DHIIYAAN NGAY KAMILAROI, WINANGALDANHA NGAYA NGINAAYNYA
(MY KAMILAROI FAMILY, I HEAR YOU)

Physical activity, ageing and the places of freedom in a Kamilaroi family

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Abstract

This thesis is written by a Kamilaroi (Australian Indigenous group from North Western New South Wales, Australia) woman using Kamilaroi ways of knowing, being and doing to understand the physical activity experiences of the older members of her family. A *Winganggay* Methodology was developed for this study which focuses on listening in Kamilaroi which goes beyond 'just hearing' and is defined as I understand; I know; I remember; I think; and I love. Thirty interviews of Kamilaroi people over 45 were conducted in Western Sydney, the North West and Central West areas of New South Wales, Australia. All persons interviewed had health issues and low physical activity participation consistent with reported negative statistics. This study creates an understanding of the statistics through life experiences and provides wider implications for Indigenous health and wellbeing discourses. The experiences reveal an earlier life of high participation in physical activities through everyday home routines, recreation, sport and physical employment, a marked contrast to their current circumstances. Racism was found to permeate through their lives and physical activities however at the same time, the physical activities provided places of freedom and respite from it. Broadly, the places of freedom are necessary for Aboriginal people to thrive and therefore have a positive sense of wellbeing.

Concurrent to the stories from family, the author has listened to many stories, shared many experiences, felt many challenges and been opened to new understandings of her expertise in physical activity. She has rediscovered the significance of people, places and stories that are integral to her Kamilaroi identity, and been challenged to consider the responsibilities that adhere to being the next generation of Kamilaroi: the next part of a longer story.

This work has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution. The sources of information used and the extent to which the work of others has been utilised are referenced in the text. Ethics Committee approval was obtained; the approval number is: HE30MAY2008-D05874 and HE31JUL2009-D00049.

Lana Leslie

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Dhirribu! (fantastic!)

CULTURAL INTRODUCTION: NGAANDI NGINDA. DHALAADHI NGINDA?

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

It is customary when Aboriginal people meet others for the first time that it is asked: 'Who are you? Where are you from?' or 'Who is your mob?' (family). This is a cultural protocol that I have seen time and time again where people do this to establish identity based on names, families and places. Specifically, this is how an Aboriginal person connects with another to determine if they are related, maybe from the same area, if they know the same people and as a method of identification. The connections can be made based on political, cultural and social grounds, as well as establishing relations (Moreton-Robinson, 2000: xv). For these reasons, I begin this thesis by introducing myself to you first in my Kamilaroi and then in English. Following my introduction, I will tell you about my family and my identification as a Kamilaroi woman.

> Yaama maliyaa. Lana Leslie ngaya. Gayaawan.gaan ngay mubirr maran.gu guwaaldandaay. Yinarr Ngaya Mari. Bubaa ngay Raymond Leslie, Mari Moreedhi. Gunii ngay Loretta Leslie, Wadjiin Lismoredhi. Badhii ngay Violet Duncan, Mari Terry Hie Hiedhi, Dhaaddhaa ngay Alfred Leslie, Forked Mountaindi, Coonabarabran.
>
> Hello friend. I am Lana Leslie. I am very proud to be writing in the language of my ancestors. I am a Murri woman. My father, Raymond Leslie is a Murri man from Moree, my mother, Loretta Leslie is a white woman from Lismore. My Murri Grandmother, Violet Duncan is from Terry Hie Hie, my Murri Grandfather, Alfred Leslie is from Forked Mountain, Coonabarabran.

My Family





I'd like you to meet some of my family. These photos are of my Dad, Ray Leslie who was born on 3 March 1945 and my Mum, Loretta Leslie who was born on 18 May 1945. Mum's maiden name was Young. Dad was born in Moree and Mum in Lismore, both from New South Wales in Australia. They got together at age thirteen and are still together today. At the left is a photo of them at age fifteen at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. On the right is a more recent photo of them.





Dad's parents are Violet Duncan and Alfred Leslie. The left photo shows Nana and Mum. Nana was born on 4th July 1912 at Terry Hie Hie Aboriginal Reserve, approximately 50 kilometres from Moree, New South Wales. Nana's Country includes the Mehi river and rich soil in and around Moree. The right photo shows Pop and his magpie Jacko. Pop was born on 2 March, 1910 at the base of Forked Mountain which is just outside the township of

Coonabarabran (which later became Burra Bee Dee Aboriginal reserve). Pop's include the mountains of the Warrumbungles. Pop passed away in 1967 and Nana in 1988. I belong to the same Country as my Grandparents. I am connected to the freshwater rivers and to the mountains in Kamilaroi country.





Mum's parents are Veronica Anderson and Arthur 'Stanley' Young. Nana was born on 2 August, 1919 in Gympie, Queensland. Pop was born 11 September, 1916 in Manila, NSW. Nana passed away in 1997 and Pop passed away 1998.

As for me, my identity as a Kamilaroi woman formed before I was born. Much to my embarrassment a few years ago, Mum told me I had been conceived in the back seat of Dad's car on Gunnedah Hill, just outside of Coonabarabran in the heart of Kamilaroi country. My spirit was formed on a significant place in my family's history, which will later be explained in the thesis. I was born in Warren located in the central west of New South Wales, Australia, a small town of approximately 2,500 people. Warren is situated in Wiradjuri country, however I am Kamilaroi according to my father's side and where they are from. I have one brother and one sister who are twins and four years older than I.

Aboriginal? You don't look Aboriginal!

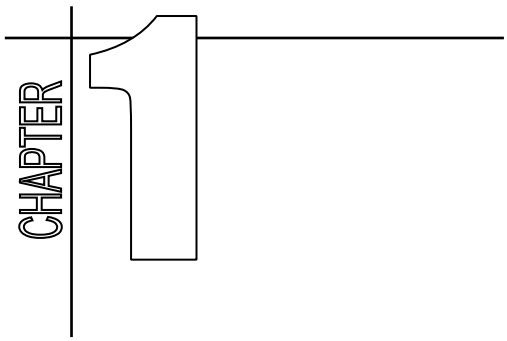
Growing up as an Aboriginal person and maintaining my identity has always been a challenge because I don't typically 'look' like a stereotype of an Aboriginal person. Basically, I look like my non-Aboriginal mother (fair-skinned, blue/green eyes) while my brother and sister look like my father (darker skin, brown eyes). Through my life I have been constantly challenged in relation to my Aboriginality in school, employment, by individuals and in life generally. Comments such as 'Aboriginal? You don't look Aboriginal?', 'What part of you is Aboriginal?' and 'You've ticked 'Aboriginal' on your

renewal for your Driver's Licence – this is wrong' have been constant and unsettling. I expect this will go on for the duration of my life. Despite the challenges, I have been brought up by my parents to believe in my Kamilaroi identity. I identify myself through my relationships with my family and extended family, and through being accepted by other Aboriginal people and communities in various places such as Warren, Coonabarabran, Moree, Gunnedah and Western Sydney. I feel the most comfortable in the bush - I am not a city person. I love the bush, rivers and trees. I've never been one for the ocean although I love going for a walk along the beach when I can. I don't feel confident swimming in the ocean because I grew up swimming in rivers and swimming pools. I really love going back to Country – Kamilaroi Country. There is something special about walking on the lands where your ancestors lived, a spiritual connection and a sense of belonging and peace.

This study is about the physical activity experiences of my Kamilaroi family and contains many stories. It is not just about presenting a collection of stories though. It is based on scholarship to better understand the context of the stories and the implications of that better understanding.

The study has taken 6 years. Most of that time I studied part-time and worked full-time. It wasn't until the final 18 months or so that I was able to spend more time on it, due to my leaving full time employment. The six years to complete the study was very difficult. There were many personal challenges I faced during that time that sometimes I doubted if I would ever get to the finish line.

I am proud to be Kamilaroi and proud to be a descendant from the oldest living Indigenous culture in the world. My family were very adamant that they wanted the stories to live on after they have gone, to pass to the next generation. I have been graced with the trust and responsibility of my family to transmit their stories in this thesis.



MAAL.NHALAYBAL

INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you and I are sitting out the backyard of my Nana and Pop's tin shack on Gunnedah Hill, just outside of Coonabarabran in New South Wales. There are other family of mine there: Nana and Pop, Dad and Mum, some Aunties, Uncles, siblings and my cousins. It is night, and we are sitting on rocks, tree stumps or fold-up seats in a circle around the fire. We all just had a feed of rabbit stew and damper which Nana cooked on the fire. Pop had caught the rabbits today. We are all feeling 'full as a bull' and are settling in to tell and listen to a few yarns (stories). It is July and it is cold. Nana laughs that we are all 'sitting gunni around the fire' or in other words, warming our bottoms! It is a beautiful, clear night and the sky is filled with a glittering blanket of stars. The fire glows red, orange and yellow and crackles as the wood burns. Yarns are told by anyone around the fire and are about any topic, happy, sad, funny or serious. Between the yarns we sing, tell funny stories, play the spoons or gum leaf or tell ghost stories.

Yarns were often told at night around a fire in my family. This thesis, titled *Dhiiyaan ngay Kamilaroi, winangaldanha ngaya nginaaynya* (My Kamilaroi family, I hear you): physical activity, ageing and the places of freedom in a Kamilaroi family honors this activity. It

is one big yarn about the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people – specifically members of my family on my Dad's side. To simulate the entertainment between the yarns, the thesis has five separate interludes which are between the majority of chapters. They are not meant to be connected to the chapters but sit alone as they would in reality.

1.1 What is Kamilaroi?

Before describing the study, it is necessary to outline what I mean when I say Kamilaroi. It can be a tribe, a language and a place. The Kamilaroi tribe is an Australian Aboriginal clan of people from the North West area of New South Wales on the eastern side of Australia. The Kamilaroi lived on their lands for thousands of years prior to white settlement in the 1800's.

Accounts of non-Indigenous people entering onto Kamilaroi lands provide information of Kamilaroi people and their health and wellbeing. An early account included George Clarke, an escaped convict from the Hunter region[1] who lived with the Kamilaroi from approximately 1826 until his capture in 1831. It was Clarke's favourable descriptions of river and lush lands that prompted Major Thomas Mitchell to further explore the area in 1832 (Mahaffey, 1985). This information gave great hope to colonists who struggled 'in a dry land whose known inland rivers had proved so disappointingly sluggish and shallow, [with] muddy streams that so often panned out into marshland or dried up' (Boyce, 1970: 2). The hope surrounding the discovery of the river 'could [therefore] be the key to open up the vast hinterland of Australia and provide a navigable inland route to the north' (Boyce, 1970: 2). Mitchell's (1832) journal of his expedition gives insight into the good health and wellbeing and housing of the Kamilaroi in 1832. He stated:

> The natives of this tribe were the finest men I had seen of this race – and from the peculiar colour which they paint their bodies, I recognised it to be that which appeared on the bank of this river much higher up where we first made it – Most of the strong men were painted grey or pipe clay colour and being tall and well made this peculiar that contrasted with small greasy black fellows gave them a very superior appearance (Mitchell, 1832: 93).
>
> On crossing one slight hollow near the river we passed through the old huts of a native tribe – These were completed in a very superior manner to any I had ever seen – the

[1] The Hunter region is approximately 250 kilometres north of Sydney.

> spot was particularly picturesque, I saw 18 huts – but many were placed most romantically under shady acacias and swamp oaks, so that they might have been much more – numerous each had the form of a semi-circle – the roof verging to a cone – but from the truncated part a flat roof stood formed like a portico supported by two sticks – and were close to the trunk of a tree – they were covered not, as usual, with sheets of bark – but with a great variety of materials – Reeds, grass, bark & boughs and the interior looked clean – and gave some idea not only of shelter – but even of comfort (Mitchell, 1832: 55).

As time marched on though, the Kamilaroi population declined, as did their health. In 1839, it was estimated that 2-3000 Kamilaroi people lived between the Peel, Namoi and Gwydir rivers. Three years later population estimates of the same region were approximately 1000. By 1847 most deaths were attributed to the introduction of small pox or from being slaughtered by the Europeans, usually in retribution for Kamilaroi killing their sheep and cattle (Milliss, 1980).

Kamilaroi is also a language that extensive work has been done in contemporary times for its revival (Yuwaalaraay Language Program, 2003). Education institutions such as Coonabarabran High School and the University of Sydney currently teach the Kamilaroi language. Recent 2013 publications on the Kamilaroi language for primary school aged children titled Minya Ngaya (What am I?)(Tighe, 2012c); Gagan (Colours)(Tighe, 2012a) and Milduulu (With my little eye)(Tighe, 2012b). The translation of the word 'Kamilaroi' into English has proved problematic therefore versions of the word exist include Gamilaraay, Gamilaroi and Cummeroy amongst many others (Milliss, 1992). Variations are therefore common and many are used interchangeably. The word 'Gamilaraay' is defined as gamil meaning 'no', and 'araay meaning having (Yuwaalaraay Language Program, 2003: 78). Put together it is 'having no'.

Kamilaroi also represents a place covering an area of 75,000 square kilometres of 'largely flat, black-soil country, with a number of major rivers and many smaller watercourses' (Yuwaalaraay Language Program, 2003) where Kamilaroi people traditionally lived and still live. The traditional boundaries of Kamilaroi country are unclear however Figure 1 outlines the Aboriginal languages of New South Wales highlighting Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay Country.



Figure 1: Aboriginal languages of New South Wales highlighting Gamilaraay.

Adapted from Aboriginal languages of NSW, New South Wales Government Department of Aboriginal Affairs (New South Wales Government Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 2013). Used with permission. Adapted by J.Davis.

Although there is not a definitive outline of the boundaries, historian Roger Milliss (1992) described it as follows:

> …their territory extended from an unspecified 'narrow strip of the Hunter River up to Murrurundi, then across the Liverpool Plains to the Moonbi mountains just past Tamworth and up to Manilla, Barraba, Cobbadah and Bingara, down the Gwydir to the Barwon in the west, then on to Walgett and past Coonabarabran to the south-western tip of the Liverpool Rangers near the head of the Goulburn River (Milliss, 1992: 22).

1.2 The Research

As revealed in chapter 2, there is a gap in the literature on the physical activity experiences of Kamilaroi people. This led me to constructing the research question.

The journey towards the research reported in this thesis began in ways that it took me a long time to understand. While my personal journey is not the focus of the research, it has been the vehicle that has allowed the research to develop.[2]

The research question is:
What are the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people?

Along the way, the research focus has evolved and been refined. No longer a search for data and causation, the problem became personalized. What are the issues and experiences that shape the ways that people in my Kamilaroi family are dealing with ageing, and what are the wiser implications of this for Indigenous health and wellbeing discourses? The specific aims that emerged were:

1. Investigate the physical activity participation of older Kamilaroi people.
2. Generate stories of physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people.

In pursuing the aims, I have listened to many stories, shared many experiences, felt many challenges and been opened to new understandings of my expertise in physical activity. I've rediscovered the significance of people, places and stories that are integral to my Kamilaroi identity, and been challenged to consider the responsibilities that adhere to being the next generation of Kamilaroi: the next part of a longer story.

This study therefore is significant for a number of reasons. First, literature focussing specifically on the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people over 45 years of age does not exist. What *does exist* is literature that focuses on the physical activity of Indigenous peoples from an epidemiological perspective such as determinants, patterns and levels; lived experiences of physical activity are rare and needed (Nelson et al., 2010).

Second, the epidemiological data, while it does not tell the whole story, gives cause for concern. In the familiar way to highlight disadvantage, older Indigenous people are

[2] As far as possible, I have tried to ensure that the personal narrative does not dominate the important research narrative, and have focused on the evidence that I've been drawn to and the analysis and interpretation of that material. The journey has however been powerful and will be reflected on at various points. I will also return to reflect on the wider significance of that personal journey in my postscript.

compared to non-Indigenous people statistically. The comparisons are also a familiar story. From this information, it is known that:

- Older Indigenous people, compared to non-Indigenous people become less active as they age.
- For those over 45, Indigenous men have a participation rate[3] of 18% based on 2008/2009 data. Non-Indigenous men aged 45-54 have a 64% participation rate, those aged 55-64 have 60%; those aged 65 and over have 51%, based on 2005/2006 data (Australian Bureau of Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012d).
- Indigenous women over 45 had a participation rate of 11% also based on 2008/2009 data. Non-Indigenous women aged 45-54 have a 66% participation rate, those aged 55-64 years had 65%; and those aged 65 and over had 48% based on 2005/2006 data (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012d).

This comparative data, although at different years, highlight concern in the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and their physical activity participation rates as they age. The low participation rates are cause for concern, as inactivity is linked with the prevalence of many diseases such as ischaemic heart disease, the leading cause of death for Indigenous people (Vos et al., 2007). The 45 and up study is another study more current that highlights concerns when comparing Indigenous people to non-Indigenous people, both aged over 45. In the sample of 1,939 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were more likely to be current smokers, be obese, have been diagnosed with certain medical conditions specifically diabetes, depression and stroke, have care-giving responsibilities, have a major physical disability, have severe physical functional limitations and have very high levels of psychological distress (Gubhaju et al., 2013). As discussed in Chapter two, statistical data misses something. It misses an understanding of the historical, geographical and cultural context of Indigenous older people's life histories. It is through life experiences that an understanding can be realised.

Third, the recording of Indigenous stories is a must-do activity as our older people have low life expectancies. As people pass away, so do their valuable stories to pass to the next generation.

Fourth, this study showcases Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing as a research imperative. A Kamilaroi methodology known as *Dhiiyaan ngay Kamilaroi,*

[3] Participation rate is the number of people involved in sport or physical activities stated as a percentage of the total population of that group.

winangaldanha ngaya nginaaynya (My Kamilaroi family, I hear you), abbreviated to *Wingangay* Methodology was developed for this study. This adds to the body of knowledge by presenting a methodology that recognises the diversity of Indigenous peoples by providing an approach individual to an Indigenous group within Australia. In the pursuit of self-determination, this study was carried out by a Kamilaroi person who was also related to the participants in the study, which allowed for critical insights and perspectives to be achieved.

Lastly, the study creates new knowledge about the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people, which creates a robust understanding of the interplay of physical activity, identity, location and health and well-being amongst a networked group of Indigenous people.

1.2.1 My Family as the Research Participants

I conducted 30 interviews with 29[4] of my family and extended family members between August 2008 and November 2011. I interviewed 17 females and 12 males who were all aged over 45[5]. As discussed elsewhere in the thesis[6], one male was excluded therefore 29 interviews were utilised in the study. The data collection for the interviews extended over a three year period. The participants lived in various places in New South Wales, Australia. The majority of family members lived in the western suburbs of Sydney, while others lived in the Central West, North West and North Coastal areas of New South Wales. While people lived in particular towns or suburbs, many were not necessarily born in the same places. Many had therefore moved during their lives. Figure 2 shows the places the participants lived.

[4] I interviewed my father twice.
[5] To further describe my family members, Appendix 3 outlines a table with all family members, their age ranges and the decade of their birth.
[6] See Chapter 7



Figure 2: Places where family members in the study live (Drawn by J. Davis).

I travelled to various suburbs of Western Sydney as well as Moree, Coonabarabran and Warren in New South Wales, Australia to conduct interviews mostly in participants' homes or at Dad's home in Rooty Hill. The interviews were semi-structured and focussed on the definition of physical activity, current participation and current health status; past participation and enablers & barriers of physical activity.

Dad became a focal point of the entire study and his role was the 'Elder[7] of the project' and the 'pilot' to guide me throughout the entire process. I began my interviews with him; and based on his feedback (and ongoing feedback), I honed my interview and communication skills when I interviewed the other family members following him. He also assisted in the study in many other ways such as helping me to find family members to interview; travelled with me to Moree to introduce me to people I had not seen for some years; debriefing after many interviews; research on my ancestors and places where he lived and worked, information where the family lived; stories for the interludes and photographs. One of the most important things Dad and Mum did for

[7] Dad is an Aboriginal Elder in Western Sydney. One role of an Aboriginal Elder is to guide others.

me was to motivate and encourage me to keep going through the six years of the study. Without them and the help I was given for the study it could not have been done.

1.3 Conclusion

This chapter has asked you, the reader, to imagine sitting around a fire on Gunnedah Hill with other family members to listen to a few yarns about physical activity, with a few songs and jokes told in between the yarns to look forward to. Kamilaroi was explained in relation to being a tribe, a language and a place. Early accounts from Europeans stated that Kamilaroi people appeared to be happy, strong and healthy although this changed as time went by. The research question and aims of the study were introduced, as well as the significance of the study. Finally an outline of the participants/my family and extended family members were given, along with brief details about where they live and where they were interviewed. The topics of the semi-structured interviews were outlined along with the important role my Father had in the study.

The study and structure of this thesis follows Kamilaroi ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. My father, Raymond Leslie had an active role in the research as the 'Elder of the Project'. All titles of chapters are in Kamilaroi and translated into English. Following the majority of chapters are interludes to simulate telling and listening to stories on Gunnedah Hill. One chapter is devoted to messages to the people in the study giving advice to the next generation with the assistance of a dhulu (message stick) which I created. The thesis is framed by the Wingangay methodology which honours the relationship I have with my family to transmit the stories with great care and love.

Following this introduction is *Bulaarr. Biibabiiba ngamildaay: banaba,dhiriya giyaandaay, ngaanngal* (2. Literature review: Health, ageing and identity). Next are three chapters that outline the results of the study from the interviews: *Gulibaa. Yuyaanban* (3. Racism), *Buligaa. Yuurrangindaaydhi banadhi* (4.Physical activity) and *Maa. Gibiylandaay* (5. The places of freedom: Resistance and persistence in everyday life). These three chapters tell my family members' physical activity stories to reflect the racism they experienced in their lives and in physical activity experiences, the ways in which they participated in physical activity and what it meant to them, and finally how some physical activity

settings became places of freedom for them. Following is *Yuli. Dhulu* (Message stick) which is based on my family members' messages to others on the importance of physical activity. For this chapter I made a dhulu out of willow wood and carved and burned symbols based on the messages I was told to pass on. Next is *Guulay. Warraymaldandaaydhi* (7.Methodology) then *Galay. Ngarabali* (8.Conclusion) and *Ngaraga ngaya winangaylanha* (Postscript, or after it is done).

I invite you to:

Dhiyamala biibabiiba Nhalay, bamba yawala!

(Pick up this paper/book and read it enthusiastically!)

CHAPTER 2

BULAARR. BIIBABIIBA NGAMILDAAY: BANABA, DHIRIYA GIYAANDAAY, NGAANNGAL

LITERATURE REVIEW: HEALTH, AGEING, AND IDENTITY

This thesis is about the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people. I have chosen to focus on the experiences of my family and extended family to give them voice; to put their stories forward as the most important imperative of the research. As an Indigenous researcher, I follow Lester Rigney (1999) and theorize on the basis of the lived experience as a powerful instrument which enables me to communicate life experiences and histories of myself and my family. I therefore intentionally privilege the Indigenous voice and proudly assert this statement to be at the foundation of the rigour of this research.

Literature focussing specifically on the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people over 45 years of age does not exist. Broadly, Nelson et al (2010) found that the majority of literature on physical activity and Indigenous peoples of Australia, New Zealand and North America focussed mainly on determinants and engagement (patterns and levels) from an epidemiological perspective. The same authors

acknowledged that complementary qualitative research focussing on lived experiences of physical activity was rare and needed (Nelson et al., 2010). This chapter is organised to first present the familiar epidemiological method of reporting aspects of Indigenous health. Next, experiences of Kamilaroi physical activity in the literature are presented, followed by aspects of physical activity, then racism in physical activity focusing on sport and lastly what might be thought of as the places of freedom in which Indigenous health and wellbeing might be reconsidered in terms of the lived experience and preferred futures of people in their culturally safe context.

2.1 Indigenous health and ageing: The familiar statistical story

> …nearly all of the socio-economic indicators as provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that to be born an Indigenous Australian means one enters a life of hardship, economic uncertainty, disease and early death (Gormon, 2010: p. 13).

Epidemiology deals with population level phenomena and does not focus on the causes of disease (Lynch, 2000). The Australian Bureau of Statistics paints a bleak picture of Indigenous Australian health and ageing using an epidemiological perspective. In 2011, in a population of over 23 million Australians, there were 548,370 Indigenous people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b). The Indigenous population is young, with a median age of 21 years (compared with a median age of 37 years for non-Indigenous people) and conversely there are few Indigenous people who are in older age groups. Within the population there are 60% aged 15-64 (compared to 67% for non-Indigenous); 36% aged under 15 (compared to 19% for non-Indigenous) and only 4% aged over 65 years (compared to 14% for non-Indigenous) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012b; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013b). Comparisons of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people abound, and statistics which show stark differences (and therefore disadvantage) are commonly described as a 'gap'. The term 'gap' is one which highlights disadvantage between black and white people across many areas within Australian society. One of the most telling comparisons is the gap in life expectancy. Indigenous males life expectancy is 67.2 years compared to 78.7 non-Indigenous males (a gap of 11.5years); Indigenous female life expectancy is 72.9 compared to 82.6 on-Indigenous females (a gap of 9.7 years) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

In response to the 2008 Apology to Australian Indigenous Peoples, the Australian Parliament commenced a bipartisan commitment aptly titled 'Close the gap'. Started in

2008, the initiative focuses on the target areas of life expectancy; child mortality; education and employment. The initiative 'acknowledges that improving opportunities for Indigenous Australians requires intensive and sustained effort from all levels of government, as well as the private and not-for-profit sectors, communities and individuals' (online at Council of Australian Governments, 2013). Specifically, the six ambitious targets are:

- Closing the life expectancy gap within a generation (by 2031)
- Halving the gap for Indigenous students in reading, writing and numeracy within a decade (by 2018)
- Halving the gap for Indigenous people aged 20–24 in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates (by 2020)
- Ensuring all Indigenous four-year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years (by 2013)
- Halving the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade (by 2018).
- Halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five within a decade (by 2018)(online at Council of Australian Governments, 2013).

Government and others committed to the initiative focuses their efforts on the targets listed above. Each year at the anniversary of the 2008 Apology to Australian Indigenous Peoples the Australian Government addresses the parliament on the progress towards the set targets (Australian Government, 2013a). In the year of this thesis submission, the target of 'Ensuring all Indigenous four-year olds in remote communities have access to early childhood education within five years (by 2013)' will have been realised. Within the 151 pages of the 'Closing the Gap: Prime Ministers Report 2013', it was reported that data from 2011 revealed that 91 per cent of Indigenous children in remote areas are enrolled in a preschool program. This data indicates that there will be 95% enrolment in 2013 (Australian Government, 2013a). Despite this good news and other positive progress, other data indicates that the gap in disadvantage is alive and well. The Australian Institute of Criminology (2013) as an example, reported that the number of prison deaths of Indigenous people had risen nationwide, with 14 deaths in 2009-2010 which is equal to the highest on record. In addition, the proportion of Indigenous prisoners has almost doubled from 14% in 1991 to 26% in 2011 (Lyneham and Chan, 2013). This data is additionally shocking as it is reported twenty years on after the recommendations of the Royal Commission into

Aboriginal Deaths in Custody[8] were made (Australian Government, 2013b). Despite the bulk of those recommendations being partially or fully implemented and despite Government intervention, in 2013 the situation of Aboriginal deaths in custody has worsened (Ting, 3 July 2013).

The rise in Aboriginal deaths in custody despite Government attention inevitably creates some scepticism towards the 'Closing the Gap' initiatives. In addition, Close the Gap has met with criticism, such as the claim that it 'reduces Indigenous Australians to a range of indicators of deficit, to be monitored and rectified towards government-set targets' (Pholi et al., 2009: 1). While there is scepticism and criticism towards Government initiatives however, 'gap data' remains an up-front reminder of Indigenous disadvantage, particularly in Indigenous health and ageing. Some of the gaps which highlight disadvantage experienced by older Indigenous people include:

- Indigenous male life expectancy is 67 compared to 79 non-Indigenous.
- Indigenous female life expectancy is 73 compared to 83 non-Indigenous (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).
- Indigenous peoples aged 25-54 years had rates of disability that were between 2.0 and 2.5 times the rates for non-Indigenous (Australian Bureau of Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013c).
- Older Indigenous people became less active as they aged compared to non-Indigenous people. In twelve months prior to 2008-2009, males aged from 15 to 24 had a participation rate of 53% which decreased when they were older than 45 to 18%. Similarly women aged from 15 to 24 had a participation rate of 36% which decreased to 11% when they were older than 45 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012d).
- Older non-Indigenous men and women were more active than Indigenous however participation did decrease with age. In twelve months prior to 2005-2006, males aged 45-54 had a participation rate of 64%; males aged 55-64 had a participation rate of 60%; males aged 65 and over had a participation rate of 51%. Turning to non-Indigenous women, those aged 45-54 had a participation rate of 66%; those aged 55-64 years had a participation rate of 65%; and those aged 65 and over had a participation rate of 48% (Australian Bureau of Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012d).

The policy discourse on Indigenous Australian health and ageing largely relies on biomedical frameworks rooted in science, and reported as 'black and white' facts in a statistical form. The methods of biomedical frameworks are generally positivist in

[8] The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was announced in 1987 to investigate the causes of deaths of Aboriginal people while in custody in State and Territory gaols. A final report was made in 1991 with 339 recommendations. More information is available from the Australasian Legal Information Institute at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/IndigLRes/rciadic/

nature, relying on numbers and percentages to highlight Indigenous disadvantage. It has become a common expectation to read the negative numbers and percentages. They don't shock, they confirm what we always have known. These biomedical frameworks offer an easy way to report disadvantage and are commonly and conveniently used for allocation of government funding. This approach, however, misses something. It misses an understanding of the historical, geographical and cultural contexts of older Indigenous people's life histories. It is through these life experiences that an understanding of important elements of what constitutes the characteristics of Indigenous people can be realised.

2.2 Indigenous experiences of physical activity

Indigenous experiences are rarely found in the academic medical literature. Similar to Warburton & Chambers (2007) in their literature review of older Indigenous Australians, sources for this section extend further than the conventional academic literature and include stories, narratives, oral histories, DVDs and autobiographies. Termed 'grey literature', it offers valuable research that has not often been peer reviewed however is common in Indigenous circles, especially in the Indigenous health sector (Laycock et al., 2011). Using grey literature offers insights and stories of the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples. I have chosen to organise the sources using my own lived experience and an Indigenous standpoint from Dr Karen Martin (2003) to guide me rather than use social-ecological models to organise and synthesise available sources. I acknowledge the work of Nelson et al (2010) and their adaptation of Lynch's social-ecological model of health (Lynch, 2000) and see merit in conceptually framing Indigenous physical activity research into aspects of structural macro-social factors, structural environmental factors, distal and proximal social connections, individual characteristics and genetic characteristics. Like Nelson et al, I see the framework's limitations is limited as it misses complementary Indigenous perspectives (Nelson et al., 2010). In addition, the framework is further limited as it does not include health conditions which majorly impact on older Indigenous people generally and especially in their engagement (or not) in physical activity, nor was it created using an Indigenous standpoint.

As an Indigenous researcher, I therefore approach the literature review on the advice of Quandamooka woman and Indigenous academic Dr Karen Martin: to 're-view' the

sources taking care to seek out primary sources produced by those in the context of country; and also taking care to 're-view' other primary and secondary sources by non-Aboriginal people. Martin states:

> The Indigenist researcher will firstly seek out primary sources of the research location. These will invariably be sources produced by People and by other Entities in the context of country. The purpose is to establish the state of relations amongst the Entities that can only be achieved by being there. A re-view of primary sources such as photographs, audio-visual media also forms the sources in Indigenist research and contain evidence of their Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing. The Indigenist researcher then 'reads' these sources for relevance to the research question. Primary and secondary sources by non-Aboriginal people should also be re- viewed keeping in mind the cultural assumptions, standpoints and biases of the author (Martin, 2003: 13).

I follow this advice from Martin for two reasons. First, it emphasises the importance of the value of primary sources which ensure the privileging of Indigenous voices and knowledges. Second, it centres Country as the essential context for Indigenous research. These reasons are culturally appropriate and therefore honour people and place.

2.2.1 Kamilaroi Experiences of Physical Activity

Following Martin's advice, I start with primary sources from the research location. In other words, I start with voices from Kamilaroi people on Kamilaroi country. The experiences of Kamilaroi people in physical activity are usually found included in other works which do not focus on physical activity as the main topic. Voices, as primary sources are often mixed with secondary sources. Themes in the literature on Kamilaroi experiences of physical activity include the following:

1. Cultural stories
2. My Grandmother's story
3. Life stories
4. Heritage studies of Kamilaroi country
5. Photographic accounts

1. Cultural stories

> Why the Emu cannot fly
>
> Once long ago in the Dreamtime it was once said that the Emu could fly. He was such a proud bird that he had wings and could fly to great heights, his eyes were sharp and

> quick to notice anything and could see for miles around. So great was his ability at flying that a wandering tribe made him their watch dog. He would watch for enemy tribes for them or spot any danger to the tribe. One day the warriors left the camp on a hunt, only the women and children were left home and the old ones. They said to the Emu 'we are going out to hunt now, mind you see that all is well in camp, come for us if danger is about'. With that the Emu flew to a tall tree and settled himself on a comfortable branch. After a while he fell asleep and while he slept, an enemy tribe sneaked upon the unsuspecting camp and killed the old ones and took prisoner all of the younger people, never to be seen again. When the hunters returned to the camp and found out what had happened, they brought the Emu before the Council 'Emu – for failing to do what you were told, your wings will be cut and from this day on never will you fly again'. And to this day I have never seen an Emu fly yet (Draper, 1974: 8).

I don't remember who, but someone told me once that when you tell a story, you never give a summary at the end. You never offer a suggestion as to what the listener should have learned from the story. This was different to my conditioning as a University Lecturer where I always summarised the important 'takeaway' messages for students from lectures or tutorials. So, instead of summarising, you respect the listener. You tell the story and the listener will engage (or not!) with you, and they will interpret the story through their own eyes and ears and heart and mind. In the story above, I think it is all about respecting your role and responsibilities to your community. If you fail to do this, there will be negative consequences. That is the way I see it – however you will interpret it in your way.

Cultural stories, as part of Aboriginal cultures are an important learning tool. Traditionally, cultural stories therefore have many functions. They reinforce ideological beliefs in the Dreamtime including stories of creation; they teach about the environment and everyday practices such as food and water sources; they set boundaries of forbidden places; and they teach children the aspects of culture (Van den Berg, 2005). Stories are entertaining; they can make you laugh and cry, sometimes in the same story. They contain important messages similar to bible parables in the Catholic faith and other religious traditions (Van den Berg, 2005) and of course rely on the engagement and interpretation of the listener. Storytelling also helps to 'connect people to places, people to people, and ultimately people to the environment and the cosmos. In this way storytelling remains and enhances its qualification as a cultural form of communication that produces and reproduces a sense of place' (Sakakibara, 2008: 459). In my family, there are always stories that are repeated about places and people (Oh no, not that one again!), some living, some who have passed away. It is through the stories that those who have passed are still alive when tales about them are told. They are still a

presence in the places and pathways of peoples' lands. Places also become alive when spoken of: an empty landscape can be 're-peopled' (Cohen and Somerville, 1990). Like the Inupiat (Alaska Native peoples) because of colonial histories, Aboriginal people are commonly *physically* detached from their homelands - many live off country (away from the place of their ancestors). Although there is physical detachment, the *emotional* bond is still there. Despite the distance, the sense of place and longing for homelands continues (Sakakibara, 2008). Storytelling connects, and parts can be pulled out of the stories to learn about different aspects of life, such as physical activity experiences.

Physical activity experiences can be, of course, communicated through cultural stories. Cultural stories are normally told orally and passed from generation to generation however some Kamilaroi stories have been documented in film. Narrabri Shire Council is a great example of a local government organisation which has documented cultural stories of Kamilaroi Elders. In their 2012 award winning 'Kamilaroi Stories[9]" interactive touchscreen installation, three Elders tell stories relating to language, dreamtime stories and traditions (Tilt & Co, 2012). Eight stories are available at the Visitor Information Centre in Narrabri. The stories include titles such as Kamilaroi rivers, How the moon came to be in the sky, Culturally modified trees, Traditional languages, The meaning of place names, The story of the Willy Wagtail, The Brolga and the Emu and the Brolga and the Evil Spirit. Again, while the stories do not primarily focus on physical activity, the stories offer information on life and activities on Kamilaroi country and stories of creation and regeneration and physical activity is an inescapable element of those processes. As an example, in the story of the Kamilaroi rivers, this story centres around the goanna and tree creeper and their physical actions towards the creation of the rivers in Kamilaroi country (Tilt & Tilt & Co, 2012). It is through this dreamtime story that we learn that at one time, there were no rivers and animals had to exert a lot of energy each morning to collect dew to drink. The goanna cunningly found a spring and hid it from the other animals by using his strength to cover it with a rock. The tree creeper was sent by the other animals to investigate. When the tree creeper tried to move the rock, he failed. The spring then erupted with an abundance of water which formed the rivers in Kamilaroi country. I interpret this story of the creation of the rivers in Kamilaroi as being the beginning of a life source, but also the beginning of a place

[9] These are accessible online at:
http://www.visitnarrabri.com.au/index.cfm?page_id=1035&page_name=Kamilaroi%20Stories

where physical activity occurred. This story outlines how a place of physical activity was created. Of course this is my interpretation; I will leave it to you to interpret your meaning from the story.

Cultural stories involving physical activity can also be documented by various organisations such as local schools in Kamilaroi country. For example Westdale Public School published 'A Tale to Tell' (Wake et al., 2010). This work included information from two Kamilaroi Elders Mrs Helen Fuller and Mrs Connie Newcombe from the Tamworth area. The book is mainly aimed at primary school aged children. Such material is easily overlooked or dismissed in the search for data in 'serious' research as it is 'just stories for kids'. Such material, however, provides information and photographs about foods that people ate and games that were played in the mid 1900s. These included physical activities such as games of rounders, marbles, jacks, horse shoes and hunting for crayfish and gathering bush tucker. Much can be learned from publications such as these. For instance, children showed initiative in making equipment for physical activities. Billycarts were made from pieces found at the tip (rubbish dump); rounders was played with a piece of stick from the bush for a bat and jacks were played using the knucklebones from lamb shanks. Being outside was highly valued as a place for physical activity and young people were hardly inside at all. Here, Mrs Newcombe and Mrs Fuller state:

> We used to play outside a lot back in those days. We hardly ever played inside. We would all go to different houses and play outside.
>
> Another thing we would love to do was swim. We swam a lot. We loved swimming in the river (Wake et al., 2010: 13).

Other cultural stories can be found in other places such as the Dawn and New Dawn magazine[10] (such as the example given at the start of this section). These magazines (now available online), published between 1952 and 1975 by the NSW Aborigines Welfare Board, also provided a range of topics such as news and opinions, important events and articles about the conditions and activities on stations, reserves, schools and homes throughout NSW (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2013b).

[10] See online at http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/fhu/dawn.html

2. My Grandmother's story

Like many Indigenous families, a lot of stories have been communicated orally. On 15 and 16 of October 1982 however, my mother and father had the foresight to interview my Nana (Dad's mother) Violet Duncan. The interviews were unstructured and Mum and Dad asked Nana different questions about her life (Leslie and Leslie, 1982). Within the conversations, Nana spoke of activities she and others engaged in. Mum used a cassette player to record the interview and later transcribed it using a manual typewriter. Both interviews were transcribed to 49 pages in total (First interview: 25 pages; second interview, 24 pages). Six years later, on the 28th September 1988, Nana passed away. In 2013, thirty years later I have Nana's voice to share stories of physical activity in her life. As described later in interlude 6, Nana was born on 4th July 1912 at an Aboriginal Reserve called Terry Hie Hie located outside of Moree in New South Wales. Here I share her voice with you.

Nana spoke of living with her own Grandmother, Granny Jenkins. Nana had a special relationship with her Granny, who loved fishing.

> Nana: I was the favourite. I used to sleep with her and she'd get me on her back and carry her home.
>
> Mum: What sort of things use she do? Tell me about her?
>
> Nana: Terriable [sic] (fanatical) woman for fishin', she was, very mad (loved) on fishin', she use to smoke a pipe Granny Jenkins, she use to be mad on [fishing], never known her to do anything much but fishin', she loved fishing (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 2).

Nana first spoke about living on Terry Hie Hie Aboriginal Reserve, on a private property owned by a Manager called Corey. Much of the physical activities Nana described were connected to gathering food, such as hunting for rabbits and goannas, fishing for fish and crayfish, gathering emu eggs. Men were employed as shearers (using blades) and travelled long distances to shear; while women mostly worked in domestic duties for Manager's households. Nana's father and mother both worked in these occupations respectively. Nana's father was in fact a gun shearer[11].

[11] A gun shearer was known to shear large amounts of sheep. This was a high status position when working in a shearing shed.

Nana described living on Terry Hie Hie as being a happy existence. As a child, she recounted her mother working at the Corey's home and playing with the Reserve Manager's children.

> Nana: Coreys yea [sic] that's where they had a big home beautiful home, well to do (rich) people they were
>
> Mum: Did they ever give yous things or anything?
>
> Nana: Mum used to work there
>
> Mum: She'd do housework and that
>
> Nana: Yes I used to go up and play with Betty her daughter all day, play up there – she had her own dolls room and it used to be lovely (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 6).

While Nana did not mention times were unhappy, she did speak about the control and abhorrent treatment towards Aboriginal people at Terry Hie Hie. This included the allocation of rations including one blanket per year, government clothing, physical violence towards Aboriginal people and the withholding of food. In addition, Nana mentioned the separate hospital ward (next to the morgue) for Aboriginal people in Moree, and the lack of facilities before the ward was created. In fact, Nana spoke about the tents that were used for Aboriginal women to give birth, and her experience with giving birth to my father.

> Nana: I never ever ever seen any ('wild' Aboriginal people) only what they were tellin me. Only what Mr Corey used to tell us, he used to yard these old wild you know blacks like horses and that, yard em into the place.
>
> Mum: What did they do with them?
>
> Nana: I don't know but they used to flog em and everything (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 6-7)
>
> At McMasters Ward, they had, the blacks own ward and they used to call it McMasters Ward (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 16).
>
> …when Raymond was born we used to, there was no hospital for the dark people, they had them (gave birth) all in tents (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 19).

Abiding by the rules was important. Nana told Dad that if rules were not abided by, rations were withheld:

> Dad: And you had to abide by the rules or what?

> Nana: Cause we had to abide by the rules.
>
> Dad: What happens if you didn't abide by the rules?
>
> Nana: Oh well we could get cut off of our eight two and a quarter[12]
>
> Dad: And ya had to starve then
>
> Nana: Yea (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 18).

Remnants of past cultural and physical activity – a bora ground[13] - were observed by Nana. As a child, she asked her Uncle Albert about the large ring she saw on the ground:

> Oh they, just Uncle Abie, his name was Albert, we used to call him Abie, one day I said to him 'What's that big ring there?' and [he said] 'That's a bora ground Violet' and it was overrun with prickly pears (weeds) there then (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 7).

In 1931, Nana and many others moved closer to Moree and relocated to Top Camp. Physical occupations continued with the men shearing and Nana's mother working for the Medical Doctor at the time and another family. Regarding physical activities, Nana spoke briefly that some people swam in rivers. In addition, many girls participated in craft activities:

> Mum: Did anyone in the family, was anyone good at any particular sport? Was there anyone good at running you know besides your Dad being a good shearer was there anyone who?
>
> Nana: I know what you mean, no, I don't think so as far as I know. Only the girls used to, Miss Barnett used to have sewing every Thursday. I think it was, yes every Thursday and they used to go to sewing and we used to sew or crochet Miss Barnet. I can crochet and knot and everything (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 14).

With the move closer to Moree, Nana mentioned that the health of people deteriorated. Unfortunately there was no further conversation about this aspect. To speculate, Nana might have meant that being around more families meant being more susceptible to sickness; or on the other hand the living conditions close to the river might have contributed.

> Mum: And were people healthy Nan do you think?

[12] Eight two and a quarter referred to the weekly food and living rations that Managers gave to Aboriginal people on Terry Hie Hie station (where Nana lived). This consisted of flour, tea, sugar, a small amount of baking powder and half a bar of soap. Nana said that these rations were for families.
[13] A bora ground was a place for ceremonies described as a large circular shape on the ground.

> Nana: Oh yes, everyone was very healthy. It was only we got into Moree amongst the mob everyone started to get, you know, sickly (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 16).

Nana also spoke of a move to Gunnedah Hill, outside of Coonabarabran. This was a place in the bushland with no facilities. A lot of physical activity involved everyday activities to collect water and firewood.

> Mum: What else can you tell me about Gunnedah Hill, yous used to have to go and carry water at Gunnedah Hill didn't you before they put the taps in?
>
> Nana: Yes we used to go and carry water…we had to [also] carry it [wood] or cart it (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 20).

Nana also spoke of people smoking, drinking and their fatness. She stated that everyone smoked, and that some people drank while others didn't (or hid the fact they drank), and that people had plenty to eat and were fat. When Nana spoke of 'poor old Les' who wasn't fat, it appeared that being overweight was an indicator for having plenty of food and therefore a good life:

> Dad: Did many people smoke?
>
> Nana: We used to smoke pipes all (pause) pipes
>
> Dad: What about drink, did many people drink?
>
> Nana: No they never used to drink. Daddy used to have a few wines, he was cunning with it too…put it in the teapot on the dresser the one they never use to use.
>
> Dad: And what about your fathers sisters and brothers, did they drink?
>
> Nana: Yes they all drank (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 2)
>
> Dad: Did yous have much to eat in them days?
>
> Nana: Oh yes we had plenty
>
> Dad: Were yous fat?
>
> Nana: Cause we were all fat only poor old Les he wasn't then (Leslie and Leslie, 1982: 14).

3. Life stories

Life stories provide an important resource in building understanding of the experiences of Aboriginal people (Van den Berg, 2005). There are however, only limited examples of these generally and even less on the Kamilaroi. Those Kamilaroi life stories that are available however are about women, and are usually produced in collaboration with non-Aboriginal historians. The life stories contain valuable information on the

importance and role of physical activity in people's lives. Life stories tell us that many Aboriginal people have worked in manual labour positions, using their bodies to perform tasks to earn a living. In Kamilaroi country, men mainly worked (on) the land, shearing, roustabouting, wool pressing, rabbit trapping, bur cutting and fencing, amongst many other positions. Women mainly worked in domestic labour, doing housework for non-Aboriginal people on missions and reserves. There was a pride and a necessity to keep homes clean, no matter how humble the home was. My Grandmother, as an example, daily swept the dirt floor of her home which was a tin shack. For those under the control of station managers, keeping the house clean was necessary for regular inspections. It was a hard life for many, and survival depended on physical activity to perform many tasks such as carting water, doing cleaning for others and trapping rabbits to earning money. Stories include information about life - and physical activity was vital to survive through it.

Isabel Flick, a Kamilaroi woman from Collarenebri with historian Heather Goodall is a great example of collaboration of a Kamilaroi woman with a non-Aboriginal woman to tell Isabel's life story. Isabel asked Heather to write the book and so began hours of recording Isabel's memories. Unfortunately Isabel passed away before the book was published. The commitment by Heather Goodall in 'Isabel Flick – The many lives of an extraordinary Aboriginal woman' is a wonderful example of a respectful collaboration to detail a life story. The book has many stories of physical activity included. As an example, while Isabel did not state her Grandmother Fanny Combo was physically fit, she alluded to her fitness. She stated her Granny often walked three or four miles from where she lived at the lagoon into town, work the day for food and then walk home to feed her family (Flick and Goodall, 2004). Isabel described conditions at the old camp in Collarenebri which involved much physical activity to make houses liveable. This included descriptions of building houses with bush timber frames and flattened kerosene tins for walls. Floors were dirt. However they were swept to keep them smooth and hard to easily walk on (Flick and Goodall, 2004). At the camp, there were many physical activities that were done with others outside:

> We played a lot of outdoor games: cubbie house, hop scotch, hide and seek, prisoners' base, sheep shed come home. Our parents played their own games. Men played marbles, mumbler peg, cricket and rounders. Our lifestyle was simple, we went fishing a lot (Flick and Goodall, 2004: 11).

Isabel commented on the popularity of rounders. The description given below of the game shows it was more than just a game similar to baseball. This was a game inclusive of all ages. Competition was varied between various groupings such as children against adults. Older people were given respect and privilege in the game by batting first.

> And then there was Kenny Mundy and Granny Fanny, they used to get out there on Sundays, every Sunday, and they'd have a game of rounders going. It's probably taken off baseball, because it was run similar…One week it'd be the kids playing the grown-ups, then it might be married versus singles, and the next week it'd be the boys playing the girls, little girls right up to the oldest – and the oldest person had to bat, always had to bat, and they had to bat first. Those games mostly used to be held down at old Granny Fanny's place. And we played rounders for hours, you know (Flick and Goodall, 2004: 11).

The river as a physical activity site was described as a very special place where many activities occurred there such as swimming, learning to swim from mothers or aunts, fishing, wash, cook. Water was carted from the river to the camp in a 44 gallon drum on a cart with wheels, or carted on yokes. Isabel stated that the river was 'special because it was about the law[14]'(Flick and Goodall, 2004: 250). The law referred to the different sections of the river allocated for certain functions: such as one for just drinking and cooking, known as the 'dipping place'; another where the adults swam; another for fishing; and another for children. The rules were that each area had to be respected for its function (Flick and Goodall, 2004: 250-251). The adults respected the childrens' place and 'never interfered with the kids' part of the 'swimming pool' as they called it' (Flick and Goodall, 2004: 13, 14). The law was also practiced when settling arguments. If someone started a fight, or had a score to settle, the older men would take them away from the community to a place such as the river, and referee the fight between the opposing men (Flick and Goodall, 2004).

Kamilaroi women Marie Dundas, May Mead, Janet Robinson, Maureen Sulter with Margaret Somerville (Historian) collaborated to tell the stories of their lives, and about the life of Mary Jane Cain (the founder of Burra Bee Dee Mission) and the place of Forky Mountain/Burra Bee Dee Mission outside of Coonabarabran (Somerville et al., 1994). The publication titled The Sun Dancin: People and Place in Coonabarabran gave priority to the relationship the women had with place. As an example, Maureen Sulter's story was framed in place, where Somerville described her story as 'very much a performance in the landscape' (Somerville et al., 1994: 7). By this she meant that when

[14] Refers to Kamilaroi customary law, not colonial law.

