit of local residents.

3.3.4 Summarising the community work literature
What the existing research into community level projects has demonstrated is the following key things.

- Defining terms (such as “community”) is crucial.
- There is value in developing new bridging and linking networks and supporting the existing one’s that make up communities, and aiming to enhance, diversify and strengthen these networks.
- Strength and hope-based relationships that do not reproduce existing power structures are important for empowerment.

With these things in mind, the discussion moves on to consider various types of community work within social work practice, and then to the selection of the strengths-based community work model known as ABCD.

3.4 Selecting an approach to community work.

3.4.1 A range of approaches to community work
As with the term “community”, “community work” can mean many things. It is informed by a range of disciplines, and a range of macro-theories (Popple, 1995, p. 1). Community work generally refers to the “the range of methods used to work with groups of people who share a common identity or geographical location” (Healy, 2006, p. 247). The multitude of ways social workers work with, in, for, and alongside communities reflects the broad range of macro-theory from which community work approaches have been drawn. The previous discussion outlining
the various discourses of community provides an indication of how community, and thus community work may be conceptualised.

Typologies of community work have been developed by a range of authors since the 1960’s (for examples see Biddle & Biddle, 1965; Popple, 1995; Rothman, 1995; Rothman & Tropman, 1987; Taylor & Roberts, 1985; Twelvetrees, 2002). Many authors have also recognised that there is some overlap, a continuum, or phasing between the models they identify. Indeed, in the most recent edition of *Strategies of Community Intervention* Jack Rothman (1995, p. 27) informs the reader that:

> Over time I have come to deemphasize or soften the notion of ‘models’, which gives greater importance and internal validity to the approaches than seems warranted, and to accent the overlap and intermixture among approaches.

Ife (2002, p. 1. Italics in original) appears to agree with Rothman’s sentiment, and adds that there is confusion in both understandings and terminology in community work.

The terms *community work, community development, community organisation, community action, community practice* and *community change* are all commonly used, often interchangeably, and although there are some important differences between some or all of these terms, there is no agreement as to what these differences are, and no clear consensus as to the different shades of meaning that each implies

A full discussion of typologies of community work is beyond the realms of this particular thesis. Rather than getting entrenched in a discussion attempting to tease out the differences between the various models and conceptualisations of community work, I am simply acknowledging that there are a range of types of community work to chose from, each with difference emphasis in terms of who decides what and how.
Models or types of community work can perhaps best be thought of as signposts or points of reference that allow us to articulate what we are doing and how this relates to theory at any given time. In this respect Twelvetrees’ conceptualisation of community work is helpful. Twelvetrees (2002), has developed a “bipolar continuum” in order to make sense of “the messy reality of practice” which “only approximates in general terms to ‘ideal types’ of community work such as ‘social action’, ‘social planning’ and ‘community development’” (Twelvetrees, 2002, p. 2). Twelvetrees’ (2002, pp.2-3) bipolar continuum is set out as follows:

Community development approaches as opposed to social planning approaches.
- Self-help or service approaches as opposed to influence approaches.
- Generic community work as opposed to specialist community work.
- Concern about ‘process’ as opposed to concern about ‘product’.
- The enabling as opposed to the organising role of the worker.
- Community work in its own right as opposed to an approach or attitude in other forms of work.
- Unpaid community work as opposed to paid community work.

Community workers are asked to consider their practice in light of where they “sit” along these continuums at any particular time. Twelvetrees is noteworthy also for his pragmatic discussion of community work as a set of values, techniques and skills. He states that:

The values are to do with justice, respect, democracy, love, empowering and ‘getting a better deal’ for people who in some way are disadvantaged. The techniques are primarily to do with establishing relationships with such people (and others), understanding how they see the world and finding ways to assist them to help themselves which need not exclude, some of the time, doing things ‘for’ them (Twelvetrees, 2002, p. 9).

The type of community work outlined in this thesis can be generally understood as community development and community organising. It is grass-roots or “bottom-
This means that the project came from the neighbourhood and was managed by people in the neighbourhood. This process is detailed in chapter five.

3.4.2 Rationale for selecting an ABCD model to inform the LNC project.

Strengths approaches, (such as the ABCD approach adopted in this community development project), can be considered post-modern, or contemporary theory constructions of social work in that “they provide concrete ways of working with people that respect difference” (Allan, 2003, p. 45) and “can enhance the person-in-environment approach to practice” (Weick & Saleebey, 1998, p. 21). For this reason, and a range of other reasons discussed in this section, the ABCD model was selected as a suitable one for the LNC project.

First and foremost, ABCD appealed to people in the community network that oversaw the beginning project (this is explained further in chapter five). People were interested in highlighting assets and strengths, rather than reinforcing some perceptions of our area as a problem saturated one. I brought up the idea of ABCD and explained the philosophy behind it to the group. It was agreed to base our project upon this philosophical platform, but not to necessarily be rigid in adhering to all the elements of any one model.

The reason I discussed the ABCD model with people involved in LNC in the first instance was because it is based on strengths perspective, which resonates with my personal values and world view, and the critical social work approach adopted in this thesis. Because ABCD overtly aims to seek out, acknowledge and draw attention to assets, it appeared to be a good framework to consider the various discourses about Ludmilla and the various groups within the suburb. How was Ludmilla and the people within it constructed (by ourselves and others)? And, how would people like it to be constructed? I was also interested in the idea of working with people to identify differences as strengths.

Lastly, the ABCD model emphasises the importance of social networks. Relationships are considered the cornerstone of ABCD (as indeed they are in most community work) and strong understanding of community networks has the
potential to assist in locating, linking up and mobilising assets. These ideas are more fully explored later in the chapter.

3.4.3 Using a networked approach and ABCD together.

Given that I have previously discussed the networking approach to community work (as discussed by authors such as Gilchrist, 2000, 2004; 2009; Trevillion, 1992, 1999), it is important to clarify why this approach was not selected as the only community work approach or model. The main reason is precisely because the networking approach is not a model per se, but rather tool to be used in community development work. As Gilchrist (2004, p. 55) explains:

Networking itself is a neutral tool – it can be used for a variety of purposes – selfish, altruistic or simply to get things done. Networking for community development is obviously influenced by key values around equality, empowerment and participation.

Whilst a networking approach draws upon social network and social capital theory to assist in understanding or conceptualising community work, it does not necessarily provide detail about the values, or philosophical underpinning to a community work project. Most authors have however, chosen to frame networking approaches within generic community development values (particularly empowerment, and respect of difference), discussed above. These values are of course relevant to social work also. However the ABCD model provided not only an empowerment, participation and equality perspective, but quite concrete and relatively easy to understand concepts for a diverse community to work with. The ABCD approach provided a different set of tools or ideas with which to do the empowering. That is, highlighting and mobilising community and individual strengths, and paying attention to the discursive elements forming and impacting individuals, groups and communities.

In a review of Gilchrist’s second edition of The Well-Connected Community (2009), Curtis (2010) reminds the reader that social capital focused interventions often appear to improve the situation of particular individuals, but not of whole communities. Curtis agrees that Gilchrist makes good use of the social capital
concepts of bridging and linking capital (particularly in conjunction her use of complexity theory). However, he cautions that “it should be remembered that the value of networking has limitations – bridging and linking network ties can go some way to alleviating social and economic inequalities, but cannot cure them” (Curtis, 2010, p. 2).

Whilst networking approaches to community development cannot cure social and economic inequality across the board, in the world of globalised economics, I do not think any community level practice will change the ideological basis upon which nation states formulate the policies that impact the social and financial equality of all citizens. It is all too easy to be rendered cynical and useless in the face of such large scale ideological, political, cultural forces. At the very least, networking approaches and ABCD can provide a way for people, groups and communities to experience some empowering changes that provide a foundation for creating more empowering changes.

This brings the discussion back to the idea of power, and where it is located. Drawing from the work of McDonald (2006) the contemporary critical social work approach provides a useful way of thinking about social work’s social change agenda. As discussed previously, the contemporary theory lens views power as fluid, as something that can be exercised and present in all relationships from micro to macro. With this understanding of power, challenging and changing power dynamics on a micro level (including between ourselves and those we work with) is crucial and meaningful. Social inequalities are present and experienced in micro level interactions, and if community work can assist in changing some of these relationships, then we are, within that context, facilitating socially just change.

Rather than viewing the state as all powerful, and social work as a system of state control; contemporary theory asks us to examine the state and social work as “systems and sets of practices that produce the poor, the damaged, the excluded” (McDonald, 2006, p. 94). McDonald stresses that in a productive process there is always room for “unexpected and local contingencies” and social workers can take advantage of this and make room or “space” for creative practice. From this
perspective, social work that creates positive changes for people at local levels is important and relevant. Thinking in this way relieves workers of the potentially paralysing and disempowering “imperatives to create the type of all encompassing ‘fix’ implied by the grand narratives” (McDonald, 2006, p. 94).

As previously noted, Gilchrist has acknowledged that the networking approach is a tool, but it is a tool based on building and maintaining relationships. As in Foucault’s definition of power, I contend that it is within relationships that power lies, and if this tool is used within a critical social work framework as articulated throughout this thesis, then there is opportunity for significant and meaningful change within the relationships that make up communities.

Ultimately, Curtis (2010, p. 3) makes the suggestion that “the onus is on researchers advocating a network approach to demonstrate its outcomes for communities, as opposed to individuals, particularly the supposed benefits of bridging ties”.

No single approach to community work provides “all the answers”, and whilst I agree with Gilchrist’s (and other’s) argument that networking is an excellent tool for community work, there must be a philosophical basis that guides the networking principles. Strengths-based practice and a community work version of it (ABCD), are creative practices, holding explicit empowerment aims, and drawing upon “post theories” (Weick & Saleebey, 1998). ABCD stresses the importance of recognising, emphasising and linking up community assets rather than focusing on deficits which serve to label and disempower. Some of the strengths and weaknesses of the ABCD model are detailed in the following sections.

### 3.5 Integrating ABCD and social network theory and analysis

Much of the remainder of this chapter is directly quoted from the article *Exploring the potential of social network analysis in asset-based community development practice and research* (Ennis & West, 2010) which I developed with my primary supervisor, Dr West, during the writing of chapters two and three. The quotes from Ennis and West (2010) are formatted in the same style as all large quotes in the
“The asset-based community development (ABCD) model is a strengths-based approach to working with communities, which was articulated in the 1990’s, most famously by US authors, Kretzmann and McKnight (1993)” (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 404). The following sections of this chapter attempts to do two main things. Firstly, to briefly explore the strengths and limitations of ABCD. Secondly, to consider how a “network approach” utilising social network theory and analysis has the potential to be integrated into ABCD practice and research. In summary, the remaining sections of the chapter “propose that because of ABCD’s emphasis on relationships, network building and network mobilization, social network theory and analysis (which is relational in nature), has much to offer ABCD practice and research” (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 404).

3.5.1 Asset-based community development: A strengths-based approach to community work

ABCD is considered a “strengths-based” approach to working with communities (Healy, 2005b). Briefly, strengths-based practice can best be thought of as a “philosophy for practice” (McCashen, 2005, p. 5). It is not generally considered a model or fully fledged theory of practice, but rather, an approach or attitude a worker may hold. This translates to an assumption that all people have strengths, assets or capacities which can be harnessed to transform their lives (Saleebey, 2006b). Whilst there is no single definition of strengths-based practice, it has been identified as having particular “hallmarks” (Rapp, Saleebey, & Sullivan, 2005, p. 81). These include: a strong goal orientation; a systematic assessment of strengths or assets; harnessing client and environmental strengths for goal attainment; a relationship that is hope-inducing; and the provision of meaningful choices, with clients having the authority to choose (Rapp, et al., 2005, pp. 81-82).

Strengths-based practice draws upon a range of influences including collectivist empowerment theories and more individualist psychodynamic
approaches (McCashen, 2005; Saleebey, 2006b). This is reflective of the two major foci of the strengths approach. For the purposes of this discussion, we have labelled these as the “internal looking” and “external looking” aspects of strengths-based practice. In sociological terms, the internal looking aspect has parallels with notions of agency (our ability to understand and control our actions). The external looking aspect is related to notions of structure (the ways in which we are bounded by socioeconomic, cultural, historical and political factors) (Giddens, 1984).

The internal looking aspect of strengths-based practice is therapeutic in nature and involves locating, articulating and building upon strengths or assets. There are links here to ideas of “meaning making” and rethinking personal or community narratives found within narrative theory (White & Epston, 1990). In addition to meaning making, a strengths approach also aims to assist with finding solutions for current problems based on currently available resources, including past experiences of success. In this way there are links to solutions focused therapy (De Shazer, 1985).

The external looking aspect of strengths-based approaches involves working to recognise, understand, and at times, challenge, the social context or structures that negatively impact people and communities (there are links here to radical and empowerment social work approaches articulated by authors such as Fook (1993) and Lee (2001)). Because agency and structure are intertwined and work to reproduce each other (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Giddens, 1984) both the internal and external foci require attention. However, it is the external aspect which appears to get ‘lost’ in some strengths-based approaches to practice with individuals, groups and communities.

ABCD can be considered a strengths-based approach to working with communities. As Healy (2006) identified, ABCD has four key principles. Change must come from within the community; development must build upon the capacities and assets which exist within the community; change
should be relationship driven, and change should be oriented towards sustainable community growth. In holding with these principles, the ABCD model has a focus on locating, articulating and developing the assets in a community rather than focusing on communities’ “needs”. Assets are conceptualised in terms of three sets of “building blocks”. “Primary building blocks” are the assets located within the community. These assets are divided into those of individuals (their skills and abilities, or ‘gifts’) and those of organisations and associations (their experience, skills, social, physical and financial resources) (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996, pp. 4-8). “Secondary building blocks” are those that are located within communities but controlled from outside the community, such as schools, parks and libraries (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996, pp. 9-13). Lastly, “potential building blocks” are the assets “originating outside the neighbourhood, controlled by outsiders” such as access to social welfare (McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996, pp. 4-13).

The application of the ABCD model follows a process where trust is developed; assets are acknowledged, documented and mapped. These initial stages of ABCD process are essentially internal looking and aim to enable a community to recognise its strengths, understanding what it “has”, rather than what it “needs”. It is ideally a process of formulating a new story of the community as well as contributing to the development of new skills and new relationships (human and social capital). Shifting the community discourse to one of assets can change how people understand their community. This can create a sense of hope and capability so that the community becomes “empowered” or “inspired” to implement action which addresses the issues articulated by the community itself (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993).

Through the consideration of “potential building blocks” ABCD includes a framework for linking up community initiatives to the broader environment and “promoting a policy environment conducive to such initiatives” (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a, p. 477). Thus there is the potential for the ABCD work to become more ‘external looking’ in its activities and focus. ABCD
proponents claim the model can assist communities into dialogue with government from a position of power, rather than of need. Government can be viewed as partner, invited into dialogue by the community and invited to share in and support the community’s vision for itself (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a).

It becomes clear however, in the (limited) ABCD literature that only by systematically including both the internal looking community work, (such as re-storying, asset mapping and mobilising) as well as the external looking activities of understanding and entering into dialogue with macro level structures (for example the political, economic, cultural and legal systems), can ABCD avoid becoming a communitarian exercise in feel-good practice. The issue of impact (or more precisely, lack of impact) upon the more macro level structures which affect communities is one of the key criticisms of ABCD (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a, 2003b). (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 404-407).

3.5.2 Criticisms of ABCD and strengths-based approaches

Critics of strengths-based practice have argued that the approach is poorly defined and requires further conceptual clarity (Rapp, et al., 2005), does not differ significantly from other social work approaches (Curtis McMillen, Morris, & Sherraden, 2004), is not based on evidence of efficacy (Staudt, Howard, & Drake, 2001), can appear “naïve” in the context of the multiple structural barriers faced by disadvantaged people and communities (Healy, 2005, p.168), and requires a much larger evidence base for practice and theory building (Rapp, et al., 2005). As recently as 2009, there has been comment about the apparent dearth of research evaluating the efficacy of strengths-based practice of any kind (Lietz, 2009).

The two major challenges for ABCD are related to those of strengths-based practice in general. Firstly, there are issues centred on the balance between internal looking and external looking foci in working with communities. Whilst ABCD has some scope for creating dialogue with the more macro
level structures that impact community, the model has been criticised because “it tends to ignore the non-local origins of many of the challenges facing disadvantaged communities” such as capitalism and globalization (Healy, 2006, p. 256). The ABCD model detailed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) is based on the premise that communities must learn to survive within the current neo-liberal models of western societies, rather than challenging these economic systems. Macro level issues such as racism, sexism and ageism, which are often experienced at the personal and community level, are left unexplored in much ABCD literature. While providing frameworks for uncovering the “gifts” or strengths of groups who may be marginalised (e.g. people with a disability, elderly people, people who are long term unemployed), ABCD does not directly confront issues related to power and oppression (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a). Accepting the status quo in regard to seemingly unjust macro systemic issues can be difficult ideologically for many social workers, community workers and most importantly, the communities they work with.

The second major criticism of ABCD centres on the apparent lack of an evidence base. From a positivist perspective, the available research has been criticised as being “sometimes flawed and far from conclusive, generally suffering from small subject populations, poor descriptions of the independent variable, and varied dependent measures” (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p. 479). A subsequent search of social science academic journals undertaken by the author supports this statement and reveals little in the way of academic research on the efficacy of the ABCD from either a positivist or naturalist paradigm.

The available (generally more naturalist, or qualitative) research is valuable in describing the ABCD model in action, however it has provided little analytical depth in terms of understanding the efficacy of the model either in terms of stated project goals, or ABCD principles (e.g., Baker et al., 2007; Cameron & Gibson, 2005). An ordinary internet search, for more “grass roots” ABCD research, reveals a number of mainly descriptive reports of
community projects, predominantly written by the agency undertaking the project (for examples see the New South Wales Government ‘Community Builders’ website). The value of this work is not to be understated, but it is generally focussed on reporting the internal looking aspects of ABCD practice. It is my proposal that social network analysis’ more quantitative, ‘relational’ measures can help to further strengthen our understanding of the efficacy of the external looking aspects of ABCD.

Relationships are the cornerstone of asset-based community development. It is via relationships that resources, “gifts” or assets can be recognised, mobilized and shared. Relationships are also the basis of social networks. The incorporation of a stronger and more theoretical focus on the concepts of social network theory has the potential to address some of the key challenges facing ABCD. Social network analysis has potential to embed a more explicit ‘external looking’ focus to the model, both in practice and in research, by shedding light on the relationships or links between community members, community groups, and broader social structures.

A social network practice approach has the potential to enhance ABCD and go some way towards meeting the major criticisms of the model. Social network analysis provides a conceptually compatible method of understanding the efficacy of ABCD projects in terms of assessing how social structure changes (or not) (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 404-409).

3.5.3 A social networks approach to practice: Integrating network concepts into ABCD models

From a network perspective, communities are viewed as individuals and organisations in a relationship with one another (either based on location or interest) involving multiple layers of interconnected networks which can be accessed to link people to the assets within, and beyond their communities.

Such an understanding can assist in the process of networking strategically, a core role of the ABCD worker. Network maps [such as the examples
presented in chapter two] assist us to demonstrate and consider which are the people, groups or organisations which act as social bridges between isolated clusters of actors. We can determine where there are current or potential linking actors which can act as access points to other networks (and the resources and opportunities contained within those networks).

Small networks such as that in figure 1 can be mapped by hand. Depending on the context or intended use, data for the maps can come from a workers own knowledge, formal or informal conversations with other organisations or utilising sources such as annual reports or minutes of meetings. Such maps may be generated as part of participatory community research, through focus groups working together to consider and map the connections in a community between various actors and assets.

A key element of the ABCD model is the “asset-map” (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). However, the asset map tends to focus more on defining and listing the assets, rather than attempting to understand who does and does not have access to these assets. I propose that there is great value in explicitly including the mapping of relationships, as well as assets as a key part of the model. By locating where actors are positioned within networks (in relation to each other and to the identified assets), communities and workers can gain an understanding of who does and does not have access to various resources or assets in that network. Such an understanding allows for strategic community action (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 410-411).

Recognising where and how power flows through networks is useful for determining how to strategically access it. Network maps can provide powerful and visual means of understanding power flows in particular networks, or parts of networks.
For example, in Figure 1, [reproduced here from chapter two] actors “a” and “d” have links to three and four other actors respectively, thus they have potential to connect into resources and information held by those actors. They could be said to have more power in this respect. Actor “e” has one link, and therefore less opportunity to access resources from that network. Actor “e” could utilise the connection to actor “d” to open up another three connections (those held by actor “d”). To foster network cohesion, a community worker might encourage links between actor ‘e’ and the other actors, so that further links are made, and the network becomes more “dense” (i.e., there are more links between more actors).

In terms of understanding power imbalance and discrimination experienced by communities or members of communities, there is potential in using network concepts. Network maps can assist workers to understand and explore power blocks, or “structural holes” (Burt, 2005) in networks. Communities can consider how they are structured, who or what is included in dominant networks and how these might be strategically accessed or impacted. Such an exercise would mean ABCD models have the capacity to embrace a more strategic “social action” emphasis where required. Communities are then able to not only create new stories about their strengths and achievements, but to understand how and where their assets can be most strategically mobilized in terms of addressing more structural issues (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 411-412).
3.5.4 Using social network analysis for researching ABCD work.

Social network analysis is a research methodology utilised in the social sciences as well as other a range of other disciplines (Trevillion, 2000b). Social network analysis is the study of social networks where the focus is not upon an actor as the unit of analysis, but on the structure of the ties between actors, and how this web of ties, this structure, affects the actors and their relationships (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982; Linton, 2006; Scott, 2000; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Social network concepts can provide a link between the “doing” and the “measuring” of ABCD and other network models of community development. Asset-based approaches are centred on the notion of relationships, and network theory and analysis can provide the “tools” to understand the structure of relationships. For example, one way to understand the impact of an ABCD project would be to analyse how a community network has grown or changed. Concepts such as: network size (how big or small is the network? how many actors?); network density (how many connections are there between all the actors in relation to how many there could possibly be?); centrality (who is ‘central’ in the network? i.e. if particular actors were no longer in the network, would parts of the network be disconnected from others?), can all be used to explore and describe networks. This provides not only useful data for a researcher, but valuable information for communities to base their projects upon.

Using network analysis to understand the links between actors in a given community could indicate changes in community relationships internally and externally. Undertaking either pre and post community work network maps, or ongoing mapping, has the potential to demonstrate impacts of ABCD projects in terms of building relationships, which is the core of ABCD. The data for such maps can come from a range of sources and can be closely tied to the asset mapping process of ABCD. If interviews are used to determine the assets in a particular community, a snowball sampling method could be utilised, which can also help to determine who knows who and how. The
first “round” of interviews could be with a range of key stakeholders in the community. As per a usual snowball sample, referrals are sought for further participants at the completion of an interview. However, the researcher also asks how the referrer is known to the person they have referred. This provides the required relational data, i.e., who knows who and how they know them.

At the end of the sampling process, the ABCD worker not only has an assets inventory, but relational data indicating the nature of the connections among the people interviewed in that community. Combined with an understanding of some basic demographics of the community being considered, the network map can assist in understanding the structural features of the community with which we are working (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 412-413).

At the completion of the ABCD project, another snowball sample can be undertaken. Network features such as size, clustering of sub-groups, bridges between clusters, and network cohesiveness can be compared and contrasted between pre and post maps to demonstrate if and how the ABCD work has effected this network.

Social network data can be drawn from a wide range of sources, dependent upon what the researcher wants to understand or explore. Data can be either qualitative or quantitative, so long as it demonstrates or indicates a relationship between actors. Any network analysis requires two key elements: a defined set of actors and a defined relationship between them.

These few basic examples have attempted to demonstrate how network analysis has the potential to provide a useful and practical way of both enhancing ABCD practice and researching the efficacy of ABCD programs in terms of relationships and structures. [I] believe that social network analysis has potential to assist the researcher to understand structural change along a continuum between small group and larger community and social structures (Ennis & West, 2010, p. 415).
This thesis provides an in-depth exploration of that idea.

3.6 Revisiting the “gap” in social work knowledge

As stated at the end of chapter two, a network focus in social work practice with communities is interesting and appears potentially useful. However, there does not appear to be any research currently available on the processes, outcomes and efficacy of such approaches in practice. An exploratory case study, which documents and explores the processes and outcomes of such practice would therefore be a useful addition to social work knowledge.

In this thesis I am fundamentally interested in considering what happens when network thinking unfolds in community work practice, specifically when coupled with a strengths philosophy, as articulated in ABCD. I am also interested in exploring the use of social network analysis as one method for understanding the process and outcomes of the work undertaken within the community case study.

The contribution to social work knowledge addressed by this thesis is therefore twofold:

1. To provide and in-depth case study of the application of network thinking within strengths-based community work practice.
2. To explore and demonstrate the application of social network analysis in understanding the impacts and efficacy of the community work practice.

3.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has moved from a critical analysis of the concepts of community and community work through to the consideration of how an ABCD model might be enhanced by using a network focus (which I have also called “network thinking”) and social network theory and analysis.

An asset-based approach to community development is a currently popular, strengths-based approach to working with communities, with a strong
emphasis on building and strengthening social networks, so that assets and resources can be mobilised to work towards positive change. The ability of communities to link up or mobilize is dependent upon social networks, yet social network theory and analysis is under-utilised in ABCD literature. Integrating a ‘networking approach to community development’ (Gilchrist, 2004) into ABCD models has the potential to go some way towards addressing the various challenges the ABCD model faces. Similarly, social network analysis can provide a framework for researching ABCD interventions, and assist the ABCD practitioner to understand how such interventions impact the various relationships between the elements that constitute a community. Relationships after all, are what creates a community, and logically, are the cornerstone of community development (Ennis & West, 2010, pp. 415-416).

Of course, network analysis cannot tell us everything about the efficacy of community work projects. As discussed in the previous chapter, the way in which networks intersect and interact with culture and individual agency, are aspects of community that cannot be currently addressed by network analysis alone. For this reason other methods are used in conjunction with network analysis in this thesis. Qualitative and quantitative data and analysis are used to triangulate the data and analysis, adding depth and credibility to the case study.

The following chapter will outline the methodology used to explore the application of network theory and analysis in an ABCD project in a culturally diverse suburban neighbourhood.
Chapter Four
Research Methodology
Chapter Four
Research Methodology

In the previous chapter it was argued that the existing community work research literature tells us a number of key things:

- Supporting existing networks and facilitating new networks is crucial to success (meeting the stated aims of community projects).
- The ability to work in socially just, empowering ways (e.g. taking time, critically reflecting, challenging existing structures and arrangements), is greatly impacted by the agendas of the funding bodies.
- Mirroring existing hierarchical, formal organisational structures does not appear to encourage participation (other than by those already likely to participate).
- Fostering an attitude of hope and encouragement is crucial.

It is my contention that these common themes from community work literature provide a strong rationale for adopting network and asset-based approaches in community practice. Because the community work which forms the subject of this thesis has social justice aims, involves critical theorising, reflection and action, I am defining this kind of community work as critical social work.

The previous chapters also explained that whilst there is an excellent body of social work literature explaining and exploring critical social work theory, there is relatively little Australian or international research concerning the actual “doing” of critical social work practice. It has been acknowledged that further research, such as case studies, exploring critical social work practice are required in order to understand the efficacy and outcomes of critical approaches (Mendes, 2009). Similarly there has been exciting literature produced about networking approaches to community work, yet there is little research exploring its application.
With these gaps in existing research identified, this chapter articulates each of the research questions and provides an overview of the research methods. The rationale for the selection of a case study design as the overarching framework is presented, along with a discussion of each of the different research methods embedded within the case study. Combined, the embedded studies provide depth and breadth to the case study.

While the embedded methods are introduced in this chapter, the details of each method of analysis are not presented until each actual method is used in the thesis. Chapters five, six, seven and eight, which each discuss different methods and their findings, all include detailed methodology sections prior to the presentation of the data analysis and discussion.

In the first instance however, a brief exploration of social work research is presented. Because a critical social work lens informs the design, processes, analysis and interpretation of the research in this thesis, a firm understanding of epistemological issues is set out. The discussion then focuses upon both the case study site and subject, before a brief overview of how the each of the embedded studies are presented in the thesis.

### 4.1 Social work research: Methodology and selection of a research design

In previous chapters I have articulated the critical social work approach adopted both within this thesis and the community work described within. It is a critical social work that attempts to move beyond the modernist/contemporary theory debate (following in the footsteps of numerous social work authors over the past decade), viewing the more contemporary “post” theories as an extension of the earlier more modernist critical theories, rather than as a complete break from them. It is a critical social work based on the premise that oppression is structural, but is experienced and reproduced at the personal level (the personal is political). It is a critical approach that acknowledges that there are always multiple possible understandings, analysis, interpretations, or “truths” about any phenomena.
Because critical social work holds emancipatory aims, a definition of social justice was articulated. This is one which is focused upon the elimination of domination and oppression (Young, 1990, p. 15) in all forms, from often unconscious micro level interpersonal interactions to oppressive government policies and practices. The interplay between the micro and macro is also recognised, that is, the personal level interactions both impact and are impacted by broader structural issues, and vice versa.

These understandings of critical theory and social justice inform the research framework presented in this chapter. The critical social work approach is reflected in an epistemological framework that holds similar tensions, between realism and constructivism.

Just as there are theorists who hold to either modernist critical social work or post-modernist critical social work, and view these as incompatible epistemological paradigms, so to in the area of research there are “those who hold to purist positivist and constructionist perspectives” who see “no possibility for accommodation between the epistemological paradigms” (Pease, 2009, p. 53). Social work writers such as Fook and Pease (1999), Healy (2001) and Mullaly (2007), have proposed critical social workers transcend the modern/post-modern binary. Pease also argues that critical social workers “need to transcend the limitations of these objective-subjective and universalist-relativist divides” (Pease, 2009, p. 53).

Pease contends that in critical social work the primary issue is not between realist or constructivist research paradigms (as both might be equally well used in a transformative agenda), but that critical social research “is incommensurable with those paradigm positions which argue for detached and disinterested research and practice” (Pease, 2009, p. 54). He goes on to argue that both positivism and relativism are such paradigm positions. Pease proposes, and I have adopted here, an approach he calls “critical realism”. Critical realism is an epistemological foundation that “acknowledges that knowledge is socially and culturally situated, but at the same time asserts that an objective reality exists” (Pease, 2009, p. 55).
In an article which attempts to understand if there is anything distinctive about social work research, Trevillion argues that it is the nature of the social work “world” which points to what is unique about social work research. The social work world is one “that comes into being alongside a process of attending to certain kinds of things in certain kinds of ways” (Trevillion, 2000b, p. 509). As previously discussed in chapter two, no matter how diverse the practices and theories of social work may be, a common thread is the focus upon the links and interdependencies between the person and the environment.

Trevillion (2000b, p. 510) believes that the ideas of “links” and “interdependencies” are useful starting points in the quest for understanding the world in which social work researchers are placed. Social workers need to “establish a correspondence” between the various links and interdependencies. This is a complex task which involves struggling to understand the various philosophical assumptions behind the different kinds of social work, and locating a place (or places) where we are able to “make sense” out of all that is occurring for ourselves and those we are working with. Trevillion (2000b, p. 510) states that “social work practice is complex” and “social work research is an intellectual discipline which can help those involved in practice to understand its complexity”.

Yet, just because social work is complex and we need to understand its complexity, does not necessarily mean social work is distinctive. Other disciplines also deal with complexity and have “generated important insights into complexity” (Trevillion, 2000b, p. 512). There are a number of accounts of complexity, including the popular “chaos theory” from the physical sciences. Yet chaos theory does not allow for individual choice or multiple interpretations of events. Sociologists have used a number of theories in order to think about the complex nature of social life. Theories of globalization, post-industrial society and pluralism are just a few of those which are relevant to social work. However, whilst these theoretical understandings can provide useful ways of thinking about society, they do not necessarily show practitioners “how to intervene in complex social situations” (Trevillion, 2000b, p. 512). Social work research aims, in a variety of ways, to
inform social work practice. As practitioners we need to both understand and intervene in society. Trevillion (2000b, p. 515) suggests that:

Unlike sociological research, social work research could be described as an applied ‘relational’ research discipline concerned with developing our understanding of interdependency so as to identify and create the potential for empowerment, need-fulfilment and emotional and practical support.

Trevillion also argues that because of the relational emphasis in social work practice, social work knowledge can be described as “networked knowledge”, and ultimately defines social work research in the following way:

Social work research operates in and attends to a world of complex interdependencies and responds to it in a committed and reflexively self-critical manner so as to create forms of networked knowledge (Trevillion, 2000b, p. 515).

In some ways this idea of networked knowledge has resonance with the “reflective approach” to social work research outlined by Fook (1996). A reflective approach affirms the importance of experiential and interconnected ways of knowing the world, and favours more emancipatory and participatory research practices. In this sense, a reflective approach blurs the traditional boundaries and separations between “knowing and doing”, “values and facts”, “art and science”, “theory and practice” “subjectivity and objectivity” (Fook, 1996, p. 5).

Through adopting a reflective, networked idea of social work research, we can rethink the separations between each of these binary constructs (e.g. art and science, research and practice) and rather than see boundaries, attempt to explore the connections and linkages. Social work research then can perhaps be located within, and defined by, its concern with these webs of links and connections between how we understand society, what we do within society and how we do it.

The reflective, networked knowledge conceptualisation of social work research is taken up in this thesis, and manifests in the diverse methods embedded in the case
study framework, and the integrated process of practice and research described in the following chapters. The more quantitative method of social network analysis is used with a range of qualitative and more reflective narrative methods. Choosing to situate these methods within a case study framework acknowledges that this research is context bound, it has occurred within a certain historical, geographical and social circumstance.

With a conceptualisation of social work research outlined; a need for case studies of critical practice articulated, and; a gap in research about the purposeful application of network ideas to community work detailed; I now outline the focus of the research.

4.2 The research focus

This thesis is centred upon understanding how a social networks focus can contribute to social work practice and research with communities. To explore this I have developed two primary questions, each with sub-questions. Question one is concerned with using network ideas in practice and question two is concerned with using network analysis in researching that practice.

1. How does a network focus translate into community work practice?
   - What processes, activities and events take place?
   - How were network maps and information used?
   - How is it different to an ‘ordinary ABCD’ project?
   - What are the challenges in this particular community?
   - What is critical about this type of community practice?
   - What is the feedback from organisations and individuals?

2. How can social network analysis contribute to our understanding about the outcomes and efficacy of a community work project?
   - What can be mapped with social network analysis?
   - What is useful in terms of understanding project outcomes and efficacy?
   - Are we learning anything new?
How does social network mapping assist us to understand outcomes from a critical social work perspective?

4.3 Overall study design: A case study of a neighbourhood network project

4.3.1 Rationale for a case study

A case study design has been selected in order to answer these research questions. Using multiple sources of data, case studies are able to capture the complexities of social work practice with communities.

The critical social work approach I have articulated demands consideration of any one phenomenon from a range of approaches. As such, I have selected narrative and social network analytic methods to assist in exploring and understanding the processes, efficacy and outcomes of the community work in the case at hand.

A case study enables a researcher to embed both qualitative and quantitative methods within a framework aimed at understanding a particular phenomenon in detail. Interestingly, each of the methods embedded in this case study design have been conceptualised in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Case studies can be either qualitative or quantitative, or both simultaneously, including elements of quantitative and quantitative data and/or analysis (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Kratochwill & Levin, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). Social network analysis too uses both qualitative and quantitative data (Scott, 2000) and some have argued that network analysis is a type of case study. Breiger (2004, p. 507) discusses how:

The very distinctions between “quantitative” and “qualitative” approaches to data analysis is called into question by network analysis, ... Typically a network analysis is a case study (Ragin and Becker, 1992) situated with explicit temporal and spatial reference (Abbott, 1999, pp 193-226), and important contributions to data analysis have combined ethnographic work and field observation with application of network algorithms.
Whilst narrative inquiry would seem to be a qualitative endeavour, and the vast majority of literature supports this conceptualisation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 1988; Riessman, 1993, 1994, 2008); Elliot (2005) has attempted to include quantitative data and analysis within narrative frameworks. Elliot argues for the value of “statistical stories” particularly involving longitudinal data. Thus, the boundaries between qualitative and quantitative paradigms are not always crystal clear. The value of both paradigms, with the different knowledge they generate, is embraced in this research.

Most importantly, a case study design has been selected because it is a good way to build or examine theory (Evans & Gruba, 2002; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). As Evans and Gruba (2002, p. 92) contend, case studies are “a way of seeing whether an existing theory works”. They further add; “your intention here is not to draw ‘hard and fast’ conclusions, but rather to act as an explorer” (Evans & Gruba, 2002, p. 92). The case-study in this thesis is indeed such an exploration of what occurs when a network focus is applied to strengths-based community work and research.

The previous three chapters have outlined a proposed way of undertaking community work, one which aims to enhance an asset-based community development approach with a focus on social networks using network thinking and social network analysis. A case study design has been selected to “try out” this approach to community work, in a location that is unique in the challenges and assets it presents. In this way, the case study can be viewed as a “critical test” (Yin, 2009, p. 48) of proposed model of community work.

### 4.3.2 Case study research

Case Study research has been described by Yin (2003, p. 14) as a “comprehensive research strategy”. In setting out his working definition of the research case study, Yin states that it is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident” (2003, p. 14).
Because of the lack of clarity between phenomenon and context in the “real-life” of case studies, Yin (2003, p. 14) argues that further characteristics must be added to the definition. He writes:

The case study inquiry

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

This case study uses what Yin refers to as an “embedded single-case design” (Yin, 2003, p. 40). An embedded single case design is the study of one context using multiple units of analysis.

Yin argues that single case (rather than multiple case) designs are appropriate in three situations. Firstly, where the case “represents the critical test of a significant theory” (Yin, 2003, p. 41). Secondly where the case “represents an extreme case or a unique case” (Yin, 2003, p. 40). The third rationale is when the case can be said to be a “representative or typical case” (Yin, 2003, p. 41 all italics in original).

It could be argued that the case at hand meets all three of these criteria in different ways. Ultimately though, the LNC project has been selected because it is a unique case, and therefore provides a critical test of proposed network approach to community work. As such it is a combination of the first and second of Yin’s rationales for selection of a single case design.

It is unique in terms of where the project is located, a socially divided suburban location in which extreme differences in socio-demographic profiles are present, and based primarily upon whether or not residents belong to an Aboriginal community located within the suburb (the case study site is described in detail in the following chapter). The case study is also unique in the approach to practice, that is a network
and strengths-based approach, within a critical framework. Applying a unique approach in a unique location represents a critical test of the approach.

Stake (1995) is interested in the “art” of the case study. He provides a different, primarily qualitative understanding of case study research. His understanding of the unique case study adds depth to Yin’s idea of the unique case. Stake (1995, p. xi) writes that:

We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.

When thinking about the “unique case” Stake (1995, p. 3) differentiates between “intrinsie”, “instrumental”, and “collective” case studies. An intrinsic case study is one where the case itself is interesting, and understanding of the actual case is the main driver, that is:

We are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case. We have an intrinsic interest in the case, and we may call our work intrinsic case study.

An instrumental case is different in that “we will have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case” (Stake, 1995, p. 3).

A collective case is one that that combines a number of instrumental cases, in order to study a question (not about the site) from a range of perspectives. For example, if you wished to study effects of a new education department policy on a school, you may take a school as a case, or several teachers from that school as the collective case, or alternatively, even a cluster of schools in a given area as the collective case.
Whilst Stake agrees that there are overlaps between intrinsic and instrumental case studies, with some case studies being both intrinsic and instrumental, as a researcher it is useful to decide which one you are using as the methods and focus for each are different.

One of the most important things to remember is that for intrinsic case study, the case is dominant; the case is of the highest importance. For instrumental case study, the issue is dominant; we start and end with issues dominant (Stake, 1995, p. 16).

In terms of the research presented here, there are both instrumental and intrinsic elements; however it is primarily an instrumental case study. I begin and end this thesis with issues about critical practice with communities, and using a network and asset approach to undertake this critical social work. Whilst there are intrinsic elements (demonstrated most obviously in the following two chapters (the case study site, and the story of the LNC Project), the focus of the thesis is in exploring and understanding how a social network focus contributes to social work practice with communities.

4.3.3 The selection of the case for the case study

The case chosen for this study is that of Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections (LNC). This case was chosen for two main reasons. Firstly, the suburb of Ludmilla represents a relatively unique suburban situation where one group of people (Aboriginal Australians) live in an area physically and socially separated from other residents in the same suburb. Geographic and social exclusion of one group from other groups in a suburban situation is not uncommon, however it is the extremity of this case which is what makes this case unique. Such an extremity presents a challenge for the basic assumptions of ABCD and networking approaches to community development. As overviewed in chapter two, one of the major criticisms against strengths and network based approaches are their seeming failure to acknowledge and work with the issues of racism, extreme poverty and other issues of structural disadvantage. This suburb can be considered a harsh test for such an
approach to community development. The suburb of Ludmilla is described in detail in the following chapter.

The second reason for selecting this site is my own interest in Ludmilla. I have resided in the suburb since 1997, in three different locations. Over the many years I have lived in Ludmilla I have been regularly challenged by the enormity of the social barriers in the suburb, and the apparent lack of opportunities for people of different cultures to even ‘be’ in the same space to begin conversations. My own personal and professional interest in community has been the key factor in the selection of the site, and indeed the inspiration and motivation behind the entire research project.

Access to the site was generally easy as I reside there, and access to participants has also been relatively easy for this reason. My own involvement in the formation of Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections and the community development work, which is the subject of this thesis, has been extensive. This is detailed in the following chapter. Clearly there are some significant issues in taking on a role of participant-observer in research such as this. These issues are explored in the final part of this chapter.

4.4 **Overview of elements of the case study**

![Figure 3. Methods embedded in case study design](image-url)
In keeping with the premise laid out at the end of chapter two, that network analysis provides a primarily *structural* understanding, a mixed method approach has been designed. The idea being that each method makes up for what the other lacks and assists in building the case study to a point where the major questions of the thesis can be adequately addressed. Figure 3 provides a visual representation of the case study design, and the four primary methodologies embedded within the case study.

### 4.5 Data Collection

The following diagram (Figure 4) provides an overview of all of the data which was collected from October 2008 to June 2010.

*Figure 4. Case study data collection overview*
A “social survey participant” is a person who completed the full social survey interview (described below in section 4.5.1). A ‘referral’ is someone who was referred for a social survey interview” regardless of whether they completed one or not. Referrals are included in the data collection as they provide network data. An “In-depth interview” participant is a person who completed a semi-structured in-depth interview.

Perhaps the most instantly noticeably aspect of this diagram is that there are more post project survey participants and referrals than pre-project survey participants and referrals. In network analysis there is an understanding that networks change over time. In this case, the network grew in size; hence there were more participants to collect data from. As such, there are more participants in the post study than the pre study. This is explained in detail in Chapter 7. A table with (non-identifiable) information about all survey and interview participants is included at appendix 7, in the case study summary data base.

### 4.5.1 Pre and post LNC project social survey.

Prior to the commencement of the community work program, a social survey (drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) social survey) was undertaken between the months of October and December 2008. From August to October 2010, the same survey was undertaken again. A copy of the social survey is attached at appendix 4.

The ABS social survey was selected as a data collection tool because it is a previously validated and tested instrument that has been used for the collection of a range of social data. The survey contains a large range of questions (122) about participants’ networks, feelings of trust and reciprocal relationships, which can be used as a measure of social capital (Stone, 2001).

Ultimately, as the research focus became less about measuring social capital, and more about examining social connections, it became clear that only a portion of the
social survey data was required for the network analysis undertaken in the thesis. Only social survey questions that would provide answers to the previously stated research questions were analysed. Questions 1 to 30 (see appendix 4) which gathered general demographic data (gender, cultural groups, length of time in current home, age etc.) were used to analyse particular features of the networks, and this is discussed fully in chapter seven when the data is presented. Questions 75 and 76 were selected as they provided information about network members links to broader social structures. The “I feel part of this community” question (question 90) was also selected. This question was selected as it provided an indication of the ‘sense of community’ in the local area prior to, and after the LNC project.

The referral data gained via snowball sampling process (described below) provided the core of the network data.

Participants had the option of completing the survey alone or with a person of their choosing accompanying them. I administered all of the social survey interviews face to face. Survey interviews were undertaken in a location selected by each participant. This varied from participant’s homes, workplaces, public spaces, to my office on the university campus. The responses to the survey questions were written by me on a printed survey sheet. The participants had prompt cards to assist with answering each question, as recommended by the ABS. The prompt cards can be viewed at appendix 5.

In both the pre and post community work social survey, the sample was gained using a snowball method. A snowball sample is a process of sampling that uses networks (Kumar, 2005, p. 179). The sample begins with particular individuals or groups who participate in the research and are then asked to identify other potential participants. These participants in turn are asked to refer participants, and so the sample grows by referral. As Kumar (2005, p. 179) explains, snowball techniques are particularly useful “for studying communication patterns, decision making or diffusion of knowledge within a group”. As becomes apparent in chapter seven, understanding such patterns is a key element the social network analysis.
This type of sample was selected as it was ideal for finding out the size of the existing LNC network, and the referral process itself provided the relational data to be utilised in the social network analysis. Ultimately the snowball “roll out” data (that is, who referred who) proved more useful than the content of the surveys in terms of the network analysis.

The snowball sample in both sets of social surveys (pre and post) began with people actively involved with the LNC group. Initially I sent an email to everyone on the LNC email list asking for participants and explaining the research. In addition to the email list, I also spoke with people involved in LNC who did not have email access. The LNC members were already aware of my intention to undertake PhD research on our network, as we had discussed the possibility as part of the research proposal and ethics application process (see appendix 1).

Each potential participant was provided with an information sheet and a consent form (see copies attached at appendix 2 and 3) prior to undertaking the survey. I also explained the forms to participants and allowed time to answer any questions they had.

After undertaking the social survey with an LNC member, I asked if they were able to refer me to someone they knew who lived in Ludmilla, who was 18 years of age or over, and who they thought would be interested in completing the social survey. The participant needed to know the person well enough to have a contact phone number or email address for them. Interpreters (either professional or a friend/relative) were offered to participants who could not converse in, or read, English. No participants took up this offer. The post LNC project snowball sample was undertaken using the same process.

In the pre LNC project social survey sample, there were 45 participants out of 92 referrals. In the post LNC project social survey sample, there were 58 participants out of 113 referrals. There were 29 participants in common between the pre and post surveys.
4.5.2 Pre and post LNC project in-depth interviews

At the same time as I was collecting the social survey data, I was also undertaking more in-depth and open-ended interviews with particular people within the LNC network. As with the social survey, these interviews took place between October and December 2008 and then again between June and August 2010.

Participants for the interviews were selected using a combination of convenience and purposive sampling techniques. As with snowball sampling, convenience and purposive sampling are also non-probability sampling techniques useful for research that requires data from particular people, groups or networks. A purposive sample is one selected for a particular purpose, where the sample can provide insight into a particular phenomenon or issue (Alston & Bowles, 1988, p. 91). For this part of the study, I wanted to interview people from different cultural, age and socio-economic backgrounds. This was so an understanding of the narratives about Ludmilla itself, LNC and also participant’s ideas about community could be explored from diverse perspectives. The sample was a convenience sample in that the people selected were easily accessible by me through the networks of the LNC group.

Potential participants were approached by me, either in person, or by phone or email. The participants were all people known to me through the LNC network. Participants needed to be 18 years or older and currently residing in the suburb of Ludmilla. The information sheet and consent form were provided and discussed (see appendices 2 & 3). I also allowed time for questions about the research to be discussed prior to each interview. Interviews were semi-structured, using a prompt sheet should the participant need encouragement in their conversation, and to remind me to cover particular areas of inquiry (see appendix 6). The interviews took place in participant’s homes and in my office at Charles Darwin University. The interviews took between 45 minutes and two hours each.

Each interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder. The recordings were transcribed by me, as part of the early stages of narrative analysis. All transcripts were provided to participants for checking and comments.
In the pre LNC project interviews there were seven participants. The post LNC project interviews included six of the same seven participants (one had moved overseas), plus an additional participant. The additional post project participant was selected purposively, in the same way as the other in-depth interview participants. As such, there were also seven post LNC project participants.

4.5.3 Community work project (or field) data

The community work project data was gathered throughout the entire project, from October 2008 to July 2010. This data was in the following raw formats:

- Minutes of meetings (LNC meetings, Bagot Outside School Hours Care Program meetings, ‘Life in Ludmilla’ film meetings)
- LNC Emails (to and from)
- LNC Newsletters
- Neighbourhood DVD
- Researcher’s critical reflection journal
- Existing demographic data (ABS)
- Historical data (print media, published books, journal articles, unpublished thesis)

All data (apart from the Neighbourhood DVD and the historical data) were ordered chronologically and placed into the qualitative software analysis program, NVivo, to create a case study data base (Yin, 2003). The data from the case study data base informed the narrative study presented in chapter six. A summary of this data base is attached at appendix 7.

The historical data was treated separately. A search of the Australian and New Zealand Reference Centre on-line data base was undertaken to locate articles about the suburb of Ludmilla from the popular local newspaper, The Northern Territory News. A media review was undertaken to determine the dominant narratives about the area over the five years preceding the ABCD project. Combined with data from the ABS Census (2006 census), and other historical and geographical data, this information provides an overview of the neighbourhood (i.e. describes the case study...
site) at the outset of the project. The description of the case study site is the subject of chapter five.

4.5.4 Summary of the multiple methods within the case study.

“A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (Yin, 2003, p. 97). The use of multiple methods in a research design has been suggested for studies where “we had more than one hypothesis or question, or if the question was multi-faceted, and different methods or different approaches of the investigator were needed to throw light on the different facets” (Evans & Gruba, 2002, p. 91). In this thesis, there are three different, but related facets to explore within the case study framework. These are constructed as the research focus, and the two sub-questions, and have been previously discussed.

In summary then, this single case study aims to describe and explore the complex activity of undertaking a network and strengths focused community work project in the suburb of Ludmilla, and seek to understand the efficacy of such a project. A case study design provides a framework which can encompass and include multiple data sources, and at the same time account for the importance of context. These factors led to selection of a case study design.

4.6 Data Analysis

The above sections have described the data collection which occurred over the time of the inquiry. However, not all data was used to answer each question. As discussed previously, narrative inquiry and social network analysis were selected as the two main embedded studies which fit within the overarching case study framework. These two types of inquiry require different sets of data, though there are some overlaps. The following sections briefly outline each of the main methods, and the rationale for selecting them.
4.6.1 Describing the case and case study site

The suburb of Ludmilla (the case study site), and the development of the LNC network (the case) is described in detail in chapter five. The data for these descriptions comes from the following sources:

- Existing ABS demographic data (2006 Census)
- Historical data from a range of published local histories (in books and journals) of Darwin.
- Media articles from the five years prior to the commencement of the ABCD Project (Jan 2009) accessed via The Australian and New Zealand Reference Centre data base.
- LNC Community work project data (meeting minutes, reflective journal, newsletters, etc.) to describe the formation of the LNC network prior to the ABCD project.

These sources are combined to provide an in-depth understanding (from a critical viewpoint) about the suburb of Ludmilla, its history and the current situation.

4.6.2 Narrative inquiry: Formulating a “story” of the LNC project

The story of the LNC project is used in order to address the first of the two primary research questions. That is, how does a network focus translate into community work practice? A narrative inquiry method is used in order to tell the story in chapter six.

For most people, telling a story is an instinctive way of recounting and making sense out of life’s experiences. Humans are continually producing narratives by which we find order and meaning in our lives and the lives of those around us. In addition to this, people are also constantly surrounded by and subject to, the narratives from the social world in which humans exist. Indeed, it has been claimed that people without narratives do not actually exist (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 7). We create narratives and narratives create us.
A narrative is essentially a story that relates a sequence of events, most usually with a beginning, middle and end. Individuals tell stories within social, cultural and institutional settings. As such, a narrative contains information about both the individual and the context in which they are situated (Moen, 2006). Narrative inquiry has been defined as “stories lived and told” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). It is the study of how human beings experience the world. The narrative inquiry process involves the collection of stories and written narratives of experience, and the interpretation of these (Gudmundsdottir, 2001). Narrative research focuses on how individuals assign meaning to their experiences through the stories they tell (Moen, 2006). A leading author in narrative research within the social sciences, and particularly social work is Catherine Kohler Riessman. Riessman advocates narrative inquiry as a way of conducting case-centred research (with “individuals, identity groups, communities, organisations, or even nations”) where understandings of human agency, identity and culture are sought (Riessman, 2008, p. 11).

Narrative analysis is a broad term which refers to a group or “family” of methods used to interpret texts which have a storied form (Riessman, 2008). Methods of narrative analysis vary considerably depending upon the perspectives of the authors. Methods range from the often emotive “creative analytic practices” that are used in narrative autoethnography (Denzin, 2006, p. 420; Ellis, 2004; Richardson, 2000), through to formulating “statistical stories” via quantitative analysis of large data sets not traditionally associated with qualitative methods (Elliott, 2005, p. 76).

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber (1998, p. 12) outline a model for the classification and organisation of types of narrative analysis. Their model incorporates two dimensions of analysis. Holistic versus categorical analysis (i.e., treating texts as a whole unit verses “breaking” text into various utterances by category); and analysis of content verses analysis of form (i.e. what the text is about as opposed to how the text is structured).

Lieblich et al. (1998) recommend the categorical approach for studying multiple texts about a shared phenomenon. In contrast, a holistic analysis is considered more
useful for gaining an insight into a person as whole. The analysis of content is generally used when the researcher is wishing to understand themes in the text and as such there is a concern with explicit content. Whereas if the structure, plot, characters and audiences are important considerations, then analysis of form is required. Often elements of both form and content analysis are utilised in a narrative study (Lieblich et al., 1998).

A variety of narrative methods have been used in this case study in order to tell and also to critically examine the story of the LNC project. Each type of narrative method is explained just prior to its use in chapter five, six and eight.

It can be argued that narrative inquiry is “interpretive” research (Riessman, 2008). Interpretive research and interpretive theorists aim to understand social action and phenomena in terms of the meanings that people attach to the action or phenomena. Interpretive theory is not necessarily concerned with attempting to create change (Aggar, 1998). However, there is an identifiable “critical vein” of interpretive theory that is “concerned with linking the micro and the macro” (Aggar, 1998, p. 30). It is within this critical vein of interpretive theory that the narrative I construct in chapter six is situated. Aggar (1998, p. 32) explains further:

Most interpretive theorists compose their work in ways that richly describe and draw from people’s everyday narratives ... This is at once a strength and a weakness. It is strength in the sense that it gives sociology access to everyday life, which is not only a vital empirical resource for social research but also a necessary political platform for social change, as both Marcuse and feminists have pointed out. It is a weakness in the sense that many interpretive narratives fail to contribute to explanatory theory; they describe but do not analyse social life. ... A rough rule of thumb is this: The more theoretical interpretive writing is, the more critical (in a political sense) it tends to be. Some interpretative studies (e.g., Denzin’s *Images of a Postmodern Society*) combine these two modes, moving back and forth between explanation and description.
In keeping with a critical social work approach, the various narrative analyses presented in this thesis aim to both describe and to explain. The reader will notice there are numerous direct quotations throughout the thesis. These quotations are used in order to ensure the participant’s voices are present and the meaning of their words is not diluted in the analysis. Providing a mechanism for participants to speak for themselves provides a “check” on the researcher’s interpretation.

4.6.3 Social network analysis: Understanding the changes in the LNC network

The second research question is, *how can social network analysis contribute to our understanding about the outcomes and efficacy of a community work project?* In order to answer this, some social network analysis must take place.

As discussed in the preceding chapters, a social network is a set of defined relationships between actors (individuals, organisations, other entities). Social network analysis is the study of these relationships. Four sets of pre and post LNC project network diagrams are generated and analysed in this study. These are:

- The LNC referral network (referral relationships among people referred for participation in the social survey via a snowball sample).
- The LNC participants network (referral relationships among people who actually participated in the research).
- The LNC participants broader linkages networks (participants linkages to broader networks).
- LNC organisations affiliations networks (common members of organisations involved in the LNC Project).

The data and analysis techniques used for each of these network sets, and related statistical data are explained as they are presented.
4.7 Bringing the embedded elements of the case study together

The findings from the embedded studies which answer the two primary research questions are brought together in chapter nine. That chapter brings the discussion back to the research focus broadly, that is, a consideration of how social networks focus might contribute to social work practice with communities.

Chang discusses the “balancing act” between data analysis and interpretation that researchers are required to undertake. This involves a process of “zooming in and out” of the data collected and analysed. Chang (2008, p. 129) describes this in the following way:

The zoom-in approach refers to the ‘microscopic’ analysis of data through which you pay attention to details, probe into small segments at a time, and keep a focus on one data set at a time... Whereas analysis is more likely to direct you to zoom in at one data set at a time, interpretation tends to pull you away from the details to hover over the entire data and the context. The zooming-out approach privileges you with a bird’s-eye view to the data, which will enable you to see how your own case is related to others, how your case is connected to its context, and how the past has left traces in the present. An ideal data analysis and interpretation process combines the zoom-in and zoom-out approaches.

It is this “zooming out” approach that is the primary focus of chapter nine. In that chapter the findings from the previous three chapters are brought together, compared and contrasted and brought together in an attempt to better understand how a network focus can contribute to social work practice and research with communities.

4.8 Methodological Issues and Challenges

4.8.1 The role of the researcher: Participant-observation

Of primary concern in terms of the credibility of this case study, is my role in it. Throughout the entire research process I have embraced the dual roles of researcher and facilitator of the LNC network (what the role of facilitator entails is detailed in
the following chapter). In addition to this, I live in the neighbourhood where the LNC Network is based. As such, in this research project, I had become what Yin defines as a “participant-observer” (2003, p. 94)

Participant-observation is a special mode of observation in which you are not merely a passive observer. Instead, you may assume a variety of roles within a case study situation and may actually participate in the events being studied. In urban neighbourhoods, for instance, these roles may range from having casual social interactions with various residents to undertaking specific functional activities within the neighbourhood.

The benefits of such a role are found in terms of access to events and activities that other “outside” researchers would have difficulty accessing. Indeed, Yin argues that in some situations (and I believe that the present case is such a situation), the information required simply cannot be gained without the researcher having an “insider” role (Yin, 2003, p. 94). The reason for my belief that the research is best undertaken by a participant is centred on the ideas of trust, local networks and knowledge.

Having been a local resident and a member of the initial LNC network prior to the time of the research meant that I was trusted by other LNC people as someone who cared about the neighbourhood. I lived there, and would not simply “take the research away” for some abstract use. Having lived in the area for more than a decade also meant that the sampling processes were far easier, as my own networks enabled me to gain access to participants who may usually have been reluctant to participate in in-depth interviews. Participants were also aware that, as a long term resident, and member of LNC, I would actually use the knowledge gained from their participation to help the LNC network in its aims and activities. I was (and at the time of writing, still am) a fellow traveller in the story of our local community network. Taking on the role of facilitator meant that I was able to offer something to the community, in return for seeking people’s information over the time-span of the LNC project.
However, as Yin also states, there are significant problems in taking on the participant-observer role in case study research (Yin, 2003, p. 96). These centre on the issue of potential bias, and are broken down into three main problems. Firstly, the researcher may end up taking on advocacy roles which may be “contrary to the interests of good scientific practice”. Secondly, the researcher may “become a supporter of the group or organization being studied, if such support did not already exist”. And lastly, the role of participant may require a large amount of time and energy, which may allow less time for the actual process of undertaking rigorous researching (i.e., taking notes, etc.) (Yin, 2003, p. 96).

Indeed each of these things did occur, however I do not believe this is problematic, particularly in terms of the autoethnographic narrative approach adopted in chapter six. Given the purpose of the LNC network and the critical social work philosophy, it would be almost impossible for this not to happen. A full disclosure and discussion of my interests and roles is provided in the following chapter.

Getting the balance right between the opportunities the role of participant-observer offers and the issues of potential bias require treading a fine line. As Yin points out “under some circumstances, this approach to case study evidence may be just the right approach; under other circumstances, the credibility of a whole case study project can be threatened” (Yin, 2003, p. 96).

Through the ongoing processes of critical reflection upon my role in this research, detailed in each of the following chapters where the findings are discussed, I hope to prove the credibility of the research. This is not detached research; it is involved and value-based social work research, with a social justice agenda. Where bias is present, it is in the values and social justice approach upon which critical social work is based. These values have been recognised, articulated and explored, and their underlying assumptions “unsettled” throughout the research process. This is particularly relevant in chapter six, which is the story of the LNC project.
It is also useful to reflect momentarily on the discussion from the beginning of this chapter, concerning the nature of social work research. As Trevillion (200b, p. 514) has articulated, social work researchers tend to:

operate from an engaged and/or participant position within rather than outside the world that they are seeking to understand. The researcher is always ‘linked’ to the research process and this process can be conceived of in network terms. This does not mean that all genuine social work research has to be done by practitioners but rather that the discipline does not and perhaps cannot aspire to neutrality. ‘Independent’ social work researchers are usually independent only insofar as they are not directly involved in the situations they research. They are rarely, if ever, indifferent to the issues they explore and will always have to position themselves in terms of their own values, primary affiliations and interests as part of the research.

4.8.2 Disclosing the case study site

The issue of whether or not to disclose the location of the study and details of the community work project is a vexed one. There are obvious benefits in terms of the “chain of evidence” and the overall credibility of the research if places and participants are identified so that readers can match what they read with what may already be known about the case. As explained by Yin (2003, pp. 157-158):

Disclosure produces two helpful outcomes. First, the reader is able to recall any other previous information he or she may have learned about the same case – from previous research or other sources – in reading and interpreting the case report ... Second, the entire case can be reviewed more readily, so that footnotes and citations can be checked, if necessary, and appropriate criticism can be raised about the published case.

Yet our neighbourhood is small, and the various networks within our neighbourhood network are not difficult to identify. Participants were assured that their participation in interviews and surveys would be anonymous, and every attempt to ensure this has occurred throughout the research. Organisations involved were asked
if they wished to be identified in the thesis and any associated publications. Those who did not, have simply been noted as “an organisation” because to disclose the nature of the organisation in such a small community, would lead to the quick identification of the organisation.

All people in the active LNC network agreed that the name of suburb and the LNC should be disclosed, as people involved were happy for the achievements and struggles of the suburb to be identified. Therefore at the level of the case the neighbourhood and the network, and most organisations are identified. However at the individual participant level, there is no identification.

4.8.3 Issues of research design quality and credibility in the case study

Yin (2003) suggests there are four tests to apply to the research design when considering the quality of research in general. These are: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Each of these four tests are briefly outlined here, with a consideration of how the present case study responds to each of the tests.

4.8.3.1 Construct validity

Construct validity concerns “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” (Yin, 2003, p. 33). In case study research, suggested ways in which to increase construct validity include; using multiple sources of evidence to answer the research question, establishing a “chain of evidence” and lastly to allow a draft copy of the case study to be reviewed by the primary or key participants (Yin, 2003, p. 36). The ways in which each of these elements have been addressed in this study are explained here.

Multiple sources of evidence:
The benefit of a using multiple sources of evidence in the case study framework lies in allowing the researcher “to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioural issues” (Yin, 2003, p. 98). However, Yin notes that multiple sources of data are most important in terms of developing “converging lines of inquiry” (Yin, 2003, p. 98). This is also known as triangulation. Yin discusses four different types of triangulation:
1. of data sources (data triangulation)
2. among different evaluators (investigator triangulation)
3. of perspectives to the same data set (theory triangulation), and

In this case study, I am using both the first and third types of triangulation. As described in this chapter, there are multiple data sources used in order to address the research focus, and answer the two main questions. In addition, the same data sets are used to gain different perspectives. In this case study, elements of the various sources of data have been used in both the narrative research and the social network analysis. Each analysis responds to a different sub-question; however the information is combined in chapter nine to provide a response to the overarching research question.

*Establishing a chain of evidence*

To establish a chain of evidence means to provide adequate and detailed information on the research processes involved in the case study from the development of the research question through to the case study conclusion. This information allows the reader of the research to follow the trail of logic and decision making in the case study.

The chain of evidence is established in this case study via procedures such as the inclusion of a comprehensive review of the literature (chapters two and three), and the logical formation of the stated research question and sub-questions stemming from the gap in this literature. A case study data base of all data collected has also been discussed (in this chapter) and is another link in a chain of evidence. The detailed discussion of analysis in this and subsequent chapters also aim to assist the reader to understand the analytical decisions made and ultimately the conclusions drawn in the final chapters.
Draft of the case study

A presentation of the major case study findings was given at a neighbourhood meeting in March 2011. There was opportunity for participant and community feedback on the findings both publicly and privately prior to the final draft of the thesis.

4.8.3.2 Internal validity

Internal validity is only a concern for casual (or explanatory) case studies, in which an investigator is trying to determine whether event x led to event y. If the investigator incorrectly concludes that there is a causal relationship between x and y without knowing that some third factor –z- may actually have caused y, the research design has failed to deal with some threat to internal validity (Yin, 2003, p. 36).

Because my research is based in a community and I cannot control for effects of everything in everybody’s lives – then this is not explanatory research, and I cannot argue for internal validity. Basically, as argued in Yin (2003, p. 36) I am aware that any inferences I make will have to be scrutinised. I have aimed to provide a strong rationale and explanation based on the case study data for any inferences or “assertions” (Stake, 1995). These processes assist with addressing ideas of internal validity within a case study design.

4.8.3.3 External validity

External validity or consistency is linked to the concept of “generalisablity” and refers to the whether the study’s findings are “generaliseable beyond the immediate case study” (Yin, 2003, p. 37). Whilst critics have argued that the major weakness of case study research is the inability to generalise, proponents have countered that case study research is not generally concerned with concepts of ‘statistical generalisation’ of findings. There is no assumption in case study research that the findings can provide the basis for universal generalisations about an issue, phenomenon or population. In case study research, a different mode of generalization is used. This is called “analytic generalization” (Yin, 2003, pp. 32-33).
Analytic generalization involves using previously developed theory to compare against the findings of the case study. Ideally, the more cases that can demonstrate support for the theory, the stronger the argument. Yet comprehensive, multiple method case studies which include a range of data sources can provide strong foundations to support a theory. This is an additional reason for the use of multiple data sources and methods of analysis in this case study.

4.8.3.4 Reliability

The objective is to be sure that if a later investigator followed the same procedures as described by an earlier investigator and conducted the same case study all over again, the later investigator should arrive at the same findings and conclusions... The goal of reliability is to minimize the errors and biases in the study (Yin, 2003, p. 37).

Yin suggests the use of either a “case study protocol” or the development of a “case study data-base” where all the case study procedures are documented so that another researcher could do the same case study again (Yin, 2003, p. 38). As previously discussed, a case study data base has been included in this study (appendix 7).

The overview of the research design in this chapter, as well as the information on analysis in the following chapters allow the reader to understand the each of the steps taken in the research process. There are differences in terms of reliability in the two studies however. In the social network analysis, the social survey data gathering could be easily reproduced, and the findings in terms of network data and social survey data analysis could be expected to be similar or the same. However the nature of the narrative inquiry is such that it could not ever be produced in the same way, as the author would be different. Given that the role and place of the researcher is overt in narrative enquiry, the notion of “reliability” is not used in narrative enquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), however other techniques such as ‘trustworthiness’ are. These are explained in chapter six.
4.9 Why not participatory action research?

Given that this project is a community work project, and that the research project stemmed from the researchers involvement in the LNC community network, one may logically ask why a participatory action research design was not selected. There are numerous types of action research, with differing levels of stakeholder participation emphasised. A general definition by Stringer states that “action research is a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives” (Stringer, 2007, p. 1).

There was much consideration at the outset, and indeed throughout the first months of the project as to whether this was a participatory action research project. In particular, a community based action research (Stringer, 2007) project. There is in fact, much in common between ABCD and community based action research. The identification of stakeholders, their aspirations and the variety of resources they bring to the community are fundamental to both approaches. However community based action research rests on a premise that a problem or issue has been identified by the community that they wish to find out about, together. The LNC project grew organically from interaction among quite a small group of people (the researcher included) who reside in the suburb, all of whom noticed that there seemed to be little interaction among people from different cultural backgrounds. Whilst the model of ABCD assumes community participation, the research questions focus on the use of network ideas and social network analysis in social work with communities, was developed by me alone. There was not a community consensus process to define the research questions, as would be expected in a participatory action research study.

In the community there was however, an agreed upon desire to create opportunities for meaningful engagement among people in the area, regardless of background. It is more a matter of emphasis. The LNC project’s being on the creating of opportunities for interaction and engagement across cultural groups, within a strengths framework, rather than on attempting to resolve a problem. Mine being to document and analyse this project in order to answer my professional questions about network focused ABCD approaches.
A final reason for not framing this thesis as participatory action research is that “participation” by community members was in the LNC project itself, not the actual gathering and analysis of research data. The community work was guided by the LNC members, and they attended and participated in many activities. Therefore the LNC did not act as a research reference group in a formal way, but more as the inspiration for activity, a place for discussion and reflection, and a source of resources.

4.10 Summary & overview of the next four chapters

This chapter has provided an overview of the research focus and questions, and introduced and explained the overarching case study design. The embedded narrative and social network analysis methods have been outlined also. These methods were introduced in the broader context of social work research methodology, informed by a critical realist epistemology which I argued fits well with the critical social work philosophy applied to this thesis.

The following four chapters present various aspects of the findings. Chapter five provides an in-depth look at the context of the community work. The suburb of Ludmilla is described in detail, as is the formation of the LNC network. Chapter five lays the foundation for the following three chapters which detail the findings. Chapter six presents the more internal looking story of LNC project from a number of viewpoints. Chapter seven is centred on the links and connections between the internal and external looking aspects of community work using social network analysis to explore how effective the LNC project has been in terms of growing and strengthening the LNC network. Chapter eight is more evaluative in focus, using a narrative content analysis to evaluate feedback data about the LNC project. Chapter nine brings the findings from three previous chapters together in order to combine the information and round off the case study and address the primary research focus: how might a social networks focus contribute to social work with communities?
Chapter Five

The Case Study Site and the Case
Chapter Five

The Case Study Site and the Case

To undertake a community work project, a strong understanding of the context is required; indeed a critical approach demands a consideration of the context from multiple perspectives. This chapter provides an overview of the suburb of Ludmilla using five types of data: demographic, geographic, historical, and contemporary media and community member narratives.

Ludmilla is located on Larrakia land. The Larrakia are the Aboriginal traditional owners of the area. Ludmilla has a history which reaches back far beyond that documented since colonisation. Ludmilla is a multicultural community, with an extremely diverse, yet culturally separated population. As will be explored in this chapter, the neighbourhood has many assets located within the people, groups, the natural and built environment and the various organisations in the area.

Ludmilla also experiences significant challenges. The majority of the Aboriginal community members are physically and social separated from the rest of the neighbourhood, residing in areas called “Bagot” and “Minmarama” Communities. There are relatively high crime rates across the neighbourhood. The continued threat of large scale industrial and residential development on local bushland looms large. The local primary school often struggles to keep up enrolments and has been under the threat of closure over recent years. Because of these issues and others, and in order to attempt to develop a “sense of community” in the area, a grass roots community network, named Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections (LNC) was formed in mid 2007. The formation of this group, and the LNC project which grew out of this group, are detailed in the latter part of this chapter.
5.1 Methodology

A range of data was used to develop the description of the case study site and the formation of the LNC (the case study subject). This includes:

- ABS census data (2006 census)
- *Northern Territory News* articles about Ludmilla and Bagot Communities
- Historical literature about Darwin (a range of articles, theses, books and reports)
- Interviews with community members from different cultural backgrounds
- Field data (reflective field journal, LNC meeting notes, photographs)

The ABS census data was used to generate descriptive statistics about the suburb generally. Historical literature was located via a search of Charles Darwin University Library catalogue, searches of on-line data bases focusing on Australian history, and discussion with local historian Samantha Wells (who provided further references).

A narrative analysis of articles, editorial and public comment in the local newspaper, *The Northern Territory News (or NT News)* was undertaken for the five years leading up to the beginning of the project (January 2004 to December 2008). The process of data collection and analysis is explained fully when that analysis is presented later in the chapter.

Sections of interviews with seven community members are also used in this chapter. These sections are presented ‘as is’ that is, directly taken from conversations with people about the neighbourhood. They are not analysed, but presented to demonstrate particular points or add detail to descriptions and give a local flavour and depth. Drawing upon Riessman’s (2008) narrative methodology, I have often included my own part in the conversations, acknowledging that narratives are co-constructed, that is, participants narratives are generally developed for a particular listener, in this case, myself. A description of these participants is provided in the following section.
5.2 Introducing some of the neighbours

Some community members are very briefly introduced here in order to provide further context, and to demonstrate that there are a range of voices intertwined with my own throughout this chapter, and the following one. There are eight people in total, all selected because they had lived in Ludmilla for different lengths of time, and come from a range of cultural backgrounds. Their names and some particularly distinguishing features have been changed so they can remain anonymous.

Susan is 77 years old and retired. She moved to Ludmilla 50 years ago. She has three grown children living interstate, and she provides a high level of care for her husband.

Frank is 80 years of age and married to Susan. He immigrated to Australia from Europe 55 years ago. Frank is chronically ill.

Pamela is 65 years old and was born in Adelaide. She has lived in Ludmilla for over 30 years. Pamela does part-time volunteer work and is married with grown children.

Tony is 40 years old, of Eastern European heritage. He has lived in Ludmilla for 6 years. He is married with two young children. Tony works full time.

John is 50, he and his family moved to Ludmilla 12 years ago from interstate. He works full time and is actively involved in a number of community groups.

Stephanie is 32 years old, married with four children. She is an Aboriginal woman who has lived in Bagot community almost her whole life. She works part time.

Ida is Stephanie’s mother, and a community leader. She is 63 years old and came to Bagot as a teenager to marry her “promised husband”. She is divorced and spends much of her time caring for her many children and grandchildren.

Paul is 48, he is a professional with teenage children and a de-facto partner. He has lived in Ludmilla with his family for 8 years.
The majority of these participants were interviewed both at the beginning and end of the LNC project and a more informal dialogue was maintained with all of them in different ways throughout the project timeframe. Tony was interviewed only at the beginning of the LNC project, as he moved away. Paul was interviewed only at the end of the project, as he became involved mid-way through.

5.3 Geographical context of Ludmilla

The geography of Ludmilla is unique in that it is the only urban area in Darwin that contains a substantial area of mangrove forest. The mangroves and bushland loom large in the identity of the area, as one resident discusses:

Pamela: I suppose there are flasher places, but it depends, the way I look at it, it’s more to do with lifestyle. I suppose it’s just little things, like when you go out to go onto Dick Ward Drive, I like going along there where the creek is and checking out whether its high tide, low tide, and things like that. At one stage, about 20 years ago, they wanted to develop that area there, called umm, Floriette Gardens, and I actually went, put in a submission, and went to a meeting against it, ‘cause they were going to get rid of all the mangroves.

Ludmilla is situated in the city of Darwin, which is located in the Northern Territory of Australia. The Northern Territory is large geographically, covering 1,346,200 square kilometres (ABS, 2007b) or 17% of Australia’s land mass. Yet the population is small (approximately 220,000), making up only approximately 1% of the total number of people in Australia (ABS, 2009). In June 2009, 124,800 people resided in Darwin. Approximately 9% of people living in Darwin identify as Indigenous (DCC, 2010). The city is in the unique position of being both a capital city as well as being classified as a “remote area” by the Australian Taxation Office (ABS, 2009).
Figure 5. Map of Australia showing location of Darwin

The yellow shaded area in figure 6 (over page) shows the suburb of Ludmilla. Ludmilla is a suburb of Darwin city and is located between the mangrove fringed Darwin harbour and a major arterial road (Bagot Road). The area encompasses a tidal creek and the largest section of mangrove in the city of Darwin (apart from Charles Darwin National Park). The area is also home to Bagot Community and adjacent to another Indigenous community, called Minmarama. Across Bagot Road is a large Australian Defence Force Community, the Royal Australian Air Force base, and the Darwin International Airport grounds.
Many people talk about Ludmilla being four communities within one, because some parts of the area are physically separated by a range of natural and built features. The following conversation excerpts demonstrate this.
**An excerpt from a conversation with Susan**

Susan: Ludmilla is an interesting ‘slice’ as a community because it’s so isolated in a way from one end to the other.

Gretchen: Yeah?

Susan: By the School, and by Bagot.

**An excerpt from a conversation with John**

John: You’ve got this elite area on one street and then you’ve got the poorest of the poor behind them. And then, none have anything to do with each other, but they live in the same area.

**Excerpt from a conversation with Tony**

Tony: This part of Ludmilla, It’s not “Ludmilla Heights” so to speak

Gretchen: Yeah?

Tony: That’s down the other end near the park, the footy park.

Gretchen: So you see there, as being different parts of Ludmilla?

Tony: Oh, well, yes. I mean, it’s just the topography’s different, being slightly on the hill. And on the other side of the creek it’s different.

**Excerpt from a conversation with Pamela**

Pamela: I suppose you’d call it “Ludmilla North” over the other side of Bagot and, perhaps, I suppose our area , we sort of think of as between, say Bagot and umm, Nemarluk Drive. And then, but then you know, there’s Ludmilla over the other side and Ludmilla over that side [points]. Umm, and I suppose, yeah, you could say Bagot would be a distinct area. Umm, yeah I suppose ‘cause you mainly think of your own little pocket, sort of thing, but within the, the bigger part of Ludmilla.

A number of the key issues for people in the neighbourhood are related to the geographic position of Ludmilla. A large area of the suburb is located under the flight path; as such noise pollution from the RAAF planes and Darwin International airport is a major issue for many residents. Ongoing applications by developers and
land holders to re-zone and develop bushland and mangrove areas have resulted in
decades of debate over land use in the suburb. Related to this debate are newer
concerns about the impact of global climate change in terms of sea level rise in the
low laying areas of the suburb. Housing shortages across Darwin have also put
renewed pressure upon the NT government to close down or drastically change
Bagot Community to allow for more residential development.

5.4 Demographic profile of Ludmilla

The following table gives a quick snap shot of the demographic profile of Ludmilla
at the time the LNC network was formed. The information is taken from 2006
census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2007a)

Table 1. Demographic profile of Ludmilla, NT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Persons</th>
<th>1,703</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Males</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Females</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>33 years</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Indigenous Persons</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total born overseas (mainly United Kingdom, Philippines, Greece and Indonesia)</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total neither Indigenous nor born overseas</td>
<td>1,024</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total families</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>(63.3% with children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>3.6% (5.2% nationally)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median weekly individual income (aged over 15 years)</td>
<td>$577 (median Australian individual income $466)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner occupied houses (including mortgaged)</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented homes</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other tenure/not stated</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in this table (Table 1) demonstrates that just prior to the time the LNC
project began, Ludmilla (as with the rest of Darwin) had a relatively young
population, and large number of families. Whilst over half of homes are owned (or
mortgaged) by the occupants, 35% of homes are rented. Both the relatively young age of the population (national average is 37 years) and the number of rental homes, reflects a broader issue for Northern Territory, which is the above average population turnover (Lawrie, 2010). Northern Territory population turnover has been described as “volatile” with approximately 18,000 (or 9% of) people moving to or from the Northern Territory each year (Lawrie, 2010).

The data also provides some indication of the cultural diversity in the area, with almost 40% of residents being either Aboriginal or born outside of Australia. Approximately one quarter of residents identify as “Indigenous Australian”.

Whilst the unemployment rate appears low at 3.6%, these figures include Aboriginal people employed via the Commonwealth Government CDEP (Community Development Employment Program) in Bagot and Minmirama communities. CDEP is an employment and social development program which aims to help “Indigenous job seekers to gain the skills, training and capabilities needed to find sustainable employment and improves the economic and social well-being of communities” (Department of Families, 2011). If CDEP program participants were not added to the employment figures, the unemployment rate would be significantly higher (Altman & Gray, 2005).

5.5 An historical overview of the setting

The history of the area now called Ludmilla is long and at times difficult to negotiate. The history of Bagot community is more difficult still. As local historian, David Carment has discussed, this is because “alternative histories are sometimes in the Territory, as elsewhere, actively discouraged” (Carment, 2007, p. 5). An example of such “discouragement” involved Northern Territory Ministers overruling the History Awards Committee’s recommendation for a grant to fund a major project documenting the history of Bagot Aboriginal reserve. The decision was based “on the grounds that inappropriate research was being promoted” which did not fit with the Territory governments emphasis on “frontier lifestyles and industries, colourful
and prominent individuals and ultimately successful battles to overcome hardship and adversity” (Carment, 2007, p.5).

This historical information included in this section provides some background for understanding why the neighbourhood can be considered “divided” along cultural lines at the current time. Much of the information in this section comes from two local historians, Samantha Wells (1995, 2001) and Julie Wells (1995). Samantha and Julie are not related to one another.

5.5.1 The Larrakia people and European settlement

The process of European colonisation of Aboriginal Australia began over 220 years ago when the first English colonies were established in New South Wales. Due to a complex range of factors including distance from the southern colonies, extremes of environment and ‘sheer incompetence’ the northern part of Australia was settled much later than the southern parts of the continent (Carment, 1996, p. 2). The first successful attempt at building a colony in the area now known as Darwin began in 1869, just over 140 years ago (Carment, 1996).

Prior to the settlement of Darwin, the local Aboriginal population, the Larrakia people (approximately 500 people at that time) had free and open access to the land, sea, mangroves and lagoons. “Larrakia” is the language group name for the Aboriginal traditional owners of Darwin. The term “Larrakia” refers to these traditional owners as well as the traditional lands and language of these people. Whilst there is blurring around some of the edges, it is generally understood that “Larrakia country includes the land and waters of the Darwin and Cox Peninsulas, including the adjacent islands. It stretches to Shoal Bay, the Vernon Islands and the Adelaide River” (Wells, 2001, p. 6).

Soon after European settlement, much Larrakia land was cleared for buildings. Imported animals polluted local freshwater creeks, and fences were constructed to separate people of different cultures. Aboriginal people “became subject to restrictions on their land as the newcomers determined what was appropriate behaviour for Aboriginal people living in this changing space” (Wells, 2001, p. 11).
5.5.2 Enforced separation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people

From the 1870’s onwards, Aboriginal residents of the Darwin area were restricted more and more by a range of Commonwealth and South Australian Acts and Laws. Such legislation was introduced to “protect” Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from each other and to avoid conflict between the various populations of the fledgling town.

The 1880’s and 1890’s saw a rush to the goldfields in the Pine Creek area of the Northern Territory. Thousands of Chinese people and many hundreds of Europeans came to the Territory attempting to find their fortune. Darwin was becoming a multicultural hub. Later, as pearl shell was discovered many Japanese and Filipino pearling luggers travelled to the seas around Darwin. By the early 1900’s the township of Darwin was firmly established with private houses, hotels, a bank, newspaper office, a small collection of business and stores, churches, a school and hospital among a range of other facilities such as a Chinese Joss House and a cricket oval (Wells 2001).

In order to control Aboriginal people in Northern Australia and oversee their relationships with the non-Aboriginal population, an enforced “compound” was established in 1913. The Kahlin Compound was the first of the compounds established in the Northern Territory to contain all Aboriginal people (HREOC 2007). Aboriginal people were subject to various oppressive laws which restricted and monitored their movements. The compound housed Aboriginal people from the Larrakia, Wagait and Woolner groups and was located at Mily Point (Cummings 1990 in J. Wells, 1995) which was at that time, on the edge of Darwin. The following description from Julie Wells (1995, p. 22) includes quotes from Cummings (1990, p. 18 cited in Wells 1995, p.22)

The whole compound was fenced in with ‘no one save Aboriginals and officials of the Department [having] access to it, except by order’. There was a curfew for Aboriginals between sunset and sunrise and they were not permitted to leave Darwin without the consent of the Superintendent or a Protector. A garden and fish trap were established and provided a source of
the labour and sustenance. Rations were distributed to ‘old and indigent’ natives while others were self-sufficient gaining paid employment in the garden, in private houses or in business places. As on mission and government settlements, the women were schooled in such ‘domestic’ duties as sewing, cooking and cleaning and ‘mending’ was done by the inmates for themselves as well as for patients at the Hospital and the Channel Island Leprosarium.

5.5.3 The establishment of Bagot Compound

Due to increasing population, overcrowding, run down facilities and the need for more land in the town area, Kahlin Compound was closed and residents were moved to a new site, called Bagot Compound, in 1938. The site selected for the new reserve was a property of 369 acres next to the Ludmilla Creek known as both “Eight Mile” and “Wilson’s” (Day, n.d.). This was considered a suitable site because it was located on Larrakia land, had access to traditional camping, hunting and fishing spots and was close “to centres of totemic and ceremonial significance” and a sanctuary where their old people would “find every comfort and care in their declining years” (Kirkland 1936 cited in J. Wells, 1995, p. 36).

There was no discrimination between different language groups, and the Larrakia people were housed together with Aboriginal peoples from various nearby areas. Julie Wells writes that the Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Dr Cecil Cook, held a strong belief in theories of eugenics and enforced the distinctions between different “types” of Aboriginal people. Dr Cook believed that that “colour” could be “bred out” of Aborigines, thus converting them “from a social incubus to a civil unit of economic value” (Wells, 1995, p. 44). Cook’s vision for Bagot Compound was that of a “settlement village” with four main functions:

1) provide decent and sanitary living conditions
2) remove the Aboriginal community from the centre of the town
3) provide accommodation for a “native workforce”
4) begin the process of ‘converting’ or teaching the Aboriginal community the skills they would need to become active, independent participants in the wider community (J. Wells, 1995, p. 44).
Bagot Compound was segregated at this time, with a “half caste” home on one side, and “native quarters” on the other. There were separate schools at the compound based on these distinctions, and very different living conditions. As Wells (1995, p. 27) states: “such design and the adoption of different policies for distinct ‘categories’ of Aborigines were to create rifts in the Darwin Aboriginal population which remain apparent today.”

The year 1946 saw the establishment of the Retta Dixon Home by the Aborigines Inland Mission, a home for Aboriginal children of mixed descent and single mothers on Bagot Compound grounds. This marked the beginning of the reduction, resumption or “taking back”, of Bagot land. Whilst twenty acres were used for the Retta Dixon home, another eleven acres was resumed for the construction of Bagot Road (Day, n.d.). By the mid 1950’s there was a population of approximately 300 people living at the Bagot Compound.

Times were changing and gradually laws enforcing segregation changed to those of assimilation. In 1953 The NT Welfare Ordinance was passed. This meant that now Aboriginal people of mixed descent could be “trained” to live as Europeans and could obtain full citizenship, whilst “full blood” Aborigines became wards of the state (Day, 1994; J. Wells, 1995). The following conversations reveal the way that history impacted people’s lives and their views today.

* A conversation between Stephanie, Ida (from Bagot Community) and myself

Stephanie: A long time ago, you know Gretch, I hear stories from my mum, dad, my nana. They used to have gates at the front that didn’t allow all the people leaving here, you know.

Gretchen: Yeah?

Stephanie: Gates to keep them mob in, not allowed to mix with the people in the suburb, where today now we can just walk free and that, go where we want in the suburb. I think that’s a big change maybe Mum will see.
Gretchen: Yeah?

Stephanie: Allowing them mob to actually go out the gate,

Ida: We were not allowed to go on transport, like the bus.

Gretchen: You weren’t allowed to?

Ida: No. We weren’t allowed to mix in the old umm, umm, Star Theatre, at that time, they had a special place in front for us, and then a big high fence where we can’t, we can’t go across or anything, and European people or whatever, they can’t come to us.

Gretchen: Yeah?

Ida: And we only had Wednesday nights, when they had the, ahh, “Cowboys” on, that was the only time that we went to the pictures.

Gretchen: The only time you were allowed to, or?

Ida: Yeah.

Gretchen: Okay.

Ida: The only time we were allowed to go there. It was just like, ahh, if they see any of our people walking in the streets, they bashed them up.

Gretchen: True?

Ida: Something like that. When we were kids wanting to go out and get some goanna and yam and some bush food, we used to go out to the beach, collect some shellfish. But we weren’t allowed, this area was
just all blocked off. We weren’t allowed to walk out on the street like any other people.

_A conversation between Susan & Gretchen_

Gretchen: Have you had, over all these years, have you had much interaction with people from the Bagot community at all?

Susan: No. No, only in the early days we used to go to those open days. That’s all.

Gretchen: Yes.

Susan: Oh!, I, the CWA [Country Women’s Association] actually, started a homemaking group up in there in those days when they were trying to assimilate them, and umm, they went up there and tried to teach them sewing and knitting and crocheting and basic cooking and all that sort of stuff which was pretty [pause], a waste of time in way. But I had very little to do with that but I did go there a couple of times and you know, everyone was very nice and polite and we all talked together and one thing and another.

Gretchen: Mmm.

Susan: But umm no, I haven’t had much to do with them otherwise.

Darwin was declared a town in 1959, the population was growing, and increasingly political pressure was mounting to develop residential housing on the Bagot land. The idea of moving Bagot Reserve was debated over a number of years. There were suggestions that there was too much land on the reserve, much of which was secluded and difficult to supervise. This was problematic for the protectors, as they believed there were too many opportunities for anti-social behaviour to occur (S. Wells, 1995).
In his second report to the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission, Justice Woodward (Woodward, 1974) documented the debate over the future of Bagot Compound as recorded in internal government correspondence from the 1960s. Woodward (1974, p. 55) stated “it is worth setting out the history [of Bagot] in some detail, since it illustrates the way in which Aboriginal interests can be lost sight of when other requirements become pressing.”

5.5.4 The resumption of Bagot Reserve: Making way for a growing town.

Despite some initial reservations, Federal Government Minister for the Interior, Sir Paul Hasluck approved the excision of the majority of Bagot Reserve in 1962 in successive stages to provide blocks of land on which to build new houses. One of the conditions placed upon this excision was that one in every three blocks of the entire sub-division (that is one third of the new housing blocks in Ludmilla) was to be kept for Aboriginal housing (Woodward, 1974). None of these conditions were met. Bagot Reserve was formally resumed in 1965 and this reduced the area of Bagot Reserve from 743 acres down to only 57 acres.

Bagot Reserve now had to share three of its fences with the new sub-division of Ludmilla, and one with main arterial road (Bagot Road). As Woodward stated in his Land Rights Commission report, it is difficult to see how it was ensured “that Aborigines would benefit from the sub-division .... They lost a large area of useful land and have nothing to show for it” (Woodward, 1974, p. 62).

This situation is reflective of issues Aboriginal people were facing across Australia. Aboriginal people had few rights and were barely considered to be citizens of this country until the 1960’s. Aboriginal people could not vote until 1962 and were not counted in the Australian census until 1967 (Queensland University of Tecnology (QUT), 2010).

In June 1973, the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission held a hearing at Bagot Community. The first report of the Commissioner, Judge Woodward, advised that the Bagot demands centred on the obtaining title to the reserve so that they could
develop the community as they wished. This included community living areas, flats and houses (Woodward, 1973). This was delayed due to Cyclone Tracey (one of Australia’s worst natural disasters), which caused damage and evacuations from Bagot Community in 1974. Eventually new homes were built as the community was re-established along with the rest of Darwin. In the late 1970’s “the reserve was vested in Aboriginal custodians to become a self-governing community for permanent residents and visitors to Darwin” (Day, n.d.).

Over the past decades since the 1970’s there have been sporadic efforts by various politicians at both local, territory, and federal level to move Bagot Community, “get rid of it” entirely, or to turn Bagot Community into a “normal suburb” (Calacouras, 2007; Day, n.d.). Some attempts have been more blatantly racist than others.

5.5.5 Bagot Community 2008

To fast forward to 2008 (the time of the pre LNC project measurements) in the Northern Territory, many Aboriginal people still live in what used to be “enforced compounds”, but living in these areas is no longer enforced and these compounds are now called “communities”. In some cases, such as in the suburb of Ludmilla, Aboriginal communities are geographically located within, or alongside newer suburbs.

Bagot Community is separated by a fence from the rest of the geographic community. It is home to approximately 350 Aboriginal people. Whilst these are no longer enforced communities, most have become “prescribed communities” since 2007. This means the community is subject to legislation which involves the quarantining of 50% of government welfare entitlements, the restriction of availability of alcohol and pornographic material, and other controls under the Federal Government’s Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) of 2007.

The NTER is a contentious intervention. In 2006, the Northern Territory government commissioned research into allegations of the sexual abuse of children in Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. An inquiry was established to consult with a broad range of stakeholders to find better ways to protect Aboriginal

On 23 June 2007 (less than two weeks later) the federal government claimed that there was a national crisis of child sexual abuse occurring in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities and announced a massive intervention (involving the military and a range of other government service providers), the NTER. The NTER has often been simply called “the intervention” and it continues (in a modified format) to this day. The suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act was required for the NTER legislation to be enacted (Stringer, 2007).

A recent report co-authored by a Bagot Community resident, demonstrates that life within Bagot Community is very different to life outside its fences. There are significant problems with overcrowded and under-maintained housing. There are high rates of poverty, unemployment and significant issues with drug and alcohol abuse (Other-Gee & White, 2010). Importantly however, there are also many strong and supportive bonds between residents, many creative people and organisations, and strong leaders with visions of a better future (Other-Gee & White, 2010).

### 5.5.6 Minmarama Community

The demographically smaller Minmirama Community was established much later than Bagot, and under very different circumstances. After a long struggle for their land, one of the Larrakia family groups (known as the Gwalwa Darinki Association) were successful in gaining a special purpose lease over a parcel of this land (see Day, 1994). The area, known as Kulaluk (301 hectares), includes parts of the Ludmilla area, and parts of the adjacent suburb of Coconut Grove. The special purpose lease came into effect in May 1979.

The lease specified that the Gwalwa Daraniki Association could use the land only for Special Community Development and contained a number of conditions which generally required that any development of the site would require planning approval by the Department of Lands (now the Department...
of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment). Today the Gwalwa Daraniki
Association operates Minmarama Park, which consists of rental housing for
families and single men and women. The Association also operates Juninga
Old People's Home which is located in Coconut Grove (Henry, 2007, p. 41).

5.5.7 The developing suburb of Ludmilla

The rest of the suburb of Ludmilla began to develop around Bagot community in the
1960’s. There have been a number of boundary changes over the years resulting in a
range of dwellings being included and excluded as part of the suburb. Many of the
original dwellings built in the 1950’s were in areas once called Fannie Bay, Parap or
Bagot Subdivision. These houses are in what locals refer to as “upper Ludmilla”.
They are located furthest away from Bagot Community, and are significantly larger
and more expensive than houses in the newer area of Ludmilla.

Large areas of the newer section of the suburb (excised from Bagot Community)
were originally built as public housing. Many were built under the flight path of
Darwin International Airport, which includes the Royal Australian Air Force
(RAAF) base. However most of these houses have been sold off to private owners
over the last decade. There are now only a handful of public housing dwellings in
the area. There are also Aboriginal people who live in Ludmilla, outside of Bagot
Community. However, most Aboriginal people in the area live within Bagot
Community.

Other key aspects of the neighbourhood which can be viewed as assets (because of
the people involved and their physical structures) include The Ludmilla School,
Nemarluk School, and Richardson Park. Ludmilla School was built in 1967. The
school has been an important part of the Ludmilla community throughout its four
decades. For example, the school became an emergency food and housing centre in
the days and weeks after Cyclone Tracey hit Darwin in 1974. The school grounds
have also been consistently and regularly used for sporting and other community
events over the years (Henry, 2007). At its peak the school had approximately 450
students enrolled (Henry, 2007). Currently however, the school is experiencing
declining enrolments, with approximately 120 students in 2008. Many children at
Ludmilla School reside at either Bagot Community or in the RAAF base housing located in The Narrows (an adjoining suburb).

Nemarluk School (for children with developmental disabilities) was initially part of Ludmilla School, but became established as a separate entity (still located adjacent to Ludmilla School) in 1986. Most children who attend Nemarluk School are from outside the Ludmilla area, as it is the only primary school in the area of greater Darwin which is specifically designed for working with children with special needs only.

A large rugby league sportsground, Richardson Park, was established in 1956, and continues to provide the area with a large football ground and club house. Anglicare NT has offices and an ‘op-shop’ in Ludmilla and Legacy also has its Darwin office in Ludmilla. There are two service stations, and McDonald’s fast-food restaurant. A large Bunning’s (hardware) warehouse sits on the edge of the suburb. Ludmilla has three small parks with play equipment.

5.5.8 A divided community?

To bring the discussion to the current context, we have a situation in Ludmilla where a large proportion of the residents live within a fence that sections people off from the rest of the suburb. This separation is a product of colonisation and is based on Aboriginality. People within Bagot community (and later, Minmarama) have historically been subject to legislation the rest of the neighbourhood is not. Originally this legislation was designed to forcibly separate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people from one another, and latter to forcibly assimilate Aboriginal people into European lifestyles. As previously noted, current federal government legislation designates Bagot community a “prescribed community”.

It is my belief that these structural issues have served to separate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents in the neighbourhood, in obvious and also more subtle, culturally embedded, ways. The following conversation excerpt demonstrates how old legislation that prohibited Aboriginal people consuming alcohol prevented Frank one local man from employing Aboriginal workers.
Excerpt from a conversation with Frank

Frank: Gretchen, do you remember the days when, if I employed or asked an Aborigine to work in the garden here, and then at night I have a glass of beer and I offer him a glass of beer? The law was, they could put me in jail for six months!

Gretchen: So you would employ people to come and work here?

Frank: No I didn’t, you know, because they were, if I would give an Aboriginal a glass of beer, I would get fined.

Gretchen: That was illegal?

Frank: Mmm. And the Aboriginal wouldn’t get fined, it was me.

As LNC formed, it appeared there were very few social connections between people living in the Aboriginal communities (Bagot and Minnarama) and people in the rest of Ludmilla. There are also a number of issues between residents of Bagot and Minnarama Communities. The LNC project in this thesis however, involves primarily Bagot and the broader Ludmilla Community. This is for four main reasons. First, Bagot Community is much larger and is located geographically in the middle of Ludmilla. Secondly, there were people from Bagot Community involved in the development of LNC from the outset. Third, Minnarama was more difficult to access due the managing organisation being located in a different suburb, and there being no accessible “centre” or contact person in Minnarama. In addition to these reasons, my limited time resources meant it was more manageable to concentrate on working with Bagot Community and the associated governing organisations as I had contacts there through the LNC.

The legislative and historical issues that have contributed to social division in the neighbourhood have been overviewed. These divisions also run deep in the minds
of many Territorians both inside and outside this particular case study site. The attitudes expressed in the conversation with Frank (below) are not unusual.

Conversing with Frank

Gretchen: Frank, have you had much to do with people from Bagot community?

Frank: No. Not when I see how we got used up and how the Aboriginal people got the money and we got the problems today. They were nice people when I came. You know, really nice, they said hello. Now it’s “give me money, give me a smoke”.

Gretchen: Hmm.

Frank: Ahh, they don’t want to work. I was a worker. I couldn’t understand why they get so much for doing nothing. And want more, more, more. First you give the grog, then you give them the land, then you give the money. What else you going to do uh? The whole thing’s collapsed. I am a racist! Call me a racist, it doesn’t worry me.

In the early days of the LNC there were numerous anecdotal examples of similar views. I became keen to understand how such racialised views were formed and sustained, not only in the realm of policy, but in subtle and related ways via popular and dominant narratives about Ludmilla and its residents. Divisions along an Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal line are consciously and unconsciously encouraged and sustained by popular, dominant cultural beliefs. Mass media (in the Northern Territory and elsewhere in Australia) provides representations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that assist in sustaining social divisions due to fear of difference, and at times racism (Goodhall, Jakubowicz, & Martin, 1994).

In the following section of this chapter, I present a review of the articles about both Bagot Community and the suburb of Ludmilla (over a five year period) in the most popular Darwin daily newspaper. As with the demographic and historical overview
of the case study site, this information is useful in providing an understanding of the issues faced in the community work project and helps to describe the case study site through a different set of narratives.

5.6 Dominant narratives: Mainstream media perceptions of the neighbourhood

A review of media representations can assist in understanding the dominant or mainstream narratives about a particular location. Media constructions of the people, organisations, events and physical environments that constitute neighbourhoods are powerful and pervasive. Media representations can impact the way a community understands itself as well as the ways others view the community and its members. The implications of these representations are significant in terms of the social reproduction of structural issues. Structural issues are embodied in media narratives which can contain uncontested assumptions based on issues such as class, culture and gender. The impact of such representations reaches beyond local communities themselves. As discussed by Hodgetts, Masters and Robertson:

Media coverage is often taken to reflect public opinion regarding policy issues, and as a result policies are more likely to be developed and implemented if policy-makers consider there to be sufficient public support ‘expressed through’ media coverage. (Hodgetts, Masters, & Robertson, 2004, p. 458)

The ways in which media represents communities and the groups that constitute them is therefore an extremely important consideration in terms of the strengths-based approach adopted in this thesis. The ability to create new and more empowering stories about ourselves and our assets is impacted by the way others see us. Individuals, groups and communities can come to see themselves as reflected in the eyes of others. Media representations impact in a broad range of ways including how people think about and treat each other in their day to day interactions through to the value of real estate, school enrolments, and the development of government policies which may enhance or alleviate social injustices (Hodgetts, et al., 2004).
5.6.1 Undertaking a media review

In order to understand dominant public narratives or ‘stories’ about Ludmilla at the outset of the LNC project, a review of stories about Ludmilla in the most widely read newspaper in Darwin, *The Northern Territory News*, was undertaken. This review was undertaken in order to gain an understanding of what aspects of the neighbourhood the media portrays, and how the media portrays them. This medium has been selected because, as Loto et al. (2006, p. 104) discuss:

> News outlets are storytelling institutions that identify and link issues and groups in society into meaningful relationships for public consumption ... In the process, no specific overall message is necessarily disseminated. Audiences are provided with an ongoing narrative exploration within which various concerns are shaped and reframed, and groups positioned socially.