Maureen walked around, she read the signs in the landscape such as the site of the school, Forky Mountain and Queenie Robinson's place to assist her to tell her story. It can be seen that physical activity also played a part to assist Maureen to tell her story. Maureen told her stories while walking around Burra Bee Dee, and a photograph on page eight shows Maureen and Marie stopping to pick five-corners (Somerville et al., 1994). Physical activity then, played a part in the research method to assist with data collection. This research method mirrors the walking journeys described by Tschakert et al. (2013) in a project with Ghana migrants. While walking around in the landscape, participants in that study demonstrated and shared through storytelling their relationships with the landscape and changes in place identity.

Stories about Burra Bee Dee involved extensive involvement in physical activity. From its inception, walking long distances from town to Burra Bee Dee to tend to goats was the reason that the founder, Mary Jane Cain, requested land from Queen Victoria to start the mission (Somerville et al., 1994: 87). Physical activity was used to gather food such as the gathering of five corners, witchetty grubs, blackberries, crayfish hunting, kangaroo hunting and catching rabbits. In addition, the collection of water involved exertion – carting it and digging wells. There were many other physical activities on Burra Bee Dee that promoted the communal nature of the place:

> Everything was communal. The fabric of life was built on their shared life together. Houses were built and wells dug, everyone was fed and when the day's work was over the people spent time celebrating together – making music, dancing, picnicking and playing sports (Somerville et al., 1994: 96-97).

Mary Jane Cain was an advocate for physical activity and recognised how it could contribute to improving people's lives. She organised dances and sports days for people to enjoy. Races involved chasing roosters and greasy pigs provided activity and fun for all persons to compete in or spectate. The sports days included an entry fee to compete which, after expenses for food and drink were subtracted were donated to the hospital to help others in need (Somerville et al., 1994). Apart from the sports days, other communal activities were common for example having a picnic and swimming at the river or playing rounders.

Apart from Burra Bee Dee, each woman spoke about physical activity in their lives and what they observed from others. Janet spoke of observing her Grandmother Queenie

Robinson working at a boarding house washing and her mother ironing. In fact, Janet remembered as a child that she helped her Grandmother with her work before she went to school in the morning (Somerville et al., 1994: 112). One of Janet's fondest memories involved her Grandmother taking her up on top of Forky Mountain at Burra Bee Dee. This trek was rewarded with a beautiful site: the sun moving across the sky, changing colours and dancing. May recalled her father working on the railway line along with many other men who worked as sleeper cutters (these went horizontally across railway lines). In addition she recounted the favourite part of her life: walking around the mountains and catching kangaroos. May also spoke about her family moving into Coonabarabran and the effort to make their house liveable by collecting kerosene tins to make the walls and to annually paper the walls with newspaper, flour and water (Somerville et al., 1994: 131-132, 134). In Marie's story, she spoke to her mother Ethel about many subjects including the method used to make balls to play rounders:

> Marie: And how did you make the balls you had out there?
>
> Ethel: Yes, the rounder balls we used to get, me and Molly'd go and get the scissors and get the clothes, cut all the dresses and everything up, make it all like this, cut it all up and Aunty Aggie and Aunty Rose Bennett used to sew 'em and make rag balls out of 'em, sew 'em all up, roll 'em around and make rag balls for us. We couldn't buy tennis balls, we used to go get them to make us rag balls and we played with them, rounders and that (Somerville et al., 1994: 148).

Marie also shared stories of the intense domestic duties she had to perform, as required by her mother, including scrubbing tables with sandsoap, boiling the sheets and making brooms. Carting water was a large chore as described by Marie:

> We had to wheel the 44-gallon drum of water with the bung in it, fill it up at the top tap, and our place used to be on a hill sort of and we'd have ter wheel that water, that was our water. Then Daddy made us yokes to put on our backs with the buckets on it. We used to carry the yokes over our shoulders with the water for Mummy, for 'er to wash mate, and all us black kids bathed one after the other in the tub and we had to go and dip the bucket in the well and bring back the two, like the Chinamen (Somerville et al., 1994: 155).

Maureen also told stories which included physical activities. Maureen's family had a horse as well as a cow, which she milked. She also recounted stories of the regular sports days and the money raised from such events. The sports days created togetherness and unity of the Aboriginal families. Maureen also recounted that rounders was a popular game, and often played by women in the twilight hours. Like

Janet, Maureen also spoke about climbing Forky Mountain as a young person to see the sun dance. Sadly, Maureen stated that at age fifty (the age she was interviewed) she could no longer run up the mountain as she used to. Maureen recognised that her fitness had decreased over time as she aged so that she no longer was able to climb Forky Mountain, as she did as a younger person to once again see the sun dance. This exchange about the decrease in fitness as Maureen aged further explains:

> Maureen: We used to go up the mountain. Our names are carved on trees up there, but I'm not going to walk up there to show you. It's too far, it would kill you, too steep. It is, Margaret.
>
> Marg: Aren't you as fit as you used to be?
>
> Maureen: No, I'm fifty now mate. I'm not a little spring chicken any more. Once upon a time I could run up there. They say, when your mother (to Marie) used to say they'd come out here at Easter time to watch the sun rise, they'd run up here and they'd watch the sun rise on Forky Mountain (Somerville et al., 1994: 179).

Margaret Somerville again collaborated with Patsy Cohen, another Kamilaroi woman in the story of Ingelba and the Five Black Matriarchs (Cohen and Somerville, 1990). This story focuses on Ingelba, about 80 kilometres south of Armidale (in Kamilaroi country), the life of Patsy Cohen and in addition five Aboriginal women (matriarchs): Granny Widders, Granny Wright, Granny Morris, Granny Maria and Granny Mackenzie who lived there during the last century. The motivations to tell the stories of the five women involved issues of identity: Patsy's identity and assisting others with their identity. At age four, Patsy was removed with her siblings from her mother and made a ward of the state. It wasn't until she went to Ingelba at age nine that she found out she was Aboriginal. It was important to tell the story of the five women as the Aboriginal community at Armidale were all descended from them - it was necessary for Aboriginal young people to understand who they were and how they were related to one another (Cohen and Somerville, 1990). This book contained aspects of physical activity contained within other stories. For Patsy, life at Ingelba involved living in a shack with her Grandparents, where part of domestic life involved carting water from the creek, washing clothes at the creek and carting wood. Tending to animals was a normal part of life where Patsy was responsible for taking care of turkeys while her Grandmother and Uncle took care of the sheep, milked the cows and tended to the cattle. Along with milking cows, other physically activities involved the gathering of food. This included fishing, collecting eggs, hunting for porcupine, rabbits, kangaroos, wild pigs and water hens. Daily life and all of the routines depended on collaboration,

an understanding of one another's roles. In her observations, Margaret Somerville comments:

> There is a sense of the strength and continuity of women's lives balanced by an understanding of the necessary collaboration and cooperation between grandmother and grandfather, which made this lifestyle possible (Cohen and Somerville, 1990: 31).

Like Patsy, the five women described in chapter seven as the matriarchs, life was also physically demanding and their stories (as described by their Granddaughters) was about physical and cultural survival. While there was limited information about Granny Maria, Granny Mackenzie (born 1850 and died 1954) had seven children lived in a hut at Woolbrook and was described as a tough and independent woman. For a living, Granny Mackenzie washed and ironed for the local hotel. Granny Wright (born 1834 and died 1938) had eight children and helped to raise others. Granny Wright was well known for her cooking and for a job, she cooked for men at stations known as Callagans Swamps and Branga Plains. Granny Widders, who had eight children, also did domestic work for people around the Armidale area. Similarly, Granny Morris had nine children and also did washing and ironing for non-Aboriginal people in the area. Collectively, the five matriarchs 'were the actual physical origin of a very large network of extended family' (Cohen and Somerville, 1990: 136). The majority of their physical activity was rearing their own and others' children. Somerville states that the women were the origin of the new kin networks, and their descendants numbered in their thousands (Cohen and Somerville, 1990). Life for these women was therefore made up of physical work which was demanding and non-stop.

Ruby Langford Ginibi, Bundjalung woman, wrote extensively of stories about her life (for example Langford Ginibi, 1988; Langford Ginibi, 1994; Langford Ginibi, 2007; Langford Ginibi, 1992) which also included a time when living on Gunnedah Hill, outside of Coonabarabran in Kamilaroi country. While not Kamilaroi, Langford Ginibi was able to make observations about other Kamilaroi people and their lifestyle. In 'Don't take your love to town', Langford Ginibi lived with my relative Harold Leslie and his family in what she described as a tin hut – 'made of a structure of pine rails, with scantling (timber off-cuts) and opened out kerosene tins for walls' (Langford Ginibi, 1988: 55). Throughout this story, physical activity is referred to as a large part of everyday life and survival on Gunnedah Hill. This included fetching water, sometimes half a mile away as well as domestic duties such as sweeping and washing:

> There were five families on the Gunnedah Hill, all living in huts near an old well which was our water supply. When it went dry we carted water from the Castlereagh River on yokes with buckets, about half a mile away. The women cut ti-tree branches to make brooms, to keep the dirt floor clean. Some of them dried their clothes on bushes and some had lines. Their washing was always white (Langford Ginibi, 1988: 56).

Other physical activity described on Gunnedah Hill related to chopping wood, swimming at the local swimming-hole and observations of others earning a living such as men going out into the bush to do log-cutting or my relative Harold Leslie preparing to go rabbit trapping in the bush to support his (my) family:

> At first I didn't know what he was doing. He was packing about a hundred rabbit traps onto the handlebars and in a tray on the back of his pushbike. He took a billy, a bit of tarpaulin wrapped up with his blanket inside it, a groundsheet and some food. Loaded up like this he went bush for a week at a time trapping rabbits, and this was how he supported his family (Langford Ginibi, 1988: 56).

Life stories are an important resource for gaining perspectives of Aboriginal people and learning about their lifestyles. The life stories mentioned in this section are from women and mostly the stories have been in collaboration with women, albeit non-Aboriginal women. The stories therefore give a gendered view of their lives and their roles. Life was very labor intensive and physical activity was necessary to perform the daily tasks and routines required for survival. The women, while describing their own lives also had insights into other physical activity around them such as observing men hunting or earning a living by working on the land. It is evident that all people, women, men and children relied on their bodies, their physical strength and endurance to survive.

4. Heritage studies of Kamilaroi country

Aspects of physical activity can be gleaned through heritage studies on Kamilaroi country. Heritage studies are conducted for various reasons, usually with the intention to understand and report on cultural values and considerations in relation to the land and water. Research methods invariably include the voices of the local Aboriginal people. If those interviewed are anything like my family, they like to 'have a good yarn'. Therefore rich information can be gained which tells many other stories that do not necessarily relate to the intended subject matter. Allowing 'interviewees' to go off the track of the subject on tangents can bear good fruit, and heritage studies are no exception. One example of a heritage study in Kamilaroi country is the Aboriginal

Cultural Assessment undertaken by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)(NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2002) in the Moree area, in particular the Brigalow Belt South bioregion (focussing on the areas of Pilliga and Goonoo State Forests and other areas near Moree) (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2002). This assessment considered various areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage including Aboriginal sites and historical, social and spiritual association with areas within the bioregion. The purpose of the project was to provide opportunities for improving management of cultural heritage using maps of landforms and their relationship with Aboriginal heritage. In the project, over 1000 Aboriginal sites were recorded 110 Aboriginal people were interviewed who shared stories of culture and heritage.

Within the many stories of the Aboriginal people interviewed, there was a wealth of information regarding physical activity experiences. Broadly, there were 22 themes coded from the interviews which included aspects of community life such as childhood days, community life hunting and fishing, community life: social gatherings, rivers, movement, racism and attachment to country (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2002). This extensive and valuable research gave voice to many Kamilaroi people in relation to their lives, including references to the physical activities they were involved in. As an example, several men spoke about the activities of hunting and fishing to catch birds, porcupines, rabbits, goannas and fish. Modern sporting activities were also spoken about such as football, community sports days, rodeos and boxing. Traditional physical activities were also mentioned such as young men learning dances from the older men for Corroborees (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2002).

5. Photographic accounts

> Photographs play an important part in the memories of Aboriginal people … because they have largely been excluded from literacy. Our (non-Aboriginal) culture offers the written record as one of the main means of making sense of our world and in the absence of writing, Aboriginal people have used photographs as one means of achieving such a record (Cohen and Somerville, 1990: xiv-xv).

Cohen and Somerville argue that photographs are used extensively by Aboriginal people as they have literacy issues and therefore did not write stories down. I prefer to think that the absence of writing did not mean there were literacy issues; rather it was a

cultural oral tradition to speak instead of write. Regardless, photographs offer partial information about experiences of physical activity. They offer a visual representation of the activity however do not tell the whole story. In my family we have an extensive collection of photographs of our relatives and places we have been and seen. Walking into one of my Auntie's places in Moree, her lounge room is like a photographic exhibition of cherished photographs from those in the past and those in the present. Important events are displayed in photographs such as weddings or graduations, or sporting greatness. Photographs are collected through other family members, and reading the back of the photograph offers an insight into the details of the image (provided that the taker of the photograph recorded details of it, usually on the reverse side). These details include such as the names of those in the photograph, the date and where it was taken. At times this information is not there, and family members try to determine these details from others, such as consulting the older people in their families to remember. Photographs therefore offer partial information however explanations are needed to make the stories complete.

Photographs have been used extensively in an ongoing project for Kamilaroi people in the Moree area. The Northern Regional Library and Information Service, as part of the Moree Plains Shire Council compiled three volumes of 'Moree Mob'. These publications are described by Noeline Briggs-Smith (a relation), Aboriginal researcher as 'family research'. The research method involved the collection of a large range of photographs and stories from Kamilaroi people, and some records in the Moree area. The first publication, titled Winanga Li (to remember) covered Aboriginal histories in the Terry Hie Hie to Moree area using photographs as well as some stories from various people and organisations (Briggs-Smith, 1999). In this publication, participation in physical activity is not mentioned specifically however some photographs depict activity for example Figure 3 shows James Junior Madden riding a bike (Briggs-Smith, 1999: 25):



Figure 3: The Madden family at Gravesend (no date)

From left to right: Eadie Madden, Mrs Charlotte Madden, James Junior (on bike), Mr James Madden, Gladys Madden.
Photo: From Winanga Li, used with permission from Moree Plains Shire Council.

Figure 4 shows a group photograph of a mission dance at the Parish Hall in Moree in 1937 (Briggs-Smith, 1999: 40):



Figure 4: Mission dance 8 October 1937, Church of England Parish Hall, Moree

Photo: From Winanga Li, used with permission from Moree Plains Shire Council.

Figure 5 shows my Great Grandmother Rose Ann Duncan and my Grandmother Violet Duncan as a child, playing in the background (Briggs-Smith, 1999: 30).



Figure 5: Rose Ann Duncan (foreground) and Violet Duncan (background). Place and date unknown.

Photo: From Winanga Li, used with permission from Moree Plains Shire Council.

The second publication, titled Burrul Wallaay (Big Camp) focussed on restrictions on the Kamilaroi people in Moree, as well as the kinship on the Moree reserve through photographs and some stories and records (Briggs-Smith, 2003). There were many photographs such as Figure 6 showing children playing in the Mission swimming pool in the late 1960s (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 228):



Figure 6: Children playing in Mission swimming pool, Moree, 1967.

Photo: From Burrul Wallaay, used with permission from Moree Plains Shire Council.

Figure 7 shows the 1950s Girls Vigaro team titled the Shamrock Juniors (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 239):



Figure 7: Girls vigoro team – Shamrock Juniors, place unknown, 1950s.

From left to right: Edna Cutmore, Helen Swan, Yvonne Binge, Frances Binge, Alice French, Margaret Raveneau, Daphne Brennan, Shirley Binge.
Photo: From Burrul Wallaay, used with permission from Moree Plains Shire Council.

Figure 8 shows the 1954 Girls Basketball team (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 241):



Figure 8: 1954 Girls basketball team, place unknown.

From left to right: Dorothy Smith, unknown, Lorraine Tighe, Clare Binge, unknown, Priscilla Graham, Jean Levy, unknown.
Photo: From Burrul Wallaay, used with permission from Moree Plains Shire Council.

Among other photographs of physical activities, this publication also covered various topics such as discrimination in physical activity for example the restrictions that Aboriginal people had to the Moree swimming pool and the subsequent demonstrations opposing the restrictions within the Freedom Ride of 1965. The

publication includes comment on the Freedom Ride and the actions of the leader, the late Dr Charles Perkins. Briggs-Smith states that 'The Freedom ride visit inspired local people to get active and start fighting for their rights' and Dr Perkins was held in high esteem with comments such as 'He came in 1965 when we needed him the most to set things right and he came in the year 2000 (Dr Perkins visited Moree 35 years later to commemorate the Freedom ride) when we needed him to acknowledge the changes he helped to bring about in regards to a troubled history of discrimination against the Aboriginal people in Moree' (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 85, 87). The publication also included specific aspects of physical activities such as a section on Aboriginal lawn bowling and the first Aboriginal Bowling team in 1984. The Moree Aboriginal Bowlers were highly skilled and acknowledged for excelling in the sport and 'set a precedent' for other fellow bowlers (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 116). In addition, reference to dancing was made such as the large attendance to the 1953 Aboriginal Spring Ball held at the Aboriginal Station Hall (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 153). Interestingly, Briggs-Smith states that Aboriginal men 'easily adapted' to the work in the shearing sheds and alluded to the reason being there was no racial discrimination in this type of work. The Aboriginal community prospered and 'many had a career to look forward to' (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 312,315).

The third publication, titled Goyourangs[15] 1925 to 1989 (Briggs-Smith, 2006) focussed specifically on Rugby League in the Moree area. This publication includes the extensive use of photographs and stories of Indigenous Rugby League players and their teams; and specific information regarding the introduction of Rugby League in Australia and the north-west area of New South Wales. While focussing mainly on the Moree Boomerangs Football Club, this publication also refers to the discrimination that players had to endure to succeed in football and more generally in sport:

> Aboriginal people still have to overcome the hurdles of racism to succeed in all areas of sport, especially rugby league. For every Aborigine who makes it to the top, there are thousands who could have made it, but did not receive the opportunity (Briggs-Smith, 2006: 8).

The publication highlights the important place rugby league has in the lives of Aboriginal boys and men in the Moree area and NSW country towns more generally. The young men grow up with an ambition to be a Boomerang player; and that his family and extended family assist him to 'make his way through life in a sport he has

[15] This word refers to a fan supporting the Boomerang Rugby League Club – 'Go – you – rangs'.

come to love'. This quote generalises that all boys wish to play football, and that their families assist them to realise this dream. It seems as though football, and being a Boomerang player, is almost like a rite of passage for a boy to become a man.

> When Aboriginal males are born, the first gift he receives is a miniature football. As soon as he is able to walk he is encouraged to kick, catch, run and tackle. When old enough he is encouraged to play junior league. In Moree should you ask any male child what does he want to be when he grows up the answer will most likely be 'a Boomerang player'. From the time he is born, a male follows the line of succession into the Boomerang teams. His family and extended families, support him in his endeavour to make his way through life in a sport he has come to love and hopefully become his profession if he is given the chance (Briggs-Smith, 2006: 9).

Interestingly, the generalisation extends to girls who 'follow their football heroes' where the following quote states: "Boys (and girls) follow their football heroes and our little boys just can't wait to grow up and become 'Boomerang football players'" (Briggs-Smith, 2006: 12).

All three volumes of the Moree mob books are valuable resources to the Kamilaroi people. To further enhance these publications, photographs of physical activities could include stories to give more detail.

2.2.2 Finding Kamilaroi experiences in grey literature

In this section I have discussed aspects of Kamilaroi physical activity not found in the academic literature but rather found in sources such as cultural stories, My Grandmother's story, life stories, heritage studies of Kamilaroi country and photographic accounts. Finding experiences of Kamilaroi people in physical activity is not overtly recognisable and therefore these sources were sifted to find relevance. It would be helpful if research could be undertaken to 'sift' through all sources in Kamilaroi country where Kamilaroi people have been interviewed to determine a more complete look at historical aspects of physical activity. Heritage studies could be examined as a valuable resource that covers many areas of interest about the lives of Kamilaroi people, not just physical activity but other aspects of their lives. In the following section, Indigenous Australian older people and physical activity in the literature is presented.

2.3 Indigenous Australian older people in the literature

Literature about Indigenous Australian older people is rare. Prior to discussing the literature, it is noted that within this group of people, there are two distinct categories. The first is an older Indigenous person and the second is an Elder. This distinction discussed by Warburton & Chambers (2007) explains that an older person is over 50 years due to shorter life expectancies; while an Elder is recognised within their communities. The Australian Government recently wrote of this distinction:

> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders play a vital role in sustaining strong cultural practices and traditions within their communities with important roles and responsibilities such as passing on knowledge, languages and customs, participating in decision making ceremonies, and 'looking after country'. Older Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander also often still have caring responsibilities, sometimes of multiple generations (Department of Health, 2013a: 38).

The literature surrounding Indigenous Australian people, whether older or Elder, has a negative focus which usually centres on health and social problems (Warburton and Chambers, 2007), and usually compares Indigenous and non-Indigenous health and social experiences using statistical comparisons. As an example, the 45 and up study was a large scale Australian (New South Wales) research project focussing on a range of areas in relation to healthy ageing (Banks et al., 2008). Within the 266, 661,45 study participants 1,939 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 45 were examined in relation to their health and risk factor profile. The study found that when compared to non-Aboriginal people, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the study were more likely to be current smokers, be obese, have been diagnosed with certain medical conditions specifically diabetes, depression and stroke, have care-giving responsibilities, have a major physical disability, have severe physical functional limitations and have very high levels of psychological distress (Gubhaju et al., 2013).

Other literature challenges assumptions of Indigenous older people. Cotter et al. (2012) assessed whether Indigenous Australians aged prematurely [16] with other Australians, as implied by Australian Government aged care policy. In this study method, health data was examined which concluded that at age 63 for Indigenous

[16] The authors compared the age-groups in policy to examine if there were a 20 year lead for conditions that were common among non-Aboriginal people over 70.

women and 65 for Indigenous men, they had the same life expectancy as non-Indigenous people at age 70. The authors stated that:

> There is no consistent pattern of a 20 year lead in age-specific prevalence of age-associated conditions for Indigenous compared with other Australians. There is high prevalence from middle-age onwards of some conditions, particularly diabetes (type unspecified), but there is little or no lead for others (Cotter et al., 2012: 68).

Cotter et al concluded that ageing prematurely was not well supported, and the current response by the aged care sector needs to be therefore re-visited (Cotter et al., 2012).

Rob Ranzijn also challenged assumptions by questioning the concept of active ageing. In particular, Ranzijn argued that having an expectation that older Indigenous Australian people would continue to be physically active may in fact further marginalize Elders (Ranzijn, 2010). Generally, active ageing is touted to be about a range of areas such as individual activity, underpinned by good physical health and independence, as well as involvement in social activities and making a positive contribution to society. There are many older Indigenous people who cannot live up to these expectations as they are denied access to the resources that facilitate active ageing which include knowledge, information, education, good health, good health care, physical fitness facilities, seniors centres, money and mobility, as well as behaviours of low motivation and high anxiety. In his paper, Ranzijn drew on earlier 2001 research with Mary Ann Bin-Salik in yarning sessions with 20 Aboriginal Elders in Adelaide, South Australia (Ranzijn and Bin-Salik, 2001). The results of that earlier work indicated that resources were out of reach due to many factors including cost, facilities, lack of education and isolation. Elders reported that they did not feel welcome in a mainstream organization and often had to deal with non-Aboriginal people with little or no understanding of, or respect for Aboriginal culture. The paper recommended that the dominant focus of active ageing be changed, and a new image needs to be imagined which takes the pressure off older people. Alternative concepts of ageing could be 'ageing well' or 'authentic ageing' were recommended to better reflect the cultural diversity of ageing (Ranzijn, 2010).

While it is recognised there is negativity, there is also positivity in the literature. Recognising the 'usual negative focus of reporting', Warburton and Chambers (2007) countered this by discussing the role in culture and the community of older Indigenous

Australians. This project involved a search of the literature and included stories, narratives and educational videos. In the analysis of their review, the authors found kinship and conceptions of support, roles in education and childcare, identity and cultural link and the concept of respect to be the main topics relating to Elders' roles. The themes painted a picture of Elders that highlighted many valuable roles they had in the community. They were very altruistic - they invested a great time and effort in supporting others whether they were family and/or the broader community. This included contributing on boards and visiting various organisations such as prisons, hospitals or schools. They passed on cultural and other knowledges such as languages, birthing techniques to the women, environmental maintenance and ways to deal with racism. In addition, they played a major role in caring for their grandchildren. In addition, the Elders shaped the cultural identity of others and through their tireless contribution to others, are highly respected members of their families and of the broader community. In discussing the roles of the Elders, the authors acknowledge that many are overworked in their attempts to maintain culture and community (Warburton and Chambers, 2007).

Roles of Indigenous Elders are also discussed in non-academic publications such as those which feature life stories. In Aboriginal Elders' Voices – Stories of the 'tide of history', the role of Elders precedes the stories. In this publication, Elders are described as 'the living link' to the knowledge of their Elders:

> They are the heads of large extended families and kinship networks and central figures in Indigenous communities. They hold the family histories that define each individual's identity and the land to which they belong. As always in Aboriginal culture, Elders are loved and respected (The Aboriginal Community Elders Service and Harvey, 2003: 7-8).

This section discusses Indigenous people and physical activity. In particular, this section focuses on definitions of physical activity, participation, appropriate interventions to improve health, the exploration of physical activity including enablers, barriers, meanings and benefits.

2.4 Physical Activity

Physical activity is defined as 'any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure'(Casperson et al., 1985: 126). In everyday life, physical

activity can encompass a number of different actions that relate to occupations, sporting activities, conditioning, household or other activities (Casperson et al., 1985). In some literature, Aboriginal people have been asked to define physical activity. In a study by Ramanathan (1999) to understand factors that impacted on ten Aboriginal adults aged 18-66, physical activity was defined by participants around three major concepts. The concepts coded by Ramanathan were:

- Activity and movement (incorporating terms such as walking, sport, exercising, gardening, manual labour, football);
- Physiology and body image (increasing the heart rate, muscle tone and having a good body image) and
- Enjoyment (fun, playing with the kids)

One participant in Ramanathan's study stated that physical activity was something you did as a family which was congruent with traditional Aboriginal communities favouring communal activities. Ramanathan concluded that Aboriginal people defined physical activity 'in much the same terms as you would expect from mainstream Western society' and therefore concluded they had a similar concept of physical activity to the rest of Australian society (Ramanathan, 1999). A limitation of the Ramanathan study was that the participants were not representative. In reviewing her conclusions, Ramanathan suggested that she had some hidden assumptions about 'normal Aboriginal people' that were the complete opposite of those she interviewed:

> One of the major limitations of this project at present is that the participants interviewed in Wagga Wagga have been from the higher end of the socio-economic spectrum of Aboriginals. Most of them were well educated, articulate, employed or retired and placed as 'leaders' in their communities. Their experiences do not necessarily reflect those of the entire Aboriginal population in Wagga Wagga(Ramanathan, 1999: 9).

This quote provides a good example of how the researchers impose a form of bias on their framing of Aboriginal people and the data they provide to researchers. It is also an example of the challenging and problematic application of Western academic terminologies of leisure and physical activity to analyse in non-Western contexts (Iwasaki et al., 2009; Macdonald et al., 2012). Consequently, Iwaskaki et al. argues that the term such as 'leisure-like' rather than leisure could be an alternative to emphasise the central role of cultures to explain leisure-like nuances (Iwasaki et al., 2009). This same principle could be applied to the term 'physical activity' where alternatives could be used such as 'being physical' or 'being active'.

2.4.1 Participation in physical activity

The Department of Health and Ageing recommend physical activity guidelines for various groups in society such as those aged 0-5 years; 5-12 years; 12-18 years; adults and older Australians (Department of Health, 2013b). The definition of 'older Australians' is defined by the Department as those non-Aboriginal people aged over 65 years, and over 55 years for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Sims et al., 2006). While the explanation of the difference between the ages is not given in that publication, it can be presumed that due to live expectancy, an Aboriginal Australian is deemed to be classified as 'older' at a much earlier age than a non-Aboriginal Australian. In my study, my family members were over 45 years of age. To determine physical activity recommendations for my family members in my study, one must look to the recommendations in both the adults and the older Australians groups.

The Department of Health and ageing (online at Department of Health, 2013b) recommends the following physical activity guidelines for adults:

1. Think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience
   Where any form of movement of the body is seen as an opportunity for improving health, not as a time-wasting inconvenience.
2. Be active every day in as many ways as you can
   Make a habit of walking or cycling instead of using the car, or do things yourself instead of using labor-saving machines.
3. Put together at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity[17] physical activity on most, preferably all, days.
   You can accumulate your 30 minutes (or more) throughout the day by combining a few shorter sessions of activity of around 10 to 15 minutes each.
4. If you can, also enjoy some regular, vigorous activity for extra health and fitness.
   This step is for those who are able and who wish to achieve greater health and fitness results.

The physical activity guidelines for older adults are:

1. Older people should do some form of physical activity, no matter what their age, weight, health problems or abilities.
2. Older people should be active every day in as many ways as possible, doing a range of physical activities that incorporate fitness, strength, balance and flexibility.
3. Older people should accumulate at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.

[17] Moderate intensity activity will cause a slight, but noticeable, increase in breathing and heart rate.

4. Older people who have stopped physical activity, or who are starting a new physical activity, should start at a level that is easily manageable and gradually build up the recommended amount, type and frequency of activity.
5. Older people who continue to enjoy a lifetime of vigorous physical activity should carry on doing so in a manner suited to their capability into later life, provided recommended safety procedures and guidelines are adhered to (online at Department of Health, 2013b).

While the above recommendations are for all Australians, the national guide to a preventive health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (2012) also recommends physical activity behaviour for those who suffer from diabetes and cardiovascular disease. As an example, the recommendations for those affected by cardiovascular disease are: 'Those with recent acute coronary syndrome event or revascularisation surgery should be advised to participate in a short period (up to 12 weeks) of supervised exercise rehabilitation'; for those affected by diabetes – 'for sedentary people, a gradual introduction and initial low intensity of physical activity with slow progressions in volume and intensity is recommended' (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, 2012: 36). While these recommendations are not outlined as those for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it can be assumed that they are. Taking a look at the above information, thirty minutes of moderate intensity is recommended for adults and older people generally, and being physically active in everyday life is encouraged. In addition, those affected by cardiovascular disease and diabetes have more specific recommendations according to their affliction.

Despite the recommendations, Aboriginal people are physically inactive. Based on the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey 2004-2005, 75% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 15 years were sedentary or had low levels of physical activity (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). While this data is quite old, new information based on 2011-2012 data will be available on 27 November 2013 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the release of the Australian Health Survey: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Results (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012a). Early released results from the same Survey indicate that in 2011-2012 non-Aboriginal adults in Australia spent an average of just over 30 minutes per day doing physical activity. Only 43% of adults however were sufficiently active according to the National Physical Activity Guidelines for adults (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a). It is not feasible to compare Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal physical

activity participation in the 2004-2005 with the 2011-2012 data. The data does tell us however that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are inactive or do no physical activity; and that non-Aboriginal people while they are active, over half are not sufficiently active. Other data though highlights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's decrease in physical activity participation as they age. Indigenous men between the ages of 15 and 24 had a participation rate of 53% which decreased to 18% after 45 years of age; while Indigenous women between the ages of 15-24 had a participation rate of 36% which decreased to 11% after 45 years of age (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012d).

The levels of inactivity and participation reported above raises a red flag as physical inactivity is the third leading cause of the burden of illness and disease for Indigenous Australians (behind tobacco and high body mass), and accounts for 8% of the total burden (Vos et al., 2007: 6, 57). Having insufficient levels of physical activity is associated with many diseases and health issues such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke. On the other hand, having sufficient levels of physical activity reduces risk of developing these diseases (United Kingdom Department of Health, 2004). It is known that the leading cause of death for Indigenous people is ischaemic heart disease, which is attributable to physical inactivity (Vos et al., 2007).

2.4.2 Appropriate interventions to improve health

As physical activity reduces risk of many diseases which are common to Indigenous peoples, it is of no surprise that some literature regarding Indigenous Australians and physical activity focuses on programs that have physical activity interventions to address poor health or specific health conditions such as diabetes and heart disease (eg Chan et al., 2007).

The quality of intervention studies to improve health is questionable. In a study on the quality of intervention research in type 2 diabetes with Indigenous peoples from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, it was found that there were 613 publications focused on the topic between 1989 and 2008. While mainly descriptive, research involving interventions that met research criteria increased from 3% in 1989-1993 to 12% in 2003-2008. Quality intervention studies should demonstrate causality or the effectiveness of the intervention. It was a concern that

three-quarters of the intervention studies did not fulfil the effective practice and organisation of care requirements for contributing to the evidence base. The authors recommended that there be increases in the amount of high quality intervention research for the prevention and treatment of type 2 and gestational diabetes among the Indigenous populations of the countries studied (McNamara et al., 2011).

Interventions can however lead to positive outcomes for Indigenous peoples (eg Foulds et al., 2011) but their success can also be difficult to discern for different reasons such as a reduction in effectiveness when translating clinical interventions into the 'real world'(National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation and The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, 2012). The success of effective interventions also relates to the sustainability of the behaviours in the long term to positively influence longer-term chronic disease outcomes (Closing the Gap Clearinghouse (AIHW, 2011). In addition, the epistemological positions of researchers need to be re-thought when conducting research on Indigenous peoples. It is not about focussing on the individual but of broader understandings of diseases. As an example, a study on urban Indigenous people in Melbourne, Victoria found that the reasons people thought they developed diabetes related to living a life out of balance, a life of lost connections to land and relations and little control over the past, present or future. This study showed the importance of using an ethno-epidemiological model to address diabetes and the wider issues of inequalities. This type of model reveals factors identified by Indigenous peoples that reflect the reality that contribute to the risk of developing the disease (Thompson and Gifford, 2000).

In a Canadian context, Lavallee (2011) recommends that researchers be more holistic and incorporate the knowledge and culture of Indigenous peoples when researching diabetes. This will lead to a better assessment of the reasons for higher rates of diabetes and their complications. In seeking effectiveness, multiple interventions are required at multiple levels to determine broader social determinants. As an example, physical activity programs need to work with social service agencies that have an impact on poverty (Lavallee, 2011). In my experience in leisure and sport programming, broader determinants always come into play. As an example, in a previous position I developed a free health program for Indigenous women in Western Sydney. Attendance to the program was up and down from week to week according to different factors, one of

them was lack of money for transport to travel to the program. If money was scarce, it prevented attendance. If there were limited money, it would be spent on food to live, rather than attending the program. Lack of attendance therefore relied on other factors not related to the program. Priorities are priorities.

2.4.3 Exploring enablers, barriers, meanings and benefits of physical activity

As discussed above, understanding wellbeing and ageing is not all about epidemiological approaches. Understandings need to be incorporated to gain better perspectives. The literature also includes studies which focus on the exploration of physical activity through the participants' eyes. Various research has been conducted with Indigenous peoples to determine understandings of physical activity such as the barriers of physical activity participation along with the enablers. In addition, meanings of physical activity have been discussed in the literature.

Motivations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 18 to 64 to attend a 12 weeks of exercise classes were many when interviewed by Canuto et al (2013) . These were their original motivation to enrol in the program, their self-motivation to be active, motivation from family and friends, motivation gained from their experience in the program and their personal circumstances (Canuto et al., 2013). Barriers to this program were mainly concerned with the personal health of the participants - long term injuries or illnesses, logistics such as parking and competing obligations of family.

In a study of 96 Indigenous Australian men and women aged from 18 to 50, meanings, barriers and strategies for promoting physical activity was examined (Hunt et al., 2008). Women were active in walking and household chores, and non-contact sports such as netball and basketball, as well as family orientated activities that involved their children. Men did chores outside the house that were more vigorous, and participated in walking as well as contact sports of football and boxing. In relation to meanings, women explained physical activity as being physical, while men explained it as playing sport. Collectively, men and women stated their environment (living in the city) was not conducive to physical activity. In previous non-urban places where they lived, people spoke about their regular outdoor activities such as fishing and walking to the beach. In addition, cost and short lived activities (one-off activities) was also a barrier to activity.

Individually, women discussed their obligations to family and children as a barrier while men reported a barrier was the feeling of being judged according to his race by others (Hunt et al., 2008).

In a study by Macdonald et al. (2012) of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal Australian women, 21 families were interviewed about the meaning and place of physical activity. Three themes emerged as barriers to physical activity for the women. The first was shame which arose from the nature of physical activity performed in public, such as activities that required little clothing such as swimming. Secondly was gendered roles and relationships where women's obligations to their family and domestic chores had precedence over their own physical activity, and men had more freedom to undertake physical activities. Thirdly, the women cited that a barrier to physical activity was the deferral of responsibility by organisations, such as council and state government for organising physical activities. This barrier highlighted that there was a reliance on someone else, rather than a self-reliance to be physically active. Results such as these indicate deeply embedded ways of thinking about the body, family obligations and the reliance of organisations as barriers to physical activity (Macdonald et al., 2012).

It is widely recognised that Indigenous Australian women tend to dominate the literature in the meanings they ascribe to physical activity. Clearly more research is needed to determine how Indigenous Australian men perceive health and how they view and care for their bodies. An upcoming study described by Ricciardelli et al. (2012) will provide greater understandings and health change in men, strategies for healthy eating and participation in physical activity.

2.4.4 What does physical activity bring to the table for Indigenous people?

There are many benefits derived from participating in physical activity. It can be fun, promotes social interactions, improve health, make you feel good and is an effective method to relax. Regular physical activity can:

- Help prevent heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure;
- Reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and some cancers;
- Help build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints reducing the risk of injury; and

- Promote psychological well-being (Department of Health, 2013b).

There are many benefits of physical activity for Indigenous people. In June 2013, the Parliament of Commonwealth of Australia published 'Sport – more than just a game – A contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring' (The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). This report was a result of an inquiry that drew on 58 submissions focussing on ways that sporting organisations can increase opportunities for Indigenous participation; ways that non-Government organisations can use sport as a vehicle to improve outcomes; and the contribution that sporting activities has towards the Closing the Gap targets. The submissions came from a variety of sources including all levels of Government, sporting bodies and clubs, Indigenous groups and organisations, academics and many individuals. This document outlines numerous benefits to Indigenous people and their participation in sport. Some of the benefits outlined in submissions include:

- The power of sport to be a vehicle for engaging Indigenous peoples in positive activities which lead to positive non-sport outcomes such as education, employment, health and wellbeing.
- Sport as a vehicle to enhance cultural wellbeing, inclusiveness and unity, increase self-esteem, self-determination and cultural empowerment.
- Through the celebration and recognition of Indigenous participation, racism is reduced and reconciliation is advanced.
- A reduction in risk for chronic disease, coronary heart disease and stroke, bowel and breast cancer, diabetes and depression.
- Overcomes disadvantage, including reducing illness and hearing related issues (in relation to swimming activities).
- A leverage for broader capacity building (The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2013).

The benefits of sport to Indigenous people have been known for many years. Colin Tatz has advocated for the many benefits of sport to Indigenous people over time. Although published in 1995, these benefits of sport for Indigenous communities are still relevant now in 2013, 18 years later:

> In many Aboriginal communities, sport:
> - Provides, however temporarily, some purpose and meaning in life;
> - Enhances (diminishing) social cohesion and togetherness;
> - Emphasises ritual and attracts loyalties;
> - Demonstrates Aboriginal organisational skills;
> - Enables a few moments of total empowerment and sovereignty;
> - Acts, on occasion, to offset alcohol abuse;

- Occupies time in the absence of real employment;
- Helps overcome, however temporarily, chronic ill health;
- Reduces serious internal violence and juvenile delinquency; and
- Provides an avenue for successful competition against mainstream society (Tatz, 1995: 318).

Similarly, Beneforti and Cunningham reported of benefits from three Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory, Australia. The main benefit related to youth issues, where sport was seen as important to keep young people busy and therefore out of trouble. In addition, sport relieved boredom and were a source of fun (Beneforti and Cunningham, 2002).

The above benefits can create a perception that sport is a panacea or saviour, an answer to just about everything, and participation is vital to a successful life as an Indigenous person. This notion has been contested in the literature such as Godwell (2000) who stated that the privileging of sport can result in Aboriginal people being typecast as sportspeople, and that 'real life' is not played on the basketball court or football field. Godwell further questioned the practices of funnelling Indigenous young people's life aspirations into sports 'they're going to be good at'. By privileging sport, other areas of achievement are therefore neglected (Godwell, 2000). Some studies of Indigenous young persons have found that is not as important to them as it is perceived to be. In a study of Indigenous young people in Queensland, they explained their achievements which were not exclusively related to what they did physically but also their academic achievements and pursuits (Nelson, 2011). An earlier paper by Nelson (2009) found that the young Indigenous people she spoke with about their perceptions of sport hardly mentioned it as a saviour or a way of increasing their social mobility. Other literature support these ideas that sport is not a panacea. In the inquiry to the contribution of sport to Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring, the committee commented that 'sport is not the sole ingredient to Indigenous wellbeing. While sport is often the hook, many government services, in partnership with Indigenous communities and the sporting industry, play a role in achieving Close the Gap outcomes' (The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 2013: 31).

While perceived for the benefits, Tonts & Atherley (2010) assert there is also a dark side of sport which highlights issues of exclusion of marginalized people, such as racist practices directed at Indigenous peoples. The next section further discusses racism in

physical activity, starting with a focus on competitive sporting activities, followed by structural racism in relation to physical activity settings.

2.5 Racism: The 'dark side of sport'

Racism in sport is a microcosm of broader racism occurring in Australian society faced by Indigenous people. When thinking about this coexistence, Colin Tatz puts it best:

> Sport is not separate from life. Where there is racism in political, social, legal and economic life, so there is racism in the sporting one – diluted sometimes, tempered perhaps, while medals and prizes are being won (Tatz, 1995: 16).

Conversely he also states that sport is a reflection of society, a 'litmus test of racist Australia' (Tatz, 1995: 341). Either way, sport has a direct relationship with and to racism. Currently, there is racism in Australia and experiencing it is an everyday occurrence for many Indigenous people. Findings from two recent Australian studies indicate that racism commonly features in the lives of Aboriginal peoples and can occur in many different settings. In Adelaide, South Australia, the majority of people in the study had experienced racist treatment in a range of places in particular the justice and educational settings (Gallaher et al, 2009). Similarly in Victoria, the majority of Aboriginal people reported in the study they had experienced racism regularly, and they had also experienced it in a range of settings which were in employment, sport, shops, education and public spaces (Ferdinand et al, 2013) Notwithstanding the studies were in different states of Australia, the types of racist treatment were similar. In the same study as an example, in a sample of over 700 people:

- 92% were called racist names, teased or heard jokes or comments that relied on stereotypes about Aboriginal people;
- 85% were ignored, treated with suspicion or treated rudely because of their race;
- 79% were left out or avoided because of their race;
- 84% were sworn at, verbally abused or subjected to offensive gestures because of their race;
- 67% were spat at, had an object thrown at them, were hit or threatened because of their race;
- 54% had their property vandalised because of their race;
- 81% were told they were less intelligent or inferior than people from other races; and
- 66% were told they did not belong because of their race.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2013 also report similar findings of racism towards Indigenous people. In 2008 27% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 15 years reported having experienced discrimination in the last 12 months (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). In the same report, it was found that almost one-third (31%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults reported they had high or very high levels of psychological distress. What caused the highest rates of psychological distress? Those who had experienced discrimination, those who had been victims of violence, or those with a disability or long-term health condition (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Similarly, one of the many life stressors (including stigma, environmental adversity and social disadvantage) impacting negatively on Indigenous people was ongoing racism (Swan & Raphael, 1995).

The above studies on racism indicate that Australia still has a long way to go in improved relationships and more broadly reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This is also evidenced in a study by Reconciliation Australia, titled the 'Australian Reconciliation Barometer' which focuses on perceptions of the relationship of Indigenous people to non-Indigenous people. Conducted every two years, the latest 2012 results reveal that while Australian people believe the relationship is important, only half of those in the study believed the relationship was strong and improving (Reconciliation Reconciliation Australia, 2012).

The racism that Aboriginal people face in their daily lives described in the above studies is an example of what Essed (2002) describes as 'everyday racism'. Everyday racism is defined as:

> …the integration of racism into everyday situations through practices that activate underlying power relations. This process must be seen as a continuum through which the integration of racism into everyday practices becomes part of the unexpected, of the unquestionable, and of that is seen as normal by the dominant group. When racist notions and actions infiltrate everyday life and become part of the reproduction of the system, the system reproduces everyday racism (Essed and Theo, 2002, p. 188).

Essed states that members of an oppressed group are *locked* into the system that reproduces everyday racism unless counterpressure develops to *unlock* (emphasis added) it. Applying the concept to Australian Indigenous people and using the findings from the studies above, it appears that everyday racism exists and continues to do so. The

findings of these studies suggest that the dominant group who dishes out the racism sees the normalcy of their actions as part of their everyday behaviours. The findings further indicate that this system of everyday racism is produced and reproduced in Australia with research findings as recent as 2013. Experiences of racism are commonplace and continue to be a huge part of the everyday lives of Indigenous Australian people. As Tatz stated earlier: 'Where there is racism in political, social, legal and economic life, so there is racism in the sporting one' (Tatz, 1995: 16). This is indeed true on the football sporting field which is next described.

> …the Indigenous experience of sport is most commonly argued to be that of racism…(Hartley, 2002: 150).

To begin a discussion on racism in sport, two recent examples of racism directed towards Indigenous elite footballers are described: First the voice of Adam Goodes, Indigenous Australian Football League (AFL) athlete:

> I don't think I've ever been more hurt by someone calling me a name then I was last night, not because of what was said but because of where it came from, a 13-year-old girl (Adam Goodes cited in Fraser, 2013).

On 24 May 2013 during a match against Collingwood, a thirteen year old female spectator racially abused celebrated AFL player Adam Goodes by calling him an 'ape'. Adam was gracious in his reaction, urging the public to support the girl rather than to vilify her. He decided to use the incident as a learning experience to assist the perpetrators and victims of racial abuse in Australian society. Just to add insult to injury, the racial taunt happened during the Indigenous round, a week in the Australian footy season designed to celebrate Indigenous people in football in Australia. The second incident involves Greg Inglis, an Indigenous National Rugby League player for South Sydney. On 23 July 2013, Greg was the subject of a racist taunt by 'beauty lovero' on his Twitter account:

> Who you are?! I steered [sic] in your face for more than a hour trying to classify your race but I failed I didn't not find any human categories to classify you on it.. You are a hybrid product for sure your grandfather is African gorilla.. But what shocked me that your African root ugliness gonna disappear if you keep mixing with white girls.. And from my point of view this is a crime against human diversity and this is the big problem human races faced specially with your African race because all this race gorillas are keep mixing with white girl specially in USA and Europe desperately to erase their African ugliness (AAP, 2013).

These incidents are reminders that racism is found in physical activity settings, in this case in elite sport, in Australia, in 2013. These stories however are not isolated incidents, but two of many similar stories highlighting a 'un-level' playing field in Indigenous sport.

The 'level' of the sporting/playing field has received attention within the literature (for example Tatz, 2000; Gormon, 2010; Maynard, 2012a). The level of the sporting field is a term which does not refer to the physical terrain of the field. While there is no standard definition, I define it as a reference to equality and inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous players. A level playing field thus refers to those competing on equal terms without racism; while an un-level playing field refers to un-equal terms with racism. There is a contradiction however that the sporting field can indeed be both. John Maynard asserts:

> The sporting arena has offered Aboriginal people a stark and confusing contradiction. It has been an avenue of acceptance, and then at times a space of fierce resentment. Aboriginal people have proven exceptional sportsmen and women, but historically many were denied their rightful place on ability by racist barriers and prejudice (Maynard, 2012, p. 987).

The sporting field is therefore a complex and confusing place. Sporting fields can be a leveller only when particular conditions exist. Alternatively they can be an un-leveller where racism occurs. At times the un-level nature of the sporting field can swing the other way: meaning the un-level sporting field can favour Indigenous peoples and act as a place of resistance. These issues are next described.

> Thus when Dale Shearer, Cliff Lyons or Sam Backo scores the winning try in a league match, there is joyous embracing of the man as one of 'us'. Colour disappears, momentarily (Tatz, 1995: 24).

Everyone loves a winner. Indigenous athletes, such as the Australian Rugby League players mentioned above are idolised when they are winning and/or playing well. Along with being idolised, they are also accepted and respected as a person. It is, as the quote above suggests, as though colour does disappear and their physical prowess and sporting skills dominate over any racial issues. Some Indigenous athletes however have found that this adulation, acceptance and respect are only afforded under certain conditions – when they are playing well. This does not appear to extend to other parts of their lives. Lionel Rose, who won the Australian bantamweight title in boxing in 1966, was heralded across Australia and seen as 'Hercules, Charles Lindbergh and the

Messiah all rolled into one'. When he won, and was winning, his colour also disappeared – he was a 'great Aussie battler'; when there were low spots in his career, he was always portrayed as 'Aboriginal Lionel Rose' (Tatz and Tatz, 2000: 27-28). Similarly, John Maynard asserts that 'success stories remain conditional' – that the Aboriginal person must keep on winning and not to misbehave. If Aboriginal athletes do 'misbehave', the media judges them using racial stereotypes such as 'blacks will go walkabout, prone to the bottle and can't handle the pressure' (Maynard, 2012a: 987).