Whilst other media (radio, television and on-line) is clearly also very important in terms of dominant narratives, I have selected only one local newspaper for two reasons. Firstly, the media review was part of the background to the research and not the primary focus of the thesis. Secondly, *the Northern Territory News* is a Northern Territory ‘institution’, and the most popular newspaper in Darwin. It embraces a general irreverence and dislike for ‘southerners’ and their politically correct views that might encroach on the “Territory way of life”. Arguably, *The Northern Territory News* can be viewed as part of the identity of the Territory.

*The Northern Territory News* review presented here has been undertaken using a combination of all articles, opinion pieces and letters to the editor about Ludmilla and Bagot Community. Birth notices and speed camera location notifications were eliminated from the collection. I have called all the collected items “pieces”. The collection period for the newspaper pieces was January 2004 to December 2008. This covers the five years leading up to the beginning of the LNC Project document in this thesis (January 2009).
A five year period was selected to provide a review of relatively recent representations. Given the significant population turn-over in the Northern Territory, this appeared to be an adequate time period to investigate the narratives affecting the majority of the population residing in the area at the time of the LNC project. The newspaper pieces were gathered using the Australia and New Zealand Reference Centre database which combines Australia and New Zealand specific magazines, newspapers, newswires and reference books.

An initial search of all media (print, radio, television, and web) was undertaken using the search terms “Ludmilla” and “Bagot” (within the parameters of January 2004 to December 2008). All returns were filtered to include only articles about the Northern Territory suburb of Ludmilla, and originating from *The Northern Territory News*. A totally of 359 articles were located and read. Seventy-four articles were focused on Bagot Community, 285 were focused on Ludmilla. Twenty-one of the 359 articles included references to both Ludmilla and Bagot Community, these articles were categorised into either Bagot or Ludmilla categories by determining the primary focus of the article.

The approach to the review is based on a descriptive thematic (Riessman, 2008) or content (Lieblich, et al., 1998) style of narrative analysis. The focus is upon the content of each article, rather than the structure of the piece. The reading of the newspaper pieces was undertaken with the following questions in mind:

1. Who are the main characters or “players” (people, places, objects, organisations) in the piece?
2. How are each of these characters represented, what are their various facets or dimensions?

After reading each of the pieces, major characters or players were identified, and electronic folders allocated to each character. Subsequent readings enabled sub categories to be formed for each character. The sub-categories were considered to be facets or dimensions of each character as represented in the newspaper pieces. Some individual newspaper pieces were also earmarked during this to be used as
examples of how particular characters (or dimensions that make up the character) are portrayed.

The main characters in Ludmilla and Bagot, and their facets (as represented in *The Northern Territory News*) and number of articles representing that facet are detailed in the tables at appendix 8.

### 5.6.2 Representations of Bagot Community

In summary, there were 74 *Northern Territory News* pieces about Bagot Community. The major characters in Bagot in order of prevalence were: Perpetrators of crime (25), people who are interested in sport (10), community event participants (8),
Bagot council members (7), the fence (6), the NTER (6) poor health services (6), and education and literacy programs (2).

The brief review showed that Bagot community is predominantly represented during the five year period as a place where criminal activity takes place, or where criminals originate from. One third (34%) of all Northern Territory News stories about Bagot community were crime related. Of the 10 more “positive” sports related stories, only two represented Bagot residents as actual sports players, the majority of stories were about Bagot residents (mainly children) being the receivers of visits from a range of sports stars, who come to “help” or “inspire” the children at Bagot. Rather than constructing residents as active participants in sport, it could be argued that these kind of “feel good” stories combine to reinforce a construction of a community in need of ‘charity’ from sports hero’s rather than active sportspeople themselves.

Of the eight community events at Bagot Community reported in this time period, five were about NAIDOC week celebrations (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration). Bagot Community is not mentioned in any of the headlines, but in the text of the article, usually in a list of program activity sites. Other community events reported include a “rubbish warrior” coming to help clean up the community, and a “Save the Children” play group. These stories also serve to construct Bagot community as a receiver of charity services and activities originating outside the community coming in to “help” the community.

Other characters associated with Bagot Community assist in constructing the community as lacking in various ways such as governance, health facilities, and literacy. Combined together The Northern Territory News pieces about the community present an overall picture of a crime-riddled community that requires charity of various kinds to help the residents, who do little for themselves. It is a particularly negative and disempowering representation.

It is acknowledged that media generally does not like good news stories and that this impacts the way in which any suburb, or part of a suburb is represented. With this in mind a review of the entire Ludmilla suburb was also undertaken within the same
timeframe to see what the dominant representations were and how these differed to the way in which Bagot community was represented.

5.6.3 Representations of Ludmilla

A brief analysis of *The Northern Territory News* representations of Ludmilla shows quite a different picture to the data from the review focusing only on stories involving Bagot Community. The most immediately noticeably aspect is the more complex way in which Ludmilla is represented. Ludmilla has many more characters and facets than does Bagot Community.
Figure 8. Representations of Ludmilla in The Northern Territory News

In summary, there were 285 pieces about Ludmilla in total. The characters represented were: Perpetrators and victims of crime (52), Ludmilla School (51), the natural environment (39), achievers and winners (37), dangerous drivers (23), essential services (13), politicians (10), community groups and events (10), citizens experiencing tragedy (9), people interested in sport (but lazy) (10), Nemarluk School...
Looking at some particular characters can also shed light on the differences in representation between the broader suburb of Ludmilla and Bagot Community. Almost one fifth (18%) of Ludmilla stories in *The Northern Territory News* are about crimes being committed in the suburb by perpetrators from the suburb. Most crimes were theft or burglary related, with a handful (7) of drug and alcohol related crimes. Of the 10 assault stories the perpetrator was often (4 out of 10 times) alluded to as being an Aboriginal person. The “crime” character of Bagot’s representation paints a more extreme picture of violent crime. Thirty-four percent of *The Northern Territory News* stories about Bagot Community were crime related. Of these crime stories, assaults, drink driving, murders and riot where the most reported facets of the “crime” character in Bagot Community. Only a few other crimes are reported (3) which were theft or property related crimes. It can be argued that such a representation suggests a violent and out of control community.

This is not to argue that serious crimes are not occurring in Bagot community, however, a wide range of things (many positive) also occur there, and these get no *Northern Territory News* space. The focus on violence, charity and mismanagement leaves no room for understanding the complexity of the community, but simply reinforcing the “badness” and “neediness” of Bagot community.

Related to crime, is the “dangerous driver” character in Ludmilla’s representation. It appears that dangerous driving is a concern with numerous (18) accidents (mainly on Bagot Road) reported in the five year period to 2007.

The local school is also a significant character in the representation of Ludmilla with 17% of stories focusing on this local institution. Most of these stories were positive and focused on new and innovative programs. There was a period of time when the school was threatened with closure during a re-designing period of the secondary school system in the Northern Territory. However most stories about this threat are representations of parents banding together in a fight to save the school. It is
interesting to note that whilst many of the children from Bagot community attend the school, there is nothing to indicate specifically the inclusion of Bagot community in the fight to save the school.

Nemarluk School is a minor character in the neighbourhood’s representation. Nemarluk, the main school in Darwin which accommodates children with disabilities, is mentioned eight times over the five year period. Most of these stories are reports about special funding or charity events the school is organising and hosting. This provides a representation of Nemarluk School as a place in need of resources that is doing its upmost to survive in the face of adversity.

The “natural environment” character is also important in the representation of the suburb, with both problematic facets (such as sewage, rubbish, cane toads), as well as positive stories about Ludmilla Creek. There is also a facet centred on the “wild tropical weather”, which is neither negative nor positive, but reflects a constant concern with extreme weather in this tropical, monsoonal region.

The suburb can also be viewed as a place with numerous commercial resources, as a handful of stories include mentions of Bunnings, McDonalds and local service stations. McDonalds in particular is a source of both positive and negative stories; with charity events and employment programs (aimed at Aboriginal people), but also as a scene of crime such as theft, property damage and indecent assault.

Ludmilla’s citizens and their concerns are also represented in a variety of positive ways as demonstrated by the “achievers and winners” character. Twelve percent of the stories about Ludmilla involved sporting, community, heroic or other kinds of achievements by residents. Ludmilla citizens are also represented in a sympathetic light, as experiencing tragedy and receiving community support in times of need. Residents are also portrayed as interested in watching and playing sport. In terms of more general issues, houses are getting more expensive, politicians engage with the community at times, and there have been some problems with telecommunication services and essential services such as the Power and Water Authority.
In summary, the characters (and their facets) of Ludmilla show a complex community with both positive and negative aspects. Whilst crime and dangerous driving are significant characters, there are multiple positives. An innovative school a “special school”, a natural environment (that is loved but contains threats), a range of achieving and winning residents, a range of commercial services, sports fans, sports facilities, political representation and community engagement can all be viewed as positive aspects in the way Ludmilla is represented. By comparison the representation of Bagot community over the same period of time is primarily focused on violent crimes and demonstrating that the community is “in need” of health, education and other charity services.

Of course, Bagot Community is geographically part of the suburb of Ludmilla. As such it can be argued that the representations of Ludmilla also include the residents of Bagot. However the fact that Bagot community is named as “Bagot Community” and not Ludmilla in the articles about it, and that no other section of Ludmilla is so singled out for representation in *The Northern Territory News*, demonstrates a psychological and social separating of the Bagot Community from Ludmilla.

5.6.4 The fence

“The fence” is an important character in the representation of Bagot Community and is worth considering in some detail. It was difficult to know whether to categorise the fence as part of Bagot Community or Ludmilla’s representation. Bagot Community was selected because the fence was generally discussed with reference to Bagot, and is regarded as “Bagot’s fence”. However the fence appears to loom large as a defining feature of the area, from both sides.

The fence that runs around the perimeter of Bagot Community has been in place in one form or another since the days of Bagot Compound in the 1930’s. Since the 1960’s there has been debate about whether the fence should come down, or be reinforced. Opinions vary on both sides of the fence. The following article (published at the time LNC was forming), has been included in full from *The Northern Territory News* because it quite clearly demonstrates some views from both
sides of the fence. The “rules” Lyle Cooper refers to in the article, are those put in place as a result of the NTER.

Residents rally to close Bagot gates

Northern Territory News (25.02.2008 Section: News, pg. 7)

RESIDENTS of a Territory suburb want to shut the gate on a nearby Aboriginal community - and the community agrees. Families living on Mosec Street in Ludmilla want to close a gate from Bagot Community that backs on to their road. They complain that rubbish, including wine bladders, is frequently dumped and that the road is being used as a getaway lane.

One nearby resident, Jasmin Hayward, 26, said she had found alcohol and porn magazines stashed in bushes out the front of nearby houses. “They run down Mosec St with grog when the police come,” she said. Ms Hayward said it would be more peaceful for the street if the Bagot gate was locked permanently. “There's constant fighting every night with screaming and swearing,” she said. Ms Hayward said she has discussed the problem with local politicians and is putting together a petition of local residents to have the gate shut permanently.

Bagot Council vice president Lyle Cooper said he would love to see all the back exits including the Mosec St. gate shut, leaving only the main entrance at the front with a boom gate to access the community. “We will be seeking funding to have the gates closed and the boom gate put up again,” he said.

Mr Cooper said the community wanted to implement alcohol and porn restrictions - and agreed Mosec St was used as a getaway lane by some community members evading the new rules. “With the gates open there's no way we can control it or maintain the dry area,” he said. “We'd love to comply with the rules but it can't be done with the back gates open - due to a lack of funds.”
Former indigenous affairs minister Mal Brough planned to rip down the fence around Bagot to normalise the town camp. But Bagot Council had opposed it. “It is protection -- it keeps the dogs and kids in,” Mr Cooper said.

*Figure 9. Section of Bagot Community fence*

It can be argued that the fence is both a physical and psychological barrier between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the area. The fence may serve to protect people within it from the “outside” world. It may also serve to hide the community from the rest of Darwin, because people do not want to see it, or face the stark differences in living standards between people in Bagot and people elsewhere. The fence has come up and down over past decades, but the issues about separation and fear of the “other” remains on both sides.

Importantly however, there are some gaps, gates and “holes” in the fence, through which people, information, noise and other things (symbolic and ‘real’) can flow. These “holes” provide limited access to one another, and, as described in the previous article, are contentious.

The following excerpts from conversations with Ludmilla residents demonstrates the lived reality of the fence, the different lives on either side of it, and people’s struggles to come to terms with what it is and what it means.
Excerpt from a conversation with John

John: When we first came to live in Ludmilla, Bagot was in a terrible state. Disgusting.

Gretchen: Tell me a bit about that time.

John: Ahh, it was just unruly. Along Bagot Road the fence was all torn down, there was gaps in the fence and it had all those huts, little huts, and all night you’d hear fighting and arguing and you couldn’t walk up and down the street after 9 o’clock at night because dogs would attack you

Gretchen: Really?

John: Yeah, and just, people used to sling shit at people in Bagot and Bagot used to sling shit back and there was always trouble with the traffic. The third night we were in the house a person got killed out the front, just about 100 metres up from us, run out on the road. And you know, it was just, we’ve moved into the street, you know we thought it was the buy of the century

Gretchen: Mmm.

John: First there was only a wire fence so you could see through. We first made the attempt, my wife cooked food, and they took the food, which was good. At night the men would come to the house next door though, it was the men, normally. And the abuse would start, and you couldn’t sleep, you’d yell out and then they’d start a continuous confrontation.

Gretchen: Okay
John: I was a shift worker at the time. On the wharf, it was very stressful, and no-one would sleep.

Gretchen: Did you call the police much?

John: Oh yeah, yeah, I would have threatening people on the fence with sticks, threatening us. We were, we were the only person to help, in the whole Bagot Community at the time, everybody came to us from right deep right inside Bagot come to us to ring. ‘Cause they found out that we would ring the police if they wanted help.

Gretchen: Right.

John: So we became the night (pause) the whatever, night watchmen for Bagot.

Gretchen: Like safety officers?

John: Yeah, so I’m not, I don’t want to dwell on it, but it was very very hard and difficult, and I left, I used to go to work on nightshift and would leave in, in fear of the family. And a lot of people couldn’t understand that, but we, we had a umm, two stabbings in a fortnight, one murder, next door. You know, this wasn’t just in a short period of time, this went on and on and on.

*Excerpt from a conversation with Tony*

Gretchen: Is there anything else about Ludmilla that you’d like to, you think is important to talk about, a story of being here that you think is important in any way?
Tony: Oh, differences. [long pause] Yeah I guess the [pause], it’s funny, the relationship or the presence of those residential communities of Minnarama and Bagot are sort of conflicted in and of their own, of the way they’re, they’re established and that, for so long it was ‘us and them’, it appears, historically.

You know, the need for, for their own internal desire to take control of or, manage their spaces internally because there was a period there where it was open slather for everybody. Anybody who was drifting into Darwin, of all sorts of persuasions, was occupying their space. That was probably one of the periods where there was a lot of problems for both the people inside both of those communities and outside it.

You know I guess the most typical, the symbol of the conflicted nature of it is that initial response of Mal Brough [federal Minister for Indigenous Affairs] with his intervention. When he finally got to Darwin and finally got outside the Darwin CBD to Bagot and was saying “tear down the fence” and all sorts of, [pause]. And yet it was the people inside who had, were trying to maintain the fence.

Gretchen: Mmm.

Tony: I guess I’d like to see some footy games on the oval you know.

Apart from the major fence that separated Bagot community and the rest of Ludmilla, John also makes an important observation about all the many smaller fences around people’s properties in Ludmilla, which may also serve to stop people interacting with one another.

Excerpt from a conversation with John
John: Ahhh, and it goes back again to those old, older residents who, [pause]... big fences, and dogs. I’ve got a fence up in the front of our house with shade cloth on it but that’s because of the noise of Bagot Road, but our dog barks, but I yell at it and tell it to stop and that

Gretchen: Yes.

John: But people just encourage their dogs, it’s just the mentality, it’s in Darwin, it shackles people from getting to know each other because you walk next door and you’ve got this horrible mongrel barking at the gate.

Gretchen: Mmm.

John: And I, we would never get to know people in the area because of this, that’s a big factor.

Gretchen: The dogs and the fences?

John: The dogs and the fences.

Figure 10. Example of fences around private homes in Ludmilla.
5.7 The formation of Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections

5.7.1 Responding to social division

In response to what seemed like a historically entrenched and growing social divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents, a small group of people and organisations (myself included) formed an informal group in mid 2007. This section of the chapter describes the rationale for, and early development of the group which became LNC network by the end of 2007.

In June 2007 Matthew Bonson, Member for Millner (part of the Northern Territory government), sent a letter to residents in Ludmilla (but not Bagot Community). Ludmilla and Bagot are situated in the electorate of Millner. Matthew is a “born and bred” Darwin man, from a well-known and popular Aboriginal family. Matthew had held the seat of Millner for six years. Like most Darwin electorates, Millner is small demographically, and so there are always opportunities for local members to engage with their electorate, and vice versa. Mathew was a very “hands on” local member, and knew many people from all parts of Ludmilla.

The letter sent by Matthew was headed “Bagot noise complaints”, and reported that his electoral office had received calls complaining about excessive noise coming from Bagot community “mainly centred on amplified music late into the night and early hours”. Residents were encouraged to contact the community development officer at Bagot, as well as the police, when there were issues with noise. Matthew advised residents to ask the police for a job number so that a log of complaints against Bagot Community could be compiled.

Matthew’s letter stated that he was writing to Bagot community, Yilli Rreung Housing (who manage housing along with Bagot council at the community) and the Minister for Police about a noise abatement order against the community as a whole. Additionally Matthew states “Another measure being examined by the Bagot Community is the option of applying to have the community declared as a dry area” (no alcohol allowed). If residents of Ludmilla support his idea, Matthew asked them to contact him.
I had experienced the “excessive noise” as I live in Ludmilla, in a street adjoining Bagot Community; however I had not complained to anyone. Having lived in the area since 1997, I was quite used to the noise. Along with airport noise and barking dog noise (there are hundreds of dogs in the suburb); these noise issues were just a “fact of life” in this particular part of Darwin.

The letter from Matthew was troubling however, as it seemed to reinforce a line between Bagot and non-Bagot residents in the area. The primary issue for me as a resident was the lack of opportunity for dialogue between residents living inside and outside of Bagot. If there was a problem, we were being advised to contact the police, the minister, or a (non-Bagot resident) government employee. There appeared to be no mechanisms by which residents across the two areas could enter into a conversation and attempt to solve neighbourhood problems. Stephanie, who lives in Bagot community, also felt this to be the case.

Stephanie: Some people aren’t so friendly [in Ludmilla], I don’t know, maybe ‘cause of noise, maybe noise pollution, I don’t know. But mostly those mob [points to adjoining houses], they’re okay, around us mob, excepting for one around corner, they complain about everything

Gretchen: Yeah?

Stephanie: But once we can talk to them, I think once we can talk, we could sort ‘em out together.

Gretchen: Mmm?

Stephanie: Maybe we can find some, some sort of agreement rather than getting, Mattie [local member], you know? Like talking to us about whatever the neighbours they complain about, - mainly noise, but.

Gretchen: What sort of noise is it, that they..?
Stephanie: Music, like party, party music, that sort of music this mobs listen to.

The following excerpts of conversations between myself and various residents demonstrate the lack of relationships ‘across the fence’. People I was engaging with did not appear to know anyone who lived on the other side of the fence from themselves.

An excerpt of a conversation between Stephanie (from Bagot) and I

Gretchen: Do you know any people in Ludmilla, outside Bagot?

Stephanie: Only you

Gretchen: Only me?

Stephanie: Only you and Roddy [Gretchen’s husband].

An excerpt of a conversation between Pamela and I

Pamela: I can’t say that I’ve mixed with any or many adults from Bagot. We did have a friend, and her husband was full blood Aboriginal person but he’d come from interstate. But, at the school, our son, he mixed with indigenous kids.

Gretchen: Mmm.

Pamela: And I mean I was happy to help with them, and things like that, but then I didn’t know any of their parents, or [pause]. I sort of feel it’s partly because indigenous people are shy, but I also feel that also because Bagot’s like a cut off area.
Gretchen: Mmm.

Pamela: You have to have a permit to go in there anyway, so [pause], that’s the only reason I could think of, I mean if you had Indigenous people living around you, there used to be Indigenous people three doors down from here, and people mixed with them. But I suppose because they’re not actually throughout the neighbourhood if you know what I mean?

*Excerpt of a conversation with Tony*

Gretchen: Do you know anybody in Bagot? Personally?

Tony: No. Not at the moment, I have done, but umm, yeah, don’t see much of them, and haven’t seen much of them for a while. And again, you know, there is no sort of common areas, common sorts of engagement, I mean, I’ve been part of things that have occurred there, but that was for work, and over 12 years ago.

5.7.2 Social bridges

Linking back to the background material in chapters two and three, there have been arguments in social capital literature that some groups within communities might be rich in particular types of social capital (e.g., bonding capital), yet they experience crippling poverty and conflict that may be related to a lack of bridging ties with neighbouring groups within a community (Narayan-Parker, 1999). Often one group does not have the opportunity to make connections or links with other groups because of a range of power imbalances. People within Bagot community, for example, may have close bonds with each other, but have few connections with the wider community. People living outside of Bagot also appear to have few connections to people within Bagot. There are many reasons for such barriers, some discussed above. The end result is that pockets form (or are forcibly formed) of particular groups, largely isolated from the wider community. In such situations it has been claimed that, “a lack of social capital in terms of relationships with the
wider community can lead to many problems. In many places, it has led to racial tensions and conflicts” (Hughes, et al., 2007, pp. 42-43).

It has been acknowledged (for example see Trudgen, 2001) that there are historical, misunderstandings, conscious and unconscious racisms between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups. Such misunderstanding and discrimination is evident in an inability to reconcile different (and at times incompatible) laws, traditions and belief systems that have links to all areas of life. In almost all cases Aboriginal groups have been forced to adapt to the European colonisers values and beliefs in terms of law, health, education, social systems, or suffer the consequences.

The following is an excerpt of a conversation between Stephanie and myself. I have included this because first of all it demonstrates Stephanie’s desire for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the area to get to know one another and share their various understandings. However, the conversation then moves on to show Stephanie’s expectations of friendship, as something that seems unconditional and provides practical resources, without question, in time of need. This is something that she has not found access to within the white community.

Gretchen: So do you think there would be any benefit, to knowing people that don’t live in Bagot? To you?

Stephanie: I reckon. You know, meet other people, say hi.

Gretchen: Yeah? Like in an ideal world, like, just say everything was exactly how you wished it to be, in this whole neighbourhood, what would that be like?

Stephanie: Friendlier. And, it would be like, we would teach each other. Like our parents teach us you know, if you do something good, good things come to you. It would be friendlier, that means making good friends, like neighbours.
Gretchen: Mmm.

Stephanie: I just use the example like, I don’t know about how, how this mob are, but you know, like if you, if you was to go to your friend’s house, like four bedroom house, and you have problems with you know, with your husband, and you decided to get up and go.

Gretchen: Yeah.

Stephanie: And with your kids, would they allow you to, you know, go to their house and stay for a while? I don’t know if it happens like that? For us mob, we don’t care how many kids. When partners are having a domestic, or fighting, or whatever they do.

Gretchen: Hmm.

Stephanie: Or just wanna break. We just like, shove all the kids over and make a bed for the other kids and just lie down, and just sit down, and just let them stay.

Gretchen: Mmm.

Stephanie: I use that example because, I don’t know, because my white friends, they like, they all go to me like, “don’t come over my place, you can’t stay here” like.

Gretchen: True?

Stephanie: And it’s like, most white people are in big flash house. And rather than like going to a woman’s shelter or something like this, you need to like, like, listen.

Gretchen: Yeah.
Stephanie: It’s all a bit sad with them mob.

In order to begin addressing some of the deep misunderstandings and discrimination, and even more simple differences, communication is required so that understanding can be gained. Yet, as Hughes et al contend, there remains “a lack of effective relationships” that would enable understanding between Indigenous and non-indigenous groups (Hughes, et al., 2007, p. 43). Such understanding is crucial in order for Aboriginal Australians to find a “recognised and respected place within our nation” (Hughes, et al., 2007, p. 43).

Looking to the literature on social networks between diverse cultures in urban settings there was little that was applicable to this particular context. In the Northern Territory, authors such as Morrisey (2006) have explored the discourse of community, social capital and community capacity building, in the contexts of health service delivery to, and the health status of, Aboriginal people. Christie (2004) has considered the concept of social capital in the contexts of Yolngu life (North East Arnhem Land). In terms of community work, Lee, Conigrave, Clough, Wallace, Silins and Rawles (2008) provide an evaluation of a two-year community development program with Aboriginal people, also in Arnhem Land.

Whilst this literature is valuable in providing both critique and conceptual enrichment of social capital ideas and insight into remote Aboriginal community development strategies, there are gaps in this knowledge base. The currently available literature concerning community work and the related concept of social capital in the Northern Territory is predominantly focused on only Aboriginal groups and remote Aboriginal communities. There has been little exploration of attempting to understand or build social connections in a cross cultural urban setting, particularly from a critical perspective.

5.7.3 Recognising the opportunities and strengths

Apart from assisting to understand the various problematic issues in the neighbourhood, these narratives also provide insight into opportunities, current and
potential assets. What many of these narratives expose is a sense of hope or an idea for the future. Whilst clearly describing some of the hardships, difficulties or problematic nature of relationships in the area, there are little “gems” of potential and a desire to improve relationships in many of the conversations.

For example, in John’s description of his (often very distressing) issues with neighbouring Bagot Community, he genuinely cared about what was going on next door, his wife had cooked food for people, and they had offered use of their phone. Stephanie speaks in terms of hope for future relationships between Bagot and non-Bagot residents. She hopes people will want to talk “across the fence”.

Pamela sees the value in the local landscape, and the value of the school in terms of places for interaction between all residents from all cultures. Tony would like to see footy games on Bagot oval that engage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

When LNC formed, it was decided very early on that while our history and context must be acknowledged, a focus on these little glimmers of hope, on “the positives” was desperately needed in our neighbourhood.

5.7.4 A “grass-roots” beginning

As a result of the noise complaint issue and some informal conversations about the neighbourhood, I contacted the local member, Matthew Bonson, in my capacity as a citizen in his electorate, to express concern about a lack of opportunity to even meet people from Bagot, or anywhere else in the area, let alone get into a dialogue about noise issues. The following quote from Tony indicates a lack of interaction among people of any culture in the neighbourhood;

Gretchen: Do you feel like it’s a harmonious neighbourhood?

Tony: I guess relative to my experience, I wouldn’t say it isn’t, but I can’t leap out of my chair going “it is”. Its umm, there’s not a lot of interaction amongst the people in the streets
Matthew and I arranged a meeting to discuss these concerns in July 2007. Matthew was very receptive to the issue and another meeting was held a week later with Matthew, his electoral officer and two more residents who I had discussed the issue with. At this meeting we decided our neighbourhood could benefit from some sort of supportive community organisation. The small group decided to take on a name, Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections (LNC). The early aim of LNC was to try to build a network of interested people and organisations that lived and worked in the area, to discuss the issue of forming connections between Bagot Community and the broader neighbourhood of Ludmilla. We were not sure if people would be interested, or how we would actually do the connecting.

In order to promote the idea we organised a stall at a local primary school event (in September 2007) and handed out a flyer inviting people to attend a meeting and help plan a neighbourhood Christmas event. We needed to state a purpose on the flyer, and to make our aim broad enough to include as many people as possible. Eventually it was decided to state that:

Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections aims to make Ludmilla a more friendly, welcoming, inclusive and safe community by creating opportunities for people to meet each other and undertake activities they are interested in.

Matthew also sought participation from representatives at Bagot Community, the local primary school and non-government organisations in the area. The first LNC meeting was held on 31st October 2007. The response was not overwhelming, with eight people coming along. Importantly however a good mix of people attended. This included the president of Bagot Community, a member of Ludmilla primary school council, and three local residents, the local Green’s candidate (for the upcoming federal election of 2007), Matthew and his electoral officer.

LNC initially attempted to apply for a community grant to employ a community worker to coordinate and facilitate the network and its activities. However at this early stage of group’s life no-one wanted to commit to forming an incorporated
association to apply for the grant. We agreed to keep the network informal and volunteer based and wait to see what it turned into.

5.7.5 My role in the developing project

I was considering undertaking PhD studies at the same time as this new network was forming. The idea to combine the two was discussed with the LNC and people were enthusiastic. I formally approached Charles Darwin University (Dr Deborah West, my primary supervisor) and the LNC with the idea of the LNC being the subject of my PhD studies. Both were agreeable. Over the following months I applied for and received notice of an APA scholarship to undertake the PhD the following year (2008). I subsequently offered to be the facilitator of LNC whilst I was undertaking my studies about community network building. LNC were happy with this arrangement and for me to document the processes of the LNC as a facilitator and researcher.

Prior to the research beginning in October 2008, LNC held monthly meetings and was involved in organising the following events and activities:

- Neighbourhood Christmas Party (15 December 2007)
- Establishment of Bagot Community Garden (April – July 2008)
- Community Barbeque & Kids Sports Day (25th May 2008)

During the period prior to the research beginning another important series of events occurred. The previously discussed report, *Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle (Little Children Are Sacred)* (Anderson & Wild, 2007) was released and a subsequent national emergency was declared, resulting in the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). Arguably the NTER created even further structural separation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents, creating a deeper “us and them” between people in the Aboriginal communities and those outside.

In April 2008 I formally began PhD studies. The first round of measurements began in October 2008 with the pre LNC project surveys and interviews. Data collection continued until December 2008. After the Christmas holiday season, the LNC
project documented in the next chapter (chapter six) began in earnest in January 2009. I am calling the 19 month time period between January 2009 and July 2010 the “LNC project” in order to separate this fully-documented time period from what went before, and what has come after. Between August and October 2010 the “post LNC project” data (surveys and interviews) was collected.

Figure 11 helps to clarify the measurement and LNC project timeframes, and emphasises the point that the LNC network existed prior to and continues after my PhD studies. The shaded area is the section of the life of the LNC called “the LNC project” covered in this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formation of LNC</th>
<th>Pre LNC Project measurements</th>
<th>‘LNC Project’</th>
<th>Post LNC project measurements</th>
<th>LNC continues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2007 to September 2008</td>
<td>October 2008 to December 2008</td>
<td>January 2009 to July 2010</td>
<td>August 2010 to October 2010</td>
<td>October 2010 to current time (April 2011) and ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11. LNC project timeframes**

By the time LNC project began in January 2009, the aim of the group had developed to make the aim of connecting people across different cultures more overt. The description of LNC in our first newsletter read:

Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections is an informal community network which aims to make Ludmilla a more connected, strong and friendly neighbourhood. We organise and support activities and events that focus on encouraging the involvement of all residents from all cultures.
5.7.6 Agreeing on an asset-based community development approach

Prior to the LNC project period, LNC had not used any particular theory or model of community work. We had discussed the idea of “emphasising the positives” and “working with what we have” in the neighbourhood at some of our meetings. There had been a focus on using the skills of residents and resources offered by Bagot Community and the Ludmilla Primary School, as well as those available in our natural environment (the creek, the mangroves, and bushland). These practices fit with strengths-based approach to community work, as ABCD is a recognised form of strengths-based practice with communities, it was adopted by LNC.

LNC had also discussed the importance of connections (indeed the word is included in the name of the group) in communities. This was discussed particularly in terms of building a network that included people from a range of cultures, particularly Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Using the networks and strengths foundation, the LNC project began in January 2009.

The members of the LNC were aware of my professional background as a social worker, and via verbal explanations in meetings and in a footnote to all emails and other correspondence I made my multiple roles (as community member, community facilitator and researcher) as clear as possible to all concerned. LNC members and the broader community (via newsletters, explained in chapter six) were now aware that I was involved in research about the LNC project in the neighbourhood. The processes and findings from this research are explored in the following chapters of this thesis.

5.8 Chapter summary

To summarise, this chapter has provided an overview of the suburb of Ludmilla from geographic, demographic, historical, local citizen, and mainstream media perspectives. It is hoped that such a thorough description of the case study site provides adequate background to the subject of the case study, the Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections Project. From this case study site information, the formation of the LNC was overviewed, with the broad aims and purpose of the group
being outlined. My own involvement in the group’s formation and continuation has been made clear, along with an explanation of why the network focused ABCD model was selected, and the timeframe which this thesis covers.

I would like to briefly refocus attention upon the research focus so the direction of the following chapter is clear. The primary research focus is upon understanding how a social network focus might contribute to social work practice with communities. This focus was divided into two specific questions, the first is concerned with how a network focus, or ‘network thinking’ translates into community practice, and the second upon examining the use of social network analysis in understanding the efficacy and outcomes of community work.

The following chapter will address the first question, exploring how a network focus translates into community work practice.
Chapter Six

The Story of Ludmilla Neighbourhood

Connections
Chapter Six

The Story of Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections Project

In the previous chapter I discussed the formation of LNC network and the activities undertaken prior to the measurement period and formal beginning of the LNC project. The story of the LNC project discussed in this chapter begins in January 2009. This chapter is centred on describing and critically reflecting upon how the LNC project unfolded, and includes an exploration of some of the challenges and achievements. The network diagrams which LNC actually used during the LNC project are presented, along with discussion about how LNC used “network thinking” throughout the project.

This chapter details and critically reflects upon the practice or “doing” of the LNC Project. Via the story of the LNC project, I demonstrate what a strengths-based (ABCD) and network focused community work project is like in practice. Through the description and analysis presented in this chapter I am able to address the first of the two main research questions: How does a network focus translate into community work practice? The final section of this chapter specifically responds to each of the sub-questions posed in chapter four (and listed again below).

- What processes, activities and events take place?
- How were network maps and information used?
- How is it different to an “ordinary ABCD” project?
- What are the challenges in this particular community?
- What is ‘critical’ about this type of community practice?
- What is the feedback from organisations and individuals?

6.1 Methodology

6.1.1 Autoethnography and narrative methods

As discussed in chapter four, a qualitative narrative inquiry approach has been adopted in writing this chapter. I have drawn loosely upon an autoethnographic style of narrative inquiry. Autoethnography is associated with narrative inquiry (one
being considered “a type of the other” depending on the source), in that it highlights the importance of experience and story as a meaning-making enterprise (Chang, 2008). Autoethnographic narrative aims to take the reader into the lives of others through the eyes of the researcher, who is a member of the culture, group or phenomenon being researched.

Definitions of autoethnography continue to be debated (for example, Issue 35 of the Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 2006, was devoted to discussion on this topic). However, I have selected an “analytical autoethnography” (Anderson, 2006) approach because it fits well with the critical social work view articulated throughout this thesis and outlined in chapter two. Analytical autoethnography aims to link micro level narratives to a cultural or social analysis. The stories of autoethnographers are expected “to be reflected upon, analysed, and interpreted within their broader sociocultural context” (Chang, 2008, p. 46).

Anderson (2006, p. 378) describes five key features of analytic autoethnography.

1. complete member researcher status
2. analytic reflexivity
3. narrative visibility of the researcher’s self
4. dialogue with informants beyond the self
5. commitment to theoretical analysis

Apart from “complete member researcher status”, each of the elements of analytic autoethnography are also key features of narrative inquiry (see Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). All five of these features are found within the research presented in this chapter which is why I have chosen to call it an “autoethnographic narrative”. That is: I am a resident of Ludmilla and a member of LNC; the processes of critical reflection (incorporating reflexivity) are detailed throughout the chapter; “I” am clearly present as the researcher and narrator of the LNC project story; the “voices” of others have been sought via interviews and other field data, and finally; there is a clear commitment to linking the local issues found in the narrative presented here, with broader social and cultural issues and understandings.
Narrative researchers Clandinin and Connelly (2000) believe the social significance of narrative inquiry lies in the process of changing our field texts (or field data) into research texts. In a narrative inquiry the field texts are likely to comprise a vast array of diverse stories gathered from participants. A research text involves analysis and interpretation of these stories. The narrative researcher needs to keep in mind that their inquiry is “always strongly autobiographical, our research interests come out of our own narratives of experience and shape our narrative inquiry plotlines” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 121). As we transition between field texts and research texts we are in a process of asking questions “about the way narrative inquiry illuminates the social and theoretical contexts in which we position our inquiries” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124). I have attempted to make these connections clear throughout the chapter.

6.1.2 Data sources

The story of the LNC project presented here is informed by a range of data (see case study data base at appendix 7) which was organised chronologically and analysed thematically. In addition to this, some of the data was also used to generate social network diagrams, which are used and discussed in this narrative. The following data is used in this chapter.

- LNC project field data (minutes of meetings, newsletters, emails)
- Practice reflection journal
- Post project interviews with seven residents
- Pre project social survey snowball sample data

Field data, interview transcripts and journal reflections were entered into NVIVO software for ease of management and data organisation. Field data were kept in their different types (newsletters, minutes of meetings, emails), so each could be considered separately. Each of the data sources were analysed in varying ways.
6.1.3 Data analysis

Meeting minutes
Minutes of LNC meetings were ordered chronologically and using a general qualitative thematic analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) the content of the minutes was considered. This assisted with understanding what was discussed in the meetings, what were the main topics, actions and events in the life of LNC in terms of the LNC meetings.

Newsletters
Newsletters were ordered chronologically and subsequently analysed using a narrative method of the “thematic” (Riessman, 2008) or “categorical” (Lieblich, et al., 1998) kind. That is, each newsletter was broken down into articles or sections, and each article or section of the newsletter was considered as a separate piece. These were read with the question “what is this part of the newsletter about?” in mind. Categories were formulated and named after careful reading and re-reading of all the newsletters. Categories were compared across newsletters to gain an understanding of how dominant particular narratives were in relation to one another. The narrative analysis of the newsletters was aimed at finding out what kind of narratives LNC was creating about itself and the area.

Emails
A broad chronological and thematic analysis was undertaken with the emails to and from the LNC email address. Emails were divided by topic, then ordered chronologically within the topic. For example, emails about agenda items, or distribution of minutes etc., were categorised under the “LNC meeting” topic. Emails about the land re-zoning issue were given another category “re-zoning issues”. All the emails in each topic or category were summarised into an Excel spread sheet, in date order. A further sub categorisation of “sender “was made within each topic, so I could gain a better understanding of how much communication on particular topics was occurring with whom.
The email data was used primarily to corroborate dates, times, events and activities, and as a memory prompt in terms of the writing of this chapter. The list of emails is not included in the case study data base because of confidentiality issues.

*Interviews with seven community members*

Narratives drawn from the in-depth interviews with community members feature extensively in this chapter. Various “stories” are woven into the text to provide voices other than my own. Segments of interviews are not analysed as such, but rather presented as examples of, or elaboration upon, the assertions I am making in my story of the project. The inclusion of these community members’ voices demonstrates a consideration of multiple viewpoints about elements of the project. All interview data was provided to interview participants for checking and approval.

*Practice Reflection Journal*

Throughout the project a practice reflection journal was used. This was where I noted everything from day-to-day activities to critical incidents, thoughts, or ideas in terms of social work and community work. Entries were made into this journal whenever such an incident, idea, thought or revelation occurred, which was often daily and at least weekly.

The idea of this kind of journal should be familiar to social work practitioners. The processes of critical reflection, and reflective practice and research outlined by such social work authors as Fook (1996), Napier and Fook (2000) and Fook and Gardner (2007), have some commonalities with the way in which the reflective journal was used in this community work project and research. A reflective approach questions the traditionally perceived “gap” between social work theory, social work practice and social work research.

Instead, a reflective approach posits that contrary to traditional conceptions, “theory” is implicit in the way people act, and may or may not be congruent with the more formalised theory they believe themselves to be acting upon. In a reflective approach, theory is induced from practice, in a more “bottom-up” manner. The best way to access this theory is thus through processes of reflection on specific actions,
and a linking of this with unacknowledged assumptions and features of the specific context (Napier & Fook, 2000, p. 8).

The process of critical reflection using journaling, and also via conversation with my peers and with my primary thesis supervisor assisted in critically questioning and changing aspects of my practice and thinking. Critical reflection also assisted in an exploration of the differences between the theories and approaches I was consciously attempting to use (i.e. strengths and network approaches,) and the theory that is implicit in my actions. Argyris and Schon (1974) call these two kinds of theory; “theory in use” and “espoused theory” (Fook, 1996, p. 4).

The journal was transferred to NVivo and analysed in multiple stages. Firstly I looked for journal entries that documented critical incidents and then grouped critical incidents in terms of specific aspects of the LNC project (LNC meetings, the newsletter, the edible garden, the *Life in Ludmilla* DVD, and community events). Any critical incidents that did not fit into a pre-determined category were put into “other” for the time being.

Once critical incidents were placed into these categories, I then examined the categories as a whole and created sub-categories that grouped similar critical incidents together (e.g. incidents about professional insecurities, incidents involving expressions of racism). I then selected critical incidents that were particularly interesting, changed my thinking or practice, or were representative of other incidents within that subcategory. These critical incidents were summarised and some are presented throughout this chapter.

The critical incidents in the “other” category were re-analysed and broken down into emic and etic issues (Stake, 1995). That is; issues about social work and community work broadly, and things about Ludmilla specifically that came out of this process. These are discussed in the final part of the chapter.

I begin the story with the very early days of the LNC project, when LNC members brainstormed what we would be and what we might do in the year ahead.
6.3 Early days: Setting up the LNC Project

Whilst LNC existed as a loose network over the year beforehand, it was not until January 2009 that LNC began its activity in earnest. Over the 19 months between January 2009 and July 2011, the LNC undertook a specific community work program called The Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections Project. It will be called the “LNC Project” in the rest of this thesis.

In the setting up of the LNC Project, the people and organisations involved thought that specific aims would be useful, and it was decided at our early meetings that the LNC Project aims would be to:

1) Encourage and increase communication and social networks across different cultural groups (specifically Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents) and

2) Increase a general “sense of community” in the neighbourhood.

The research I had undertaken from October to December 2008 (just prior to the start of the LNC project), was helpful in deciding on a focus and articulating these aims. I had undertaken 45 social survey interviews, and seven in-depth interviews, and this data helped to inform the LNC project in a couple of ways. Firstly (as demonstrated in the chapter five) the in-depth interviews helped LNC to understand the strengths and challenges in the neighbourhood from a few different perspectives. Secondly, because the social survey was undertaken using a snowball sample, the way in which people referred each other provided data for mapping an aspect of the LNC network.

The snowball sample began with people involved in LNC, and moved on to those they referred for participation in the research, and so on. The LNC pre project referral network provided an indication of who the LNC could potentially access via its members in the neighbourhood at a particular point in time. People only referred others they thought we be interested and able to participate (for approximately an hour) in the research survey. Therefore, the snowball sample referral process helped LNC to understand its “reach” at the outset of the LNC project.
A full discussion of the way in which the following network diagram was generated is detailed in chapter seven where it is analysed and compared with the “post LNC project” referral diagram. The pre project diagram (Figure 12) is simply presented “as is” here, in order to demonstrate how it was used in the community work practice.
Figure 12. Pre LNC project snowball referral network.
Actors = 92    Ties = 106

Legend for Figure 12

Cultural Groups (marked by colour of actor)
Yellow = Identifies as Aboriginal
Green = Identifies as European
Red = Identifies as New Zealand/Pacific Region
Blue = Identifies as Middle Eastern
Pink = Identifies as South East Asian
White = Identifies as ‘Australian’ and no other cultural group

LNC membership
Small size nodes = LNC member
Large size nodes = non LNC member

Tie strength
Thin line = weak tie
Thick Line = strong tie
Figure 12 was used in our preliminary meetings, (and in a community presentation I gave at the outset of the project). For LNC members (that is, people attending the LNC meetings or people in Ludmilla who were in regular communication with the facilitator about the project), the network diagram provided an opportunity to think about the structure of our LNC network. From the diagram we could see that there appeared to be a few different cultural groups represented, which people thought was a positive start. We could also see that particular people were central to the LNC network, and others barely linked in. Indeed, two small clusters of people were not linked to the broader network at all. We could also see that a cluster of people who identified as “Aboriginal” formed one of these separated clusters, and the other was a group of people identified as “Australian, no other cultural background”.

LNC members wondered why some people (some of whom were active members of LNC) had links to only their own cultural groups. This promoted a range of discussions questioning; “does it matter?”; “why does it matter?” as well as thinking through our own contacts in the neighbourhood. There were no general agreements on whether it mattered or not, but it was agreed that communication across all the various groups of people in the neighbourhood was important, so that at the very least, information, questions and news about the local area could be shared as needed.

Our first example of network thinking then, was to examine the referral network diagram and think about the connections that made up the LNC network. People agreed that it would be good for more people to be “joined up”, particularly the disconnected clusters. LNC members agreed that making our network bigger, with more connections, would be a good goal, the rationale being that the more people who were included (and the more these people knew one another) the more Ludmilla would feel like “a community”.

In a second example of network thinking we talked about the structure of the LNC, and how it would work in term of undertaking the LNC Project. As outlined in the previous chapter, a strengths approach had been decided upon, and people liked the idea of a loose network, one that could be called together by the facilitator or other
members when needed. Because no one wished to formalise the LNC or the LNC project in any strict way, we did not articulate objectives, formulate key performance indicators, or assign dedicated roles to people. Most individuals involved did not want this community project to feel like work (although the organisations did not seem to mind). As the facilitator, this meant ensuring that we kept our broad goals in mind, but allowed lots of room for everyone’s ideas about how we would achieve them.

The following conversation with Paul demonstrates some of his ideas about the formalised structures, and the obligations they can bring.

Paul: Community, it’s really important. We don’t do enough of it, or we expect that we need structures, or things like that, to do it. And to be honest, structures don’t work.

Gretchen: What’s been you’re experience with structured activities? How did you form that view?

Paul: Well, people start to rely on the structure or a couple of individuals who they believe represent the structure, or who take a representational role - which of course, they don’t always want. But community is this [pause], you don’t take representational roles, not unless you go into politics. You know, you’re just in there to do it… So you get into really relying too much on structured roles and things. Whereas the informal approach of – “you show up, you show up, if you don’t you don’t” - works much better, much, much better.

Gretchen: Yeah?

Paul: It allows people room to be [pause], to participate without feeling like they’re going to get lumbered with a something they don’t want to.
Paul has a family and a full time job, additionally he was working as the voluntary coordinator of another local community group, and perhaps the stresses and strains of this role effects his views about loose-organisations and represents his desire to be a little less “depended upon”. And even a loose arrangement such as LNC does needs some facilitation (as opposed to management), and that was my role. In the role of facilitator I would organise meetings, take notes and distribute information, co-ordinate newsletters and be the contact point for events and activities.

6.3 A brief overview of the LNC project.

Over 19 months LNC held ten meetings, involving more than 31 different community members, three schools, a youth arts organisation, four non-government community/welfare organisations, a church group, two local environment groups, and members of local council, and the Northern Territory government. Each organisation and community member participated in meetings and activities to varying degrees.

Through these meetings LNC organised a number of events and activities: two gardeners’ mornings, a guided bushwalk and family fun day, a neighbourhood big breakfast, a Christmas gathering, a large public meeting, and a large community DVD launch celebration. We also worked in partnership with other local organisations on various community events, including the development of an “edible garden” project and the production of a local neighbourhood DVD. LNC also developed and distributed 13 editions of a neighbourhood newsletter to over 400 households.

How these activities and events occurred, and how network thinking worked with the strengths approach, is now explained in more detail. The key activities and events are described, then critically reflected upon to see how the espoused theory (strengths and networks approaches) and the actual practice “match up” or otherwise.
6.4 LNC Meetings

The LNC meetings were held at the local primary school staff room, at a big round table, with space for children to play. Tea, coffee, water were freely available, and sometimes people bought snacks to share. Meetings were mostly held in the late afternoon, and facilitated by me. I tried to keep things informal and friendly, but on-track. Meetings were open to anyone (and children were made welcome so that parents were not excluded).

Using the networks of those already involved, meetings were promoted via our local member of the legislative assembly (Northern Territory Government), our email list and local schools newsletters. Notes from the meetings were taken by me and distributed via email to everyone on our email list. Our email list in January 2009 contained 28 email addresses, and by July 2010 there were 88. The same notes were also printed out and hand delivered to people who did not have access to email.

The following table shows the meeting dates, issues discussed, organisations represented and the number of residents who attended the meetings.

Table 2. LNC meeting summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main issues</th>
<th>Organisations attending</th>
<th>Citizens attending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.03.2009</td>
<td>Scout Hall. Ludmilla nature corridor &amp;</td>
<td>Corrugated Iron Youth Arts</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.07.2009</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Big Breakfast planning. FONL introduction. Ludmilla nature corridor &amp; walk. Life in Ludmilla – the DVD. National Aboriginal &amp; Islander Children’s day event at Bagot.</td>
<td>Ludmilla School Council. FONL.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4.1 Themes from meetings

As is clear from the LNC meeting summary (Table 2) a range of issues were covered in the LNC Meetings. Some of the most interesting aspects, in terms of the strengths and networking community work approaches adopted, require more detailed discussion. These issues involve: the process of identifying and linking up assets, responding to development plans for local bushland, making our own community work.

6.4.2 Identifying and linking up assets

The very first meeting included an overview of the strengths philosophy and the ABCD model. Some people had experience with similar approaches in their workplaces or other community groups, and they shared these experiences. We agreed our meeting processes would be carried out in way that was respectful and
encouraging of all participants. We talked through ideas for how we would
determine (and promote) neighbourhood assets. We also wondered how we would
mobilise assets to achieve our two main aims.

The strengths approach, and our broad goals had previously been agreed upon prior
to the project’s start in January, but they needed discussing, as some new people
were now involved. We also reviewed the first network map (figure 12) which I
had generated from the social surveys undertaken during the previous months.

The network diagrams were useful in that they helped people to quickly get an idea
of how big our networks were, and how dependent we were upon particular people.
We could also see quite clearly that people in the Aboriginal cultural group did not
appear to have ties to other people in the referral network. I had hoped more
questions about “why” there were separate clusters in the network would arise with
new people in the discussion, but no one asked. I wondered about all of our own
individual assumptions about the separate clusters, perhaps we all thought we knew
“why”.

This was the only time the network maps were used at the LNC project meetings, at
the beginning stage of the project at these first few meetings. The conversations
about assets at our meetings were fascinating ones. I left our first few meetings
concerned that people did not “get” the strengths approach, and that I had not
explained it well enough. This was mainly because, while participants appeared
happy to discuss community assets broadly (e.g. the local bushland, the schools, the
variety of cultures, the resources of non-government organisations,) and identifying
the assets of others, they were less comfortable speaking about their own assets, or
“gifts” as Kretzman and McKnight (1993) call them.

As facilitator, I thought I should just let this be, and “start where people are at”.
Over the coming weeks there were formal and informal discussions about what our
neighbourhood assets were and how we might link them up to build cross cultural
networks and increase a sense of inclusive community. Talk soon moved to the
idea of developing a neighbourhood directory, so that people were aware of all the
services and resources in the area. However, it seemed an existing Darwin City Council services directory really covered that kind of information. I suggested that perhaps a DVD or some visual form of highlighting local assets and people’s strengths could work. This idea captured people’s imaginations, and most importantly seemed like it would be fun. LNC agreed to apply for (and eventually gained) a small amount of funding ($1,500) to make a neighbourhood DVD.

The idea of a local newsletter was also raised in the second LNC Project meeting, as a way of communicating information about our various assets, local events, people, and to keep people informed about the research I was doing. The local member of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly agreed to print the newsletter. LNC decided to trial it and see what the response was.

The discussion about assets made it clear that there was actually a lot of activity and participation going on in the neighbourhood. For example, the schools were regularly organising school and community social events, Bagot Community held the occasional gig with bands from remote communities coming in to perform, and they were running children’s discos every few weeks. Local environment groups often held working bees and information days. There was also a small group of people trying to reclaim the disused local scout hall for community activities. We realised that outside of the networks of each of these groups and organisations, few people knew about their events and activities. Rather than create lots of new activities, LNC decided to start working on promoting the existing activities across the whole neighbourhood. That is, LNC decided to try and open up the networks of each of the organisations involved in the network and share information across them.

If local events and activities were promoted as open and inviting to everyone, then perhaps non-Aboriginal people might feel more welcome to come to events in Bagot Community. Similarly, if events outside Bagot Community were promoted within Bagot Community, ensuring that people knew they were very welcome, this might break down some of the barriers “across the fence”. At the very least we thought, it might encourage people from both sides of the fence to think it was possible to be in the same place at the same time, which had to be a start. It seemed like a simple
idea of identifying some of these assets, and opening up people’s access to them. People at the LNC meeting agreed that the newsletter was probably a good tool for facilitating this process.

The other major decision at this time was to start developing a proposal for a nature corridor (which would have a walking/bike path) stretching the length of Ludmilla. Our rationale was that this would not only be a celebration of one of our major assets, the local bushland, but would be a great way of physically linking the various parts of the neighbourhood together. A range of land tenure and topographic maps were obtained, and discussions began with Larrakia Nation (an organisation representing many of Larrakia families), Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group, and government at the local council and Territory level.

Little did we know however, that influences outside of our community were about to make their presence felt. Our primarily proactive community project was about to become a much more reactive one.

6.4.3 Development plans for local bushland

John: It’s ironic isn’t it, ‘cause when LNC started, we’d come up with these ideas to improve things, and this was all waiting in the background, and we didn’t even know it.

On the first of April 2009 the headline of The Northern Territory News read “$1bil marina plan for East Point”. Under the headline, a draft plan of the proposed development, named “Arafura Harbour”, detailed a 1000 home canal estate, luxury resort accommodation, a marina for super-yachts and a huge sea wall. Initially I thought it was an April Fool’s Day joke. But it was not, and it seemed much of the area of Ludmilla simply disappeared on this draft plan. The bushland, the mangroves, Minmarama Community, much of coastal reserve were all “wiped off” the proposal drawings. In their place were the luxury homes, resorts and super-yacht moorings! From the reaction in local media and “word on the street”, many local residents were appalled at the proposal, and wanted to actively oppose it.
LNC members discussed whether or not LNC should take an overt “anti-Arafura Harbour” stance. As far as I was aware, nobody at the LNC meetings (apart perhaps, from our new Local Member, David Tollner, who advised he was “open minded” about it) was in favour of the proposal. After a brief discussion we agreed that we would simply present all the information that came to hand, and let people know when all various protest meetings and public information sessions were scheduled (either in favour of, or against the proposed development).

In this way people could have access to the information we had, share what they had learned, and make up their own minds. We also organised our own LNC public meeting in May, so that all stakeholders could come together and discuss the proposal. However, on the day of the meeting (May 27th 2009) the Northern Territory government announced they would not support the proposed development. The plans were put on hold. To date there has been no further dialogue about Arafura Harbour.

I was looking forward to the LNC meetings getting back to our asset-based community work. However, in July 2009, a large block of bushland in Ludmilla was listed for proposed re-zoning so that 16 two-storey town houses could be built on the site. It would be the first building on what was a much used and loved strip of bushland. Many local residents rallied to fight this proposal, and a new neighbourhood group formed, specifically to fight against development proposals on local bushland. This group called themselves Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla (FONL), after the name of the street (Nemarluk Drive) where much of the proposed re-zoning was to take place. Over time, many members of LNC also participated in FONL activities. The following comment from Paul demonstrates the links between FONL and LNC.

Paul: I think LNC provided an opportunity for people to understand what was going on, and to have a chance to think about it. In the long run I think it also helped in getting people involved and prepared to participate, by that I mean come along to meetings, or write letters, submissions and stuff like that. LNC introduced probably 50% of the
membership of our organisation. That means people who turned up to meetings and became involved because they were notified via LNC. In the end I think we probably had an 85% overlap on our email lists.

As FONL became more active, the LNC meetings became less frequent, because people wanted to concentrate on fighting the bushland re-zoning. Whilst meetings were less frequent, our LNC network became larger, through people becoming involved in FONL that were not involved with LNC, and subsequently becoming interested in LNC.

Some people became confused as to whether LNC and FONL were the same group, or if FONL was a sub-group of LNC. We tried to make it clear in our newsletters and meetings that LNC was a “whole neighbourhood” group and FONL had a single agenda. Whilst FONL saw the value in the LNC network, they also tried to make the distinction between the two groups clear. The following quote from Paul provides further detail about the differences between LNC and FONL;

Paul: It’s a broad issue, and that’s about how we deal with the land around us, and the land management, and its zoning and its looking after. How you look after that land, land that’s important to us, and we think, important to the broader environment, to this suburb as well as I think, all of Darwin. Whereas, LNC is sort of, is more able to be across a whole range of things and brings together people across a range of things. It [LNC] really plays an important role, again, because it makes people feel comfortable you know? You’re not pushing a barrow, I think neighbourhood by its nature, it will take positions, or be seen to be taking positions, but the thing about it was, the important thing was to, and I think it delivered on this, was to say “well, we’ll give people information, we’ll let people know where they can find out more and they can make up their minds for themselves” and that’s really important.
At the time of writing (April 2011), a decision on the re-zoning proposal had still not been reached. Three more re-zoning applications for local bushland have been submitted.

Whilst there were times we felt our networking and asset building agenda had been hijacked by the development threats, we rode the wave of the new enthusiasm for, and appreciation of, our natural environment. The local bushland had been identified as a community asset early on. LNC needed to be as flexible as possible, adapting to what community members wanted to focus on, but at the same time holding to our strengths and network building ideas.

LNC decided to take advantage of the interest in the re-zoning issue by encouraging people to actually participate in activities associated with the threatened bush area. FONL could organise the protest meetings and rallies, but LNC would organise bush walks and social events in the area. On August 24th 2009 we held a community “big breakfast” and in October we celebrated Children’s Week with a “family fun day” and guided bush walks in the threatened area. We invited a local Larrakia man to guide the bush walks and talk about the Aboriginal history and current use of the bushland area. The walks proved very popular with over 100 people attending each event.

It was also during this time that we were brainstorming ideas about the content of our neighbourhood DVD. These conversations were a good way to focus our attention on assets and encourage people to start thinking about the various aspects of our neighbourhood that make it different, and special. We agreed to call it Life in Ludmilla. LNC members decided that our Life in Ludmilla DVD would include a substantial coverage of the local bushland, and people’s views about it. We set about filming in the mangroves to show people the wonderful natural assets in our area.

In the past, some authors (for example Mendes, 2001) have argued that there can be confusion between community building activities (particularly in relation to social inclusion) and NIMBY (not in my backyard) type community action, that is, community action aimed only at stopping some phenomenon that will negatively
impact that particular geographic area. However, LNC was able to “piggyback” on to the NIMBY aspect of neighbourhood activity and use concern over local bushland as a catalyst, and a way to bring people into contact and conversation with one another. The following quote from Pamela demonstrates her belief on the positive aspects of fighting for the local bush

Pamela: I think one thing that really sort of drew people together was to do with the re-zoning and also how much the people of Ludmilla like our natural bush area. Even though I hadn’t been involved with Landcare working in those areas, I appreciate what people have done. You could see that there are people involved in the community for different reasons, or how much they like the community, that they are prepared to do voluntary things.

For some, there was value in seeing that people actually cared about the natural environment in the neighbourhood. The threat of development provided a forum for participation that acknowledged a “common caring” that perhaps was not previously understood. The following quotes from Paul and John point this out;

Paul: Well, it’s very “community”; it’s incredibly “community”. FONL had 400 people on a petition. You know, we got 100 people that wrote a submission from what we understand. People showed up at the public meetings and put their names down, half of them I’ve never heard of or ever seen. They live in this suburb, but they participated and they went away, they didn’t do any more than that. But that’s the nature of community.

John: I think there is a bit of a doubt that carries in everybody’s mind, whether people care about their area, but I don’t know what it is, but when it gets to the crucial stage, people sort of come together, which we’ve all seen, we’ve witnessed, which has been really good. Like just, what we had last week with the email from X, I was so busy at work but I set out one letter and I sent it off to nine people.
The LNC networks were important for providing people in Bagot Community with information about the re-zoning proposals. It became clear via conversations (such as the one with Stephanie below) that people in Bagot Community had little access to local environment activist networks and their up-to-date information regarding the re-zoning actions. It seemed that not many people within Bagot Community had internet access, and as this was the way a lot of the protest information was shared, Bagot people were missing out. LNC made sure newsletters with this information were printed and delivered to Bagot Community. It seems like a very simple network bridging mechanism which had a really positive effect. The sharing of information and making sure people knew about meetings, and were able to attend meetings (sometimes this meant helping with transport) helped to build trust within these new and fragile networks.

Stephanie: The protest about the development stuff has been good, you know? None of us mob, Indigenous mob, understand what the government is trying to do, like with development. I guess, especially for me, a young lady trying to understand you know, what is the government about and what do they want to use all the bush area for? And how we can challenge government, just by people, rather than as an organisation or something else? I guess, people power!

It’s been good for people like my mum too, because once I met you mob and you know, we got to hear about all this development and stuff you know. Some of the old people started standing up and started talking you know, among them-mob-selves. But then we actually got them to public meetings around in the suburbs regarding the development. They were understanding about these rich developers, that just wanna come and destroy our land. So then they get to have a say on issues about development. You know, they been doing things on that land forever like hunting and gathering and stuff like that.
The involvement of people from Bagot Community in the protest actions also provided an opportunity for people in the broader community to learn about how local Aboriginal people have used the mangroves as both a source of food (fish, mangrove worm, crab, and shell fish) and a place for learning about various plants, animals, and sea life, as well as hunting and other food gathering skills. At one public meeting, a woman from Bagot Community presented an overview of the variety of food in our local mangroves and its importance to families in Bagot Community. This allowed many non-Aboriginal people in the area access to new knowledge which may not have been possible had we not proactively sought two way communication between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members. In this way, the anti-bush development (potentially NIMBY) community action was used to encourage cross cultural dialogue through new networks.

These cross-cultural linkages were small, with only a handful of people forging relationships. Yet just these few relationships “across the fence” allowed an important flow of information back and forth between the different networks, providing new and useful information across the fence line. Stephanie makes this clear:

Together we are doing stuff, that’s how I see it. Helping, you know, to help understand one another, rather than, you know, you mob live on that side, us mob live on this side, over the fence, kind of thing.

6.4.4 Making our own “community work”

Even though the land re-zoning issue loomed large in the neighbourhood, LNC attempted to maintain an active presence in other neighbourhood activities. During the last few months of 2009 I was invited (as LNC facilitator) to participate in the newly formed Bagot Outside School-Hours Care (BOSHC) community support group. The BOSHC staff had decided that it would be useful to better coordinate the various organisations and groups that were taking an interest or running programs associated with children’s activities in Bagot through the BOSHC. My role as LNC facilitator was to be a type of conduit (or social bridge) between the broader
neighbourhood and the BOSHC. It was through these meetings that Red Cross became involved with the BOSHC and eventually the Bagot Community Council.

Workers from a Red Cross program had seen our fledgling volunteer-run community garden in the BOSHC grounds and had offered to help us improve the garden. They offered a small budget and access to some of their staff. Eventually through this contact with the Red Cross, a nutrition program linked to the garden evolved. This is explained further a little later on in this chapter. However, these meetings and the evolution of the edible garden were an exciting development for LNC to be involved in. This involvement helped to further strengthen existing ties with Bagot Community, and to establish some new ones.

The asset identification and mobilising agenda was becoming increasingly difficult to adhere to as these various events and activities and community groups (BOSCH and FONL) took on lives of their own which LNC were involved in. The minutes of our LNC meeting in October show an attempt by me to re-assert a “visioning” agenda. However, there was little enthusiasm for undertaking this process, as energy was taken up with trying to keep the developers at bay, and activity within Bagot Community.

Attempting to see the strengths or opportunities in any given situation became useful for ensuring we maintained a community wide focus, and could keep to our initial two major aims. LNC organised a Christmas get together at the end of 2009, however, a severe tropical low moved in on Darwin and we experienced a month long monsoonal downpour. Despite efforts to re-schedule it, the rain won and we had to cancel.

The beginning of 2010 was a time of intense DVD making, with CIYA, Ludmilla School and Bagot community. We only called one full LNC meeting between January and June 2010. This was because, by early 2010 the various community groups, (FONL, BOSHC, and a re-invigorated Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group) had become so active that LNC’s main role seemed to be as a network facilitator and event organiser. Each of these community committees, and other community
organisations kept communication open via the LNC newsletter, email list and a Facebook page set up by a local community member. In chapter seven, a set of network diagrams called “organisational affiliation networks” are presented. These maps demonstrate the dramatic increase in people becoming affiliated with each other’s organisations or groups.

Ida: What we started doing, what was good, was a little less meeting, a little more action.

LNC members agreed that we did not really need or want more meetings unless we were planning something big. Subsequently, the only LNC meeting of that year was to plan the DVD launch in May 2010. The rest of our communication was via the smaller community committees, informal meetings and the channels noted above. Conceptualising LNC as a network rather than a formal organisation really freed people up to concentrate on the existing local organisations and their focus on Ludmilla.

LNC’s role eventually became one of information conduit or “umbrella organisation” (Gilchrist, Bowles, & Wetherell, 2010) keeping organisations and people in touch with one another (via newsletter and email list). This involved LNC being an occasional event co-ordinator (co-ordinating local organisations and people); a “noticer of strengths” (encouraging and exposing the exciting things people were doing and the great assets in the local area); and reminding participants of the broad project aims (increasing social networks across cultural groups, and creating a ‘sense of community’).

These various roles differed in degree of difficulty. Most were not difficult, however attempting to keep the need for building cross-cultural networks on the agenda, particularly across Bagot Community/non-Bagot Community lines, was continually challenging for me. At times the challenge was centred around issues of colonisation (was LNC trying to “make” Aboriginal people more like the rest of the community so Bagot residents were more acceptable on white terms?). The following section presents a key critical incident related to this issue and the LNC meetings, and
through this I was able to explore more fully why the cross-cultural work in this context was troubling at times.

6.4.5 Key critical reflection from the meetings: Grappling with colonisation

Looking back on the critical incidents about meetings that I had detailed in my journal, I could see that many of the incidents concerned my attempts at grappling with issues of racism and colonisation and how to “handle” it. The following critical incident and reflection provides a good example of the issues faced.

Description of incident

There was only myself and one other person at the LNC meeting. This was disappointing in itself for me. The other person was a regular LNC meeting participant, and began to talk about Bagot community in a way that I was not comfortable with, asserting that it needed to be made into a “more normal” community. I attempted to challenge these views and we had long conversation about what was “normal” and why. Yet ultimately I felt very frustrated and angry (and that did not fit well with the espoused strengths-based philosophy). Here was a person who was really “on board” with the LNC project and its aim of increasing cross cultural connections, yet they were saying racist things about Aboriginal people, and Bagot Community.

Reflection

I asked myself a range of questions. What are the main feelings in this? What have I assumed here? What might the other person be feeling? How am I participating in power in this interaction? There is not room for all the various answers to each of these questions here, but rather I will summarize the main things I learned from the reflection.

I came to the significant realisation that whilst LNC participants had often discussed the need to increase networks across different cultural groups, there had been no real
consideration of why this was needed. The person at the meeting and myself had articulated very different reasons why. He saw connections as important so that Aboriginal people in Bagot could essentially become “more like normal people”. He thought of normal people as living in nuclear families, with both parents working in paid employment, purchasing their own homes and being “house proud”, aspiring to become more financially well off, children achieving at school and in sports etc. None of these things are “bad” but they are one person’s view of what normal is, and that person is a member of the dominant (white, English speaking, male, middle class) culture. As I understand it, colonisation occurs when a dominant group imposes its ideas and culture upon a less dominant group.

For the first time the potentially colonizing power of community work became very clear, as well as my own role in this. I began to question what my values about community and “normal” were and wondered what others in the group thought. I had assumed that people wanted to increase connections across cultures for the same reasons I did. That is, to open up a dialogue, have a chance to get to know one another and perhaps begin to understand a little more about each other’s cultures. Did people become involved because they thought they could “fix” Bagot Community and make it more like the rest of neighbourhood?

I became aware that I would have to be very clear about my own motivations for attempting to increase social connections, and make it clear that LNC was not about “fixing” any part of the neighbourhood.

Fook and Gardner (2007) recommend giving a name to the new learning as a way to remember it and keep it in mind in our practice. I called this new learning, “awareness of colonisation”.

Changing practice

I discussed this issue with members of LNC, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and found that there were a range of different views as to why increased connections across cultural groups where needed in Ludmilla. However, we all recognised that
learning about each other and having the avenues to communicate with one another were most important for understanding our differences and attempting to “get along better” in the future. The content of the newsletter and DVD also changed to include a significant amount of neighbourhood history, including how the area known as Ludmilla was colonised by the English and later settlers. We hoped that education about this history which emphasised Aboriginal ownership of the land, would aid understanding about Bagot and the broader community, and create more motivation for non-colonising action. We promoted our cultural differences within the framework of assets. LNC acknowledged that our differences are what make this place (Ludmilla) unique, and these need to be celebrated.

6.5 LNC Newsletter

Strategically placing notices about community activities and events in local newsletters and flyers has been recognised as a useful way to “get the word out” across networks to various parts of diverse communities (Gilchrist, 2004). Apart from the local school’s newsletter, we soon found that there was not really any local newsletter we could utilize to promote LNC events and activities. As such we agreed to start our own. Our local Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) agreed to photocopy 400 newsletters each month for us to distribute. It was a small newsletter, just an A4 double sided sheet. A team of volunteers (seven people) would deliver the newsletter in the streets near their homes.

6.5.1 Summary of newsletter contents

The following table is a summary of the 13 newsletters and their contents over the 19 month period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2009</td>
<td>Introduction to LNC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Request for newsletter ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some ideas for project activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Event Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| April 2009  | Response to our first newsletter  
Gardeners morning information (17 May)  
Arafura Harbour proposal updates and information  
Nature corridor ideas  
Next LNC meeting details |
| May 2009    | Gardner’s morning information (17 May)  
Arafura Harbour proposal - Public meeting notice (27 May)  
Speeding cars & dangerous driving issue  
Life In Ludmilla – Successful grant application to make DVD  
Working bee at Bagot Community music room (seeking interest)  
Play group at Ludmilla Primary School (every Friday)  
Next LNC meeting details |
| June 2009   | Gardner’s morning information (12 July)  
Life in Ludmilla DVD (information and call for input)  
Bagot Community Garden updates  
Arafura Harbour proposal updates  
Next LNC meeting details |
| July 2009   | Life in Ludmilla DVD updates  
Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group information  
Re-zoning Proposal – Lot 4938.  
Next LNC meeting details |
| August 2009 | Ludmilla Big Breakfast event (23 August)  
Life in Ludmilla updates  
Thanks to local MLA for printing newsletter |
| September 2009 | Update on Life in Ludmilla film  
Information about LNC and encouragement to come to meetings  
Bagot Kid’s Disco information (1 October)  
Neighbourhood project ideas and grant applications.  
New Facebook group |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Promotion of NAPCAN Children’s week bushwalk event (25 October)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Next LNC meeting details.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November &amp;</td>
<td>Christmas event information – (12 December)</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2009</td>
<td>Bagot Victory Church Christmas event</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-zoning proposal updates</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal of the year award – Nemarluk School</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Well’s Street Scout Hall information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Next LNC Meeting details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January &amp;</td>
<td>Bagot Community Garden working bee information (5 March)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2010</td>
<td>Ludmilla Creek Landcare news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla updates on re-zoning proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ludmilla history spot – (excision of Bagot community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Facebook group information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Next LNC meeting details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March &amp;</td>
<td>Life in Ludmilla DVD launch celebrations (29th May)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2010</td>
<td>Bagot Community Garden updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ludmilla history spot (Retta Dixon Home)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Next LNC Meeting details</td>
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<tr>
<td>June &amp;</td>
<td>Newsletter accompanied by Life in Ludmilla DVD</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>Information about DVD</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group updates and working days</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Get involved in your neighbourhood (information &amp; contact information)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talking about experiences of racism (call for people to comment)</td>
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6.5.2 People’s thoughts on the newsletters

Each month I would send an email asking for any items for the newsletter. I would also visit Bagot Community and ask people from the BOSH and Bagot Council if there was anything they wanted included. Over time we realised we had a strong audience, and feedback was really positive. The newsletter seemed effective in
quite quickly forging a “sense of community”. The following excerpts of conversations with neighbours provide further elaboration.

Paul: It’s the nature of community. I think governments and academics and people, don’t understand how huge these small things are. What is huge is when you actually have people reading those newsletters. You have people talking across the breakfast table about “oh this is on next week,”. You know, and maybe they’ll turn up. One of the things that’s really important is regular updates. If people know that things are happening in their neighbourhood, that makes them feel comfortable about it, and one day it makes them feel they’d like to turn up. But it doesn’t mean that they are heavily or actively involved, ‘cause they’ve got their own lives.

Gretchen: It’s interesting isn’t it? It’s almost like if there’s a narrative or a story of community, that alone makes people feel better about their neighbourhood.

Paul: Yes.

Gretchen: So even if they have nothing to do with it, they just kind of go “I know my neighbourhood’s a nice kind of place”. I think that’s very interesting, that’s something that I’ve learned out of this.

Paul: What’s also interesting is that more people in the street talk to you, people can walk up and down the street, that you don’t recognise and you don’t know them - so they’re not really people in the street. Whereas now you don’t walk up and down the street without not knowing someone, having seen someone, saying “hello”, or seeing them from a distance and a least waving. I think people feel more of that sense as well, so, they won’t get up, do a whole lot of things or organise a whole lot of things, but you will get that greater sense of community, and things like newsletters help bring that together. It
keeps people thinking that yeah, we are a community, we are, together.

*And Pamela.*

Just knowing other people are doing things is good. And that’s where the newsletter comes in, because see, we don’t get involved in everything, because we might be doing different things, but with the newsletter I might say “oh yeah, let’s go to that”. You can sort of pick and choose what you attend. But also knowing what’s happening in the neighbourhood, that’s a really positive thing. I just think it makes you feel good to live here.

*And Susan*

I always get it and read it and take note of what going on and think “oh well I should be there but I’m not”. But, no, I think the newsletter has actually done [pause], it’s brought the community together.

As noted previously, LNC began using the newsletter to share more than just events and activities aimed at opening up access to networks. We also included information about the neighbourhoods’ Aboriginal history, and began opening up a discussion about how racism might be experienced. As discussed in chapter five, historical issues have present day repercussions. I hoped that neighbours could perhaps share some of the stories of colonisation to raise awareness and understanding in the area, and even open up some kind of meaningful dialogue about our history and its current meaning.
6.5.3 Key critical reflection on the newsletters: The unexpected outcomes

Incident

On one day, two small, encouraging, things happened in terms of the LNC project. Firstly I had met up with someone in the street while I was delivering newsletters and she told me she loved getting the newsletter because it gave her an excuse to talk to people in the street. I was pleasantly surprised, I hadn’t thought of the newsletter in that way. In the following days I received five emails from different people asking if they could help with delivering newsletters. I was really pleased, because I felt like things were working on some level, but I was also surprised because they were not things I expected in terms of the newsletter.

Reflection

I realised that much of the community work we had been doing had been quite stressful for me! As much as I enjoyed it, there had been so much explaining and planning involved, and this was the first really good, unsolicited, feedback. A small, unexpected, but positive outcome. The newsletter was encouraging someone to talk to others in their street, and five community members wanted to help deliver the newsletter. I learned how important these small outcomes are, in terms keeping up morale and energy. I also learned that you cannot always predict outcomes. I had hoped the newsletter would encourage people to come to events and participate in LNC and increase understanding about local issues and people. But here were other, positive outcomes. I called the learning from this reflection “expect the unexpected”.

Changed Practice

This resulted in small changes in terms of community practice, mainly in terms of my own attitude, as I started seeing and appreciating some of the unexpected benefits of not only our newsletter, but of other activities. As a group LNC were encouraged to note and celebrate these small things, and this provided inspiration and energy. This approach also ties in well with the strengths philosophy underpinning the community work.
6.6 The edible garden

The first incarnation of the garden came about in 2008 when LNC received ad hoc feedback from residents and other organisations that people were interested in establishing a community garden. Through LNC’s networks we found out that another organisation had received funding to establish a community garden in Bagot, and so we all agreed to work together. Unfortunately the organisation’s funding ran out after only a few months, and the garden was then run by a handful of volunteers (with plants and seeds donated) for almost a year. Red Cross became involved after seeing some of us working in the garden and offering to help out. The partnership with Red Cross has been fruitful. They provided a part-time community worker and dedicated some funding for equipment and plants. Together we organised some working bees and the garden is now running well.

It was decided to call the garden an “edible garden”, as we felt unsure about claiming it was a community garden for a few reasons. With the involvement of Red Cross, the garden structure became more formal. Because it was located within a children’s service, we needed to keep account of all volunteers from the community, meaning they needed to register with Red Cross. The garden is primarily worked on by children attending the BOSHC and a few other programs within Bagot community. The food from the garden is generally prepared and eaten at the BOSHC with the children, or on open days to promote the garden. The broader community is welcomed via working bees and events, or (as previously noted) through becoming a Red Cross volunteer.

6.6.1 People’s thoughts on the edible garden

The following excerpt is from a conversation between Stephanie and I about the garden at Bagot Outside School Hours Care Centre.

Stephanie: The garden has fricken’ grown! But now, you know, we’re in partnership with Red Cross; we’ve got that garden going! It’s good, it’s good to have kids identifying which vegetables they can eat, they
go to the supermarket, like even I do it, and go, “what is that”? Like
the eggplants.

Gretchen: The eggplants! (both laugh) they went wild, they are still going!

Stephanie: They still going!! (laughs) they still going GOOD! (more laughing). Like it’s so funny, my son comes to me and like “mum, what’s this?” I’m like “eggplant” and he is like “how do you cook it” and I’m like, “I don’t know, that’s white man’s vegetable, I don’t know, just chuck it on the barby, and eat it and it’s yummy” … He didn’t mind the cucumber, cause like, he got one big massive cucumber out of the garden and he’s like “mum can you put this in the salad” I’m like “yeah, you can wash it, and you can eat it”. And I’m like, “what else you can do? Maybe just peel all the green stuff off and just eat the white thing inside”.

Gretchen: Yeah?

Stephanie: “Can we?” “Yeah, do whatever you want with it - but I have to be there to watch you, watch the expression on your face when you eat it!” (both laughing)

Stephanie: So it’s nice.

Gretchen: It’s alright?

Stephanie: Yeah, but you know, now that we’ve got partnership with Red Cross, now I’m trying to get the nutrition lady to show them, you know, the stuff that they’ve got there, what kind of tucker they can make, and what sort of ingredients they can get from the store too, in order to make a meal for themselves. The garden is good, to help the kids understand you know, about what you can grow here.
Gretchen: Yeah.

Stephanie: You don’t necessarily have to buy from the supermarket; you can have your own you know? And just to teach them to know what it is, how to cook them, but also it just give them mob kids something to start thinking about. For some of the kids are asking me ‘can we put some plum’ and stuff like that, so we can share with the non-Indigenous people.

Gretchen: Yeah?

Stephanie: We can just get some plants and grow here and show them mob. I reckon, we can show whoever you know, into that gardening stuff, the seed and how we can plant it into them trees, it will take forever probably to, for that plant to grow, so the kids are willing to share info, what kind of plum, we can eat, and stuff like that.

I like this conversation because I think it shows a progression from non-Bagot people teaching Bagot people about gardening “white man’s” vegetables, to Bagot people teaching non-Bagot people about bush foods. LNC started a garden, Red Cross became a partner and the garden has really flourished with dedicated staff, resources, and the integration of gardening into other children’s activities. People are getting to know and taste new kinds of vegetables. Importantly, there has been a shift to thinking about what kind of “bush tucker” could be planted to introduce the non-Aboriginal people to foods they have not tasted.

Again, it seems that even though not many people from the broader area of Ludmilla have been involved in the edible garden, the idea that it happens is important.

Paul: I don’t know enough about the community garden, I heard about it, but not ended up actually participating. But I felt it was really good because it brought something, on a principal basis, it brings a whole
lot of groups of people together who might not necessarily normally be together. It’s a unique cultural context that we have in Darwin.

6.6.2 Key critical reflection on the Garden: handling violence

Incident

At about 5.30pm one afternoon I was working at the garden with a new volunteer from outside Bagot Community, and one woman and child from Bagot Community. We were having a pleasant enough time when we heard a man and woman screaming at each other just outside the garden fence. They came running out of a house and the woman was hitting the man with a rake across the head, he in turn picked up a coconut and began trying to hit her with that. About ten Bagot residents came out of their houses and stood around the two fighting adults. No-one intervened. There were children watching, everyone standing and looking, like it was a completely unsurprising event. The new volunteer I was with was very shocked, saying “what should we do?” I advised her to just stay put, and I spoke to the other garden volunteer (from Bagot) about what we should do. She advised me not to do anything, saying that they had to sort it out themselves, they were drunk and if I went over there they would only start abusing or attacking me. So, ultimately, we all just stood there, and the woman in the fight ran out of the gate and into the streets adjoining Bagot. The man yelled at everyone to go away, he was covered in blood. It was all over and everyone walked away, like nothing had even happened.

This incident was critical to me because I realised two things: firstly I had become quite accustomed hearing and seeing violence in and around our area, but because people generally intervened quickly, or it was “far away”. I never had to actually “do” anything about it. However, being responsible for volunteers made me acutely aware how distressing it was to witness two people assaulting one another, and how easy it is to “get used to” behaviour that previously would have horrified me.
Secondly, I had to acknowledge that I really did not know what to do. Apart from attempting to keep the volunteers I was working with “safe”, I did not know whether I should attempt to intervene, to call the police, or was I simply imposing my own views about how people should and should not resolve their differences. I just did not know and as it was all playing out in front of my eyes, I felt quite useless.

Reflection

The questions that kept coming up for me were around my assumptions. Did I assume that violence was “more tolerable” or “less horrific” because it was happening in Bagot Community? That was a frightening thought to me. If the same scene played out in my nearby street with non-Aboriginal neighbours, how would I have reacted? These were really challenging issues, around seemingly “basic” things such as human rights, duty of care, mandatory reporting issues, and the fact that assault is illegal. I felt I had been complicit in a violent act by just standing by with other neighbours and letting it all happen, but I was unsure what else I could have done. I was confused about my espoused valuing of concepts of “social justice”, “human rights”, “anti-colonising practice”: None of these concepts, nor strengths-based philosophies actually helped me work through this situation.

It became clear that this was not something I could work through on my own. I would use my networks, and go and speak with a woman on Bagot council with whom I had a friendship, to ask her advice and express my concern and confusion. We talked through some of the complexities of the local community, families, mandatory reporting, violence, trust and the LNC project. The woman also told me that no-one calls the police in Bagot Community because they never come. In the end we agreed that we would let people know that I would call the police if I witnessed any violence. This way, people knew in advance where I stood, that it was part of my responsibility as a person working in and visiting the community, and that I believed violence is not acceptable. I called this (seemingly obvious and basic) learning: “violence is never okay”. It reminds me whilst contexts change, and our ways of working need to adapt, I need to respect and be true to my own values.

Changed practice
Fortunately I have not witnessed any further incidents such as the one just described. There is a strategy in place should a similar situation arise.

6.7 *Life in Ludmilla*: The DVD and DVD launch.

The *Life in Ludmilla* DVD came about through conversations at the LNC meetings, trying to figure out ways to promote the various assets in our community, and to provide some different viewpoints and history of the area. In doing this we hoped to raise awareness of the Aboriginal history in general, and Bagot Community in particular. We hoped to get as many people in the area involved in the production of the DVD.

Corrugated Iron Youth Arts (CIYA) agreed to be a partner in the project from the outset. We applied for funding from the Northern Territory Government Community Benefit Fund in order to “value add” to a grant CIYA had already received from NAPCAN to work on video projects with Ludmilla School and Bagot Community. Linking these resources across the organisations meant that we could make something together that would have been far more difficult (and costly) as individual organisations. CIYA worked on content with children from Bagot Community (documenting their circus arts program: The Bagot Boomerangs), and similarly with children from Ludmilla School (making a power point presentation of school history). Each of these sections became a chapter of the DVD.

LNC promoted the DVD making in the local newsletter, inviting anyone to get involved and tell their story of the neighbourhood. Only a handful of neighbours volunteered to be involved, however they were an exceptionally dedicated team and together we made another two chapters for the DVD, one about neighbourhood history, and one about “Ludmilla Now”. A range of local people were approached and interviewed, and a number of our local events were filmed too. A copy of the *Life in Ludmilla* DVD is attached to this thesis at appendix 10.

Ludmilla school children did the artwork for the DVD cover. The Young Guns band from Bagot Community wrote the theme song “Paradise” and allowed us to use it for
the DVD. Another Ludmilla band, The Presley Boys, provided an instrumental soundtrack also.

6.7.1 People’s thoughts on the DVD and DVD launch

LNC focused on demonstrating and “showing off” our assets and strengths as a neighbourhood in the DVD. Key among these was the different cultures, the social events and activities, and the bushland. The following quotes demonstrate the positive response to the DVD (which is also discussed further in chapter eight).

Pamela: I think the thing I liked the best about the video was when they went down to Ludmilla Creek, and I just thought, you know, what they showed on there, I mean I like what I see, but just through the video, I saw a lot more. So really, I just thought, we are really lucky to have that there and it is worth fighting for. I think it’s something precious.

John: If we do move away, it’s a great memento, a part of the history of our lives. And I’ll always feel a part of Ludmilla no matter what. I think, that this is, and the kids, all their years here and school, they’ll look upon that DVD later in their life and they’ll wish they were back here. There’s no doubt about that.

Stephanie: It was interesting to hear from the non-indigenous mob, you know how them mob, talk about the Ludmilla area. Like, its good education for us mob, you don’t get to learn that stuff in classrooms or meetings or anything, you know? Just from looking at the DVD we get to learn, you know, what happened to the non-indigenous mob and also what happened to the indigenous mob in this suburb. That was really interesting for me.

Susan: I think it’s been a great idea, and because this has been a very disconnected sort of a community, Ludmilla, and I think it’s been a fantastic idea. As I said before I’m just sorry I’m not young enough
to take more of a part in it. And, doing the DVD was a great idea, and I think joining in with the Landcare group, and other groups, was a great and you’ve all done a great job.

The DVD launch was held at the end of May 2010, it was a large-scale community event held at Ludmilla School. We wanted the event to be a showcase for the neighbourhood, and encouraged all organisations to come along and have a stall or person to talk about what they do. Most of the organisations involved took up the opportunity and subsequently we had a large event on our hands! Two local bands (Young Guns, and Country Town Collective), The Bagot Boomerangs Circus troupe, and the Ludmilla ‘Beat’ choir performed at the event. The Northern Territory Music School donated music gear, the local member (David Tollner) put on a free barbeque, the school held a sweets and drinks stall, and Red Cross donated a large outdoor movie screen so we could project the DVD. Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group, Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla, and Ludmilla School organised displays of their activities. Over 300 people attended the event. Feedback about the launch was overwhelmingly positive (chapter eight examines this further).

Pamela: When the DVD launch happened I thought that was really good. The young fellows from Bagot and their band. I thought you know, they’re really good and I thought they had really positive messages in their songs. I thought that was good to see and I know quite often Indigenous people are shy, but I thought, no, that was a good, promotional thing. And also to show that they also care about their own community and their own people in the message that they were singing. Well, that was just one of things, but I thought, no, that was a really good song for young people.

Paul: I sort of feel that it [the DVD launch] really brought the community together more than perhaps some of the other activities.
6.7.2 Key critical reflection on the DVD: Community work does actually belong to the community

Incident

After a meeting with the DVD team, during which we realised the completion date for the DVD would be some four months later than originally planned, I came home upset that things never seemed to go to plan. If the completion of the DVD was late, this meant delays right down the line, (including the post project measurements for my research), and LNC would not be able to launch the DVD when we originally planned etc. The incident was critical because I was so upset and frustrated, out of proportion to the actual incident.

Reflection

Through reflection in my journal I became aware that my main source of frustration was concern about what people would think of me. I was concerned they would think I was no good at my role of facilitator because of all these delays. Where did this worry come from? No one had expressed any disappointment. I started to unpack all of the reasons our timelines had blown out and soon realised that seeking the involvement of a wide range of people, and then having so many people involved, who all really cared and wanted to do their best for the DVD, made for a time-consuming process. The DVD was taking a long time because it was so grassroots, and none of us had made a DVD before. We were all learning from the ground up, and it was a valuable learning process in terms of technical skills and reflection upon the local area.

I also needed to remind myself that whilst I was facilitating the project, it was not my DVD or a reflection of me personally. And I admit, it was very hard for me to let go of it in this way, because I had not realised how much I thought of this DVD project as “mine” to this point. I had to think about my own pride and the reasons why I wanted this DVD to be successful. I called this learning: “I am not the community!” This reminded me to be aware of my own tendencies to take over and
also to trust in the processes and allow the time for the community to meaningfully create something together.

Actually practicing in a strengths-based way (my espoused theory), particularly in terms of “starting where a community is at”, taking time so that people can participate on their own terms, and working on the assumption that the community knows best; was really difficult for me to put into practice.

Changed practice

As a result of this learning I made a concerted effort to stand back more, not stress out about timeframes and allow the DVD project to go where it needed to. This meant that the DVD was launched six months later than expected. But as the feedback in the chapter eight will demonstrate, it was worth taking the time we needed.

6.8 Community events LNC participated in

LNC representatives were invited to participate in a range of community events organised by other groups over the 19 month period. For example the Northern Territory Department of Health and Communities organised a “Children’s Day” event at Bagot Community, and they asked LNC to come along and be involved by helping run the BBQ. Similarly Red Cross and Bagot Victory Church organised a number of community events in Bagot community that LNC members (i.e. anyone on the email or “visiting” list) were invited to attend.

LNC was also invited to various school concerts and other celebrations at the local schools. Whilst it was often only me who attended these events (everyone was invited, but only a few ever actually turned up) we hoped that having representation at such events helped build networks and encouraged a sense of “Ludmilla” being present in some way. Having LNC invited to participate in local organisation’s events and activities also provided some legitimacy and credibility to the work LNC was doing. LNC members (myself included) advised that they believed these invitations provided an acknowledgement of LNC’s role in the neighbourhood.
No critical reflection section is included for this aspect of LNC practice, as most journal notes included under this theme were about being pleased at LNC being acknowledged and included as an important and useful network in the neighbourhood.

6.9 Overarching practice issues

There were ongoing community work issues that occurred in different ways over the LNC project timeframe, that do not fit neatly into the above categories. These issues are also not always directly related to specific incidents, but more about issues that I personally, and LNC as a group, faced time and time again. Through their accumulated weight these events gained significance. They are more general reflections on issues specific to our neighbourhood and its life, so are not set out in the structured way the other reflections in this chapter are. The main three issues were: death of neighbours, turnover of key people and “the fence”. Each of these is discussed briefly.

6.9.1 Death

Almost every couple of months there was news of someone dying in Bagot Community. The deaths spanned all ages from a baby to someone in their 70’s, but every death was a shock and a tragedy. Over the time that LNC had been active, I had met many people within Bagot Community and came to realise how close-knit the community was. Many people are related, and many non-relatives have known each other since birth, and have grown up together. In network terms it appears to be a very “dense” network, with multiple ties of multiple kinds linking almost everyone in the community of (approximately) 350 people. Unlike the rest of Ludmilla, people know their neighbours, even when they are streets away. Because of these close ties and cultural obligations, Bagot Community often shut down completely for a week (or longer) after each death. This meant the administration block, the Outside School Hours program, the shop and sometimes the clinic all closed.
I found it difficult to comprehend what this almost constant process of loss and grief must mean to the people living in Bagot. How do people continue with their lives in the face of so much loss? On a community work level it meant that activities were often postponed or cancelled because someone had died. It is difficult to stress the impact of this. It is also difficult as a community worker to know if and how the work you are doing with the community is even relevant in the face of such compounded loss and grief.

My father died at the outset of this project and the experience of that loss has been huge. At times I did not want to think about Ludmilla and “community”. I just wanted to deal with my own emotions and family. It made me wonder how people in Bagot Community could be motivated to do anything other than cope with their own grief, because death seems ever-present in so many peoples’ lives. In terms of morbidity and mortality statistics, Aboriginal Australians are over-represented in all the negative categories, dying younger and living sicker than other Australians. This is significant in terms of people’s ability to participate in civic life. When people are grieving, or supporting others who are grieving, it is difficult to imagine that some can also manage to actively participate in trying to make their communities better and stronger.

This reflection links to the previous (and later) discussions about the concept of social capital. Bourdieu (1986) has argued that to create and accumulate social capital, particularly the bridging and linking forms, economic and cultural capital are required. There are different types of cultural capital, but broadly, it is the combination of the various knowledge’s, skills, education and advantages that a person holds. High levels of cultural capital are linked to prestige or high status in society. Parents inculcate their children with cultural capital as they transmit the attitudes and knowledge needed to compete in various fields, such as the education system (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986).

If parents are comfortable within the dominant culture, understand the associated fields and their rules, if they are healthy, financially secure and have the time and resources required to parent children so that they gain the necessary cultural capital
to “compete” in various fields, then their children are likely to understand and “succeed” within the dominant culture. If however, parents are in oppressed cultures, experience ill-health and mortality at disproportionate rates to the majority of society, experience ongoing poverty, and spend large amounts of time coping with their own or others illness and grief, then it is far more difficult, if not practically impossible, for their children to gain the necessary cultural and economic capital required to develop social capital. This has huge repercussions for a community project aimed at building ties (particularly bridging ones) between different cultural groups of unequal socio-economic status.

6.9.2 Turnover

Turnover of population in Darwin was discussed in chapter five; however the implications of high population turnover are significant in attempting to undertake community work. Turnover of two kinds was experienced by LNC: turnover of community leaders and staff in participating organisations, and turnover of residents in the suburb. It was particularly the turnover of people in leadership positions that impacted our project.

The local member, Matthew Bonson, with whom I began the LNC project, did not retain his seat in the late 2008 elections. We gained a new local member at the outset of the LNC project, with a different political ideology. Whilst the new member for Fong Lim (the electoral boundaries changed as did the name), David Tollner, was immediately supportive of the project, myself and another LNC member spent quite a lot of time talking through the aims and underpinning strengths philosophy with him so we were (almost) on the same page.

In the time since LNC began in 2007, there have been four principals at Ludmilla School, and four presidents of Bagot Community Council. Because both of these organisation are key players in the LNC and heavily involved in the LNC project, the turnover resulted in many hours spent introducing the project and its aims to new principals and presidents. Some people were more interested in the LNC project than others, and so there was an ongoing process of “selling” the project to key
people. This was very frustrating at times, because it felt like we were just starting to get somewhere, and then a key person would leave their job, or the area.

Our network approach was helpful in respect to dealing with high turnover. As will be explained in detail in chapter seven, via a network analysis I was able to better understand key people in the network and see where there would be significant impacts if we “lost” a person (in terms of being connected to various groups in the community). We purposely tried to create more ties across the network so that rather than there being only one connection to a particular organisation, there were multiple. If someone left their job, then LNC had other connections to that organisation or group.

6.9.3 The fence

Throughout the LNC project, I wanted to talk (and maybe do something) about the fence that marked Bagot Community from the rest of Ludmilla. To me the fence is a powerful symbol of the separation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Ludmilla. As explained in the previous chapter, there is a history of the fence coming up and being pulled down, there have been different kinds of fences, and different reasons why people want or do not want a fence. I wanted to explore the fence and attempted to talk to people about what they thought about it and whether there needed to be one. People were divided in their views and feelings about the fence more than any other topic we broached via the LNC project.

Thinking about the fence between Bagot and the rest of Ludmilla also prompted me to reflect on the fence around my house, and the many tall fences (often with dogs behind them) around the vast majority of houses in the suburb. To me there is still a physical sense of barricades, across the entire neighbourhood (and indeed most of suburban Darwin) and as such, all the fences in Ludmilla are worth thinking through in a deeper way. Members of LNC have not yet been able to decide what to do in terms of the fences, or how we should approach them. However the idea of making a new neighbourhood film, exploring the history of the Bagot Community fence, and the many other fences in the area, as well as resident’s views about fences, is an idea some of us are keen to pursue in the future.
6.10 The manifestation of strengths and network approaches at the micro level of practice

Chapter 6 has told the story of the LNC project, detailing events and activities, providing the views of the in-depth interview participants and using a practice reflection journal to critically reflect of various incidents during the project. I will now provide a more detailed discussion of how the network and strengths approaches manifested at the micro level of interaction with individuals, families, groups and organisations.

6.10.1. Individuals

The strengths philosophy was put into practice when working with individuals in two main ways. Firstly, as the facilitator I worked from an assumption that all people have strengths and positive motivations. Secondly I acknowledged and encouraged others to acknowledge, the strengths of individuals. Both of these practices are key elements of the strengths approach as discussed in Chapter 2.

What this actually looked like in practice can be demonstrated by a further discussion of Frank, who openly called himself “racist” (as detailed in chapter 5). The philosophical premise that all people have strengths could be challenging to enact at times. While acknowledging Frank’s views did not match mine, or fit with a human rights or social justice perspective, I still needed to look for what Frank ‘had’. A strengths approach meant not condemning Frank for his views, but seeking to understand and challenge them, and to acknowledge other aspects of Frank’s life and views. Frank was not only “a racist”. He was many things, a community activist in years past, a holder of over 50 years local knowledge. I needed to find ways to promote these aspects, and acknowledge the non-racist “assets” Frank held and could contribute via the LNC project. Thus we chose to value his role as a previous community leader (key in various road-work projects and social action projects in the area), and to work with Frank to learn about the “early days” of white settlement in Ludmilla. Using and acknowledging Frank’s knowledge in LNC activities (such as community meetings) was one way of acknowledging and sharing his contributions as a community member.
The network approach manifested in practice with individuals primarily in taking every opportunity to link people together, with a focus on creating bridging linkages. That is, linking individuals who could potentially make connections between different networks. This manifested in practice at the micro level through engaging in activities such as “purposeful loitering”. For example, going for a walk to places where people might be (community garden, school events, local concerts etc.), and discussing what ideas others are having about neighbourhood projects, and letting people know how to contact one another. The newsletter provided the same linking opportunities but in a different format. Using the newsletter to alert people to what was happening and who they could contact for particular things was a concrete way of assisting people to link to others. If people expressed misgivings, reservation or just plain nervousness about meeting people they didn’t know, I would offer to accompany them, or see if a common linking person might do so.

The core tasks of the networking approach were: finding out what opportunities for gathering together existed, creating new opportunities for gathering and then creating awareness about the opportunities and facilitating the process of people coming together so it was not too difficult for them.

6.10.2 Groups

The strengths philosophy was manifest in our group interactions in similar ways to working with individuals. A key aim was to name and celebrate the strengths of the groups in our community, and to find audiences for them so that others could acknowledge and celebrate their work. In particular LNC focused on previously “invisible” or socially labelled groups. One example of this was the promotion of the Bagot Boomerangs, a young people’s circus skills group. LNC and CIYA worked together to organize a performance by the Bagot Boomerangs’ in front of the rest of the neighbourhood so that they could demonstrate their learning and new skills. The performance was part of the DVD launch, so this group of young people were able to have a large audience in which they could demonstrate their achievements and be acknowledged publicly.
The strengths focus also manifested at the group level in terms of how meetings were conducted. At the beginning of meetings everyone was introduced in terms of their various roles and their connections to others. We modelled respectful behaviour and attempted to resolve any disagreements in non-aggressive, non-judgmental ways. Participation was encouraged by holding meetings at various locations that different group felt comfortable with.

The networking approach was manifest in the way we invited representatives of all local organisations to come to LNC meetings and facilitated discussion about how each might “value add” to the others activities. For example it became apparent through discussions with various community groups that two different organisations were doing similar activities in a particular area on the same days, and therefore halving the pool of people who could potentially engage in their projects. I invited people from both of these organisations into our LNC meeting and they were able to discuss their projects and work out ways to coordinate them so that people were able to attend both activities if they wished to do so.

Another way the networking approach was manifest in practice was through encouraging groups to work together on specific projects (such as the DVD). LNC also facilitated networking by providing opportunities’ to get different groups together into spaces (stalls at DVD launch, and ‘Come and Try’ Day) and smoothing the introduction processes. Conversations would start if people were physically placed next to one another, intruded and asked by a facilitator to do a particular task together (eg. Assemble a marque, set up a sausage sizzle). These simple things, put network theory into practice.

6.10.3 Families

In the LNC project a strengths focus with families was enacted in similar ways to those discussed in terms of individuals and groups. An important aspect of this was to acknowledge the different types of family in the area, and particularly to understand the concept of family as large groups with varying levels of obligations which could impact involvement in community life. An example of how this manifested was in the way LNC meetings were family friendly, providing space for
children, food, drinks etc., in place that were comfortable. This also meant having meetings in different locations, and trying to find ‘neutral’ places so as many people felt comfortable to attend as possible.

Putting the networking focus into practice with families meant that we organised many “family friendly” community activities. Events were alcohol and smoke free to promote a healthy and safe environment for children. A few families took on the roles delivering newsletters, which meant and adult and their children took on the responsibility of delivering the LNC newsletters in their street. Through this simple activity, they were able to meet other families in their street, as the delivering of the newsletter provided an excuse to strike up a conversation.

Enacting a network approach with families was about providing safe, friendly, supportive and welcoming opportunities’ for families to meet and do things together. Combining this with a strengths approach also meant that families contributions of time, skills and knowledge and interest, were acknowledged by LNC in the newsletters, DVD and emails.

6.11 Discussion about the LNC Story

The story of the LNC project has been laid out, and I now return to the question I sought to answer at the outset of the chapter. That is, how does network focus translate into community work practice? This question was broken down into five smaller questions which have all been addressed to some extent throughout the chapter. However, it is useful to summarise and clarify key points.

1. What processes, activities and events take place?

The process and activities that occurred have been explained throughout the chapter. They involved facilitating a range of LNC meetings, organising and distribution of a neighbourhood newsletter, making a neighbourhood DVD, supporting a local “edible garden” and organising and/or participating in a range of community events such a BBQ’s, bushwalks and children’s week celebrations. The ways in which
these events and activities occurred was described and critically reflected upon throughout the chapter.