2.5.1 The un-level sporting field

The un-level playing field racial vilification is commonplace. Name-calling/sledging, as part of racial vilifying a player, was once an activity that was commonplace in sporting activities, part of 'The Australian Game' as part of a strategy to 'put your opponent off' and to separate the 'men from the boys' (Maynard, 2012a). A watershed moment against this type of racism in Australian Sport in 1993 began with one defiant act by Nicky Winmar, Indigenous St Kilda AFL player. After being racially abused several times during a game against Collingwood, the final siren heralded an action that was to go down in history. Winmar faced the crowd, lifted his jumper and proudly pointed to his skin. Much has been written about this act in regards to racism and race relations in Australia. Klugman & Osmond (2009) assert that Winmar's act was the beginning of a movement against racism in the AFL. In addition Winmar's image remains '…a powerful and popular symbol of racial issues, particularly, but not only, in sport' (Klugman and Osmond, 2009: 87). In 1995 AFL was the first sporting organisation in Australia to adopt their anti-racial and religious vilification laws. As such, AFL are perceived to be the leading sporting organisation affiliated with reconciliation and non-tolerance of racism, and as Judd (2010) argues, an organisation which assumed a 'de facto national leadership role in Indigenous affairs to the extent that it claims expertise on issues concerning Indigenous Australia' (Judd, 2010: 3). Does racial vilification still exist in elite football? Have the laws helped? The incident with Adam Goodes explained at the beginning of the chapter might assist to answer this question. While many might agree that times have changed, others, like myself are sceptical. Judd (2010) acknowledges the good work of the AFL however states that the game has a long way to go until it can be fully shared between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and it largely remains 'unfinished business'. Further, he states that the rhetoric of anti-racism and reconciliation in fact a 'new trope of racism' explained as 'enlightened racism'. First

used by authors Jhally & Lewis in 1992 in a study of American sitcoms, the term was coined to explain perceptions of the characters in the Cosby Show, a comedy sitcom which portrayed an affluent black American family. The sitcom was found to both confirm and reinforce ideal relationships within black and white American people (Jhally and Jhally and Lewis, 1992). Judd argues that the same enlightened racism occurs in AFL. The laws did not mean an end to the racism on the field; longstanding perceptions of Indigenous people still exist in society which continue to perpetuate stereotypical attitudes and understandings (Judd, 2010).

The racial vilification is not exclusive to elite Indigenous sport. In a study on the experiences of Aboriginal men playing in a regional basketball competition, it was found that racial vilification and stereotyping was also an issue. Players were vilified using the same 'racial and cultural tropes of 19th century Australian colonialism' (Hallinan and Judd, 2007: 429) and expected by their non-Aboriginal opposing team to riot when they lost the final. It didn't seem that racism on the field of play, whether it be a football field or a basketball court, whether it be elite players or amateur, it remained the same. It was found that 'the same pressures of racial and cultural identity that Aboriginal sports people are confronted with in elite sporting competition also characterize the sporting experience of Aborigines at the local amateur level' (Hallinan and Judd, 2007: 433).

Racial vilification is not the only example of an un-level playing field. It is one example of a range of examples of racism across a myriad of sporting activities, with many Indigenous sportspeople, over many years. Indigenous sportspeople listed in the Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame is other examples where racism has entered into sporting activities. Invaluable contributions to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sport history include the work of Colin Tatz and Paul Tatz. In publications such as 'Black Gold – The Aboriginal and Islander Sports Hall of Fame (Tatz & Tatz 2000), the Hall of Fame athletes are listed, along with a brief history of Aborigines and Islanders in Sport. Describing the successes of the athletes in the same publication with discussions of racism gives a balanced, view of reality of the experience of the Indigenous athlete in sport: success is achieved despite the many barriers of racism. This is apparent in the athletes from the Hall of Fame: the majority of the listed 224 'all endured levels of racism, ranging from physical segregation, denial of access to clubs

and facilities, commercial exploitation, verbal abuse and school bullying to non-selection at some point' (Adair and Tatz, 2009: 5).

Generally, the racist activities that cause the 'un-level' playing field is what I believe Tatz and Tatz (2000) describes as a 'denial of competition'. These materialise in the forms of structural, institutional and blatant racism. Racism occurs at each level:

> One is structural: Because of their place in the political, legal, economic and social system, Aborigines and Islanders rarely get onto squash courts or Group 1 golf courses or into ski lodges. They never hang-glide, play polo, ride bikes for Yamaha or drive cars for Ferrari.
>
> The second form is institutional: on settlements and missions – where many Aborigines have lived – there was, literally, no grass. There were no facilities such as coaches and physiotherapists, and scholarships are not part of their vocabulary or experience even in today's 'communities' which were, so recently, settlements and missions.
>
> Finally, there is blatant racism: the exclusion of individuals or teams from competition because they are Aboriginal (Tatz and Tatz 2000, pp. 7-8).

2.5.2 Resistance on the sporting field

> I felt good when I knocked white blokes out. I felt good. I knew I was boss in the boxing ring. I showed my superiority...they showed it outside (Henry Collins, boxing tent fighter cited in Tatz, 2000).

The sporting field can also be an un-level site, but not for Indigenous players. The field can also be interpreted as a place where Indigenous people assert resistance and dominance over their non-Indigenous opponents. The above quote is an example of the resistance to non-Aboriginal people in sporting activities. Other authors refer to this same issue such as the Navajo who use basketball and football, along with recreation and fun, as an opportunity to compete against Euro-Americans. In a study by Anderson (2006), it was found that the Navajo use sports in attempts to 'beat white culture at their own game, effectively assimilating to these sports while simultaneously resisting them' (Anderson, 2006: 248).

2.6 The Places of Freedom

For many years, Dad has signed off his letters and emails as 'Yours in the struggle'. To me, this statement is a sign of resistance to the many restrictions that shaped his life

and the lives of other Aboriginal people he knew. It was also an acknowledgement that the struggle was and still is, continuing.

At the time of Australian federation (1901), Australian states and territories had control and responsibility for Indigenous Australians. This included oppressive legislations and policies that were controlling and restrictive for Aboriginal people (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010). Policies of protection and segregation (such as the *Aborigines Protection Act 1909*) in the twentieth century negatively impacted severely on the lifestyles and well-being of Aboriginal people. They gave a legal justification to control the lives of Aboriginal people in various ways such as to remove children from their families, segregate Aboriginal people into strictly controlled reserves, prohibit Aboriginal people to enter some public places and to remove children from school on the basis of their race amongst many others (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997). All were affected – 'not one Aboriginal person could be said to have been untouched by the legislation across the country' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010: 30). More recently laws such as the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Payment Reform) Act 2007* was part of the package to enable the 2007 Northern Territory intervention to 'protect' Aboriginal children from sexual abuse and family violence. Schedule 1 of this Act includes a variety of income management measures, stated to promote socially responsible behavior by quarantining Centrelink payments to ensure they are only spent on food and other essential items, and not to purchase alcohol or pornography (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2009).

Restrictions have become common place in Indigenous person's lives in Australia. Freedom on the other hand has been at the foundation of activism to address various restrictions on Aboriginal people. Freedom is described as 'the state of being free; exemption from the power and control of another; liberty; independence' (A to Z Online Dictionary, 2013). Looking at this definition, history indicates that Aboriginal people in Australia have been at the power and control of the oppressor. One of the most significant acts towards the opposition of restrictions was the 1965 Freedom ride in New South Wales, Australia. Influenced by the civil rights movement in the United States, a group of University of Sydney students boarded a bus to travel around various towns in New South Wales to highlight disadvantage and expose examples of racial discrimination (Curthoys, 2002). A visit to one of the towns, Moree, exposed the

restrictions on Aboriginal people from entering the swimming pool. These restrictions were formally set out in a Moree City Council resolution on 6 June 1955 (Moree City Council, 1965).

Much of the literature on Indigenous issues includes a discussion of the relationship that Indigenous Australian people have with Country, in particular how interacting with country positively affects their health and the positive aspects relating to caring for Country (Garnett et al., 2009; Kingsley et al., 2009; Griffiths and Kinnane, 2010; Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2011; Ganesharajah, 2009). The Australian Government recognises the link to Country for the health of Indigenous Australian peoples. In the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2013-2023, the central priority for health is culture: 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the right to live a healthy, safe and empowered life with a healthy strong connection to culture and country' (Department of Health, 2013a: 7).

In this section I propose that the literature on relationship to country has a synergy with freedom. Indigenous people seek country as a place of freedom, away from the many restrictions that have bound them in the past and in the present day. First though is some explanation about the concept of Country.

2.6.1 Describing Country

In my life, the most common way that I have heard Indigenous people talk about their Country is that they need to go back to it; they are planning to go back; or how the positive feelings they have after coming back from it. The quote below is a more detailed way to describe country however keeps the same theme that country/land is part of family and as such, is a close relationship:

> People talk about country in the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry or happy. Country is not a generalised or undifferentiated type of place, such as one might indicate with terms like 'spending a day in the country' or 'going up the country'. Rather, country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, country is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease (Rose, 1996: 7).

In this quote, Country is defined as being inclusive with all things:

> Country includes land, waters both fresh and salt, air and that which lies above and below the ground or out of sight. The term Country encompasses the physical, spiritual and cultural meaning of landscape. People are a natural resource since they too are part of Country. The use of a capital 'C' gives the place its respect and significance—a proper name, a proper noun (Griffiths and Kinnane, 2010: iii).

2.6.2 Feelings of Freedom in Country

Indigenous people speak about the many benefits that are derived from being on Country. My assessment of the benefits received is that one central theme is the feeling of freedom that Country brings. The word 'freedom' is not always overtly stated however is implied. One example of a reference to the word 'freedom' however is from Indigenous peoples from Western Australia. This reference came from a report conducted of health services in the Kimberley region. Within this report, Indigenous people spoke about their holistic perceptions of health with Country. Specifically, being on Country enabled people to 'feel free' (Smith and Smith, 1995).

While not overtly stated in these terms, other literature describes the freedom people have derived from being on their Country. In a book about the Aboriginal people on George's River, New South Wales, Goodall and Cadzow (2009) wrote about the centrality of rivers in the survival of Aboriginal people. The rivers played a major role for Aboriginal people to meet the changes imposed on them by the early settlers and the city itself. The rivers 'offered the mobility first to confront the settlers, but also to evade them'. The settlers moved extensively and consequently the areas along the river remained accessible to Aboriginal people to have time and space (Goodall and Cadzow, 2009: 280). The river was therefore a place of freedom for Aboriginal people.

Other literature which focuses on the effect of Country on the health of Aboriginal people also alludes to the feelings of freedom. In a project on the relationship of caring for country on the health of Boonwurrung and Bangerang tribes of Victoria, Australia, thirteen people spoke about the benefits they derived from being on Country. These included building self-esteem, fostering self-identity, maintaining cultural connection and enabling relaxation and fun through contact with the natural environment. In particular, people described Country in 'freedom terms' as a place to escape because it

gives quietness and an opportunity to de-stress. In addition, being on Country was a place to go to heal from discrimination (Kingsley et al., 2009). Reading between the lines, escaping, de-stressing and a place to heal from discrimination all implies the same thing: that life contains places and situations that contain restrictions, places to escape from. Being on country provides the freedom away from those issues and as Kingsley et al. describes, provides a 'utopian sanctuary' (2009). Similarly, Garnett et al. (2009) report that participants in a landscape health study felt better on Country for many reasons such as escaping from the stresses of 'tensions and temptations' of townships and it gave them a sense of autonomy.

2.6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has considered literature surrounding Indigenous physical activity along with the context of Kamilaroi culture as a way to frame that literature. Indigenous physical activity in the literature follows most other Indigenous topics in the health literature – it mainly focuses on the familiar epidemiological method of reporting negative aspects of inactivity and its dire health consequences. Experiences of physical activity, particularly Kamilaroi physical activity is not found in the literature therefore 'sifting' was a method I used to find experiences through other methods such as cultural stories, my Grandmother's stories, life stories, heritage studies of Kamilaroi country and photographic accounts. These combined tell a story of a life of physical activity as a method of survival to live through everyday routines but also the enjoyment of games and sports. In other literature, Indigenous physical activity was most informative when studies gained the perspectives of those who participated. Long standing perceptions can be challenged, such as 'sport is a panacea or saviour' for Indigenous peoples when studies including Indigenous voices clearly indicate that this is not the case. Indigenous older people and physical activity hardly feature in the literature except for those studies surrounding interventions to improve health conditions. Even then, age ranges are quite broad and thus difficult to weed out specific information about older people. Racism featured in this section which was described as the experience of sport for Indigenous people. Competitive sport was discussed according to the literature's focus on racism in football codes, however it was also evident that racism occurs, and has occurred in other sports and at an amateur level. The level of the sporting field was discussed which the literature focuses on heavily. As the literature suggests, the sporting field is indeed complicated. It is a site

where several dynamics are at play. It is un-level due to racism such as racial vilification; it is level only when certain conditions are evident. It is also un-level but in a different way – it is a site of resistance against non-Aboriginal people and more broadly invasion/colonisation. The light at the end of the tunnel for physical activity is that it offers a place of freedom for Indigenous people away from the restrictions that have bound, and still bind them. Indigenous voices chorus the many benefits that being on Country brings. I argue that being on Country has a synergy in the concept of seeking freedom from oppression. Being on Country in particular those physical activity settings such as rivers offers what people describe as escapism. It is through escapism from stressful situations that Indigenous people can find their freedom, and consequently their wellbeing.

– INTERLUDE 1 –

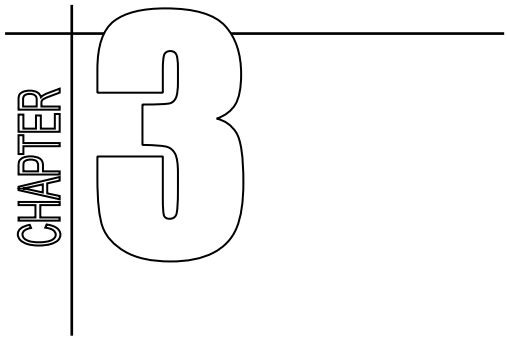
AUSTRALIA'S ON THE WALLABY

Australia's and the wallaby
Come listen to the cooey,
The kangaroo he packs his port
And the emu shoulders Bluey,
The boomerangs come whizzing round
The dingo scratches gravel,
The possum and bears and bandicoots
Are always on the travel.

The cockatoo calls the bats and owl
The pigeon and the shag,
Malley-hen and platypus
Are rolling up their swag,
While the curlew waves his last farewell
Down by the long lagoon,
And brolga dance his last sweet waltz
to a sweet bird mocking tune.

There's tiger snakes and damper boys
And johnny cakes on the coals,
Droughts and floods and raggered duds
And dried up waterholes,
There's shadeless trees and sun scorched plains
Now asking us to toil,
While Australia's sons are weary
And the billy's on the boil.

Background: Dad has been singing this song for as long as I remember. When Dad sings, the words are from his father instead of an authorised text. He also tells me that his father also used to sing it. The lyrics are based on Dad's memories. The entire lyrics can be found on a website of Australian songs however the composer is unknown (Australia Down Under, 2013).



GULIBAA.YUYAANBAN

RACISM

This chapter presents the first part of the results from interviews with my family about racism my family encountered in pursuing physical activities. The wide ranging interviews that constituted this research included many stories about racism not related to physical activity and are not included here, but will be taken up in later publications. The chapter begins with stories from my father's experiences, as I began my data collection with several interviews with Dad. The initial interviews were initially seen as a pilot study but they were not in a standard methodological sense. It was not about testing the interview schedule. Rather than a 'pilot study', Dad *was the pilot* who assisted me to navigate the topic to prepare me for further exploration with family members later; the Elder guiding conduct of the research. In addition, I also wanted to first engage with an individual Indigenous lived experience, which is crucial in understanding Australian geographies and histories. I wanted to gain insights into the ways that discrimination was exercised and experienced, and the ways it was challenged. Following Dad's stories, and similar to the order of interviews, this chapter then extends to other family members' experiences. All these stories build towards my interpretative conclusion rather than being analysed in a way that simply adds to a train of evidence that reveals an authoritative or 'true' way of understanding racism in physical activity settings.

3.1 Dad's stories

My father is Raymond Noel Leslie, a Kamilaroi man and Elder. He was born in Moree on 3rd March, 1945. It could be said that Dad's first encounter with racism was at the time of his birth, as Dad was born in a tent on the grounds of Moree Hospital. At that time, Aboriginal people were not allowed to enter the hospital due to racist practices of the time. Dad's stories throughout his life revealed many stories about discrimination, resistance and survival. Dad's interviews revealed his experiences in relation to racism in physical activity for example games in primary school, swimming pools, football and boxing. In addition, Dad spoke about acceptance of racist practices as the status quo.

3.1.1 Maypole dancing: racism in early education

In Dad's primary education (1950s), racism was encountered in Coonabarabran Primary School in a physical activity known as maypole dancing. Dating back to the 17th Century in England, the activity involved people holding ribbons attached to the top of a pole and dancing to music around it (Stradling, 2013). This was an activity that Dad didn't like due to how he was treated by the non-Aboriginal girls. The dance required children to hold hands during the activity however Dad's fingertips and fingernails were held instead. The perception was that the dark colour of Dad's skin would rub off onto the non-Aboriginal girls' hands, therefore they had to take measures not to touch him (much). Dad explains here:

> Well you'd get with some of the white girls and they'd hang onto your fingertips thinking of your hands, you know when you are dancing around the maypole and they're thinking the colour would rub off. So they'd hang onto your fingertips, just your fingernails and your dancing around with this bloody ribbon stuff and it was a heap of shit as far as I am concerned. But they always thought that, that if they kept away from you, didn't touch you too much it wouldn't rub off on them (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

3.1.2 Dad's experiences in swimming pools

Dad swam in swimming pools at a time in history (1950s/1960s) when Aboriginal people were banned from many in New South Wales. It was a long-held belief that Aboriginal people were seen as having sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea and it was feared these diseases would be spread in the water. In addition a perception also existed that Aboriginal men would ejaculate in the water and in doing

so, impregnate the non-Aboriginal women. Other reasons for banning Aboriginal people included they were dirty as they lived out of the township in camps without facilities; as well as deterring tourists from using facilities (Curthoys, 2002). In Moree Public Baths, the banning of Aboriginal people to the pool (and some other public facilities) was supported and formalised by legislation passed in a Moree City Council resolution on 6 June 1955:

> No person, being a full-blooded or half-caste aboriginal native of Australia, or being a person apparently having an admixture of aboriginal blood, shall use, or occupy or be present in or upon, or be allowed or permitted or invited to use or occupy or be present in or upon, the premises of the Council known as the Memorial Hall…AND THAT no such person as aforesaid shall use or occupy or be present in or upon or be allowed or permitted to use or occupy or be present in or upon , the premises or the council known as the Bore Baths or in or upon any of the Buildings or places enclosed herewith (Moree City Council, 1955).

Despite the local laws, Dad gained entry to the baths as he told attendants he lived in town (although he didn't), and was therefore classified by them as being 'civilized'. Being civilized was defined as living in town and looking clean was defined as being civilized. Dad describes his experience of being judged upon entry to the pool depending on the place he lived. Once approval was given, Dad was then allowed to swim if he went home, collected a towel and soap and then had a shower:

> I ended up getting in there actually cause my sister lived in town and they were looked at as civilized black fullas I suppose and when I went down to go to it, it was, finally they told me they said 'did you bring your towel and soap and that?' I said 'No' They said 'You go home and get it' They asked me who I was with and that, where I'd lived I said I lived in Warialda Street, [with] (names omitted), they said 'Go home get your towel and soap and come back". And when I went in [to the facility] they said 'Now you gotta have a shower, wash yourself up and no pissin' in the pool' (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Living in town held a status for Aboriginal people - they were seen as a respectable person who was doing something with their lives. Although Dad was only visiting and not living in town, he knew the strategy for entry. He also knew how others perceived Aboriginal people: that they lived in squalid conditions without proper bathing facilities.

> I don't know what their motives were, but I spose you were different if you were seen to be doin' something, doing something with your life… I was only visiting there (in town), I wasn't living there but it made a difference if I said I come from their place than coming from the mission, or a reserve or the top camp or something because … they would picture you as not [a] very clean person I spose, because down on the top camp or anywhere like that, they didn't have the greatest of facilities. As I said, you

> bathed in the river there, you didn't have a shower to turn on (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Like the maypole dancing, Dad also spoke of others' perceptions that his (and other Aboriginal people's) dark skin would rub off onto others this time in the water. Aboriginal children were therefore subjected to strict cleaning rules prior to entering pool:

> I just don't think they didn't like you because your black, I would guess they'd thought because your black, you were dirty I think because why would they want you to have a tub before you went into the pool, other than that, if they thought you had to have the soap and all that and tub up, wash yourself clean well they assume, must assume we were all dirty black and dirty and it'd rub off, that the colour would rub off on the people (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Despite the Council resolution banning Aboriginal people from entering the Moree baths, Aboriginal people did gain entry to the baths on occasions, albeit under a deeply racist screening process as Dad describes. Living in town had a status and came with privileges to use the baths. This was not written in the Council Resolution, but was an arrangement constructed in the discretionary space of the unwritten policy and values enforced by the baths attendants.

3.1.3 'The river was the popular place to be': The river was the alternative

While Dad and others living in town gained entry to the Moree pool, there were many others who were banned outright. This did not stop them from swimming – the river was the alternative and a popular place to be:

> …in Moree and some places you weren't allowed in the pool, so the river was the popular place to be I spose (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

It is not surprising that the river was a popular place for Aboriginal people. In Kamilaroi Country (and many other places), rivers hold a special significance to Aboriginal people. Not just a place for swimming, the rivers had many other functions for education and survival:

> The rivers were our classroom. It is here that we learnt the stories of our old people, how to find food and survive in the bush. The river has always been, and still is, the source of life for the Kamilaroi people (Catchment Management Authority, n.d).

Further, the river is a spiritual and cultural place:

> The Aboriginal people (Kamilaroi) of this area look upon the rivers, creeks, waterholes and lagoons as part of creation during the Dreamtime. Water has been the shared essence of Dreamtime, it is one of the four connecting elements of land, water, sky and kin. It has been the factor that determined in settlement in pre and post European contact times. It determined tribal boundaries, it is the blood of our primary and secondary industry. It is our life source (Briggs-Smith, 2003: 80).

Rivers such as the Mehi in Moree was not only used for cultural, social and recreational activities but also used for practical reasons. Those who lived on the banks of the river bathed and washed their clothes in the water. Water was also carried a long distance in some cases for cooking and drinking (Briggs-Smith, 2003).

3.1.4 Reactions to racism: The Freedom Ride

There were different reactions to the racist practices of being excluded to the Moree baths. For the local people, some were accepting of the practice. Dad spoke about accepting segregationist practices as a way of life for Aboriginal people in Moree. They were aware that discrimination was 'always happening' and it was futile to cause trouble in efforts to enter the baths. Dad explains:

> It [racism] was always happening, but you know you just had to accept it … you knew your place, you went to where you went, you didn't bother anyone about trying to fight to get in the pool but as I said, I got in, cause I [I said I] was livin' in town (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

In the film Blood Brothers (Lander et al., 1993), an unidentified Aboriginal female resident of Moree speaks about racism in Moree in the 1960s. Her statement: 'We knew our place' suggests a similar notion as Dad. While Aboriginal people lived with racist practices towards them in Moree, it also appears that some people were accepting of this, and it was a known 'status quo'.

A different reaction to the exclusion to the Moree baths was from University of Sydney students in the iconic Freedom Ride in 1965. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Freedom ride involved university students who travelled to towns in New South Wales to highlight disadvantage and expose examples of racial discrimination (Curthoys, 2002). The 'Freedom Riders' were met with hostility and violence at Moree on 20 February, 1965 as they demonstrated at the front of the baths (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2013a). Ann Curthoys, one of the non-Aboriginal students on the bus, provides a detailed account of the event at Moree and the other towns in the Freedom Ride (Curthoys, 2002). While the freedom ride at Moree is well

documented by Curthoys and others (for example Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2013a), there is scarce information or personal perspectives from those living in Moree who witnessed the event. Dad next provides his perspective from being at Moree when the Freedom ride came to town.

On February 20, 1965, the Freedom Ride bus came to Moree. Dad was at the Victoria Hotel, across from the baths when the demonstration occurred:

> We heard it was goin' on and they said 'she's on at the six' that's what's they used to say when there was something going on, a fight or something, she's on at the six around at the pool. We all raced out of there … most of it was about the racism at the swimming pool (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

When describing the event, Dad said that people were fearful of repercussions after the freedom ride bus had left the town:

> … there's a lot of fear and people think along the lines 'yeah it's alright for you…you come here sayin' this, yous will be gone tomorrow and we'll have to put up with it all so there was that fear element that left a lot of people wondering what to do (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Some Aboriginal people were angry with the Freedom Riders. Dad tells a story of my Aunty (name omitted) who had an encounter with the young Aboriginal leader of the action, the late Dr Charles Perkins, when he was attempting to collect her children to assist in the demonstration:

> ...he [Perkins] come up there and she said 'What do you want?' He wanted to use her as a little pawn or something to say why are they discriminating against these kids there, they're allowed in, but those down the mission or the top camp or whatever, they can't get in, what's the trouble? Why are you doing this? And she told him 'piss off and leave us alone, you're not using my kids in any front line stuff just for your sake (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

While the Freedom ride was met by some negatively (such as the above statement), Perkins later acknowledged that this had been the case - that 'tension had been heightened in some towns' as a result of the visits however the tension was described as 'inevitable' and 'creative', necessary to bring problems out in the open (Perkins, 1965: 48). While the tension was acknowledged, the same report described the support from the Aboriginal communities which in turn encouraged the Freedom Riders:

> The significant feature of the tour was the support, morally and physically, received from the Aboriginal people. Ninety-nine per cent of the people gave us full support. Wherever we went we consulted them first about the situation and whether they

> wanted our group there or not. The response of the people was justification for our efforts (Perkins, 1965: 48).

While Dad spoke of negative reactions to the freedom ride, he also spoke of the Freedom Ride as the start of positive change for Aboriginal people in Moree:

> Aboriginal people weren't allowed to go [in the baths] so that was the start of a change to happen in Moree around 65. … I guess it was stressful for a lot of people, particularly for the students who came up there, but it was the beginning of some change in later years (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

and:

> Looking back at it today as an older person, younger in them days, certainly a lot of things gotta happen to get change in people's lives. I thought it was a good thing looking back now. But it all turned out ok I suppose and there's a lot of change for Aboriginal people in Moree today and they are working together to achieve a [lot of]other things but it wasn't too good in those days (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

3.1.5 Football and acceptance on/off the field

Dad played a lot of Rugby League (football) as later described in Chapter 4. Dad spoke about the contradiction and confusion of being treated differently when on and off the sporting field. As someone highly skilled, Dad was celebrated as a star by others. Spectators cheered for him and clapped as they appreciated his athletic prowess. Off the field was a different story though. A common part of Dad's life was people calling him names and bashing him for no reasons only for his skin colour:

> … but it was just that people called you names, they didn't like you or you know, but when we went on sports carnivals, we were stars then. They'd be clapping for you and yellin' because most of us were pretty good footballers and runners... we always excelled in it so that part of it was alright… I guess today I can look back and I can say you know, it was racism but at that time it was a bit confusing I suppose when you're young (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Dad similarly spoke of being bashed 'for nothing' but at the same time being cheered for on the field:

> Well I think, its hurtful when someone gives you a bit of a floggin' (bashing) for nothing and wait for you after school if they didn't like you or your sister…. then when you're playing sport 'Go on, go, go go go' And you for your team playing someone else so it becomes a bit confusing… But if you was a good footballer in the country, you was all right on the field, but after you were on the field you never got really friendly with them.
>
> *Lana: Why?*

> I think it was because of racism and different things. They liked you as a good sportsperson, but not good enough to go anywhere else with (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Dad also spoke about this different treatment he received during his employment as a shearer. While working in the shearing sheds his workmates were friends with him however the relationship changed when they saw each other in town. Dad believed the reason for this was that they thought they had an image to live up to, and that mixing with Aboriginal people did not fit this image:

> …you were all mates in the shed and when you come to town they were white and you were black so I think that there was that type of when you are out there you are top man you know. Your brother, mate or whatever. When you're in town they don't mix with you.
>
> *Lana: And why is that do you think?*
>
> Well I guess they didn't want to be seen talking or mixing with the black fellas I spose. Because they had an image to live up to in town you know (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Being treated differently in various environments was a confusing part of Dad's sporting life, and for other environments such as in employment. This binary is similar to the different treatment that Aboriginal sportspeople have on the field: where the sportsfield can be a place of acceptance but also a place of resentment (Maynard, 2012b).

3.1.6 Boxing: the fight against racism?

Growing up, I remember hearing Dad talk fondly about his boxing but I only realized his motivation for taking up the sport in the interviews. As stated above, Dad was subject to physical violence as non-Aboriginal people did not like him or his sister. As a response and reaction to the violence, Dad was motivated to take up boxing. It gave him self-esteem and confidence:

> Well growing up as a child I always thought of you know, got into a lot of trouble because of racism. I don't think it was my fault greatly but a lot of people didn't like black fullas, or they called you black and you got into a lot of fights. So I thought when I go to Parramatta[18] I'm going to learn how to fight and I'm going to go back and loosen these people and put a bit out of them and I felt more confident because they talk about, they helped you raise your esteem and you go back and you go back and I thought I was Muhammad Ali when I went home. I wasn't that big but I thought I had

[18] Parramatta is located approximately 23 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD.

> the confidence to stand up and I did. And it changed the course of a lot of things for me. But you know I wasn't no great fighter but at least I was big enough to stick up for myself, be able to handle yourself a bit and ah so never had too much trouble after that (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Learning to fight changed things for Dad in a positive way. He was not picked on as much. In fact, Dad talked about gaining respect by 'knocking one of them over' and wearing a Police Citizens Boys Club t-shirt. Being able to defend yourself for him was positive – it prevented people from taking advantage of him:

> Well no one picked on you too much then (as they knew he was involved in boxing). You only had to knock one of them over and your right and you know, people sort of respected you a bit in the way of saying, don't have a shot at them you know, he can fight a bit then, cause I was lair rising [showing off] a bit too, I used to wear a t-shirt with Police Citizens Boys club on it and people thought oh yeah they're pretty good. But no, but it helped me a little bit because there was people at times, even your own people would have fights with other kids. If you could learn to handle yourself, it's like today, if you got a bit of self-discipline stuff, able to look after yourself then not a lot of people might take advantage of you. I think (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

3.1.7 'You knew your place': Acceptance of segregation as the status quo

Dad spoke about accepting racist practices as a way of life for Aboriginal people in Moree. Aboriginal people were aware of the status quo, and some accepted this position in society. They were aware that discrimination was 'always happening' and it was futile to cause trouble in efforts to enter the baths. Dad explains:

> It [racism] was always happening, but you know you just had to accept it … you knew your place, you went to where you went, you didn't bother anyone about trying to fight to get in the pool but as I said, I got in, cause I [I said I] was livin' in town (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

3.1.8 Conclusion to Dad's Stories

Dad's stories about his experiences and reactions to racism in physical activities give powerful insights into the ways that discrimination was exercised and experienced, particularly in the ways it was challenged in relation to the entry to the pool in Moree. Dad's experiences both as a child and a young man show a more subtle and pernicious racism surrounding exclusionary practices in Moree. The view, that the Freedom Riders were resented by local Aboriginal people for their work in challenging racism in Moree, is not widely reported in the literature celebrating the Freedom Ride and its achievements. Yet, it also reinforces the complex local manifestations and impacts of

the racism that controlled access to the Moree Public Baths and the many aspects of well-being and opportunity that the baths represented in the dominant society. The evidence presented here contributes a personal account from a person living in Moree at the time of the Freedom Ride, and their recollection of it, and their reflections on its meaning and consequences. The Freedom Ride, despite its iconic reputation, was met by some Aboriginal people with fear of repercussions and fear of being exploited to highlight segregation practices in the town; and being left to weather the subsequent responses of the virulent local racism once the Freedom Ride had moved on.

Discriminatory practices banning Aboriginal people from entering the baths were not a simple process of exclusion or inclusion on the basis of "the minutest amount of color" (Curthoys, 2002, p119). In this case, Dad's individual experiences show that it was more complex. Despite local law, entry was gained to the baths based on individual judgments of whether someone was 'civilized'. Being civilized was defined in this instance as living in town and therefore perceived as clean, rather than living on a reserve out of town or on the banks of the river and therefore perceived as dirty. The creation of such markers created both fragmentation within the Kamilaroi community, and resistance to derogatory and damaging representations of Kamilaroi people and values in Moree. The evidence reported opens discussion about the importance or lack of importance of gaining entry to the baths. While the banning of Aboriginal people to the baths became a potent symbol of the racism confronted during the Moree leg of the 1965 Freedom Ride, and of wider race relations in Australia, Dad's stories opens other dimensions of the management of and debate about entry to the baths. Certainly some Aboriginal people accepted the status quo, and preferred the river as a place to swim, socialise and participate in other activities. For others, while the Freedom Ride was the 'start of a change', it also evoked feelings of fear of repercussions, as well as resentment from feelings of potential exploitation.

Dad's experiences in football, boxing and maypole dancing are all examples of racism in physical activities. In football, Dad spoke of the confusion and contradiction of being accepted in the environment of a sports field however being unaccepted in the environment of the wider community. The different treatment according to the place was also common in Dad's experiences working in shearing sheds. Boxing was an activity that Dad did not take up to get fit – the motivation for his participation was a

reaction and response to racial violence towards him. Being able to fight was a survival mechanism, and wearing a Police Boys t-shirt was also a strategy for survival, a type of a uniform to intimidate others and therefore prevent violence. Maypole dancing was an example of racism in physical activity from early education. Even at that early age, Dad knew that the colour of his skin was feared.

Racism permeated throughout Dad's entire life from being born in a tent, through education, health, employment, leisure and personal life. In physical activity, racism also was a major feature in swimming, football, boxing and even primary school activities. When talking of racism in his life, Dad stated: 'I never went to war but I think we were in a war all our life'. This statement describes the ongoing racism throughout Dad's life. As a response and reactions to racism, Dad developed strategies for survival and to challenge it. Dad's accounts of his individual experiences provide an opening for discussion with others in the family.

3.2 Extending the stories to other family members

The issue of racism in physical activities was raised often in my interviews with other family members. As the Elder guide and pilot to the study, Dad often started conversations about racist acts towards him in physical activity. While there were many overt acts of racism towards him personally such as name calling and violence, he also spoke of structural racism that was barriers to access to facilities such as the swimming pool in Moree. Dad resisted and reacted to these acts of racism with his own strategies for survival: learning to box, wearing a Police Boy's Club t-shirt or saying he lived in town. With experiences of racism, like Dad's stories, there are subsequent reactions. This section reports therefore on the experiences of racism and then following the resistance and reactions to it. Similar to Dad, the experiences of racism included those in swimming pools, name calling and racial violence; as well the being treated differently in and away from sport.

3.3 Experiences of Racism

This section outlines various experiences of racism including those connected to swimming, other sports activities, name calling, racial violence, relationship differences on and off the sporting field as well as resistance and reactions to racism.

3.3.1 Swimming

There was an overwhelming amount of discussion about experiences surrounding swimming. Many family members spoke about being excluded from swimming pools and the reasons they understood they were barred. While the majority of persons spoke about being excluded from pools, there were others that reported that they swam in the pool under certain conditions. Despite the large amount of stories about the exclusion and inclusion to pools, the majority of people stated that they preferred to swim in the river. People also spoke about the Freedom Ride demonstration in Moree against the denial of entry of Aboriginal people. In addition to the stories about the pools, there was also a story about an experience of the lack of recognition of achievement in competitive swimming.

Many people who lived in country towns talked about being excluded from local swimming pools in their youth. Typical comments were:

> …we weren't allowed in the [Moree] pool (Cousin Daphne, Moree, 10.11.11).[19]

> No, never ever swam in a swimming pool when I was a kid, although there was one at Dubbo there and we lived there, like stayed there and never ever went into the pool (Aunty Mable, Lethbridge Park, 6.10.11).

> No, no no, we never tried [to get into the Moree pool], we knew we weren't allowed in there (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

People reflected on the reasons they believed they were being excluded. For some, they knew that local government had the opinion that Aboriginal people were dirty and subsequently there were laws that prevented them entering the pool:

> We had a stupid old mayor, old bloke named (name omitted), he was running the town then. He didn't want black people in the pool, he was chucking them out left, right and centre, he was a bit of a ratbag I thought (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

> I think they thought, we had a very racist Mayor then. Old (name omitted), I can't think of this name. They thought Aboriginal people coming off the missions and all that were dirty and diseased and all that. The white fullas knew this too, or thought we had it (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

[19] As later stated in Chapter 7, pseudonyms are used for all family members with the exception of Dad who wished to be identified. Citations denote my relationship to each person, a pseudonym, the family member's home town and the date they were interviewed.

Generally, people believed that the reasons they were excluded from pools was because of the colour of their skin, being perceived as being dirty or for just being Aboriginal:

> We'd be outside the fence trying to get in and they'd [white kids] say you can't come in here you've got snotty noses, yous are dirty (Cousin Ruth, Moree, 5.9.10).

Aunty Mable spoke about the older people in her family not allowing her and others to go to the pool in the 1930s as they believed they Aboriginal people were not welcome:

> I think the older people kind of had this notion or they had this idea that they didn't want black fellas in the pool and that's why they never used to let us go and then the years went by, it really came to fruition in Moree and then I used to think that's why those old people never used to allow us into the pool. I think that was a notion they had, they were inclined to think that the gubs [white people] didn't want Koori kids in there…In 36, 38, you know, in Dubbo, yeah (Aunty Mable, Lethbridge Park, 6.10.11).

Being excluded brought about feelings of rejection, upset and acceptance:

> Well it makes you feel real rejected to think you know you are a human being like them. And everyone bleeds the same blood, why is it that you are not allowed in there? I think that sometimes they said you dirty little black fella, you can't come in here, you make the pool dirty (Cousin Diane, Moree, 4.9.10).
>
> When I found out to know we weren't allowed there it was very upsetting and we had to go the river (Cousin Tia, Moree, 10.11.11).
>
> I don't know whether they cared, but I think a lot would have loved it being able to go…but what you can't do you can't do. You've just got to face that (Aunty Darlene, Warren, 11.10.11).

While for Cousin Ruth, it did not matter:

> Well when they stopped us from the baths that time, it didn't worry us, they'd stop us from going in the pool, but they made us go there and sit in the hot sun and watch the white people swim Cousin Ruth (Cousin Ruth, Moree, 5.9.10).

For Cousin Darren and Cousin Ruth, they explicitly recognised their exclusion to swimming pools was due to racism:

> *Lana: Did you ever have any trouble getting in?*
>
> Did in the '50s.
>
> *Lana: Why was that?*
>
> Racism (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).
>
> *Lana: Why do you reckon they didn't want you in there?*

> Because we were black, no other reason, only because we were black… that's what you call prejudice. You don't have to have a reason, all you got to be is black. And they sort of take a dislike to you (Cousin Ruth, Moree, 5.9.10).

(i) Conditional entry to the Moree Pool

While the majority of people spoke about being excluded from swimming pools, there were also some exceptions. Some people gained entry as they lived in town, did not collect Government benefits & lived and communicated with non-Aboriginal people. These family members were criticised by other Aboriginal people for being allowed in the pool with racist comments.

Here, Cousin Siena talks of being allowed in the pool as their family lived in town and not on missions. Other Aboriginal people criticised her family because of this by calling them derogatory names – 'uptown niggers' and 'coconuts'[20]. Similarly, Aunty Jacqueline's children were allowed in the pool due to their status of living in town:

> Mum and Dad bought a house in the street and I used to be a swimmer then but we were the only Aboriginal children that could go into the Moree pool. There were no other Aboriginals so we used to get a lot of flack like we were uptown niggers or coconuts but we weren't, we talked to everyone, it was just because of that and then we could go to the schools (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

> My children, my kids were the only Aboriginal children that was allowed to go in the pool.
>
> *Lana: Yeah, why do you think that is?*
>
> Because we lived in the town.
>
> *Lana: In the town? What difference do you think that that made to the people at the pool?*
>
> Well because they might have thought that we were citizens of the town whereas all the rest of them all lived in roundabout at like Missions and things like that and we built a house in [name omitted] Street (Aunty Jacqueline, Moree, 12.11.11).

For Cousin Gertrude, they were allowed in the pool as their family lived in town, did not receive government benefits and lived and communicated with non-Aboriginal people:

[20] Coconuts is a derogatory name for an Aboriginal person meaning being black on the outside and white on the inside.

> I think the only reason we were allowed because we lived amongst the white fellas in [name omitted] Street and we lived there for bloody years. And we didn't get no Abstudy [Financial study assistance from Government] or anything like that no benefits.
>
> *Lana: Yeah and so it was do with that - they probably saw you as different or something like that maybe or?*
>
> Maybe. Because mum and dad both worked so they could support us. Well at school we were always up town niggers because we lived in [name omitted] Street where the rest of them lived on missions. So there was a bit of racial stuff there but didn't worry me…And as kids we were never allowed to sleep away at friends places or anything like that. And we sort of just had our own crew, oh I don't think there was any Murris[21] involved in, it was just - because you lived with them, lived with the whites well you communicate with the whites. In like well Murris well they stay down their end and they just all stuck together too (Cousin Gertrude Moree, 7.11.11).

Cousin Darren was allowed to enter the pool with his school but not at other times:

> I was never thrown out because I used to go with the school. That's what didn't make sense. If you went in there with four or five of you, you wasn't allowed in, but if four or five of you went over there with the school, for the school carnival, you could swim. But that's stupid, isn't it? (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

Cousin Siena was allowed in the pool as she was part of the swimming club. She did not escape criticism however with some people stating she should not be in the pool. Her love for swimming made her determined to continue even though her feelings were hurt. She was accepted by the Manager of the pool and her trainer due to her high swimming ability:

> They reckoned I shouldn't be swimming in their pools and I shouldn't be in the races and all this and that. It used to hurt me a bit. Sometimes I'd get a bit teary there and then I used to think, "Oh I'm not letting them turn me away from something that I like", so I was just determined that I was going to do it and I liked doing it, so I did it. I mean if I was sensitive, I would have pulled out. I wouldn't have done any of it.
>
> *Lana: But you kept on going. Did the attendants ever say anything to you at the pool that you should or shouldn't be there?*
>
> No, some of the workers would that worked at the pool but the guy that managed it and my trainer, I never had any flack from them. Once they knew my ability ... at least they were willing and gave me a bit of go because they knew that we were determined and even my brother. We used to go there but you'd get a lot of flack (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

Cousin Daisy stated she didn't have any problems gaining entry to the pool, although she stated that at times she did:

[21] A Murri is a term used that Aboriginal people use to identify others according to where they are from. A Murri is typically used for those from Queensland or upper New South Wales (near the border of Queensland).

> Teenager, I remember it was good, because we were in high school then and our friends, and we all had boyfriends then and we all used to meet at the pool and I found that we didn't have any problem then, growing up as teenagers at school, it might be before my time. We've never experienced, you did on some occasions, but you just ignored it (Cousin Daisy, Moree 10.11.11).

(ii) Entry Procedures

Those that did have entry to the pool underwent particular procedures before being allowed to swim & during their time in the pool. These included being given DDT[22] to scrub their hair and bodies, being checked for hair lice, made to have a shower and only allowed to swim in certain roped-off sections:

> When we used to go to the town pool for a swimming carnivals, we had to get scrubbed down, and wash our hair with DDT…we had to do it. They give us the stuff. We had to go and scrub our hair, and scrub and body, and then have a shower (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).

> We'd get in. I can remember on some occasions, they would check your hair to see if you had nits. And we'd always have to have a shower before we got into the pool, and on some occasions, the pool was roped off and you could only swim in the roped-off section (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

In both of these cases, both family members reflected on the procedures and the reasons non-Aboriginal children did not have to undergo the same conditions:

> Well at the – being young you don't really understand much about it. You know what I mean. We thought it was just a policy. I remember once we was talking down the top hill, "Why are we so different?" You know we was having a yarn, and we couldn't work out why we was different to the town mob, they got like TVs and electricity, and we had candle lights and home fires, you know? Old tilly lights, and a lamp (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).

> We'd get in. I can remember on some occasions, they would check your hair to see if you had nits. And we'd always have to have a shower before we got into the pool, and on some occasions, the pool was roped off and you could only swim in the roped-off section…white children did not have to have a shower.… We'd be in there, "How come they don't have to have a shower?" A couple of times like that, and we sort of never really got an answer. So I think it was just more this was the practice (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

[22] DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) is an insecticide.

(iii) Preference to swimming in the river

Some family members reported they did not worry about being allowed in the pool – they preferred the river as the water was fresh, it was fun, free and people were happy to swim there:

> No, didn't worry me one bit [being barred from the pool] because we could go out to the river and have a swim. Anyway, the river was running all the time, and the water was fresh so you wasn't bathing in the one lot of water (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

> Yes we knew [why we couldn't go into the pool], we never worried about it; we had our river. We had our river. No we had a good swimming pool down there and we were all down the river back then and we didn't have to pay any money just go down and have a swim and stay as long as you liked. I don't know about the grownups I don't think they cared either because the kids were all happy down on the river bank (Cousin Daphne, Moree, 10.11.11).

> The river was more fun (than the pool) but see I'd never swam at the pool so I didn't know (Cousin Tia, Moree, 10.11.11).

(iv) The Freedom Ride

As discussed earlier, the denial of Aboriginal people to the Moree baths was highlighted by a violent demonstration outside of Moree baths on 21 February 1965 (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2013a; Curthoys, 2002). Family members living in Moree at the time spoke about their involvement in the demonstration. This included discussion about the requests they had for interviews from Charles Perkins and others; and what they believed the benefits and after effects of the demonstration meant to them and to Aboriginal people in general.

Prior to the demonstration, Charles Perkins and his colleagues approached some family members in efforts to interview them on their negative experiences of racism in Moree. The information my family members gave was not what the freedom rider's expected. Instead of giving negative experiences of racism, some stated they didn't have any problems:

> I know when the students came that time, I was just at home and they [swimming trainer] came and got me and they said "Could you come to the pool for a while we've having a thing on racism down at the pool", because the council owned the pool. Anyway, I went there and all these students came and there was all the local people from around the town there too. They wanted to interview me to see if I'd ever had

> any trouble getting into the pool and how had people reacted to me and all this. I just told the truth… I couldn't tell them, I didn't have difficulty. I got a lot of flack but I was just determined that they weren't going turn me away. I thought well I've got a goal too so I'm sticking to it, and that was it[23] (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

I asked Cousin Siena the reason her trainer asked her to come to the baths. She was confused as to the reason, but offered some possible explanations:

> Well I don't know. I don't know if it was just to try and make out that they weren't racist or not. Well I often think of that today too. Was it to give them a good name or ... the little me or just to be smart to other Aboriginal people, I don't know what it was (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

Similarly, Cousin Darren recounted his story about being interviewed. Sitting on his front porch, Charles Perkins and colleagues asked him if he had any problems with racism. He told them he didn't have any problems as he had good working relationships with non-Aboriginal people. When there were no complaints, the interviewers left:

> There was about seven or eight of them, I could see them coming up the street and [it was a] summer day and then [name omitted] said "Whose all these fellas coming here with white shirts and neck ties on? They're coming up here". I said "I don't know who they are" I wasn't expecting them, they'd been down the Mission, they walked along (name omitted) Street, coming this way. No, he just wanted to know, what's his name, Charlie Perkins, but he just wanted to know if I had any complaints, because I got on well at school and I still do get on well with people in my old age. But then, he said "You got any complaints about the white people, what they say to you and that at school?" I said "No, I've got a lot of good school mates" but I'd left school then, I was living in my house then. I said "No, I've got no complaint". My fathers the same way, he was [a] popular old man on the railways, Dad.
>
> *Lana: What was the reaction, when you said no, you didn't have any complaints?*
>
> I think they wanted me to make a complaint and I said "I've got nothing to complain about" I said "I work with them, they're all good mates of mine and their teaching me things, teaching me the trade and that"
>
> *Lana: And what did they say to that?*
>
> I worked with every nationality, they didn't have to ask me any more questions then. They said "Don't be afraid to say anything" I said "I'm not afraid, I know how to talk" (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

Aunty Jacqueline reacted negatively to the freedom riders when she was asked if her children could attend the pool as part of the demonstration and additionally when she was asked to be photographed with her children:

[23] Cousin Siena excelled in swimming, was part of the swimming club & allowed entry to the baths.

> Well my kids went to the pool that day and then that afternoon a knock come on my door and it was Lyall Munroe, Charlie Perkins and a bloke of Brown, would ask me would my kids go to the pool, and I said 'they've been to the pool but they are already home' and Charlie Perkins said 'well if I pay 'em to go back into the pool will you let em go?' And I said 'oh and what's at the end of that?' And he said 'well if they let your kids in and then I'll have another half a dozen dark children there'. Well if the (name omitted) kids allowed in why aren't the rest of them. I tell him to fuck off.
>
> *Lana: You told him to F off did ya?*
>
> F off I said I don't dictate putting my kids down for you or any other blacks and that was it.
>
> *Lana: What did he say?*
>
> Away he went (Aunty Jacqueline, Moree, 12.11.11).

The same family member recalled that the freedom riders returned and asked for a photograph. Feeling annoyed and used, the freedom riders were again sworn at and told to go away:

> Then oh they came back again with the, oh must have been someone from Tamworth that takes photos and things like that, come up and ask me would I, me and my children sit out the front of my house for him to take a photo of them and I just told him to fuck off.
>
> *Lana: Yeah, it's a, how did you feel about them when they asked you to take the photo?*
>
> Well I was very annoyed about it because I thought they were just using me and my family for a sample for the rest of the Aboriginals, that's what I felt, you know (Aunty Jacqueline, Moree, 12.11.11).

(v) Benefits and after-effects of the Freedom Ride

Despite some negative reactions to the freedom riders, many family members thought that the event was positive as it started to change segregation practices in Moree:

> With the prejudice and all that, it went a long way in our lives I suppose but I don't know when it ended, right about the time when they had that thing with the pool (Cousin Ruth, Moree, 5.9.10.)
>
> … we were allowed there after they'd done the freedom ride. They sort of opened it up to say that Aboriginal people could go in (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).
>
> They just hated things, for what he [Charles Perkins] was trying to do. He was only doing the right thing. Get the freedom for all the Aboriginals, stop the segregation…
>
> *Lana: Was there any kind of talk around town and after that all blew over?*

> No, it did for a while but it quietened down, it went away, it died out then (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).
>
> Well it might have helped Aboriginal people to really get into the pool... (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

(vi) Lack of recognition in competitive swimming

Cousin Tania spoke about the lack of recognition of achievement in swimming. She recalled that eight Aboriginal children joined the local swimming club and started to accumulate points for winning races, training and other activities. Despite the large accumulation of points from constantly winning races, Aboriginal children did not win the overall point score. It was believed that this lack of acknowledgment was denial that Aboriginal children could achieve in swimming:

> I think they adjusted how that worked because, to be honest, we were never beaten.
>
> *Lana: And why do you think they adjusted the scores?*
>
> To be honest, I think it was so that they wouldn't have to acknowledge how good the Aboriginal kids were at swimming. Because even now, Aboriginal people in swimming is sort of not an area where you expect to see swimmers. It's not an area. But we had quite a lot of good swimmers in Coonabarabran, a lot of good Aboriginal swimmers (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

3.3.2 Exclusion and racism in other sports activities

Similar to swimming, Aboriginal children also excelled in other sports such as athletics and team sports however did not win any sports awards, nor were given other opportunities or leadership positions:

> A lot of Aboriginal people were becoming sports champions, junior champion, senior champion, sub-junior champion. A lot of Aboriginal kids were becoming all those champions in different areas, athletics, swimming, participating in teams. But at the end, I can't remember many winning the sports award at the end of year speech nights, no…No, I can't remember in my time at school an Aboriginal person getting that, those awards (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11.)
>
> So you weren't given opportunity, access to opportunity right, what selections and all that (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).
>
> Well we were never…I suppose if you looked back on it there was some discrimination in the team. We were never captains of the team. They were all…the people that were the captains of the softball team or the vigaro team…(Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

Lana: So why weren't you selected then?

Because we were black, and black weren't representing in any great degree at that stage... (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

3.3.3 Name calling while participating in sporting activities

Many people said they were regularly called racist names by their opposing team players and spectators during sporting activities such as rugby league, basketball and in swimming races at the pool. The racist names almost always referred to the black colour of their skin. The names included:

Oh black bastard, liquorice sticks… nigger, boong, you know (Cousin Diane, Moree, 4.9.10).

oh ya boong, ya black cunt. Yeah, It was a way of stirring people up so they didn't perform as well (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

Someone said go back to your own place… They call you black something… yeah black fellow or you fucking black cunt or something like that (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).

Black coons (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

There was the usual name-calling…Black C's and black bitches and things like that (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

Them black bobos you know (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

Blacks (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

While the majority of name calling occurred on fields or on basketball courts, one person stated she was called names while participating in swimming races at the pool or walking:

Because I was black they said oh black. I used to just say 'sticks and stones[24]' (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

The white kids would see you coming [walking to school or on weekends] and you black so and so and all that you know (Cousin Tia, Moree, 10.11.11).

One participant stated that in school all children had nicknames, and his referred to the colour of his skin:

[24] The full saying is 'Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me.

> We had all nicknames, you see…One bloke use to call me Crow because I was black (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

Along with name calling, one participant reported a racist comment towards one of her children:

> Of course you'd hear the odd comment but unless you were the type of person to come right out and call someone on it and to me I've never been like that although once I remember as our kids grew up, we took our kids away to play and someone had made a racist comment at one of our kids…One of them told us to go back to our humpies… (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

Name calling also occurred between Aboriginal people. Cousin Wallace said when he played in a non-Aboriginal rugby league side, he was called a 'gub[25]-a-lover' by Aboriginal people in the opposing side:

> They always called me gub-a-lover when I played for them... That was from the black fellas.
>
> *Lana: Oh right. Oh so they never – they didn't like you playing –*
>
> No. No. No. I was [the] first black fella to play with that white side (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).

3.3.4 Racial Violence

Violence was also a part of racism in physical activities for some family members. This involved spectators as well as players against players from the same side. Cousin Wallace remembers winning a grand final in football where spectators yelled 'rip the black bastards head off'. This erupted into a brawl amongst all:

> We were the first Aboriginal team to win a group football. We won that in 1985. We – Moree dominated that for 12 or 13 years. Yeah. We done 'em. We bust them in the grand final. Then a big brawl broke out, big fight. Whites and blacks, everybody into it (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).

Cousin Larry recounted that at a young age he was subjected to racial violence. He was bashed by his own team mates in an under-fourteen aged football team. Reflecting on this experience, he felt it was unsafe to be around non-Aboriginal people and was the start of him thinking about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in opposition to each other:

[25] A 'gub' is defined as a non-Aboriginal person

> I got smashed up after a practice one day because I didn't go home straightaway. It was my own mates from the football team (laughs). It was black versus white, they decided to bust me up, 4 white kids. They were just targeting black fullas. I just happened to be practicing kicking goals. They didn't like that I was the goal kicker for their side, and a bit better footballer than they were. It was a very strange thing, I thought I was safe, but it started me thinking about black versus white.
>
> Lana: In life or in sport?
>
> That it wasn't safe to be hanging around where white people were (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

In addition, he acknowledged that the bashing was due to racism:

> They seemed like nice guys. But you know racism is a thing that it's like a disease. I suppose they were just trying to outdo each other, wondering who could attack the black fulla [laughs] (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

At boarding school, Cousin Larry talked about another bashing he received because he was Aboriginal and to establish the 'pecking order' of boys at boarding school:

> Well at [name of boarding school omitted] the same thing happened. I was a great sportsman and someone in a year ahead of me, was a huge guy. He decided to bust me up one day just because I was black. Anyhow it doesn't matter, it's just history.
>
> Well part of it is the boy culture, the school boy culture. You have to find, get your place in the pecking order…Part of it is racism, part of its just boys stuff. I, like one year I had, I was counting them for some stupid reason – I had 17 fist fights.
>
> *Lana: 17, and what were they over?*
>
> Same story, mainly bloke stuff. But some of it is black versus white. It might be something like 'ah you black bastard', 'don't fucken call me a black bastard, you white bastard'. And it goes on from there. Anyway two to tango but I wasn't a person that instigated most of them. I just happened to be caught up with them. But boarding school was full of fights (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

3.3.5 Relationship differences on and off the sporting field

Some spoke of being treated differently according to whether they were on a sporting field or off it. Cousin Dirk said that he was enemies on the field with non-Aboriginal opponents, but got on well with them off the field. On the other hand, Cousin Otto said the opposite. These differences are highlighted below:

> We was enemies on the field but we'd get together off the field, mainly meet at the vic [hotel], you know we'd go behind someone's house in their backyard. You know and we'd all meet there. But it'd be mainly black fullas at the house. But it would be black and white mixed at the pub. It was black and white mix. You might see a bit of a

> punch up and that but you know. But I was treated good, pretty good. Yeah (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10)
>
> Oh no, they all seemed to get on there [on the football field], but it's outside definitely. Someone's got under their skin or something (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).

For Cousin Mary however there was no difference in how she was treated on or off the netball court with non-Aboriginal people:

> *Lana: So were you treated differently on the [netball] court as to off the court?*
>
> Never (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

3.3.6 Resistance and Reactions to Racism in physical activities

In response to name calling, some family members retaliated with violence, while others did not. The two main physical activities where retaliatory violence occurred was football and to a lesser extent basketball. In football, Cousin Larry and Cousin Otto retaliated with violence:

> I'd just bust them. I'd target them and didn't care how big they were, just run at them and go troppo (crazy) (Laughs)
>
> *Lana: Did it help? Did they say that to call you the names after you'd bust them or?*
>
> I'd tell them 'so you like playing with us now?' and I stood over the top of them. 'What have you got to say now, you white cunt?' so you'd give and take (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).
>
> Well I'd say that's not right, so I'd get up and retaliate and then they wonder why you retaliate for. I don't like discriminations. We've all got the same blood, everything else. We're all just different colours. What's the difference? We've all got to live in the world. We got to make the world better for a lot of us.
>
> *Lana: When you say you retaliated, what did you used to do?*
>
> Oh well retaliate and tell me that and then he hit me, I retaliate hit him back. Trick or treat, no trick or treat here sorry (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).

Reacting to violence with violence gave Cousin Mike respect from the non-Aboriginal person. As a result, he was thereafter treated better:

> Once you'd given them concussion, they were right. That's how we played it down here, then the respect comes, especially when you start winning premierships... Actually, what you've got to do is knock sense into them. They don't snap out of it until you injure them (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

For others, rough play in football was instigated as a way to resist against non-Aboriginal people and Police:

> Yeah we used to like it when we used to play white fullas, local sides. You know get a bit rough and that, we used to love it.
>
> *Lana: Why was it rough?*
>
> You know, we didn't want white fullas to rule us. As footballers, we were more the superior sports person. Like the black fullas you know, we didn't want to take a loss (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).
>
> Well you want to rip their heads off, that's how you feel, because in that (name omitted) team there was a few coppers there eh, and my brother …he was sitting on the sideline, and this big fella just come running at us, and I picked him up and drove him, and one of the blokes said, 'Oh what's that black cunt here can do.' And my brother said, 'Don't worry about him.' And, 'Whoa.' 'That's just my little brother over there.' 'Oh. Over there.' And it was a copper. And any copper that played, black fellas wanted to kill him. You know what I mean? (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).

In basketball, two female family members either punched or pushed over opposing team members if they called them names:

> Bang
>
> *Lana: Did you punch them?*
>
> You'd come off and bang, you'd soon hit them. Yeah, that's right. I'll give you liquorice stick (Cousin Diane, Moree, 4.9.10).
>
> I think some reacted – probably all of us at some stage had reacted with like pushing them over (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

(i) Non-violent reactions

There were also non-violent reactions to name calling. For this family member, he didn't let the name calling bother him and instead reacted with words instead. Having said that, he also stated he was ready to get physical with others if needs be:

> No, I wouldn't be bothered, wouldn't worry me. Just go in the one ear and fly out the other.
>
> *Lana: Yeah. So how did you have that much strength in you as a young man to like just let it go there?*
>
> I had big broad shoulders.
>
> Yes, it didn't worry me and I said at least you know I'm black. I could turn around and say shut up, they'd say no more. Yeah, and I said you fellas don't know you're white.

> No, no, they'd shut up, they wouldn't say nothing because they know I'd fire one straight back at them again.
>
> *Lana: Yeah. Did they ever get physical over that?*
> If they ever got physical, I knew how to use my dukes, don't you worry about that. (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

For others, they laughed it off; was so accustomed to being discriminated against that he was immune to it; or used the name calling as a positive to make them more determined, or they just did not worry about it:

> No, they might just call you a Murris name or something, but I just laughed it off, but you didn't take it serious (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).
>
> *Lana: So didn't worry you or anything like that.*
>
> No. I copped a lot of racism all my life, so it didn't worry me (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).
>
> It made us more determined in them days (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).
>
> *Lana: Right, did you understand that's that why at the time that's why you weren't picked [selected for representative teams], or is it just looking back on it now?*
>
> No I sensed it then, and I didn't worry about it.
>
> *Lana: Why didn't you worry about it?*
>
> Because I just didn't worry about it (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

(ii) No Racism in physical activity

A small amount of people reported they did not encounter any racism in physical activities. Cousin Gary and Cousin Heidi offered different reasons why racism did not occur. For Cousin Gary, he believed it was due to his fair skin. For Cousin Heidi, she believed it was due to her family's involvement with non-Aboriginal people in the community:

> *Lana: a few people I've been talking to have been saying there was a bit of discrimination on the field and whatever at times in football, did you ever experience anything like that?*
>
> No, I was a bit lucky, sort of like cause I was a lot fairer than other black fullas. [name omitted]'s really dark. They might have given them a bit of a tickle up (Cousin Gary, Colyton, 4.11.10).
>
> Some towns had a lot of racism within the town and I'm sure there was heaps of racism here but we didn't see it, well our family didn't see it. It may not have been the same for every family in town. All our experiences are different so for our family in

> particular because we were involved in everything and Dad was heavily involved in community activities and so was Mum at that time because we did everything, we didn't have a problem (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

Two other family members said they had no issues with racism in their respective sports of football.

> *Lana: so never, discrimination never came into the sport [football]?*
>
> No, no, no (Cousin Barry, Dundas, 5.11.10).
>
> I don't remember, there could well of been, it was par of the course I suppose, but nothing stands out that was solid or anything like that (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter began with my Dad's stories which provided a window to extend the conversations with other family members. As stated, all stories offer my interpretative conclusion to understand racism in physical activity settings. These experiences of racism are contextualised into a time in Australian history where segregation was alive and well. Racism was a normal part of everyday life, and these stories of racism in physical activity are just a microcosm other racism they endured.

The stories of racism my family members reported occurred in issues surrounding the inclusion and exclusion of Aboriginal people to swimming pools, name calling which nearly always was a swear word coupled with other words referring to their dark skin and racial violence. Being treated differently on and off the field was an interesting phenomenon which confused some family members. Family members reacted and responded to racism in various ways. For most, physical violence was the natural reaction. Some even stated that the violence was a strategy to stop name calling; it was a perceived way to gain respect from non-Aboriginal people. People reported that this strategy of violence seemed to work. For others, they reacted in non-violent ways and laughed it off.

Aboriginal people suffered a great deal of racism however these stories have also revealed other stories from some who did not encounter much racism, if any. Some family said they did not suffer racism, perhaps due to several reasons such as having fairer skin and therefore being invisible; or that they related well with non-Aboriginal

people due to their regular involvement with them in community life. Some were accepted as they lived in town, rather than on the fringes of town. To non-Aboriginal people it appeared they were more civilized if they lived in town and therefore more accepted. The literature surrounding the iconic 1965 freedom ride did not report the stories that some Aboriginal people were accepted in the community and others were accepted into the Moree pool albeit under certain conditions (Curthoys, 2002; Nugent, 2013). It also did not report that some community members thought the freedom riders were trying to exploit their children during the demonstration, nor did it report that some Aboriginal people did not care about gaining entry to the baths as they preferred the river. In addition, some family members in this study did not report any racism in their physical activities. While these stories were not as prevalent than the majority who did report racism, they are still important to give another side to the story/stories. These stories of difference reveal other sides to the stories of the 'normal' discourse surrounding racism as well as the dominant discourse about the freedom ride. It is through gaining the individual experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal people that a more balanced story can be told.

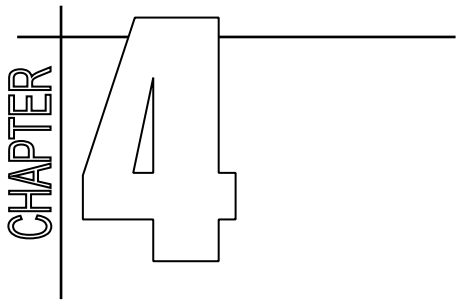
This chapter is the first of three chapters that are devoted to the results of this study. It shows that racism was part of the everyday physical activity experience of most of my family members. Racism in physical activity was a microcosm of other racism that was happening in other parts of their lives. Experiencing racism did not mean that my family yielded to this treatment. They resisted and reacted in various ways, either through counteracting violence with violence; or using words to laugh it off; finding alternative activities (such as swimming in the river rather than the pool); or just accepted it as the status quo. Through the interviews I do not recall any family member who gave up any physical activity due to racist treatment. I understand that my family members loved their physical activities and pursued them despite racist interference. The next chapter (Chapter 4) presents the physical activities my family pursued throughout their lives. Chapter 5 extends the conversation about physical activity and reveals the collective truth of the meaning of physical activity in the lives of my family.

– INTERLUDE 2 –

FUNNY STORIES

> The time I was shearing. This bloke was up in Talon in Queensland just over the NSW border, a little town. I said to him once 'Where do you live over there Mick?' Mick Flick his name was. He said 'I live in Talon bud'. I said 'Not many houses there, where do you live?' He said 'I've only got a tent but she's all electric'
>
> Years ago Donnie Gibson and Nighty Allen from Warren were going to meet up at Central Station in Sydney. Nighty got off the train, walked up to a stranger reading a paper at Central Station and said 'Excuse me mate, you haven't seen Donnie Gibson, have you?'
>
> There was a singing group in Australia called 'Mental as Anything'. They had a big hit called 'Live it up'. Anyway, they were touring in Wagga Wagga. The band was apparently lost and couldn't find their venue. One of the band members went up to an old Aboriginal bloke and said 'Can you tell me where the Town Hall is mate?, we're mental as anything'. Not knowing the band member or the band, the bloke said 'Mate, I'm not the full quid myself'.

Background: Dad tells the above stories. These are real stories from those he has met over the years. I reckon I have heard these stories a million times, but every time they are told, they are still funny. Dad always laughs at the end of funny stories, like everyone else hearing them.



BULIGAA. YUURRANGINDAAYDHI BANADHI WORDS ABOUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: THE BODY MOVING

This chapter presents the second part of the results from interviews with my family about the physical activities they experienced in their lives. For all the participants in the interviews, physical activity was an inseparable part of their lives as Aboriginal people. They spoke of physical activities as integral to their living conditions, working lives and their leisure time. This chapter is structured to reflect this lived experience of physically active lives, as well as discussions about how they defined physical activity and what it means to them; what motivated them to participate and the barriers they encountered. In addition the interviews considered the physical activities older family members currently participate in. The chapter tells a collective story of physical activity as part of everyday life that was important for survival and wellbeing. Similar to the format of the previous chapter, this chapter begins with stories from Dad's individual experiences as the navigator/ pilot/ guiding Elder and is then extended by consideration of other family members' experiences.

4.1 Dad's stories

This section outlines Dad's stories in relation to his physical activity in everyday, his working life, leisure time, motivations and barriers and his current participation.

4.1.1 Gunnedah Hill: Physical activity in everyday life

Gunnedah Hill, approximately 1.5 kilometres North East of the centre of Coonabarabran was a significant place in Dad's life. Although Dad was born in Moree, he spent much of his childhood (under 10), living with his family and other relatives and other families on 'the Hill'. Gunnedah Hill was an Aboriginal domain where only Aboriginal people lived. It began as an informal campsite on the fringes of the town area, but was later gazetted as a government Aboriginal Reserve. The Hill was separated from the main part of town by the Castlereagh River – a typical configuration for many rural NSW towns which ensured Aboriginal residents could be excluded from the 'white' town. Figure 9 shows a map of Gunnedah Hill, in relation to the township of Coonabarabran. The physical terrain of the Hill was described as bushland with trees and scrub.

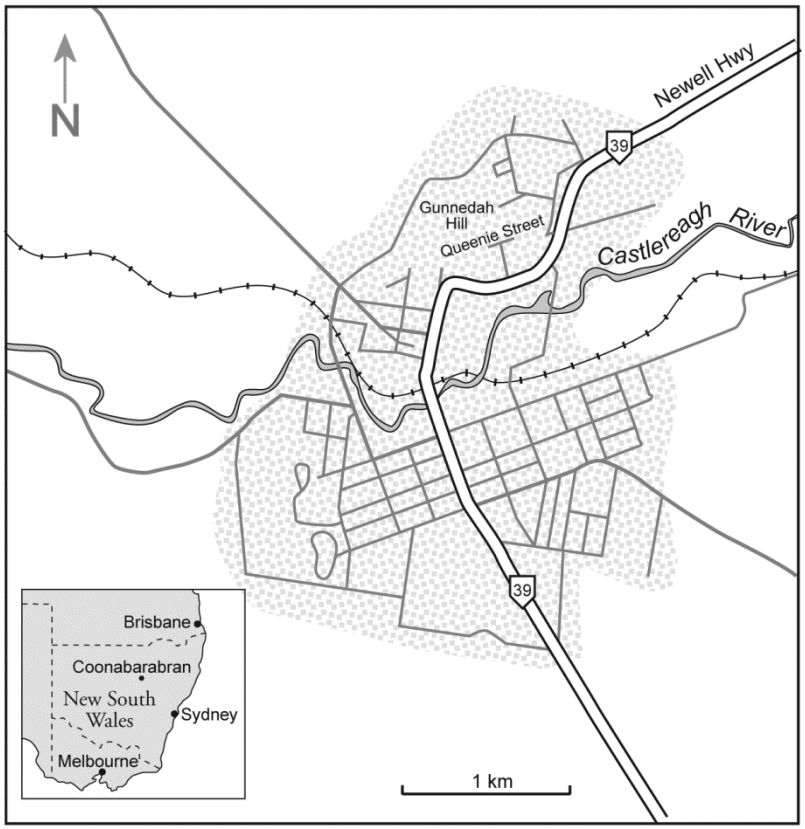


Figure 9: Gunnedah Hill, on the outskirts of Coonabarabran (Drawn by J Davis).

Life on Gunnedah Hill was tough. Dad lived in a tin shack with walls made of flattened kerosene tins and a floor of dirt. Winters were very cold on the Hill and Dad told me that he remembered condensation running down the tin walls. To try to make it

warmer, Pop glued paper with flour and water onto the tin and hung hessian around the inside of the walls. Nana made her own brooms from tea-tree bush and continually swept the 'floor' to keep the dust at bay. The facilities on Gunnedah Hill were limited. There was no electricity and light came from kerosene lamps. Water had to be carted in buckets on a yoke balanced over the shoulders and wood was collected from around the hill to make a fire for the 'bush oven' for Nana to cook meals such as rabbit curry, fried scones and damper. Clothes were washed in a copper over a fire and bed waggas (quilts) were made from corn bags. There wasn't a lot of money around in those days and people living on the hill did not get food rations. When times were desperate though, people would go to the Police Station for financial assistance. Pop was a rabbit trapper and as a seven year old, Dad helped his father to trap rabbits, carry them and sell their skins.

Gunnedah Hill was also a significant place of resistance for my family against Government policy of the time. Dad tells a story when the Aborigines' Welfare Board (AWB) made Gunnedah Hill an Aboriginal Reserve and built houses and fences around the existing shacks. Pop didn't like being fenced in and moved the shack to outside of the fence the top of the hill. The AWB saw this as a rebellious move. The following quote describes my Pop's resistance and the subsequent response from the AWB:

> … they (AWB) started to make it into a type of Aboriginal reserve and they started building a few homes there for Aboriginal people. There was four actually. Anyhow, Dad put in for one, but he never got one. Then when they put the houses up - they fenced it in, so Dad didn't like being fenced in, so it was practically overnight one night - I think I was away at the time. They pulled the house down and moved it to the other side of the - outside the fence, up the top of the hill. That's where we spent a few years (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

> Subject: Demolition of dwelling- Mr Alf Leslie
> I wish to bring to your notice the fact that the abovementioned person residing on new reserve number 77160, Gunnedah Hill has demolished his sub-standard dwelling thereon, and has erected another similar dwelling outside the boundary of the reserve. He has done this without my knowledge moving overnight (Aborigines Welfare Board, 27 April 1959).

Despite the living conditions, Dad has always recalled his life on Gunnedah Hill fondly, in particular the many games he played with sisters and cousins who also lived there. The Hill was a place of exploration and imagination for the children. Games mostly emulated adult physical activities. The children used tree branches and other objects

from the Hill for games. Dad describes a game where he was pretending to ride a horse by sitting on a bent pine tree branch:

> …the pine trees we'd pull em over with a bit of rope, and put a bag on em and we'd jump on it and use it as a horse. I don't know [what we called that game], just wanted to ride the horse I spose. We didn't have a horse so we used the pine tree, It's having another kid down the bottom and they'd say 'let er go' and way you go you'd start ridin' (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Dad loved to explore Gunnedah Hill with his cousins. In Figure 10, Dad is shown on the far right on a rock ledge with his two of his cousins, along with his air gun he named 'Daisy'. Dad loved Daisy and used it to shoot birds and targets.



Figure 10: Ray Leslie (Dad), far right with his Daisy air gun and cousins on Gunnedah Hill
(Photo: Family photograph)

Other games included playing 'cubby' house which involved children pretending to be their parents. This game emulated their fathers coming home after a day's work of rabbit trapping. In this case, sticks with a forked end were imagined as rabbits:

> I don't know whether you'd call it a cubby house or not…you'd play as mum and dad (laughs) and we used to use a forky bushy stick for the pairs of rabbits so we'd imitate our fathers as rabbit trappers, and saying 'We're coming home with all these rabbits' and you're hanging em up on forky sticks, you know across the tree, [and saying] 'You've got so many pair tonight' and all that stuff (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

As there was no transport, Dad walked everywhere, such as into town. Walking had its hazards though. When Dad and Mum were courting, Dad was regularly windy (frightened) when walking home after the pictures (cinema). The Hill at night was known to be haunted and often evoked fear in those who walked the back way into

town. Figure 11 shows a picture of the road from the Hill into town where Dad walked. In the following quote, Dad talks about walking into town and calling to his mother effort to alleviate his fear:

> We walked all the time. It was long, it seemed a long way when you went to the pictures, cause it was all dark and you're a bit windy, a bit frightened. I used to come up the back way and they had about two hundred yards of scrub there and I'd be singing (yelling) out, frightened coming home from the pictures 'Mumma are you awake? Are you awake?' 'Course I'm bloody awake, how can I sleep with you singing out all night?' So I was the big brave fulla, I used to walk Mum home when we was courting around together I was very brave, and then when I got home I was windy, coming through that pine scrub there, she was like your hairs on the back of your head coming up, you'd feel this hot wind behind you, gees I used to move (go quickly) through there (laughs) (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).



Figure 11: Track from Gunnedah Hill into Coonabarabran (Photo: Lana Leslie)

Dad's early life on Gunnedah Hill was a very physical life with daily routines and the many activities he engaged in with others. These memories made such a strong impression on Dad that he moved back to Gunnedah Hill six times in his life, as well as visiting it many times. Figure 12 is a map of the 36 places where Dad lived throughout his life and the trail he made indicating his movements back to Gunnedah Hill.

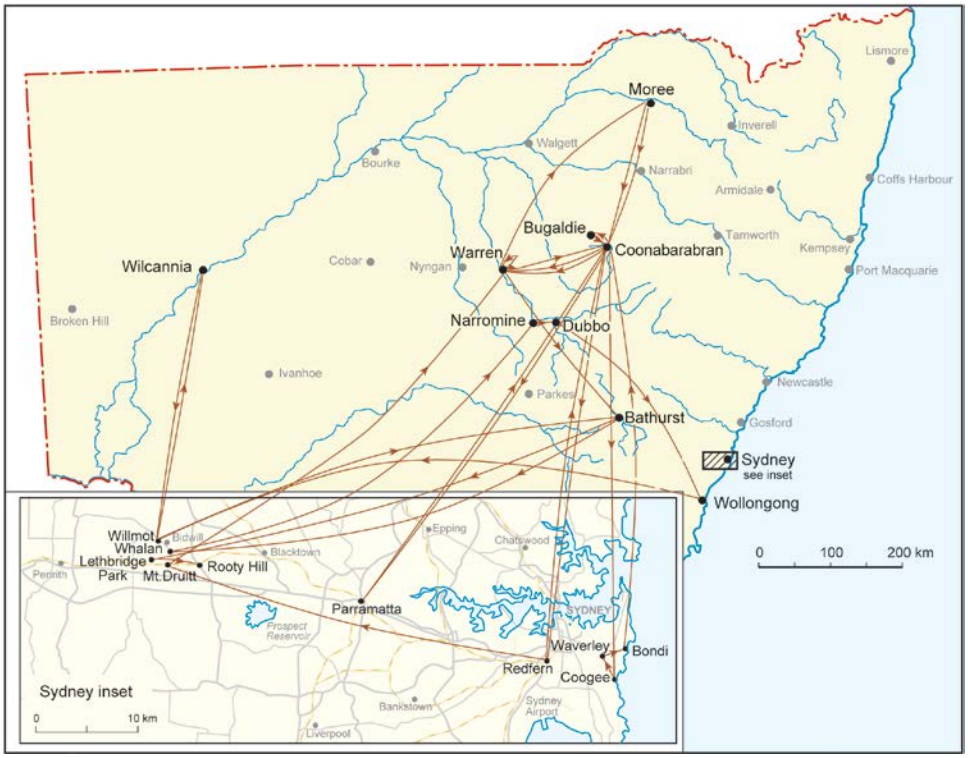


Figure 12: Places Dad lived, highlighting many returns to Gunnedah Hill (Drawn by J Davis).

4.1.2 A Physical Working life

> I didn't learn a whole lot in the shearing sheds, I just had to survive there on a daily basis (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

The majority of Dad's employment consisted of hard, physical work on the land. The most physically challenging work was in shearing sheds. Dad worked in them for 14 years (aged 21 to 35) and travelled widely around New South Wales and sometimes Queensland first as a roustabout then a wool roller, a 'picker upper', a wool presser, then a shearer. It was hard work and involved extensive travel, but it was essential to support his family:

> It was totally all travel … you had to travel and sometimes 300 mile and I know for two or three years I hitchhiked with a kit bag to different towns, in central western NSW, out as far as Wilcannia and places, Cobar and places, but it was a thing you had to do if you wanted to feed your family (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Figure 13 shows the places where Dad travelled when working in shearing sheds New South Wales.



Figure 13: Places where Dad travelled for work in shearing sheds in NSW (Drawn by J Davis**).**

For as long as I can remember, Dad has talked about the challenging work in shearing sheds and particularly wool pressing, which he described as the 'hardest job in the shed'. Of that time, there were no machines that pressed the wool into bales. Instead, manual presses were used to compact the wool down enough to add more in before it was packaged up for removal. Here, Dad describes wool pressing and the toll it took in later years on his body:

> …it was terribly hard work cause today they've got electric pressers and I used to use the old manual ones, they used to have the Kurtz and the Ferrier presses and one they had a bag that you had to dive on and pull it down, the other one you had to wind up, put the rope on, the iron ropes on and pull it down with the big lever so it was fairly strenuous, probably one of the hardest works I have ever done in me life and wheat and wool and all that stuff it was probably the hardest, one of the hardest jobs, I think it was even harder than shearin'. It does a lot to your body and it's telling on me today, all the pain that's coming into my arms and legs and shoulders and back as you get older. But it was a pretty strenuous job (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Dad excelled in wool pressing despite his stature at five feet two and weighing eight stone (51 kilograms). His skills led to earning him a title - the 'pygmy presser', given the nickname by another aptly named man: 'Joe the Dog':

> For a few contractors around there (Warren)…I was known as the wool presser but one fulla around there, because I was so small he used to call (me) the pygmy. So that's when I got the name the pygmy presser and that bloke was named Joe Eldridge and he had a nick name himself called Joe the Dog probably cause he was a bit ugly. But anyhow I got pretty good at it, I pressed the most I ever pressed was at Mumblebone, I think Caters owned that, a big company, they owned that and a few other properties, it was 42 bales in one day, so that was a pretty good effort for eight stone wringing then (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

The most common work in shearing sheds for Dad was shearing. This was also very physically demanding work. Work consisted of an eight hour day with an hourly rate of $20-$30 an hour. Dad was a hard worker and he regularly shore over 200 sheep a day, and stated that one day he crutched (just head, tail and between legs) 1300 sheep in a day. Figure 14 shows a picture of Dad shearing and following are two quotes from Dad describing the challenging work of shearing and crutching, likening it to running:



Figure 14: Dad shearing in a shed outside of Warren, 1976 (Photo: Family photograph)

> [With shearing], you put your hand, left hand, if your right hand, you put your left hand on his bum, you twist his head, as he's fallin' over you are runnin' back with him and you are grabbin' him by the two front legs and you run him, put him between your legs and then you use the machine, do your job, then run and do it all over again, all day, all day, every day until the last sheep is down (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

> Another type of shearing was crutching where you did the head and tail and all that around the bum and in between the legs and all that stuff and that's a quick, a really quick job where you gotta run all day, you shear, you run in grab another one, shear, run in grab another one, let em go and all that stuff, most I ever did was 1300 in one day so that's a lot of runnin' – that's like runnin' from here to Parramatta and back (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Understandably, fitness was a requirement to work in shearing sheds. Shearing was a high intensity physical exercise that required endurance, strength and flexibility. Dad was very fit. Here, Dad tells a story of his cousin visiting him in a shed near Trangie. The cousin (who was from the city) was interfering with Dad's work by wiping his sweat and warning Dad that he was going to 'kill' himself by working too hard:

> …I was shearing a lot of sheep…and he came over to me and said 'cuz, cuz, slow up', he said 'you'll kill yourself' and while I was shearing, he was wiping me face and interfering with me time that I had to get one done you know cause I used to work off the clock. If I could do 4, 5 or 6 in 15 minutes well that's how I'd get a good tally and he was wiping my face he said 'oh you'll kill yourself working like that' he couldn't understand how much energy [I had] and he thought all the sweat coming out of you (me) that you'd (I'd) drop any minute but it took a lot of fitness to be in the shearing game (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Like wool pressing, Dad also excelled in shearing. He became known as a 'gun shearer', well known to shear large amounts of sheep. To be a 'gun' meant that you occupied a high status in the shearing shed. Everyone wanted to know him, and treated him very well. But as Dad says, 'don't ever judge a book by its cover'. At five feet two, Dad was perceived as a 'little fulla' (fellow) at a place called Boorowa. Here, Dad was judged by his size and placed at the end of the row of shearers. This was a mistake as he ended up being the gun shearer which meant the roustabout collecting the wool from his sheep had to run further.

> Well they had the shearers and then they had the gun shearers. The gun shearer is the shearer who shears the most and continued to do it all through the shed. So everyone wants to know ya. If your only shearing a few they don't want to know ya. And it had an environment if you were a gun shearer everyone came into your room and bullshitted and trying to impress and [they said] 'oh yeah I did this' and 'I did that'. There was a period of time when I hit the gun status and people used to come into my room. You feel like your top of the world. Everyone is crawling up your backside, thinking you're the ings and bings, or you're the best bit of gear since sliced bread (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

> One thing people judge a book by the, don't ever judge a book by its cover. Cause one shed I moved into down among Boorowa once we were shearing down there, had a 4 or 5 stand shed, they said 'little fuller here, we'll put you down the end down there mate' and that was the biggest mistake they ever did because I ended up being the gun shearer of the shed and it was further for the roustabout to pick the fleece up – they said we should of put you in number 1, closer to the table (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Dad entered into shearing competitions in shows around NSW such as Warren, Wellington and Dubbo. His achievements included running second and third at two shows. Figure 15 is a photograph of a shearing pennant from the 1977 Warren show.

For his achievements, Dad received pennants which he treasured as an acknowledgment and memento of his high skills in shearing.

> … I run 2nd and 3rd in two shows and that's from shearers from everywhere, from all over NSW so I must have been alright at that (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).



Figure 15: Shearing ribbon won at Warren Show, 1977 (Photo: Raymond Leslie).

4.1.3 Leisure time

Dad also loved physical games and sports in his spare time. Games, like those played in his early life on Gunnedah Hill were played using the land around him. When living in Moree, Dad recounted a story of making a ball out of mud after it rained.

> A lot of other activities was at Moree on the black flat. We'd roll mud until it got to about two or three, four foot high along the black flat and ah that was a fair bit of activity there. Well after it rained up there, black mud, black ground is easy to if you walk it sticks to your feet. You only gotta go a hundred meters, and five inches higher than what you are because it sticks to your shoes and feet so the same things, so we'd start a ball off, and roll that ball along and finally it got bigger and bigger and bigger so you'd end up with a big roll of mud (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Games, like rolling the mud ball described above, involved play with relatives. The communal nature of games appealed to Dad, such as the game of rounders. This game, like baseball was inclusive of all people.

> Playing rounders was a big thing. The whole family was involved in that, from young to old. Even if you went fishing and that you'd still have a go at rounders. On the Beemunnel at Warren we everyone played there, no matter if you were 60, 70 years of age, everyone had a go. And that was a good game. [Rounders was] like baseball I spose, three stops from the base and you'd hit the ball and you had to make it … It

> was a good game… you'd use a tennis ball and an old broomstick or a bit of a waddy, a stick what we called a waddy. Yeah so it was good fun (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

(i) Swimming

Rivers were popular to swim and play in with relatives and other Aboriginal people. Dad talked about swimming in the Castlereagh river in Coonabarabran, the Gwydir river in Moree (what Dad refers to as the 'Big River') and the Ewenmar Creek at the Beemunnel Aboriginal Reserve outside of Warren. Other activities at the rivers included swinging off ropes and tyres over the water, diving, fishing and rounders. Less active activities included playing cards, or having a camp (sleep). All gatherings on the river were communal places for Aboriginal people to recreate in and around as Dad explains:

> … we used to go swimming down … they had a hole down at Coonabarabran, I think it was Willowvale we had a big swing off a pepper tree there, we used to swing out in that, take a bit of dive. That's where all the Aboriginal people, all the black fullas I used to call em' swum down around there… (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

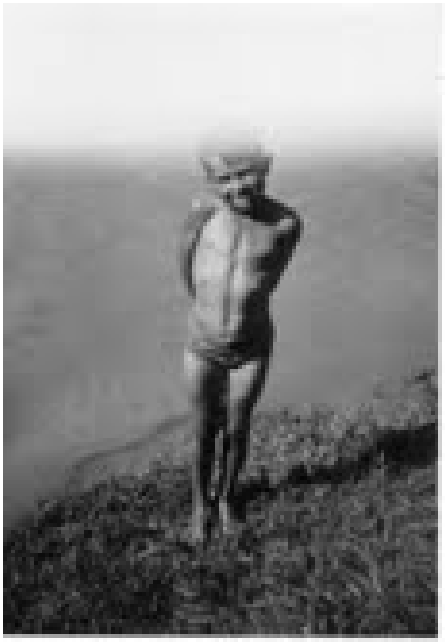


Figure 16: Dad standing at the river bank of Castlereagh River, Coonabarabran, approximately 1953 (Photo: Family photograph).

Figure 16 shows a picture of Dad aged 7 or 8 at the Castlereagh River in Coonabarabran. It was around that time that Dad learned to swim using what was around, in this instance an empty gallon tin. Dad had an empty tin attached to the belt

loops from his trousers and was then thrown in the water. As Dad said, it was literally 'sink or swim':

> … what they did for me because I couldn't swim they tied a gallon tin on my back and chucked me in, so sink or swim I suppose (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

As discussed in Chapter Three, swimming pools were a site for restrictions for Aboriginal people. Dad however gained entry into swimming pools. Figure 17 shows Dad leaving Coonabarabran pool at age 13. In this photo, he is shown to be holding his swimming shorts in one hand with his towel draped over his opposite shoulder. One pool, however was also a site to change Dad's life. In Coonabarabran swimming pool at aged 14, his physical activity prowess of diving gained him the attention of his future wife (my mother, Loretta).



Figure 17: Dad leaving Coonabarabran pool & going home to Gunnedah Hill, aged 13.
(Photo: Family photograph)
Note: Towel over shoulder and swimming shorts in hand

Dad describes his diving and how it attracted his future wife:

> I met her at the swimming pool, I was showing off a bit there, doing a bit of swimming, … a bit of diving, I used to do swallow dives, bend your body right over, go down, lair rise (showing off). Mum must have been a bit impressed as she's still here. She was pretty good at going underwater for a long time. So I was pretty impressed with her as well (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

(ii) Football: 'We loved it completely'

Dad played football (Rugby League) for most of his life from primary age to middle adulthood. He played in the positions of fullback, centre or halfback in towns such as Warren, Coonabarabran, Narrabri and Moree. Football was a contact sport that was very popular with Aboriginal people, whether they were playing or spectating. Dad loved football and he excelled in it as he describes:

> Never had much to do with many other things, but there was certainly a lot of football. I believe we used to go away with the schools and play other schools, go to other towns and play other towns, and big sports carnivals. So we were fairly busy and we loved it completely. I thought I was pretty good anyhow. Done really well in - excelled in football… We had a pretty good time during that time (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

> I think we (Dad and his cousin Alfie) were fairly deadly (good) at the football, pretty good (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.08.08).

Dad's skills in football were recognized with the pennants he received. Figure 18 and Figure 19 are two examples. The first is from playing in primary school in Coonabarabran while the second is from playing as an adult in East Moree.



Figure 18: Rugby League Football Pennant Primary School, Coonabarabran
(Photo: Family photograph)

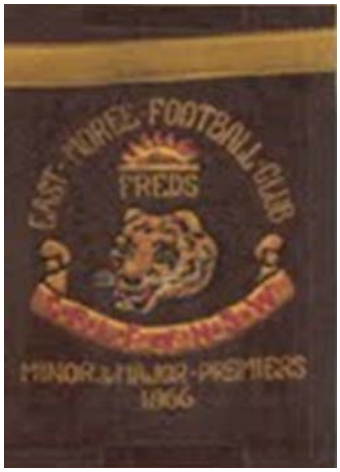


Figure 19: East Moree Football Club Minor and Major Premiers blazer pocket 1966 (Photo: Family photograph)

Dad also spoke about the social aspect of football, where it enabled him to have fun with relatives and others. Football was a sport for everyone, in fact it was the highlight of the weekend – the Sunday outing to travel to other country towns to play or watch football. Dad commented he regularly travelled away to play football and anything up to thirty cars of people did the same. Nothing stopped this outing – not even Dad's car, a slow Ford Consul.

> I don't know, I think it was a thing (playing football) that everyone did. Every bloke done, every kid done, especially males they used to do that. It was a thing where you'd travel sometimes particularly in Warren we used to travel from town to town. Everyone used to go because that was the big outing on Sundays. Everyone would go to Nyngan, 18 or 20 or 30 cars used to go across. Our car could only do 40 mile an hour. It took us a while to get there, and I took mum and all the girls, they'd say 'hit her'- 'hit her be buggared, she's flat out now at 40' and that was a 52 Ford Consul she didn't have much guts (power) about her (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

(iii) Boxing

Chapter Three discussed Dad's experience in boxing and the racial violence that was his motivation to enter the sport. In his teenage years, Dad stated that he was regularly in fights with non-Aboriginal boys so he learned the sport of boxing because he '…was sick and tired of getting a flogging going home after school' (Raymond Leslie, 4.08.08). This was initially an act of survival but changed into a physical activity that positively affected Dad's life.

The sport of boxing and the 'Police Boys Club' (now called the Police and Citizens Youth Club) at Parramatta became a place for shaping Dad's identity. He first attended at age thirteen, along with some of his cousins. Apart from boxing, he also participated in other activities at the club such as wrestling and weight lifting. Acquiring the skills from boxing gave Dad the ability to defend himself from racial violence, and as a result, he was not targeted as much. Others noticed Dad's skills and as a result, he gained respect. On a personal level, Dad also gained self-discipline with the assistance of the trainers at the club. Dad stated that they 'broadened' his life by being 'sympathetic', but at the same time disciplining him when needed. For Dad, the trainers being sympathetic was an important part of the activity. He was accepted at the club regardless of his race and felt supported there. In this quote, Dad describes the trainers as people who supported him but also ensured discipline was enforced:

> People who broaden your lives like people in the Police Boys Clubs, they had trainers, they had sympathetic people, they had people there if you were cheeky they would clip you under the ears (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Dad's skills in boxing meant that he won fights and as a result, won cups (trophies). The cups, while a small gesture by the club, meant a lot to Dad. Dad reflected that although they were small, the cups were engraved and became a tangible record he 'was there'. Figure 20 shows Dad with some of his cups. Below the figure is a quote from Dad about the importance of winning the cups.



Figure 20: Dad with his boxing cups aged, 14, Beemunnel Aboriginal Reserve, Warren (Photo: Family photograph)

> It was good fun, the police boys club looked after us fairly well. It, you know, we'd win cups. I had a lot of cups at one stage. I don't know where they got to now. Well it wasn't fantastic cups but there were cups. You might of got little cups but as long they were engraved and that. Saying that you were here (laughs) (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

(iv) Physical activity: Definition and Meanings

Dad talked about how he defined physical activity and what it meant to him. As discussed in Chapter Seven, I interviewed Dad several times from 2008 to 2010. His definition changed over time, probably due to our discussions and listening to other people's stories during his presence in some family member's interviews. In 2008, Dad described physical activity as exercise, while in 2010 he described it to incorporate other activities such as physical employment. The quotes below show this change:

> Well I think its exercising and walking (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

> … first thing I thought of was fitness … and the types of physical other things you do, like physical in working in your lifetime, what type of work you did, how strenuous it was and whatever things and the effects of after (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

Regarding the meaning of physical activity, it was different according to his age. As a younger man, Dad took his fitness for granted. He described physical activity as 'just an everyday occurrence …during your [younger] life to keep fit' (Raymond Leslie, 4.11.10). It made him feel more mature & develop self-confidence, as well as enabling positive social interactions with others, as outlined here:

> Well, you got with other kids and big fellas and you think you're grown up. You think you know everything and you're looking at going to different carnivals and there's plenty of people (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

As an older man, he recognized that being fit and active enabled him to function better in his everyday life. The absence of it stopped him from doing the things he wanted to do:

> … I think it's pretty important to keep fit when you get a bit older there's other things that stop you from doing the things you'd like to do (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.08.08).

Dad also recognized that being active was connected to positive feelings of wellbeing. In this quote, Dad talks about the way he feels after mowing the lawn:

> It certainly cheers me up a bit. I get tired, but you get a new lease of life where you feel like you've done something … and say, "Geez, that was good". Then after a while, when you sit down, you go, "Ahh". You want to have a camp (sleep) (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10.)

One of the recurring messages that Dad also spoke about was the important role that physical activity had in his life, without him even realising it at the time he was participating. He said '…unbeknownst to you, you're doing exercising or doing something with your life you know' (Raymond Leslie, 4.08.08). His language throughout the interviews involved an extensive use of the word 'life' when talking about physical activity. He has talked about physical activity in relation to his current and past life, that it was the good life and the very strenuous and stressful life, football being the best part of a child's life, the country life vs the city life, doing something with your life, a new lease on life, what you did in life. Examples include:

> I thoroughly enjoyed that type of a life (playing football) (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).
>
> (football bus trips) But it was a good life at that stage (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).
>
> The earliest time that I got into playing football was probably the best part of most country kid's lives (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

4.2 Motivations and Barriers to Physical Activity

This section outlines Dad's motivations and barriers to physical activity.

4.2.1 Barriers

Dad spoke about internal and external factors to be barriers to his physical activity. The internal factors were personal to him: his health issues; being lazy and losing the will to exercise. The external factors were those that affected him from others and from the choices he made in his employment and places he lived: racism; judgment from others; inappropriate advice from medical practitioners; moving from physical employment to sedentary employment; sedentary lifestyles in general and living in the city.

Dad reflected on the internal factors as an older man and did not refer to internal factors affecting his activity in younger days. The physically demanding jobs he had held in his earlier life took a toll on his body in later life causing many health issues

such as arthritis and pain in many parts of his body. He acknowledged there was no alternative to the physical work he did in the past. Dad explains in the following two quotes:

> You get a lot of problems and due to your work life. I don't think I would have the problems if I worked the way I had. I don't think me knees, ankles, shoulders, me wrists, all down the right side, just about stuffed. It's due to the type of employment I've had. It's only come on later in life. I think you know it's a given you know.

> The only thing I try to do is walking but it's cold or the arthritis or the pains prevent you from doing that. I think it's a sad thing looking back at it, I don't know, there wasn't any other employment so you had to do what you had to do in the country towns. There was no factories or none of this or that out there. You had to take up the seasonal type of work out there. I guess a lot of the people ended up the same way. But the work you did certainly in the younger times is telling on us today (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

He also spoke about laziness being a factor for others. He talked about 'losing the will' and gave the example of his sister who had previously been very active but lost the will after her husband died. She became obese and warned Dad that he should never let the same thing happen to him. Dad commented that people judge others, like himself on him being overweight however do not understand the type of life he has led.

> Me sister said to me a while back, "Don't let it happen to you, brother", she said, "this is what can happen to you". She was physical, fishing all the time, working on the cotton, working on burr cutting, doing all these things, things we all did out in the west, and none…She said, "Don't let it happen to you where you become housebound". She can't walk or - and she just go too overweight. Lot of people look at you then and say, "Oh, look at that fat thing" or something. But they don't understand the type of life that you'd lived and that you lose a lot of will, I think. She would have, after her husband died. A lot of will to go on. So what else is there to do? (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

Dad also reflected on the external factors that were barriers to participating in physical activity. As discussed in Chapter Three, racism permeated all aspects of Dad's life so when I asked him about barriers to physical activity, he chose to answer more generally about barriers he faced in everyday life. His statement: 'I never went to war but I think we were in a war all our life' best sums up his experiences in life with ongoing racism.

> …the big problem about Aboriginal people was people who came back from the World War 2 …people came back they fought for their country but they weren't allowed in the RSL clubs so what does that chance leave for people like me? I never went to war but I think we were in a war all our life. Warren was a place to me, even though everyone said there was very little racism but it took me nearly 9 years to get into the Warren RSL, somewhere to take your wife out, instead of to the pubs and that. [When I did get in they said] 'We'll give him another six months' and that happened each time, and you go again, dress yourself up in a suit, trying to impress and

> you'd be judged by drunks themselves trying to judge whether you were good enough to get into their club. So that went on for a fair few years so the barriers people have were swimming pools, not only that, the movies, the picture shows in Moree. They used to have a barbed wire fence in the picture show...blacks used to sit down the front. They'd draft you like you were sheep going through a turnstile, you'd have to go down there sit on the old bits of wood or something so there were a lot of barriers growing up.
>
> So one big life is a barrier I think to Aboriginal people and causes, the colour of your skin and the places you lived. And the people judge you for them over those periods of time (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Dad, like other Aboriginal people, faced judgments from non-Aboriginal people in relation to their life and leisure activities. As an older man, Dad also faced another type of discrimination: being overweight. Dad was very frustrated that medical practitioners gave him advice to swim to lose weight. He stated that as an older man, he didn't want to swim or do group fitness classes – places where his body would be on display. He said he didn't want to be in a situation where he was discriminated against because he was fat; it reminded him of being discriminated against because of his race.

> I'm not going to no pool. I don't care what happens. I'm not going to no exercise classes. I don't want to get up there in leotards. No, no. You feel embarrassed. You got rolls of fat and they (people) don't like fat people and there's discrimination. I know as an Aboriginal person, been discriminated most of me life, I'd feel the same as I did as them days, being fat (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

Further advice from medical practitioners was also inappropriate. Their encouragement for him to walk was useless as Dad reported he was in a lot of pain. In addition, their encouragement to purchase expensive bread was useless as he could not afford to buy it. Dad stated that the medical practitioners did not listen to him of the reasons why he could not be more physically active or buy healthier food.