2. **How were network diagrams, information and ideas used?**

a. Conceptualising LNC as a loose network rather than a structured organisation or group demonstrates the first application of network thinking.

b. The first round of data collection, just prior to the community project was used to create a network map that was discussed with the LNC group and in an open community seminar. This helped LNC to figure out what our network was comprised of, what connections we had, and where obvious holes or gaps in the network were. In turn we were able to think about ways to connect the disconnected parts of the network via different events and activities.

c. LNC sought to find out what every organisation in the area was, and how they were linked to one another and then try and link them to LNC. Some we were successful with, others not as much (The network maps in chapter eight demonstrate the connections and changes in detail).

d. LNC actively sought to connect people up, and open up information and ideas by inviting people to meetings and events and trying to get different people into the same space (either physical or on-line).

e. LNC promoted the idea of network thinking in our discussions, talking about networks as strengths and encouraging people to think about the resources within their networks that could be brought into the project. In this way new partnerships were formed and more resources became available in Ludmilla (eg the edible garden, the newsletter and the DVD).

f. LNC used all possible communication mechanisms (email, letterboxes, meetings, in person visits, Facebook, Youtube) to establish, maintain and build the network. We placed high value on the all communication mechanisms as they were
considered the “lifeline” of the network, through which the neighbourhood network could exist, and be “enacted”.

g. LNC considered all activities and events in light of three things: Firstly, is the event likely to increase or strengthen our network (particularly across different cultures)? Secondly, how will it do this? And lastly, is the event or activity strengths-based? That is, how are we framing events – not as one group “helping” another (who by inference must be lacking in some way) but by stressing the exciting potential of opening up conversation and dialogue between people who all have valuable strengths and who care about the neighbourhood.

3. **How is it different to an ‘ordinary ABCD’ project?**
Through liaising with other community workers using ABCD in their work, I have come to learn that there is no such thing as an “ordinary ABCD” project. And so, this question really becomes redundant. The more interesting question becomes, what was interesting about *this* ABCD project? What are the emic issues? The main point that became clear from the first LNC project meeting was that participants were able to enthusiastically talk about natural and built assets in the area, and to consider various organisations and their commitment to Ludmilla as assets, but they were much less able to talk about their own assets or gifts. People appeared to feel uncomfortable when their own positive qualities, skills and abilities were pointed out and quickly moved to change the focus on to someone or something else. As the facilitator I did not want people to be uncomfortable for prolonged periods whilst their strengths and assets were detailed, and so I just went with the flow of the conversation rather than force it to stay on particular assets.

Perhaps this reluctance or discomfort in discussing individual strengths is an “Australian thing”, tied up with a cultural aversion to self-promotion. As ABCD is American in origin, there may be some cultural differences in this respect. This is only speculation, and to be certain would require more research, but it is an interesting observation none the less. I had to become creative about maintaining a strengths focus, and via the newsletter and DVD was able to work with LNC
members in attempting to open up a dialogue with the neighbourhood more broadly about what we have and who we are.

Related to the reluctance to talk about individual assets was the push to have less meetings and talk, and more action. I realised at the outset that if LNC did not have some action going on (e.g., BBQ’s, the garden mornings, the nature path) then LNC would lose members and interest. As such our meeting agendas show a quick move away from asset lists and into saving bushland, making films and organising other community actions and events.

The strengths philosophy was maintained however, as a way of thinking about things, in terms of shifting perceptions to look at what we have in Ludmilla rather than what we do not have. LNC started looking at the potential of things (people, organisations, cultures, parks, schools, rivers etc.) and how we might “join them up” in order to realise this potential and meet our aims of increasing connections and creating a sense of community. This was perhaps the main way ABCD ideas were used in the LNC project.

4. What are the challenges in this particular community (emic issues)
The main challenges have been addressed through the processes of critical reflection detailed throughout the chapter. In summary these were: grappling with colonisation and racism; dealing with violence; high turnover of key people; and the high mortality rate in Bagot Community.

5. What is ‘critical’ about this type of community practice?
The networking approach draws attention to who is within the LNC network and who is not, as well as how that network was structured. As writers such as Bourdieu (1977, 1986) and Giddens (1984) have argued, relationships at the interpersonal level serve to produce and reproduce the broader systems in societies. Therefore understanding the networks of relationships in communities can highlight the way in which macro level structures are being produced and reproduced at the local level. Having network diagrams as starting points for community members to consider,
discuss and plan their community work can shed light on relationships and lead to discussions about why the network looks the way it does.

Whilst the network diagrams provide a useful tool to open up discussions about relationships and networks, the strengths approach to practice added a further element of criticality by challenging people to think in different ways.

6. What is the feedback from organisations and individuals?
There has been some feedback expressed throughout this chapter, and it has been predominantly positive in terms of the activities and events. Chapter eight however, is dedicated specifically to analysis of the feedback the LNC sought from seven of the organisations involved, and also from the post project survey of 58 participants.

6.12 Chapter summary
This chapter has been the most interpretive element of the thesis, and has told a story of the LNC Project from the point of view of the facilitator (myself), and various members of the community. The story has drawn upon a narrative autoethnographic style of writing, linking the various narratives to a broader analysis of the project in its context. Field documents such as meeting notes and newsletters were also used to provide further substance to the analysis. Finally the way in which network ideas were used in the LNC project was articulated in terms of the first major research question, with each of the sub questions being addressed specifically.
Chapter Seven

Social Network Analysis
Chapter Seven
Social Network Analysis

This chapter presents the social network analysis of the LNC networks pre and post the LNC project. Using social network analysis to explore the outcomes and efficacy of the LNC project in terms of individuals, organisations and their relationships provides a different lens through which to view the LNC project and its outcomes. As previously argued, this social network analytic lens fits well with the LNC project aims of increasing and enhancing social networks across diverse cultural groups. The research demonstrates that LNC social networks have not only grown larger, but become more cohesive over the 19 month period of the LNC project. The linkages between organisations involved with the LNC project also grew in a particularly exciting way.

An introduction to social network analysis was provided in chapter two. In chapter three a number of ways social network analysis might be used in researching community development work (particularly asset-based community development) were proposed. The most relevant of the suggested analyses are presented in this chapter.

Four sets of pre and post LNC project diagrams and analysis are presented and explained. A summary of the data sources and analytic techniques used for each set is also presented. Each of the four sets of diagrams and analysis sheds light on different aspects of LNC project outcomes. The last section of this chapter then considers all the network analysis as whole, and provides answers to the second major research question, that is; how can social network theory and analysis research contribute to our understanding of community work?

7.1 Some preliminary methodological issues

Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by geometry of his own, the circle within...
which they shall happily appear to do so (Henry James 1987, cited in Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982, p. 9).

Knowing where to “draw a line” or create a boundary that defines a network is problematic in most network studies, particularly those involving communities. However a network must be defined in order to analyse it. In order to define a network, there are a few very important issues to be worked through and clarified. These are basic issues concerning what data is gathered, the nature of the actors in the network, the types of ties in the network, and level of analysis to be used. These issues are discussed in the following section.

7.1.1 Sampling units

The first question one must address when exploring a community project using social network analysis is: what should be analysed and at what level? There are quite a few options to select from. As Knoke and Kuklinski discussed back in the early 1980’s, the sampling units in network analysis become the nodes (or actors as I have chosen to call them throughout the thesis) in the network.

Ordered in a roughly increasing scale of size and complexity are a half-dozen basic units from which samples may be drawn: individuals, groups (both formal and informal), complex formal organisations, classes and strata, communities, and nation-states. A typical design involves some higher-level system whose network is to be investigated with one or more lower level units at the nodes, for example, a corporation with its departments and individual employees as the actors, or a city with its firms, bureaus, and voluntary associations as the nodes (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982, p. 14).

I have selected two lower level sampling units, individuals and organisations, to investigate the larger LNC network which I am calling a “community”. For the most part, the network analysis presented here is carried out with individual people as the actors. However there is one set of network diagrams in which organisations are the actors. These are explained as they are presented.
7.1.2 Relationships

The forms of relations between actors are the next consideration in thinking through a network analysis. What sort of relations are of interest and why? The social network diagrams and analysis presented in this chapter include two types of relationships relevant to the aims of the community work. These are communication relationships, and relationships of affiliation.

Communication relationships are links between actors that serve as channels for information and ideas. Messages are transmitted via such channels from one actor to another (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982).

Affiliation relationships are linkages between individuals and organisations. Affiliation networks demonstrate which actors are affiliated to which organisations (or vice versa). In terms of community work, affiliation relationships are interesting because of the idea that people with similar interests or identities are likely to gather together at the same events and in the same organisations. Because they are in the same place, they are also more likely to interact. Sociologist Georg Simmel, calls the groups of people affiliated with, or “gathered around” particular organisations or events “social circles” (de Nooy, et al., 2005, p. 101). De Nooy et al. (2005, p. 101) discuss the way in which affiliation networks express particular aspects of society:

Affiliations are often institutional or “structural”, that is, forced by circumstances. They are less personal and result from private choices to a lesser degree than sentiments and friendship... Affiliations express institutional arrangements and because institutions shape the structure of society, networks of affiliations tell us a lot about society. People are often affiliated with several organisations and events at the same time, so they belong to a number of social circles, or, in other words, they are the intersection of many social circles. Society may be seen as a fabric of intersecting social circles.

The analysis of communication networks between individuals, and affiliation networks between organisations involved in the LNC project provides useful
information providing a more structural understanding of the outcomes of the LNC project.

7.1.3 Social network data

Gathering data in social network analysis is not always a straightforward task. Ideally, data from every actor in a network is gathered, as it is difficult to make assumptions about a network from a small sample. If 50% of a network is sampled, half the connections and actors – therefore half an entire social structure – are missing. The half you miss out on may well be the most structurally important.

In terms of community networks, access to an entire network can be problematic for a number of reasons. Where does a community start and end? As discussed in chapter two, communities are difficult to define, as are the networks that combine to form them. Such networks are fluid and changeable. Artificial boundaries often need to be drawn. In the case at hand, I have gone about this in a sort of reverse manner. Rather than attempting to draw a sample from a community, I have let the (snowball) sampling process provide the information as to who is in the community. That is, the LNC network is a community. It is a community of interest within a geographic area. By beginning with active members of the LNC, I could define the LNC network by asking them to refer others who would complete and interview or survey, and so on.

Traditionally the main way in which data is gathered in social network analysis is via name generator surveys (either free call or roster based surveys) (de Nooy, et al., 2005, pp. 21-22; Lin, 2001, p. 16). These are surveys in which participants are asked to nominate people from a list (roster based) or from their memory (free call) who fulfil certain roles in their lives, or with whom they have particular relationships. For example, a researcher might ask; “who are your closest friends?”, or “who would you trust to mind your home while you are away?”

Name generator surveys hold a number of ethical concerns in the current research. In small networks, people may not like to say who they know and how, or make judgments about how others relate to each other. Name generator surveys also tend to elicit stronger rather than weaker ties (Lin, 2001, p. 16). Because community
studies are generally very interested in the weak ties that form links and bridges between various networks, using name generator surveys alone can be problematic.

There are other methods of network data gathering which “register social relations rather than elicit them” (de Nooy, et al., 2005, p. 22). Researcher observation is one such method (for example, observing the number of particular interactions that occur between students in classroom). The use of existing documents such as membership and attendances lists held by organisations is also common in social network analysis. Increasingly on-line resources are utilised to provide data for various kinds of social, economic, political, trading and other networks. “Indirect data are usually better than reported data, which rely on the often inaccurate recollections of respondents” (de Nooy, et al., 2005, p. 22).

Primarily because of ethical issues around confidentiality of participation, I have chosen to gather data from a range of sources. The following data was used to develop a range of social network maps:

- Snowball sample roll out of social survey (who referred who in the snowball sample).
- Community work project data (meeting minutes, emails, and contact data documented via the research and practice journals).
- Social survey data (the findings from the social survey demonstrating various assets in the network).

For each of the sets of (pre and post LNC project) social network diagrams presented and analysed in this chapter, different sources of data and different types of network analysis took place. For clarity’s sake, each network diagram set is presented separately, with an overview of what data was used, and how it was used to generate each of the network diagrams. Explanations of what analysis occurred (and why) are also presented with the various sets of diagrams. As recommended by various social network analysts, both visual diagrams and network calculations are used in the analysis of the networks.

Exploring network structure by calculation is much more concise and precise than visual inspection. However, structural indices are sometimes abstract
and difficult to interpret. Therefore, we use both visual inspection of a network and calculation of structural indices to analyse network structure (de Nooy, et al., 2005, p. 12).

7.1.4 Data analysis

As with the sampling unit and the type of relation, a network analyst has numerous levels of analysis to select from, each providing different information. There are egocentric, dyadic and triadic levels of analysis, but in studies of communities, analysis at the level of the ‘complete network’ is most useful. At this complete network level, “the researcher uses the complete information about patterning of ties among all actors to ascertain the existence of distinct positions or roles within the system and to describe the nature of relations among these positions” (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982, p. 17).

Drawing on the literature reviewed in chapter two, I will examine four key features to assist in understanding the four sets of diagrams and calculations presented here. Network structure, processes, function and composition are considered for each of the networks, at the level of the entire network.

To recap briefly, the structure of the network includes network size, the connectedness of the actors, the concentration or dispersion of the actors, the accessibility of the network, the degree of clustering in the network, and the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the actors. Network process includes network content (what is being exchanged or communicated in the network), contact frequency and degree of intimacy, the durability and intensity of the ties or relationships, and the direction of the ties. The function of the network concerns the purpose the network serves, both for the individuals in it, and in terms of its wider social functions. The composition of the network is concerned with actor attribute variables, that is, who is the network comprised of? (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 29). Dependent upon the theoretical focus, researchers may be interested in variables such as the gender, age, culture, income, employment status, marital status, housing status, number of dependents of the actors, or any other relevant attribute.
Four different, but overlapping sets of pre and post LNC project networks are explored in this chapter:

1. The LNC referral network (active LNC members and people referred for a survey or interview regardless of whether they participated).

2. The LNC participant network (active LNC members and people who were referred and who participated in survey or interview).

3. The LNC survey participant broad connectedness network, (people who participated in a survey only).

4. The LNC organisations affiliations network (organisations involved in LNC and their common member(s)).

It is important to clarify at the outset that I am not included in any network analysis (apart from the final affiliation networks) presented in this chapter. This is for three main reasons. Firstly, I was not a participant in the survey or the subject of an in-depth interview; therefore I was not included in the snowball sample upon which much of the analysis is based. Secondly, because of my role as facilitator of the LNC project, and as the researcher, I have a connection (through working together or through surveying or interviewing participants) with almost all of the participants, therefore making my connections less meaningful. Finally, by not including myself in these analyses it is possible to gain an indication of the sustainability of the network. That is, to see what the network is like without the facilitator whose role is to develop the network. The ongoing role of the facilitator is discussed further in the following chapter which considers feedback from people within the LNC network. The reasons for my inclusion in the LNC organisation affiliations network is made clear when that set of analysis is presented.

7.2 The LNC referral network

A network analysis of all the referrals (gained via snowball sample starting with LNC members) in the pre and post LNC project social surveys and interviews is a useful place to begin the exploration of the outcomes of the LNC project. The referral network provides an indication of who the LNC can potentially access via its
members in the neighbourhood at a particular point in time. It is a meaningful measure of project outcomes in terms of understanding if the reach of the LNC has grown over the 19 month period.

There is no attribute data (other than gender and cultural group) for all of the actors included in these two networks, because they did not all complete a survey or interview. As such, I cannot meaningfully consider network composition. The analysis on the LNC referral networks includes only a consideration of structure, with some exploration of processes and function.

7.2.1 Data used for LNC referral network

As previously stated, the LNC referral network is drawn from a snowball sample ascertained when undertaking a general social survey and in-depth interviews (see chapter four). The rationale for the snowball sample has already been discussed in chapters two and four. The snowball sample began with people directly involved with LNC. These were people who were regular participants in LNC events and meetings (i.e. communicated with the facilitator at least once a month about LNC issues). These people were contacted in person or via phone or email. If they agreed to participate in a survey, then, at the completion of the hour long survey or interview, they were asked who else they might like to refer as a participant in the research. When referrals were given, participants were asked if they would call this person either a close friend/family member, or an acquaintance or casual friend. In this way I was able to designate whether the link between the participant and the person they referred was a strong link or a weak link.

The snowball sample then carried on with this system of surveys and referrals for almost three months until referrals had dwindled significantly. I undertook all of the interviews myself.

This process was undertaken twice. Once prior to the LNC project (from October to December 2008), and again after the LNC project was completed (from August to October 2010). These two snowball sample referral lists provided the relational data for the following two network diagrams.
Only people over 18 years of age, and who resided in Ludmilla were eligible to participate in the survey. This geographical boundary was drawn in order to understand links within the neighbourhood. All people referred for the survey (whether they participated or not) are included in this first set of pre and post project diagrams.

In the LNC referral network diagrams, the actors are individual people. The relation is one of communication, specifically, referral. This meant that the people communicate information to one another and pass along the referral. It is assumed that if a person knows someone well enough to refer them for an hour-long survey or interview (and has contact information for them), then they are likely to be in some kind of communication with that person.

7.2.2 Analysis of LNC referral network

The LNC referral network diagrams and analysis were developed using the social network analysis program, “Pajek”. The automated drawing feature in Pajek was used in the generation of these diagrams. Apart from the amount of time saved, de Nooy et al. (2005, p. 16) state that:

Automated procedures for finding an optimal layout are a better way to obtain a basic layout than manual drawing, because the resulting picture depends less on the preconceptions and misconceptions of the investigator.

Pajek contains two main “energy commands”. Energy commands move the vertices (actors) into suggested optimal positions (for clarity of diagram) to which manual adjustment can then be made. These energy commands (named after their authors) are called the “Kamada-Kawai” and the “Fruchterman Reingold” energy commands. The Kamada-Kawai command is slower, yet considered to be better for smaller networks (up to 500 actors) than Fruchterman Reingold. However Fruchterman Reingold separates unconnected elements of networks well. Each has their pros and cons and deNooy et al (2005) recommend experimenting with both energy commands to determine the “best” diagram, then selecting that diagram. I have followed this advice, and for the pre and post full referral network diagrams (figures 13 and 15), the Fruchterman Reingold energy command provided the clearer
diagram. The resulting diagrams were then manipulated manually to reduce any unclear aspects of the diagram.

Because the aims of the LNC project involve increasing community connections, particularly across different cultural groups, I have chosen to mark the vertices (actors) on figures 13 and 15 with a "cultural group" attribute. In this way we are able to see how cultural groupings are dispersed or clustered across the LNC network.

Because I do not have full attribute data for the entire referral network (that is, some people were referred but did not actually participate) I am not able to analyse network composition in an in-depth way, so this is not considered for the referral network. I also know that the function of this network is one of communication, and particularly of referral. Therefore the LNC referral network serves to diffuse information (beginning with LNC members) about the LNC project and research and also to gain participants in the research.

The main area of interest in figures 13 and 15 is network structure, particularly the concepts of network cohesion and network components. Density of a network has been used as one measure of how cohesive it is. Density is calculated by considering the number of lines (connections between actors) in a simple network as a proportion of the maximum possible number of lines (if all actors were connected to all other actors). Therefore a density of 0 (zero) means there are no connections and a density of 1 (one) means every actor is connected to every other actor.

However, because density is inversely related to the size of a network (the larger the network the more possible ties) it is not particularly useful in comparing networks of different sizes (as the pre and post LNC project networks are). de Nooy et al (2005, p. 63) advise using the concept of "degree" in terms of exploring network cohesion. The degree of a vertex (an actor) is the number of ties incident to (coming in or out of) it. For example, if an actor has one tie to one other actor, and no others, it has a degree of one.

A higher degree of vertices yields a denser network, because vertices entertain more ties. Therefore, we can use the average degree of all vertices to measure the structural cohesion of a network. This is a better measure of
overall cohesion than density because it does not depend on network size, so average degree can be compared between networks of different sizes (de Nooy, et al., 2005, p. 63).

Because the pre and post LNC networks change over the course of the LNC project, the pre and post network sizes are different. Therefore, degree is more useful than density for our purposes. A measure of density is also provided however, as it is relatively simple to calculate and provides information about the single network at hand. However, much of the analysis is focused on the degree of individual actors, and of the networks as a whole.
7.2.3 The pre LNC project referral network

Figure 13. Pre LNC project referral network

Legend for Figure 13

Cultural groups (marked by colour of actor)
Yellow: Identifies as Aboriginal
Green: Identifies as European
Red: Identifies as New Zealand/Pacific Region
Blue: Identifies as Middle Eastern
Pink: Identifies as South East Asian
White: Identifies as ‘Australian’ and no other cultural group

LNC membership
Small size nodes: LNC member
Large size nodes: non LNC member

Tie strength
Thin line: weak tie
Thick Line: strong tie
7.2.3.1  **Pre LNC project referral network structure**

By visualising the pre project LNC referral network (figure 13), it is clear that there are three separate components or sub-networks. That is, three sections of the network that are disconnected from each other. There is a large loosely tied network that takes up most of the diagram. To the right we have a small unconnected component made up of actors [93,17,15,69,75]. At the top of the diagram we have another unconnected component made up of actors [23, 27, 44, 38, 112]. Because we have no attribute data other than “cultural group” for the LNC referral network, we cannot attempt to correlate the structurally separated components with actor attributes or variables. It is noteworthy however that members of the component [93,17,15,69,75] are all from the “Aboriginal cultural group”, and the other separate component are all from the “Australian born and no other cultural group”, group.

Visual examination of the Figure 13 also shows how dependent the LNC pre project referral network is upon actor ‘v1’ (located in the centre of the diagram) in holding much of the network together. Figure 14 below demonstrates what would happen if the LNC pre project referral network was redrawn removing actor v1. The network in figure 14 is broken up into five separate components and four completely isolated actors.
Breaking up the network this way also helps to reveal other key actors whose importance in building the network are not so obvious until actor v1 is removed. For example, actors v13 and v18 connect two large sections of the main network component, as do a number of other actors such as v28, v22 and v25.

To consider structure in more detail, some network calculations are useful. Firstly some structural elements of the network (particularly size and cohesion) are considered.

Figure 14. Pre LNC project referral networks components with actor 'v1' removed.
To understand network cohesion, the number of connections each actor has needs to be determined, regardless of whether they are sent or received. This involves determining the degree of each actor and averaging this out to get the average degree of the entire referral network.

Because the pre LNC project referral network is a directed network (that is, the direction of the tie is indicated by an arrow), the network must be “undirected” in order to make an accurate calculation. To do this requires that the network be “symmetrised” before calculating the degree. This means taking into account both the indegree and outdegree of each actor (the number of ties going to them, and the number of ties they send, or, the referrals they received and the people they referred). If an actor receives and sends a tie from another particular actor, these ties have been “summed” to count as only one connection.
Table 4. *Frequency distribution of pre LNC project actor degree in referral network*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>57.6087</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>57.6087</td>
<td>v2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.8696</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68.4783</td>
<td>v5</td>
</tr>
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<td>75</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5.4348</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86.9565</td>
<td>v8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4348</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>92.3913</td>
<td>v3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3478</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>96.7391</td>
<td>v7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0870</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97.8261</td>
<td>v24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0870</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98.9130</td>
<td>v18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0870</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>v1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum | 92 | 100.0000 |

Sum | 206.000000 |

Arithmetic mean: 2.2391304  
Median: 1.0000000  
Standard deviation: 1.9636344  

Table 4 demonstrates that there are 92 people in the network, and there are 106 ties between them. On average, each person in the pre LNC project referral network communicates (well enough to refer or be referred) with a little more than two people in the network (2.24 people).
7.2.3.2  *Pre LNC project referral network processes*

Network processes can be explored by examining the numbers and flows of referrals and strength of ties between actors. LNC members are the starting point in the flow of information about the LNC research which then moves out towards potential participants (people referred). Notable points are related to the two smaller components in Figure 13. LNC members have only referred to others in the same cultural group in these small components, meaning information is not likely to cross a cultural group barrier in that respect.

Table 5 shows the frequency distribution of each actor’s outdegree. An outdegree represents a referral sent to another. This table is generated by calculating only the outdegree of each actor. The outdegree of an actor is the total number of ties an actor sends (that is, the total number of referrals they make, and not the referrals they receive).
Table 5. Frequency distribution of pre LNC project actor outdegree in referral network

Actors: 92  
Ties: 106  
The lowest value: 0  
The highest value: 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdegree</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60.8696</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60.8696</td>
<td>v2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.1304</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75.0000</td>
<td>v5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.6087</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>82.6087</td>
<td>v4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.3478</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86.9565</td>
<td>v11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4348</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>92.3913</td>
<td>v3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1739</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>94.5652</td>
<td>v13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.2609</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>97.8261</td>
<td>v24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0870</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>98.9130</td>
<td>v18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0870</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>v1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum 92 100.0000

Sum 106.0000000

Arithmetic mean: 1.1521739  
Median: 0.0000000  
Standard deviation: 2.0266420
Table 5 demonstrates that the average outdegree of the pre project referral network is 1.15. That is, on average, each actor referred one other actor for a social survey. Actor number v1, a member of the most prevalent cultural group, provided the most referrals (11). 56 participants did not provide any referral (because many of these were not surveyed or interviewed so not able to provide a referral).
7.2.4 The post LNC project referral network

Figure 15. Post LNC project referral network

Legend for Figure 15

**Cultural Groups (marked by colour of actor)**
- Yellow: Identifies as Aboriginal
- Green: Identifies as European
- Red: Identifies as New Zealand/Pacific Region
- Blue: Identifies as Middle Eastern
- Pink: Identifies as South East Asian
- White: Identifies as ‘Australian’ and no other cultural group

**LNC membership**
- Small size nodes: LNC member
- Large size nodes: non LNC member

**Tie strength**
- Thin line: weak tie
- Thick Line: strong tie
7.2.4.1 Post LNC project referral network structure

Visually it is quite clear that the post project referral network (Figure 15) is larger. There are 61 more ties and 21 more actors in the post project referral network than in the pre project referral network. The network is also one connected network, as opposed to having the three distinct components visible in the Figure 13. Removing actor ‘v1’ again gives a good indication of how dependent the network is upon this one actor in keeping the network connected.

Figure 16. Post LNC project referral network components with actor ‘v1’ removed

Figure 16 (generated using Kamada-Kawai energy command with the “separate components” tool) demonstrates that the referral network is still quite dependent
upon actor v1 to join up particular sections of the network, however it appears the network is now less dependent upon actor v1. Without v1 the network breaks into three components, with five isolated vertices. The separated components are also smaller than the components in the pre project referral network.

Because the network appears visually denser than the pre project network, some aspects are a little difficult to see. Network calculations provide a more accurate picture of the post project network.
Table 6. Frequency distribution of actor degree in post LNC project referral network.

Actors: 113  
Ties: 167  
Density: 0.0131953  
The lowest value: 1  
The highest value: 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42.48%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42.48%</td>
<td>v5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23.01%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>65.49%</td>
<td>v9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.16%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>79.65%</td>
<td>v2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>81.42%</td>
<td>v18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.19%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>87.61%</td>
<td>v14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.43%</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>92.04%</td>
<td>v10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.65%</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>94.69%</td>
<td>v7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>95.57%</td>
<td>v4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>97.35%</td>
<td>v27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>98.23%</td>
<td>v21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>99.12%</td>
<td>v3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>v1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum 113 100.0000

Sum 312.0000000

Arithmetic mean: 2.7610619  
Median: 2.0000000  
Standard deviation: 2.7978321

Table 6 was developed by symmetrising the directed network, with multiple lines summed, so that we are counting in and out degrees. Table 6 demonstrates that the
average degree in the post referral network has only increased slightly, to 2.76 (from 2.23) meaning each actor in the post project referral network is connected to approximately half a person more than in the pre LNC network. So whilst the network is larger in size, it is only slightly more cohesive.

To consider network process, an exploration of outdegree (number of referrals sent by an actor) is again helpful.
7.2.4.2  Post LNC project referral network processes

Table 7. Frequency distribution of actor outdegree in post LNC project referral network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdegree</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56.6372</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56.6372</td>
<td>v5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.1593</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70.7965</td>
<td>v11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.3894</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>83.1858</td>
<td>v2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8850</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>84.0708</td>
<td>v18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5398</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>87.6106</td>
<td>v31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4248</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>92.0354</td>
<td>v10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5398</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>95.5752</td>
<td>v7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8850</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>96.4602</td>
<td>v4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7699</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>98.2301</td>
<td>v21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8850</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>99.1150</td>
<td>v3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8850</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>v1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum        113  100.0000

Sum of lines (referrals) 167.0000000

Arithmetic mean: 1.4778761
Median: 0.0000000
Standard deviation: 2.7590474

The average outdegree of the post LNC project referral network shown in Table 7 is 1.478. Again, this is a slight increase in average referral from the pre project average
(which was 1.152). It means that the average number of people an actor referred is closer to one and a half, rather than one.

Figure 15 also demonstrates another important outcome in terms of the LNC project and network processes. In figure 15, we see actors in the previously disconnected component [93, 17, 15, 69, 75] (who also identified as being the Aboriginal cultural group) now linked into the communication flows of the LNC referral network in a stronger way. Not only has that cluster grown in size to include more people who identify as Aboriginal, figure 15 also demonstrates referrals to and from this group have increased. Actor v1 sends two referrals into this cluster, as does actor v21. Referrals coming out of this cluster come from Actor v15 and actor v69. This indicates that there is now communication in both directions across cultural groups where there was previously none.

### 7.2.5 Summarising findings from the pre and post LNC project full referral networks

Examining the pre and post LNC project referral network shows an increase in network size. The number of actors rose from 92 to 113, an increase of 21 actors. The number of ties between the actors also increased from 106 to 167, an increase of 61 connections between actors. In terms of network cohesion (measured via the average in and out degree of connections in the networks) there was a slight increase in network cohesion.

Whilst the network is only slightly more cohesive after 19 months of the LNC project, it is larger, and able to reach further into the neighbourhood. The implications of this are addressed in the following chapters.

To undertake more in-depth social network analysis, a range of actor data is required. The following section of this chapter examines the networks of only those who completed a survey or interview; this allows different kinds of analysis to take place.
7.3 LNC survey participant network.

The second set of networks presented is the LNC survey participant network. As with the first set of diagrams, this is a network drawn from the snowball sample developed when undertaking the same general social survey or interview (see chapter four). However this set of diagrams includes only actors who actually completed a one hour survey or an in-depth interview. This means the diagrams have fewer actors than the first set presented, but importantly it also means there is useful data from the actual surveys/interviews which can be utilised to map relevant actor attributes.

In the following two diagrams, the actors are again individual people and the relation is one of communication and referral. The same process for analysis was undertaken as for the full referral networks (the Fruchterman Reingold energy command was used multiple times to generate the optimum diagrams, then hand manipulated). Again, the structural elements of network size, density, degree and clustering are explored in order to understand network cohesion.

Whilst the pre and post referral network diagrams explored in the previous section provided information about the potentially “reachable” people in the LNC network, the participant networks show something different. These diagrams provide some indication of who is contactable and willing to “do something” (in this case an hour long social survey or in-depth interview) in the LNC network(s). Combining this relational network data with attribute data from the social surveys allows the mapping of particular assets and other affiliations that can be useful for understanding community development processes and outcomes (as discussed in chapter three).

In this section the networks are explored in terms of cultural group (for reasons already explained) and in terms of how connected actors are to broader social institutions. This is explained further later in this section.
7.3.1 Pre LNC project participant network

The pre LNC project participant network is made up of 49 actors (45 survey and four interview participants). Whilst seven pre LNC project interviews took place, only four of those participants were either involved in LNC or referred by others, hence, they are included in this network. Because there is a good amount of data for the participant network, I am able to consider three of the four key features of social networks (structure, process, and composition). Function is not considered, as the function or purpose of the network has been described in detail in previous chapters. Structure is considered first.
7.3.1.1 Pre LNC project participant network structure

Figure 17. Pre LNC project participant connections network
Actors = 49

Legend for Figure 17

**Cultural Groups (marked by colour of actor)**
- Yellow: Identifies as Aboriginal
- Green: Identifies as European
- Red: Identifies as New Zealand/Pacific Region
- Blue: Identifies as Middle Eastern
- Pink: Identifies as South East Asian
- White: Identifies as ‘Australian’ and no other cultural group

**LNC membership**
- Small size nodes: LNC member
- Large size nodes: non LNC member

**Tie strength**
- Thin line: weak tie
- Thick Line: strong tie
The elements of network structure I am most interested in are: network size (the number of actors and the number of ties) to see if the size of the LNC participants network has increased; the components of the network (the sub-groups or sections of the network) and their linkages; and the cohesion of the network (measured via the average degree of network actors).

In terms of size, there are 49 actors joined by 61 ties in the pre project participant network. As noted in the referral network analysis, it is useful to explore the diagrams to see if there are any subgroups. Where there was limited data in the referral network, there is a much more comprehensive data set for the participant networks. Detection of subgroups is useful because, as de Nooy et al. (2005, p. 61) discuss;

Social networks usually contain dense pockets of people who “stick together”. We call them cohesive subgroups and we hypothesize that the people involved are joined by more than interaction. Social interaction is the basis of solidarity, shared norms, identity, and collective behaviour, so people who interact intensively are likely to consider themselves a social group.

Detecting sub-groups is a particularly useful process in exploratory network analysis, where the researcher might be interested in finding out whether structural sub-groups correlate with other attributes or variables, for instance gender, age etc. The main question in this kind of exploration is; are similar people more likely to be connected within particular networks? There are a number of techniques for detecting cohesive subgroups in social networks. These techniques are based on examining how actors are connected. Following the method outlined by de Nooy, et al. (2005, p. 78), Pajek software has been used to detect network components.

In pre LNC project participant network, there are three distinct components. These are quite clear to see in Figure 17 above. These three components are not joined to one another by any connection. The actor set [75, 69, 15, 17] are connected to one another, but not to the main section of the diagram. They form their own sub-network. Actors [44, 23, 27, 38] form another sub-network, separate from the main
sections of the diagram. In terms of cultural group, the component [75, 69, 15, 17] identify as Aboriginal. Each of these actors also lives within Bagot community, and three of the four are members of LNC. Whilst there is another actor in the network who identifies as Aboriginal (v34), this actor does not live in Bagot community.

The component [44, 23, 27, 38] all identify as Australian and not belonging to any other cultural group. When examining their data for other similarities, it is revealed that they are direct neighbours, with houses adjoining one another (I will call them X street residents). Other variables such as, age, gender, profession, and family status did not reveal commonalities between all four from that component.

It is possible therefore to say that these two small components are based on geography, or small geographic sub-communities. A Bagot Community component and an “X Street” component. The main component of the diagram, containing all other actors, does not appear to have any significant similarities among actors.

Let us now consider the average degree of the pre LNC project participants’ network. As previously discussed, the average degree is a good indicator of the cohesiveness of the network. Table 8 provides an overview of the frequency distribution of degree in the pre LNC project participants’ network.
Table 8. *Degree frequency in pre LNC project participant network*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38.7755</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38.7755</td>
<td>v2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26.5306</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>65.3061</td>
<td>v5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.3673</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>83.6735</td>
<td>v6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.1633</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>91.8367</td>
<td>v4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0408</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>93.8776</td>
<td>v21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0816</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>97.9592</td>
<td>v7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0408</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>v1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>49</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0000</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum: 116.0000000 (this equals the total number of degrees of each actor, therefore it’s more than the number of ties)

Arithmetic mean: 2.3673469  
Median: 2.0000000  
Standard deviation: 1.8035552

Table 8 demonstrates that on average, each participant in the pre project network is connected to 2.37 other actors in the network. The “most connected” actor is ‘v1’ with 11 connections to others, and there are 19 actors with connections to only one other.

Having considered the size, components and average degree of the pre project participant network, I now move on to consider the processes occurring in this network.
7.3.1.2 Network processes

As previously discussed, in examining network process I am concerned with such things as network content (what is being exchanged or communicated in the network), contact frequency and degree of intimacy, the durability and intensity of the ties or relationships, and the direction of the ties.

The pre project participant network diagram (Figure 17) shows both the intensity and direction of the ties. There are both strong and weak ties across the network. A strong tie was defined as a “very close family member or good friend” and a weak tie was defined as “colleagues, acquaintances, and other people you know but are not close to”. In this case, the direction of ties is related to the content of the network. What is being communicated in this network is a “referral”. One participant is suggesting another to become a participant. Thus the direction of the tie shows who referred who, the arrow head points to the person referred and is “sent” from the referrer.

Actor ‘v1’ sends out 11 referrals, thus this actor is important for the beginning of information dispersal across the LNC pre project participant network. No referrals come back to v1. It is not really possible to make any assumptions about numbers of referrals sent and received however, as the person who received a referral generally knew who referred them and so would be unlikely to then refer them back. Rather than relying solely on the network diagram to understand processes, the concept of degree can again be used in the analysis. In terms of connectedness (discussed above in terms of structure) I calculated both the number of referrals sent and received (the indegree and outdegree) for each actor. As with the previous set of calculations, to look at only who referred who only the outdegree is considered. The following table 9 provides information about the distribution of referrals in the pre project participant network.
Table 9. *Pre LNC project frequency distribution of actor outdegree*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44.8980</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44.8980</td>
<td>v2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.6122</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>75.5102</td>
<td>v4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.1633</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>83.6735</td>
<td>v6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0816</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>87.7551</td>
<td>v13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.1633</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>95.9184</td>
<td>v7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0408</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>97.9592</td>
<td>v18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0408</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>v1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum  | 49   | 100.0000   |

Sum   | 61.0000000   |

Arithmetic mean: 1.2448980  
Median: 1.0000000  
Standard deviation: 1.9328589

Table 9 demonstrates that among the people who completed a survey or interview an average degree of 1.24 referrals can be seen in the pre LNC project participant network. So, on average each participant referred 1.24 participants.
7.3.1.3  

**Network composition**

The following table provides an overview of some key descriptive statistics which assist in understanding the composition of the pre LNC project participant network. Depending upon the researcher focus, any of these attributes could be incorporated into a network diagram in order to see if they are meaningful in terms of network structure. However, as I am primarily interested in cultural assets, that is the attribute used in each of the LNC participant network diagrams presented here.

**Table 10. Pre LNC project participant network descriptive statistics**

\( n = 49 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Males (16)</th>
<th>Females (33)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOTE @ home</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI background</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born overseas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed year 12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>65.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further qualifications</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>81.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children at home</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>83.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 shows a fairly “middle aged” and educated network with the average age of participants being 44 years old, and 84% of the LNC participant network holding post-school qualifications of some kind. Almost half the participants have dependent children at home.

The cultural diversity in the network is reflective of statistics for the Darwin area as a whole (see “geographical context of Ludmilla” in chapter five). However, the
LNC participant’s network is less reflective of the cultural diversity in the suburb of Ludmilla. As discussed in chapter five, 25% of the population of Ludmilla identifies as an Indigenous Australian, however in the LNC participant network only 10% identify as Indigenous Australian. In terms of people born overseas, the LNC participant network almost exactly reflects the 14.8% of people in Ludmilla born overseas. When considering cultural diversity the LNC participant network is reflective of the suburb in terms of people born overseas, but not in terms of Aboriginal Australians.

Because findings from the previous chapter indicated that the high levels of population turnover have an impact upon undertaking community work projects, it is also useful to consider the length of time people within the participant network have lived in their current home.
Table 11. Pre LNC project participants length of time in current home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of time</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 to 5 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 shows that there is high mobility in the area, with six participants living in their current home for less than a year, and almost half (46.93%) of the pre project participant network having lived in their current home for five years or less.

I now move on to explore the participant network after 19 months of the LNC project. I have called this network the “post LNC project participant network”.

7.3.2 Post LNC project participant network

The same processes were used to generate the post project participant network as we used in the pre-participant network, so they will not be explained again.
7.3.2.1 Post LNC project participant network structure

Figure 18. Post LNC project survey participant connections diagram
Actors = 61

Legend for Figure 18

Cultural Groups (marked by colour of actor)
Yellow: Identifies as Aboriginal
Green: Identifies as European
Red: Identifies as New Zealand/Pacific Region
Blue: Identifies as Middle Eastern
Pink: Identifies as South East Asian
White: Identifies as ‘Australian’ and no other cultural group

LNC membership
Small size nodes: LNC member
Large size nodes: non LNC member

Tie strength
Thin line: weak tie
Thick Line: strong tie
The size of the post project participant network is 61 actors and 102 ties. This is an increase of 11 actors and 41 ties when compared to the pre project participant network.

In terms of network components there is now one connected network, or one component, as opposed to three distinct components visible in the pre LNC project participant diagram (Figure 17). There are however, network analysis techniques that can be used to detect sub-groups within a connected network. A $k$-core is a component in which each actor (or node) “is adjacent to at least a minimum number, $k$, of other nodes” in the component (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 266).

In the post LNC project participant network the entire network is one component, there are no unconnected components. However, using the $k$-core tool in Pajek three “types” of actors that have similar network structural features can be detected (see Figure 19). The actors coloured black are all connected into the network by only one degree. The actors coloured grey are connected into the network by more than one degree. What is most notable is that the actors coloured white, who are connected into the network by a minimum of three degrees, are also strongly connected to one another in that subset of actors [15,71, 69, 75]. In fact each actor is linked to each other actor in the subset. The four actors in this subset [coloured white] are people who identify as Aboriginal, are female, and live in Bagot Community. This small component is the “most cohesive” component of the three structurally different parts of the network.
Figure 19. Post LNC project participant network components

What is particularly interesting and relevant to the LNC project aims is that the network is connected, and the previously cut off components are now integrated into the network. To consider network cohesion it is useful to again look at the average degree of the actors in the network. The following table provides a frequency distribution of degree.
To calculate the data for table 12, the directed network has been symmetrised with multiple lines summed, counting in and out degrees. Table 12 shows us that in the post LNC project participant network there is an average degree of 2.98. That is, on average each actor is connected to almost 3 other actors. There has been a small increase in average degree (of .61) from the pre project participant network which had an average degree 2.37.
Also notable is that actor ‘v1’ has gained more connections (16 connections, or 5 more than in the pre project participants network), and has far more connections than the next most “well connected” person (actor ‘v21’ who has 7 connections). Thus actor ‘v1’ is an actor to “keep an eye on” in terms of power and influence in this network.

Also interesting is that in the post LNC project participant network 22.95% were connected to only one person, whereas in the pre project network, 38.76% had only one connection, therefore more people had more connections in the post LNC project network.

Visually it is also quite clear in figure 18, that whilst the previously “cut off” component of Aboriginal residents from Bagot Community is now connected to the broader network, it is a fragile link. The links between the cluster of Aboriginal cultural group actors (coloured yellow), and the broader network are via three other actors, actors ‘v21’, ‘v61’, and ‘v1’. Whilst connections have been made that did not previously exist, more are needed to strengthen the network.

7.3.2.2 **Network processes**

As with the pre LNC project participants’ network, the processes here are ones of referral and communication. Again, strong and weak ties are marked on the post project participant map, as are tie directions. Strong and weak ties are dispersed across the network and seem to have little to do with the LNC referral processes in the network. It is important however, that (as with the referral network analysis previously presented) the previously unconnected participant cluster in figure 17 [v17, v15, v69 v v75] is now larger (more actors) and is linked into the bulk of the participant network (figure 18) via four links to actors v61, v21 and v1. Thus there are process of communication and referral now occurring cross culturally between Aboriginal residents of Bagot community, and other network members.

The following table (13) provides a frequency distribution of referrals between actors and assists in understanding network processes in terms of the numbers of referrals.
Table 13. Post LNC project survey participant frequency distribution actor outdegree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq%</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39.3443</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39.3443</td>
<td>v8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.3115</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60.6557</td>
<td>v11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.3934</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77.0492</td>
<td>v2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.5574</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>83.6066</td>
<td>v3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.9180</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>88.5246</td>
<td>v39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.8361</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>98.3607</td>
<td>v4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6393</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>v1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>61</th>
<th>100.0000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>102.00000000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arithmetic mean: 1.6721311
Median: 1.0000000
Standard deviation: 2.3658867

Table 13 demonstrates that the average degree of the post project survey participant network is 1.67, meaning that on average a participant referred between 1 and 2 participants who in turn completed a survey. Again, there is only a slight increase in the average degree of post project network referrals (from 1.24). This means that network processes in terms of referring and participating are slightly better than in the pre project network.
7.3.2.3 Post LNC project participant network composition

The following table provides some key descriptive statistics concerning actors in the post project participant network.

Table 14. Post LNC project participant network descriptive statistics  
\( n = 61 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Males (24)</th>
<th>Females (37)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOTE @ home</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.83 %</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI background</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.33 %</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born overseas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.83 %</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.51 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed year 12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>67.57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further qualifications</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>91.89 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children at home</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>51.17%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>59.46 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>91.67 %</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>81.08 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>67.57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15. Post LNC project participants length of time in current home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of time</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 to 5 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sum</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with the pre LNC project descriptive statistics, the post LNC project participant descriptive statistics show that in terms of cultural diversity, this network is becoming more reflective of the broader neighbourhood. In the post project network Aboriginal participants had increased by 3.11% (to 13.11% of participants). This is still quite a way from 25%, but it is a positive increase in 19 months.

In terms of people born overseas, there is an increase of 2.39% in the post project network (to 16.39% of participants). Given that 14.8% of the population of Ludmilla was born overseas (see chapter five) LNC can claim good representation in this respect.

Other interesting findings are that the average age increased slightly to 44.6 years. This is significantly older than the average age for the suburb which is 33 years. This may be accounted for by the fact that no one under 18 completed the survey, due to ethical considerations.

Also notable in terms of the type of community development work undertaken (eg. often family focussed), is the increase in participants with dependent children at home. This rose from 45% to 57.38%, an increase of 12.38%.
7.3.3 Summarising the pre and post project LNC participant network findings

There are some significant differences between the pre and post LNC project participant networks. In terms of structure the network is larger, with more actors and more connections between them, it is also slightly more cohesive. Network processes of communication/referral are more effective in terms of gaining access and connecting up residents of Bagot community and others in the network. The LNC participant network has also become more representative of the various cultural groups in the neighbourhood.

7.4 Linkages to broader networks.

This set of project analysis is used to gain an understanding of the links between the LNC network and the broader community both prior to, and after the LNC project. This kind of analysis attempts to explore how local level networks link into broader societal level networks, and to consider if the LNC network is “well-connected” to other structures in society. Linking networks can also be understood as the basis of linking capital discussed earlier. That is, these are links that provide access to institutions and organisations in the broader social spheres of economic, political and cultural interactions.

In order to think about this further, I have undertaken an exploration of the pre and post LNC project survey participants networks, using a “broad connectedness” attribute to develop the following exploratory analysis.

The broad connectedness attribute is calculated for each survey participant by using data from two questions in the social survey. These questions were:

1. Do you personally know a member of state or federal parliament, or local government that you would feel comfortable contacting for information or advice?
2. Do you personally know someone in any of the following types of organisations that you would feel comfortable contacting for information or advice?

a. State or territory government department
b. Federal government department
c. Local council
d. Legal system
e. Healthcare
f. Trade union
g. Political party
h. Media
i. University/TAFE/Business college
j. Religious/spiritual group
k. School related group
l. Big business
m. Small business

Participants were allocated one point for circling “yes” in question one. And they were allocated a further point for each type of organisation they had a personal contact with in question two. The scores for each participant are equal to their “broader connectedness”. In social capital theory, this could also be thought of as linking capital (as discussed chapters two and three). The level of broader connectedness is reflected in the size of the actor node in Figure 20 and 21. The larger the circle, the more kinds of organisations the person has a connection to.

By understanding how connected to broader networks each participant is, a feel for the overall connectedness of the LNC network to the broader networks of government, business and community, can be gained. Additionally it is possible to understand if some actors or groups of actors are more or less connected to broader networks. This kind of understanding might allow community workers to assist people with fewer linking connections to gain connections they may want or need in order to access information, resources or other community assets.

Interview participants did not complete social surveys; this means I did not collect information other than basic demographic data. As such, these people will be excluded from the network for the following analysis.
7.4.1 Broad connectedness in pre LNC project survey participants network.

Attributes noted are “cultural group” (colour of node) and “organisational connectedness” (size of node).

Figure 20. Pre LNC project survey participant broad connectedness

Legend for Figure 20

**Cultural Groups (marked by colour of actor)**

- **Yellow:** Identifies as Aboriginal
- **Green:** Identifies as European
- **Red:** Identifies as New Zealand/Pacific Region
- **Blue:** Identifies as Middle Eastern
- **Pink:** Identifies as South East Asian
- **White:** Identifies as ‘Australian’ and no other cultural group
The average number of connections in the broad connectedness calculation is 6.96 organisation types. That is, each actor in the LNC pre project survey network has links to almost seven organisation types, such as schools, community groups, business, government, health or legal organisations.

Whilst there is nothing to compare this pre project analysis to, at an intuitive level, it appears to be a quite well connected network in terms of linking capital. It could be argued that because Darwin (indeed the whole NT) is a relatively small capital city in terms of population, residents may have easier access to politicians and government officials at all levels of government. Similarly Darwin is known as a “public service” city, with high levels of employment in government, hence it may be more likely that people know someone working in government than may be the case in other cities.
7.4.2 Broad connectedness in post LNC project survey participants network.

Figure 21. Post LNC project survey participant broad connectedness

Legend for Figure 21

**Cultural Groups (marked by colour of actor)**

Yellow: Identifies as Aboriginal
Green: Identifies as European
Red: Identifies as New Zealand/Pacific Region
Blue: Identifies as Middle Eastern
Pink: Identifies as South East Asian
White: Identifies as ‘Australian’ and no other cultural group
The average organisation connectedness of actors in the post project survey network is 6.344 organisations. This is slightly less than in the pre project network.

Upon examination of the 29 participants who completed both a pre and post project survey, the same slight drop of overall organisational connectedness is found. The pre project survey participants had an average of 7.24 connections and 19 months later the same survey participants had an average of 7.21 connections to organisations.

Whilst this measurement can provide a general indication of the linking capital the network holds at two different points in time, it does not provide an indication of the extent or strength of the linkages a person has to specific organisations. Perhaps if the number of linkages decreased, this is because the intensity or strength of linkages to specific organisations increased. There is no way of knowing this from the data at hand, but it is an interesting point to consider.

Another notable fact for consideration is that the broad connectedness level of the 29 participant’s common to the pre and post survey networks is approximately one organisation more than those who completed only either a pre or a post survey. One can speculate as to whether people involved in the project for the full 19 months are more likely to be slightly more ‘broadly connected’ than others. Again, this is only a questioning or reflective observation inspired by the data, rather than an assertion proven by any data.

Also important in terms of challenging our assumptions about socio-economic disadvantage and linking capital (explained in chapter two), is the finding that the ‘identifies as Aboriginal’ cultural group is no less or more broadly connected than those from other cultural groups in the network.

If the post LNC project participant network component diagrams (Figure 19) and the “linking to broader network” diagrams (Figures 20 and 21) are considered together, a good argument for concentrating upon bridging ties in the neighbourhood can be formed.
The post LNC project participants component diagram (Figure 19) suggests that Bagot Community participants form quite a cohesive sub-set, that is, the participants from Bagot Community are more tightly bonded to one another than any other network component. As discussed in chapters two and three, there is literature proposing that the most disadvantaged groups are tightly bonded to one another, but have little bridging or linking capital. Yet, what is important in the findings in this case (as evidenced by the links to broader networks diagrams) is that people within Bagot community appear to be no more or less linked to broader networks than anyone else in the network. From this it is possible to see how the type of capital most needed in this particular network, particularly in relation to the participants from Bagot, is bridging capital.

In the pre LNC project referral component (Figure 14) there are no bridges between particular components (particularly Bagot and not-Bagot), and the post LNC project referral component diagram (Figure 16) a few ties have been formed. More would be better, but even a few is a good start. Just a few connections across diverse cultural groups opens up some opportunities for dialogue, information and understanding to flow (see DVD for example). So the quality of the connections and what is flowing through them is important, not only the quantity.

7.4.3 Summarising findings from the broad connectedness exploration

The broad connectedness measure appears to be useful in terms of understanding the linking capital in the networks pre and post the LNC project. Although, unlike all other measurements between the pre and post LNC project networks presented in this chapter, a decrease in connectedness is seen. It was suggested that perhaps the slight decrease in number could be accounted for by an increase in intensity of connectedness to particular organisations. In the final set of pre and post LNC project analysis, I explore the organisations within the LNC network that people are affiliated with.
7.5 LNC organisation affiliation networks

The last set of pre and post project diagrams represent the LNC affiliation network. Affiliations are relationships between people and organisations or events. “Data on affiliations can be obtained relatively easily and they are very popular in data mining” (de Nooy, et al., 2005, p. 101). The following two diagrams represent the network of affiliations between organisations involved with LNC just prior to the outset of the project, and again at the end of the project.

In the following two maps, the actors are the organisations involved with LNC. The links between the organisations are people. If there is a single link between two organisations this means there is one person ‘affiliated with’ both of the organisations. The links are numbered to show how many people are affiliated with the two organisations they are linking. The thickness of the linking line also demonstrates the number of people who are affiliated with both organisations they are linking. The thicker the line, the stronger the affiliation between the organisation in terms of common members, employees or participants.

The following criteria were used to generate the affiliation network diagrams. The ‘pre LNC project organisation affiliations’ diagram was generated by firstly developing a list of who had attended any LNC meeting prior to January 2009 (using meeting minutes and journal notes as data sources). People were marked as “affiliated with LNC” if they were on the LNC email or hand-delivery list, and either came to an LNC meeting of some kind or were in communication about LNC with the facilitator.

People were marked as “affiliated” with other organisations if they came to LNC meetings or communicated with the facilitator as a representative of a particular organisation or group, or someone connected in another way with an organisation (they work for them, they belong to them, they work closely with them).

A matrix of affiliations was formed and this data was inputted into Pajek for analysis and network drawing. The Kamada-Kawai energy command was used to generate the organisation diagrams. This was selected because it is a good command for smaller networks and separates network components well. As with the previous
diagrams, a number of diagrams were generated until a consistent diagram was developed, this was then hand manipulated for clarity of ties and actors.

The actors have all been given different label numbers for these affiliations maps. As such, actor ‘v1’ in the following maps is not necessarily actor ‘v1’ from the previous maps. I am also included in the following analysis. I have included myself in these diagrams because, as the facilitator of LNC, I was the primary link between organisations at the outset of the LNC project.

The post LNC project organisations affiliations diagram was generated by starting with a list of who had attended any LNC meetings over the project time frame. The same criteria and process were followed as for the pre LNC project affiliation network. However, as the organisation affiliation networks are not directed (that is, no organisation “chose” or referred another) the degree calculations count all ties between actors, not only the one generated from an actor (the outdegree, as used in the above sets of diagrams).
7.5.1 Pre LNC project organisations affiliations network

Figure 22. Pre LNC project organisational affiliations network
Actors = 13 (organisations)
Table 16. Pre LNC project frequency distribution of affiliations between organisations

Organisations: 13  
Ties: 18  
Density 0.2307692  
The lowest value: 1  
The highest value: 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliations</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq%</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.7692</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.7692</td>
<td>School one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.7692</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5385</td>
<td>Church group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.7692</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92.3077</td>
<td>Youth arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.6923</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>LNC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum       | 13 | 100.0000

Sum      | 36.0000000

Arithmetic mean: 2.7692308  
Median: 2.0000000  
Standard deviation: 2.7777646

It is quite clear to see from figure 22 and table 16 that organisations involved with LNC were not particularly closely affiliated with other organisations involved with LNC at the outset of the project. The organisations linked most closely (by people involved with both) are school three and LNC, and Bagot Council and LNC. Both of these affiliations are three people strong. All other organisations have only one or two affiliations with other organisations, and these affiliations are only one to two people strong.

The other obvious feature of this map is the “hub and spoke” layout. LNC clearly has a role as the network facilitator, bringing most of the organisations together to form a very loose and not very connected network.
7.5.2 Post LNC project organisation affiliation network

Figure 23. Post LNC project organisational affiliations network
Actors = 20 (organisations).
Table 17. Post LNC project frequency distribution of affiliations between organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliations</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Freq%</th>
<th>CumFreq</th>
<th>CumFreq%</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0000</td>
<td>School three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.0000</td>
<td>NGO children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.0000</td>
<td>NGO Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0000</td>
<td>Church group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.0000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75.0000</td>
<td>School one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80.0000</td>
<td>School two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0000</td>
<td>Bagot Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.0000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95.0000</td>
<td>Enviro Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100.0000</td>
<td>LNC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>20</th>
<th>100.0000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>84.0000000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Arithmetic mean: 4.2000000
Median: 3.5000000
Standard deviation: 4.0693980

Figure 23 and table 17 demonstrate that there are more organisations involved after the 19 month LNC project, and there are many more links between them. Whilst LNC is still central in the network (with a degree of 16), it is not the only actor holding the network together and there are now many more people linking particular organisations. There are seven more organisations included in the network.
In particular it is notable that there are nine people affiliated with both LNC and the local environment group (Friends of Nemaluk Ludmilla), and also nine people affiliated with both LNC and the Bagot after school program. Other strong links are between the community NGO and the Bagot after school program, and between the local environment group and the local Landcare group. The existing link between LNC and Bagot council is slightly stronger (one extra person affiliated with both organisations).

In terms of network cohesion, the average degree of the network grows from 2.76 to 4.20 over the 19 month period. This indicates that more organisations are linked by common members in the network. The significance of this is addressed in the discussion chapter (chapter nine).

Three organisations previously linked to LNC (see figure 22) are no longer linked into the network, people from these three organisations stopped attending LNC meetings and communicating regularly with the facilitator. They did all remain on the email list. The reasons for this “unlinking” from the LNC organisations network were clear in two cases, but not in the third. Two of the organisations were small (less than three staff) and the staff member who was originally involved in LNC resigned from their position and their replacement did not engage with the LNC network. The other organisation (school three) had been supportive of the LNC project, so we were surprised to see the “unlinking”. Upon investigation, we found out that the organisation was planning relocation to a different suburb.

7.5.3 Summarising findings from organisations affiliation networks

The pre and post LNC organisational affiliation networks provide some of the most dramatic changes in terms of the LNC project. The LNC project clearly assisted in bringing together people from a range of organisations at the local neighbourhood level, and these people then went on to become affiliated with each other’s organisations (as evidenced via the increase of common members between organisations). LNC’s role as a network facilitator was crucial in ‘enacting’ the network in the first place, the hub and spoke layout of the pre project network (figure 22) demonstrates that aside from a handful of people connecting a handful of
organisations there really was no network apart from connections to LNC. The post project diagram (figure 23) shows a dramatic increase in numbers of organisations and numbers and strength of affiliations between many of them.

7.6  **How did social network analysis contribute to our understanding of the community work?**

In this section the second major research question is addressed, drawing upon all the findings presented in this chapter. The second research question and sub questions are: How can social network analysis contribute to our understanding about the outcomes and efficacy of a community work project?

- What can be mapped with social network analysis?
- What is useful in terms of understanding project outcomes and efficacy?
- Are we learning anything new?
- How does social network mapping assist us to understand outcomes from a critical social work perspective?
- A response to each sub question is provided, and a summary provides a response to the major question as a whole?

7.6.1  **What can be mapped with social network analysis?**

This chapter has presented four different sets of pre and post LNC project network diagrams and analysis. The rationale for these four sets was provided prior to each set being presented. There are however, many other options for analysis of the data gathered in the project, as such there was a wide range of possibilities for diagrams. For example, the social survey provided a significant amount of data about each individual participant, and depending upon the focus of the research, any attribute for which data is held can be represented on a network diagram and the distribution of the attribute (or asset) can be analysed. Because LNC was primarily concerned with
building links across cultural groups, that attribute was selected for analysis. However, analysis on the basis of income, gender, length of time in the suburb, employment status, age, etc., can also be carried out. As such, social network analysis has significant potential in providing a particular understanding about relationships and structure within a community network.

There are also multiple types of analysis that can be undertaken upon the data. I selected specific types of analysis because I wanted to gain an understanding of issues such as network components, network cohesion, network size, and affiliations between organisations. Analysis can be undertaken which seeks to measure structural equivalence (to determine which actors have similar positions of influence in the network), and distance between actors in the network (to determine how many links are used to get information from one part of the network to another). These are just some options for other types of analysis which could occur, and can be selected by the researcher should they be relevant to enhancing their understanding of the networks they are working with, or measuring the effects of particular phenomenon upon networks.

As such, there are many things which could be mapped using social network analysis in this study, and I have presented only four items. However these items are most relevant to the research aims and the LNC project aims.

7.6.2 What is useful in terms of understanding project outcomes and efficacy?

This question is clearly linked to the previous one and has been answered to a large extent by the choices made about the various sets of analysis throughout this chapter.

In terms of measuring the outcomes of the LNC project in line with its aims to increase social connections across diverse cultural groups, the pre and post referral and participant sets of diagrams, and the calculation of various aspects of network structure, composition and processes were able to show that on average, connections have been increased across the network.

The social network analysis was useful in demonstrating increases in numbers of actors in the referral, participant and organisational affiliation networks over the 19
months of the LNC project. Network analysis demonstrated that the dominant cultural group was the “Australian born and no other cultural group” category. It also demonstrated that in terms of network structure, there did not appear to be particular structural ‘gaps’ between cultural groups, apart from the significant complete lack of connection between Aboriginal residents of Bagot Community and the broader network. This was evidenced in both the pre project referral and participant networks. Both the post project referral and participant networks showed that this previously unconnected group of residents was now linked into the rest of the networks.

The most dramatic changes in the network can be seen in the organisational affiliation networks, where it is clear to see more people participating in more organisations thus forming stronger links between the organisations involved in the LNC project. The organisational affiliation maps were therefore very useful in understanding the impact of the project upon the organisations involved.

7.6.3 Are we learning anything new?

When compared to the qualitative data analysed in the previous chapter (and in relation to the evaluative data presented later in the following chapter), social network analysis does provide something new in terms of one way of understanding the LNC network. The previous chapter provided information about the value of new networks, how they might be “built”, and what the challenges in building networks are. Chapter eight provides an understanding about what individuals and organisations thought about the project. The network analysis however, provides a more ‘zoomed out’ view that allows the researcher to step back for a moment and consider how these changes translate into structures.

The social network analysis provides a different kind of understanding about outcomes. For example, the extent of the changes in the organisational affiliations was not fully understood until the pre and post LNC project diagrams were generated. Network analysis can be used to explore, argue for and demonstrate changes in network structure and composition in visual, measurable ways which adds depth to the previously provided qualitative analysis.
7.6.4 How does social network mapping assist us to understand outcomes from a critical social work perspective?

Being able to view a situation or phenomenon from multiple perspectives, and to challenge assumptions and “default thinking” is key to critical social work. The network analysis undertaken in this research has assisted me to look at the network in different ways, as explained in the previous question.

An important example of this is the “broader connectedness” diagrams and analysis. Upon undertaking this analysis I became aware that I had assumed the Aboriginal residents would have far fewer “broader connections” and therefore fewer linking network connections than the other residents in Ludmilla. This was proved wrong, and I had to seriously re-think my understanding of the Aboriginal participants linking ties and recognise my own racialised thinking in this respect. There is deeper consideration of the issue of critical practice and network analysis in the discussion chapter.

As discussed in chapter three, social network analysis is not so much interested in aggregates of actor attributes, but in the relationships between actors. The focus is not on actors, but on the relationships. The social network analysis has provided a measure of the relationships in the network prior to, and after the LNC project. Such an analysis can shed light on how the relationships between people in the LNC networks reflect and/or reproduce wider social structures. The new connections between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the LNC can be viewed as a positive change, facilitating dialogue and opening up new opportunities and resources for those involved. These new connections can also be viewed as a disruption to the disempowering history of separation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the broader suburb traditionally.

7.7 Chapter summary

Network cohesion (across all networks presented) increased only slightly over the time of the LNC project, yet it did increase, indicating that changes towards a ‘more connected’ community were occurring. Network analysis has provided a very different type of consideration and exploration of the LNC project outcomes, one
that focuses on relationships in a more abstract, quantitative manner. In particular
the social network analysis has provided information about network structure that
was not available via the previous chapter (nor the following chapter), but that
provides a different understanding of network changes, and numerical evidence of
project outcomes.

To further enhance our understanding of the impacts, processes and efficacy of the
LNC project, the following chapter presents evaluative data gathered from
individuals and organisations at the end of the LNC project. Data from chapters
six, seven and eight are then brought together in the discussion chapter (chapter nine)
in order to return to the overarching research consideration; how might a network
focus contribute to critical social work with communities?
Chapter Eight

Evaluating the LNC Project: Feedback from the LNC Network
Chapter Eight
Evaluating the LNC project: Feedback from the LNC network

The previous chapter provided an understanding of how the LNC network changed in terms of its structure over the two years of the LNC project. Prior to that, chapter six provided a detailed narrative about the LNC project that explored how network thinking played out in the neighbourhood via the LNC project. I have also discussed how strengths and network perspectives were used as the guiding principles for enacting a critical social work approach.

This chapter compliments chapters six and seven, through the analysis of general feedback from participants and organisations involved in the LNC project. Feedback from all 58 participants in the post LNC project social survey has been analysed using a narrative (categorical content) framework, to explore what people in the post LNC project participant network thought about the LNC project. To triangulate particular aspects of the thematic data, some statistical data from the pre and post LNC project social survey is also used. LNC also sought feedback from a range of organisations involved in the LNC network, and this has also been analysed in the same narrative (categorical content) manner.

All of the feedback data comes together to help consider how a network focus translates into community work practice. However this chapter is particularly focused on the aspect of LNC network feedback that could not be adequately addressed by the methods used in previous chapters.

8.1 Feedback from post LNC project survey participants

8.1.1 Methodology
In order to gather information about views of the LNC project from people other than those involved in the in-depth interviews, two additional questions were added
to the post LNC project social survey. These questions were aimed at obtaining broad feedback about LNC from the LNC network. The questions were:

1. How did you find out about LNC? and,
2. Do you have any feedback about LNC?

These questions were purposely broad so that responses were not focused on any particular aspect of the project; rather I was interested in knowing whatever came into participant’s minds when they thought about the LNC project.

As discussed in chapter five, a snowball sample (starting with the LNC members) was used to access participants for the social survey. None of the participants involved in the in-depth interviews took part in the social survey. Before considering the LNC feedback data, a brief statistical overview of the 58 participants is presented, in order to provide some additional context to the feedback.
Table 18. Post LNC project survey participant descriptive statistics

\( n = 58 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Males (22)</th>
<th>Females (36)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LOTE @ home</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATSI background</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born overseas</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed year 12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>72.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further qualifications</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>84.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent children at home</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>55.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>84.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own home</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19. Post LNC project survey participants length of time in current home

\( n = 58 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of time</th>
<th>Number of people</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 to 5 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years (inclusive)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 20 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The responses to the feedback questions were recorded in writing on the paper survey. I checked back with participants to make sure their responses had been correctly captured. The data was then entered into NVivo and the content was categorised by theme.

In addition to this qualitative data, data from the pre and post LNC project social surveys which measures the extent to which participants “feel part of the community” was used to determine if any changes occurred in participants feelings in terms of their sense of community. This is explained in more detail later.

8.1.2 How did people find out about LNC?

Figure 24 demonstrates how survey participants first found out about LNC.

![Bar chart showing how participants found out about LNC]

y axis = number of participants

**Figure 24. How participants found out about LNC**

The newsletter is clearly the main way people heard about LNC, with almost half (25) the participants finding out about the network this way. Nine participants were directly involved with the LNC group (LNC members), seven had never heard about LNC even though someone involved may have referred them. The same number (seven) heard about LNC via friends, and four people heard about it through their
workplace. One person found out about it via their involvement as a participant in the pre project surveys.

8.1.3 Community feedback about the LNC Project

Without any prompting regarding specific events or activities of LNC, the 58 participants were asked if they had any feedback on the LNC project. A categorical content analysis was carried out on this feedback. The following five themes were drawn from the data; (1) inclusiveness and communication, (2) obstacles to participation, (3) a ‘sense’ of community, (4) learning, and (5) the start of something. These themes are represented in figure 25 in terms of their prevalence.

\[ 
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Promotes inclusiveness & communication} \\
\text{Obstacles to participation} \\
\text{Promotes a sense of community} \\
\text{Increased learning} \\
\text{Feel it is just the beginning} \\
\end{array} 
\]

y-axis = number of participants

*Figure 25. Categories of feedback about LNC project*

**Inclusiveness & communication**

Survey participant: The community as a whole, since this happened, has been more cohesive.

Survey participant: I read the newsletter. It is a valuable resource, and helps make people feel connected to the area.
Twenty-eight of the 58 participants provided feedback which highlighted the “linking up” nature of the project, and the impact they believed this has had on the neighbourhood. Events such as the bushwalk and the DVD launch were considered to be particularly good in terms of bringing people from both Bagot Community and other parts of Ludmilla into the same space.

Survey participant: I loved it. I love people coming together, that’s the general theme of it all for me, about all of that joining together stuff. People from Bagot and from the rest of Ludmilla.

Figure 26 is a bar graph which shows the number of references to specific aspects of the LNC project which people mentioned in terms of their inclusivity or communicative value. That is, participants felt these events or activities fostered inclusion and communication. The item titled ‘gatherings’ includes all the face to face events LNC organised (such as the DVD launch, bushwalk, and big breakfast).

![Bar graph showing inclusive aspects of LNC project](image)

y-axis = number of participants

**Figure 26. Inclusive aspects of LNC project**

Communication is required to facilitate inclusiveness of one another. As such, a key aspect in attempting to make sure people feel included in the variety of things happening in the neighbourhood is having a range of ways to communicate. Even if
people were not directly speaking to one another at gatherings, there was the opportunity for information exchange via the newsletter, the email list and the Facebook page (the newsletter was also distributed via email and posted on the Facebook page). Whilst only 11 people provided feedback specifically about the newsletter, they all discussed it as a means of communication and information sharing which made them feel included.

Survey participant: I like the communication that there is now. I like to know what's going on around the community, not just in Bagot. We can also tell people outside what's going on here in Bagot, and they can find out what we are doing with the kids and what it's all about. It's good for showing others what we can do.

Survey participant: It is healthy for the community to have discussions about issues such as the environment issues. Public awareness of these things is important. LNC is a platform for these discussions.

**Obstacles to Participation**

The second most prevalent theme that arose in response to people being asked for feedback about LNC was that of “obstacles”.

Survey participant: I’ve had no involvement, I don’t know much about it at all. I am so busy with family and my own business that I just use this house as a place to sleep. The location or neighbourhood aren’t really part of my life.

Of the 58 participants, 12 people commented that they were not able to participate in LNC activities and events as much as they wanted to. Another nine people commented that they did not participate at all. For the most part the obstacles were not ones which LNC had any control over, however there were some valuable
lessons for the network to learn from this feedback. Table 27 summarises the
reasons people provided for problems with participation.

![Bar chart showing reasons for participation problems]

y-axis = number of participants

**Figure 27. Reasons why people could not participate**

The “too busy” category was by far the largest with 13 people mentioning that they
did not have enough time to participate as they would like. People were
predominantly busy with paid work and attempting to balance this with their own
family’s lives.

Survey participant: I did not attend any of the events due to availability issues, my
job is very intense and I often work weekends as well as
weekdays.

Of these 13 people, almost half (six) also noted that they really liked the idea of the
LNC project, even if they did not participate.

Survey participant: I can't give feedback from any experience I’ve had personally.
I think it's great that it’s happening, and would like to be
involved, but I have no time. In principal it's great.
Other reasons included experiencing personal issues such as illness or caring roles, which made participation difficult. Five were either unsure or unaware of the LNC project so had not thought about becoming involved. Another two participants comments are reflective of the high population turnover and housing crisis issues in Darwin. They noted that their accommodation in Ludmilla was unstable or uncertain, so saw no point in becoming involved.

Survey participant: I only moved here less than a year ago, been too busy with other things so not really taking notice of things in local area. I will probably have to move soon anyway as the house is rented and is being sold.

These personal obstacles can all be linked to broader social issues. The impact of a Territory wide housing shortage; the stresses of balancing work and family commitments within a globalised capitalist society where job security is tenuous and rent and mortgage costs are increasing. By the time people have met their daily work commitments and tended to their family members’ needs, there appears to be little time left for community involvement. For these people, it appears that a newsletter or email is the only connection they have to neighbourhood life.

**A “sense of community” in Ludmilla**

Numerous participants advised that they believed LNC was helping to create a stronger feeling, or sense of community in the area than there had been in the past.

Survey participant: I like it. I like the idea of trying to foster a sense of community. I think it has helped make the community closer.

This category is called a “sense of community” because those are the words some participants used to describe a new ‘feeling’ they had about the neighbourhood. Seventeen of the 58 participants made comments about a new sense of community in Ludmilla. Whilst some participants used the words “sense of community” many
others alluded to this same feeling. They often noted examples of people being friendly or saying “hello” to each other.

Survey Participant: I like the idea of community. I don’t get to many things due to other commitments, but I like the idea that these things are happening. People seem friendlier.

Survey Participant: I like being able to say hello to more people than I used to, I have met so many people, even if we don’t we really know each other we say “hello”.

In addition to people from within the area feeling a sense of community, there was also some recognition of the growing sense of community from people outside Ludmilla.

Survey participant: People in other suburbs I know, they covet the idea of the community stuff going on here.

Survey participant: People say “where do you live”. I say “Ludmilla”. They say “that’s one of the best suburbs in Darwin”. It’s because of the community stuff happening here now.

Survey participant: It is a great idea. I am really happy we have it here. Most people I tell about it think it is unbelievable, people are surprised it’s in our area.

Nine of the 17 participants who noted an increased sense of community mentioned this in relation to the DVD. Other activities mentioned in terms of fostering a sense of community were the gatherings (three people) and the newsletter (two people). The DVD however, appeared to be quite emotionally powerful for some participants who noted that it helped to both capture and create a neighbourhood identity.
Survey participant: The DVD was fantastic. For me it clarified why I love living in Ludmilla. I used to want to live in a different suburb, near the beach. Buying a house in Ludmilla was not our first choice. But the DVD made me realise we have something special here. The creek, the diversity of people. This is something that no-one else in Darwin has, or maybe even Australia.

Given the previously described generally negative media narratives about Bagot Community specifically and Ludmilla generally (in chapter four), the opportunity to promote and share these new, more positive narratives about our neighbourhood appear to be appreciated in terms of reclaiming a positive identity about Ludmilla.

*Learning about each other*

Whilst concepts such as “inclusiveness” and “cohesion” have positive connotations, these concepts also present challenges. Through processes of critical reflection about racism and racialised practices occurring in the neighbourhood, I became aware that the concept of inclusiveness is a double edged sword. LNC needed to be careful that a perception of cohesion did not come at the expense of acknowledging, understanding and celebrating our differences across cultures.

Through a growing awareness at the early stages of the project that LNC may be unintentionally thwarting the expression of diverse interests and views via a call to inclusiveness, we attempted to integrate a much stronger emphasis on opening up a dialogue about different histories and viewpoints in the neighbourhood. We tried to show different experiences of the neighbourhood with the DVD and to provide awareness about some important historical issues in the newsletters.

It was pleasing to see that this “learning” or “awareness raising” attempt was recognised in some of the feedback from community members. Six participants noted that they had learned new things about people and places in the area. Again, it was primarily the DVD which facilitated this new learning (six participants noted this).
Survey participant: It has been important for forming an identity of Ludmilla as a community. The brilliant thing about the DVD is that it taught us about history, which we didn't know, and that is important for our identity as a community.

Survey participant: I loved getting the DVD in the mailbox. I particularly like the history part as we were not aware of the whole story of Ludmilla, especially about Bagot community.

The start of something.

Six participants believed that the LNC project was “only the beginning” of positive change in our neighbourhood. Recognising that our aims are long term, even inter-generational, these participants provided the grounding in the broader context that is always needed. The following quotes come from a Bagot resident and a broader Ludmilla resident respectively. These comments show both the fragility and the importance of the new connections.

Survey Participant: It is a good start. There was nothing, now there is something. We need more people from Bagot to get involved to open up people's horizons. The women here must have something more, and getting involved in this sort of community project is good for everyone.

Survey Participant: There have been opportunities to meet people. Opportunities to meet don't happen without a catalyst - LNC has been a catalyst. I still feel I don't have any real connections to Bagot, but it's only through LNC that there have been any connections at all. It is the start of something.

Almost every person who had comments in this category also had suggestions or ideas for future activities. These included:
• women’s “sit-down” groups (where women of all cultures come together informally, often with a cup of tea, and talk)
• An internet café in Bagot Community (which everyone is welcome to come to) with a tutor present to teach ‘the oldies’ how to use the internet
• A shrimp paste making business
• Dance parties for youth
• New year’s eve street parties
• Hunting/bush tucker trips in local mangroves.

8.2 Quantitative data capturing a “sense of community”
Related to concepts such as the previously noted “sense of community” and ideas about identity is the feeling that one is part of a community. Analysis of data from the pre and post LNC project social surveys reveal some positive changes in terms of participants feelings of being ‘part of the community’ that support the previous analysis of comments from survey participants.

8.2.1 Methodology
The following question was asked in both the pre and post LNC project social surveys.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
‘I feel part of this community’

Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Strongly disagree

Participants could provide one response. This was marked on the paper survey by me, and later entered into a data file in the quantitative data analysis program, SPSS. Frequency distribution calculations were made on each five response options, for
both pre and post surveys. The pre and post LNC project results were then compared.

8.2.2 Results.

Table 20. Feeling “part of this community” pre and post LNC project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I feel part of this community</th>
<th>2008 (n=45)</th>
<th>2010 (n = 58)</th>
<th>Percentage difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>16.7% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>5.3% increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>16.1% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>4.7% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>.5% decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The post LNC project survey demonstrates an increase of 16.67% in the participants who strongly agree that they feel like part of the community. Prior to the LNC project, 66.7% of participants agreed (either strongly or somewhat) that they felt like

Figure 28. Differences in pre and post LNC project “I feel part of this community”
part of the community. After the LNC project, 87.9% of participants agreed (either strongly or somewhat) that they feel like part of the community. This shows an increase of 21.2%. As there is no control group in this study, there is no way of determining whether this increase was a result of the LNC project directly. However, these findings, combined with the qualitative data demonstrate that changes have occurred over the timeframe of the project, and participants acknowledge that the LNC contributed to a sense of community.

The Mann-Whitney $U$ Test was used to compare the two sets of data in response to the “I feel part of this community” question. Allen and Bennet (2008, p. 234) recommend the use of the Mann-Whitney $U$ Test for comparing differences between two independent samples of ordinal data. Whilst the two sets of data (pre and post LNC project) have 29 participants in common, I have treated them as independent rather than related sets of data because of the numerous different participants.

A Mann-Whitney $U$ test indicated that the “feeling part of the community levels” in the post LNC project surveys ($\text{Mean Rank} = 58.87, n = 45$) were significantly higher than those of the pre LNC project surveys ($\text{Mean Rank} = 46.67, n = 58$), $U = 996.00, z = -2.198$ (corrected for ties), $p = .028$, two-tailed. As the Mann-Whitney $U$ Tests shows a $p$ value of less than .05 the distributions in the two groups are shown to have differed significantly.

### 8.3 Capturing informal feedback from community members via field data.

I recognise that there is likely to be a tendency for participants to provide favourable feedback about LNC to me. People involved in the group, or who have read newsletters, would know that I was also the facilitator of the community work project. Perhaps people are less likely to be critical of the project when the researcher is also the facilitator. Participants may feel they are being critical of me personally if they criticise the project.
As I did not have the resources to employ an independent researcher to undertake the interviews and surveys (and because there were some previously discussed benefits in me doing the research), there was no getting around this “dual role” and the subsequent influence this may have upon participants. As such, I searched for critique within email correspondences and within my own journal (where I noted interactions of significance). From these field data sources I have brought together feedback about the project that might not be captured via survey or interview.

A search through email correspondence over the timeframe of the project revealed only a handful of complaints about aspects of the LNC project. The issues centred on clarifying the role of LNC in the neighbourhood. There were six emails and two phone calls received over the 19 months of the project which demonstrated the LNC’s role in the community was not always clear.

There was also a problem in relation to noise complaints regarding some of the activities LNC supported through its newsletter and email networks (a children’s disco, and a live music program for young people at Bagot). Only one resident complained about increased noise; however that resident complained often and very effectively. Even though LNC assisted in organising a working bee to sound-proof the music room, it was still too loud for the neighbour. Despite a process of negotiation, a compromise could not be reached and another venue could not be located within the area. Sadly, the music program was cancelled due to the complaints of this one person who shared a boundary fence with Bagot community.

Confusion about what LNC was, and what its role was in Ludmilla arose on several occasions. Related to the noise complaint issue described above, it became clear that some neighbours thought LNC had a “spokesperson” role in terms of Bagot Community. Historically there were minimal connections between Bagot and the rest of Ludmilla, perhaps because of this, some people thought LNC was an opportunity to communicate to people within Bagot through me or others in the LNC group, when they did not want to do this themselves. It also seems that some people believed that LNC had authority within Bagot community to “fix” anything that occurred there.
The following email excerpts demonstrate that some people thought LNC had a position of authority both within Bagot Community and outside of it.

Email Comment: What’s happening with the band in Bagot? Six hours a week of rock drumming and amplifier feedback NEXT TO MY HOUSE is too much! I want my life back! Could you please ask them to stop or get a studio? [Emphasis in original email]

Rather than approaching Bagot Community, the neighbour perhaps felt more comfortable approaching me. The neighbour was contacted and LNC’s role in promoting and informing people about the music program was clarified. It was explained that LNC did not start up or run the program, and contact details for the organisations involved were provided. However, whilst the neighbour did contact the organisations involved, they also continued to email and call me with complaints until the music program was cancelled.

Misunderstanding concerning the role of LNC is also evident in the following email asking LNC to consider traffic calming devices in the local area.

Email Comment: I wish to raise my concern over the traffic late at night on XX Road. I have found that since McDonald's has decided to open 24 hours, we've received a lot of hoons at all hours (especially weekends) driving up our street. Would it be possible to suggest that speed humps be put on XX Road??

Again, the person was contacted and LNC’s role was clarified. However, from time to time issues about LNC’s role demonstrated the need to consistently state and clarify the network’s role in all material (newsletters, emails etc.).

Other informal feedback was generally positive, providing broad encouragement and confirmation of the need for the project. There were 18 unsolicited complementary emails received over the timeframe of the project. The email extract below provides a nice example of this kind of feedback.
Email Comment: I received your flyer on the LNC, and am glad that something like this is happening around the suburb! Of particular interest to me is the 'Life in Ludmilla' short film that you are making. If there is some way I can assist in this project, please let me know.

Thanks again for starting something like this. There is a great need to build a sense of community in our community.

8.4 Feedback from organisations

8.4.1 Methodology
Feedback was sought via email and in person, from all organisations involved in LNC. This data was gathered either from emails, or (if feedback was given in person) through notes in my community work journal. These emails quotes and journal notes were entered into NVIVO and analysed to gain an understanding of organisations views about the LNC project.

A range of questions were asked of organisations, as well as an invitation to make general comments. LNC asked:
1. What has LNC done well over the past 20 months?
2. What could we have done better?
3. Has your organisation made any new connections with other organisations or individuals as a result of LNC activities, events or meetings?
4. Has LNC assisted your organisation in any way? If so, how?
5. Would you like to see LNC continue into the future? In what way?

Seven organisations responded to the request for feedback: Larrakia Nation, Red Cross, Bagot Outside School Hours Care; Corrugated Iron Youth Arts, Bagot Victory Church and two schools. Organisations were advised that their responses would be “de-identified” so comments could not be attributed to specific
organisations. As such, references to specific programs and organisations have been changed to ‘XX’, “ZZ” or “the program” to help ensure anonymity.

8.4.2 What has LNC done well?

The two main themes in response to this question were about networking and about bringing new and creative ideas to the community (particularly the DVD). Every participant organisation commented that the LNC’s networking role was valuable. The networking role was discussed in terms “bringing people together”, “helping with introductions” and “enhancing and extending connections”. Participants noted that they appreciated regular communication through emails, newsletters and meetings. The ability to work together on activities as a result of the networking was also appreciated.

Organisation comment: Excellent networking. Created opportunities for introductions, and better involvement in community.

Organisation comment: I was very impressed that so much took place and it wasn’t one or two people running around doing/facilitating the whole show - many people/orgs doing their own thing with it all fitting together beautifully.

Given that we had embraced a networking approach to our community work, this feedback was fantastic, and demonstrates that the networking approach was really valuable and useful in developing community from an organisations viewpoint. What came as a pleasant surprise was that organisations also seemed to appreciate the creativity of LNC, and the way in which working together with other groups and people can enhance and inspire ideas for meaningful projects. One participant noted that a number of the organisations were all striving towards similar outcomes for their service users, so it was good to be able to think creatively together about how we might achieve desired outcomes for everyone.

Organisation comment: Thanks for all the lovely ideas. Truly inspiring!
Organisation comment: LNC has engaged many of the residents in worthwhile, meaningful and enriching activities.

Organisation comment: I believe that LNC is a very important tool in trying to help engage the people of Bagot with the broader community and vice versa. This was definitely evident at the *Life in Ludmilla* launch. It was especially great to see the young people choosing to play together as a group rather than Bagot vs. the rest! As well as the circus show, the crowd watching and the cheers from everyone!!

The DVD and associated DVD launch celebrations were singled out for attention by four of the seven organisations. Again, it seems that organisations appreciated the opportunity to work together with other organisations and neighbours on something that was really positive, focusing on our neighbourhood assets.

Organisation comment: What a great community event the DVD launch was. Everyone has been talking about it ever since. A fantastic event that brought together so many different people from our community - we certainly are all winners! A very big thank you to the Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections group - your hard work definitely achieved a more connected, engaged and friendly community. We look forward to many more similar community events in the future.

Organisation comment: The DVD that was launched was a fantastic production that I know our students and teachers will value for years to come. This DVD is a really rich resource that
will help our school learn from and about our local community.

8.4.3 What could LNC do better?

There were three main themes in terms of how LNC could improve. These were: (1) ensuring people know exactly who/what LNC is; (2) making more effort to involve Minmarama Community, and (3) addressing issue of dependency upon the LNC facilitator.

As with some of the informal feedback from participants discussed above, there was an initial lack of clarity or understanding about what LNC was for some workers in organisations.

Organisation Comment: Well, the one thing that maybe I was not too clear about is who LNC is auspiced by, or where it fits exactly. But I don’t think this is a major issue.

Given LNC’s relatively unusual “non-structured” network approach, one participant noted that they could not comment on what LNC could do better as “there is nothing to compare this too”. Our network was not like anything they had previously worked with.

An important criticism was LNC’s lack of involvement with Minmarama Community. Whilst this was due to logistical and resource issues at the outset of the project, by the time we got to the end it became quite a glaring issue.

Organisation comment: One thing I would like to see if possible would be Minmarama being including in these things. We have a lot of problems with the Bagot and Minmarama young people trying to get along…I believe the more people try to include the Minmarama kids and families with Bagot the better. This is something that some of the Bagot and Minmarama parents, families as well as
council have expressed that they would like to encourage more interaction between the kids at the two communities.

Some of the organisations involved in LNC came on board later in the project, and these organisations had good connections with Minmarama. As LNC continues into the future, Minmarama are definitely part of the picture in a much more significant way.

Helping the network become less dependent upon the LNC facilitator was also raised by one organisation as something LNC may need to consider. The concern was that without the facilitator as an “organisational point” the meetings, emails and newsletters would not occur, and the LNC network would collapse.

Organisation comment: Resourcing such a group and maintaining an interested and active support base and driver for the longer term is a challenge.

This is an important, if not crucial point. The position of facilitator which I undertook was financed by an APA scholarship and a handful of small community grants. Mostly, the facilitator role was my own volunteer time. Without a dedicated volunteer, such a network requires a paid networker position. This is discussed further in the following chapter.

8.4.4 New connections as a result of LNC involvement?

Organisation comment: Big time! It was not that clear to me when I started in this job, that our XX project had had so much to do with LNC. But the relationship with ZZ, which came through LNC, has been crucial for our program. Plus, it has helped us to have the first pilot project in a particular area. So, LNC has been absolutely vital for that to happen and we are very thankful to LNC.
All of the organisations advised LNC that they made new connections with other organisations as a result of the LNC project. Some organisations also noted that already established ties to other organisations were strengthened through LNC projects.

Organisation comment: We worked with XX on an LNC project and although we had been trying to get something happening with them for a while, this activity provided the key. Our relationship with ZZ has also grown. We ran activities at an LNC event and then six months later re-connected with some of those families and children at another program – a really rewarding experience.

These comments show how useful the networking approach was in getting projects started, and also for better coordinating existing projects for maximum community value.

Organisation comment: I was truly amazed at the range of activities for kids on the same day as ours! We didn’t know we were competing for kid’s attention, but now we have met the other organisations running activities and our work is now complementary, not in competition.

The importance of providing “excuses” for organisations to focus on location based activities together was appreciated. Because LNC was not auspiced or governed by any other organisation, we had the freedom to organise events that might not fit into any single organisations core business. Such events were open to maximum, diverse participation, and facilitated cross-network links. These kinds of events were very useful for establishing and strengthening organisational networks.

8.4.5 Has LNC assisted your organisation?

The organisational feedback demonstrated that the main way LNC assisted organisations was through providing networking opportunities (by inviting people to
meetings and events). However it also appears that LNC was appreciated for its role in organising opportunities for various organisations to “show off” the work they have been doing in specific parts of the neighbourhood. LNC’s focus on events that promote community strengths and assets meant that organisations were provided with a diverse audience for their work.

Organisation comment: LNC provided an opportunity for young people we work with at Bagot Community to showcase their skills and performance, and in their locality too.

The events and activities helped to motivate and/or inspire some organisations to work on specific projects.

Organisation comment: LNC provided the motivation to enhance our existing activities and document them for the DVD, and to work with XXXX.

By involving XX and other NGOs in a project which we auspice, it has gained new life, greater depth and a broader community engagement for all participants.

Two organisations noted that they appreciated the way in which LNC acknowledged their input and participation in the various events and activities. Such acknowledgement provided their organisations with opportunities to promote themselves, their programs, and to be seen as participants in the community.

Organisation comment: There was great acknowledgement of our organisations presence at LNC events and through newsletter.

There was acknowledgement from two organisations also, about the educative role LNC played. Through LNC’s networks, which included many long-term residents, and the sharing of historical research undertaken as part of this thesis, LNC was able
to provide organisations with important contextual background information about many local issues. In particular, providing information about the historical separation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the area were viewed as important by two organisations. The sharing of this knowledge assisted these organisations in planning their programs, and understanding some the obstacles they came up against.

Organisation comment: Through LNC our community development work has been easier, as we have contact with a wider range of people, as well as getting to know some of the community’s history and dynamics.

The feedback from organisations shows not only that they made new connections, but what these new connections were important for motivation, community participation, increased knowledge and opportunities for the people who the organisations work with and for.

8.4.6 The future of LNC?

All organisations agreed that LNC should continue.

Organisation comment: It is a great idea, pursued for all the right reasons. Closer community connections and working together at a micro level is exactly what our community, and the rest of the world, needs in these troubled times.

Specific ideas for the future of LNC included focusing on more community events that highlight the strengths and assets of our local people and environment.

Organisation comment: We see enormous value in activities that showcase the work of the young people we work with. XX performed at the DVD launch and it was a significant moment for them, their first general public
performance, the crowd loved them and their families saw this success.

Ideas for a weekend long “Ludmilla Festival” were proposed as a way in which all the organisations and people could continue working together on a range of exciting activities (film making, music writing, circus skills, visual art, and sports) that could come together in an annual festival. Again, the idea of providing an “audience” so that organisations can demonstrate and celebrate the work they do with community members was important to organisations.

Organisation comment: Maybe LNC could organise some yearly event, like the DVD launch, that would be attractive to both Ludmilla and Bagot community members.

8.5 Chapter summary
The feedback about LNC from individuals in the post LNC project survey provided useful information for understanding the value and meaning of the LNC network to participants. The power of the newsletter for accessing and communicating with people in the suburb was confirmed by the data. The feedback has also provided new impetus for organising more local gatherings in the future, as LNC had been unsure how important these were in terms of the projects aims, but it seemed these were the most popular activities.

In terms of developing a neighbourhood identity, the DVD proved very useful, and allowed LNC to help create a positive, asset-based identity that people could join in with and be a part of. A new sense of community was acknowledged by 17 participants, and this was confirmed via a quantitative analysis also.

The feedback data also helped LNC understand why people did not participate as much as they might like to, or at all. Importantly, the feedback from individuals seemed to acknowledge that LNC had helped to start the process of making
connections across between people inside and outside of Bagot Community; however these were new, few and fragile.

Organisations response to the LNC project was overwhelmingly positive. Each organisation noted that they had formed new networks and gained value from participating in the LNC project. Combined with the organisations affiliation network analysis presented in the previous chapter, it is clear that involvement in a location-based ‘umbrella’ network had significant positive outcomes for the organisations involved.

This qualitative feedback has demonstrated that many individual survey participants and all organisations found the LNC project positive and useful. All of the analyses from this chapter, the previous chapters are brought together in the discussion in the following chapter. Chapter nine integrates the findings from these three chapters, bringing together all the elements of the case study in a discussion of what has occurred and what it means in terms of a critical approach to community work.
Chapter Nine
Discussion
Chapter Nine
Discussion

The previous three chapters have provided a range of data analyses aimed at answering two main research questions. To recap, these are:

- How does a “network focus” translate into community work practice?
- How can social network analysis contribute to our understanding about the outcomes and efficacy of a community work project?

In this chapter the findings from previous chapters are brought together to consider the whole case in an integrated way. In doing this, I return to the research topic generally: that is, how might a social network focus contribute to social work practice with communities?

The case-study presented in this thesis is discussed in terms of existing social work knowledge. A consideration of what network thinking and the ABCD approach lent to the LNC project is also presented, along with an overview of the critical nature of the LNC project. Finally there is a brief overview of the extent to which the LNC project aims were met.

This chapter demonstrates the value of using multiple methods embedded within the case study framework to gain a strong understanding of community work processes and outcomes. Whilst this chapter contains a summary of the discussion, the conclusions are reserved until the next, final chapter.

9.1 The contribution of network thinking to community work practice

The research has shown that network thinking helped LNC in a range of ways. Network thinking assisting in defining the community LNC was working with, and
in guiding LNC’s own structure as an informal network. Network thinking informed LNC’s aims and practice. The integration of social network analysis, as a tool for assisting network thinking provided a strong link between practice and research. Each of these elements are explored further in the following sections.

9.1.1 Using network thinking to define “community”

In chapter three I explored the multiple meanings and uses of the term “community”, and argued that critical practice requires an examination of the assumptions underpinning this term in any given context. It was also argued that aside from defining communities as those “of interest” or those “of place”, much community work research does not clearly define the community it is concerned with.

Rather than defining the community LNC was working with as “Ludmilla” or “Bagot Community” or both; LNC defined itself as the community, that is, a network of people and organisations with similar interests (building relationships across cultures and creating a ‘sense of community’), within a geographic location. It was an open network with flexible boundaries that continuously grew and changed.

Defining community as a network of people and organisations with similar interests in a particular geographic context opened up a “new” community. LNC was not based on any existing community identities that may have served to oppress or exclude. Rather, LNC embraced and valued the idea that people belong to multiple communities and have a range of identities. Thus LNC formed it own identity, as a community that values different identities as assets or strengths. This idea of creating a “new” community is discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Finally, defining our community as a particular kind of network provided a clear link between the “doing” and the “measuring” of changes within that community. “Community” was no longer an intangible amorphous idea involving “a bunch of people out there”, but a network of people and organisations with tangible connections. This is also discussed in more detail later in the chapter.
9.1.2 Using network thinking to help define LNC

As discussed in chapter three, some authors have discussed the value of informal community care networks or partnerships in terms of undertaking community development work (Gilchrist, 2004; Trevillion, 1992). More recently, some have discussed the value of “umbrella organisations” taking on the role of encouraging and facilitating the networking (Gilchrist, et al., 2010). LNC could be defined as such an “umbrella organisation”. Yet LNC is not a formal organisation, it is unique in that it is a network made up of people from various organisations and individual citizens, who came together independently of any previously existing organisation, and in turn worked together to create something new.

This did make defining who was or was not an “LNC member” incredibly difficult. Because it was voluntary and informal, people might be heavily involved in one activity and then not appear again for a year. There was therefore a great amount of ‘blur’ between LNC “active members” and the LNC network. Whilst this may have contributed to some of the issues around people being unclear about what LNC was (as discussed in the feedback in chapter eight), it was a tension or blurriness that was also empowering in its non-hierarchical and non-formal nature. Everyone “owned it”, everyone could have a say, and everyone could participate as often or as little as they wished.

From the outset LNC chose to define itself as a network rather than an incorporated association, committee, board, formal group or other kind of more formal structure. LNC attempted to maintain the idea that it was a relatively “loose network” with a non-hierarchical structure. Keeping a focus on the role of communicator rather than as a source of expertise, helped maintain this idea. Chapters six and eight demonstrate that participants felt they knew what was happening in the suburb and could participate in particular aspects if they wished to. Whilst there was a network facilitator, there was no designated leader or “boss” of the project. Rather all organisations and individuals could play whatever role they felt comfortable with. The following quote from chapter eight highlights this point.
Organisation comment: I was very impressed that so much took place and it wasn't one or two people running around doing/facilitating the whole show - many people/orgs doing their own thing with it all fitting together beautifully.

This research also identified that the neighbourhood newsletter as a particularly important tool for maintaining communication across the neighbourhood, and providing open opportunities for different kinds of participation. Some of the narratives in chapter six particularly highlight the way in which this approach allowed participants to join in on their own terms, and not feel obligated to an ongoing, work-like role in a volunteer organisation.

9.1.3 Integrating network diagrams into practice

As discussed in chapter two, network analysis has been proposed as a useful resource for practice and research by a range of social work and community development authors since the 1980’s (for example Folgheratier, 2004; Gilchrist, 2004; Gray, et al., 2009; Hardcastle, et al., 2004; McIntyre, 1986; O'Connor, et al., 2006; Seed, 1990). Yet there has been little research aimed at exploring the use of social network analysis in practice in a community work setting. The case study presented in this thesis demonstrates that using social network diagrams within community work can add a particular focus and sense of strategy to the work.

The initial pre LNC project social network diagrams contributed to the LNC’s network thinking, through a visual representation of who was involved and linked to the LNC network. This provided an opportunity to think-through who was and was not in the network and how people within it were linked. The pre LNC project diagram showed that the people from Bagot Community were quite connected to each other, as were other clusters of people throughout the neighbourhood. However, most obviously, there were no connections between people in broader Ludmilla and Bagot Community, suggesting a lack of bridging connections in social capital terms.
Through integrating the use of network diagrams into the community work, this research has taken previously articulated network approaches to community work a little further by using network analysis as a tool for practice. Network diagrams were used at the early LNC meetings, and they were helpful in understanding structural issues within the suburb itself, aspects of this are discussed further in the following section.

9.1.4 A strong basis for “linking up”

Almost all community work texts (but particularly community development, social action and community organising types) emphasise the importance of linking up, and building networks (for example Biddle & Biddle, 1965; Gilchrist, 2004; Hardcastle, et al., 2004; Henderson & Thomas, 2005; Homan, 2008; Hughes, et al., 2007; Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2006; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Popple, 1995; Saleebey, 2006a; Taylor & Roberts, 1985; Trevillion, 1992, 1999; Twelvetrees, 2002). Similarly with the LNC project, there was an emphasis on locating, acknowledging and “joining up” the various people, programs and organisations operating within, or providing services to, Ludmilla. A network focus, including the use of the network diagrams, assisted in being more strategic in the networking activities.

As the organisational affiliation diagrams from chapter seven (and presented again in this chapter, see Figure 22 and 23) demonstrate, LNC’s attempts to “link up” existing organisations and local people had a significant impact. In this respect, the network approach linked nicely to the ABCD approach in terms of focusing on what the community has rather than what the community needs (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) and the network diagrams provided a focus for linking up those assets that were identified.

9.1.5 Adding value to existing programs

Linking-up people and organisations was an important contribution LNC was able to make to the local neighbourhood. However this research has demonstrated that an umbrella-type network with a facilitator, such as LNC, can also add value to each of the LNC affiliated organisations activities. The network as a whole can create
something that an individual organisation could not. For example the Life in Ludmilla DVD and the neighbourhood newsletter were resources that individuals and organisations contributed to, but would not have undertaken on their own. As a result of joining up, individuals and each organisation gained new resources. In this way, the “whole” becomes bigger than the sum of its parts.

Having a facilitator that has an understanding of who and what is in the network means the network as a whole can “piggy back” onto particular organisations projects or programs and expand or add value to the project. For example, the ongoing threats to local bushland were being addressed via social action by Friends of Nemarlu Ludmilla (FONL). FONL wanted to raise awareness of the issue and so planned to have a BBQ on the threatened bushland. LNC worked with FONL to make sure news of the BBQ spread throughout the neighbourhood (via newsletter, emails and facebook) and sourced some funds from our local member for refreshments and a barbeque. Thus LNC met its aims of holding inclusive community events, and FONL got to raise awareness about their issues at the same time.

This network facilitation worked because there was already some community activity in Ludmilla (that is, there were things to facilitate). However, it seems generally people did not know there were things happening; hence they felt a “lack of community”. While people were aware of activities in their own networks (e.g. the school, Bagot, LCLG) it appears they knew little of activities outside of this. The networking approach helped to open up these networks and create an idea that there is a lot going on in the area. The strengths emphasis ensured that people also knew they were very welcome to participate in the various activities.