> Some people can't even stand up to do exercises, or some people can't even walk, they got that bad today. Then the doctor tells you to do this and do that. It's all right for them; they're not doing it….I believe they have a role to play and they're trying to save your life as well. But, I mean, once it gets to that point in your life then, there's people who don't want to swim. People like - I never ever wanted to swim again greatly from in the, well, the early 80s or something…I don't think they (the Doctors) understand garbage, anything like that.
>
> Well, they tell you to now, "If you want to get yourself doing this, you gotta buy this, this and this". I said, "Good Lord, I'm lucky if I got enough money left over to get a couple of loaves of bread". I don't eat the dear bread, I eat the $1.80 bread. I don't eat $3 and $4 breads. It's all right for them. They're on $100,000 a year. We're only getting a bit over $10,000 a year to live, so we can't afford the food they want you to eat. (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

One of the major barriers to physical activity in Dad's life was the transition from physical to sedentary employment. The change came about when Dad decided to give up working in shearing sheds due to health reasons. He spoke about this change in his life in a definitive way – that it was the beginning (or more like the end) where the 'physical fitness went out and the fatness came in', that it was a 'downward spiral'. Sedentary jobs followed his work in shearing sheds. This included working in Coles Supermarket, Aboriginal Affairs, Corrective Services and Home Care Service of NSW. As well as being sedentary, Dad's wellbeing was affected such as when he worked in Aboriginal Affairs. He described this change as the end of the 'good life' replaced by a life which was 'very strenuous' and 'stressful'. Dad described these sedentary and stressful roles as those that were going to kill him, that sitting down made him overweight. He lamented he didn't do any physical activity that he used to do anymore: he never swam, played football, wool pressed or even shore another sheep. He had changed into a person who wanted to please everybody. He developed a 'welfare mentality' and wanted to 'save the world'. These desires appeared to have a very detrimental effect on Dad's physical activity and more broadly upon his health. In Dad's interviews he appeared very sad when talking about this change in his life.

> I started to get into some Aboriginal Affairs after that. [It was]…very strenuous and very stressful, all of it, and that was the end of the good life. The good life, even though it was hard and continuous and strenuous, that was the end of the life. The more you do in paperwork, I think, the more it kills you. It takes away a lot of other things from your life. It's never been the same. You go further and further. You're sitting at a desk. You're getting fatter and fatter.
>
> You just go to work, do your thing, trying to please everybody, and there's not a lot that went on as far as the exercises. I never went to swimming again, never played football again, never done no wool pressing or shearing again. So the physical fitness went out the window. There was never nothing done again.
>
> *Lana: Did you ever try to get into anything again?*
>
> Well, it wasn't even in me thoughts. I had a different life now and this is where I was. I wanted to save the world. I had the welfare mentality and I was going to save everybody and fix everybody up. There's no more of it (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

Dad also commented on sedentary lifestyles in general which were barriers to physical activity. Factors such as driving instead of walking, the use of technology, increased sitting in everyday life all contributed to a lack of physical activity. These factors had changed over years and furthermore Dad had recognised these changes in his life as he describes in the quote below:

> So it's all changed. Too many people, they don't want to walk over and see a mate over there. They'll text him now. They don't want to see him. They don't want to go down to the drive-in or anything and get a bit of exercise. No, we'll get a video. We'll just sit in here and we'll watch the movie. Whole lifestyle has changed for as far as physical activity's concerned. It's changed completely. Everything we do is geared about sitting at home, or sitting on a stool, or sitting on a chair, or driving in a car (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

Dad also spoke about living in the city as a barrier to participating in physical activity. Dad said that it was a healthier life living in the 'bush' (Country) rather than the city. The bush was clean and the work was hard but healthy. The city on the other hand was dirty and had mental strain that shortened life.

> I think I would rather be back there in the bush because even though it was hard work it was healthy work, it was [a] clean environment, ah the wear and tear of yourself ah the city life is so ridiculous. It's not a good life to live. And I think if I had my choice I would still be out there but through health and other problems we came to the city… I think the mental strain of learning, whether you are doing work in the city and departments or university I think that shortens your life, I don't think it's a great thing (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

4.2.2 Motivations

I asked Dad who had influenced him & what had enabled him to participate in physical activity. Instead of focussing his answer on activity, Dad instead chose to answer this question in relation to who had influenced him in his life and what he had learned from them, or didn't learn from them, in the case of working in shearing sheds:

> There was people who got in your road and had some influence on your life, you know I learnt a lot of things … most of the things I learnt I learnt on my own or from other people, working people in the public service, different jobs I've had. I didn't learn a whole lot in the shearing sheds, I just had to survive there on a daily basis (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

Dad stated that his family and his work colleagues influenced his life. In his family, his mother, wife Loretta and his cousins all had positive effects on his life. In work he was influenced by the first Aboriginal Senator, Neville Bonner[26] to enter the Australian Labor Party, as well as Prime Ministers and other Politicians. These people played a part in increasing Dad's self-esteem and confidence.

[26] Although Neville Bonner was part of the Liberal Party, he was still very influential as an Aboriginal leader to Dad.

> … there's some people that has affects on you. You know, through the lifting of the esteem, Mum and I ran across a lot of people, we ran across a couple of Prime Ministers, we ran across a lot of people, different politicians, you know and by lift, you lift in your esteem doing things. It did lift, I don't care, I'd talk to anyone but it's a long fair cry from a fulla who couldn't even answer a telephone when the telephone first got put on (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

4.3 Current participation

Dad talked about his current physical activity and intensity. The activity he participates in includes a small amount of walking and mainly activities in and around the household. Inside the house he does housework including cooking (which he enjoys) and vacuuming; while outside the house he does gardening including mowing and digging. He also commented that there was more housework today in his life compared to when he was growing up. As a young person, housework was minimal - he only had to sweep the ground with a broom (when he felt like it). Regarding walking, Dad said he walked very slowly. Dad appeared to be frustrated when talking about his walking intensity due to his Doctor telling him to 'do it briskly' which was impossible:

> Only thing I do now is a little bit of walking, but not much. I do mowing and that type of thing, digging. I do a fair bit of housework, which I don't mind, like the cooking. Not too good on the vacuuming, but I do it (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

On 14 January, 2013, I had another conversation with Dad to ask him about his current physical activity. He stated that his activity consisted of domestic duties including cooking, washing clothes and cleaning. He said he didn't mow the lawn anymore – he paid Home Care $10 a mow to do it. He also commented that a lot of his activity is caring for his wife (Mum) with her health problems.

4.4 Conclusion to Dad's Stories

This chapter described the important role that physical activity had in Dad's life. It permeated through his living conditions, his work life and his leisure time. As an older man reflecting on his younger life, Dad recognised physical activity in his life and also life in his physical activity. He recognised that many of his current bodily restrictions were due to an earlier physically demanding life however at the same time described those early days in very positive terms. He was well aware that the changes in his life – moving to the city and having more sedentary employment – decreased his physical activity and in turn decreased his health.

It was important for Dad to have recognition for his physical activity achievements. Winning cups in boxing, pennants in football and ribbons for shearing were all tangible markers of his athletic prowess, along with the status from others being known as a 'gun shearer' or the 'pygmy presser'. The awards were links to the past for Dad to relive his former glory in the activities and work that he loved in places he loved. Moving into more sedentary work roles was a huge change for Dad which impacted upon his physical and psychological health. The choice to lead a different, sedentary life was for the betterment of his people: he developed what he described a 'welfare mentality' where he wanted to 'save everybody and fix everybody up'. I believe that for Dad to try and save others he believed he had to sacrifice himself, and similarly to fix everybody, he had to 'unfix' himself. One of Dad's greatest traits, altruism, was to the detriment of himself. He knew his choices meant his deterioration.

The discussion surrounding barriers and enablers to physical activity was not completely answered by Dad. Instead of relating his answer to physical activity, Dad saw it as an opportunity to talk about the barriers to his life in general and also the people who broadly influenced his life. This highlighted that Dad interpreted the questions in this topic to being more about the bigger picture in his life which was more important to discuss, rather than centring conversation on physical activity. For him, barriers of physical activity was not a singular activity but was connected to life barriers of being an Aboriginal person. Similarly, the enablers for physical activity was also connected to his life which contained people who motivated, encouraged and lifted his self-esteem. The statement: 'I never went to war but I think we were in a war all our life' is Dad's summary of the challenges he has faced in life. Despite the challenges though, his memories and tangible records of physical activity remain as positive reminders of a past which he described as 'the good life'.

4.5 Physical activity across the wider family context

Listening to stories from other family members, I was struck by the contrasts people experienced across the spectrum of their lives, as many of my family spoke of their current low level participation and poor health compared with their high participation in the earlier years of their life. It is common that physical activity reduces with age, however the extent to which this occurred with my family was surprising and

distressing. Dad stated earlier that people judge others (like him) on being overweight and inactive however do not understand the type of life he has led:

> Lot of people look at you then and say, "Oh, look at that fat thing" or something. But they don't understand the type of life that you'd lived (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

This comment was quite pivotal to me when listening to the stories of what led many in my family to their inactivity and sometimes as a result, their poor health. As a whole, my family were extremely physical active in their lives however for many, the present was quite different. In this section, the reader is invited to follow Dad's advice: to take a look at my family's health and current physical activity participation and then to learn more about their lives to gain an understanding of the type of lives they have led.

This section first invites you to take a look at my family's present current health and current physical activity. Following this information, physical activity in living conditions, working lives and leisure time is presented. My family also discussed the definition of physical activity and what it meant to them, along with their motivations and barriers to participate. Similar to Dad, physical activity was an inseparable part of their lives as Aboriginal people and it was important for their survival and wellbeing.

4.5.1 Take a Look: Current Health and Physical Activity Participation

Table 1 lists all twenty eight[27] family members (using pseudonyms) and the way they assessed their health and a list of their current health conditions. In relation to self-assessed health, eight people responded negatively describing their health in terms such as poor, crap and statements such as 'I'm not the healthiest person in the world' or 'Just fed up with it at the moment'. The majority of people responded positively when describing their health using terms such as good, excellent, perfect, 60/100, 80-90% and statements such as 'You can't say real bad' or 'fit as a fiddle'. These results are similar to broader health data in 2008 where 44% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 and over rated their health as excellent or very good and a further 34% rated their health as good. While there is limited data surrounding self-assessed health for those aged over 45, it is known that older people are more likely to rate their health lower than younger age groups (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

[27] This table represents 29 interviews with 28 people. As stated earlier, Dad was interviewed twice and one person was excluded from the study.

Results also indicate that those who responded positively also said they had existing health conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, arthritis, heart conditions, and cholesterol.

Table 1: Self-assessed health and current health conditions

Family member	Self-assessed health	Current health conditions
Ray Leslie	Poor	High blood pressure (on medication) Obesity Diabetes type 1 (on medication) High cholesterol (on medication) Sleep apnoea (uses machine to sleep) Shaking hands; right shoulder injury; right knee injury; right ankle tendonitis; skin complaints
Cousin Diane	Good; 60/100	Fibromyalgia All joints ache Osteoarthritis in the base of the neck and spine Blood pressure (on medication)
Cousin Ruth	'Just fed up with it at the moment'	Not sleeping well Emphysema Left shoulder tendon injury Right shoulder pains Varicose veins in legs High blood pressure Cholesterol
Cousin Dirk	Really healthy	Creaks in body and some knee problems
Cousin Larry	Pretty crap. Very poor, struggling	Overweight Sleep apnoea Skin rashes
Cousin Leonard	Pretty good	High blood pressure (on medication) Osteoarthritis (no medication as exercise helps)
Cousin Helena	Pretty good	Arthritis in the fingers
Cousin Gary	Alright, pretty good	Arthritis in shoulders
Ray Leslie	Refers to first row	Refers to first row
Cousin Barry	Not stated	n/a
Cousin Otto	'You can't say real bad'	Diabetes Arthritis in the joints and legs High blood pressure
Cousin Wallace	No good	Overweight Diabetes
Cousin Mary	Shocking, not good	Thyroid problem Overweight
Cousin Willy	Okay	Right shoulder joint Asthma
Cousin Mike	Poor	Emphysema

Aunty Mable	Excellent	Osteoarthritis (on medication) in knee
Cousin Tania	Average	Not stated
Aunty Sally	'I'm not the healthiest person in the world'	Not stated
Aunty Darlene	Not stated	Arthritis High blood pressure (on medication) Had knee reconstruction
Cousin Dee	Perfect, fit as a fiddle	Diabetes type 2
Cousin Siena	Pretty good	Asthma Diabetes Previous heart condition (and triple by-pass)
n/a – removed from study	Not stated	Previous heart condition Cholesterol Blood pressure Diabetes
Cousin Gertrude	Okay	Undisclosed health condition. Reliant on Doctor's visits every two months, affects every aspect of life, more reliant on husband.
Cousin Heidi	About 80 - 90 %	Ulcer Cataract blindness
Cousin Darren	Pretty good	Suspected health condition
Cousin Daphne	Alright	Blood pressure Diabetes Cholesterol (on medication)
Cousin Tia	Pretty healthy	Knee issues Breast cancer scare
Cousin Daisy	Good	Arthritis Previous heart issues 4 bypasses
Aunty Jacqueline	Not good	Overweight

Table 2 highlights the current health conditions in categories to determine the common ailments my family suffered. Arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes, musculoskeletal issues and other various conditions were most common. Over half of persons had multiple conditions such as Dad and Cousin Ruth. When looking at national data, the four most common diseases and illnesses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were cardiovascular disease, mental disorders, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes (Vos et al., 2007). While diabetes was common with the reported data and the results from the study, other prevalent ailments were different.

Table 2: Current health conditions

Health condition	Number of persons affected
Arthritis	9
High blood pressure	8
Diabetes	7
Musculoskeletal	7
Other*	7
Overweight or Obesity	5
Cholesterol	4
Respiratory	4
Sleeping issues	3
Heart condition	3
Undisclosed/unknown**	2

* various health conditions including skin conditions, varicose veins, Fibromyalgia, thyroid, ulcer and cataract blindness, breast cancer scare.
** One person spoke of their health condition but did not disclose it; another suspected a health condition that she intended on seeking medical assistance with.

Table 3 highlights the types of physical activities that my family currently participated in. There were nineteen people who stated they were physically active in various ways sometimes in multiple activities. The top three most popular activities were walking, housework and 'other' which included playing the piano, small house renovations, stretches and push ups and activities on the water (for example activities using a tube on the river). Most of the activities were of low level intensity, for example walking and housework with only a few described as higher intensity such as sports. The top activity – walking – is the same as the reported Australian data however other comparisons cannot be made due to housework and other activities being excluded in the data (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012c).

Table 3: Current types of physical activities

Physical Activity	Number of times mentioned
Walking	8
Housework	7
None	6
Other*	4
Gardening	3
Not stated	3
Caring for adults and children	2
Group fitness classes	2
Active employment	2
Fishing	2
Women's group	1
Community work	1
Sports**	1
Exercise equipment	1
Swimming	1

* Other piano, small house renovations, stretches and push ups, water activities (tube)
** Ball sports (Rugby League and Touch Football)

4.6 Physical activity in everyday life

Physical activity was a constant in everyday life. My family grew up in many different types of places. These included riverbanks, reserves located outside of towns, missions, in towns, farms and for one cousin, a boy's home. All of these places required physical activities to survive. Many families had multiple children, and all had to contribute to the running of their house by doing chores. For siblings Cousin Mike and Cousin Mary, much of their childhood was spent living on a property where their father worked on a dairy farm. Regular activities included collecting milk, cleaning out pig pens and opening gates for fox hunters on weekends. Children were often assigned roles, such as Cousin Mike who was a 'fire lighter'. Here he explains his role:

> [From the age of 5 to 12 years old] I was the fire lighter. I'd do the wood, chop the wood, start the fires early in the morning. [I used to get up out of bed] on day break and we'd go to bed early and sleep well because of what you've done all day. Didn't matter if you were a girl or a boy, there were always jobs to be done (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

Everyday life on missions and reserves also involved physical activity. Here, Aunty Mable describes her routine before she went to school every morning:

> … early in the morning, before we went to school, a bell would ring and everyone would be up early and ready because we'd have our billy cans, all sizes, we'd (every child) all have to run to the dairy and the mission manager's wife, she would put the milk in billy cans for us every morning (Aunty Mable, Lethbridge Park, 6.10.11).

For Aunty Sally, her chores on the mission were after school. At age 11, her job was to scrub a verandah every day on her hands and knees, with a scrubbing brush and a cake of soap. Much later in her life, Aunty Sally realised that the emphasis on cleanliness was a preventative measure so that children were not removed. Here Aunty Sally explains:

> Every day that verandah had to [scrubbed]. I worked out later in life, I didn't know at the time, but that my mum was a stolen generation too. Similar to the stolen generation and they were put out on properties for four years, indentured, like indentured out for four years out there working for this lousy little bloody sixpence. They had a policy out there at the mission, the protection, the protection board, they had a policy that said the mission manager's wife had to report, check all those houses at nine o'clock every morning to see if they were clean.
>
> *Lana: That's why you had to be real meticulous?*
>
> Yes, that would have given them reason to be able to take us away because kids were being taken away then too. They were taking them away right up until pretty close to the seventies (Aunty Sally, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

Cousin Willy's early life in Kinchela Boy's home in Kempsey consisted of hard physical labour and other physical activities in spare time. Forcibly removed at aged six from his family and taken to Kinchela Boys Home between 1947 and 1958, this was eleven years of hard, physical work and shocking abuse. Each day, for eleven years, Cousin Willy and five other boys woke at 3am and milked 60 cows before 7am in the morning and again milked them at 4pm. If the cows were not milked before 7am, the boys would be deprived of their breakfast. Cousin Willy explains:

> … if we didn't have our cows milked before seven o'clock then we missed breakfast. You'd got to go and collect them [at 3am], go and get them in the cold. It was shorts, no shoes, and we used to - the only way we could warm our feet is when the cows do a poo, we'd put our feet in it. That's nice and hot... (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

There was other abuse apart from withholding food. Treated as prisoners, the children were referred to as numbers and not their names. There were different types of punishment for boys who did not comply with rules. One involved making other boys punch and kick the 'offending' boy:

> It was terrible at first. Of course anything you do wrong is they line you up, they get boys on either side and if you don't run through, you get belted from pillar to post. They punch you, kick you, too easy. If they didn't do it they'd make them do the same thing there at the Kinchela Boys (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

Another form of punishment involved my family member being forced to fight (box) his own brother. It was well known that Cousin Willy could box and that his brother did not have the same skills. At first he refused but was threatened: either fight your brother or face potential violence from bigger boys.

> (name omitted) wanted me to fight me own brother [in boxing]. I don't know whether he disliked him or what, but I said, 'why me?' I said to him, 'I'm not going to hit him, no way'…he said to me, well if you don't hit him, he's going to get the bigger boys onto me. (name omitted) knew I can handle myself. I knew (name of brother omitted) wouldn't (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

Despite the long hours of work, the boys were made to participate in gymnastics on a Friday night or Saturday. This involved activities such as springboards and parallel bars. Cousin Willy told me he enjoyed these activities. His life at Kinchela Boy's home consisted of non-stop physical activity. I asked him how he survived:

> *Lana: But you must have felt tired doing all that, because you had such a - you worked non-stop, like all during the week, and Friday nights at the end of that big week.*
>
> Well I just kept going. I just kept going (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

4.7 A Physical Working life

> 'My adult life was consumed by work…' (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

Like the quote above, the lives of my family were consumed by physically demanding work. Table 4 presents the types of work categorised into three main areas: working on the land, service roles and professional positions. Dealing first with working on the land, much of this work was seasonal which occurred during certain months of the year. As an example, cotton chipping around Warren and Moree in central west New South Wales occurred September to February, from spring to almost half of summer. Cotton chipping and bur cutting involved removing weeds and burs using a hoe as equipment, while stick picking involved picking up sticks involved no equipment. Other aspects of working on the land involved working in shearing sheds either shearing or roustabouting, working in market gardens or even working on the roads. It appeared that both genders worked on the land however women did not report any work in shearing sheds or roadwork.

Table 4: Types of work

Working on the land
Cotton chipping
Bur cutting
Stick picking
Ring barking
Shearing
Roustabouting
Roadwork
Market gardens
Service roles
Cleaning
Caring – work in retirement homes
Domestic duties
Factory work
Artisan – making artefacts
Manual labour – concrete laying, flour mill, 'Shit carting'
Retail – working in bakery
Milking cows
Railways
General assistant
Tyre inspector
Professional positions
Education – School teacher, University Lecturer, Student Support Officer
Security
Apprenticeships – carpentry, jockey
Project work
Electroplating
Construction
Oil refinery
Missionary training
Postmaster

Regarding service roles, women were mostly employed in cleaning, caring and domestic roles, although retail was also included. Some women were employed as children as well as in their adult lives. They either cleaned businesses or organisations (such as a Government office, motels, hairdressing salon) or private homes. Aunty Mable describes her cleaning role as a child:

> We were the house maids and cleaned up and go to school and come home and put the kettle on, get the fire going and put the kettle on and make a cup of tea ready for lunch.
>
> *Lana: So you used to go to school then?*
> Yeah, and do the housework (Aunty Mable, Lethbridge Park, 6.10.11).

Men were involved in service roles such as manual labour, working on the railways or factory work. The position of 'shit carting' was a less than favourable role which was before sanitation systems were installed. Basically the role entailed attending homes at night and picking up four gallon tins of human waste and replacing them with empty

cans. In this role, my family member best describes his duties, as well as an unfortunate incident with a workmate:

> Oh I done shit carting. Plenty of that in Coonamble. That was a shit job. Oh terrible job. I remember once, me and (name omitted) had a go, and we had to go back to these old places, and take it (the pans) into the toilets, and (name omitted) was frightened of the dark see, and he got in, and he got the toilet, put it up on his shoulder… I jumped out from the other thing, "Whah." And he dropped it all over [himself]. [My job was to] cart it out. Empty it into the truck. Change them over (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).

There were several professional positions which were mentioned. Three people mentioned that they worked in education positions – in schools and universities. It could be perceived that these types of roles are not typically physically challenging although they were described they were:

> … whilst they say people think teachings not physical, it is physical. You're on your feet all day, you're talking all day, you're active the whole day. You're on the playground, you're working everything and often you're pulling kids away from one another. You don't stop. You go from the time you get to school around eight o'clock in the morning until well in my case I think I got home at six o'clock tonight (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

> …we'd have to jump in the car and go out and see them (students). You weren't sitting behind the desk a lot of the time (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

There were two male family members who described their physical professional roles they obtained in their teenage years. Cousin Gary was an apprentice jockey and Cousin Darren an apprentice carpenter:

> Yeah, getting up at half past 4 in the morning, brush the horse down, cleaning out your stalls, take him down the track, ride him track work, take him back home, dress him down, put him to sleep for a while then go in the afternoon do the same thing again. And feed em then back about 6 o'clock and give him a bit of hay and put him to sleep (Cousin Gary, Colyton, 4.11.10).

> [I was] 17 year old when I left school… they said I was one of the first ever Aboriginal tradesman in New South Wales.…I signed me indentures and then I served me apprenticeship, five years that. [I had to] build, [did] repair work, renovations, build new homes, most of the time I was in the bush. First two years, we did a lot of bush work. I worked a 100 mile radius of Moree from where we're sitting now. Every road out of Moree, we worked on. Yeah, worked on a lot of old homesteads (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

Work on the land, service roles and professional positions were very physically demanding physical activities. Work such as burr cutting and cotton chipping were in hot summer weather with no shade, and workers had long hours to contend with.

Many described this work on the land as relentless such as Aunty Darlene and Cousin Wallace:

> [I used]a hoe, that's all, only got a hoe, chipping the weed from the cotton. Yeah, well I chipped up around Moree too, but part was here and Warren the first few years. When it first started out, I was one of the first chippers that ever started in the women and we used to do ten hours a day. Ten hours a day, yes and they were strict. There was no sitting down or anything like that. We had ten, 15 minutes for morning tea probably and 20 or 30 minutes, 40 minutes for lunch and that was it (Aunty Darlene, Warren, 11.10.11).

> … them cotton rows, some a mile long, so you imagine that eight hours a day, just up and down, up and down, up and down. She was hard work, especially when they plough the ground. And not only cotton chipping, you're doing bur cutting, ring barking, stick picking… (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey 20.5.11).

In addition to the heat, hours and the hard work, workers also had to deal with other hazards such as chemicals being sprayed on the cotton while they were chipping. Typically, workers were not given notice of the spraying, nor were they issued with protective clothing. Cousin Siena talked about her experience of chipping with indiscriminate chemical spraying from planes above:

> … if they wanted to spray the cotton, they wouldn't care if we were in the paddock, they'd just spray it straight over our heads and they're supposed to give us notice to be out of the paddock, but they never ever did…no masks, no gloves no nothing (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

While chemical spraying was an occupational hazard, outdoor work also had potential for other hazards such as snakes:

> But with stick picking you follow the tractor and pick all the sticks up, and if they were big sticks I'd kick them first to make sure there were no snakes under them (Cousin Gertrude Moree, 7.11.11).

Roustabouting and shearing had equally harsh conditions. Shearing sheds were generally made of tin, were cramped and often had many shearers alongside each other, working in very hot conditions. Shearing and crutching sheep was hard and dirty work. Many spoke of the tough conditions working in shearing sheds such as Cousin Larry:

> …in terms of demanding, it's very hot weather most of the time. You are in a big tin shed, somewhere between 40 and 50 degrees most of the time and you're running all the time, running from, you hardly get a breather in roustabouting (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

The physical work had effects on my family at the time and years later. Cousin Willy spoke about corns in his fingers as a child milking cows, while Cousin Barry spoke

about blisters on his hands from bur cutting, and hinted at what he used to do to toughen his hands.

> We used to have corns in here. All in your fingers. [It was from] milking the cows, yeah (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).
>
> [I used to get] blisters on [my] hands, you'd be surprised what you had to do to toughen your hands (laughs) (Cousin Barry, Dundas, 5.11.10).

Some family members reflected on their current health conditions and attributed their health conditions to the work they had done in the past:

> No, it was hard work and that's why I'm like I am today. I'm gone in the legs and the doctor just said it was from hard work. Just hard work all my life. I'm not the only one, there's a lot of them (people who did cotton chipping) in Warren like that a lot, but I enjoyed it (Aunty Darlene, Warren, 18.10.11).
>
> But I used to carry them (railway sleepers) on my shoulder, up here.…but I'm suffering now (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

Despite the work being physically challenging and the subsequent effects, work was described as enjoyable. Here, Aunty Darlene and Cousin Barry talk of their enjoyment of their active roles on the land and in the house:

> …it was hard work. I enjoyed it (cotton chipping) because I've never been one to sit down ever. I've always been a workaholic, even in the house. (Name omitted) (husband) used to say, 'Mum why don't you sit down?'. Even if I'm sitting down I'd get the needle and cotton. I'd do something (Aunty Darlene, Warren, 18.10.11).
>
> I used to go out seasonal work with my father, especially in the shearing sheds. I loved being in the shearing sheds with him, roustabouting… I was shearing sheep at 15. That's what helped me along in life, being able to get out and do some seasonal work with dad because mum was working all the time… It was a marvelous life… (Cousin Barry, Dundas, 5.11.10).

4.8 Leisure time

In leisure time, there were many physical activities such as games and sports. Games were played in the bush, at home, in primary schools, on the way to school, rivers[28], on the street, on missions. Games were mostly played with toys that were made by children as there was limited money. Toys were made out of different materials from and around the home: syrup tins, herring in tomato sauce cans, milk cans, old tyres, sticks and branches from a tree, pieces of cloth, rubber bands, four-gallon drums,

[28] There was extensive physical activity spoken about in rivers however is discussed in Chapter 5

poles, pegs and bottles. Toys called 'rollers' were made which involved filling a can with dirt, stones or even cement. A string was attached in some cases and the idea was to run around with the rollers. Toys were made to imitate 'real' toys such as a herring and tomato sauce can made into a miniature car; pieces of cloth was glued onto bottles and pegs to imitate dolls. Even branches from trees were used as a 'stick-horse' to ride. Items were also used to imitate various sports: one person described using jam tins to create a golf putting hole as well as two four-gallon drums spaced apart with a pole on top to simulate a tennis net.

> … we'd make our own games I suppose, appreciate that we were poorly… I know we get sticks and put rubber bands and pegs on them and shoot at each other (Cousin Tabitha, Moree, 13.11.11.)

> We'd make steam rollers out of old milk cans, stones in them, put the string on them and you know that's our toys. All of our dolls were made out of pegs and old wine and beer bottles. We used to put rags, glue rags on them and make dolls out of them. Yeah, well you know, you couldn't afford a lot of stuff in them days. Especially with my mum and dad, there were 12 of us, I was the eldest of 12, I've got 5 brothers and sisters (Cousin Diane, Moree, 4.9.10).

> [It was] a stick horse, you cut a branch out of a tree, tie a bit of string on and you ride him as if he's a horse. You'd make out it's a horse, a make believe horse. Mad (loved) on the horses and that, and cowboys (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

Other games utilised various equipment such as skipping ropes, marbles and various activities using balls. The majority of activities were for everyone however it appeared that skipping was for girls while marbles was primarily a boy's activity. Skipping was a vigorous group activity involving one girl swinging each end of one or two ropes (or sometimes one end of the rope was attached to a telephone post), with other girls skipping on the inside. The activity also had other elements of mental dexterity with rhymes being recited during the activity. Other activities such as 'brandies' (running after others and throwing a ball at them to get them out), tabloid activities such as tunnel ball, egg and spoon races, relays, as well as cricket, handball, playing 'cubby houses' (a game where children pretended they were adults doing activities in a home), 'linies' (throwing pennies on lines on the ground), throwing objects such as boots, shoes or a broom, (to see how far they could be thrown), hopscotch and 'drop the hanky'.

There were many organised team sports played including:

- Football: Australian Rugby league and touch football
- Basketball
- Cricket
- Vigaro
- Softball
- Netball
- Soccer

Of the organised team sports, Australian Rugby League (football) was most popular for the males playing, as well as others who supported the sport. People spoke about their progression in the sport throughout their life stages. Skills for rugby league were learned from a very early age such as kicking a ball around or tackling as a child with family members or friends. Rugby league was then played throughout school and on weekends. This typically progressed into local competitions where many people travelled to various towns playing against other teams.

Football was a way of life for many people and families, it gave purpose and provided a family based activity as Cousin Heidi describes:

> (Name of brother omitted) played rugby league and it was big in our family and we'd go to the Aboriginal knockouts each year and it just became a way of life for us because (name of brother omitted) was good at league (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11)

Many acknowledged their superior skills in football and their achievements in the sport. Some were given nick names such as 'flash' which described their speed. Others spoke of winning competitions.

> Yeah. I used to play on the wing they called me flash, I was that quick. I was that quick. People, a couple of blokes I played with still call me that today. G'day flash. They still call me that today (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

> I was a pretty decent footballer, too, when I was a kid. Yeah, yeah, I was part of an all-conquering football team from Dubbo High School (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11.)

> We were the first Aboriginal team (Boomies in Moree) to win a group football. We won that in 1985. We – Moree dominated that for 12 or 13 years (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey, 20.5.11).

Football was much more than a sport – it evoked a sense of pride as well as feelings of superiority over non-Aboriginal teams. The football field was a place that was an equalizer in society, a place where Aboriginal people could not be 'ruled' as Cousin Dirk explains:

> Yeah we used to like it when we used to play white fullas, local sides. You know get a bit rough and that, we used to love it. Oh yeah, yeah it was really rough, my word. You know, we didn't want white fullas to rule us. As footballers, we were more the superior sports person. Like the black fullas you know, we didn't want to take a loss (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

As well as a place of equality, the football field broke down barriers and built relationships referred here by Cousin Tabitha as a 'true place for reconciliation'. Football was a symbol of race relations and having skills appeared to decrease discrimination. In addition, the team aspect of the game meant that team members had to depend on each other, despite their race.

> So the football was breaking down barriers …it's where relationships are built and I know through me, playing sports you made friends through sport …we were treated more equally in terms of getting represented in sport our abilities were acknowledged and we weren't discriminated as much against. So I think that for a lot of us that sport was the true place for reconciliation, not schools, through school sport because we had to assimilate in schools.
>
> *Lana: Why do you think that is? Why do you think that sport contributes to that reconciliation?*
>
> Because most sports we played were team sports so you had to play as a team so in your team. Racism will come in maybe from the adults in terms of selecting but as kids, I think kids until adults tell them otherwise we treat each other quite respectfully (Cousin Tabitha, Moree, 13.11.11).

Rounders was a group activity that was mentioned extensively by many people as something that was very enjoyable due to the collective nature of the game that involved all persons of all ages. Rounders was described as being like baseball and needed a bat, usually a piece of wood, and a tennis ball. Bases were used, and people typically ran around them trying to avoid being 'branded'. 'Branding' involved throwing the ball at the person running, to attempt to get them out. Rounders was played in various locations such as on missions, in the street or on sporting ovals. The best part of this game however was that it was inclusive – people from all ages played, including families and friends:

> …the rounders, yeah, everyone had a go at the rounders, grown-ups and all. First of all the kids would start at school and then on a nice day they'd all go out onto the football oval. And everyone would go out then and the grown-ups would have a go and the kids then (Aunty Mable, Lethbridge Park, 6.10.11).
>
> That used to be all the go (popular) was the rounders, you know but there was so many each side like 14 or 13 in each side and they played one another, it used to be good. I used to like that.

> Well it was just you used to run and someone bowling, if they bowl you out you'd get the shits (Aunty Jacqueline, Moree, 12.11.11).

Dancing was a popular physical activity for many. The styles of dancing most frequently mentioned were 'old time' ballroom dancing which required a partner such as foxtrot, Canadian three step, waltz, cha-cha, tango, the stomp, barn dance as well as rock and roll. Dancing was also a physical activity that promoted togetherness with others. People gathered in halls on weekends to dance and to socialise. Some dancing environments were places where only Aboriginal people were together, such as at dances at Aunty Queenie's in Coonabarabran in the 1950s:

> Oh they had to make their own fun, make their own dances. Down at Aunty Queenies place, the middle of the mission (Coonabarabran). Christmas time all the dark people around the districts, other towns…They used to more or less come and join each other. They'd sit down at aunty queenies. She had a big shed in the middle of the 2 houses (Cousin Barry, Dundas, 5.11.10).

> Rock n Roll, the Cha Cha, the waltzing, the tango or something ... there was always some sort of dancing, there was a lot of ballroom dancing. Yeah you'd go out and then you'd like to have a dance and enjoy yourself (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

In contrast, others spoke of dancing at school socials in the 1970s and 1980s, where popular dance styles were 'the Bump', dance moves to 'Nutbush City Limits' and disco. This was a time where music was played on records, and it was common to go to friends' places to listen to records and dance. Many families had 'mini shows' at home where performances would be conducted whether it be singing like Elvis Presley or dancing:

> I think that Aboriginal people sang more in their house, like with guitars and things like that. And it wasn't unusual for – the adults used to like to get the kids to dance and watch them dance, especially if they were funny. It was quite a good thing to get the kids up and dance if they were pretending to be Elvis, so to speak (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

4.9 Physical activity: Definition and Meanings

People defined physical activity in different ways. Some spoke of it being the physiological effects on the body, such as breathing harder, perspiring, the feeling of muscles working.

> I mean a lot of huff and puff I suppose it used to give you too (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).

> Well I define it through movement and the physical effect that it has back on the totality of your being. So you know the perspiration, the feeling of well the fact that you're breathing that breathing, like that good breathing. The fact that you can actually feel your core, like and I'm thinking about when I'm walking my dogs, I can actually feel my core forming. I can feel my muscles renewing and strengthening (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

Other responses indicated a more broad definition of physical activity that encompassed a range of activities such as physical employment, housework, walking, art and craft, stretching, movement with purpose, gardening or even getting out of your chair or bed. The following quotes indicate some of the range of responses:

> …sports stuff that I've done but I suppose you could almost think about you know are physical activities when you work, when I was working as in the sheds with (name omitted)…and in the factories and as laborers and stuff. That was a lot of physical activities (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

> I would say movement that has purpose. And by that, I don't mean jogging and things like that – I mean, if you've got – to get up and vacuum the floor, that's a movement with purpose (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

> Oh, I think physical activity to me is actually being active. When I mean active it's about getting up out of your chair, a way of … out of bed, going for a walk. Being, having your body actually physically active doing gardening, doing walking, doing your housework, hanging out washing, any of that can be physical activity (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

There was extensive talk about the positive meaning that physical activity in life. Socialising with others in physical activity was highly valued. There was friendship/mateship in activities and being involved was also opportunities to connect with others and the outside world:

> Yeah, in those days it was Sunday football see. Like …we'd be having a beer at Redfern on the Saturday. On the Sunday we'd go and belt each other to hell in football. It was real, real mates you know, everyone was mates, friendly (Cousin Barry, Dundas, 5.11.10).

> Of course, you've got to have your friends and communicate with the outside world (Cousin Gertrude Moree, 7.11.11).

Involvement in physical activities developed self-confidence as an Aboriginal person. It provided opportunities to feel equal and accepted by others as described in the following quotes:

> All of our family having been heavily involved in sport have given us a lot of different things and confidence. Confidence to get out there and mix in the broader community because sometimes being Aboriginal has its drawbacks and whilst we're all proud of, well the majority of us are proud of being Aboriginal (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

> People accepted you, everyone. Sport's great for bringing communities together, I reckon (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11.)

Cousin Mike also spoke about feeling equal and respected by non-Aboriginal people when playing sport.

> You're equal or better, you're physically equal or better. An old black fella used to say to me, he said, you get them white fellas, he said you've got to be equal or better. It's always stuck with me. It works.
>
> *Lana: Equal or better?*
>
> Yeah, to earn the respect of the white man.
>
> *Lana: Is that important, to get the respect?*
>
> If you're a proud person (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

There was also discussion about the role of physical activity to prevent health issues such as diabetes, obesity and asthma, loss of function or even preventing unknown issues that could arise. There was a recognition that physical activity was an important part of keeping healthy and preventing disease. Here, Cousin Mike acknowledges that physical activity has prolonged his life and prevented diseases from developing:

> [Physical activity] might have prolonged my life, I think…I think it staved off obesity in me, diabetes. People just seem to accept it. I don't know why. What else? No asthma. It's only because of being physically fit, I think, plus I've got a good diet (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

Many people also acknowledged the role of physical activity in ageing. Some recognized that as they had become older, there were many changes: their physical activity had reduced and they were more prone to health issues, therefore physical activity was more important than ever. People knew that reduced physical activity when getting older meant a likelihood of 'slowing down', not being able to function as well, depending on others and as a consequence, becoming more unhealthy. The following quotes are examples where people spoke about the positive aspects of being active for growing older:

> Sometimes it's good to walk. [It] keeps you active…especially in your old days…If I slow up then it will take over your body (Cousin Diane, Moree, 4.9.10).
>
> I think as you get older you tend to do less physical activity than you probably do when you were younger. So I think as you get older it's certainly more important to do it because you feel you got to keep your limbs moving you've got to keep your joints

> moving, you've got to be conscious of your medical issues (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

> Well you're independent of everybody if you can do these sort of things yourself well you're not, you don't depend on other people to do it for you. But I suppose if it got to the stage that I wasn't able I'd need a little bit of help well then the kids are there to do it. But at this stage I don't need it (Aunty Jacqueline, Moree, 12.11.11).

Physical activity was also spoken about an alternative to unhealthy behaviours such as drinking alcohol or getting in trouble as a consequence of being bored.

> You see back then if you didn't play sports you either hit the grog …That's a decision that most of us made (to play sports and not drink). [Playing sports was] mainly to give us something to do, because none of us were working, you know, we all straight of school, living on (name omitted) (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey 20.5.11).

> Oh yeah. When you're playing sport you're not roaming the street looking for trouble, and I think that's what a lot of trouble is today (Cousin Gertrude, Moree, 7.11.11).

People also spoke about the role of physical activity in wellbeing - clearing the mind, being calm, feeling better, feeling alive and having something for yourself.

> It's very important to be - to get a lot of exercise, because it keeps you fit…and also it clears your mind and you know what you're doing. Half the time you don't know what you're doing (Cousin Willy, Quakers Hill, 2.6.10).

> Oh it (fishing) was everything. Even today my only wish I'd just love someone to come and take me down and have a couple of days on the river and now no fishing, but it's too steep. I can't do it. Oh I just loved it. It was just the love of my life outside my family. I was calm…but fishing, when I lost fishing it was dreadful (Aunty Darlene, Warren, 18.10.11).

Cousin Mary used a very spiritual analogy of her wellbeing and a river. In the past when the river was unpolluted, she was also healthier; today it is a different story where she feels she is polluted in alignment with the polluted river. It appeared that this family member was stating that for her to be healthy, the land/river also needed to be healthy. As a culturally attuned Aboriginal woman she spoke of the 'static' or energy in her connection to the river and to the land. She also stated that reconciliation needed to happen between the river and Aboriginal people to be healthy again.

> Fuck yeah [physical activity is important] …I know what it's like to feel alive. Do I feel alive at the moment? No. Because you know and I suppose I'll use the river as the analogy. So back in the day the river flowed beautiful, it was crystal right, and in me my flow is beautiful, it's pure, it's unpolluted, it has nothing to create a dam or to block. Right so there's that consistency of energy flow. This day and age it's a polluted creek in my inner and but when I look at the river, the river is also polluted. So I think there is a strong alignment as a fresh water river girl, the river provides that metaphor of me understanding my inner me. And so the rivers sick, well I feel sick.

> And I've only been and I've sort of only had a bit of that realisation now, but It's how - like we've been divorced from the river. And there almost needs to be a reconciliation with the river for a lot of people yeah.…there's static running in between the connectivity between me and the river, because neither of us are well enough to even give each other strength or wellbeing (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

When I asked Cousin Mary how she could reconcile with the river to be healthier, she talked about the role of race relations in wellbeing. Connection to Country, whether for her was land or water, was related to the rights of Aboriginal people. As places became polluted, there were no longer opportunities to connect with Country:

> And I suppose you look at race relations and the lack of respect, and it's not just you know there is still so much that the others in this country don't get. And one of them is about not just connection to land but connection to water. And the significances, it's not just about sea bed rights, it's about river rights as well. And the minute people start to close rivers, and they became polluted…there's nowhere you can swim in a river anymore, how fuckin' sad is that? How sad is that? (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

4.10 Motivations to Physical Activity

People were motivated to be more active with the influence of others and intrinsically within themselves. School teachers, whether in primary or high school, encouraged my family members to commence their physical activities in various ways. Cousin Mike remembered how he first started in football as a result of a teacher when he was in kindergarten:

> Yeah, Mr (name omitted). He put me in my first footy team. I'll never forget it. He came up to me, because they were training the footy teams. The rest was just running around, ratbags, this is kindergarten and he called me over and he made me put my arms like that and he lifted me up and he said, yeah, you're under four stone seven, he said you come over here and that was the start of my footy life (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

Other teachers were also influential, not just for their encouragement to be more active, but also for role modelling leadership qualities:

> Yeah there was a teacher at high school, she was my home science teacher because I was really good at home science. And she actually made me captain of the school softball side, and she was very encouraging. She supported a lot of my athletic stuff like the shot, she loved the fact that I could throw a shot put. I think it was about her leadership, her assertiveness as well. Like she was a strong woman as well, and I suppose that's one thing I admire, like I can from my earliest I always loved a strong woman (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

Some teachers took an interest in many aspects of their students' lives, such as their further education and employment. For Cousin Tania, some teachers were fondly remembered for encouraging her to not only play sports but also to umpire games and attend university. Here, she recalls a teacher who encouraged her to be a referee as well as to attend university.

> I think (name omitted), by encouraging me to referee or to umpire – and she was actually the first person who even mentioned to me about university. She was the first person who said, "You can go to university." And I would have been about 14 at the time, but mind you, it took another 25 years before I got there (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

For Cousin Gary, a story about an injury to his toe on the cricket pitch described good relationships with the headmaster and a teacher at his school. After the injury he was angry that he wasn't allowed to play other sport. As a result, he truanted from school and came to the attention of a park ranger. After being reported to the headmaster, the incident was laughed off. Later, the teacher bought him sandshoes to play soccer:

> … I kicked half my toe off on the cricket pitch. And later I got the poops with them because they wouldn't let me play with half me toe hanging off. So I wagged school and I went down and climbed a tree down there at Parramatta Park. Anyhow the park ranger came around you know and said 'C'mon get down outta there and get home' I said 'I'm not getting down out of here, what for?'. Next day he came up to the school, he dobbed me in, that's the fulla up there that's climbed up the tree. When I told the headmaster about it he sort of just laughed about it. I told him I had the poops about not being able to play soccer with my toe hanging off.
>
> *Lana: How come you didn't have any shoes on?*
>
> Didn't have any shoes in them days. Then after that the school teacher bought me a pair of, not showing off or nothing but I was a pretty good player and we had to play these other schools and he bought me a pair of footy boots, a pair of sandshoes it was then (Cousin Gary, Colyton, 4.11.10).

Relatives were also a large influence on physical activity participation. Watching older sisters and brothers playing sport was an entry point into activities; it was natural to follow siblings in their same pursuits. Siblings had coaching roles – they taught skills for sporting activities and corrected when they needed to.

> …as you got a little bit older because (name omitted) and (name omitted) were what, five, six years older than I was, they got to play rounders, we got to sit and watch and play mud cakes or whatever beside them but they'd let you play occasionally but the ball use to be just, they'd brand you too hard so you'd sit there and you'd watch them but other than that, they were the influences I think, growing up watching what my older siblings actually did which meant that we did the same things, I did the same things…Watching and following what they did, doing what they did, copying what

> they did. You learn from your peers and from your other family members (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

> Oh suppose from your elder brothers, brothers, they used to do that as well, and you'd learn from them. I suppose they just showed you how to do it. If you were doing it wrong, they would correct you. They would show you how to tackle and run and pass the ball that sort of thing as far as league went. And just show you how to hold the tennis racquet and the balls. I suppose you would just learn from your siblings (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

Parents and other family members were also an important influence to be active. Some of my family members spoke of their parents loving sport, 'being sporty', or being active themselves. It appeared that parents directly involved with their children's activities influenced the children to be active. Parents played with their children in various activities such as golf, tennis and rugby league. For Cousin Leonard, his parents were very involved with his physical activities. He understood that this involvement, along with rabbit trapping with his father, instilled the importance of physical activity from an early age:

> Mum and dad always, they loved sport. And you know, any sort of sport and we just…we loved playing sport. Well they used to get out with us in that little golf course at home, they'd get out there and hit the ball, play a little game of golf with us, they'd play the tennis with us. I think Dad used to go and have a game of rugby league with us. But, see he was a trapper, he used to trap rabbits, we used go out and help him. He used to carry 60 rabbit traps on his back and used to run to keep up with him. It was up and down hills, he knew where his traps were. We sort of take off after him. We used to love going with him in school holidays. Yeah, I suppose right from there, you are instilled with that sort of activity program, you keep active (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

Other influences were playing with other Aboriginal children. For Cousin Tania, playing with others from the same background gave her a sense of belonging. This feeling extended into activities where she was in the same teams, played hopscotch elastics and skips with other Aboriginal girls.

> I think we had a more sense of belonging with the Aboriginal kids. But I know that we used to always try [to] be on the same team. And quite often … our friends at the school would be Aboriginal and we'd be playing hopscotch together and skips and all that. I think it was because familiarity [that Aboriginal children played together](Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

Coaches and instructors were mentioned as a lesser influence of physical activity. They were tough and used a 'no nonsense' approach in the activities by setting expectations, rules and giving lessons to those they were coaching. Cousin Wallace respected his

football coach as a younger man, and took on his traits when later coaching teams himself:

> He taught us everything about football. He taught us proper way to train, everything. He explained what he had in line for us, what he expect from us, if you don't put in your 100% well you're wasting your time. Well what he said to me, I say today to the kids I train. Anyone who mucks around, like I say, he'll say to us, "I want you to do two laps non-stop." If one walks and there are two laps, we do the two laps then he'll say, "I want you to do two laps." And no-one stops. If you walk he'll after you finish your two laps he'll say to you, "I want you to do two laps." No one stops until you get the message (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey 20.5.11).

Cousin Helena was motivated by a group fitness instructor who was Aboriginal, approachable and had a good sense of humour. While this instructor was friendly, she was also tough in her manner by using motivating language to encourage others to attend the class:

> …if we didn't have that Aboriginal health worker over there in that program, there would be no Aboriginal people going, that program wouldn't exist. It was set up for Aboriginal people that have some sort of cardiac event. And because you know you're laughing and joking and they might tell a story or something, it just makes the whole atmosphere relaxed. And I think, She'll ring them up for example if they've missed a couple of nights, she'll ring them up and say 'You haven't been for a couple of nights, are you not well? Are there any problems? Can we do anything?' She motivated me she said 'bloody well get over and that's it'. That's her way of motivating (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

Sporting role models from mainly Rugby League were important to male family members who played the same sport. Role models were revered; and through their skills enabled others to copy their movements or pretend to be them. Some stated that they aspired to play with them or just liked the fact they played the same sport. Two of my cousins share their thoughts on role models and the way they influenced them in rugby league:

> This were the old players like Eddy Lumsden and all them. Clive Churchill played in Moree. So they became more or less me idols, I said I want to be like this fulla and play football. But I didn't want [to] emulate their feats or anything you know I just wanted to know that I am a footballer like them fullas. You play football mate, and I'm playing football too, I might not be as good as you but I am going to win the grand final or something (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

> We used to take the names of the current rugby league players from Australia, New Zealand and France. We used to have some great games.… you looked up to those people. As a kid you try to play as they played, to be like them I suppose…They were role models I suppose you would call them (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

The other main area of motivation to be more physically active came from my family members themselves. They wanted to do activities and they enjoyed them so participated without any encouragement from others. For these family members, it was as simple as getting out and doing your best:

> Done it off our own bat. If you want to do it you go and do it, do your best, other than that well. Nah, just went and done it and that was it… (Cousin Gertrude, Moree, 7.11.11)

> Oh no I just done it myself [without anyone encouraging me]. I just liked the sport (Rugby League) (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).

Two family members spoke about their self-motivation to play sports despite their parents not wanting to be involved or watching them play. In these cases, parents did not attend for several reasons. Cousin Mary stated that there was favouritism towards her brothers' sports – her mother attended those football matches as she was fearful, perhaps of them getting hurt. It appeared that not attending girl's games was a sign that her mother thought she was competent, independent and strong. Cousin Larry reflected that his parents did not attend any of his sporting activities. He appeared to be sad that his parents were not involved and that he did not receive much recognition or acknowledgement of his sporting talents.

> … mum never had time to come and watch me play netball, but we would all go to the football to watch all the boys play. And that was cool, but like the girls never got a lot of favoritism out of mum, the boys got it all. And I understand that because the great fear that she had around the boys more so than the girls, because I think she's seen us as being really competent and independent and strong enough and like listening to all her warnings and heeding them. Just because my family didn't come and watch me play netball, I didn't stop because again it was my thing and I loved doing it. And I knew I was an asset, so I knew I was valued… (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

> Mum and Dad encouraged me but they never saw me do anything that I can remember. It didn't affect me [not participating]. I would of liked them to turn up but you know all the moments you know there's the championships and things. It would have been nice to see me do something but I didn't stop or feel bad about it because I was just wrapped up in the exercise. Well we would get the report cards home and with the report cards would come a piece of paper, like a newsletter on what was happening. I just remember having my name down as an athletics champion and mum and dad saying 'oh gee you did good'. But a little bit of a pat (recognition), but it was already over…. (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

Some family members spoke about the influence of place on their physical activity. Cousin Helena felt that she was more active when living in the country (Coonabarabran) rather than in the city (Sydney). In the country my family member

spoke about living on a farm where often there were long walks and other activities such as horse-riding. In contrast, city living meant living in a house with a small backyard and less activity. Along with a decrease of activity, there was also a decrease in health. Moving to Sydney with smog and humidity brought on respiratory issues such as a blocked nose and hay fever. Living in the country mean feeling healthier, more alive and energetic. Along with the clean air, it was the place that mattered to her. It was a place that was her home – where she grew up, where her history was, a place she lovingly described as herself.

> In Coona (Coonabarabran)… we used to go for long walks cause we were out on a farm… we had horses on the farm. We used to walk around the paddock so there was lots of activities up there. When we moved to Sydney and we moved to suburbia, we moved to St Marys, we rented a house with a small backyard so you don't do the things you were doing, you don't go for the long walks in the bush. When I first came to Sydney to live… I used to get a lot of blocked noses and hayfever… When I'd go home I'd be good. [I feel] much healthier in the country, the clean air, the different temperatures. I do [feel a difference in my health], when I go home, I feel, I don't know if the right words are more alive, more energetic or I suppose more alive, more refreshed…
>
> *Lana: What do you put that down to?*
>
> The fact that I'm home I think. The home and the air is clean. That's your land, that's where you grew up, that's where your history is, that's you, probably (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

4.11 Barriers of Physical Activity

People spoke about barriers to them that were personal to them such as their health restrictions, self, family influence and lifestyle. Health reasons, in particular physical restrictions, prevented people from participating. These included broken bones, injuries from sports or other reasons, falls or knee replacement. Legs and knees were the main body parts which were affected and to a less extent, shoulders. People stated that if it wasn't for the restrictions, they could participate in their chosen sports, or work in the job they used to, or dance.

> I bruised around a lot and I got leg troubles and busted part of my leg here…but I mean to say when you've got too many injuries in football, I didn't like to keep going and getting worse than I was getting, so I pulled out of that (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).
>
> Just one leg. It's just that leg. If I could walk with that leg I wouldn't ask anyone for two bob (Aunty Darlene, Warren, 11.10.11).

> Me kneecap, had a complete knee replacement. I had a big steel plate put in it. I left then, they wouldn't let me drive me truck, I had to climb up on the truck in them days, you know and I said I can't do that, I'm buggared now, me knees gone so I left (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

People spoke about a number of issues regarding the negative way they perceived their competence in physical activity. Cousin Leonard and Cousin Helena believed they were not competent when they compared themselves with others in football and group fitness classes respectively.

> I mainly gave away the sport a bit cause I wasn't up to the quality of the you know, footballers who went there. I didn't have the skills my brothers had to play. Even my younger brother was a better footballer than I was (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

> When you go to aerobics, you go to aerobics classes and you know way back then they all had their leg warmers and tights that type of stuff. All the good people that were good at it were up the front. All the ones that were a bit slow and uncoordinated which was me, was up the back. So I didn't enjoy going to aerobics. I went because I probably went with someone else but I didn't enjoy it cause I felt it was too pressured and all the good people with all the nice outfits were up the front. All the others were up the back (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

For Aunty Sally and Aunty Jacqueline, a fear of water prevented them from participating in swimming. While Aunty Sally eventually overcame her fear by learning to swim later in life, Aunty Jacqueline never overcame her fear of the water. Now in her 80's, she still recounts the affect the incident had on her:

> I tried to learn [to swim at age 10] but one bloke tried to drown me and I never looked at the water again…he was only mucking around that was all and you know it might have been to teach me how to swim or but then when he tried to drown me or something like that well that was it, I got out. Pushing me under, mucking around saying he was going to make ya learn how to swim. But he was learning it the wrong way so I never ever went back and that's why I never ever learnt swimming (Aunty Jacqueline, Moree, 12.11.11).

For Cousin Heidi, another internal factor was her body image concerns during swimming in pools. Getting older, hormones and a developing body meant she didn't like to display her body at the pool. She stated that her concerns made her not go at all, or go and cover her body while sitting at the side of the pool.

> …as you get older your hormones start to play a different part, it relies heavily on the decisions that you actually make. You get bigger, girls in particular, when they start to develop, you don't get out to the pool, you might go to the pool, you might sit on the side but you always cover up. They're the little things. you get older you start to get bigger, put on a bit of weight, become a young lady, you don't like to show off your body (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

Families also played a role in being a barrier in physical activity participation. Families were protective of their children where in some cases these behaviours completely stopped physical activities. The protective behaviours were varied. For one person as a child, she and her siblings were not allowed out of their yard due to her Grandparent's rules to protect them from discrimination. For the same person, she was not allowed to dance due to her family's religion. For another, when her relative drowned, she was no longer allowed to go to the river. For another, having a violent and jealous husband prevented her from pursuing physical activities. In this case, her adherence to her husband's wishes was a self-protective behaviour. Most conversation about families and barriers however focussed on putting their children first before their own physical activity. People described that they came second, that life revolved around their children and their children's activities.

The importance of family overrode personal motivations to be physically active. The majority of family members who loved their physical activity were equally committed to the concept that family came first, before any of their own activities. Caregiving to children was the highest priority and responsibility however this was rarely mentioned as a negative. People described their responsibility to their children in several ways such as loving their children however not having time to oneself; that it wasn't appropriate to play sport as it took time away from their children; that it was more important to create a life for her child; and that life revolved around the activities that their children participated in. It appeared that some people believed that they had their time being physically active and they needed to step back to allow their children to have their own time. Cousins Larry, Leonard and Heidi describe their changing priorities to their children, rather than to themselves:

> I spent 4 hours traveling at least every day. And then when you got to, you work and then you get home you, the most important…you are dead tired. But then you got to look after your daughter and be happy and everything you're doing becomes second. Like (name omitted) [my daughter], and I love her but it means there is not much time for myself (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

> I don't know, I don't think it (giving up playing football) worried me too much. It was more important to be around the two kids (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

> As we had children, life revolved around all the games that, all the activities that they did… (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

Lifestyle factors were also barriers to being more physically active. Much like family responsibilities, work was also a high priority. Family members who spoke about their employment as a barrier explained it was the amount of time it took to travel to work that interfered with their activities. As stated above, Cousin Larry travelled 4 hours for work each day which left him very tired for anything else. For others, travelling to/for work meant there was no time to focus on activities: work came first:

> When I started me trade, I'd give football away because I was never home and like I said, 100 mile radius of Moree working on property and that, building homesteads, shearing sheds, working on old churches way out bush… camping out and you didn't have time to train, you worked, your work come first (Cousin Darren, Moree, 9.11.11).

> …because I have to travel a lot, I have less activity (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

The type of employment was also a barrier. Cousin Larry acknowledged that his career choices of computing and teaching decreased his physical activity. In addition, the responsibilities of work meant longer hours which detracted away from being more active.

> … because I chose computing… and teaching, most of my physical activity is gone and so you don't get to run around. Your just in the classroom, in front of a computer. Your body deteriorates because you don't use it. Yeah I was playing indoor cricket and rugby union, still doing some roller-skating and differing stuff…the pressure of work [made it hard for me to continue my active lifestyle]. In computer jobs and particularly the more responsibility you have to stay behind and make sure certain things complete and it was hard to keep a steady timeslot for exercise (Cousin Larry, Seven Hills, 25.10.10).

Some places of physical activity had barriers which prevented people from attending. Some rivers were no longer accessible due to their unsafe conditions. Chemicals sprayed onto nearby cotton fields ran off into the water which was believed to cause many health issues such as asthma, allergies and skin rashes including eczema. Fish were also affected by the chemicals that were found to have sores, or even to be washed up on the river bank dead.

> Oh yeah, health conditions [from swimming in the rivers]. Like a lot of asthma, allergies, like eczema, you know you get the rash and everything from the sprays. That's why you can't go swimming in the rivers no more. There's too much chemicals and stuff in the rivers. You've got to be careful of the fish you catch in case they've got sores from where they spray the cotton. You don't know what you're getting. Sometimes you can go when they've been spraying the cotton and the fish would wash up with sores on them all dead. It's not like it was in our younger days. Too much chemicals.. It's no good for the environment (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

> I wouldn't swim in the river now because all the chemicals on the cotton (Cousin Daisy, Moree 10.11.11).

In addition to the chemicals in the river, others did not swim there due to dangerous currents which caused deaths:

> ....no one swims there now (Little Bondi outside of Moree) cause too many deaths. A lot of people were taken there swimming must be about 8 to 10 people disappeared. They reckon there is a current there. [This is] the Gwydir, one river going one way and another current going underneath, underneath is a big hole. We swum and dived everywhere there. They used to get them and take them under. It was just sand. Miles of sand and that's why they called it Bondi. … we used to go out in busloads (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

Another factor concerning the place where activity took place concerned the type of activity and the staff employed in those settings. Two settings mentioned were a gymnasium and dance classes. In the first quote below, one family member spoke about her dislike of the environment of a gymnasium. She described herself as 'I'm not quite a gym person' for several reasons. Using cardiovascular machines for aerobic activity was silly to her – she didn't see sense in using a stationary exercise bike or a treadmill as she preferred these activities to be outdoors. In addition, she disliked staff who tried to motivate her in a stereotypical 'drill Sergeant' way of ordering her to 'go harder'. She stated that this type of behaviour was not motivating, in fact it had the opposite effect which made her feel de-motivated.

> I'm not quite a gym person. I just don't see the point of sitting on a walking machine where you're walking and you're looking at a bare wall. To me, that was dead boring. And I can't see the point of sitting on an exercise bike and you going nowhere. But there was a person – I don't know what you call them. A trainer, I suppose is what you'd call them. He was in the gym too, and he's one of those ones who comes up and tries to motivate you by getting right into your face and saying, "Go harder." And it's like, "Get away or this is going to turn into a boxing match. Just let me go." I'm not the person that gets motivated by that. It's quite the opposite effect on me (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

In the next two examples, family members spoke about dance classes: ballroom and line dancing. In both dance styles, both left the activity for two different reasons. First, the ballroom dancing involved partnering off with others in the class. For this family member, she only wanted to dance with her husband. For the second family member, one of the main contributors of her leaving the activity was the teacher's choice of music. There were expectations of country music for the activity and not other music such as older style music not typically used in line dancing.

> Yeah, the (name omitted)(dancing school) in Brisbane but then they wanted to do funny things. They expected me to go with this bloke and (name omitted) [my husband] to go with this woman and you know what I mean? So that was the end of that (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).
>
> It was good (line dancing). Yes, but they started - the teachers started doing a lot of like even bringing - they brought a lot of the classic music in and the real songs before I was even born like Singing in the Rain and all these stupid songs. I know I thought it was country music and all that. (Cousin Tia, Moree, 10.11.11).

A small amount of people mentioned cost as a barrier to participation and was a major factor in leaving the activity. These activities were attending the gymnasium, fees for sporting activities and for line dancing.

4.12 Conclusion

In their interviews about the physical activities they experienced in their lives My family members described physical activity in their living conditions, their employment and their leisure time. They also defined physical activity and what it meant to them; as well as what motivated them to participate and the barriers to participate.

Dad recognised that physical activity brought significant meaning in his life. He stated that the physically demanding employment he had was very detrimental to his body. He sacrificed his health for the welfare of others. He also recognised that living in the bush was a healthier place to live than the city where he now lived. Extending his stories to other family members to me was like a conversation that different people contributed their stories to the mix. There were many commonalities between the voices. Dad's invitation to you the reader was take a look at my family's health and current physical activity participation and then to challenge you to find out more to enable you to understand how people arrived at their current health. This larger conversation offers a powerful insight into the ways in which physical activity has been the lived experience of a generation older Aboriginal people. The picture that emerges provides a living narrative context for bald statistics reported in the 'closing the gap' policy assessments (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).

The majority of the family members interviewed positively assessed their own health however at the same time stated they had multiple health conditions. This was unusual and presented some contradictory tendencies in people's narratives: they generally

overstated things when categorising their health but down-played their circumstances when referring to their specific health conditions or illnesses. Family members participated in many different physical activities in their everyday life which mostly involved domestic duties. For some, the everyday physical activities such as milking cows at a boy's home and scrubbing floors related to broad controls of oppression common for that time in history. Employment was physical across three categories of employment: working on the land, service roles and professional positions. There was a dependency on the fitness of the body to keep working in these types of environments. Roles were generally gendered with men doing mostly work on the land (although there were exceptions with some women cotton chipping and stick picking) and women doing domestic type duties such as cleaning. While the work was described as very hard, it was equally described as being very enjoyable. A lot of the reasons for this were due to a lot of the work being done outdoors.

Leisure time was also full of physical activities including games with self-constructed toys, sports such as Rugby League, dancing and rounders. It appeared that the most popular activities were those that involved others such as family and friends. There were many enablers and barriers to physical activity. School teachers, whether from primary or high school, played a role in encouraging physical activity as well as other important aspects in life such as education and employment. Others such as family members, athlete role models, coaches and fitness instructors all encouraged those to participate.

There were many barriers to physical activity however poor health was the most common, in particular leg issues. Being of poor health meant less function, therefore participation was low. For others, a perception that they were not competent at an activity led them not to pursue it further. There were many other barriers that were also enablers, for instance family members. Even though family encouraged participation, they were also a detriment as responsibilities to family overrode personal motivations to be active. The responsibilities of earning a living and caring for family members were also barriers to physical activity, particularly recreational activities later in life. It was more important to earn money to support family than it was to pursue a physical activity for self. Another barrier was an unsafe environment such as the reluctance to

swim in rivers in contemporary times due to the poor condition of the water and strong currents.

Physical activity was described broadly to contain many activities. Many people spoke about the meaning of physical activity in their life such as social interaction and self-development such as building confidence as an Aboriginal person. Physical activity was the equalizer, the leveller, a place where there were opportunities to be the same as everyone else. Many people also described the benefits of activity to be related to being healthier and having more function in their bodies.

Health conditions and current activity patterns appear to be mostly common with the reported statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The illness and diseases are therefore reflected in my family. This chapter narrates the statistical truths and personalises them. Here, the statistics come alive, and explanations are presented about why things as they are.

In the context of low paid, mostly unskilled work, people wear out. Bodies wear out. Generally in ageing, the reliance on the body to be physically active for employment is no longer an option. The 'wearing out' of the body means a body in older years that can no longer be sufficiently active for health benefits. It is easy for medical practitioners therefore to assert what they believe is the right thing to do – to exercise, to buy what Dad describes as the 'expensive bread'. As Dad says, they don't appear to understand type of life he and others have led. It is hoped that this chapter has enabled you to reach your understandings.

– INTERLUDE 3 –

NETBALL, GROUP FITNESS & GYM: MY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STORY

Netball

The only competitive sport I ever played was Netball. I started in primary school and ended up playing it into my twenties, well after my high schooling was finished. I played mostly Centre but also Wing Attack and Wing Defence. I loved the game but continually sprained my ankles, really bad lateral (outside of foot) sprains that debilitated me for weeks on end. The injuries were the factor for me to give it all up. I always found Netball to be a rough game, so much for it being a 'non-contact' sport. I still have scars on my arms from other girls' nails!

Group Fitness

I was a Group Fitness Instructor for 20 years, from 1986 to 2006. I was never full time though, I worked full time in other positions and taught classes on a casual basis. Back when I started in Raymond Terrace, it was called 'Aerobics'. It was the 80's and what I wore when I taught classes screamed Jane Fonda. I started wearing leotards with full brief bottoms with skin tone tights and headbands; I progressed to g-string leotards and black tights of all lengths. I started teaching freestyle aerobics – meaning I made up the routines, recorded my own music from records and made up my own music tapes. As time went by the fitness industry became more professional, and I did courses for accreditation to the fitness governing body. Starting out I was teaching all sorts of classes ranging from high impact to low impact, to 'toning' classes focussing on abdominals, bottoms and thighs, circuits and aqua-aerobics. Les Mills pre-

choreographed group fitness classes were introduced to Australia and I jumped on the bandwagon to do courses to become an accredited Les Mills instructor in BodyCombat, BodyBalance, BodyStep and BodyPump. I taught these classes for many years at many fitness centres, sports centres, squash centres, schools and many other locations. According to fitness industry requirements, I regularly upskilled myself to keep my qualifications current. I also did courses to become a Pilates Instructor which I taught prior to my retirement from instructing.

Gym Instructor, Personal Trainer, Fitness Figure Competitor

At the same time I was teaching, I was also doing work as a gym instructor, had my own personal training business and trained to compete in fitness figure competitions. I loved resistance training and got a real kick out of teaching others about the benefits. Competing was fun too but hard work. I remember I was working in my full time role as a Police Officer for the NSW Police at the same time as training for my first competition. Working shift work coupled with eating 6 meals a day, lots of cardiovascular training such as running stairs and heavy resistance training was tough but I also loved every minute of it.

Wanting to learn more….Studying at University, Working in Sport and Recreation Jobs

I was a Police Officer and decided to leave to pursue a Bachelor of Social Science degree in Leisure and Sports Science. Later I went on to doing a Master of Social Science in Leisure Science. During my study and between those degrees, I worked in different jobs relating to physical activity. For example I worked for a Local Council as a Recreation Programs Officer, the Australian Sports Commission in Junior Sport and State Government in Sport and Recreation. Other jobs included a sports camp leader, various project officer roles in sport and recreation and the list goes on.

Today

As of 2013, it has been seven years since I stopped instructing classes. I still go to the gym and lift weights and do 'cardio' – on the treadmill, bike or cross trainer. I also love to walk outdoors whenever I can. In 2012 I decided I wanted to begin teaching classes again so I enrolled in a Yoga Teacher Training Course in Sydney. I loved doing this course however had to defer until I finished my PhD. I still have the 'bug' to teach

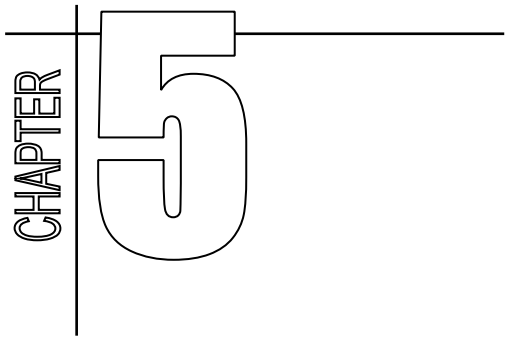
others to value physical activity and I regularly try to motivate others to exercise and live a healthy life.

PhD in Physical Activity?

Despite my love of physical activity and loving to motivate others, the PhD has been, rather ironically, an activity that has negatively affected my physical activity participation. I think, but I am not completely sure, that I have gained about 20 kilograms since I began in 2007. In the final 18 months as a full time student, my life has become very sedentary. My current activity is about 3 hours a week which is nothing compared to what it used to be. I still pursue physical activity though. One day I will write my own story of my physical activity experiences, especially my aerobics/group fitness stories. I have some funny yarns to tell. The completion of the PhD for me will also be a time for me to pursue a more dedicated commitment to physical activity and a healthier me.

Background

This is my opportunity to tell my physical activity stories with the stories from my family.



MAA. GIBIYLANDAAY

THE PLACES OF FREEDOM: RESISTANCE AND PERSISTENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Article 2 from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:
Indigenous peoples and individuals are free and equal to all other peoples and individuals and have the right to be free from any kind of discrimination, in the exercise of their rights, in particular that based on their indigenous origin or identity (United Nations, 2007).

Since invasion, Indigenous Australians have been subjected to restrictions on their freedom. Governments have been instrumental in creating these restrictions which led to devastation to the peoples and cultures of the First Peoples of Australia. In past years restrictions have included legislation to 'protect' Indigenous peoples such as the *NSW Aborigines Protection Act 1909* and to segregate Indigenous peoples such as the *NSW Aborigines Protection Amendment Act 1940* and *NSW Aborigines Act 1969* – all of which directly affected the participants in the research reported in this thesis. Local Government also played their part for example, Council resolutions to ban Indigenous peoples from occupying public areas (such as swimming pools) in country towns such as Moree.

Earlier chapters discussed how racism, poverty and physical activity shaped the everyday lives of members of my family. Their stories inevitably reflect the statistics

that characterise Aboriginal health in Australia and provide the backstory of how Kamilaroi communities have arrived at their current health circumstances. In these previous chapters the stories of racism constructed a challenging set of restrictions affecting individuals and families and confronting people over and over again throughout their lives. But these stories also offer glimpses of freedom and the narratives that underpin alternative futures, alternative trajectories and alternative possibilities. It is these glimpses that this chapter turns to in order to explore the places of freedom found in physical activity spaces.

The places of freedom that my family members spoke of were places of refuge away from formal rules, oppressive laws and discrimination. They were places where people felt that could be themselves, be Kamilaroi, be family, be happy. Within their places of freedom however, people recognised there were rules. But these were made internally. They were established by family members to govern the safety of younger family. The logic of these rules was understood by those they governed and were therefore acceptable. In their discussion of these rules, my family members' experience reflects the challenges and possibilities of self-determination – a right referred to in the 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but never available to Kamilaroi people since invasion. In many ways, the places of freedom discussed in the interviews with my family members are pointers to these wider debates of issues such as self-determination and the rights enshrined in the UN Declaration. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to explore the places of freedom in Kamilaroi lives, and to lay foundations for a wider discussion of the implications for health, ageing and physical activity. As in the previous chapters, Dad will again pilot us into the discussion of freedom and its implications, followed by extended discussion of the experiences of other family members.

5.1 Dad's Stories

This section outlines Dad's stories regarding restrictions and his places of freedom.

5.1.1 Dad's Restrictions

> So one big life is a barrier I think to Aboriginal people and causes, the color of your skin and the places you lived. And the people judge you for them over those periods of time (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

As discussed in Chapter Three, racism and restriction was inscribed on Dad's life from birth when he was born in a tent on the grounds of Moree hospital on 3 March, 1945. At that time, Aboriginal people were restricted from the hospital due to their race. Born under this climate of racism and restriction did not mean compliance however. My family were always activists; resisting the restrictions imposed by institutional racism; and my Pop, Alfred James Leslie was a prime example. In 1959, when living in a shack on Gunnedah Hill, Coonabarabran, Pop refused to be restricted. As described in Chapter three, the Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB) made Gunnedah Hill a type of a reserve and subsequently built and fenced houses. Pop didn't like our family being fenced in and moved his shack to the outside of the fence to the top of the hill. The Burra Bee Dee Aboriginal Station notified the AWB of his action, declaring that he had 'demolished his sub-standard dwelling thereon, and … erected another similar dwelling outside the boundary of the reserve' (Burra Bee Dee Aboriginal Station, 27.04.1959). Pop did not want our family to be restricted and while he didn't verbalise it, it was obvious. Pop desired freedom for our family; freedom was paramount to our survival and wellbeing.

Dad spoke about other restrictions that constrained his freedom to be and become what he wanted. As stated in Chapter three, he talked about his restrictions in entering a RSL club in Warren. It took Dad nine years to gain entry into the RSL due to an unwritten rule that Aboriginal people were not allowed entry. He also spoke about restrictions on entry to the cinema in Coonabarabran where Aboriginal people were fenced off with barbed wire away from white people; also restrictions to swimming pools in towns such as Moree. Despite these restrictions, Dad (like his father) resisted and persisted. Dad kept trying to get into the RSL and dressed in a suit to eventually gain 6 months of entry; he went to the movies and sometimes moved seats when the lights went out; he had entry to the Moree swimming pool and complied with various rules imposed by pool staff.

5.1.2 Dad's Freedom

Dad mostly spoke about the importance of the river in allowing people to feel free and also the freedom from living in the bush – away from the crowds and controls of city life. Dad described the freedom of the river in comparative terms to the swimming

pool. Freedom was no restrictions and no rules such as attendants enforcing washing rules and no surveillance. He could do what he wanted.

> I think it was no restrictions. There was no restrictions. You did what you want to do. You had no one watching you, what you do, or how you do it, or telling you had to go and have a wash, or doing anything. You just went in, clothes and all, if you wanted. You didn't even have to have any togs (swimming attire) on, swimming costume or something. No, you didn't have to do it, so you was free as the breeze (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.11.10).

Dad also described feelings of freedom in comparative terms when talking about living in the country versus living in the city. Living in the country meant freedom to do what he wanted, whether it be walking or feeling dirt in his toes. Feeling free was a link to a simpler past – where Dad could live anywhere - 'pitch a tent or live in a tin shack'. Freedom was a clean environment, a place of optimal wellbeing which evoked good mental health practices such as meditation. He described the importance of the cleanliness of the country, but also mentioned red dust and dirt in his toes. Perhaps he didn't perceive dirt in the bush to be unclean as it was derived from natural resources – it was Country. In comparison, living in the city was removed from the natural resources, from Country – it was a place of cement, smog and garbage.

> Well you are free. You do basically do what you want to do. You can go for a walk, you can get a fair bit of meditation, you feel free. It is nice to have the dirt between the toes. All you got down here is cement. I think at the time when I was growing up you could basically live anywhere. You could pitch a tent or live in a tin shack. You can't do that even in the country today. But it still had a clean environment even though some of the plains had red dust, dust and storms and all that. It wasn't like the city today with all the smog and the garbage that's going on. Country is very clean and people are more friendly Yeah (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

5.1.3 Conclusion to Dad's stories

So Dad faced many restrictions in his life but he also had his places of freedom. Throughout my life as well as in the interviews I did with him, Dad has spoken continuously about the restrictions on his life as an Aboriginal person. In the interviews, Dad reflected a lot on his experience of barriers both in physical activity and throughout his life. He was born under restrictions and his father instilled in him the trait *to resist*. Dad recognised restrictions but it fuelled him to resist. He kept on trying to get into the RSL until he was successful; he 'played the game' of getting into the movies and the swimming pool under restrictions but changed the game to suit himself. In his older years at the RSL and his younger years at the pool or movies, he was

stubborn and found ways to change his circumstances and therefore survive within restrictions.

Dad knew his places of freedom. These were connected to the natural world: the river and to the Country. But it is also important to consider what Dad *did not say* explicitly in his accounts of his experience. He didn't directly say how important freedom was, or how much he was influenced by the desire to attain it and/or feel it. Dad spoke about freedom in comparative ways: when speaking of the river he compared it to the restrictions of the pool; when speaking of the country he compared it to the restrictions of the city. To verbalise finding freedom for Dad was therefore describing what it wasn't. The river and the country were both places of feeling free and freedom, away from rules and discrimination, a place where he could do what he wanted, a place of freedom, a place of wellbeing.

5.2 Extending the stories to other family members

Dad's introduction of the idea of places of freedom as a basis for thinking about health and well-being emphasised the value and impact of his places of freedom being able to connect him and his Kamilaroi family and friends to the natural world of the river and to Country. He recognised restrictions within his life but these fuelled his desire to be free from them. Within restrictions, he resisted. Other family members also spoke about places of freedom in discussing their engagement with and experience of physical activity. In almost every case, these places were without walls. They were outside, where people said they felt most comfortable which made them have a good sense of wellbeing. Their discussion of the way that places fostered this sense of freedom, well-being and possibility are discussed under the following headings:

- Outside with others
- River
- The sporting field
- Being on your Country

5.2.1 Outside with others

People spoke about freedom in their childhood being physically active outside with their own people (relatives) or with others. Games and sports activities were played in

front yards, on roads, on reserves, or in the bush near their homes. The activities included football, cricket, handball, softball, rounders, relays and t-ball. Outside was a place of socialisation, where friendships were built and maintained, where there was conflict, where anyone could play regardless of their gender and where there were opportunities to be independent.

> Always playing sport in the front yard, at mum's house like football and cricket. You know mums lived in that property now close to 45 years, and I can guarantee you every nationality that's ever lived in (name of suburb omitted) has actually played football in that yard, absolutely yeah. And you play cricket, but handball used to be a really big one and we used to have the four squares on the road, and we'd have a raging competition within the street. But I suppose when we did play sports it was always mixed because of how many boys and girls used to live around and how large the families were. So if we played cricket, it wasn't just the girls playing cricket we were playing cricket with the boys and the girls. It was football with boys and girls. So we were a bit tomboyish growing up, and I suppose that's because I think we understood that freedom around just being out in nature and all that sort of stuff, and not hamstrung hanging around mum, hanging on the aprons and staying inside and all that sort of stuff (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

> When we come home that's when we just throw our things in the door and end up outside playing again…then we'd play our relays at all that at night. There's enough kids in the Row those days and everyone in the Row had kids more or less the same age. [It was important to be] mixing with the other kids. You probably had your fight and all that too because that's what we used to like doing. Well I did. I used to. Terrible for a fight and especially with the boys and that but all mates and that. No, just mixing with the kids and whatever (Cousin Tia, Moree, 10.11.11)

> …One of the memories I would say as far as watching them (siblings) and going to the Beemunnel (outside of Warren) playing every Sunday because we lived in town by then, going back out to the Beemunnel every Sunday to play rounders and whatever they were playing at, best sticks or whatever you like to call it, stepping stones or whatever they call them these days. That's where everybody met up and that's where everyone went back out there to play. All the townies would go back out there and play because we had the freedom to play out there and that's where your people were. It was just a big meeting centre… (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

Being outside with family and community members was also freedom from being racially discriminated against inside. Freedom from discrimination occurred in places outside of the school classroom, as well as away from living in houses in townships. In the past (1970s in Coonabarabran), the classroom was a place where Aboriginal children were discriminated against due to their race. They were invisible or ignored and not expected to engage with any learning activities within the classroom. The institutionalised racism of the classroom shaped the restrictions on children's freedom to realise their potential. Cousin Tania recalled how this affected her own entry to the classroom. The school simply assumed that because she was Aboriginal she would not

know how to read or write. Despite her mother asserting that she knew how to read and write and knew her alphabet, she was placed in a lower class and faced a future in which she was treated as Aboriginal in a racist system.

> I think that was the way education was at that time. That Aboriginal people weren't expected to answer questions, weren't expected to be able to participate in classes. I don't think they were really – I still remember my first day at school, which was in first class. My mum made sure that I had the pretty lace socks with lace frill around the top with these black patent-leather shoes with the strap that goes across and a buckle. And she'd polish them up, and we'd gone to school for the interview. And I could already read and I could write and do the alphabet and all that sort of stuff, but they insisted that I go into the lower class (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

Being outside playing games and sports was away from this type of discrimination. The same family member told me that being outside had a different atmosphere.

> I think I liked best about it was that it was sort of outside. I think looking back, this is retrospectively looking back that it was the atmosphere was different than the classroom when you were out playing sport.
>
> *Lana: Can you describe that, what the difference was?*
>
> Well, in the classroom, you're almost not noticed. Not noticed in the classroom. You'd be standing there to answer a question, or sitting there with your hand up to answer a question… (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

There was freedom from discrimination away from town. In this case, living in a house in town represented assimilation: living a 'white way of life'. Being outside was away from the laws of oppression and discrimination.

> Well as I said it was that freedom, we're sort of cooped up in town in our little boxes houses and living a white way of life when you get out on the river you just let loose and go wild and as I said and that freedom, you weren't under laws like in town you're oppressed because, what do you say, well around the '60s like I said the '60s was very hard times or been hard times for the last 200 years but in terms of like '65 were the freedom rides and the racial tensions (Cousin Tabitha, Moree, 13.11.11).

Similarly, living in town created feelings of being part of a minority. Out of town being with your people meant you were part of a majority, you were the dominant group.

> We were all the same, very, there were no non-Aboriginal people out there at that time, it was all Aboriginal people and you were just one of the families. You come to town and you've become a minority rather than part of the majority (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

5.2.2 The river

For many of the family members interviewed, the river was a place of freedom. Many activities occurred there such as swimming, diving, exploring, swinging on branches over the water, rock climbing, fishing, running, throwing rocks and playing sports such as vigaro, cricket and rounders. It was a 'kids world' away from adults, described here as a 'totally different space':

> That's one of the biggest thing of all was on the river, we were always exploring the river, we used to have all these little spots that we had special names for. And there were these little islands, you know and it was a different - it was our world, it was a kids world that was very separate that our adults and the family and that were living in too you know. So the river was a totally different space and we ruled it. Just us kids, but you know when you say us kids, we're talking about seven, eight of us all down there. And the older ones looking after the younger ones, everyone taking that responsibility (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

> Yes, you could do whatever you liked at the river and honestly, nine out of ten times, there was no adult there (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

While the river was a 'kids world' free from adults, it was also a described as freedom and had a sense of belonging. People described a spiritual connection to the river where they felt they were a part of it.

> It was fun, it was lovely, it was beautiful, freedom. The water was clean and it made you feel you were wanted down at that river, you were part of it, you were part of that river, it was lovely (Cousin Dirk Moree, 5.9.10).

> I don't know, it's a freedom thing, I suppose (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

5.2.3 The sporting field

For many people, the sporting field represented a place of freedom in race relations. People spoke about many benefits they found in being involved in competitive sports such as Rugby League. For many, it allowed some shift in the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people – even if it was conditional and temporary. The Rugby League field was described as a place of equality, a 'leveller' (meaning black and white were on the same level), where Aboriginal players were respected and accepted.

> People accepted you, everyone. Sport's great for bringing communities together, I reckon (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

The sporting field was also a place where Aboriginal people could actually be superior to non-Aboriginal people for a rare and brief moment. It was a place where Aboriginal people were not 'ruled' such as in other parts of society. It was a place to resist and to dominate.

> Yeah we used to like it when we used to play white fullas, local sides. You know get a bit rough and that, we used to love it. Oh yeah, yeah it was really rough, my word. You know, we didn't want white fullas to rule us. As footballers, we were more the superior sports person. Like the black fullas you know, we didn't want to take a loss (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).
>
> You're equal or better, you're physically equal or better. An old black fella used to say to me, he said, you get them white fellas, he said you've got to be equal or better. It's always stuck with me. It works.
>
> *Lana: Equal or better?*
>
> Yeah, to earn the respect of the white man.
>
> *Lana: Is that important, to get the respect?*
>
> If you're a proud person.
>
> *Lana: You're a proud person, yeah.*
>
> It's a great leveller.
>
> *Lana: Yeah, the leveller of where a lot of people talk about that that is the only place sometimes that they've ever felt accepted on the playing field.*
>
> And admired (Cousin Mike, Bidwill, 6.10.11).

The sporting field was also seen as a place of freedom more broadly for Aboriginal people in society. For Kamilaroi people, the wider achievements of Aboriginal sportspeople offered a glimpse of wider horizons, of wider possibilities for freedom and responses to the racism that so restricted their lives. In this exchange, Cousin Tabitha describes the football field as a 'true place for reconciliation', a place of respect and tolerance. In addition to the sporting field, team sports in general promoted good relationships. Being part of a team sport meant a dependence on others in the team to win therefore racism was less likely to be present:

> So the football was breaking down barriers … it's where relationships are built and I know through me, playing sports you made friends through sport, even though you might not have been selected because you were Aboriginal, that sort of stuff went on but as I said I found it more tolerant coming up in the '70s and '80s, that we were treated more equally in terms of getting represented in sport our abilities were acknowledged and we weren't discriminated as much against. So I think that for a lot

> of us that sport was the true place for reconciliation, not schools, through school sport because we had to assimilate in schools.
>
> *Lana: Why do you think that is? Why do you think that sport contributes to that reconciliation?*
>
> Because most sports we played were team sports so you had to play as a team so in your team. Racism will come in maybe from the adults in terms of selecting but as kids, I think kids until adults tell them otherwise we treat each other quite respectfully. (Cousin Tabitha, Moree, 13.11.11).

5.2.4 Being on your Country

> That's your land, that's where you grew up, that's where your history is, that's you, probably (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

Another place of freedom was being on 'your Country'. This meant living or visiting the places where you were born and/or where your relatives and ancestors had lived before. The connection to Country, whether its rivers or lands, brought many benefits. It was a way for Kamilaroi families to form and maintain a strong cultural identity. This was done by being at the places where past generations had been before you, a spiritual link to the past and a contemporary way to maintain cultural identity and to teach younger generations:

> I take my grandkids, I've always taken my daughter to the river and when we've lived in other places and there's been a river there and oh yeah we're river girls, we have to live near a river because your Nanny comes off the Murray river, you know your great Grandfather comes off the Mulgoa River…So you know that river is really significant.…it's that life force, life force energy, its well it provides so much. And I can say that now because of everything that it did provide for us as kids, safety, security, it gave us an occupation. It's solidified our own identify within us, it helped us understand a sense of belonging, it also helped us understand environment and who we are within that environment (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

People felt better when on Country. In the quote above, Cousin Mary described a 'life force energy' that being on Country provided and nurtured. Others echoed similar sentiments of feeling alive and refreshed when they were on their Country. As well as the clean air, people said they felt comfortable and had a sense of belonging on Country. This reflected people's sense of a link to history as well as a place where Kamilaroi people congregated and were free to be Kamilaroi.

> I do [feel a difference in my health], when I go home, I feel, I don't know if the right words are more alive, more energetic or I suppose more alive, more refreshed…
>
> *Lana: What do you put that down to?*

> The fact that I'm home I think. The home and the air is clean. That's your land, that's where you grew up, that's where your history is, that's you, probably (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

> It meant we knew we belonged out there. We knew that's where we actually came from and we still today have a connection to the Beemunnell. A connection that is where, relating to that's where the Aboriginal people lived. That's where they lived together as a group and probably for a very long time, that's where everybody was most comfortable.

> *Lana: Why do you think that they felt most comfortable out there?*

> Because they were a group, they were part of one another (Cousin Heidi, Warren, 8.11.11).

Living on Country was generally understood as advantageous for health and many of the family members interviewed emphasised the link between being on Country and feeling well. In contrast, living away from Country was often described negatively. City life was unlike the life they had on Country. People spoke about the difference in the air they breathed. In the city, there was smog and humidity which contributed to respiratory issues such as having a blocked nose and hay fever. They talked about living in smaller houses with small backyards and busy streets, which meant less physical activity. In comparison, life in the bush was characterised by cleaner air and wider expanses of land for recreation and physical activities. People valued the positive aspects on health in the bush and conversely recognised and were concerned about the negativity in the city.

> In Coona (Coonabarabran)…see the boys were only young we used to go for long walks cause we were out on a farm, we went for long walks, we had horses, we had horses on the farm. We used to walk around the paddock so there was lots of activities up there. When we moved to Sydney and we moved to suburbia, we moved to St Marys, we rented a house with a small backyard so you don't do the things you were doing, you don't go for the long walks in the bush. In Coona for example in town, when we used to go and visit mum and pop there is the bush at the front of the house. The kids used to run wild in the bush there. You could walk around in there. There were lots of places you could walk and do lots...

> When I first came to Sydney to live… I used to get a lot of blocked noses and hayfever... No [I didn't get it checked by a Doctor] because I thought it was just Sydney, the air in Sydney, the humidity and all that type of thing, that sort of played a part in it. When I'd go home I'd be good. [I feel] much healthier in the country, the clean air, the different temperatures. In Coona it gets really hot in summer but quite cold in winter. I think the air up there…it's a small town there's no pollution there's no factories there (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10.)

5.3 Playing by the rules

The places of freedom were not simply unrestricted. They were not places of anarchy. They had rules, a contradiction and paradox that was unnoticed and yet totally acceptable. Rules were made and enforced by those that frequented the places of freedom. Rivers, for example, were an environment that was internally governed by peers and other family members for safety reasons. The rules at the river were all about risk prevention. Rivers were well known to have dangers such as currents and deep areas. There were stories from some family members about those who had drowned at rivers. Stories such as my Uncle Jimmy who drowned as a toddler while wading in shallow water at a river. As a result of the drowning, adults banned children from the place of his death:

> … but there was like the river was there was as well and there was also little puddles of water, little drums of water and things like that and that's when Jimmy our other mum's brother, Raymond's father, well he went down to this river and he went fell into the water where it was only about up to there… (shows to ankle)…yeah and when he fell down he went in flat and that's how he got drowned. Yeah well I don't didn't remember that I remembered it but I, you know, so then we weren't allowed to go there then no more) (Aunty Jacqueline, Moree, 12.11.11).

Other stories such as those who 'were taken' by strong currents, never to be seen again.

> … no one swims there (Little Bondi outside of Moree) now cause too many deaths. A lot of people were taken there swimming must be about 8 to 10 people disappeared. They reckon there is a current there. Yeah [it was] the Gwydir [River], one river going one way and another current going underneath, underneath is a big hole. We swum and dived everywhere there. They used to get them and take them under. It was just sand. Miles of sand and that's why they called it Bondi…we used to go out in busloads. To little Bondi (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10).

The stories were part of the risk prevention strategy to inform others of the danger: a warning of the fatal consequences that could occur. Strategies were therefore put into place such as the supervisory roles performed by the older children over the younger. Supervision was vigilant over the younger children, especially those that could not swim.

> We weren't allowed to go out into the deep and the big ones (older children) used to make us go back in [to the riverbank] (Aunty Mable, Lethbridge Park, 6.10.11).

> Me and me sisters, me cousins, there was always about 15 of us, 10, 15 all swimming in the river and there was always someone older that was always there looking out. Yeah, especially swimming downriver when we were younger and if no one couldn't swim,

> you'd always have a group with that person, they'd be in the shallow part but they wouldn't go any further than we were (Cousin Daisy, Moree, Moree 10.11.11).

While there was supervision from the older children, there was also other methods of risk prevention such as the surveillance of strangers that came to the river. Cousin Mary compared the safety of the river to a swimming pool. She recounted a story where a man had tried to sexually assault her in a public swimming pool. She stated that the enclosed area of a swimming pool could be a haven for these offences to occur due to a perception that children are a 'captured audience' being in a smaller area. The river on the other hand was a larger area that had personal space. The river was a place that you got to know – you knew who went there, you had an understanding of the behaviours of people.

> You've also got other elements of danger too. And I remember there was a time there the guy who actually tried to sexually abuse me at the pool yeah. And it was a crowded pool and that's one thing with the river, when you were in the river you never swam next to other people. Because the rivers big enough to stay in your own space. It shows the danger of when we, when Government decides it wants to close down things, it actually makes a whole lot of people far more vulnerable. Because perpetrators now have more of a target a captured audience. Like the river, the minute he (a stranger) was on the sand and the minute he pulled up in a car we all would have been there's a stranger here. Because we understood the river and who went to that river so that's understanding the space and place and our sense of belonging to that space (Cousin Mary, Lethbridge Park, 20.5.11).

There were other rules at the places of freedom which were usually enforced by adults. Many spoke of arriving home from school and going outside to play. The rule for children at the time was to be home by the time the sun went down. It appeared that being dark outside was associated with danger however it was also a call to the children to come home for the evening meal.

> …we'd get called in then before the sun went down. You'd hear all the mothers out, singing (yelling) out to all the kids. We all had to be inside by dark, that was one thing (Cousin Tia, Moree, 10.11.11).

While some families allowed children to go outside the family home until dark, there was one family that forbade their children from leaving their yard. The reason was to protect the children from potential discrimination:

> In Dubbo we weren't allowed out of the yard because we lived in-between two white families and we weren't allowed out of the yard. Grandfather [didn't let us out of the yard]. We lived with him then. That was Dad's parents.…we never ever went out of the yard to play with other kids, just there was eight of us, eight kids and we played in the yard. Well, Grannie, she was the one that kept us in the yard because Grandfather

> would go away to meetings and that and although people went past, they'd say good morning or good afternoon to Grannie and she would answer and we were never noisy.
>
> *Lana: So why do you think that she didn't want to let you out of the yard?*
>
> She was born down at Darlington Point. That's near Griffith and I think they were all discriminated against down there (Aunty Mable, Lethbridge Park, 6.10.11).

Both rules imposed by adults (to be inside by darkness and to stay in the yard) highlight a sad fact. It was clear that many people that grew up around other Aboriginal families had places of freedom to play and socialise together. The example above highlights a different type of life away from other Aboriginal families: one of restriction from fear of discrimination.

Of course, these rules were Kamilaroi rules – they reflected the persistence of Kamilaroi values and Kamilaroi understandings. They shaped the places of people's freedom as Kamilaroi places; as places of belonging to a wider community that accepted people and encouraged them to be what they were – Kamilaroi. The implications of this tension between the places of freedom and the restrictions imposed by institutionalised racism, then, become central to understanding the trajectories of Kamilaroi health, well-being and opportunity and opens the question of what choices Kamilaroi people had in the question of 'playing by the rules'.

5.3.1 The contradictions of playing by the rules?

> I do think this is an Aboriginal thing, and it's because of all the policies and legislation that we've had to live under. We've become very good at knowing rules (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

One aspect of Aboriginal people's experiences of being forced to conform to the arbitrary and restrictive – and often hidden – rules of oppression and institutionalised racism has been the development of an ability to recognise and adapt to the rules. Living under policies, legislation and 'unwritten social rules' of discrimination in society was commonplace to Aboriginal people therefore following rules in a sporting environment came easy to many of the family members interviewed in this research. Rather than creating a naively binarised 'black and white' space, this points to precisely the same kind of ambivalent and contradictory spaces that emerged from earlier consideration of the scholarly literature, where securing reliable outcomes of Aboriginal health and well-being from well-intentioned state policies in a setting characterised by

state-institutionalised racism was, at best, an uneven and unreliable process. Unsurprisingly, people seek the best outcomes they can secure from the opportunities that present themselves. In some cases, resistance was best exemplified by an approach of 'playing by the rules', but knowing the rules well enough to create unexpected outcomes in new sorts of spaces. For example, not only did people find that they were able to exhibit superior skills on the sporting field contrary to the institutionalisation of white superiority in wider social settings, they were able to use that experience to open new spaces as coaches and coaches.

> I think you've got the rules that are there that are for everyone. And then you had the usual ones for the Aboriginal people that were around in that time. But you've also got the unwritten ones, like the unwritten rule was if you were in the shop in town, you wouldn't go in and say, pick up the merchandise, look at it and then put it back down. You'd stand back from the shelf. That was unwritten rules sort of in the sense so that no one could accuse you of stealing. So that's one of those sorts of things. That's sort of like the unwritten social rule (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

The rules of the sportsfield also demanded acts of strategy and encouraged people to develop skills in strategic thinking, teamwork and leadership that were applied off the field. Many people discussed how strategy improved as skills improved. Players learned to disguise fouls and generally learned the consequences of their actions on court. Within the rules though, Aboriginal players needed to have more 'nouse' (intelligence) than others to avoid fouls. They knew the cause and effect of their behaviours on court and were meticulous at their approach to avoiding fouls. When detected for a foul, Aboriginal players therefore were very indignant that they did nothing wrong. Knowing and abiding by the rules was justification to passionately resist from being reprimanded. They knew the rules and in the sporting environment were defiant and felt justified defending themselves. Knowing the rules was therefore central to success and central to feeling justified to resist.

> And it's just the way that you just – I think when Aboriginal people play sport, and say if it's in basketball and you get called up on a particular type of foul, you either become better at disguising that foul or you – okay, you know that, "If I do this, I'm going to get called on a foul." And that's as you become better at sports, you learn those techniques anyhow. But I think because when we were playing sport, you had to have a bit more nouse than some of the others. So you learnt how to the play the rules in the sense that you just – you could almost predict that if person X is dribbling down the court, and I run too close to her, I'm going to get a foul whether I touch her or not. (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11)
>
> And I think that's probably a strategy and a technique that's not Indigenous, but I think we probably got to that point sooner than the other people our age who were

> playing that sport. Because you just have to – you've got to be aware of it, so you're aware of it. Because a lot of the times you'd get fouled, "But I didn't even touch her!" You'd have indignation, you'd have (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

5.4 Conclusion

Kamilaroi people lived under a shroud of discrimination which was formally supported by Government legislation. It was also reinforced by 'unwritten social rules' which governed, for example, behaviours that Aboriginal people had to adopt in shops and other social environments. Following rules was common in everyday life however resisting them was also an important part of survival and reflected an ongoing desire for freedom.

In their interviews for this study, my family members reflected on the moments and places of freedom which were distinct from and separate to laws of oppression. People found their places outside the constraints of the mainstreams of institutionalised racism. In being on Country and being with other Kamilaroi people, they found their places of freedom. The rivers and community spaces were amongst the most highly prized memories, and as people were ageing, their nostalgia for Country and their youth combined to emphasise the importance of those spaces as their lives had developed. The places of freedom did not have walls: they were all outside. Children being outside with others, usually family members and neighbours, had many advantages of socialisation and self-development and the development of Kamilaroi culture, values and understandings. There were feelings of freedom to be active outside the home which also promoted independence from inside the home. Not just for children, people spoke about the freedom to play as adults at places with their own people.

Being outside also was a symbol of freedom away from discrimination which occurred in indoor settings. These included classrooms where Aboriginal children were invisible; being away from home (in town) which represented a 'white way of life' and oppression. Being outside with your own people meant that you were the dominant group and not the minority, a sense of normalcy. The river was a place of freedom which was described as a 'kid's world' which was away from adults. People felt a spiritual connection to the river as though they were part of it. Being on your own Country was another place of freedom that represented a spiritual connection to

ancestors and those Aboriginal people that came before you. It was a method to form and maintain a strong cultural identity, a cultural link to the past, as well as a link to the future. People stated they felt healthier when on Country and described it as life force energy, being alive and refreshed and had a sense of belonging. It was also perceived as a clean place with clean air.