The pre and post LNC project network affiliation diagrams (Figure 22 and 23) clearly demonstrate the increased in involvement in many of the organisations involved in LNC. The assumption that increased links between organisations is a positive thing for the community requires some critical consideration. As discussed in Chapter 7, the actors in Figures 22 and 23 are local organisations and the ties between them are people who are affiliated with the organisations they are linking.
The diagrams show an increase in organisations involved in LNC and in the links between them. Because the links represent people, it could be argued that only those citizens with the time and resources to be able to become a link (that is, be affiliated with two or more organisations) could be part of this network. Thus, the development of larger and denser organisational affiliation networks may be viewed as simply reproducing the inequalities that already exist in the community (this concept is explored further in the following section 9.1.6). It could also be argued that increased connections between particular organisations meant that small cliques could be formed to the detriment of other organisations in the area.

In the case of the LNC project I worked upon the assumption that more participation of community members in local community organisations was a positive thing. I argue that even if many of the people who represented the linking ties between organisations identified as being part of the dominant cultural group, this was not necessarily a negative thing. If those who are able to contribute their time and energy do so in a strengths based way (with an awareness of the social justice issues), then this in turn generates more activity and resources for the community as a whole. An awareness of the range of people and groups, and their relative under or overrepresentation in organisations and networks of influence means that the facilitator can be acutely aware of potentially reproducing exclusive networks. With this in mind they can work with those involved to facilitate as broad as possible participation in the most inclusive way.
Figure 22. Pre LNC project organisation affiliations

\( n = 13 \) actors (organisations)
The case study presented in this thesis confirms what multiple researchers have suggested in their evaluations of various community development projects. That is, purposively and strategically strengthening existing supportive community networks and building new ones where needed, is crucial to achieving inclusive, dynamic and sustainable communities (for example Cameron & Gibson, 2005; Campbell, et al., 2007; Chaskin, 2001; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Munford, et al., 2003; O'Meara, et al., 2004). Through demonstrating what ties existed between organisations and measuring the development of new ties; this case study has demonstrated that

*Figure 23. Post LNC project organisation affiliations*

n = 20 actors (organisations)
network thinking, incorporating network analysis, can assist in developing and measuring new ties, thus “more cohesive” community.

9.1.6 “Network thinking” and social capital

In terms of thinking critically about the contribution of network thinking to the LNC Project, social capital theory has proven useful. To recap, there are three generally agreed upon kinds of networks; bonding, bridging and linking. Bonding networks consist of the strong ties between family and close friends (Coleman, 1988). Bridging ties are more diverse than bonding ties, and refer to relations with acquaintances distant friends, associates and colleagues (Healy & Hampshire, 2002; Putnam, 2000) these are important for connecting with people outside personal (bonding) networks as they allow for cross-network access to new ideas, resources and information (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Linking ties are those between people and broader institutions and organisations, and between organisations. They involve the capacity to leverage resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Linking networks enable communities to communicate directly with those in positions of decision making power, and theoretically, to gain access to potentially valuable information and resources within these larger networks (Hughes, et al., 2007).

As the network analysis in chapter seven has demonstrated, LNC has acted as a facilitator of bridging ties, and in some cases, linking ties. As discussed in chapter three, bridging ties are important because:

A focus on bridging capital involves the creation of heterogeneous networks. Bridging networks provide a powerful base for collective recognition and support and so can be used to challenge stigmatising stereotypes that prevail about disadvantaged people (Healy & Hampshire, 2002, p. 234).

Similarly, Gilchrist argues that umbrella bodies, (such as LNC) help to create bridging ties in diverse communities.
Organisations that encourage networking and co-operation across identity boundaries provide vital opportunities for bridging activities. Umbrella bodies are particularly effective for bringing together people who share a common interest but come from different communities (Gilchrist, et al., 2010, p. 40).

This case study supports such claims about the importance of focusing on bridging ties, and the role of umbrella bodies in assisting in the construction of such bridges.

Bourdieu’s understanding of social capital, however, provides a useful framework for thinking more critically about the creation of bridging capital within the LNC network, particularly bridges between Bagot and other Ludmilla participants. As outlined in chapter two, Bourdieu has argued that social networks were not a natural “given”, but they must be constructed through investment strategies aimed at institutionalising group relations so that they are usable as a reliable source of benefits (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, the acquisition of social capital, particularly bridging and linking capital, requires purposeful investment of both economic and cultural resources (Portes, 1998, p. 4).

Bourdieu believed that social capital can only be understood along with other types of capital. Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital is centred on the extent, quality and quantity of social actors’ networks and their ability to mobilise these. Bourdieu understands social capital as being a process of deliberately constructing sociability so that the benefits of being part of particular networks can be attained (Wilson, 2005).

As noted in chapter six, Bourdieu argued that people and groups with enough economic and cultural capital can invest in strategies to acquire social capital, which in turn assists in generating more economic and cultural capital, and the cycle continues to produce and reproduce social inequalities. People and groups without the economic and cultural capital to make such “investments” have difficulty building the social relationships that would enable them to generate social capital.
(ie, gain access to resources held by others) which in turn means a lessened ability to acquire economic and cultural capital, and again, another cycle continues.

With this in mind it can be argued that it is more difficult for people living in Bagot Community to purposefully create bridging networks than the majority of residents outside Bagot Community. According to a range of sources (see chapter five) residents of Bagot Community experience socio economic disadvantage at much greater levels than the rest of the neighbourhood, thus it could be argued, have limited economic capital. It can also be argued that Aboriginal people’s range of knowledge’s, cultures, values and worldview are also not valued in comparison to more dominant Western ones, as such there are issues with a devaluing of Aboriginal culture (and thus cultural capital) in broader social fields also. With little economic or dominant cultural capital to invest, building bridging capital is likely to be incredibly difficult for residents of Bagot as compared to others in Ludmilla who may not experience similar socio economic disadvantage.

As was demonstrated in chapter six, just a few connections across diverse cultural groups opens up opportunities for dialogue, information and understanding to flow (the DVD and newsletters for example). Even so it can be argued that the people who get involved are most likely to be people already in leadership positions (thus with comparatively more cultural capital). However, in term of what LNC was trying to do, these few connections to community leaders in Bagot were vitally important, because the LNC project aims were focused upon open up bridging ties in the first instance.

A critical analysis facilitated by Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital reminds social workers of the extent to which community work can create broad social change, or not. It also links well with the contemporary critical social work approach which demands a consideration of the multiple and fluid locations of power, and the way it is enacted in relationships of all kinds. Whilst community work can potentially change some oppressive relationships and challenge power dynamics at a local level, no single community work program can cure poverty on mass, reconcile the history of colonisation and its ongoing processes, and change the
capitalist ideology that underpins oppressive government policies. These are some of the macro level factors which affect people’s ability to gain the economic and cultural capital required to strategically amass social capital and change the patterns in the social reproduction of disadvantage.

A critical analysis of this kind emphasises the fact that community level work is important and can change relationships at this local level. However unless there is also change at the macro levels of government policy, such community work programs are ultimately piecemeal ways to address the worst impacts of national and global political, social and economic policies.

This research has shown how network thinking has contributed to the LNC project in a range of ways. Network thinking assisted in defining the community LNC was working with, and the type of ‘entity’ LNC constructed itself as. Network thinking provided a guiding framework and focus for practice and, combined with social capital theory, a way to critically reflect upon the community work. Social network analysis was a key element in facilitating the network thinking, and the contribution of network analysis is now considered in more detail.

9.2 The contribution of social network analysis

In chapter three I argued that social network analysis could potentially provide a useful link between the practice and the research of community work. This case study has described the way in which this occurred. Social network analysis assisted in facilitating a network focus at the outset and provided a strong understanding of the LNC project’s efficacy at the end.

Because they are interrelated, it is difficult to tease out the contribution of social network analysis from the network thinking. Some of the benefits of using social network analysis are also implicit in the previous discussion about network thinking. Upon reflection it is fair to say that the social network diagrams and analysis were very useful in terms of better understanding the need for bridging ties, and being able to measure the development of these.
The meaning and effects of the lack of bridging ties, and the development of new ones upon the LNC structure could be (and was to some extent) discussed and explored through qualitative methods. However social network analysis provided an added dimension to this understanding. Social network analysis provided an understanding of how people were positioned at particular points in time within the LNC network. This analysis allowed the LNC to see the unconnected components of the network. This provided a “target” for the project and a focus for the facilitator, that is, how could LNC help to “join the dots” (with bridging ties) so that the components become connected? Social network analysis provided a way of understanding where connections needed to occur (a focus for the project) and a way of measuring the extent to which this happened (a measurement of its outcomes).

In terms of providing a measure which lent a different facet to LNC’s understanding of the efficacy of the LNC Project, the organisational affiliation maps were particularly exciting. Again, LNC had informative qualitative data from the evaluation (as outlined in chapter eight) and from individual participants interviews that provided information about linkages formed. However, it was not until the organisational affiliation maps were generated that LNC realised the impact that the LNC project had upon cross-organisational participation.

Social network analysis also provided a method for understanding the cohesiveness in the LNC network. Whilst there were slight increases in the cohesiveness of the LNC networks over the 19 month time frame, none of the networks are particularly cohesive. This is not surprising however, as other literature has demonstrated, communities with diverse groups of people who have little in common with one another, are rarely highly cohesive (Cheong, 2006; Jaffe, 2006; Letki, 2008). Whether this is problematic or not is another issue, and is discussed further later in the chapter.

As discussed in chapter seven, social network analysis also provided important information about the type of tie that needed to be the focus of the community work. By analysing different aspects of the LNC networks, such as the “broader
connectedness” and the “full referral” networks, it became clear that bridging ties between different cultural group networks were needed. The network analysis assisted in defining and confirming a focus for the community work, importantly it was a focus that could also be measured.

Network diagrams were only used in practice with LNC members twice. This is primarily because network diagrams were only generated twice (pre and post the LNC project). Firstly at the outset of the program, network diagrams were used in order to understand, explore and think about the network we were working with (this was discussed in chapter six). Secondly, when the post project diagrams (as presented in chapter seven) were first drafted, they were discussed with LNC members at various formal and informal meetings. A community presentation of all the results of this case study, including network diagrams, was also given in March 2011. There was however, no formal data collected that provided feedback on the use of the network diagrams specifically; rather, feedback (as explained in chapter eight) demonstrated that participants, particularly organisations, valued the network focus generally.

More comprehensive use of network diagrams throughout a project could be useful, in order to track the progress of a project. Far simpler means than the full social survey used in this research could be used to generate the network data, such as a version of the name generator surveys discussed in chapter four. Throughout the course of this project and the writing of this thesis, more software has become available for undertaking network mapping which is relatively user friendly. Integrating the use of network diagrams into an action research project could provide a useful platform for ongoing development of networks and a measurement of project outcomes.

9.3 Reflecting on the ABCD model

In chapter three the strengths and weaknesses of the ABCD model were discussed and it was proposed that a stronger focus on network thinking and social network analysis might be able to ameliorate some of the weaknesses of the model. Whilst
this case study was not primarily concerned with the efficacy of ABCD in particular, there has been some learning about ABCD in the context of this case study. Network thinking and the ABCD model had clear overlap in terms of practice centred upon linking and mobilising. However, an overt philosophical commitment to recognising individual, group and community strengths and assets brought a particular “flavour” to the LNC project. This section discusses what the research in this thesis has contributed to understanding the value of the ABCD model.

9.3.1 The imagined community

In chapter three, various conceptualisations of community were discussed including the notion of “the imagined community”. This was articulated by Leonard (1997, p. 155) as follows:

Community as that to which one affiliates may be spoken of as one of interest, of subject identity, or of geographical location, but it is also an imagined community (Anderson, 1983; Bauman, 1992). It is the discourse of community, its practices of identity formation and its production of a sense of belonging which, under postmodern conditions, is sought as a replacement to that belief in universal reason and progress which no longer seems convincing. Communities are imagined insofar as ‘belief in their presence is their only brick and mortar, and imputation of importance their only source of authority’.

Ludmilla is a geographic location, a suburb, and an Australian Bureau of Statistics collection area. However, simply because it exists as a location with boundaries, does not mean that there is any “community” associated with it. In many respects LNC can be argued to have “imagined” or “created” a community within Ludmilla, based not only upon sharing a geographic space, but a belief in the intrinsic value of that place being centred upon the diverse range of people, the physical and built environment and the connections between these things. The LNC network “became a community” and worked towards creating the kind of community it wanted.
In a review of a range of community and identity research projects that took place in the United Kingdom over a five year period, Alison Gilchrist et. al. (2010, p. 40) found that umbrella bodies were excellent in facilitating community work across diverse communities because people do not need to “suppress their primary identity” to be involved in umbrella bodies. This is supported by the LNC case study. The new community that the LNC helped to imagine was one where no identity needed to be suppressed, rather a variety of identities were important to the new identity of the LNC.

The feedback from survey participants provides evidence that through focusing on assets LNC was able to create a different discourse about Ludmilla.

Survey participant: The DVD was fantastic. For me it clarified why I love living in Ludmilla. I used to want to live in a different suburb, near the beach. Buying a house in Ludmilla was not our first choice. But the DVD made me realise we have something special here. The creek, the diversity of people. This is something that no-one else in Darwin has, or maybe even Australia.

Through co-constructing a different, more positive, respectful “Ludmilla” identity (specifically via texts such as the Newsletter and the Life in Ludmilla DVD), LNC, in a small but important way, helped to imagine and enact more socially just relationships at the community level.

Survey participant: I loved getting the DVD in the mailbox. I particularly like the history part as we were not aware of the whole story of Ludmilla, especially about Bagot community.

The notion of the “imagined community” is also particularly applicable to another finding in chapter seven. That is, the notion that the idea of community was important to some participants, regardless of their actual experience of interacting in it. Whether or not people participate, they seem to like to know something is
available, and enjoyed receiving the neighbourhood newsletter and knowing activities were taking place. In this way it can be argued that by imagining a community (creating a new, more positive discourse about Ludmilla), LNC helped create a sense of community.

As the facilitator, I believe that the strengths approach also assisted in terms of building the bridges between different parts of the LNC network. Engaging with community members and groups from a non-judgemental, open, and hopeful attitude assisted in creating trust that in turn helped to open up channels for discussion. LNC was not concerned with “fixing” any part of the community, and thus labelling it as needing to be fixed, but rather on relationships and creating positive identities and interactions in the suburb. LNC never focused on any “badness” or “negativity” in any part of the community, just the assets. People seemed to find this refreshing.

Survey participant: LNC has engaged many of the residents in worthwhile, meaningful and enriching activities.

9.3.2 The challenges of working with “difference”

In chapter three it was discussed that one of the key criticisms of ABCD is that it leaves issues such as racism, sexism and ageism unexplored. That is, aside from strategies to uncover people’s gifts, ABCD does not really provide any useful frameworks for working with difference or oppression in communities (Healy, 2006; Mathie & Cunningham, 2003a). The community work processes outlined in chapter six demonstrated that through the incorporation of network thinking and critical reflection was I able to think through how to begin to addresses issues of racism. The first important step was to recognise my own “white” colour and work through the implications of this in terms of my role in the LNC.

As the facilitator I may well embrace a strengths-based philosophy; however this did not mean that all participants held similar values. As discussed in one of the critical reflections in chapter six, there were challenges in terms of individual people’s agendas and reasons for participation. These challenges reflected broader issues in Darwin and indeed Australia, specifically around colonisation and (perhaps
unconscious) attempts to “homogenise” the community in order to make it more cohesive.

Projects with goals of community cohesion often focus primarily upon “the need to build cross-community contact, rather than addressing deep-rooted racial prejudice and inequality”. As a result “strategies for promoting community cohesion tend to assert the need for unity based on the integration of different cultures and experiences within society” (Gilchrist, 2004, p. 53). As explained in chapter five, in Australia, the “integration” of Aboriginal people into mainstream society has a troubled history of oppressive practices.

Dealing with these challenges meant stepping outside of the ABCD model and taking a more consciousness raising or educative approach. LNC used the Life in Ludmilla DVD, and also the newsletter as ways of communicating the history of our area, so that residents might reflect upon what that history means in the current time. Attempting to do this in a positive and hope-inducing way was tricky, however some of the feedback discussed in chapter eight about the DVD in particular indicates some success in that respect.

This case study confirms Gilchrist’s (2004, p. 52) understanding, that “working within and between diverse communities in ways that simultaneously honour different cultures and challenges inequalities can be a complicated process”. Additionally, this case study also lends weight to the argument that informal networks can provide useful mechanisms for attempting to do this. As long as “inequalities in power and access” are addressed, “informal networks can provide opportunities for dialogue between diverse groups” (Gilchrist, 2004, p. 54). This case study suggests that critical analysis of taken for granted terms and constructs is crucial for socially just practice, and no one model for community work will fit all contexts. By integrating both this network focus and a critical reflection process, ABCD became more relevant to the LNC network and to my own approach to social work.
9.3.3 Suitability of ABCD for the LNC project

Throughout the research and LNC project process I wondered whether LNC was ready for an ABCD model. In many ways I believe the network was perhaps at a “pre-ABCD” stage. That is, a stage where building trust, understanding and relationships were needed prior to being able to fully mobilise assets and achieve broader changes. Merely establishing a handful of connections between Bagot and non-Bagot Community residents took much of the energy and focus of the community work.

Ludmilla was, and in most ways still is, a suburb divided along Aboriginal community/non-Aboriginal community lines. Apart from the local school, there were no opportunities to develop relationships of any kind until LNC began. As was found in chapter eight, some participants believed it was in this respect that LNC was particularly useful.

Survey participant: There have been opportunities to meet people. Opportunities to meet don't happen without a catalyst - LNC has been a catalyst. I still feel I don't have any real connections to Bagot, but it's only through LNC that there have been any connections at all. It is the start of something.

ABCD is also a model which has grown from an American context, far different to remote Northern Australia. It could be argued that in Australia talking about and drawing attention to your good points is not really the norm, and this has implications in terms of identifying the assets of individuals. As explained in chapter six, encouraging people to talk about their personal strengths and assets proved difficult in this context. It could be argued that we live in a culture that cuts down “tall poppies”, and warns against “loving yourself too much”. As such, there appears to be cultural issues in translating an American model to this Australian context. That is not to say it is impossible to have conversations about individual strengths, rather that others need to identify them for people, rather than them doing it themselves. Even then, there is a large element of what some people in Darwin call “shame job” (that is, embarrassment)!
9.3.4 Reflecting on “models”

As pointed out in the discussion above, it is fair to say that the LNC Project did not stick to any particular model in a dogged fashion. Rather, LNC used strengths and asset-based ideas as our inspiration and as our guiding philosophy, and “network thinking” for ensuring we focused upon the building of relationships. The network focus aligned well with the linking ideas in ABCD practice, as a way of doing something with those strengths. However, as previously explained there were elements of community education, and community organising also involved in the LNC project.

As discussed in chapter three, there has been ongoing discussion in community work literature about typologies of community work, and “the messy reality of practice” which “only approximates in general terms to ‘ideal types’ of community work” (Twelvetrees, 2002, p. 2). The findings from this research confirm this messy reality. In the end it can be argued that it was the strengths philosophy, and the sense of hope that it engenders that was more useful than the following of an ABCD model.

9.4 The critically reflective community worker

In terms of contemporary critical social work practice, this case study has demonstrated that a strong understanding of context is crucial, and being comfortable with the ‘art’ of community work makes for exciting and challenging practice. Issues of context and art are considered a little further here.

9.4.1 The “art” in community work

As discussed in chapter three, critical social work practice with communities requires an element of “artistry”. Lane (1999) provided an overview of critical community work practice in New South Wales and found Elphick’s (1980) concept of the “cultural animatuer” an applicable one. Critical community work seeks to animate the community, to create “change through relationship building, encouraging people to meet, to form networks and to express their needs, desire and aspirations through
creative forms of expression” (Lane, 1999, p. 146). Through embracing the network thinking approach, the LNC project was driven by forming relationships. The DVD, newsletters and various community run events provided strengths-based ways in which the people could express themselves and their ideas about the neighbourhood’s past, present and future.

Another aspect of artistry or creativity draws upon the concept of power and where it is located, as discussed in chapter three. Through an understanding that power is fluid, enacted and located in an array of interactions, including relationships between people and groups in local communities, workers can create space for creative critical practice (McDonald, 2006). The community work undertaken by the LNC project can be argued to have “created a space” where none had existed. As previously discussed prior to LNC there were minimal opportunities for people to meet one another or interact anywhere other than the local school. LNC created opportunities, by forging new relationships and forming a new non-hierarchical, locally controlled network based umbrella organisation.

In terms of artistry, there are interesting links between this research and research undertaken into network therapy with families, as discussed in chapter two. Sieikkula, Arnkil and Esa (2003) define network therapy as a postmodern way of practicing. Siekkula et al report that network approaches require being comfortable with the uncertainty that arises when authority is in the hands of a network of people and organisations rather than with one professional who is considered an expert. They write:

New competencies were required from professionals: instead of prescriptive expertise, mobilization skills were called for. The first modern society produced the sectored service systems and specialized expertise where the expert knew better. In a network setting, the professional is faced with a great deal of unpredictability. In fact, unforeseen solutions by combinations of people working together are the goal. Top-down expertise begins to give way to networking competencies (Sieikkula, et al., 2003, p. 189).
9.4.2 Context

The broad social work “person-in-environment” perspective is crucial to critical practice as it emphasises the importance of context (McDonald, 2009). This case study has demonstrated an emphasis on context in multiple ways. Chapter five placed Ludmilla within a geographic, historical, political and social context. This information was crucial for critical practice, as it provided much of the material for critically reflecting upon particular aspects of practice (for example, the potentially colonising aspects of the LNC project) and also assisted in formulating some of the actual community work (e.g., providing information for the DVD and newsletters).

The processes of critical reflection documented in chapter six also demonstrated the way in which practice was linked to the broader contexts of Darwin, the Northern Territory and internationally. As other community development researchers have found (e.g. Campbell, et al., 2007; Greenaway & Witten, 2006) critical reflection assisted in the practice of community work; it provides a framework for constant learning and challenging of underlying assumptions and beliefs, this in turn changed elements of the project. Critical reflection, drawing upon critical social theory, encouraged me to look at the LNC project and my own practice from different viewpoints.

Important in terms of context also is the “organisational” context, that is, who I was working for and with. Because I was the facilitator of an informal network (which I helped to create), that was self-governing by community members and participating organisation, and not dependent upon any particular stakeholder or interest group for funding, I had an unusual amount of freedom as a facilitator. Some organisations may be uncomfortable with a worker having this amount of freedom. Indeed, as long as LNC members agreed among themselves, LNC could do anything it wished in terms of community work. This is a fairly out of the ordinary situation. As McDonald (2009, p. 251) rightly points out, “critical practice is a bounded form of agency, and what can be done is inevitably constrained by institutional realities. Good critical practice is doing the possible in a manner cognisant of the context”.

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I am under no illusions that to embrace a critical social work stance within a different type of organisation (particularly government funded) would be considerably more difficult. For this reason, the findings of this case study are particularly important, as some authors have suggested there is little research about critical approaches (Mendes, 2009) and this is perhaps partly because (given the current political and economic context), there are “significant challenges to its practice” (Allan, 2009a, p. 80). The only fetters upon LNC acting in a socially just, contemporary critical way were those we imposed upon ourselves. Therefore this case study contributes to the much needed research base about critical community practice.

This brings the discussion to the future of the LNC, given that this PhD has run its course and the scholarship which supported the work and research has been used up. The role of facilitator was key to the LNC project. As described in chapter six, the meetings, their minutes, the newsletter and multiple other activities required the assistance of a facilitator that was independent of all the organisations involved, but who worked with all of them on equal terms. It was the facilitator (in this case, me) who attempted to keep the networking, strengths and social justice approaches at the forefront of the LNC agenda. I could do all of these things because I had a scholarship which allowed me to treat the role as a part time job. It is too large and skilled a role for any one volunteer and as such, the role requires resourcing if it is to be ongoing into future. Gilchrist discussed the importance of support and resources for facilitation and umbrella bodies, she states:

In practice, these networks will need support so that they can adapt to changing personnel and circumstances without drawing disproportionately on the resources of the member organisations. Community development workers often play a ‘behind the scenes’ role in helping to maintain the relationships and mutual commitment of these bodies, by facilitating events, mediating conflicts and ensuring that communication happens smoothly and regularly (Gilchrist, et al., 2010, p. 30)
The LNC network continues to this current time, although the LNC Project is completed. It runs completely on volunteer time, including my own. For this reason, the amount of activity has decreased. The LNC network continues to produce a newsletter, although it is now every three months rather than monthly. The email list and Facebook site are both active and people continue to use these mechanisms for distribution of locally relevant information. Currently two LNC members and I coordinate these activities.

The edible garden continues, overseen by Red Cross. It has expanded into a program to encourage and support people to grow gardens in their yards or other spare land. At the time of writing, no decision had been made about the bushland re-zoning applications; as such the bushland is still under threat. Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla are still an active network poised to spring into action once any news about proposed developments is released. Nemarluk School has also recently announced that it will be leaving its current location in Ludmilla and relocating to larger, purpose-built premises in another suburb.

A range of ideas, some generated by the evaluation material outlined in chapter eight, have been proposed for the next LNC Project. At this point in time the LNC network is developing ideas and locating funding for an annual one day Ludmilla festival, and another neighbourhood film, about fences and dogs in Ludmilla. As was recognised by some of the organisations in their feedback (see chapter eight), for the level of activity undertaken during the LNC Project to be sustained, a facilitator is clearly required, as no volunteer or single organisation has had the capacity or desire to take on this role in an unpaid capacity. This is completely understandable, and funding for a facilitator for both the proposed Ludmilla Festival, and new film will be sought as part of the project development.

9.5 To what extent did LNC meet its project aims?

The final discussion in this chapter concerns the LNC project aims (stated in chapter six). These were the aims formulated by the LNC members in the early stages of the project. It is useful to reflect upon these now, with the knowledge gained via the
research project; as such a reflection demonstrates how different methods provide different knowledge.

The LNC project aimed to:
1) Encourage and increase communication and social networks across different cultural groups (specifically Aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents) and
2) To increase a general sense of community in the neighbourhood

The findings in the chapter seven demonstrated an increase in social networks, and subsequently communication, between some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents. Social network analysis has been a powerful tool in measuring the efficacy of the LNC project in this respect.

The extent to which LNC encouraged communication is more difficult to measure, however the qualitative analyses contained in chapter six demonstrates a range of attempts to encourage communication, and chapter eight demonstrates an acknowledgement of this encouragement as well as evidence of an increase in communication. Combining these two methodologies and their findings allows LNC to claim that this aim was achieved.

Chapter eight reveals a new sense of community in the both qualitative and quantitative terms. The qualitative analysis of network feedback demonstrated that some people felt a greater sense of community as a result of the LNC project.

Survey participant: I like it. I like the idea of trying to foster a sense of community. I think it has helped make the community closer.

In addition, the quantitative analysis of the pre and post project survey data demonstrated that over the 19 months of the LNC project there was an increase of over 20% of participants “strongly” or “somewhat” agreeing that they feel like part of the community. Combined together these data sources reveal an increased sense of community in the LNC survey participant’s network. The various data sources
and analysis triangulate to demonstrate that the LNC project, which embraced a networks focus and a strengths philosophy, was able to meet its aims.

9.6 **Comparing the findings from this case study with the findings of other projects focused on developing community networks.**

As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.8.3.3) external validity in case study research can be enhanced via a comparison with other similar studies. Throughout this chapter I have discussed the findings from this case study in relation to findings from a range of different research projects to demonstrate where and how findings agree or differ. Ideally I would compare this case study with others set in similar contexts, using similar methods. However, at the time of writing there was no published research I could locate which used the same embedded methods within a case study framework that has been utilized here.

Whilst a direct comparison to a similar case study is not possible, I am able to compare aspects of the findings with research about other network focused community work projects. In the following section I will discuss the main findings in this thesis and compare directly with other relevant (network and strengths focused) community work research.

*Network thinking’ and ‘integration of network analysis’*

As discussed earlier in this chapter, network thinking, particularly that involving the integration of network diagrams has aided the both the process of the community work, and provided a “built in” evaluative tool. In attempting to compare this finding with other similar research, the originality of this thesis becomes clear. While the usefulness of focusing on networks in community practice has been acknowledged in a wide range of community work research the integration of network diagrams has rarely been used. The usefulness of integrating network diagrams has been demonstrated in this thesis, and it is to the handful of other community studies that have integrated network diagrams that I will now turn my attention in order to compare key aspects of this research findings.
The following researchers have found that focusing on developing and strengthening networks is crucial for successful community practice (that is, meeting the stated goals of the community project): Cameron & Gibson, 2005; Campbell, et al., 2007; Chaskin, 2001; Gittell & Vidal, 1998; Hanson, et al., 2008; Krebs & Holley, 2006; Munford, et al., 2003; O’Meara, et al., 2004; Smets, 2011; Tesoriero et al., 2010. Each of these authors found that focusing on community networks, developing and strengthening them, was a cornerstone of community work and was essential to both achieving the goals of the projects, and to contributing to the sustainability of changes made. Yet network analysis is rarely used in any of this research.

Network thinking in this thesis involved the inclusion of social network diagrams both as a tool for practice and for evaluation. I have argued that integrating network diagrams into community practice is beneficial for a range of reasons (detailed in sections 9.1 and 9.2). There has been very little research that has examined the integration of network diagrams into community practice. The few examples available are not similar in focus to the research presented in this thesis. However, it is useful to consider what value the researchers found in integrating network diagrams into their work in order to compare their findings to those in this thesis.

Hanson, Hanson, McFarlane, Speare and Durrheim (2008) undertook research into the development of social capital in a community safety promotion network in Australia. In their research they found that using social network analysis helped them to define and understand the community they were working with by providing ‘diagrammatic representation of the social structure and quantified important aspects of its structure and function. It highlighted the asymmetric distribution of relationships, resources and power that had a profound impact on how the network functioned.’ (Hanson, et al., 2008, p. 144). They compared two network diagrams of the same network four years apart and were able to gain a clear understanding of changes in the network size and structure over time. The authors found that network analysis helped them to gain insight into impacts of the program on people’s connectedness and access to different types of social capital. Whilst the community project was different in nature to the LNC project, the use of diagrams prior to and after an intervention is similar to that used in this thesis. Hanson et al, were able to
make good use of network diagrams in terms of focusing their intervention and assessing its outcomes.

The second example of social network diagrams integration into community work practice is found in a paper by Krebs and Holley (2006). The authors present a case study from Appalachian Ohio (USA) to show how network diagrams can provide information about a community “as is” (Krebs & Holley, 2006, p. 2) before attempting to work with the community to improve networks and connections. Krebs and Holley’s work is different from the LNC project work as it was focused on creating economic opportunities, rather than building supportive social networks. They discuss their use of network diagrams in terms of “knowing the network” and then “knitting the network” and state that “All throughout this process network maps guide the way – they reveal what we know about the network and they uncover possible next steps for the weaver.” (Krebs & Holley, 2006, p. 17). They found (as I have in this thesis) that understanding the community in terms of networks is crucial for any attempt to join up networks.

In the two examples discussed above (Krebs & Holley, 2006 and Hanson et al., 2008) network diagrams were also used to plan and monitor the progress of the community work. In both examples the integration of network diagrams into their community practice was found to be extremely useful.

**The strengths and challenges of ABCD approaches to community work**

This thesis has found that there is strong overlap and synthesis between the networking and ABCD approaches to community work (see section 9.3). Whilst there has been much theoretical discussion in ABCD literature about the importance of networks, there has been a much smaller amount of research. Research specifically about strengths or asset based community work has confirmed the importance of network building (for example, Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, & Bearsley-Smith, 2008; Cameron & Gibson, 2005; Tesoriero, et al., 2010) but not discussed overtly “network focused” approaches.

The challenges of applying an ABCD approach to community work in this context
are more difficult to compare with other research, as the context described in this thesis is unique. However, the challenges of working with “difference” in community work has been explored by some researchers. Smets (2011) provides the example of a community development project in the Netherlands and finds that building positive networks across different ethnic and class groups requires a very careful process of creating bridging capital. Smets (2011, p. ii15) points out that “contact between heterogeneous groups and individual residents does not develop spontaneously” and that purposefully orchestrated positive encounters at the neighbourhood level are needed to form the building blocks for subsequent encounters. This is a very similar finding to those in this thesis. The work LNC undertook was aimed at laying the groundwork for further dialogue and activities, and required careful, strategic facilitation.

**Critically reflective community work**

As discussed in section 9.4, there is very little research about critical approaches to community work and this thesis has contributed an example of this type of practice. Being comfortable with the “art” of community work, and having a strong understanding of “context” were crucial to achieving the projects outcomes for LNC. Attempts to link the “personal to the political” while keeping people engaged are difficult to “do” in practice. A case study by Mandell (2010, p. 269) documenting a community development project similar to the LNC project also found this to be the case. Mandell investigated a “network centric community organizing model” based upon Putnam’s concept of using social capital as “an antidote for civic disengagement” (2010, p 269). Her case study showed that experimenting with a range of social engagement activities (e.g. “picnic” style activities similar to those used by LNC) that increased bonding and bridging types of social capital, worked well when combined with empowerment focused activities that enhanced linking capital. In this way the project was attempting to combine the personal and the political through making links in creative ways between people and organisations. A focus on community strengths and relationships were key to achieving outcomes in Mandell’s study, and this was also what was found in this thesis.
Comparing the main findings in this thesis to other research about community connecting-style projects has shown the findings here are supported by other similar research. This exercise also demonstrates the findings concerning to the integration of network diagrams, and the documentation of a critical approach to community work are the main contribution to social work knowledge.

9.7 Summary

This discussion chapter has brought together the findings from the previous chapters and integrated them into new learning. This new learning was discussed in terms of what was already known. The chapter demonstrated that network thinking and social network analysis was useful in the LNC project. The usefulness of underpinning the community work with a strengths philosophy was also discussed, as were the challenges of the ABCD in the context of Ludmilla. The value of using multiple methods to explore the efficacy of community work has been demonstrated in the chapter. Triangulating qualitative, quantitative and relational data has provided a strong understanding of the efficacy and meaning of the LNC project. Social network analysis was discussed in terms of how it contributed to both the community work and to researching the efficacy of that community work.

The following chapter provides a conclusion to this thesis. The strengths and weaknesses of the case study are overviewed, and some areas for future research are outlined.
Chapter Ten

Conclusion
Chapter Ten
Conclusion

Gaining an understanding of how a social network focus can contribute to critical social work practice with communities has been the primary subject of this thesis. Through documenting and analysing the life of the strengths-based LNC community work project over 19 months I have been able to demonstrate that a network focus has value for social work practice with communities. I have also demonstrated that integrating social network analysis into this practice is valuable in terms of researching the efficacy of that practice. This has been my contribution to social work research and knowledge.

This final chapter provides a brief conclusion to this thesis. A brief summary of the research and findings is presented. The strengths and weaknesses of the case study are overviewed, and some areas for future research are outlined.

10.1 Summary of the research and findings.
At the outset of this thesis I posed a broad question; how might a social networks focus contribute to social work practice with communities? Through the embedded methods used in the case study framework, I have been able to do two main things:

1. Document and analyse the way in which network thinking was used in a strengths-based community work project.
2. Undertake social network analysis before and after the community work project to explore network changes.

These two achievements represent the purposeful application of a community work approach that had only been discussed theoretically in the past. This has been coupled with an integrated method (social network analysis) for understanding the efficacy of the networking. As explored in chapters one and two, there has been some exciting literature about network approaches to community practice, yet as far as I am aware, there has been no research about the purposeful application of such
approaches. Similarly there have been suggestions that social network analysis can be useful for researching the efficacy of community work programs. Yet there has been very little social or community work research actually using social network analysis to better understand community work outcomes. The “good fit” between network approaches to community work, and social network analysis makes them ideal partners in practice and research.

By undertaking network research and creating network diagrams at the outset of a community project, two things can be achieved simultaneously. Firstly the worker and community have benchmarking data from which to measure the network changes that may occur. Secondly the worker and community have a tool to facilitate discussion about the structure of the networks that make-up the community. The diagrams can be used to think about how networks are comprised, who is in and out of the networks and why this might be. All of these questions are important for developing goals, making plans and being strategic in activities. Similarly, network diagrams developed at the end (and at other points in the life of the project if resources allow) provide evaluative network data, as well as a tool that workers and communities can meaningfully reflect upon together in practice. This thesis has shown that integrating network diagrams into community work creates a practice tool with a ‘built in’ evaluation component.

What I have not been able to do is demonstrate any causality. That is, I cannot show that the changes in the LNC network were caused by the LNC project. As is the case with most community “pre and post” studies, it is seemingly impossible to isolate all variables involved in the lives of community members and argue exactly what has caused what. However, by including the LNC project evaluation data analysis, and comments by individual participants, I have been able to show the LNC project has contributed to network changes. This allows me to make some cautious claims.

The network approach contributed to community work in this context by helping define both the community, and the LNC. Having an understanding of the LNC network via network analysis helped to provide a focus for the community work in
terms of the aims and process, and enabled LNC to link these processes to outcomes in network terms.

Combined with the strengths approach, network ideas also provided a focus and rationale for valuing positive relationships across diverse groups. Related to contemporary conceptualisation of power, network thinking allows critical social worker practitioners to appreciate that small changes in local relationships are important for socially just practice. Forming social links between previously separate groups of people has allowed an opening up of dialogue and contributed to increased understanding. This network focused community work has, in a very basic way, been concerned with helping people enter into a new dialogue to begin to understanding and work with each other. LNC has helped open up some channels between diverse groups. It seems that new understandings in Ludmilla exist because the network exists. If there is no network, then there is no mechanism for the dialogue to occur, people to be mobilised and community be created. Gilchrist (2004, p. 39) has argued that networks provide the conditions from with things can grow. This case study adds weight to that claim.

Importantly, the network approach, and its incorporation of social network analysis, allowed the exploration and understanding of network changes so that LNC could actually measure how effective it had been in terms of meeting its stated goals.

Therefore, it can be argued that network thinking has been useful in social work practice with this community. LNC’s role as a network developer, facilitator, communicator, and recogniser of local strengths has been useful for forming a different, new neighbourhood identity that people can subscribe to without having to suppress their differences or give up other aspects of their identities.

This thesis has shown that networking can be a useful tool for beginning a dialogue about cultural difference. Locating and bringing ‘different’ people into the same space, both physically and psychologically, was a key activity of the LNC. Network thinking provided strategic underpinning to this approach, and the network diagrams assisted in understanding changes that occurred.
From the findings in this research, one could extrapolate that the same kind of networking approach could be used in other communities where issues of difference, isolation or entrenched separation of particular parts of a community are apparent. When there is a group of people, even a small group, who want to create a new kind of community, then the networking approach explored in this thesis works well to address difference at the local relationships level.

10.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the research

Many of the various strong and weak points of this research have been addressed as they arose in the thesis, in each of the findings chapters (six, seven and eight). This section therefore, overviews the strong and weak points of the entire case study as a whole.

This research has been framed as a single, primarily instrumental case study. As discussed in chapter four, case study methodology has its strong points. The ability to know a particular case in an in-depth way and to explore both etic and emic issues allows a strong understanding of such issues, changes and outcomes within the case (Stake, 1995).

Embedding a range of methods within the case study framework, both qualitative and quantitative, and triangulating various aspects of the data and the findings adds credibility to the case study, as the same phenomena is examined via different methods. In many ways the strengths and weaknesses of each embedded element (the narrative analyses, descriptive qualitative and quantitative analysis and the social network analysis) cancel out each other. The use of mixed methods has been a strong point of this case study.

The dual role of research/facilitator for the LNC project brought both positives and negatives to the quality of the research. This dual role provided access to a wide range of participants because relationships of trust had already been established with many of them. There was also (particularly by the time of the post project data
collection) a willingness of participants to engage and reflect quite deeply in interview conversations, because they knew me well after working together. This relationship may have also allowed participants (particularly the ones involved in the in-depth interviews and post project feedback), to be critical because of the shared responsibility for the network and its activities.

It can also be argued that some participants might be less likely to be critical because of my relationship with them, and their involvement in the project. The only way to avoid this would have been to employ an independent person to undertake the data gathering, separating some of the roles of facilitator and researcher. I believe the benefits of insider status, and the insight into the machinations of the LNC network and project this provided outweighed the drawbacks of not being able to claim objectivity or unbiased research.

It is clear that I am not a dispassionate observer, and as discussed in chapter four, this is often the case of social work research. Social workers care about the people and phenomena they are researching (Trevillion, 2000a, 2000b). I care deeply about Ludmilla and the people who live there. I live in the neighbourhood and see the strengths and challenges of life here each and every day. As such, I cannot be objective in how I have undertaken the research or interpreted the findings. I have attempted to mitigate this passion and hope for the neighbourhood (in terms of the research), by sharing the research and findings via various neighbourhood meetings, through member checking and discussion of the findings with participants, and via sharing my thinking and research at social work conferences so that the research can be considered more credible.

Combining these things with the open critical reflection process, this embracing of the dual role of facilitator/researcher provided a realistic approach, given that many community development roles involve both the facilitating of a project and the evaluation of the same project.

The case study framework also has weaknesses. Of course, the ability to generalise from a single network case is extremely limited. For example, whilst a range of
changes occurred in the LNC network, and many participants attributed these changes to the LNC Project, there is no way of knowing if another, different, community work project in the same neighbourhood might have elicited similar changes. I cannot know if it was specifically because of the “networked, strengths-based approach” or simply because LNC “did something” that these changes occurred.

This case study could perhaps argue for theoretical generalisability (Yin, 2009) in terms of how the findings relate to the network approach to community work. However, further case studies using a network focus and social network analysis in community work will provide a stronger basis for generalising the findings.

Other weaknesses involve the number of pre and post survey participants. The ability to gain more participants would have provided more credibility to the analysis. However, because I relied on a snowball sample and participants’ willingness to provide at least an hour of their time, it was difficult to gain more participants.

In summary there are both numerous strengths and weaknesses in this case study, in many ways these strengths and weaknesses reflect the exciting, messy reality of community work and community research.

10.3 Ideas for further research

Network approaches to community work would benefit from further in-depth case studies to add to the slowly growing body of knowledge about purposively applying such approaches in practice. As some of the participants discussed in chapter seven, the LNC Project is only the beginning, the initial steps in the development of new, cross cultural, relationships in a complex community. Long term (five years or more) research following network focused projects over time in a selected group of communities would be particularly useful. Comparing and contrasting the process and outcomes in different communities would provide a rich understanding to network thinking across a range of contexts and timeframes.
There are also a range of social network analytic techniques that I have not been able to explore here due to time and data constraints. Research to further consider what network analytic techniques best apply (or have good “fit”) to particular conceptualisations of community, and related community work aims would be very useful in furthering the use of network analysis in community work research.

10.4 In conclusion

The purposeful strengthening of existing social networks and building of new social networks in a culturally divided suburban community has proven fruitful in this Australian context. The network approach, combined with a strengths philosophy has helped establish some new, fragile, relationships between different groups of people, and lay the groundwork for further activity in the area. The aim of this community work was not to alleviate poverty and related injustices, but only to make connections across previously disconnected groups. It is a modest project, with modest aims. But importantly, LNC has contributed to forming and strengthening bridging relationships, so that now neighbours are more able to begin to have conversations about broader inequalities and attempt to work on them together.

Through this work I have demonstrated that a networks focus and social network analysis can assist in the process of working with communities in a critical way, and in understanding the outcomes of that work. This has been my contribution to social work knowledge.
Appendix 1: Ethics Committee Approval
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CLEARANCE

NEW PROPOSAL

HREC REFERENCE: H08073


CHIEF INVESTIGATOR(S): Ms Gretchen Ennis

The Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee has considered your project.

The Committee is satisfied that the research proposed in this project conforms with the general principles set out in the current National Health and Medical Research Council regulations, and with the policy of the Charles Darwin University.

It should be noted that data must be stored securely on campus. Storage in a central facility (with limited access if necessary) is available. Researchers should address any queries concerning data storage to their relevant faculty.

Expiry date: 20 August 2009

Please Note: A Final Report is due on completion of this project, or if the project extends beyond the expiry date a progress report is due before the date of expiry.

APPROVED

[Signature]

Chair,
CDU Human Research Ethics Committee

[Date]

Research Office, Casuarina Campus Ph: 08 8946 6498 Fax: 08 8946 7199 Email: cdu-ethics@cdu.edu.au
6 October, 2009

Ms Gretchen Ennis
PhD Student
36 Harney Street
Ludmilla
NT 0820

Dear Ms Ennis

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF ETHICS CLEARANCE, REF. NO. H08073

The Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved your application for renewal of ethics clearance for your project titled A Social Work Approach to building Inclusive Community in a Northern Territory Suburban Setting. Please find attached a notice of clearance.

The expiry date of ethics approval for your project is 28 September 2010. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that ethics approval is renewed prior to the expiry date. If further renewal is necessary, you will need to submit a progress report including a statement of compliance with ethical requirements, and detailing any proposed or actual changes to the project, which may affect its ethical acceptability. A Final Report will be due upon completion of the project. Renewal/Final Report forms may be downloaded from the Web at: http://www.cdu.edu.au/research/office/renew_final_04.rtf or obtained from the Research Office.

If any significant alterations to your project are contemplated, or if any matters arise which may conceivably affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project, you are required to immediately notify the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely

Plaxy Purich
Executive Officer

for Professor Robert Wasson
Chair, CDU Human Research Ethics Committee
Ms Gretchen Ennis  
PhD Student  
36 Harney Street  
Ludmilla NT 0820

4 November, 2010

Dear Ms Ennis

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF ETHICS CLEARANCE, REF. NO. H08073

The Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved your application for renewal of ethics clearance for your project titled A Social Work Approach to building Inclusive Community in a Northern Territory Suburban Setting. Please find attached a notice of clearance.

The expiry date of ethics approval for your project is 23 September 2011. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that ethics approval is renewed prior to the expiry date. If further renewal is necessary, you will need to submit a progress report including a statement of compliance with ethical requirements, and detailing any proposed or actual changes to the project, which may affect its ethical acceptability. A Final Report will be due upon completion of the project. Renewal/Final Report forms may be downloaded from the Web at: http://www.cdu.edu.au/research/office/renew_final_04.rtf or obtained from the Office of Research & Innovation.

If any significant alterations to your project are contemplated, or if any matters arise which may conceivably affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project, you are required to immediately notify the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Steele  
Acting Executive Officer

for Professor Robert Wasson  
Chair, CDU Human Research Ethics Committee
Appendix 2: Plain Language Statements
Information Sheet – Interviews

Project Name: Building Inclusive Community in a Culturally Diverse NT Suburb

Chief Researcher: Ms Gretchen Ennis, PhD Student at Charles Darwin University.
Supervisor: Dr Deborah West, Associate Professor, Theme Leader, Social Work and Community Studies, School of Health Sciences, Charles Darwin University.

Aim of Project: The aim of the project is to assist residents of Ludmilla to make their community a friendlier, safer and more harmonious neighbourhood. This will be done by understanding and increasing social connections in the neighbourhood, particularly focusing on building connections between people from different cultural backgrounds.

What does it involve?
As a participant in the research, you would be involved in a 1 to 2 hour interview where you will be asked questions about your connections to different people, groups and organisations in Ludmilla. We will also discuss your feelings and thoughts about the social connections in the neighbourhood. The interview will be tape recorded.

The interview can take place in your home, the researcher’s office at Charles Darwin University, or another place where you feel comfortable. You are able to have a friend or family member with you in the interview if you wish.

The researcher will contact you again in approximately 18 months and ask you to do another interview, discussing the same topics.

What are the benefits?
The researcher is part of a local community group (Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections) who regularly organise community events and activities with the aim of bringing people together and creating a stronger, more connected community. This research will assist in better understanding the social aspects of the neighbourhood so that more opportunities may be created for people to participate in community events and activities if they wish.

Who can be involved:
To be part of the research you need to be 18 year of age or older, and live in the suburb of Ludmilla. Interpreters can be arranged for people who speak a language other than English.

How will your information be used?
The information you provide will be combined with information from other participants and used to find out about the different kinds of connections and relationships in the neighbourhood.
All information collected will remain:

**ANONYMOUS**: Your name and address must be known to the researcher, so she can find you, but it will never be mentioned in the report of the research, and your personal details will be locked away, quite separate from the tapes and transcriptions of the tapes. Any names you mention in the interview will not be included in the transcriptions. After five years, all tapes and personal information (name and contact details) will be destroyed and only the transcriptions will be kept by the researcher.

**CONFIDENTIAL**: You will not be able to be identified by anything that is written in the text of the research paper. The same care will be taken with the names or characteristics of anyone you mention in the interview.

The research will also be used to help the local community group, Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections, plan community events and activities in conjunction with the researcher. A summary of the research findings will be available to all participants at the completion of the project.

The research is a major part of the researcher’s PhD study, and will be published as a thesis, some aspects of the research are also likely to be published in professional journals.

**Risks or Discomfort:**
There are no specific risks associated with this research. However, if you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop the interview, you are free to do this at any time. If the interview discussion leaves you feeling upset or distressed in any way, free counselling service contact details will be provided to you so that you may discuss these issues further with a professional counsellor. The counselling service details are a letter format with details about the service provider included.

**Your Participation:**
We would be grateful if you did participate in this study but you are free to refuse to participate. Even if you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the research at any time, any information you have provided will be destroyed and not included in the research.

**Persons to Contact**
If you have any questions about this project, please contact the researcher, Gretchen Ennis, on 0400 356 709 or 08 8946 7655 or email gretchen.ennis@cdu.edu.au.

If you have any concerns about this project, you are invited to contact the Executive Officer of the Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee by email: cduethics@cdu.edu.au, phone 08 8946 6498 or mail: Research Office, Charles Darwin University, Darwin NT 0909.
The Executive Officer can pass on any concerns to appropriate officers within the University.

*This information sheet is yours to keep.*
Information Sheet - Survey Questionnaire

Project Name: Building Inclusive Community in a Culturally Diverse NT Suburb

Chief Researcher: Ms Gretchen Ennis, PhD Student at Charles Darwin University.
Supervisor: Dr Deborah West, Associate Professor, Theme Leader, Social Work and Community Studies, School of Health Sciences, Charles Darwin University.

Aim of Project: The aim of the project is to assist residents of Ludmilla to make their community a friendlier, safer and more harmonious neighbourhood. This will be done by understanding and increasing social connections in the neighbourhood particularly focusing on building connections between people from different cultural backgrounds.

What does it involve?
As a participant in the research, you would be involved in a 1.5 hour interview where you will be asked questions about the activities (work, sport, groups you may belong too) in your life, and your connections to different people, groups and organisations. The researcher will record your answers on a paper survey questionnaire.

The interview can take place in your home, the researcher’s office at Charles Darwin University, or another place where you feel comfortable. You are able to have a friend or family member with you in the interview if you wish.

The researcher will contact you again in approximately 18 months and ask you to do another interview, with the same questions.

What are the benefits?
The researcher is part of a local community group (Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections) who regularly organise community events and activities with the aim of bringing people together and creating a stronger, more connected community. This research will assist in better understanding the social aspects of the neighbourhood so that more opportunities may be created for people to participate in community events and activities if they wish.

Who can be involved:
To be part of the research you need to be 18 year of age or older, and live in the suburb of Ludmilla. Interpreters can be arranged for people who speak a language other than English.

How will your information be used?
The information you provide will be combined with information from other participants and used to find out about the different kinds of connections and relationships in the neighbourhood.
All information collected will remain:

**ANONYMOUS:** Your name and address must be known to the researcher, so she can find you, but it will never be mentioned in the report of the research, and your personal details will be locked away, quite separate from the questionnaire which is completed in the interview. After five years, all personal information (name and contact details) will be destroyed and only the questionnaires will be kept by the researcher.

**CONFIDENTIAL:** You will not be able to be identified by anything that is written in the text of the research paper. The same care will be taken with the names or characteristics of anyone you mention in the interview.

The research will also be used to help the local community group, Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections, plan community events and activities in conjunction with the researcher. A summary of the research findings will be available to all participants at the completion of the project.

The research is a major part of the researcher’s PhD study, and will be published as a thesis, some aspects of the research are also likely to be published in professional journals.

**Risks or Discomfort:**
There are no specific risks associated with this research. However, if you feel uncomfortable or wish to stop the interview, you are free to do this at any time. If the interview discussion leaves you feeling upset or distressed in any way, free counselling service contact details will be provided to you so that you may discuss these issues further with a professional counsellor. The counselling service details will be provided in a letter format with details about the service provider included.

**Your Participation:**
We would be grateful if you did participate in this study but you are free to refuse to participate. Even if you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the research at any time; any information you have provided will be destroyed and not included in the research.

**Persons to Contact**
If you have any questions about this project, please contact the researcher, Gretchen Ennis, on 0400 356 709 or 08 8946 7655 or email gretchen.ennis@cdu.edu.au.

If you have any concerns about this project, you are invited to contact the Executive Officer of the Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee by email: cduethics@cdu.edu.au, phone 08 8946 6498 or mail: Research Office, Charles Darwin University, Darwin NT 0909. The Executive Officer can pass on any concerns to appropriate officers within the University.

*This information sheet is yours to keep.*
Appendix 3: Participant Consent Forms
Interview Consent Form

Project Title: Building Inclusive Community in a Culturally Diverse Neighbourhood

I, …………………………………………………………………………………………………

Of, ……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

Hereby consent to participate in a study by Gretchen Ennis, PhD student from Charles Darwin University. I understand the aim of the project is to gain a clear picture of the social connections in the neighbourhood, with the intention of assisting residents to make their community a friendlier, safer and more harmonious neighbourhood. This will be done by providing activities and events aimed at increasing social connections in the neighbourhood, particularly focusing on building connections between people from different cultural backgrounds.

I acknowledge that:

• I have been provided with an information sheet which explains the research project.

• Upon completion of the taped interview, the tape will be transcribed and all identifying features (including the names of any people mentioned in the interview) will be removed from the transcripts. My interview will be coded and my name and address will be kept separately from both the tapes and the transcriptions.

• Any information that I provide will not be released in an identified form.

• The information from my interview will be combined with the interview information from all interview participants, and will be used for research purposes and may be reported in academic journals.

• Individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.

• I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease, and any information obtained will be returned to me or destroyed at my request.

Signature: ………………………………………… Date: ……………………………
Survey Consent Form

Project Title: Building Inclusive Community in a Culturally Diverse Neighbourhood

I, ...........................................................................................................................................

Of, ...........................................................................................................................................

...........................................................................................................................................

Hereby consent to participate in a study by Gretchen Ennis, PhD student from Charles Darwin University. I understand the aim of the project is to gain a clear picture of the social connections in the neighbourhood, with the intention of assisting residents to make their community a friendlier, safer and more harmonious neighbourhood. This will be done by providing activities and events aimed at increasing social connections in the neighbourhood, particularly focusing on building connections between people from different cultural backgrounds.

I acknowledge that:

• I have been provided with an information sheet which explains the research project.

• Upon completion survey interview, my survey will be coded and my name and address will be kept separately from the survey form.

• Any information that I provide will not be released in an identified form.

• I understand that aggregated survey results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in academic journals.

• Individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation.

• I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study, In which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease, and any information obtained will be returned to me or destroyed at my request.

Signature: ...................................... Date: ..............................................
Appendix 4: Social Survey
Ludmilla Social Survey
Questionnaire to be administered by researcher.
Based on ABS General Social Survey 2006.

1. What is your name?

2. Male/Female

3. What was your age last birthday?

4. What is your marital status?
   1. Married
   2. Never married
   3. Widowed
   4. Divorced
   5. Separated
   6. Married (not in a registered marriage)
   7. De facto
   8. Single

5. Are you currently a full time student?
   Yes
   No

6. Are you currently employed?
   Yes
   No

7. How many hours per week are you employed?
   0-8
   8-15
   16-30
   30-40
   40+

8. What is your main occupation?
9. What was the highest year level of school which you completed?

10. Have you completed any other educational qualifications?
    Yes (list)
    No

11. In which country were you born? (if not Australia ask questions 12-15)

12. In which year did you first arrive in Australia to live (for one year or more)?

13. Do you currently hold Australian citizenship?
    Yes
    No

14. Do you plan to stay in Australia for more than 12 months or more?
    Yes
    No

15. Do you hold a permanent residency visa?
    Yes
    No

16. Do you hold a temporary residency visa?
    Yes
    No

17. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander background?
    Yes
    No

18. Do you identify as a member of an Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander community or group?
    Yes
No

19. If yes, what is the name of that group?

20. Do you speak a language other than English at home?
   Yes
   No

21. If yes, which language other than English do you speak at home?

22. Do you consider you speak English very well, well or not well?
   1 – very well
   2 – Well
   3 – Not well
   4 – Not at all

23. In regard to your current home, is it
   1. rented property
   2. your own home (either mortgaged or owned)
   3. government housing
   4. other (please specify)

24. How long have you lived in this dwelling?

25. How many times have you moved in the last 5 years?

26. I would like to ask you about the dwelling you lived in immediately before this one. How long did you live in that dwelling?
   1 – Less than one year
   2 – One year or more

27. Was that dwelling in the same suburb as your current dwelling?
   1. Yes
   2. No

28. Where was that dwelling located (suburb, city and state)?
29. What were the reasons for your last move?

More than one response is allowed

**Housing reasons**
1. Wanted bigger/better home
2. Wanted smaller home/downsize
3. Reduce rent/mortgage
4. Notice given by landlord
5. Allocated housing (eg. Public housing)
6. Purchased own dwelling
7. Renovations/rebuilding

**Employment reasons**
8. Closer to work
9. Lost job
10. Got job
11. Improve employment prospects
12. Job transfer

**Accessibility reasons**
13. To be near medical services
14. To be near education facilities

**Family Reasons**
15. Moved with family
16. Be close to family/friends
17. Family conflict
18. Be independent
19. Get married/live with partner
20. Breakdown of marriage/relationship

21. Other (specify)
22. Don’t know

30. What was the main reason?

**Housing reasons**
1. Wanted bigger/better home
2. Wanted smaller home/downsize
3. Reduce rent/mortgage
4. Notice given by landlord
5. Allocated housing (eg. Public housing)
6. Purchased own dwelling
7. Renovations/rebuilding

**Employment reasons**
8. Closer to work
9. Lost job
10. Got job
11. Improve employment prospects
12. Job transfer

**Accessibility reasons**
13. To be near medical services
14. To be near education facilities

**Family Reasons**
15. Moved with family
16. Be close to family/friends
17. Family conflict
18. Be independent
19. Get married/live with partner
20. Breakdown of marriage/relationship
21. Other (specify)
22. Don’t know

The next few questions are about transport

*Show prompt card 5.*

31. Do you have access to any motor vehicles such as these for you to drive?
   Yes
   No

*Show prompt card 6*

32. I would now like you to consider all the places you need to go to, by car or other transport. Which statement best describes your overall transport situation?
   1. Can easily get to the places needed
   2. Sometimes have difficulty getting to the places needed
   3. Often have difficulty getting to the places needed
   4. Can’t get to the places needed
   5. Never go out/housebound
33. In general, would you say that your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor?

1. Excellent
2. Very good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor.

Show prompt card 12
The next few questions are about any problems you have had accessing, understanding or being understood by services such as these.

Show Prompt Card 13
34. Do you find it difficult to access services for any of these reasons?
More than one response is allowed.

1. Transport/Distance
2. Cost of service
3. Disability restricts your access to service
4. No services in your area
5. Inadequate services in your area
6. Lack of support networks
7. Can not trust them
8. Any other reason (please specify)
9. No problems accessing service providers
10. Have not tried to access any service providers

35. What is the main reason that makes it difficult for you to access services?

1. Transport/Distance
2. Cost of service
3. Disability restricts your access to service
4. No services in your area
5. Inadequate services in your area
6. Lack of support networks
7. Can not trust them
8. Any other reason (please specify)
9. No problems accessing service providers
10. Have not tried to access any service providers
36. Which types of services have you found hard to access? 
   More than one response is allowed
   1. Government
   2. Private
   3. Non-profit organizations
   4. Don’t Know

37. When you contact a service, do you find it hard to understand what they say? 
   Yes
   No

38. Do they find it hard to understand you? 
   Yes
   No

39. Which types of services have you found hard to understand/found it hard to understand you/you had difficulty communicating with? 
   More than one response is allowed.
   1. Government
   2. Private
   3. Non-profit organization
   4. Don’t Know

The next few questions are about your family or community commitments. These commitments can include looking after children or other family members, volunteering or community activities.

40. Do you have any dependant children living at home with you? 
   Yes
   No

41. What are the ages of your dependant children?
42. Do you have family or community commitments?

Yes
No

*If participant employed complete this section*

43. Does your employer have conditions that allow you to meet your family or community commitments?

Yes
No
Don’t Know

44. Are you always, sometimes or never able to use these conditions (to meet family or community commitments?)

Always
Sometimes
Never

45. In the last 4 weeks, have you spent time providing unpaid care, help or assistance to someone with a disability, long-term illness or problem related to old age?

Yes
No

The next few questions are about support you may provide to children living outside of your household.

46. Do you have any children under 25 who do not live with you?

Yes
No

*Show prompt card 15*

47. Do you provide any of the following types of support for your children under 25 who do not live with you?

*If 'yes' prompt for each one*
More than one response is allowed

1. Child support payments
2. Money to help pay rent/bond/other housing costs
3. Provide or pay for food
4. Provide or pay for clothing
5. Let them borrow your car
6. Drive them places
7. Pay for educational costs/textbooks
8. Give them pocket money or an allowance
9. Give them money to pay bills/meet debt
10. Buy or give them money to buy big cost items
11. Other (please specify)
12. No support provided

48. Do you provide any of the following types of support for your children under 25 who do not live with you? More than one response is allowed

1. Provide or pay for general medical related costs
2. Pay for sport and other activity costs
3. Have them stay over
4. Take them on holidays
5. Give general advice and emotional support
6. Other

49. How many of your children under 25 who do not live with you, do you provide some type of support to?

1. one
2. two
3. three
4. four or more.

50. Do you provide any of the following types of support for any other relatives who do not live with you?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones*

1. Child support payments
2. Money to help pay rent/bond/other housing costs
3. Provide or pay for food
4. Provide or pay for clothing
5. Let them borrow your car
6. Drive them places
7. Pay for educational costs/textbooks
8. Give them spending money
9. Give them money to pay bills/meet debt
10. Buy or give them money to buy big cost items
11. Other (please specify)
12. No support provided

51. Do you provide any of the following types of support for any other relatives who do not live with you?

*More than one response is allowed*
1. Provide or pay for general medical related costs
2. Provide occasional accommodation
3. Help with everyday tasks (shopping, meals, housework)
4. Mind children
5. Give general advice and emotional support
6. Provide care because of disability or long-term illness
7. accompany to appointments
8. other

52. *Show prompt card 17*
In the last 4 weeks, did you help anyone (who does not live with you) with the following activities?

*If ‘yes’, prompt for which ones.*
*More than one response is allowed.*

1. Domestic work, home maintenance or gardening
2. Providing transport or running errands
3. Any unpaid child care
4. Any teaching, coaching or practical advice
5. Providing any emotional support
6. Any other help
7. Did not help anyone

53. Who did you give this help to?
*More than one response is allowed.*

1. Relative in another household
2. Friend
3. Neighbour (someone living in this suburb)
4. Work colleague
5. Other person.
I would like you to think about help you may ask for from other people in your day to day life.

Show prompt card 18

54. If you needed to, could you ask someone (who does not live with you) for help with these types of things?
   Yes
   No

Show prompt card 19

55. If you needed to, could you ask someone (who does not live with you) for any of these types of support in a time of crisis?
   Yes
   No

Show prompt card 20

56. Who could you ask for this support in a crisis?
   1. Friend
   2. Neighbour (in this suburb)
   3. Family member
   4. Work colleague
   5. Community, charity or religious organization (which one)
   6. Local council or other government services
   7. Health, legal or financial profession
   8. Other

The next few questions are about things that may have been a problem for you, or family or close friends during the last 12 months.

Show prompt card 21

57. Have any of these been a problem for you or anyone close to you, during the last 12 months?
   If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones.
   More than one response is allowed.
   1. Serious illness
   2. Serious accident
3. Death of a family member or close friend  
4. Mental illness  
5. Serious disability  
6. No

Show prompt card 22

58. Have any of these been a problem for you or anyone close to you, during the last 12 months?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones  
*More than one response is allowed.

1. Divorce or separation  
2. Not able to get a job  
3. Involuntary loss of job  
4. Alcohol or drug related problems  
5. Witness to violence  
6. Abuse or violent crime  
7. Trouble with the police  
8. Gambling problem  
9. Other (specify)  
10. No.

Show prompt card 23

59. In the past 3 months, that is since this time in (month), have you participated in any of these activities?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones  
*More than one response is allowed

1. Visited or was visited by friends  
2. Went out with or met group of friends – outdoor activities  
3. Went out with or met group of friends indoor activities  
4. Spent time in internet social activity  
5. Other informal social activities (specify)  
6. No informal social activities.

The next few questions are about any contact you’ve had with family or friends (who do not live with you).
60. In the last three months, that is since this time in (month), have you seen family or friends (who do not live with you)?

Yes
No
No family and no friends

61. Have you seen them since this time last month?

Yes
No

62. Have you seen them since last (insert day of interview)

Yes
No

63. Do you see them every day?

Yes
No

Show prompt card 24

64. In the last 3 months, have you used any of these other types of contact with family or friends (who do not live with you)

If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones.
More than one response is allowed

1. Fixed telephone
2. Mobile phone for calls
3. Mobile phone for SMS
4. Internet such as email or chat rooms
5. Mail (inc cards) or fax
6. Other form of contact used (specify)
7. No contact

Show prompt card 25

65. How often have you had (SMS and internet/SMS/Internet) contact with them (in the last 3 months)?

1. A few times a day
2. Once a day
3. A few times a week
4. Once a week
5. At least once a month
6. At least once a quarter

_Show prompt card 25_

66. How often have you had (telephone and mobile phone/telephone/mobile phone) contact with them (in the last 3 months)?

1. A few times a day
2. Once a day
3. A few times a week
4. Once a week
5. At least once a month
6. At least once a quarter

_Show prompt card 25_

67. How often have you had (mail and another form of mail/and other form of) contact with them (in the last 3 months)?

1. A few times a day
2. Once a day
3. A few times a week
4. Once a week
5. At least once a month
6. At least once a quarter

_Show prompt card 25_

68. Do you have any family members (not living with you) that you feel you can confide in?
   Yes
   No

_Show prompt card 26_

69. How many family members (not living with you) can you confide in?

1. 1 to 2 family members
2. 3 to 4 family members
3. 5 or more family members
70. Do you have any friends that you feel you can confide in?
   Yes
   No

71. How many (friends can you confide in)?
   1. 1 to 2 family members
   2. 3 to 4 family members
   3. 5 or more family members

   Show prompt card 27

   the next few questions are about all your friends.

72. How many of your friends are of similar age to you?
   1. All
   2. Most
   3. About half
   4. Few
   5. None
   6. Don’t know
   7. No friends.

   Show prompt card 27

73. How many of your friends are from the same ethnic background as you?
   1. All
   2. Most
   3. About half
   4. Few
   5. None
   6. Don’t know
   7. No friends.

   Show prompt card 27

74. How many of your friends have similar levels of education as you?
   1. All
   2. Most
   3. About half
   4. Few
5. None
6. Don’t know
7. No friends.

75. Do you personally know a member of state or federal parliament, or local government that you would feel comfortable contacting for information and advice?

Yes
No

*Show prompt card 28*

76. Do you personally know someone in any of the following types of organizations that you would feel comfortable contacting for information or advice?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones.*

1. State or territory government department
2. Federal government department
3. Local council
4. Legal system
5. Healthcare
6. Trade union
7. Political party
8. Media
9. University/TAFE/Business college
10. Religious/spiritual group
11. School related group
12. Big business
13. Small business
14. No

The next few questions are about issues that are important to you.

*Show prompt card 29.*

77. How often do you feel you are able to have a say with your family or friends, on issues that are important to you?

1. All of the time
2. Most of the time
3. Some of the time
4. A little of the time
5. None of the time.

*Show prompt card 29*

78. How often do you feel you are able to have a say within the general community, on issues that are important to you?

1. All of the time
2. Most of the time
3. Some of the time
4. A little of the time
5. None of the time.

The next few questions are about how much you trust people and institutions.

*Show prompt card 30*

79. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

That most people can be trusted?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*Show prompt card 30*

80. That your doctor can be trusted?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

*Show prompt card 30*

81. That hospitals can be trusted to do the right thing by you?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

show prompt card 30

82. That police in your local area can be trusted to do the right thing by you?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

show prompt card 30

83. That police outside your local area can be trusted to do the right thing by you?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

show prompt card 30

84. That most of my relatives can be trusted to act in my best interests?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

show prompt card 30

85. That most of my friends can be trusted to act in my best interests?

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
86. Since (insert month – 6 months ago), have you attended any events that bring people together, such as fetes, shows, festivals or other community events?

Yes
No

87. If yes, which events?

Show prompt card 31

88. Have you ever been active in any project such as these, in your local area to provide a new service or activity, or to preserve an existing service or activity?

Yes
No

89. If yes, which projects?

Show prompt card 30

90. I feel part of this community

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

91. Most people I know feel part of this community

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree

show prompt card 32
92. In the last 12 months, have you been actively involved in any of these social groups or taken part in an activity they organised?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which one (and name)*

1. Sport or physical recreation group
2. Arts or heritage group
3. Religious or spiritual group or organization
4. Craft or practical hobby group
5. Adult education, other recreation or special interest group
6. Ethnic/multicultural club
7. Social clubs providing restaurants or bars
8. Other social groups (please specify) no active involvement in social groups

*Show prompt card 33*

93. In the past 12 months haven you been actively involved in any of these community support groups or taken part in an activity they organised?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which one (and name).*

1. Service clubs
2. Welfare organizations
3. Education and training
4. Parenting/children/youth
5. Health promotion and support
6. Emergency services
7. International aid and development
8. Other community support groups (please specify)
9. No active involvement in community support groups

*Show prompt card 34*

94. In the last 12 months have you been actively involved in any of these groups or taken part in an activity they organised?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones (and name).*

1. Trade union, professional/technical association
2. Political party
3. Civic group or organization
4. Environmental or animal welfare group
5. Human and civil rights groups
6. Body corporate or tenants’ associations
7. Consumer organization
8. Other civic or political organization (please specify)
9. No active involvement in civic or government group

95. In the last 12 months have you:

   Read out categories 1 – 8
   More than one response is allowed

1. Participated in a community consultation or attended a public or council meeting?
2. Written to the (territory government/council), or contacted a (territory government member/local councillor)?
3. Contacted a member of parliament
4. Signed a petition
5. Attended a protest march, meeting or rally?
6. Written a letter to the editor of a newspaper?
7. Participated in a political campaign?
8. Deliberately bought or boycotted products for environmental, ethical or political reasons?
9. Engaged in none of these in the last 12 months.

Show prompt card 35

96. When you were a child, did you participate in any of the following activities?

   If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones.
   More than one response is allowed.

1. Organised team sport
2. Youth group (guides, scouts, choir)
3. Some kind of volunteer work
4. Raised money door-to-door or in public places for a cause or organization
5. Active in student government
6. Active in a religious organization
7. None of these as child/youth

97. Have either of your parents ever done any voluntary work in the community?

   Yes
   No
   Don’t know.
The next few questions are about unpaid, voluntary work, that is, help willingly given in the form of time, service or skills to a club, organization or association. Please exclude any voluntary work done overseas.

*Show prompt card 36.*

98. These are examples of the types of organizations or groups that people may do voluntary work for. In the last 12 months, did you do any unpaid voluntary work for any of these types of organizations?

Yes

No

99. How many organizations have you done unpaid voluntary work for in the last 12 months?

100. What are the names of this/these organizations?

101. Are you currently doing voluntary work for any of these groups?

Yes

No

102. How long (have you/were you) a volunteer for the (insert group)

1. Less than one year
2. Between one and five years
3. Between six and ten years
4. More than ten years.

103. How long ago did you first become involved in voluntary work for any organization?

1. Less than one year
2. Between one to five years
3. Between six to ten years
4. More than ten years

*show prompt card 41.*
104. How did you first become involved in voluntary work?

1. Knew someone involved
2. Someone asked me
3. Self involvement in organization
4. Saw advertisement / report in media
5. Found out about it myself
6. Other

105. What (are/were) your reasons for being a volunteer?

*More than one response is allowed.*

1. Personal/ family involvement
2. Personal satisfaction
3. Social contact
4. Religious beliefs
5. To be active
6. To learn new skills
7. To do something worthwhile
8. Help others/community
9. Gain work experience
10. Use skills/expertise
11. Felt obliged
12. Just happened
13. Other

I would now like to ask you about donating money to various organizations. Donating excludes purchases of goods and raffle tickets but includes door knocks and sponsoring events such as walkathons.

*Show prompt card 42*

106. In the last 12 months, have you personally donated money in any form to any of these types of organizations?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones.*

*More than one response is allowed.*

1. Arts/heritage organizations
2. Universities
3. Research organizations
4. Schools
5. Hospitals
6. Other health organizations
7. Community/welfare services
8. International aid
9. Religious organizations/churches
10. Environmental / animal welfare groups
11. Law/ justice/ political
12. Sport and physical recreation clubs
13. Other recreation (craft, hobby)
14. Other
15. No donations made in the last 12 months.

The following questions ask about your feelings of safety at home and within your local area

*Show prompt card 43*

107. How safe or unsafe do you feel at home by yourself during the day?

1. Very safe
2. Safe
3. Neither safe nor unsafe
4. Unsafe
5. Very unsafe
6. Never home alone during day

*Show prompt card 43*

108. How safe or unsafe do you feel at home by yourself after dark?

1. Very safe
2. Safe
3. Neither safe nor unsafe
4. Unsafe
5. Very unsafe
6. Never home alone after dark

*Show prompt card 43*

109. How safe or unsafe do you feel walking alone in your local area after dark?

1. Very safe
2. Safe
3. Neither safe nor unsafe
4. Unsafe
5. Very unsafe
6. Never walk alone after dark

I would now like you to think about any physical activities or sports that you have participated in as either a participant, coach, official, umpire or administrator in the last 12 months.

110. In the last 12 months did you participate in any physical activities for recreation, exercise or sport?
    Yes
    No

111. Did you do any of these activities for sport?
    Yes
    No

112. Did you do any of these activities for exercise or recreation?
    Yes
    No

The next few questions are about your use of computers and the internet. By Internet, we mean use of email or the World Wide Web.

113. Do you have access to a computer at home, regardless of whether it is used?
    Yes
    No

114. Do you have access to the internet at home?
    Yes
    No

115. In the last 12 months did you use a computer at home?
    Yes
    No
116. In the last 12 months did you access the internet at home?

   Yes
   No

   show prompt card 44

117. How often did you access the internet at home in the last 12 months?

   1. Every day
   2. Two to six days a week
   3. One day a week
   4. One day a fortnight
   5. One day a month
   6. Less than one day a month
   7. Don’t know

   show prompt card 45

118. For which purposes did you access the internet at home in the last 12 months?

   More than one response is allowed.

   1. Work/business
   2. Education/study
   3. Volunteer/community groups
   4. Personal/private
   5. Other

   Show prompt card 45

119. For which purpose did you spend the most time on the internet at home in the last 12 months?

   1. Work/business
   2. Education/study
   3. Volunteer/community groups
   4. Personal/private
   5. Other
120. In the last 12 months, did you use the internet to access any government services for private purposes?

*If ‘yes’ prompt for which ones
More than one response is allowed.*

Electronic lodgement of
1. Tax returns
2. Applications or claims for benefits
3. Applications for permits etc
4. Bill payments (e.g. rates and car registration)

Information or services relating to:
5. Taxation
6. Pensions or other benefits
7. Employment/unemployment
8. Community safety education
9. Other
10. No government services accessed via the internet
11. Don’t know

121. Before tax is taken out of your wage, what is the average annual income of your household?

1. Less than $40,000
2. Between $40,000 and $80,000
3. Between $80,000 and $120,000
4. Over $120,000.
5. Don’t wish to answer

122. What is your main source of income?

1. Wage/salary
2. Own business
3. Government pension
4. Superannuation
5. other
Are you aware of LNC? How?

Do you have any feedback on LNC activities (newsletter, DVD, events)?

Would you be able to refer anyone else that lives in Ludmilla to do this survey?

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Appendix 5: Social Survey Prompt Cards
Prompt Cards for

Ludmilla Social Survey

(the numbering system is the same as the ABS 2006 Social Survey numbering, hence it starts with prompt card 5)
Examples of motor vehicles you may have access to:

- Vehicles (s) belonging to you (including jointly owned vehicle)
- Vehicle (s) belonging to another member of this household
- Company or government vehicle(s) for personal use.
6.

1. Can easily get to the places needed

2. Sometimes have difficulty getting to the places needed.

3. Often have difficulty getting to the places needed.

4. Can’t get to the places needed.
These are examples of types of services:

- Doctors
- Employment services
- Telecommunication services
- Centrelink
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Disability services
- Family assistance office
- Medicare
13.

*You may choose more than one answer:*

1. Transport/Distance (eg. Lack of transport or services are too far to get to easily)
2. Cost of service
3. Disability restricts access to service
4. No services in your area
5. Inadequate services in your area
6. Lack of support networks
7. Cannot trust them
8. Any other reason (please specify)
You may choose more than one answer

1. Government
2. Private
3. Non-profit organisation
You may choose more than one answer:

1. Child support payments
2. Give them money to pay rent/bond/other housing costs
3. Provide or pay for food
4. Provide or pay for clothing
5. Let them borrow your car
6. Drive them places
7. Pay for educational costs or textbooks
8. Give them pocket money or an allowance
9. Give them money to pay bills/meet debt
10. Buy or give them money to buy big cost items such as a car, computer, sound system etc.
11. Other (please specify)
16.

You may choose more than one answer:

1. Child support payments
2. Money to help pay rent/bond/other housing costs
3. Provide or pay for food
4. Provide or pay for clothing
5. Let them borrow your car
6. Drive them places
7. Pay for educational costs/textbooks
8. Give them spending money
9. Give them money to pay bills/meet debt
10. Buy or give them money to buy big cost items
11. Other (please specify)
17.

*More than one response is allowed.*

1. Domestic work, home maintenance or gardening

2. Providing transport or running errands

3. Any unpaid child care

4. Any teaching, coaching or practical advice

5. Providing any emotional support

6. Any other help
18.

*Examples of types of help:*

- Look after pets or water your garden while away from home
- Collect mail or check your house while away from home
- Mind a child for a brief period
- Help with moving or lifting objects
- Help out when you are sick or injured (eg the flu or sprained ankle)
- Borrow equipment.
Examples of types of crisis support:

- Advice on what to do
- Emotional support
- Help out when you have a serious illness or injury
- Help in maintaining family or work responsibilities
- Provide emergency money
- Provide emergency accommodation
- Provide emergency food
You may choose more than one answer:

1. Friend
2. Neighbour
3. Family member
4. Work colleague
5. Community, charity or religious organization (which one)
6. Local council or other government services
7. Health, legal or financial profession
8. Other
21

*You may choose more than one answer:*

1. Serious illness
2. Serious accident
3. Death of a family member or close friend
4. Mental illness
5. Serious disability
22.

*More than one response is allowed.*

1. Divorce or separation
2. Not able to get a job
3. Involuntary loss of job
4. Alcohol or drug related problems
5. Witness to violence
6. Abuse or violent crime
7. Trouble with the police
8. Gambling problem
9. Other (specify)
More than one response is allowed

1. Visited or was visited by friends
2. Went out with or met group of friends – outdoor activities
3. Went out with or met group of friends indoor activities
4. Spent time in internet social activity
5. Other informal social activities (specify)
24.

*More than one response is allowed*

1. Fixed telephone
2. Mobile phone for calls
3. Mobile phone for SMS
4. Internet such as email or chat rooms
5. Mail (inc cards) or fax
6. Other form of contact used (specify)
1. A few times a day
2. Once a day
3. A few times a week
4. Once a week
5. At least once a month
6. At least once a quarter
1. 1 to 2 family members
2. 3 to 4 family members
3. 5 or more family members
1. All
2. Most
3. About half
4. Few
5. None
You may choose more than one answer:

1. State or territory government department
2. Federal government department
3. Local council
4. Legal system
5. Healthcare
6. Trade union
7. Political party
8. Media
9. University/TAFE/Business college
10. Religious/spiritual group
11. School related group
12. Big business
13. Small business
1. All of the time
2. Most of the time
3. Some of the time
4. A little of the time
5. None of the time.
30.

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
• Examples of a project:
  • Starting a preschool
  • Keeping a hospital open
  • Establishing a recreational facility
  • Keeping a local football team in existence
32.

You may choose more than one answer:

1. Sport or physical recreation group
2. Arts or heritage group
3. Religious or spiritual group or organization
4. Craft or practical hobby group
5. Adult education, other recreation or special interest group
6. Ethnic/multicultural club
7. Social clubs providing restaurants or bars
8. Other social groups (please specify) no active involvement in social groups
You may choose more than one answer:

1. **Service clubs** (eg Lions, Rotary, CWA)

2. **Welfare organizations** (eg Salvation Army, Lifeline, Meals on Wheels)

3. **Education and training** (eg. School events, P & C)

4. **Parenting/children/youth** (eg. Scouts, Guides, Playgroups)

5. **Health promotion and support** (eg. National Heart Foundation, Bonnie Babes)

6. **Emergency services** (eg. Fire, flood, search and rescue)

7. **International aid and development** (eg. Care Australia, Red Cross International, Oxfam)

8. **Other community support groups** (please specify)
You may choose more than one answer:

1. **Trade union, professional/technical association** (eg. Australian Metal Workers Union, Law Society, Small Business Association)

2. **Political party**

3. **Civic group or organization** (eg. Community council, neighbourhood watch)

4. **Environmental or animal welfare group** (eg. Landcare, RSPCA).

5. **Human and civil rights group** (eg Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Council for Civil Liberties)

6. **Body corporate or tenants’ association**

7. **Consumer organization** (eg. Australian Consumer’s Association, motoring associations)

8. **Other civic or political organization.**
35

You may choose more than one answer:

1. Organised team sport
2. Youth group (such as guides, scouts, choir)
3. Did some kind of volunteer work
4. Raised money door-to-door or in public place for a cause or organization
5. Active in student government
6. Active in religious organization
These are examples of types of organizations

- Organised sporting group/team
- Youth group (such as guides, scouts, choir)
- A charity organization or cause
- Student government
- Religious organization
- School or preschool
- Some other kind of volunteer work
37.

1. arts/heritage
2. business/professional/union
3. welfare/community
4. education and training
5. parenting, children and youth
6. emergency services
7. environment/animal welfare
8. international aid/development
9. health
10. law/justice/political
11. religious
12. sport and physical recreation
13. other recreation or interest
14. ethnic and ethnic-Australian groups
15. other
You may choose more than one answer

1. Phone calls
2. Postage
3. Uniform
4. Travel costs
5. Meals
6. Training
7. Other
1. knew someone involved
2. someone asked me
3. self involvement in organization
4. saw advertisement/report in media
5. found out about it myself
6. other
You may choose more than one answer:

1. Arts / heritage organization
2. Universities
3. Research organizations
4. Schools
5. Hospitals
6. Other health organizations
7. Community / welfare services
8. International aid
9. Religious organizations / churches
10. Environmental / Animal welfare groups
11. Law / justice / political
12. Sport and physical recreation clubs
13. Other recreation (such as craft, hobby, other interest group)
14. Other
1. very safe
2. safe
3. neither safe nor unsafe
4. unsafe
5. very unsafe
1. Every day
2. Two to six days a week
3. One day a week
4. Once day a fortnight
5. One day a month
6. Less than one day a month
you may choose more than one answer:

1. work / business
2. education / study
3. volunteer / community groups
4. personal / private
5. other
You may choose more than one answer:

Electronic lodgement of:

1. Tax returns
2. Applications or claims for benefits
3. Applications for permits etc.
4. Bill payments (eg. Rates and car registration)

Information or services relating to:

5. Taxation
6. Pensions or benefits
7. Employment / unemployment
8. Community safety education
9. Other
Appendix 6: Interview Guide
Interview Guide

When you think Ludmilla as a place to live, what comes to mind?

- **Prompts:**
  - do you think it is a friendly place?,
  - would you call it a harmonious neighbourhood,
  - is it safe?
  - do you think there are any problems among people here?

What do you think about there being a ‘sense of community’ here?

- **Prompts:**
  - do you feel part of a ‘Ludmilla’ community and why?
  - What does the community ‘do’ how do you know it exists?
  - Does everyone in the neighbourhood have the opportunity to participate in community life if they wanted to?
  - Do you think some people may be ‘left out’ of community life – why might that be?
  - Do you think there may be distinct ‘sections’ of community here?
  - What do you think about that?
  - Do you feel part of a community other than that of the neighbourhood of Ludmilla?

Can you see any benefits in a ‘sense of community’ in this area?

- **Prompts:**
  - What does it mean to be part of community?
  - Why is it good or bad to be part of a community?
  - Who would a ‘sense of community’ benefit and how?
  - Does it matter if there is no ‘sense of community’ – why?

In an ideal world how would you like people in the neighbourhood to be?

- **Prompts:**
  - how would people interact, how often?
  - What would be going on, what would you see?
  - do you think some things need to change, what could make it a better place?
Appendix 7: Summary of Case Study Data Base
Summary of contents of case study data-base

The following table summarizes the data sources used in the case study.

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Post LNC Project Data

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Attribute table: Pre LNC project participants (n = 49)
### Post LNC Project Participants Information

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Attribute table: Post LNC project participants (n = 61)

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<td>Dependent children at 12</td>
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<td>Average age</td>
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LNC Newsletter content

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| Mar-09| Introduction to LNC
<p>|      | Request for newsletter ideas                                              |
|      | Some ideas for project activities                                         |
|      | Next LNC meeting details                                                  |
| Apr-09| Response to our first newsletter                                          |
|      | Gardeners Morning information (17 May)                                    |
|      | Arafura Harbour Proposal updates and information                          |
|      | Nature Corridor ideas                                                    |
|      | Next LNC meeting details                                                  |
| May-09| Gardner’s Morning information (17 May)                                     |
|      | Arafura Harbour Proposal - Public Meeting Notice (27 Apr)                |
|      | Speeding Cars &amp; Dangerous Driving issue                                   |
|      | Life in Ludmilla – Successful grant application to make DVD              |
|      | Working bee at Bagot Community Music Room (seeking                        |
|      | Play group at Ludmilla Primary School (every Friday)                      |
|      | Next LNC meeting details                                                  |
| Jun-09| Gardner’s Morning information (12 July)                                   |
|      | Life in Ludmilla DVD (information and call for input)                    |
|      | Bagot Community Garden updates                                            |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January &amp;</td>
<td>Arafura Harbour Proposal updates</td>
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<td>February 2010</td>
<td>Next LNC meeting details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jul-09</td>
<td>Life in Ludmilla DVD updates</td>
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<td>Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group information</td>
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<td>Rezoning Proposal – Lot 4938.</td>
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<td>Aug-09</td>
<td>Ludmilla Big Breakfast event (23 August)</td>
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<td>Thanks to local MLA for printing newsletter</td>
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<td>Sep-09</td>
<td>Update on Life in Ludmilla film</td>
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<td>Information about LNC and encouragement to come to</td>
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<td>Bagot Kid’s Disco information (1 October)</td>
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<td>Neighbourhood Project Ideas and grant applications.</td>
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<td>Promotion of NAPCAN Children’s week bushwalk event (25</td>
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<td>Christmas event information – (12 December)</td>
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<td>Bagot Victory Church Christmas event</td>
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<td>Principal of the year award – Nemarluk School</td>
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<td>Well’s Street Scout Hall information</td>
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<td>Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla updates on rezoning</td>
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<td>Ludmilla History Spot  (Retta Dixon Home)</td>
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<td>June/July 2010</td>
<td>Newsletter accompanied by Life in Ludmilla DVD</td>
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<td>Information about DVD</td>
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<td>Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group updates and working days</td>
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<td>Get involved in your neighbourhood (information &amp;</td>
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<td>Talking about experiences of Racism (call for people to</td>
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Page 10   Case Study summary data base
### Reflective Journal entries

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04.08.09 can i offer suggestions?
05.08.09 what is my role now?
11.08.09 BOSCH meeting
14.08.09 LNC becoming more recognised and approached.
24.08.09 Big Breakfast, and excitement about the DVD
28.08.09 Grant writing in partnership with other orgs
31.08.09 becoming an active and useful partner
04.09.09 Development consent authority hearing
14.09.09 donation of PA to music program
14.10.09 Ill health and turnover of key people.
21.10.09 death of child, violence at McDonalds.
24.10.09 the weather
28.10.09 modern life and participation in community
06.11.09 conversations with politicians
09.11.09 explaining things over and over
11.11.09 fatigue
13.11.09 spokesperson role and responsibility
19.11.09 more death at Bagot community; loss and grief
22.11.09 what kind of get togethers work best?
01.12.09 christmas in Ludmilla
03.12.09 the weather
05.12.09 'the block' and a growing network of volunteers
09.12.09 figuring out priorities
10.12.09 funding of facilitator position in the future - discussions
17.12.09 rained out!
16.01.10 strengths-based practice and existential philosophy
16.01.10 on line presence - face book
17.01.10 community garden meeting issues
22.01.10 positive about plans for the year.
23.01.10 land use, and opportunities for social bridges
27.01.10 change of principal, turnover of key people
28.01.10 First Bagot meeting of the year, new people, difference
29.01.10 phone call, dispondent people.
01.02.10 death of young men
02.02.10 Grant writing meeting with youth organisations
04.02.10 sneaky ways' of doing strengths-based work
04.02.10 the 'messy' reality of community work and research
06.02.10 postmodernism, community and 'difference'
06.02.10 sneaky or subtle ways of promoting social justice
07.02.10 doing' social work in critical ways for the first time
08.02.10 Meeting with new principal, explaining LNC
16.02.10 Fun day at the garden
16.02.10 newsletter and neighborhood history
19.02.10 no one says anything
20.02.10 maintenance social work as opposed to social change?
24.02.10 great day at the garden, more people involved
05.03.10 conversation with a neighbour; different realities
13.03.10 social work and existentialism, Irving Yalom
18.03.10 newsletter and conversations
18.03.10 is something better than nothing?
20.03.09 talking about doubts
27.03.10 colonization and Ludmilla
02.04.10 assumptions about ABCD and thinking about colonisation
04.04.10 what are the boundaries of the LNC network?
05.04.10 ABCD in this context
10.04.10 poster making for working bee
14.04.10 having great NGO's on board
15.04.10 new staff - more turnover - more explaining...
22.04.10 DVD launch - everyone wants to get involved!
24.04.10 identities and the DVD
09.05.10 prompting conversations.
10.05.10 partnerships and responsibility?
14.05.10 slowly slowly
14.05.10 leadership, facilitation, roles and responsibilities
17.05.10 development consent authority issues
20.05.09 just a handful of relationships makes a difference
02.06.10 local council roles and responsibilities
03.06.10 Does anyone care if we stop?
05.06.10 feedback about DVD
08.06.10 DVD and identity
10.06.10 Losing a key person
13.06.10 confidence
15.06.10 where to focus attention; dilemas.
15.06.10 ideas for the future
20.06.10 suicide rates
22.06.10 meeting with NGO, ideas for future
24.06.10 role of facilitator, what is 'sustainable'?
28.06.10 do I keep writing?
28.06.10 Endings and other things

Post LNC Project Feedback from Organisations via email

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.06.10</td>
<td>NT Music School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.06.2010</td>
<td>Corrugated Iron Youth Arts (Projects Co-ordinator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.06.10</td>
<td>Red Cross (Community Development Team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.06.10</td>
<td>Ludmilla Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.09.10</td>
<td>Larrakia Nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.09.10</td>
<td>Red Cross (Community Development Team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.08.10</td>
<td>Red Cross (Nutrition Team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.11.10</td>
<td>Corrugated Iron Youth Arts (Executive Officer)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.10.10</td>
<td>NT School of Music</td>
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</table>

Post LNC Project Feedback from Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.10.10</td>
<td>Bagot Victory Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.08.10</td>
<td>Ludmilla Creek Landcare Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23.08.10 Friends of Nemarluk Ludmilla
05.10.10 Bagot Outside School Hours Care

Other documents referred to in the study

15.06.2007 Letter from Mathew Bonson MLA Re: noise complaints
15.09.2007 Ludmilla group Flyer for Ludmilla School celebrations
Appendix 8: Summary of NT News Articles Used in Ludmilla and Bagot Community Media Review
### Media Review Data Base

**Bagot Community (74 pieces in total)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Facets</th>
<th>Number of pieces demonstrating facet</th>
<th>Example of Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Perpetrators of crime (25)             | Perpetrators of Assaults (on each other)       | 6                                    | "wife puncher jailed" (9.2.4)   
                                         |                                                |                        | "stab-victim survives" (18.06.07) |
| Drink driving perpetrators             |                                                | 6                                    | "driver 6 times over limit" (15.06.08) |
| Murderers                              |                                                | 5                                    | "cops seek witness on body dumped in bush" (01.11.06) |
| People who riot                        |                                                | 5                                    | "Community turned into war zone" (17.5.6) & "mob attacks dad with spear" (9.5.6) |
| Perpetrators of theft & property damage|                                                | 2                                    | "5 year ban for car crashed into mums house" (26.10.6) |
| Other crimes                           |                                                | 1                                    | No headline (27.02.08)          |
| People who are interested in Sport (10)| Recipients of visits from sports stars         | 8                                    | "Footy hero's meet Bagot Fans" (25.6.4) & "All stars football heroes turn up for surprise lunch" (9.12.7) |
| People who play sport                  |                                                | 2                                    | "Teams flock to Super 6’s Tournament" (30.5.08) |
| Community event participants (8)       | NAIDOC activities                               | 5                                    | ‘NAIDOC activities begin’ (04.07.06) & “Golden Oldies Get NAIDOC underway’ (09.07.07) |
| Other activities                        |                                                | 3                                    | “Fringe Events” (13.06.08)       |
| Bagot Council                          | Lacks good governance                          | 7                                    | "Bagot back to bad old days" (20.6.8)   
<pre><code>                                     |                                                |                        | &quot;council under fire&quot; (20.02.04) |
</code></pre>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Fence</th>
<th>Separated from the rest of Ludmilla</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>&quot;Fence dividing us cuts both ways&quot; (05.11.07)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Intervention (NTER)</td>
<td>a prescribed community subject to the NTER</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Grog, porn, sign of the times&quot; (10.01.08) &amp; &quot;Bagot need detailed plan&quot; (03.01.07) &amp; &quot;Bagot set to be normal suburb&quot; (29.10.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health services</td>
<td>A 'lack of' health services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Wet brings health risks to community&quot; (25.02.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and literacy programs</td>
<td>Residents need to participate in programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;Uni helps local literacy&quot; (18.11.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## The Ludmilla suburb (285 pieces in total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Facets</th>
<th>Number of pieces demonstrating facet</th>
<th>Example of Headlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrators and victims of crime (52)</td>
<td>Victims and perpetrators of assaults</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Sex assault charges laid against boy” (18.06.07 p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indigenous perpetrators of assaults</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Domestic ends in Stabbing” (28.12.05 np)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drug related criminals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“House hunting a bust for Dope” (31.11.05 p.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Drunk driving perpetrators</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Drink drivers 5 times over” (01.03.07. p. 04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misc. crimes (fraud, tax, protestors)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>“Police jail Pine Gap protestors” (15.02.08. p. 07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dangerous drivers (charged)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>High-speed chase driver charged (21.11.06. p. 06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property damage</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Cars burn within minutes” (11.05.05. p. 05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victims and perpetrators of Theft/burglary</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>“Marlo moves after brazen bag robbery” (27.06.05. p. 04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludmilla school (51)</td>
<td>A school with innovative programs</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>“Reading class a success story” (16.03.04 p.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Toadzilla pays a visit to Ludmilla” (-1.05.07 p.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under threat of closure</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Parents angered at government plans to close school” (27.03.06 p.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of local community activities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Supercars preaching safety to kids” (18.05.04 p. 7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersed in natural setting (with dangers!)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Creek to flow again” (17.10.06. p.17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Boy feared bitten; by snake at school” (04.04.07 p. 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtains funding</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Schools get needed $2m” (22.02.06. p. 02)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural environment (39)</td>
<td>Faulty sewage plant and rubbish issues</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Canberra bag our harbour filth” (14.06.06.p.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild tropical weather</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Wild storm as wet gets into early swing” (14.11.07. p.6)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Beastly find” (05.08.02. p.7)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ludmilla Creek</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>“Concrete Jungle kills creek fun” (27.10.05 p.6)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Threat of development</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievers and winners (37)</td>
<td>Good at sports</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“568 steps just a walk in the park for 74 yo” (30.11.08 p.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Gotcha you big barra beauty” (09.04.06. p. 54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heroic, kind or community acts</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>“Bid of generosity goes a long way” (14.5.04. p.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Winners of competitions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Bring on the strawberries and icecream” (13.11.05. p.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Subcategory</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals achieving</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>“Michael can brag about gong” (22.02.05 p. 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic achievers</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Top end paper artist blown away by paper award” (02.07.08 np)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having babies</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Premature baby ‘big enough to walk’” (10.08.02 p.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dangerous drivers (23)</td>
<td>Accidents</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>“4WD crash cuts power to two suburbs” (15.10.02 p.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speeding cars</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“Speeder passes police” (08.03.04. p. 06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential services (13)</td>
<td>Power and Water problems</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“Another day, another blackout hits suburbs” (07.10.08 p. 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Fast net for remote Territory” (20.09.08. p.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians (10)</td>
<td>Politian’s engage with community</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“Chief faces the heat with fries wide open” (19.11.06. p3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Locals call to ‘give Matt back’” (12.05.08. p.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community groups &amp; events (10)</td>
<td>A range of organisations provide services &amp; events (eg. Landcare, Department of Defence, Legacy)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“Top end greets families” (01.02.05 p. 6): Landcare group to party (09.06.05 p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens experiencing tragedy (9)</td>
<td>Tragic accidental deaths</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Family man laid to rest in moving ceremony” (23.12.06 np)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People interested in</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>“we are top couch”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sport (but lazy)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>potatoes” (29.7.7. np) “tensions heat up for NRL final” (05.10.08. p.05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemarluk School (8)</td>
<td>A special school that needs and benefits from charity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>“Kids with special needs get some practical helping hands” (10.08.06. p.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonalds (8) + 5 of the ‘crime’ character</td>
<td>employment programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Program aims to bridge indigenous workers gap” (11.10.08. p.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New products</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>McDonald's brews; new blend of business (26.12.05. p.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving to charity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“McHappy Territorians dig deep” (6.11.2008. p. 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene of crimes (5 of these crime numbers were counted in the ‘crime’ character)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>“Foreign burger bandit in armed hold-up” (23.09.06. p. 03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses (7)</td>
<td>Getting expensive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>“Home sales go strong despite boom ending”(03.12.07. p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petrol/Service stations (3)</td>
<td>Fuel prices go up and down</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Why would we buy fuel anywhere else” (19.06.05. p. 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson park (3) + 1 of the ‘crime’ character in Bagot.</td>
<td>Hosts football events</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Thriller in Ludmilla” (18.9.05. p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene of crime (This piece was counted in the ‘crime’ character for Bagot community)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Shadow, bashing murder charge” (15.07.08 p. 05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bunnings (2)</td>
<td>Has new activities and services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Girls DI for themselves” (24.03.07. p. 10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9: Life in Ludmilla DVD Cover
Life in Ludmilla

Exploring our neighbourhood, past & present

1. Ludmilla Now (13:02)
   Made by Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections

2. Bagot Kids Acrobatics (2:02)
   Made by the Bagot kids with Corrugated Iron Youth Arts

3. Ludmilla History (17:54)
   Made by Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections

4. Ludmilla School Power Point (1:59)
   Made by Ludmilla School Students with Corrugated Iron Youth Arts

"Life in Ludmilla" has been put together by a small group of volunteers from Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections.

Ludmilla Neighbourhood Connections is an informal volunteer-based community group which aims to make Ludmilla a more connected, strong and friendly neighbourhood.

We organise and support activities and events that focus on encouraging the involvement of all residents from all cultures.

We have made this DVD as a way of sharing our local history and highlighting just a few of the amazing people, groups and activities currently happening in our neighbourhood.

If you want to get involved in our future activities, or just be on our email list to receive information about upcoming events and activities in the local area, our contact details are:

Email: ludmilla.neighbourhood@gmail.com
Mobile: 0400 356 709

COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND
Helping Build Better Communities

Exploring our neighbourhood, past & present
The manufacture of this DVD was kindly supported by a grant from the Community Benefit Fund (Northern Territory Department of Justice).

All artwork on this DVD is by students from Ludmilla Primary School. Thanks to: Georgie Davies, Dano Thompson, Erin Reynolds, Naomi Rosova, Rachael Campbell, Katrina Thompson, William Ahtat, Tihinarii Arama, Jack Buckham, Dorys Da Costa, Malex Julius, Shanice Brack, Ebony Fishlock, Richardo Timber, Mya Brack, Caitlin Cahill, Ryely Robison, Sam Holia-West, Tracey Campbell, Indy Barrett, Alyssa O'Donnel, Jennah Cunningham, Oalana Bernabe-Silazar, Haily Vigona, Shanoah Cooper, Patrick Ly-Gallagher, Lauren Cohalan, Nikolas Karpathios.

DVD cover design very kindly done by Kris Keogh.
Appendix 10: Life in Ludmilla DVD
Appendix 11: Bibliography
Bibliography


London: Jessica Kingsley Publications.


Hanson, D., Hanson, J., Vardon, P., McFarlane, K., Speare, R., & Durrheim, D. (2008). Documenting the development of social capital in a community safety promotion
network: It’s not what you know but who you know. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* 19(2), 144-151.