For many of the people I spoke with, the sporting field was another place that offered a different sort of freedom. On the sporting field, people were required to conform to the same rules as everyone else, and for a change were valued if they excelled and were equal to or 'better than a white fulla'. This was a place of equality, which enabled Aboriginal people to be respected and accepted for their sporting abilities. Broadly, the sporting field was also discussed as a place of reconciliation, where positive relationships between black and white could begin and be maintained. The nature of the sporting activity promoted good relationships as team members depended on each other to compete. Like so much experience in their racialized everyday lives, many people found their sports experience was marked by racism, but offered a place to resist racism and respond in ways that were simply not available off the field.

Within the places of freedom were also acts of resistance. Sporting fields were described positively for their equalizing benefits however were also places of resistance. They were seemingly like a battlefield, where Aboriginal people could fight/compete and play rough against the non-Aboriginal people. The quote '…we didn't want white fullas to rule us' reflected that the sporting field was a place which was unlike the rest of society full of oppression and discrimination. It was a place where Aboriginal people could be free to dominate and be superior to non-Aboriginal people due to their sporting abilities. The basketball court was another type of battlefield where strategizing was a key to success: Aboriginal people knew the rules meticulously as a justification to resist should they be reprimanded by referees.

The places of freedom also had in-built rules which were made by Aboriginal people and therefore acceptable. These included supervision of younger, experienced children at rivers; not playing outside after dark and staying within the boundaries of a backyard. There were advantages of playing by the rules, none withstanding safety. Knowing the rules in playing sport was conducive to developing higher sporting skills. From living

under restrictive rules in their life, Aboriginal people adopted them quickly and knew them well.

As stated, the places of freedom were all outside. All places were all connected to the natural world as well as being with other Aboriginal people. Freedom was a spiritual connection to the land and river and provided an important cultural link to those who had passed away as well as a teaching tool for younger generations. Togetherness was very important to feelings of freedom to associate with your own family and extended family – to feel part of a majority, rather than feeling part of a minority. People felt healthier being on country due to the spiritual connection as well as the benefits a cleaner air free from pollution associated with city life. The sporting field was a place of freedom and equality. As stated above, it was also a site of resistance and dominance over non-Aboriginal people and the laws of oppression. It was therefore a battleground, a place of activism where resistance and domination were motivators to compete.

For my Kamilaroi family, racial discrimination was part of life and the places of freedom were refuge and provided respite from it. In a contemporary context, places of freedom are necessary for Aboriginal people to thrive and therefore have a positive sense of wellbeing.

- INTERLUDE 4 –

HOW MANY BEANS MAKE FIVE? STORIES FROM NANA

One of her stories from Terry Hie Hie concerned Nana's school teacher who was also the Reserve Manager. One day the teacher patronisingly asked the class 'How many beans make five?' and the kids answered 'Two in each hand and one up your arse ' Nana loved this story and laughed every time she told it.



Both her father's mother, Granny Rosie Duncan (pictured on the right) and her mother's mother, Granny Elizabeth Jenkins (pictured on the left) were alive when she

was a child at Terry Hie Hie. She especially loved and was close to her Granny Jenkins who spoke the Kamilaroi language. Nana would tell the story that her Granny would sit for hours and sing 'blackfella songs'.

She was threatened as a child by the Station owner if she spoke Kamilaroi - she was told 'We whip wild blacks here'. Nana however understood the Kamilaroi language and although she did not speak it, she did use words in her everyday language all of her life.

Nana also told us that it was a regular occurrence for racial verbal abuse to be inflicted on her and her sisters when walking into town. Non-Aboriginal children would yell to them: 'Go on ya black gins ya black fellas ya's lousy'.

Dad tells the story of Nana sweeping the flat one day and he was being cheeky; as a result Nana threw the tea-tree broom at him which knocked him down. Dad reflected that 'Mumma could sure a throw a boondi (a club)'. Dad said he didn't give cheek after that.

Nana referred lovingly to Moree as the 'Big M' where most of her family lived.

Highly respected by her family, no one ever said no to her. When the boys were working it was a usual thing for her to say 'Got any money?' 'Yes Aunty Violet, is a pound enough?' and she would take it. Then she would ask someone else: 'Got any money?' and if they said 'No' she would say 'Here's a pound, will that do you?'

She always said 'We didn't know what greed was, we always said share and share alike'.

Background: Nana was a matriarch of the family and the communities in which she lived. She was well respected by all and always took care of others. She also had a very good sense of humour and teased others in good humour.

CHAPTER 6

MAA.DHULU

MESSAGE STICK- TEACHINGS ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A dhulu (message stick) was traditionally a method that some Australian Aboriginal groups used to pass messages to each other across lands. The messages could be about various topics of interest such as events, for example the location and details of a ceremony, or perhaps a death or a funeral. Made from a piece of wood, the dhulu ranged in size however an approximate length was two hands end to end and the width of one. The messages were communicated by symbols, which were either burned, painted or carved into the wood. Traditionally men had the responsibility to source the wood, burn, carve or paint and transport the dhulu. This chapter describes my creation and use of a dhulu to communicate messages from my family members to the others on the importance of physical activity. The teachings incorporate messages to the next generation as well as messages about ageing well. The rigour of this chapter is entrenched in Kamilaroi culture, described as 'ways of doing' that emphasises a traditional role and process (Martin, 2003).

6.1 Background

In their interviews, my family members talked about the many benefits of physical activity they enjoyed throughout their lives. In addition they also spoke about the messages they wanted to offer to the next generation to be physically active. They wanted to communicate the importance of physical activity by recommending a set of positive behaviours. Being older, they had accumulated life lessons through their experiences, and wished to pass on what they had learned to others. In addition, being an older Aboriginal person, it was a natural, cultural way that they teach the younger generation. The interviews identified six key messages:

1. Participate in any physical activity
2. Maintain your physical activity
3. Participate in a physical activity that you enjoy
4. Control your behaviours
5. Healthy body, healthy mind
6. Be disciplined

In addition to the presentation of my research in the formal thesis, I also wanted to communicate the themes in a cultural way and sought the advice from Uncle Wayne Griffiths, Uncle Greg Griffiths and Uncle Mick Horn, three Male Elders from Gunnedah, New South Wales (Griffiths et al., 2012). After explaining what I wanted to do, I was concerned that my intentions were culturally inappropriate as I knew dhulus were created and used traditionally by males. All three Elders assured me that my intentions were culturally appropriate in a contemporary context and were pleased that I was attempting to communicate part of my thesis in a cultural way. With Uncle Wayne, I went to Uncle Mick's house to source some wood. Visiting Uncle Mick's house in Gunnedah was a cultural experience in itself. Uncle Mick is an artist, and as I walked through his house, he showed me different artefacts he had made, as well as his paintings, many of which were painted directly onto the walls of his house. Going out to his backyard, Uncle Mick said he had some things to give me – a bag of empty emu eggs for carving, 2 long digging sticks and a hollow piece of lightly coloured wood. All items were gathered by him from Kamilaroi country. He told me that the wood was from a willow tree. It was about the length of one and a half hands, and was in the shape of a hollow cylinder. Uncle Mick stated it was an emu caller but it could also be used as a message stick. I felt very honoured that I had received all items, and I was really excited of the prospect of creating a message stick for my thesis.

At Uncle Mick's house, while waiting for him as he gathered my gifts, Uncle Wayne and I talked about message sticks and I asked him if there were any symbols that best represented Kamilaroi. He then told me about one carving on the tree where Cumbo Gunerah (Red Chief), a great Kamilaroi warrior was buried. He drew the symbol in the air, against part of Uncle Mick's garden shed. It looked like a series of the letter 'V' which went down, one after the other. The tree is described in 'The Red Chief' by Ion L. Idriess (1979). While the book does not refer to the exact markings, it states that it had 'totemic designs' and 'a boomerang cut on each side with a yeliman on the bottom' (pp. ix, xx). He said I could use this symbol on the message stick. With the hot January sun against my skin, standing on Kamilaroi country, I listened to this story and felt the significance of this knowledge I was given. Calling it a symbol did not seem good enough. It was cultural knowledge passed to me that represented 'Kamilaroi-ness'. In a spiritual way, I interpreted it to represent the spirit of the warrior within the Kamilaroi. I went home to Sydney that day and set about the creation of the Dhulu.

6.2 The Creation of the Dhulu

First, I needed to prepare the wood and sanded the message stick by hand and with a small hand sander. The themes I had prepared were then represented in symbols which I first drew in pencil on paper, then used PowerPoint to capture these electronically. I printed them out and traced them using tracing paper. Using the tracing paper, I placed the symbols on the dhulu. From there, I carved the symbols into the wood using an engraver, then burned each symbol using a wood burner. When all of the symbols were done, I 'signed' the dhulu on the top with 'LL (then an arrow to represent an ongoing journey), then PhD 2013'. The dhulu was given several layers of clear lacquer to preserve the original colour of the willow. This process was completed over eighteen months and involved assistance from others. The people who helped me to create the dhulu were:

- Uncle Mick Horn – who gave me the wood
- Uncle Wayne Griffiths – who gave me advice, reassurance and encouragement
- Uncle Greg Griffiths – who gave me advice and reassurance
- Dad – who helped me with the sanding, carving and burning
- Mum – who helped with the sanding
- My partner – who helped with purchasing the engraver, wood burner and lacquer; as well as helping with sanding, carving, burning and lacquering.

The assistance from the above people over time made the creation of the dhulu a collaborative effort. I therefore used the creation of the dhulu to involve people in the messages to the next generation, but also more broadly to acknowledge and symbolise their help to me at various stages in the six years of the PhD. The bulk of the work was done by me however, and I usually did the work sitting on the floor of my flat, or in Mum and Dad's backyard in Rooty Hill, Western Sydney. Figure 21 shows me sitting on my lounge room floor working with the dhulu.



Figure 21: Me working on the dhulu on my lounge room floor, 2013

6.3 The Weeping of the Dhulu

In early 2013, in the final stages of creating the dhulu, something happened to the dhulu while I was working with it. One weekend, I was sitting on the floor of my lounge room and was doing more carving and burning to go over symbols that looked to have faded a little from previous work. The wood started to seep liquid. This had never happened before and initially it frightened me as I suspected something

spiritually was happening. My first thought, which I relayed to my partner, was that the wood was weeping. I reflected on the symbolism of this moment and thought about the tears of my Kamilaroi people and Kamilaroi country as a result of dispossession and attempts of cultural genocide; I also thought about tears of survival. Not really knowing what it truly meant, I decided to call Uncle Wayne to talk with him about it. He asked me to send a photo to him. With my iphone in hand, I took a photo of the wood 'weeping' and called him back after a few minutes later. He told me he had called Uncle Mick and both of them told me not to worry. The wood was still young, they said, and the 'weeping' was a natural process. This made me feel better, but I still reflect on this incident as something that spoke to me in a spiritual way.

On 28 July 2013, I travelled to Gunnedah to meet with Uncle Wayne. Uncle Mick was not home that weekend unfortunately. I showed the finished product to Uncle Wayne and he was very happy with what I had done.

6.4 Dhulu Symbols and Meanings

This section presents photographs of the dhulu including each set of symbols with their meanings.

6.4.1 The Dhulu

Figure 21 shows the dhulu in entirety. As described above, the dhulu is made of wood from a willow tree in Kamilaroi country. The wood is light in colour. The shape is cylindrical and hollow, as the original purpose for the wood was an emu caller.

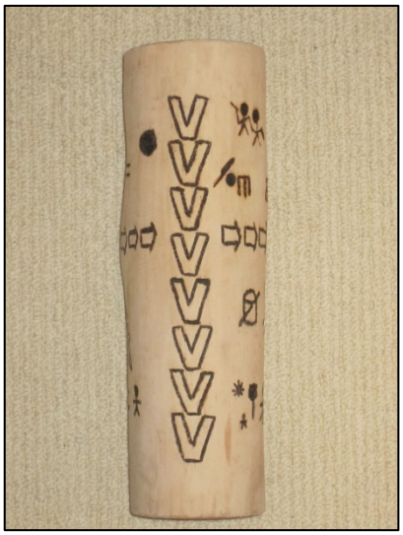


Figure 22: The Dhulu

6.4.2 Sign of Kamilaroi

As stated above, this is the sign of the Kamilaroi as relayed to me from Uncle Wayne Griffiths. Uncle Wayne stated that this symbol was found on the tree where Cumbo Gunerah was buried. It symbolises the great warrior that was the Red Chief. To reiterate, it in a spiritual way, I interpret it to represent the spirit of the warrior within the Kamilaroi.



Figure 23: Symbol of the Kamilaroi

6.4.3 Messages to the next generation

To reiterate, the six messages to the next generation are:

1. Participate in any physical activity
2. Maintain your physical activity
3. Participate in a physical activity that you enjoy
4. Control your behaviours
5. Healthy body, healthy mind
6. Be disciplined

1. Participate in any physical activity

Family members recommended that people should participate in any type of physical activity. It didn't matter if the activities were sport, dancing, walking or being involved in the community; it was just important to be active and involved. The comments relating to this message also indicated that they understood the term 'physical activity' to encompass many different activities.

> No matter what sport it is, as long as you play. You must participate in something (Cousin Wallace, Shalvey 20.5.11).

> Activity, I won't say activity, not necessarily sports because activity is very important… And when I mean activity, I mean things like – a lot of Aboriginal people are really good dancers (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

> …exercise as much as they can, do a lot of walking (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

> …if they keep healthy and be actively involved. Also being actively involved in your community that's exercise on its own (Aunty Sally, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

Figure 24 shows the symbols used on the dhulu to represent the message: 'Participate in any physical activity'. A variety of physical activities are represented. On the top row, from left to right indicate dancing and walking; the bottom row from left to right indicates sport/cricket and cycling.



Figure 24: Participate in any physical activity

2. Maintain your physical activity

The second message was to enjoy physical activity however it was equally important to maintain it and not to stop. Here, people spoke about the positive nature of physical activity and the benefits it brings, such as a sense of pride. In this message was also an innate warning that the activity must be continued, otherwise there would be consequences. The last comment refers to stopping activity as finality, that it would be the end of physical activity forever. It appears that there was a realisation that momentum had to be upheld.

> If they like the sport stay in it and be proud of what you're doing (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).
>
> Any younguns listening to this, tell them to get into sport and stay there (Cousin Gary, Colyton, 4.11.10).
>
> I tell them see what you like and just keep doing what you are doing (Cousin Daphne, Moree, 10.11.11).
>
> ...you just got to keep at it and don't let it die out (Cousin Dirk, Moree, 5.9.10.)
>
> So - but I'd encourage people to get in and keep active, but the moment you stop, that's the end of it.... well, I'd just encourage people to keep doing something at least (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.08.08)

Figure 25 shows the symbols used on the dhulu to represent the message: 'Maintain your physical activity'. The arrows appear around the circumference of the dhulu, symbolising ongoing and continuing action.



Figure 25: Maintain your physical activity

3. Participate in a physical activity that you enjoy

Family members stated that others need to participate in physical activities that were enjoyable and fun. If the activity was enjoyable, it was more likely that participation would occur.

> If you like it, go and do it (Cousin Daphne, Moree, 10.11.11).

> If they like the sport stay in it... If you want to exercise and do things, if you want to do it your own way, pace and everything else and you like sports or anything else, whatever you call it, get out there and do it if they want to do it (Cousin Otto, Hebersham, 8.11.10).

Figure 26 shows the symbols used on the dhulu to represent the message: 'Participate in a physical activity that you enjoy'. The smiling face and heart represent participating in an activity that makes you smile and makes you happy, something that you love to do.



Figure 26: Participate in a physical activity that you enjoy

4. Control your behaviours

Family members warned that behaviours need to be controlled and that others need to take responsibility to care for themselves. They warned about several behaviours such as alcohol, drugs and being inactive:

> Look after yourself, don't do drugs and alcohol, if you're young. Look after yourself. Do it in moderation. Drink in moderation, not desperation and look after yourself. (Cousin Daisy, Moree, 10.11.11).

> Keep away from drugs and…live your life (Cousin Gary, Colyton, 4.11.10).

> Keep off the grog and drugs is probably the worst part about it, and don't become a couch potato, I suppose (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.08.08).

Similar to the quote above regarding not being a couch potato, other warnings were communicated with a statement regarding the likely consequences. In this first quote,

the consequences of being inactive is not clearly spelled out however it is clearly negative.

> You want to exercise a bit or you know what will happen? I even go crook on Mum. She whinged about her legs aching and [I] said yeah, 'that's circulation, you want to stop crossing them legs and have a little walk'. She said, "I can't walk far". I said "you can walk up and down these roads in the flat', no excuse. I reckon there's no excuse. (Cousin Siena, South Kempsey, 7.11.11).

This quote has a consequence more clearly stated. Here, a family member told the story where his very overweight sister was once very physical in her life. She warned him that being inactive and overweight had a consequence of being housebound:

> … same as me sister said to me a while back, "Don't let it happen to you, brother", she said, "this is what can happen to you". She was physical, fishing all the time, working on the cotton, working on burr cutting, doing all these things, things we all did out in the west… she said, "Don't let it happen to you where you become housebound". She can't walk or - and she just got too overweight (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Other warnings related to modern conveniences in society which impacted on the amount of physical activity in everyday life. People were aware that technology had changed their daily lives. Walking was replaced with using motor vehicles; playing outdoors was replaced with sedentary behaviours such as using the computer indoors; office work was also a sedentary behaviour:

> You don't walk anywhere. You drive everywhere. Even go down to the shop, 200 metres, I'll drive down. No, no bloody getting out and walking. That would be terribly unhealthy. So the thing is, we find excuses. "I'm too tired, I'm so hungry, I've got to get down there quick." It's an excuse and the excuse is trying to find a reason where there isn't one (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

> I mean you see the kids now you know, they're obese because they sit down behind a computer, they don't go out and play outdoors. They come home and turn the television on, they get onto the computer and they [are] twittering away all the time. They don't lead an active, they don't lead the active life that we, that I did as a kid. And that's gone, and that's the cruel part of life that it's all mechanical (Cousin Leonard, Rooty Hill, 29.10.10).

> … the more you do in paperwork, I think, the more it kills you. It takes away a lot of other things from your life. It's never been the same. You go further and further. You're sitting at a desk. You're getting fatter and fatter. You got to keep trying to do your best to keep yourself fit (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.08.08).

Some people, such as participant 6 above, compared the sedentary activity of children today to his active life when he was a child. Similarly, Dad also reflected on the way it used to be, compared with the way it is now. He stated that in the past, people did not

complain, they were happy to walk as a normal part of their life. The impact of changes in food consumption was also similar to physical activity. Dad stated that in the past he ate a simpler and healthier diet, compared with the 'garbage' that was available today.

> But in the years ago, if it was six mile to town, you get on your shanks's pony (walking) and move. People never whinged (complained). They walked along whistling and going on and they were fit as a fiddle. But today we don't do nothing… (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).
>
> … I don't think there is any right foods today, because it's all a lot of garbage. I'd rather eat a rabbit and one potato, or just an old stew or something. We used to eat birds and different other things. The rubbish that's there today, you can't even get a decent feed today. So I'd encourage people to eat right, don't eat a lot, exercise as much as they can, do a lot of walking (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

Figure 27 and Figure 28 show the symbols used on the dhulu to represent the message: 'Control your behaviours'. There are two sections. The first has warnings running from top to bottom:

- Get off the lounge
- Get up from the desk
- Get away from the computer
- Get out of the house

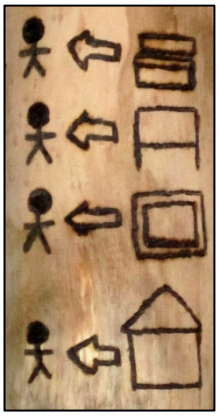


Figure 27: Control your behaviours

The second section has the following warnings in the top row from left to right are:

- Don't drink
- Don't smoke.

In the bottom row, from left to right are:

- Be outdoors
- Don't be overweight.



Figure 28: Control your behaviours

5. Healthy body, healthy mind

The fifth message relates to the relationship of a healthy body to a healthy mind. People recommended that physical activity should be part of an active life along with a healthy mind. This message promoted a holistic way of looking at a healthy life – the body and the mind. In the second quote, this family member also recommends that the healthy body healthy mind combination is anti-ageing.

> Active body, active mind, active life. You can't move forward in life unless all of those things are – unless your mind's healthy and your body's healthy (Cousin Tania, Coonabarabran, 20.10.11).

> If your body slows down, everything slows down. If you want to …try and keep a little bit young, keep your mind active and your body active you've really got to do some sort of exercise (Cousin Helena, Mount Druitt, 28.10.10).

Figure 29 shows the symbols used on the dhulu to represent the message: 'Healthy body, healthy mind'. The symbol on the left represents a healthy body, the symbol on the right represents a healthy mind.

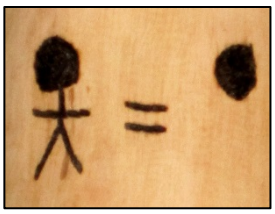


Figure 29: Health body, health mind

6. Be disciplined

The sixth message was to be disciplined. It was acknowledged that being physically active and leading a healthy life was difficult. Despite the difficulties, discipline had to

be employed to achieve good health. These quotes relate to some of the comments where people recommended that discipline was essential.

> The only way is either get really fanatic about your health …but it's very difficult in this day and age (Raymond Leslie, Rooty Hill, 4.8.08).

> I'd advise people today don't look for the easy way out, whatever's in front of you, do it…don't go looking for the easy way out (Cousin Barry, Dundas, 5.11.10).

Figure 30 shows the symbols used on the dhulu to represent the message: 'Be disciplined'. The symbol of the figure and the lightning bolt represents that despite whatever happens, it was essential to keep being active. The arrow represents this determination to continue and maintain activity.



Figure 30: Be disciplined

6.4.4 Representing the Journey: The signature

As stated earlier in this chapter, when all of the symbols were done, I 'signed' the dhulu on the top. Figure 31 shows that 'LL' represents my signature; then a single arrow which symbolises the ongoing journey of the PhD and my self-development over a six year timeframe; then PhD 2013 to represent the degree and the year.



Figure 31: My signature on the top of the dhulu

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter used a cultural method to communicate my family member's messages to others on the importance of physical activity. The six messages were:

1. Participate in any physical activity
2. Maintain your physical activity
3. Participate in a physical activity that you enjoy
4. Control your behaviours
5. Healthy body, healthy mind
6. Be disciplined

The messages focussed on the need to be physically active, and stay active, in different ways not restricted to stereotypes of organised sports. These included dancing, walking and being active in the community. It was important that activities be enjoyable. If they were enjoyable, they were more likely to be engaged in and sustained. Along with the positive aspects there were also warnings of the negative consequences of being inactive and unhealthy. These included becoming overweight which could have consequences of being housebound and therefore being detached from life. Discipline to exercise was also a message for others to practice to be healthy. Being healthy was holistic – the body and mind were connected and many spoke of the need to have a healthy body and healthy mind approach to life.

The creation of the dhulu was a reflective tool for me as an Indigenous researcher. The symbol of my signature represents my self-development in the journey through the six years of the PhD. The dhulu was also a collaborative effort - many assisted in the creation of it. I interpret the symbol of Kamilaroi to represent the spirit of the warrior

within the Kamilaroi. The concept of the warrior can be an analogy of the very physical lives that my family members have lived and survived.

The messages came from the voice of experience/s, from older Aboriginal people and from Elders. Collectively, their voices as Elders and Senior community members reflect traditional roles - to guide others through their lives.

– INTERLUDE 5–

THE STORY OF THE SHAKING GROUND

> 'Did you ever hear about Dad and Charlie Cain in Gular, sleeping in their swags on the ground, across the road from the Reserve? The ground kept movin' and wakin' them up and they had to move. They were being thrown out of their swags. It must have been a place where someone was buried cause when they moved over a few feet it stopped.
>
> Everyone sat quiet only the crackle of the fire could be heard.
>
> 'What's that?' someone said and they looked up just as Mum (Nana) came round the old house with a white sheet covered over her. A piercing scream was heard, and they all got up as one and ran for the door. Pushing and shoving to get in first they jammed in the doorway and no one could move. 'Fuck it Violet' a voice cried out 'I could have died from a fuckin' heart attack'.

Background: Dad tells this story. Apparently Pop was sleeping on the ground near Terry Hie Hie reserve and the ground moved and they were thrown out of their swags. They suspected the reason for this was they were sleeping on a burial ground, and spirits must have pushed them away. This story was one of intrigue and labelled a 'ghost story'. Nana used to take advantage of these types of stories told around the fire. She slipped away and came back with a sheet over her head and screamed, and then followed up with a great deal of laughter.

CHAPTER 7

YULI.GARAY GUWAALBAL/A

WORDS ABOUT THE STORIES: METHODOLOGY

Winangaya, Wingangaya, Winangaya
Winangaya, Biame
Winangaya, Garriya
Winangaya, Walayybaa, Dhaadhaadhi (wolaibaa)
Winangaya, Walayybaa, Guniidhi (wolaibaa)
Winangaya, Cumbo Gunerah
Winangaya, Winangaya, Winangaya

Remember, Remember, Remember
Remember, the great Creator
Remember, the Rainbow Serpent
Remember, the land of your Grandfather
Remember, the land of your Grandmother
Remember, Red Kangaroo
Remember, Remember, Remember

Uncle Greg Griffiths, Suellyn Tighe

The core of this study is a Kamilaroi methodology titled: *Dhiiyaan ngay Kamilaroi, winangaldanha ngaya nginaaynya* (My Kamilaroi family, I hear you), or *Wingangay* Methodology. The journey to articulate this methodology spanned over five years. This transformative process was two-fold in that it developed over time as I did, as an Indigenous researcher. The above quote emphasises the remembering of that which makes up the Kamilaroi: the Creator, the Kamilaroi lands

of my grandparents from Terry Hie Hie, Moree and Forked Mountain, Coonabarabran and Cumbo, Gunerah, the great Kamilaroi warrior known as the Red Kangaroo. The remembering of Kamilaroi is the Wingangay methodology which I claim for this study. This chapter is about the journey to develop the methodology. In addition I outline the ethical considerations and the research method to conduct the study. I also reflect on the positive aspects as well as some challenges in undertaking the study.

7.1 Journey to the Wingangay Methodology

This section outlines the journey I travelled to developing the Wingangay methodology.

7.1.1 It's all about me?!

I began my journey by reflecting on my experience as a researcher and what my current knowledge could bring to the table. My previous academic research for my Master's thesis focussed on the body image of Western Australian Group Fitness Instructors and the impact of their work environment (Leslie, 2002). That project utilised a positivist and an interpretative methodology. This was in fact a turning point for me: I made the realisation that for my Masters degree, I was working within a western framework but wasn't aware of it. I wasn't aware that the positivist framework I had used focussed on processes, facts & objectivity. This was the same framework and justification used to objectify and exploit Indigenous people as participants in research. This understanding came to me as a new Lecturer at my university while researching for Indigenous research units which I was teaching.

7.1.2 Learning from 'Teachings'

My eyes started to open when I learned from others' teachings. Maori Scholar Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith and her landmark book 'Decolonizing Methodologies' (1999) was my first port of call. I remember having a conversation with Terry Widders, my Director at university about Indigenous ways of doing research. Not long after that conversation, Terry had walked to the university bookshop on campus and returned with a brown paper bag which he gave to me. Inside the bag was Smith's book: 'Decolonizing Methodologies'. Not expecting any payment, Terry looked at me with a knowing smile and suggested I read the book. This book opened my eyes, as it did with so many others who have read it, (for example: Bozalek, 2011; Castleden et al., 2012;

Howard-Bobiwash, 2005; Tipa and Panelli, 2009) to what was possible. I read about atrocities towards Indigenous peoples in research such as crude ways to measure intelligence, about murder of Indigenous people in order to scientifically examine them. All in the name of science. These atrocities created a negative reputation of research for Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples' perceptions of research was that it was a dirty practice, it stirred up silence, it was associated with bad memories and distrust (Smith, 1999: 1).

In Smith's work I also learned about being critical and the need to have careful consideration surrounding the processes of methodologies, the methods of research, the theories, the questions and the writing. I understood that western research imposed a western worldview:

> ...a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power (Smith, 1999: 42).

I learned that research needed to be 'decolonised'. Decolonising research was a strange term at first. Smith made it easier to understand by explaining it is not a rejection of Western theory but it is about centring Indigenous worldviews and concerns, and then to understand theory and research from Indigenous perspectives and purpose (Smith, 1999: 39). For me, decolonising research was all about adaptation of western ways of doing research in Indigenous ways. It also gave me an 'awareness of colonisation and the firm belief that Indigenous peoples have their own worldviews' (Wilson, 2008: 53). This was very exciting to me.

Reflecting on my own development as an Indigenous researcher, there were many teachings in this early stage of the research. I realised I had used a positivist approach in a previous research project. I was horrified and appalled at the ways Indigenous people had been abused in research in the past. Both of these reflections led me to a strong desire to be a respectful, ethical researcher. I didn't want to be part of a long line of researchers doing 'dirty' work. Linda Tuhiwai Smith gave me the initial excitement surrounding an approach towards research – be careful & critical, adapt and therefore decolonize. I was comforted in this knowledge and began to teach methods to decolonise research to my students. At the time, I believed that the concept of decolonising research was the way to go, however this would later change.

7.1.3 To Decolonise or not to Decolonise?

I didn't use a decolonising methodology for my study. Reading Cree Scholar Dr Shawn Wilson's book: 'Research is Ceremony Indigenous Research Methods (2008) resonated with me in a very profound way. He states that the act of decolonising methodologies means to turn them into something which is useful in research. In other words, this act is an attempt to insert an Indigenous paradigm into one of the other major paradigms. Wilson further states that this act will not be very effective, as it is difficult to remove the underlying epistemology and ontology upon which the paradigms are built. Instead, if you start from an Indigenous paradigm, one can choose any tool within that paradigm that may be effective (Wilson, 2008: 39). I thought deeply about this challenge to decolonising methodologies. It made me think that the challenge was not to use colonised methods but rather to develop and understand my own Indigenous research paradigm. I didn't need to use a western methodology and decolonise it. Through Wilson's work, I began to develop confidence that there were indeed other ways of doing research which was not grounded in western ways.

Along with Wilson, Rigney (1999) was another Indigenous scholar who resonated the same message: that ways of doing research were indeed western in nature, and that there were distinct differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. The epistemologies as the foundation of research was central in the production of research. Western research or adaptations of it was not where I wanted to go. The way I approached my research task needed to address the western construction of research, differences in worldviews and the dominance of non-Indigenous epistemologies which shape research in Australia:

> The research academy and its epistemologies have been constructed essentially for and by non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous Australians have been excluded from all facets of research. The process of racialization declared that my people's minds, intellects, knowledges, histories, and experiences were irrelevant. Indigenous Peoples think and interpret the world and its realities in different ways from non-Indigenous Peoples because of their experiences, histories, cultures, and values. However, it is the epistemologies themselves that reproduce and reaffirm the cultural assumptions of the "world" and the "real" by the dominant group (Rigney, 1999: 113-114).

In rejecting a decolinising methodology, I did not reject the work of those scholars who came before me. Instead I chose a path to develop an underlying epistemology and ontology that was grounded in Indigenous knowledges, instead of an adaptation of

something else. I then set out to find my own path: I needed to develop a Kamilaroi methodology to guide the research. I asked myself 'How will I do this?' I then embarked on almost five years of talking with and listening to people, reading about specific Indigenous methodologies, travelling to significant places and reflecting deeply about what in fact it all meant.

7.1.4 Talking, Listening, Reading, Reflecting

I had many conversations with people about my idea of a Kamilaroi methodology. Initially, I spoke with my father (as an informant of the research) about the approach to my methodology. Rather than using academic terms to explain the definition of the word 'methodology', I asked Dad 'How should I do this research?' 'What is the best way of doing it to make sure everyone is respected?' Dad told me to just have a 'yarn' (talk), and not to worry as they (the participants in my study) were our family. Other family members I spoke to all gave similar responses, to just sit down and have a yarn. Other things my family told me were that they thought the study was great and that it was important to write the stories down for our family and for the generations to come. They liked the idea that I was going to write the 'university book' but were more interested when I told them I was going to also write a book for our family. The message was clear. My family all told me the best way to do the study was having a yarn. As simple as that.

I also had spoken with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Academics. My PhD Supervision team were not Indigenous so I set out to find an Indigenous Supervisor to join my team. While I value my Supervisors, I needed to have an Indigenous perspective to help guide the development of my Kamilaroi methodology. Trying to find an Indigenous Supervisor was trying to find a needle in the haystack. I travelled to Lismore, New South Wales and met with Dr Shawn Wilson and Dr Karen Martin to speak about my research and to determine if they would like to be part of my team. Unfortunately both could not come onto my team due to work demands and personal reasons. Feeling a little deflated, I went to the literature to read more about Indigenous methodologies.

Indigenous scholars such as Rigney was (and still is) very influential to me when I try to understand my position in academia & the many barriers I have encountered during my

journey through the PhD. One powerful teaching I have gained is the realisation of a 'racialized research industry' in Australia. Rigney (1999: 113) states that:

> Research methodologies and the protocols in knowledge construction in my country is the way the colonizers constructed it… There is little evidence that research epistemologies and methodologies in Australia were modelled on any knowledge of the Indigenous population or that it was produced from presumed equals.

This is a powerful statement that reinforces that as an Indigenous Researcher, I am working in a system that from its origins, did not value my people's worldview. I am also functioning in a system by participating in the same social formations that were instrumental in [my people's] own oppression (Rigney, 1999: 112-113). Do I belong in academia? Do Indigenous knowledges belong in academia? Over time I have always had the feeling of 'not fitting in' while studying or working in the Academy. In the first weeks of my undergraduate study at Newcastle University, I walked around the campus with my eyes firmly planted on the ground. I didn't feel as an Indigenous person I belonged nor I had the 'intelligence' to be studying at a University. After a few weeks and doing well in assignments, my eyes started to lift. Despite my confidence building, even after an Undergraduate, a Master's degree and now six years of a PhD, I still have the feeling I don't belong nor have I ever felt comfortable. Through Rigney's work, I have developed a realisation of this racialized research industry I am in, a system like other systems such as Government or the Law. I accept I am in an education system, like so many other systems, that were built on the graves of Indigenous Australian systems (Rigney, 1999: 112).

Reading about Indigenous people and their position in the academy, as well as Indigenous research provided me with a comfort. I didn't feel like the odd one out anymore but part of something that was known by others that had come before me. Their collective voices gave me a loud and clear message: to define, control and own epistemologies and ontologies that value and legitimate the Indigenous experience. I therefore function from an Indigenous perspective where I seek to construct, rediscover and reaffirm Indigenous knowledges and cultures (Rigney, 1999: 114)

7.1.5 A Listening Methodology

Dr Judy Atkinson and Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann were also influential to me in developing the Winangay methodology. The Dadirri methodology was developed to assist in their research project about trauma in Indigenous communities in the

Northern Territory in Australia. Dadirri is a Ngangikurungkurr word from the Northern Territory meaning an 'inner deep listening and quiet still awareness. Dadirri can only be experienced over a period of time in the practice or activity (Atkinson, 2002: ix). In developing the concept into a research methodology, Dadirri is both an Indigenous philosophy informing investigation processes and an ethical cultural behaviour in research ensured cultural safety in the research design. The idea of Dadirri being a philosophy for investigation and behaviour ensuring cultural safety [29] (McCleland, 2011) excited me as that was the process I wanted to follow: one that had a foundation for practice as well as an emphasis on how to do the research with the upmost respect and care for participants.

I related to Atkinson's concerns in designing a research project. These were:

> …the need to understand and to be responsive to the implications of hierarchical structures, and the potential for the intentional or unintentional misuse of power in the relationship between the researcher and the researched; the obligations of relating within an Aboriginal community environment, which necessitates reciprocity; and the ethical obligations and responsibilities of the researcher to ensure the participants' safety and confidentiality (Atkinson, 2002: 14).

While I related to these concerns, I also had an additional concern relating to the study. It was not just obligations to a community; it was obligations and responsibility towards my family members (the participants) in the study. Being a family member meant the foot was in the door to 'gain access' to 'participants' where it could be perceived as a major advantage. I reflected on the 'insider' role of being an Indigenous researcher but also the complexities of it. Smith (1999: 137) states that an insider needs to think critically about processes, relationships and the quality and richness of data and analysis. I cannot be a detached observer/outsider as I have to live with the consequences along with my family and community.

The major part of Dadirri I related to was the understanding of listening. Atkinson states there is a responsibility to get the story right. The result of the deep listening is 'insight and recognition of the responsibility to what has been heard, observed and learnt' (Atkinson, 2002: 18). Atkinson also stated that other Aboriginal groups had

[29] Discussed by McCleland (2011) as effective relationships based on understandings of others' worldviews.

similar concepts of deep listening, citing the Kamilaroi as an example. Acting on this information, I became more interested in the concept of a listening methodology.

7.2 Finding the Methodology in Language

A light bulb moment happened in January 2012. After almost five years since commencing the study, I developed the capacity to articulate my methodology through my Kamilaroi language and being on Kamilaroi country. In January 2012, I participated in a Kamilaroi language course held at Red Chief Local Aboriginal Land Council in Gunnedah, within the heart of Kamilaroi country. I intended the language course to be a tool to use language within my thesis. I did not expect that the language course and the cultural activities I participated in would change me in a very profound way. Upskilling in language also meant upskilling in my thinking. Being on country was a significant time in confirming the importance of my project to my Kamilaroi culture.

Apart from the language course, I participated in many activities which were of great importance to me as an Indigenous person and researcher, and to the study. My cousins (who are Elders in the community) told me many stories and showed me significant sites such as the Wallaby Trap and Ydire. I heard the story of Cumbo Gunerah[30] (Red Chief), a great Kamilaroi leader and stood on the site where he stood in battle. I heard the story of non-Aboriginal people, when finding out where he was buried, exhumed his remains and sending it to a museum. I was shown the location where it was said he was exhumed – a small sign from the historical society. My cousin told me this was the incorrect location. He instead took me a short distance away down a laneway. The local Elders knew where Cumbo Gunerah was really buried and exhumed – underneath a slab of cement at the back of a Chinese Restaurant. Sadly it is unknown where Cumbo Gunerah's remains are. While it is rumoured they are in the Australian Museum, they have never been found. I thought about this atrocity and the need to bring Cumbo Gunerah, the great Red Chief home. I was also told stories of bones found on property owner's land which were dated by anthropologists at 600 years old. I was shown through the museum at Red Chief Aboriginal Land Council with an overwhelming amount of items from hundreds of years ago. I was introduced to Uncle Mick Horne, an Elder in the community who gave me emu eggs, two digging

[30] For more information about the Red Chief, see Chapter 6.

sticks and an emu caller. Being on country gave me a deep cultural pride in being Kamilaroi, more so than any other place I have been. Through the stories, through visiting locations and seeing and touching cultural items, my cultural identity felt renewed and strengthened. It revitalised me and made me think about the purpose of my study and what it means to the Kamilaroi nation.

In Gunnedah, I also reflected on my fieldwork during the study through my Kamilaroi language. In particular, the word '*Winanga'*, is translated as hear. The verb for *winanga* is *winangay* however it is not 'hearing' using a western interpretation. In most Aboriginal societies the ear is seen as the instrument or seat of intelligence and perception therefore *winangay* goes beyond just hearing. In Kamilaroi, it means: I understand; I know; I remember; I think; and I love (Yuwaalaraay Language Program, 2003: 143). In traditional times, the Kamilaroi (like many other Aboriginal societies) used oral methods such as dance, song, art and stories as methods for communication. In a Western communication process, the person communicating to another says 'Listen to me'. In a Kamilaroi communication process, a person communicating to another says 'Listen from me'. The emphasis in Kamilaroi is therefore on the receiver of the information, it is a more important role in the communication process (Tighe, 2012d). Figure 32 shows this process.



Kamilaroi communication process placing the emphasis on the receiver by saying 'Listen from me'



Western communication process placing the emphasis on the communicator by saying 'Listen to me'

Figure 32: A comparison of the Kamilaroi and Western communication process

The Kamilaroi methodology is named as '*Dhiiyaan ngay Kamilaroi, winangaldanha ngaya nginaaynya'* (My Kamilaroi family, I hear you), which is also the thesis title. For the purposes of this thesis, I wish that the methodology is easily understood. Therefore, I

have abbreviated it to *Wingangay* Methodology. Through my language, through my culture, I understand my role and my family member's role in the study which has changed over time. In the beginning, I was the communicator expecting my family members to listen to me & the way I was conducting myself and the research project. Through the Kamilaroi communication process, I have realised that my family members, while still being the receivers, play the most important part in the research. They say 'Listen from me' and it is my responsibility to report their stories. When I say 'I hear you' in Kamilaroi, I am engaged in a relationship with my family members in this study. I am not the researcher, I am a family member and I don't just hear them. I connect to them on a deeper level because of my relationship with them – therefore I understand them; I know them; I remember them; I think about them; and I love them.

7.2.1 Ethics

Two ethics applications were submitted to the Macquarie University Human Ethics Committee for the project. The first application was a pilot study utilising my father as the only participant in the study. In this context, I do not define a pilot study in a positivist way, I define a pilot study as a way for Dad to mentor me on the appropriate ways to behave with my family members, as well as advice surrounding the contents of the ethics application and associated appendices.

During this time, I remember thinking how strange it all was. Stories which I had never had to seek permission to hear suddenly became part of a formal process. Working within the western framework, I 'played the game' and therefore did what I needed to satisfy the university's ethics requirements [31]. The application form, the appendix relating to Indigenous research, and the letter of informed consent were all discussed with dad several times prior to the submission. Dad was very concerned with issues of intellectual property and we paid close attention to this in both the application and the letter of informed consent. As an example, the letter of informed consent had a heading titled 'Who owns the interviews and transcripts? What about my Intellectual and Cultural Property?' Under this heading, it was explained that the interview recording, transcripts and photographs will remain property of the participant. Further, it stated that by signing the form, the participant allowed the Researcher and her

[31] Ethics application reference number: HE30MAY2008-D05874

Supervisor access to the interview data, not ownership. It was clearly stated that the participant owned the data as their property. Dad and I also discussed who would caretake the data (his and the upcoming data from other interviews. I suggested that there could be an archive of interviews and images sent to the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Dad did not agree with this point. He told me he did not want AIATSIS to have control over his data, nor did he believe he should have to seek permission (and perhaps pay) to access it. While Dad did not agree with it personally, he did however suggest that I include it on the consent form as an option for others to agree or disagree to this action.

Another aspect of preparing the consent form was the issue of payment. Dad had relayed to me many times over the years that he had been interviewed by various researchers and not received any payment. From what I knew about the negative history of Indigenous people being used in research, I was adamant that I would apply to the ethics committee for permission to pay all participants in my study. In section 9 of the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies[32] (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 2000) it states that Indigenous research participants should be paid adequate financial compensation for their involvement. It did not however state a suggested amount. I used information from an AIATSIS funding program based on recommendations for payment of research participants as a guide. This was an amount of $38 per hour. Calculating two hours for each person's involvement in the study left me with the amount of $76 per person. The funding for the participants was subsequently sourced from my higher degree research support budget.

As discussed later in the method section, I did three interviews with Dad which was the first stage of my data collection. The purpose of these initial interviews with Dad was to trial my methods and approach in interviewing. From these initial interviews with Dad, I realised I spoke too 'academically' & talked too much before the interviews took place. Reflecting back on my behaviour, I was nervous but at the same time wanted to 'do everything right' by explaining every detail prior to the interview starting. A lot of

[32] Note that there are 2012 guidelines that superseded this earlier version, available from the AIATSIS website: http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/docs/GERAIS.pdf

my behaviour was unnecessary; therefore I had to change my ways prior to the next larger stage of the project.

The second ethics application involved interviewing my family and extended family members on their physical activity experiences in their lives. I submitted the required forms to Macquarie University Human Ethics Committee. This included the application form, the appendix relating to Indigenous research, the letter of informed consent and the interview schedule[33].

7.3 Methods

This section outlines the methods employed in the study which were using a Murri Grapevine sampling technique; Interviews; transcribing, analysis and interpretation of the data.

7.3.1 Murri Grapevine sampling technique

Dad having a yarn with family and extended family members became an 'Murri Grapevine sampling technique' for finding those who would be willing to be interviewed. I describe this technique as the ways that are typical in Murri (Aboriginal people from north western New South Wales and Queensland) and Koori (Aboriginal people from New South Wales) lives. This 'grapevine' is a typical way that word is spread about different issues or news. The grapevine is known to be fast and efficient way of communicating with people whenever help is sought.

Using the Murri Grapevine, Dad contacted the majority of family members by telephone in Western Sydney, Moree, Warren and Coonabarabran on my behalf to introduce my study & to gain interest if they wished to be interviewed. As I had lived in Western Australia for many years, I had lost contact with some of my family therefore Dad initially developed a rapport on my behalf. Once Dad had initially contacted each person, I would then follow-up with another phone call to arrange a meeting date, time and location. Sometimes Dad would call a family member, introduce the study & then pass the phone to me. This worked well however sometimes felt awkward to me as I had not spoken to some family members for a long time. Despite this, all were very

[33] Ethics application reference number: HE31JUL2009-D00049

welcoming. The majority of family was contacted this way however there was some variation. Although I did not ask family to recommend others to be interviewed, some suggested I contact others, or at times they called them on my behalf. I did not intend on this happening however at times it was imposed upon me which I felt obliged to follow-up. As an example, one family member after her interview started calling other family members to tell them to be involved in the study. This was quite awkward as the conversation went something like this 'Lana is here doing some interviews – she has money to pay for them, get down here!' This made me feel awful as I suspected there were some family members who only wanted to be involved in the study for the payment. On the flipside of family members recommending others to be interviewed, some also warned me not to interview other family members due to internal family conflict. The people I was warned about would have been great participants in the study however I decided it was best for me not to approach them to avoid conflict.

7.3.2 Interviews

Twenty eight one-on-one interviews and 1 group interview of two were conducted in five stages between August 2008 and November 2011 in various suburbs of Western Sydney, Moree, Coonabarabran and Warren.

The data collection extended over three years due to time constraints from being a part time student with full time work commitments, as well as family and personal issues. Table 5 outlines the stages, dates, gender of family members' interviews and place of interview. Note that Dad wished to be identified in the study, however the other participants' identity remained confidential.

Table 5: Interview Timeline*

Stage	*Date*	*Family interviewed*	*Place*
1	August 2008	1 male, Dad – Raymond Leslie	Rooty Hill
2	September 2010	2 females, 1 male	Moree
3	Between October 2010 and October 2011	3 females, 9 males	Western Sydney
4	October 2011	4 females (2 in each town)	Coonabarabran, Warren
5	November 2011	8 females, 2 males	Moree
Total		30* (17 females,13 males)	

*One male was excluded from the study[34] therefore the total sample size was 29.

In the first stage, I interviewed Dad over three sessions. I used an interview schedule but at the same time allowed Dad to go off topic to allow for new information to emerge. In the second stage, my Dad and I travelled to Moree together in September 2010 on a scoping trip to visit family to establish interest in the study. While only a scoping visit, three family members wished to be interviewed at their homes which I obliged. In the third stage, twelve family members were interviewed between October 2010 and October 2011 in their homes or Dad's place in Western Sydney. In the fourth stage, I travelled to Coonabarabran and Warren in October 2011 and interviewed 4 family members (2 in each town). In the fifth stage, I travelled back to Moree in November 2011 and interviewed 10 family members. At this point, I finished my data collection at 30 family members. This was an easy decision as I found that new information was not emerging. After discussing this with my PhD Supervisor, I felt comfortable I had reached saturation point. Upon returning home to Sydney from Moree, I received information that one male I interviewed was not Kamilaroi or even Aboriginal which I was led to believe he was. While I was disappointed, I was also reminded that as an Indigenous researcher, I had a responsibility to act in a culturally safe manner 24 hours a day (Martin, 2003). The protection of the integrity of the study was important; and with that, I excluded him from the sample.

The majority of interviews were conducted at the family members' homes. Other interviews were conducted at my parent's home (Dad would invite a family member to his house for the interview) or other places such as the hotel I was staying at, in a park, office or during a car journey. The majority of interviews began with a 'catch-up' as a normal practice of meeting a family member. This involved talking about our lives and happenings of other family members. This practice made both me as the interviewer and my family member as the interviewee relaxed. This initial part ranged from half an hour to two hours and almost always involved a cup of tea and sometimes food. Prior to the start of the interview, I told each family member about the study and the reason for the letter of informed consent. I then completed a brief information sheet which I recorded details of the interview and the family member. I also explained that they would be paid for the interview. The act of payment was regarded highly, and many

[34] For more information, see 'Positives and Challenges' later in this chapter.

people thought it was my personal money which I had to explain it was not but rather from funding from Macquarie University. Each family member signed a receipt acknowledging the payment, and the majority signed a 'Statement by a Supplier' form declaring the payment to be seen as a hobby by the Australian Tax Office. The paperwork procedure was necessary but proved to be very cumbersome and never felt comfortable. Once all of this was done, the interview was then commenced.

Each interview was recorded using two digital recorders. One recorder was used as a back-up. Out of the thirty interviews, there was only one instance where one recorder failed however the back-up recording worked. All interviews were therefore recorded with no problems. During the interviews I had the interview schedule in front of me for easy reference, as well as a notepad and pen to write prompts for me during the interview. I purposely did not take copious notes as I wanted my full attention on each family member.

The interview schedule was in two parts. The first part included a definition of physical activity, current participation and current health status. The second part included past participation and enablers & barriers to physical activity. Each part had a short introductory script. As an example, the script for the first part was 'I thought we might start talking about what you think physical activity is and what physical activity you do at the moment'. While my intentions were to use the scripts, they were not used. They seemed too formal with family members. Similarly, I changed my approach with the use of the interview schedule. As an example, early interviews commenced with me asking my family member 'What is physical activity?' Responses to this question showed me that I was making people feel uncomfortable, as though I was testing them. Early responses indicated that this term was not understood by people. I therefore changed my approach according to the responses in early interviews. As an example, I changed my opening line as 'What is your earliest memory of doing exercises or being physical?' This worked and family members began their contribution to the study by fondly recollecting early memories.

So while I had a semi-structured approach to the interviews, the schedule was not followed word for word. Instead it was used for prompts. I introduced particular general themes for example types of physical activities and allowed the family member

to speak freely. Within each discussion of general themes, I used prompts to obtain more detail. As an example, when discussing types of activities, I would then ask how they got into it (enablers) and did they have any problems when participating (barriers). Family members told me this interview method was very comfortable and was more like a yarn than an interview.

7.3.3 Transcribing, Analysis & Interpretation

Interviews were transcribed by me and by two professional transcription services. Originally, I wanted to transcribe all interviews myself, to immerse in the data. In my transfer from being a part-time student to a full-time student at the beginning of 2012, I realised that I did not have time to transcribe all interviews. I gained approval from the Macquarie University Ethics Committee to engage transcription services. This was funded through my higher degree research fund. The majority of transcriptions were done by one organisation. One interview had to be transcribed by another organisation as it was recorded in a different format which wasn't accepted by one organisation but was in the other. Upon receiving the transcriptions, I bundled up packages which were sent to all participants in the study. Each package had the participant's transcription, a cd with the audio recording of the interview, the original letter of informed consent and information that participants needed to check the accuracy and contact me should there be any changes. Consequently there were no participants who contacted me to make any changes to their interviews.

All transcribed interviews were placed into nVivo 8. Data were organised first by 'chunking' the text into the broad topics from the interview schedule then reading line by line to identify concepts (Bazeley, 2007). From there, three broad topic areas of racism, physical activity and survival (which later became places of freedom) emerged from the data. Each interview was carefully examined and data were organised under these themes. Within each theme a number of sub-themes emerged. Each large theme with sub-themes were copied and pasted into individual word documents. While nVivo was initially used to organise the data on a large scale, I found it easier to later organise the data and write about the findings in a word document.

In the analysis and interpretation of the data, I followed Martin's (2003) advice to draw upon my Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing to assist me. I made sense of

the data knowing my family members and how they communicated, the tone of voice they used and their choice of language. In the interviews, I was reflexive and allowed family members 'to tell their own stories, in their own ways' and allowed them to go off on tangents if they desired according to what was important to them during the interviews. During the interviews some people's stories contained sensitive material which I knew was not something our family spoke about openly with wider audiences. Using this knowledge, I checked immediately with them if they wanted to share the information. At times they stated that they wished to delete certain parts of the interview because of this. It appeared that the trust they had with me allowed them to speak freely, perhaps too freely about very sensitive material. When analysing the data I also kept this in mind and checked back with some people regarding the sensitivity of some data. Other aspects of the analysis and interpretation included me recognising the choice of language used by my family members and interpreting it accordingly. Examples include the word 'mad' which in some contexts mean fanatical and 'windy' which means frightened.

Following the analysis and interpretation, I checked back with Dad as to his thoughts about the process. Dad was pleased with how I had analysed and interpreted the information and I set out to write up the results.

7.4 Positives and Challenges

There were many positive aspects and challenges during the data collection of the study. The involvement of my father as a guide prior to and during many of the interviews was invaluable. Without Dad's involvement, the study would not have been able to be done. He gave me extensive advice on all aspects of the study, including my behaviour in my dual role as researcher and as a family member. Dad utilised the Murri/Koori grapevine and was the 'ice-breaker' for the majority of family members to learn about the researcher. Dad's communication method with family members was very relaxed which opened up a wonderful rapport building situation for my involvement.

There were several challenges during the data collection phase of the study. As previously discussed in the recruitment and interviews section, there were times when some family members only wanted to be involved in the study was due to the payment.

This was a very disappointing aspect for me, as I wanted all people to understand the significance of documenting family stories for our next generations. Despite the disappointment, I didn't let it bother me and continued on. Another challenge (as discussed in the interview section), was discovering one of my participants was not Kamilaroi, or even Aboriginal. I felt betrayed by this person as well as the person who recommended him to be interviewed, as they knew he was not Aboriginal.

Another challenge was the emotional toll the data collection had on me. In the first stage of the data collection with Dad, I was totally drained by the three interviews. The information while interesting was also very heavy going for me as a daughter listening to some stories I had not heard before. I recall in a tea-break that Dad told me some very personal and heavy stories about my Pop (Grandfather). I had not heard this information before. Dad warned me not to include those stories in the research. The overwhelming feeling I had after the interviews with Dad was exhaustion and sadness from the way Dad was discriminated against as an Aboriginal person during his life. As an example, my father described his birth being born in a tent on the grounds of Moree Hospital, as Aboriginal people were not allowed inside due to racist practices of that time in history. Similarly, others told stories that were heartbreaking and sad. One particular family member detailed their life being taken to a boy's home. The effect on me after listening to these stories and seeing tears in the eyes of my family members made me very sad. I developed headaches directly after these types of interviews. I spoke to my PhD Principal Supervisor and a friend who was also a Psychologist about the effect of the interviews. My Supervisor suggested that whenever these types of interviews happened, I needed to have a strategy to 'download' the stories with him. Other assistance I had were from my parents. As some of the interviews were at their home, they often sat in on the interviews (with the family member's permission). After the interview and the family member had left, I was able to discuss the interview with my parents which helped me to 'share the load' of hearing the intensity of some stories.

Reactions from family members towards me as a 'researcher' were mostly welcoming but some assumed certain things about me. As an example, one family member had just finished talking about racism she had experienced in her life. Among other things, she described not being able to swim in the local pool due to racist local laws. After the discussion the following exchange took place:

> Participant: Have you experienced that (segregation practices)?
>
> *Lana: No, I've only heard stories*
>
> Participant: You've never experienced anything
>
> *Lana: No but I've heard many stories about it though. But there has been different things at school when they, I've experienced racism when I was in the police. I've had it in different ways, I've had it at the university as well, there's different ways*
>
> Participant: But looking at you, you wouldn't think you were a black fulla so you know. (Cousin Diane, Moree, 4.9.10)

After this exchange, it was difficult to continue the interview as I felt offended. Not only had I experienced similar assumptions from non-Aboriginal people in my life, this was another example in my experience of an Aboriginal person (who also happened to be a family member) assume certain things about me due to my fair skin. I felt I had been racially discriminated against. This time it wasn't from non-Indigenous people – it was worse than that – from my own family. I reflected on the aspects of being an insider and outsider to the research. I was an insider as I was a family member and extended family member. Access to my family members was very easy and people spoke freely around me. I was also an outsider as I was a researcher, from a university, doing a university study. What I didn't expect that in one case, I was also perceived as an outsider to my own Indigenous identity and experience. This perception was formed by a family member who judged me on my skin colour.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the stages in the journey to develop an Indigenous methodology known as the *Winangay* methodology. As an Indigenous researcher embarking on an Indigenous research project, I was committed to using an appropriate methodology that was going to be respectful and ethical towards Indigenous people. I understood that research was perceived negatively by many Indigenous people and this drove me to be vigilant to pursue an ethical methodology and methods for the study. Influenced by Indigenous scholars, I developed a methodology which was based on a Kamilaroi epistemology and ontology rather than a decolonising framework which emphasised the adaptation of Western methods. The *Wingangay* methodology was one that was realised on Kamilaroi country within the Kamilaroi language. The methodology emphasises the communication process of the researcher and the participant, in this

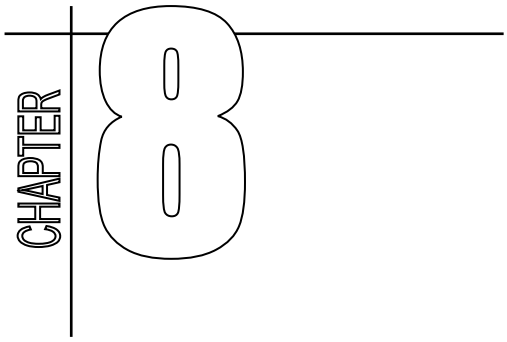
case my family and I. This process enables my family members to be the most important part in the research. They say 'Listen from me' and it has been my responsibility to report their stories. When I say 'I hear you' in Kamilaroi, I am engaged in a relationship with my family members in this study. My role is changed from being the researcher to being a family member. I don't just hear them. I connect to them on a deeper level because of my relationship with them. The *Wingangay* methodology is about the Kamilaroi concept of listening - a connection based on understanding, knowing, remembering, thinking and loving.

The methods in the study involved semi-structured interviews with twenty eight one-on-one interviews and 1 group interview of two. One person was excluded from the study therefore there were 29 family and extended family members interviewed. All data was coded, analysed and interpreted using my Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

Dad was central part to the methods in this study. He assisted as the main informant and pilot to guide the study, giving me advice and feedback on my behaviours. He used the Murri/Koori grapevine to find people who wished to be interviewed and provided a support to offload the emotional toll the interviews had on me. In many of the interviews he was present which helped me in building a rapport with family members I hadn't seen for many years.

The methodology and methods for this study shaped me as a Kamilaroi person. Developing the *Wingangay* methodology was a cultural experience for me that strengthened my Kamilaroi identity. Being on Kamilaroi country and learning the Kamilaroi language was instrumental in arriving at my 'light bulb moment' of articulating a Kamilaroi methodology through language. The development of the methodology and methods were not all made up of positive experiences. At times it was very emotionally draining listening to stories of my family members which regularly left me with headaches and migraines. At times I felt used due to the financial incentive I gave for the interview, and one person pretended to be Aboriginal to gain an interview, and therefore the money included in the interview process. Another person I interviewed made a statement regarding her assumptions towards me which left me feeling discriminated against. The experience of being an insider and outsider to the

research taught me about various roles I had which appeared to be running concurrently. Despite some of the challenges in the methods for this study, I was still driven to transmitting the stories entrusted on me from my family. As a Kamilaroi person and Kamilaroi researcher, I have learned from the teachings.



GALAY. NGARABALI CONCLUSION

The starting point for this study was to report the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people. My understanding of the study and what could be achieved, however, changed over time as the project developed in collaboration with my Kamilaroi family and through interactions with my Kamilaroi culture and Country. The original research question: What are the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people? was descriptive and my intent was to report the experiences. The original aims were also descriptive:

1. To investigate the physical activity participation of older Kamilaroi people.
2. To generate stories of physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people.

My understanding of these aims shifted as the project unfolded and it became clear to me that there was a responsibility to understand the implications of the context, not just to describe the content of physical activities. Dad's life was full of physical activities including hard, physical work which had implications on his health in later life. Doctors prescribing exercise as a means to address his failing health frustrated him because he felt they simply didn't understand the type of life he had led; further he believed that many people, including his doctors, judged him negatively because he was overweight. Dad's story of his frustrations with doctors and others who judged him led directly to one of the major findings of this study: it is necessary for systems supporting health and well-being to listen but not in a western way, but in a Kamilaroi way using a

Wingangay methodology. In framing the conclusion to the study, therefore, my task is not so much to report a set of proven and definitive statements based on factual findings, but rather to present the conclusions and understandings that have arisen from listening to people's accounts and interpretations of the social context of wellbeing and to consider the implications for future generations.

This chapter sets out the findings of the study, reviews the policy implications and opportunities for further research, considers the methodological contribution made by the thesis, and reflects on the personal implications of the journey the research has involved and my next personal and professional steps.

8.1 Wingangay methodology

Development of the Wingangay methodology has been a significant contribution of this research. The journey to develop this methodology started with my initial training as a researcher schooled in positivist methodology. Learning that there was an emerging discourse about 'Indigenous methodology' that could be used was naively taken on board as the procedure for my study as a first step - but it was just a 'first step'. There was still more learning to discover that there was not just one single, all-encompassing Indigenous methodology and there was not one way of conducting Indigenous research. My interest took me around the world to meet with other Indigenous academics. I read and listened to them with awe and kept finding myself thinking that their way was the only way frame Indigenous research. Through Dr Shaun Wilson's work, I realised that a decolonising approach was not the approach I needed to employ for my study. I knew I needed something different, something specific – something I started thinking about (and calling) a Kamilaroi methodology.

I came to this methodological discussion in Chapter 7 rather late in the writing structure because it has become one of the outputs from the research. Rather than writing up as if the Winangay methodology was adopted at the outset, I've written it as it developed – late in the process and as a challenge that insisted I come to terms with Kamilaroi language, Kamilaroi experience, Kamilaroi Country and my own Kamilaroi identity. It was necessary to learn how to articulate my methodology through the Kamilaroi language. From doing a Kamilaroi language course in Kamilaroi country, the concept of listening became the framework for the study. The Wingangay methodology

was specific to the Kamilaroi. Going beyond just hearing, the term Winangay and its use to describe my methodology drew in a more-than-oral and more-than-quantitative methodology. Winangay means: I understand; I know; I remember; I think; and I love. This was not just a word but provided my behaviour as an Indigenous researcher conducting a study with my family members as my participants. The Wingangay methodology provided a shift in my research capabilities from my understanding of research that I was conducting it and I needed others to 'listen to me'; to a place where I understood that others were saying 'listen from me'. This shift became an important part of the study which made me understand my role as a researcher to 'listen' in a Kamilaroi concept, rather than a western concept. The multiple meanings of Winangay in Kamilaroi – that I understand; I know; I remember; I think; and I love – have influenced the study in the following ways:

- I understand and have listened to the stories that people have shared with me. They are personal stories that were significant and important to them. I protected the stories and protected identities of my family who shared their stories.

- I know my family members and where they lived and who they are related to. I know the racism that they endured and in many cases, still do. I know the government policies of different times inflicted great hardship on my family. I know their histories.

- I remember what they told me not just with their words but also with the tone of their voices, the tears in their eyes, the joy, the sadness of the stories, the language they used to describe their feelings. I also remember who became before me such as my Grandmother Violet Duncan whose voice is heard in this study despite her passing many years ago. I remember my past generations and what they endured to elevate me to a fortunate position in life to pursue my studies.

- I think about the stories deeply and what affects physical activities had on their lives. I used my skills of analysis and interpretation to develop my thinking to communicate their stories.

- I love my family which provided the commitment and motivation throughout the study to keep going despite many barriers that stood in my way. I took care with my family and made sure they were comfortable throughout the research process ensuring their safety was paramount to the study.

The insights through the Wingangay methodology gave me the realisation that a specific methodology for Kamilaroi was needed, not a generic approach known as an Indigenous methodology nor a generic decolonising methodology. The specific nature

of the methodology allowed me a cultural way of knowing, being and doing my research to gain insights into my people and the context of their physical activity in their lives. The methodology was constructed for the Kamilaroi, not adopted from other Indigenous methodologies or other Indigenous groups.

8.2 The social context of physical activity

This section describes the social context of physical activity including racism, physical activities without facilities, services or money and the places of freedom.

8.2.1 Racism

The thesis has discussed many examples of lived experiences of racism in physical activity settings. Indeed, the experiences of the majority of my family members in physical activities was that of racism, consistent with Hartley's claim that '…the Indigenous experience of sport is most commonly argued to be that of racism' (Hartley, 2002: 150). While Hartley was referring to sport, and this study focussed more widely on physical activity including sport, the message is still the same.

Many of my family endured the structural, institutional and blatant racism that Tatz and Tatz (2000) describes as a 'denial of competition'. At a structural level, many family members told stories of their denial to public swimming pools which arose from local government laws to disallow Aboriginal people from entering and using the facility. At an institutional level, the places my family lived were not places with facilities – they were places on hills and riverbanks where the only sporting and activity equipment was often made using the natural resources surrounding them. At a blatant racism level, my family endured this level most of all. Name calling, violence, being treated differently on and off the field and denial of recognition in achievement were all examples of racist treatment which was commonplace.

This study highlighted reactions to racism in physical activities. Some people reacted and resisted to name calling and violence in the same way – applying a concept similar to 'an eye for an eye'. Reactions of swearing and fighting could be described as what Langton (1988) argues is an expression of customary law:

> The behaviour in question is not deviance and anarchy, as some would have it, but appropriate rule-governed behaviour adapted from earlier Indigenous patterns to enable meaningful existence in the new political, legal and social situations imposed by the dominant Australian regime (Langton, 1988: 202)

Swearing and fighting therefore can be seen as an activity that relates to traditional forms of social interaction, punishment, retribution, processing of disputes and negotiation (Langton, 1988). Reactions to name calling and violence in this study were acts of resistance and retribution that allowed some family members to assert dominance over non-Aboriginal people, an act which was not achievable by them off-field. These acts of dominance appeared to have a higher significance and make a statement regarding resistance to 'white culture' (Anderson, 2006).

An alternative view to fighting that this study found was that it was a strategy that had benefits. For some, it was believed that fighting violence with violence earned respect and acceptance from non-Aboriginal people. Furthermore, fighting was a strategy that appeared to dissipate or even eliminate racist treatment. Either way, the reactions to racist treatment did not appear they were unplanned but rather were a strategic activity against racism and at times against the white dominant culture.

This study also revealed a different discourse surrounding the Freedom Ride – an iconic episode in Australian race relations history. The freedom riders demonstrated against the denial of Aboriginal people to the Moree pool and the local government laws which supported this rule. This study however showed that some Aboriginal people did gain entry to the pool albeit under racist conditions. Further, this study showed that many people did not care about gaining entry to the pool as they preferred the river. The literature does not include these perspectives of the Aboriginal people at the towns where the freedom riders visited. This study showed that local perspectives show another side to the story – one where the freedom riders were not always welcomed by Aboriginal people. In fact this study shows that some felt they were being exploited by the freedom riders. Perspectives such as these are missing in the literature. The memories of segregation and the freedom ride are what Nugent (2013) describes as a 'landscape of memory' that shows 'alternative ways of knowing and interpreting complex and contradictory histories of entanglements and interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people…' (Nugent, 2013: 300). The memories are important as they 'remake the meanings of spaces in which segregation was practiced'

(Nugent, 2013: 303) offering differences and new insights that are not part of the dominant discourse surrounding segregation and the freedom ride.

This study also showed a different perspective to racism – where for a very few did not experience much if any. These few reported their reasons they believed it did not occur with them: due to their fairer skin and also due to their high involvement in community life and non-Aboriginal people. Living in town mattered to non-Aboriginal people; Aboriginal people were deemed to be civilized rather than un-civilized living on the fringes of town without facilities.

8.2.2 Physical activities without facilities, services or money

Chapter 4 described the physical activities my family participated in throughout their early life, their working life and their leisure time. Physical activity permeated throughout all aspects of their lives. This study found that the majority of my family grew up in areas without facilities, services or without much money. Homes were at riverbanks or in bushland, often made of flattened kerosene tins with dirt floors. Food and money were scarce, and much of the daily routines involved activities for survival such as collecting water and wood. These places, living conditions and poverty all had a direct influence on the activities pursued in early life. Activities were pursued that didn't cost money and used resources that were available. Games[35] were common with toys that were constructed from items found in and around their homes such as tins, cans, pegs, bottles, trees, sticks, branches, tyres, cloth, rubber bands and four-gallon drums. Other games such as imitating adult behaviour were also common such as pretending to ride a horse or pretending to arrive home from work. In his research on traditional Indigenous games, Ken Edwards (2009)states that imitation activities were a popular game for Aboriginal children. These included string games, mock battles and tracking and collecting and many other traditional physical activities (Edwards, 2009). Despite the claim that 'the loss of knowledge and the oral traditions of the societies severely compromise a complete or accurate depiction' (Edwards, 2009: 39) of games, this study found that games were recounted in detail by those who spoke of their early physical activities. In addition, this study emphasised the construction of toys with natural resources available.

[35] There were many games described in detail in this study however were not included due to limited space.

8.2.3 The places of freedom

Chapter 5 discussed the places of freedom which made my family happy and produced positive feelings of wellbeing. Restrictions were a common part of life however freedom was found in physical activity spaces. All of the places of freedom were Kamilaroi places: Being outside with others; being at the river; playing on the sporting field; and being on your Country. On closer examination of these Kamilaroi places, it can be seen that they have two commonalities: one is being outside; the other is being with family and other extended family members.

Being outside provided a connection and interaction with Country where people were from, and where their past generations were from. Country provided the locations for physical activities: ground to run on, water to swim in, places to compete in sports and places to play games. It also provided resources: trees, grounds, mud, water and many places that enabled creativity and education opportunities. Connection to Country is usually referred to in relation to the spiritual connection for Aboriginal peoples, as well as the health benefits it evokes. While this was the case in this study, Country was also a facilitator of physical activity, providing locations and resources for the physical activities to occur.

Kamilaroi places of freedom were also those that involved being with other family and extended family members. Positive aspects of togetherness/social interactions were discussed by my family, particularly in sports such as rugby league and games such as rounders which emphasised being with other Aboriginal people. These activities that emphasised collectivism also provided security and belonging benefits for those that participated in them. Although used in another Aboriginal community and context in Western Australia, Prout (2006) found that family networks and the social structures around them are at the foundation of cultural identity, have a deep sense of belonging; and provide a source of support and security. The connections with family also provide a network of potential resources when needed. In her study, Prout found that the maintenance of family networks was also important to reaffirm the sense of security and belonging:

> [Methods of maintaining family networks] include visiting, gathering together at funerals and family celebrations such as birthdays and weddings. Major social and

> sporting events also provide opportunities for dispersed extended family networks to reunite and reinforce the social structures from which individual identities are derived (Prout, 2006: 226)

Another benefit of being with others is a link to culture, a link to tradition where Aboriginal people regularly came together for ceremonies and other gatherings. An example of the cultural aspects of a physical activity and togetherness is the NSW Aboriginal Rugby League knockout carnival[36], what Norman (2012) describes as the biggest event for the NSW Aboriginal community. While it is a sporting event, it is also known to have the largest gathering of Aboriginal people in Australia and is likened to a 'modern day Corroboree':

> The knockout is reminiscent of a 4-day ceremonial dance and celebration and enables new social and cultural practices to emerge. It is an opportunity for families to gather, reunite as a community and barrack for their hometown and mob, to relive past glories and to remember those who have passed on. The football is fiercely contested with tough, world-class Rugby League on display, where victory is cited as a lifetime highlight for players and communities (Norman, 2012: 999).

The event is an example of a physical activity that emphasises Aboriginal ways of doing through kinship with organisers and teams who are mostly clan or family based. The kinship is central to the 'foundations of Aboriginal social and cultural life [that is] relationships amongst people and to place' (Norman, 2012: 1003). Due to the cultural aspects of the knockout and football generally, the activity can be thought of as within the definition of a 'traditional game':

> …those which include aspects of traditional and contemporary play cultures associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identifiable communities, and are generally accepted as an adequate reflection of their cultural heritage and social identity (Edwards, 2009: 33)

Although the places of freedom are refuge from restrictions imposed by others; they still have restrictions in the form of in-built rules. These rules are different though as they are governed by Aboriginal people themselves and are therefore acceptable. These include the supervision of younger children by older children at rivers, or knowing it is dark therefore knowing when to return home. These in-built rules are examples of self-determination, a right mentioned in the United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples to 'freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development' (United Nations, 2007).

[36] The knockout is as an annual event that has been conducted since 1971.

There are barriers that my family identified in going to their places of freedom. These are:

1. Poor health. Many health issues and restrictions were identified which impact on mobility. These have an effect on the ability to travel and to participate in the physical activities they did in the past, or new physical activities.

2. Location. For many who have moved away from their places of freedom, being on Country is no longer accessible. Why do they move away? This can be due to many factors such as those identified by my Dad as needing to be closer to health specialists and services. It is ironic that Dad feels happier and healthier on Country however he feels he needs to be in the City for proximity to specialist health services to make him feel well.

3. Financial constraints. For those that lived 'off country'[37] very few of my family members in this study were financially able to travel to their country. Many were not working full time therefore travel was a luxury and taking care of the basic necessities of life were more important than travel.

4. Poor state of natural resources. There were concerns that rivers were contaminated. They were a place of freedom that was close to many of them geographically but also far removed due to their poor conditions.

It is not about Indigenous people physically going to their place of freedom however. It is about Indigenous people constructing their own places of freedom regardless of the barriers they face. The construction of a place of freedom can be within memories and/or being with other family. Fond memories remain and are spoken about as treasures of the past, stories of people and places, of happiness and hardship, of gain and loss. Stories about earlier times are commonly repeated in my family, and although they are heard over and over, they offer a sense of comfort, happiness and laughter. People who have passed away are still present, albeit in the stories about their lives. The stories of the places of freedom can therefore be found in the memories which are articulated in the stories of the past.

Places of freedom can also be constructed by being with family, an activity that provides a reinforcement of cultural identity, belonging, support and security. On 6 July 2013, my family constructed a place of freedom: my mother and father's 50th wedding anniversary. As discussed earlier, Dad lives in Sydney, approximately 630 kilometres South East from his Country. The wedding anniversary was an event which is an example of a construction of a place of freedom. While Dad doesn't like living in the

[37] 'Off country' means they live far from the places they grew up and where their ancestors are from.

city and prefers the bush, he was able to construct his place of freedom in that event. The event was a gathering of family and extended family from Warren, Western Sydney and other parts of New South Wales. People of all ages were there: from babies to people in their eighties. Speeches were full of stories of the past, people spoke of good times and bad; and times where being together was all that was important despite adversity. People spoke of those who were no longer with us, there were regrets they weren't there celebrating with us; but more importantly there was cherished memories which recounted their lives and our associations with them. Memories were not all from stories, but also photographs on a loop on PowerPoint, and photographs of Dad and Mum in their younger years around the room. For everybody it was an event much more than a wedding anniversary, it was a gathering of family with opportunities to maintain connections with each other.

Places of freedom are important to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people. This study found that the physical activities my family spoke of provided places of freedom from adversity and discrimination. These places had two things in common: they were on Country and they had family and extended family. While it is not always possible for people to be on Country, they can construct their own places of freedom. They can tell stories of memories of those places and they can seek opportunities to be with their family and extended family to provide their places of freedom.

8.3 Policy Implications

Current policies of health close the places of freedom to Aboriginal people. It provides generalised solutions to poor health for Aboriginal people as one homogenous group however misses something. Policies miss the specific Aboriginal groups which have their own specific Countries, specific languages, specific ways of knowing, ways of doing and ways of being. These specificities highlight that Aboriginal groups are different, which suggests that approaches to health should be different.

Policies need to make space for a Kamilaroi discourse of health and ageing. Policy is needed that does not erase the specificities of individual cultures but one that celebrates them and uses them to address wellbeing. This requires a Wingangay methodology that encompasses the Kamilaroi definition of listening: to understand; to know; to remember; to think; and to love. To listen in Kamilaroi has policy implications which

requires different approaches to service delivery. An Aboriginal friend of mine working in health told me about how she always gets into trouble from her Supervisor as she spends several hours with her Aboriginal clients having tea and talking, before 'getting down to business[38]'. From the Supervisor's point of view, this act took up work time. From my friend's point of view, this act was necessary as part of her work. This type of work on grass roots level cannot be underestimated as it promotes a Wingangay methodology: a demonstrated way to understand, know, remember, think about and show love to their client. Allowing space and time to listen is an opportunity for Aboriginal people to tell their stories of their past and therefore to relive their places of freedom. Aboriginal workers are also providing a place of freedom for their clients simply by their own background – which gives opportunities to connect based on mutual family connections. Being together as Aboriginal people, albeit a worker/client relationship can therefore still be a place of freedom. In addition, other approaches to service delivery is to facilitate people to people connections as a method of wellbeing, to create a network of belonging and therefore create a place of freedom.

8.4 Opportunities for further research

Given the scarce research on the physical activity experiences of Kamilaroi people, there is opportunity for further research in this and other areas relating to physical activity. This section highlights four areas recommended for further research which has been identified in the current study.

8.4.1 Physical activity experiences studies

As there is no existing research on the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people, there is scope for more research in this area. Further study of a larger group of Kamilaroi people could be undertaken to gauge experiences from a higher sample. In addition, physical activity experiences of other Aboriginal groups in Australia is needed to give perspectives and comparisons from other geographical areas such as those from coastal and desert areas of Australia. A study such as this could determine the places of freedom according to the Aboriginal group and locality.

[38] Getting down to business means to talk about the reason they were visiting, perhaps a health problem.

A study on physical activity experiences from heritage studies and other reports could be done to determine what information has already been collected in this topic area. While reports such as heritage studies do not set out to determine physical activity experiences, information emerges about a range of other topics emerge.

Differences of 'being accepted' according to the place could be investigated. This study highlighted the confusion that many people felt about being accepted in some places by people but not accepted by the same people in other places. Some of the places of acceptance in this study were the football field and the shearing shed, however in public places under the gaze and judgment of others Aboriginal people were unaccepted. A study to understand the perspectives of Aboriginal people would be helpful, as would a study on non-Aboriginal people to give their perspectives on this topic. Perspectives of non-Aboriginal people could investigate the importance of 'being judged' by others should they interact with Aboriginal people.

Achievement in sport despite adversity could be explored and what drove many Aboriginal people to continue on. Instead of high profile athletes, those absent people in the literature who achieved in sport on a more local level could be part of a study to explore their strategies to achieve.

8.4.2 Other experience studies – Perspectives from the Freedom Ride

Perspectives of Aboriginal people from the towns of the freedom ride (Walgett, Gulargambone, Kempsey, Bowraville and Moree) could be investigated. The literature appears to present perspectives from the people on the freedom ride bus however misses the perspectives of the Aboriginal people who lived at the various towns at the time of the events. This study showed another story to the freedom ride from the eyes of the people who lived in Moree – where some met the freedom riders with aggression and believed they were being exploited. This is a different story to the dominant discourse of the freedom ride, where it has always being presented as a beneficial exercise where all were accepting of the events that took place.

8.4.3 Specific Indigenous methodologies

The role of Aboriginal languages in Indigenous methodologies would be an interesting study to explore more specific methodologies according to the Aboriginal group involved in any research project. The study could question if any Indigenous methodology can be used across different Aboriginal groups and explore the concept of listening as a foundation for methodology.

8.4.4 Physical employment studies

A study on the role of Aboriginal people in the past working on the land could be done. While Australia is known for early primary production in sheep wool, the role of Aboriginal people in contributing to this industry has not been discussed.

A study of those Aboriginal people affected by chemical spraying in the past while working on the land could discuss effects, if any, on them today are due to past practices.

8.5 Methodological Matters

There were both methodological challenges and personal implications arising from the study. These challenges are revisited here not because they weaken the conclusions, but they allow consideration of some important elements of the real politics affecting research in these complex Indigenous domains.

8.5.1 Ethics as a challenge in Wingangay Research

The processes of ethical review was initially confronting due to being personally related to the people in the study. Initially Dad wanted me to start interviewing him before I had ethics approval. We had spoken many times about the project and he was impatient to start the interviews. Waiting for ethics approval to interview my own father seemed unnecessary and I explained to Dad that the university expected several things to be done before we could start. Similarly, ethics processes for the wider study were done however still felt unnecessary. Despite these feelings, all ethics processes were conducted according to university rules. Indigenous researchers who choose to research Indigenous topics are bound to confront issues when researching with their

own family. This is a complex issue for Indigenous researchers to navigate, which requires a mix of objectivity and subjectivity to abide by processes while at the same time maintaining good relationships with family.

Another ethical challenge is appropriate recognition of family members who participated and contributed to the study. The payment I offered each person to participate was a nominal amount for their involvement. I also offered a copy of the thesis to each person. Family members appeared to be more interested in having a book about our family rather than a copy of the thesis. Employing the Wingangay methodology, this request is to be met by me in the future. While an academic piece of writing is applauded in the academy, it is not easily accessible by many community members. Therefore the format of the thesis must be adapted later for my family. Reproducing the thesis is a responsibility that I have as a researcher and as a family member. In their giving their stories to me, I will give them back their stories in a format for them and the next generations.

8.5.2 Challenges on the dominant paradigms

During my candidature I had several challenges from peers and more senior academics (and even in one case from a proposed Associate Supervisor from the biomedical research sector) on the development of my methodology. These challenges also came from some audience members of some conference presentations. The challenges from some people in presentations were confronting to me, sapping my confidence and resilience. One example was a student conference at Macquarie University where an academic from another department challenged me (in front of approximately 100 other academics and PhD students) in relation to my thoughts on positivism and the unethical approaches to doing research *on* Aboriginal peoples that I concluded had characterised much of the early positive research record. The challenger advocated positivist methods and rather than listening to the positive contribution I was constructing in the Winangay method was trying to shoot my ideas down. While I was told later I responded well (and came second in a competition for student presentations from my department), the person in question approached me during the lunch break to continue his argument. His challenge put me in a difficult situation that left me feeling I was expected to collectively defend Indigenous people and the atrocities of the past.

The challenge placed me in a familiar position where I was forced to speak on behalf of Indigenous peoples.

Early in my studies, a potential Associate Supervisor was identified who 'didn't get' what I was trying to do, and instead wanted to impose their way of 'doing research' which depended on framing my study in a non-Indigenous, existing methodology. This experience left me very deflated and doubting my abilities and leaving me ready to withdraw from my studies. My Principal Supervisor attempted to reason with the potential Associate Supervisor to no avail. It was clear that while the Academic was skilled and qualified in their field, they were not equipped to accept or legitimise an Indigenous methodology for the study. As a result, the 'potential Associate Supervisor' was quickly disassociated from the study.

8.5.3 Family: challenges and strengths

In Chapter 1 I introduced Dad as an integral part of the study where he had a role as an Elder of the project and also the 'pilot' to guide me. While there were many advantages to this role, it also created a dependency on Dad which I'm sure (although he wouldn't admit to!) took a toll on him. As someone with poor health and acting as a full time carer for my Mum, my father's six year commitment to guide and advise on the study at times must have been very challenging for him. In addition, many interviews I gave included Dad in the room. Again while there were many advantages, Dad at times started to ask questions during the interview which placed me in a difficult situation where I had to explain to Dad that I needed to conduct the interview and also stay on topic.

On reflection, the role of my Dad as the Elder for this research was profound and positive for both of us. Through his advice, I gained confidence in my abilities in conducting research. I also gained a better understanding of the significance of the work and of the recording of important stories for future generations. Dad was able to exercise his role as an Elder to play an important role in guiding a younger person to navigate their life, in this case a project in life. I'd like to think that Dad learned more about the importance of physical activity in his life by being involved in the study. I have had indications of this over time, such as the changes that Dad made when defining physical activity. During the study he once told me he realised that getting

Government assistance to help him clean his home and mow his lawn should not be started if he could still do it. At that point it was like an 'Aha' moment for him as he realised that by getting others to do things for him, he was in fact limiting his own opportunities to be physically active.

Inevitably, family is a simple positive. Like many families, mine is affected by a range of disputes and disagreements and some of these limited the range of people I was able to draw into the research. At times I found myself caught in a situation where I potentially missed some interviews to essentially keep a positive relationship with others. While this no doubt means that some important stories were not drawn into this analysis, the purpose here has been exploratory rather than exhaustive. I have contextualised questions of physical activity, well-being and ageing into my Kamilaroi family as it operates, rather than as it might be defined in more positivist or anthropological terms. I have listened, and responded as best I could. I have understood and loved the stories and the learning and lessons they embody. I cannot claim these stories encompass the totality of my family's experience or Kamilaroi experience – but they don't need to. They teach something of importance and this thesis has attempted to convey that.

8.5.4 A personal toll: challenges of hearing and accepting pain and trauma

Judy Atkinson's work (Atkinson, 2002) has pointed powerfully to the intergenerational burden of trauma in Indigenous peoples. While this observation is politically powerful and important, this research has revealed another, more personal dimension of Atkinson's work. One of the most challenging elements of my research was the emotional toll the interviews had on me as the interviewer. I've discussed earlier how some of the interviews made me feel very sad. As I was related to all participants in the study, the stories they told me were very confronting as they were my family: I was connected to them. Stories of racist treatment, poor living conditions, Kinchela boys home, illnesses and injuries, regrets and reflections all affected me emotionally. As discussed, I 'downloaded' thoughts to my father, my Principal Supervisor and only a few times to a friend who was also a psychologist at Macquarie University.

Winangay is no easy path. Listening as an interviewer, as a researcher meant I heard much that is difficult, uncomfortable and demanding of me as a person. For example, one session saw me being challenged by a family member on my identity due to my

physical appearance. When confronted with 'You've never experienced anything' and 'But looking at you, you wouldn't think you were a black fulla so you know' (Cousin Diane, Moree, 4.9.10), this initially made me feel angry and discriminated against but I had to shake it off and keep going. These types of comments have been directed at me for most of my life, but this was the first time it came from a family member. This incident reflected something outside of my control: the way I appear to others. It made me think about the argument that it was advantageous to being a researcher having similar characteristics as your interviewee such as race and gender (Archer, 2002). In this case, I was the same cultural background as my interviewee and I was also a family member. These commonalities should have provided a shared understanding as I had cultural and family knowledge with this family member. The racial or family matching between my family member and I was not an advantage in this one case. What mattered to her was the way that I looked.

8.6 Next steps

The next steps beyond this study include personal and professional approaches. On a personal level, the places of freedom identified in this study mirror my journey through the PhD, which I will further discuss in the post-script. Briefly though, I have found my own place of freedom in this study which involves my changes as a researcher to have confidence to seek a methodology which is specific to my people and to my Country. I now have a realisation that my starting point in trying to frame a PhD topic was due to my positivist conditioning: to report the facts. My end point of this study is to reflect that it is the social context of the physical activity experiences are what matters most, as well as the ways in which these social contexts were spoken about and recorded. Dad had the answers very early on: that medical practitioners didn't understand the life he had led; that others looked at him and judged him on his weight, without understanding how he got to that point. The undertone of these messages is that people did not listen, nor care to listen. My personal next steps in this study is to utilise the Wingangay methodology for further research I do in the future that focus on Kamilaroi people and Kamilaroi Country. This methodology provides a listening personal framework in my ways of knowing, being and doing. Running concurrently with using the methodology is to further expand my Kamilaroi language to learn more and hopefully to be fluent in Kamilaroi someday.

On a professional level, the idea of places of freedom developed in this study need to be communicated to those working in policy areas with the intention of influencing program and service delivery. The importance of Country, not just visiting (if living off Country) should also encompass opportunities for Aboriginal older people to talk about their lives and the places that mattered most and what shaped them and their health. In addition, facilitating Aboriginal people to be together, whether family, extended family or other Aboriginal people are paramount to wellbeing.

In addition to communicating findings, it is my intention to further explore the places of freedom through making documentaries of people and places. With a medium such as film, places of freedom can be visually presented where images can be coupled with voices to present a more user friendly communication method for understandings about the places of freedom. A medium such as film will potentially reach more Aboriginal people and those working at the grass roots level to emphasise the importance of Country and family. In addition, the importance of the places of freedom need communicating to those in decision making and management positions – those that can influence service delivery. More understandings can then be gained of the important work that grass roots Aboriginal workers do in the community and the methods they use when interacting with their Aboriginal clients.

8.7 Conclusion

This study first set out to report the physical activity experiences of older Kamilaroi people – my family and extended family members. What transpired over six years was a shift to understanding the research question more clearly. The voices of my family told me a collective story: that to understand the social context of their physical activities, not just the activities themselves. Dad said he wanted for others to understand the type of life he led, and this was echoed in others' stories. An understanding of the social context of physical activities was achievable with Kamilaroi ways of knowing, being and doing. These involved framing the study in a Wingangay methodology to really listen to voices but in a Kamilaroi way.

Listening to the voices I learned about their lives framed in discrimination, hardship and poverty. Places of freedom were sought which gave them refuge and respite from these aspects. The places of freedom were found in physical activities. While physical

activity permeated through all of their lives, they were not seen negatively instead they were seen as places of freedom. These were places where people could be on Country and feel healthier from their interactions with the natural world. These were places of acceptance and were self-governed. They were also places of togetherness, being with other family and extended family which gave a sense of belonging and cultural identity.

Discovering the places of freedom is just the first step though. What matters is communicating the importance of these places and then facilitating actions that can assist Aboriginal people to construct their own places of freedom. Inevitably, this will demand that medical service providers, community service providers and Indigenous policy agencies become proficient, at least in Kamilaroi settings, in Winangay – in listening, understanding, knowing, remembering, thinking and loving with a Kamilaroi orientation. I relish the prospect of broadening a Winangay approach to Kamilaroi policy development, implementation and evaluation.

NGARAGA NGAYA WINANGAYLANHA

POST SCRIPT – AFTER IT IS DONE

Ngaraga ngaya winangaylanha – after it is done. I finish this study with thoughts about how I've changed as a researcher and how I've changed as a person. I choose to format this piece of writing in a letter form. This is a letter from me in 2013 finishing my PhD to me in 2007 when I started my PhD. It is a letter of advice.

Yaama Lana,

What you are about to embark on is something that will change you. You will change in two ways which I will explain. The first change is that you will become an Indigenous researcher with all the complexities that go along with that. I know you start with a background limited in Indigenous research. You will start thinking about your existing skills in research and you hope that will help you with this study. Yes, it will help, but it will help you *what not to do*. What you did before in research used other methodologies that historically disadvantaged Indigenous people. You will learn that research has not been kind to your people or to many other Indigenous peoples of the world. Because of this you will have an internal struggle at first, wondering if the research you do will perpetuate any of this ill-will towards Indigenous peoples. Don't worry, it won't.

My advice to you is to learn from others, conversations, books, journal articles. Learn about how research has negatively affected your people, but don't get bogged down into feeling down about that. You can learn from history to make a better present. Read what other Indigenous people have written about research, but also don't be too influenced by the paths *they* have chosen. Think about your specific study and don't try to implant someone else's way of doing things into yours. I know you understand that within Indigenous peoples there are many differences, many specificities, many individual ways. Apply this to your study. You will be in awe of other Indigenous academics and other Indigenous peoples who have come before you and the ways they

have gone about their studies. Learn from them but remain focussed on the specificities that make your study unique.

You are going to work very closely with your father for six years on this study. Your mother is going to give you a lot of help as well. Take it easy and don't hurry. Dad will help you in ways you won't even imagine. He is the key to all of this, your guide from the beginning until the end, as he has always been in your life. You are fortunate to have his wisdom guiding you: trust in that, even if at times you become impatient.

You will find an excellent Supervisor will become a very important person in your life, not just in your study but in other ways. He won't be Indigenous but it doesn't matter. He knows more about Indigenous issues than most, and has stood up for Indigenous people for many, many years. He will be patient and kind, and you will drive him a little crazy at times. Trust in him from the start, as I did and you will be ok. Don't be afraid to use that box of tissues that are next to his visitor's chair in his office and try not to knock his mandolin hung on the wall as you walk in and out of his office every fortnight for six years. Be amazed at his knowledge and how he allows your knowledge to grow at your own pace, not his. Remember when you are being knocked down, as you will be many, many times, that he will be the one to reach out the hand to help you get back up. When you don't have confidence in yourself, he will give you confidence that you can do it, and do it well. Don't forget he has a fantastic long list of PhD students he has supervised and they have got through to the end, and have graduated. You will be one of his list and you will take up some space on his bookshelf when one day he will place your bound thesis there, with all of the others. You will wonder how on earth you can repay your Supervisor for his commitment to you. You probably won't be able to figure this one out. Just accept.

Just on Supervisors, you won't find an Indigenous Supervisor until right at the very end of your thesis. You will search for one for a few years and ask three prominent Indigenous academics if they would be your Adjunct Supervisors. They won't be able to supervise you as they are just too busy. Remember they are in demand and don't be concerned. You will meet your Adjunct Supervisor at a conference – never underestimate speaking at conferences! She will be there towards the end helping with

your writing. You will wish you found her much, much earlier but better late than never.

You will interview many of your family members and they will talk to you about the hardships they have faced, and are currently facing. This will affect you emotionally but there is no getting away from this. The best thing you can do is keep yourself healthy - exercise, eat healthy foods to help you cope with it all. You will deteriorate emotionally and physically – try to minimise this by taking care of yourself. It will be very stressful and you will need to set up strategies to help yourself through this. Your family members will also tell you about their places of freedom – places where they feel happy and have feelings of positive wellbeing. You will realise that through this study, you will find your own place of freedom – one that is not restricted by western methodologies, one that is grounded in the core of your own identity as a Kamilaroi person.

The second change you will have is that your cultural identity will become stronger. You will find this by tapping into your Kamilaroi-ness. Go to Country often. Experience your Country and experience the places that your family will tell you about. Take your shoes off and feel the earth under your feet. Go to the rivers that your family talked about. Put your feet into the water. I did this often and it grounded me to understand and reinforce who I am and where I am from. Don't wear sandals around a river in the middle of summer as I did and you won't get frightened of the huge snake you see perched on a low branch near you. Pick up some stones from the rivers and throw them in, think about the years gone by when your family swam in those rivers and played their games as children there. Swim in the Moree pool as I did. Think about the significance in this act. Go to the Moree Council and read the original Council resolution banning Aboriginal people from public places. Marvel that you are holding the original work but at the same time be disgusted at the original text from a very racist time in history. Listen to stories about your relatives and ancestors from others. Laugh and cry about those stories. Go to Gunnedah Hill many times and walk around. You were made there – this place is significant to you. Look at the remnants of old flattened kerosene tins and wonder what it must have looked like, and what it was like to live there with no facilities. With others, make a fire on Gunnedah Hill and stand around it, observe others around you are doing what you are doing – just staring into the fire telling a few old stories. Drive to Terry Hie Hie with your Dad and feel the sky

open up with the heaviest rainstorm you have been out in. Drive 10 kilometres an hour with a metre visibility to get out of there. Afterwards, wonder what it all meant.

Keep in touch with your people and your places. You'll go to your relative's places over time and you will meet up with many you have interviewed as well. Don't lose contact with them. They will keep you going and remind you of the reason why you are doing this. Talk to your ancestors and ask them for strength and it will come. Remember that you are connected to many generations of proud, strong people. While oppression was a big part of their lives, it wasn't the sum of their lives. Family and relationships mattered and still matter. Learn more about your language, do a course on Country. But don't stop. You will start on your journey to learn your language and this will bring you better understandings of not just your study also for yourself and for your life.

Be aware that your study brings many responsibilities to provide ways to communicate the stories from your family. You can't give up as your family has trusted you with these stories, they are gifts. The stories aren't just stories as you will come to realise. They will provide you and others a better understanding of the context they have lived and are living in. It is not just about the activities they engaged in: you will come to realise that over time. This understanding won't happen quickly though, you must be patient. Think of it as a traditional storytelling method. Traditionally, some stories were told to in bits and pieces, little by little, over extended periods of time to allow for gradual understandings to develop. This will be like your journey. This won't be a quick journey of understanding so be patient and know that you will be graced with knowledge in good time.

Find your Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing the study and the thesis. Be proud of this and have confidence in it.

Before I close, I want to show you a picture of Dad and I in 2013 (Figure 33) at the Yabun festival in Sydney. Dad's knee wasn't good that day but he still hobbled around and enjoyed himself talking with people despite his ongoing pain. He is what my family call a 'goer'. This means that he keeps keeping on, despite any hardships. But you would expect that from an Elder, a 'pygmy presser', a 'gun shearer', a champion boxer, a politician, a 'show-off' diver at the pool and my Dad.

Yaluu (Goodbye, until we meet again)



Figure 33: Dad & I at the Yabun festival in Sydney, 2013

Appendix One

MACQUARIE
UNIVERSITY · SYDNEY

22 July 2008

Associate Professor Richard Howitt
Department of Human Geography
Division of Environmental and Life Sciences

Reference: HE30MAY2008-D05874

Dear Miss Leslie

COPY OF LETTER

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: ***Mapping physical activity participation through the lifespan of an older NSW Indigenous Australian: A Case Study***

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your responses have satisfactorily addressed the outstanding issues raised by the Committee. You may now proceed with your research.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. Approval will be for a period of twelve months. At the end of this period, if the project has been completed, abandoned, discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are required to submit a Final Report on the project. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. The Final Report is available at http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms
2. However, at the end of the 12 month period if the project is still current you should instead submit an application for renewal of the approval if the project has run for less than five (5) years. This form is available at http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human/forms. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report (see Point 1 above) and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).
3. Please remember the Committee must be notified of any alteration to the project.
4. You must notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
5. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University (http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human).

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project **it is your responsibility** to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely

P.P

Dr Margaret Stuart
Director of Research Ethics
Chair, Ethics Review Committee [Human Research]

CRO File: 08/495 **ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (HUMAN RESEARCH)**
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY (E11A)
SYDNEY, NSW, 2109 AUSTRALIA
Secretary: Ph: (02) 9850 7850 Fax: (02) 9850 4465 E-mail: ethics.secretariat@vc.mq.edu.au
http://www.ro.mq.edu.au/ethics/human

Portrait (85%)

Appendix Two

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

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27 October 2009

Miss Lana Leslie
Warawara: Department of Indigenous Studies
Building W3A, Room 317
Macquarie University

Reference: HE31JUL2009-D00049

Dear Miss Leslie,

FINAL APPROVAL

Title of project: Mapping physical activity participation through the lifespan of older Gamilaroi people

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Ethics Review Committee (Human Research) and you may now commence your research.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is **conditional** upon your continuing compliance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

2. Approval will be for a period of five (5 years) subject to the provision of annual reports. **Your first progress report is due on 27 October 2010.**

If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report on the project.

Progress Reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/researchers/ethics/human_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. Please notify the Committee of any amendment to the project.

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at: http://www.research.mq.edu.au/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide Macquarie University's Research Grants Officer with a copy of this letter as soon as possible. The Research Grants Officer will not inform external funding agencies that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Officer has received a copy of this final approval letter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White
Director of Research Ethics
Chair, Ethics Review Committee (Human Research)

Cc: Professor Richard Howitt & Associate Professor Kevin McCracken, Department of Environment and Geography

Appendix Three

Family member	Decade of birth	Age range
Ray Leslie	1940s	60s
Cousin Diane	1950s	60s
Cousin Ruth	1930s	70s
Cousin Dirk	1940s	70s
Cousin Larry	1960s	50s
Cousin Leonard	1930s	70s
Cousin Helena	1950s	60s
Cousin Gary	1920s	80s
Cousin Barry	1920s	80s
Cousin Otto	1940s	60s
Cousin Wallace	1960s	50s
Cousin Mary	1960s	50s
Cousin Willy	1940s	70s
Cousin Mike	1940s	60s
Aunty Mable	1920s	80s
Cousin Tania	1960s	50s
Aunty Sally	1940s	70s
Aunty Darlene	1930s	70s
Cousin Dee	1930s	70s
Cousin Siena	1950s	60s
Cousin Gertrude	1950s	60s
Cousin Heidi	1960s	50s
Cousin Darren	1930s	70s
Cousin Daphne	1940s	70s
Cousin Tia	1940s	70s
Cousin Daisy	1960s	40s
Aunty Jacqueline	1930s	80s
Cousin Tabitha	1960s	50s

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