TJUKURPA PULKA
The Road to Eldership
How Aboriginal Culture Creates Sacred and Visionary Leaders

Tjanara Goreng Goreng
M.Soc.Admin (Comm.Dev.) University of Queensland
PDM University of Melbourne
Grad.Cert.Soc.Sc. Australian Catholic University

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of The Australian National University

April 2018
© Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2018
All Rights Reserved
Candidates Statement of Original Authorship

Except where I have acknowledged translation of Indigenous languages, this thesis is entirely my own original work. The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution.

Signature: 

[Signature]

Date: 15 October 2018
DEDICATION

To

Grace, Fanny, Mooki, Arika and Willa Grace Mooki Mae

For Allowing me to Become
WARNING TO FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE

This thesis contains images photographs words and pictures of First Nations\(^1\) people who are deceased. With their permission prior to their passing they are included here with respect and honour for agreeing to share their stories with me and to record what they have asked me to record. Ceremonial, spiritual and cultural secrecy and restrictions have been involved in these case studies and so I share only what I’m allowed to share.

The thesis is interspersed with the language of the people I interviewed and undertook this research journey with, language from my mother and my own clan and language from theirs. I share it here to honour and show respect to their agreement, commitment, engagement, love and sharing.

---

\(^1\) I use the terms Aboriginal, Indigenous and First Nations interchangeably in this thesis to describe the nations and clan groups of Indigenous people in Australia now commonly known as Aboriginal Australians. *Aboriginal* is an English word which some continue to use to describe the original inhabitants of Australia. Indigenous is often used internationally to describe all the First Nations peoples in each continent. In this thesis, the words First Nations, Indigenous or Aboriginal will be used to describe mainland Australia and Tasmanian people who were and still are the sovereign peoples of the continent now called Australia. Torres Strait Islanders are the original inhabitants of the Torres Strait Islands to the north of Australia.
Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have come about but for the faith in my Ancestors who guided me and my Elders and academic supervisors at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the Australian National University. But gratitude goes firstly to Great Grandfather Alick (Little) thank you for surviving our Wakka Wakka business, to Grace my Great-Great Grandmother, our Wulli Wulli Ancestor and to her daughter Fanny who held onto the knowledge of our women’s business culture. I acknowledge the leadership, caring and mentorship of Anangu Elders, Kummunara Randall and Barbara Tjikatu AM for always showing me love, kindness and how to live the principles of Kanyini in my daily life practice. You are both the inspiration for this research for being willing to contribute so easily your stories, sharing country, culture and ceremony with me and for giving me such constant love and wisdom. To Sister Jayanti, and Dadi Janki my other spiritual Elders, and to Lenny, Alex, Charlie, Laura Agroum, Carmen, Pam and Chrissy, your unconditional love and unwavering support of my inner spirit gave me sustenance. Thank also to Brian Bacon and Marc Fourcade for Self-Managing Leadership and the loving friendship and knowledge of the raw struggles of your own leadership in the world, you have both been an inspiration for this research. Kevin Gilbert and Kumantjay Perkins now in the Other World, and Michael Mansell, thank you for your Aboriginal political leadership, friendship and sharing.

To all the CAEPR staff I’m very grateful for the training, companionship and professional regard, especially Denise Steele and Tracy Deasey for the patience and constant smiles, you brightened my world despite all that paperwork! I also thank the teaching and research staff of CAEPR for the academic Eldership and being a constant reminder of excellence and inspiration for my own research, Dr. Will Sanders, Dr. Katherine Kurchin, Dr. Sean Kerins, Dr Nicolas Biddle, Dr. Boyd Hunter and everyone else. My fellow CAEPR HDR students on the journey, Annick, Simone, Talia and Kaely, your friendship and companionship, love and acceptance during sometimes stressful times was beautiful for me to experience and taught me to be
humble. Thank you to my editor Ms Hilary Bek for the excellent work in short time frame!

To the Chair of my supervisor panel Dr Janet Hunt, your skill and support got me to this point and I’m forever grateful. Thank you for the Eldership and the wisdom. To Dr Julie Lahn for your gentleness toward my writing and acceptance of its Indigeneity and Dr Sarah Holcombe thank you for the sharing your expertise.

Particular gratitude is attributed to Dr. Paul Collis, my Barkindji friend. He has had a deep impact on my emotional, cultural, and intellectual journey as a student, a fellow academic and Aboriginal man who understands the deep suffering of our generation. He often challenged my life perceptions and understandings, assisting me to understand European philosophers as I jibed him about his ‘French intellectuals’. However, he taught me well to read and research these philosophers, in order to understand our place in the world as Indigenous people, affected as we were so terribly by the influence of their enlightenment, imperialism and colonisation.

Special thanks go to my daughter Arika Biara, the best part of my life, all my love and gratitude for having your spirit come to my life. You have taught me the most in this world.

To my Ancestors who will never need to be named, I am grateful you told me to do this and that you walk with me always in this life.

Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2018

“This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship”
Abstract

Robert Kegan says that sacred leadership is a particular order of consciousness that applies to people who have navigated their emotional stages of development to become individuals who go beyond the ego to become ‘sacred’ in their thinking and being. They are leaders who motivate and inspire others to follow them. In Aboriginal communities in Australia, Elders have always been considered leaders because of similar qualities to those espoused by Kegan and other western sacred and visionary leadership theorists. Indigenous researchers and writers in the field express the wisdom of our Elders as leaders in our language that espouses similar theories of sacredness. This thesis examines Elders as sacred leaders through the process of their development in Aboriginal culture, education and experiences and analyses that through the western and Indigenous leadership theoretical lens. The research was undertaken utilising Robert Kegan’s theories of western leadership, in particular, his work on higher levels of thinking in transformational leadership from an educational psychology perspective and Erik Erickson’s Stages of Human Development in addition examining the research of Indigenous leadership researchers and writers internationally and nationally. In addition, to explain the transformative processes of achieving higher levels of thinking when one’s development is arrested through colonisation, violence, abuse, dependency and acculturation, the thesis seeks to find what practices or events in cultural development supported an individuals’ movement through the levels of thinking to sacred leadership based in these theories. The thesis examines whether these western theories have any application, correlation or parallels in Aboriginal culture.

Utilising an Indigenous research methodology, four Aboriginal storytellers on their Roads to Eldership describe their life’s journeys which are then analysed to ascertain their development stages, levels of thinking, and their values and motivations as leaders and Elders. The aim is to ascertain whether these storytellers have achieved higher levels of thinking on their road to Eldership, through navigating their stages of development, and overcoming any arrested development experiences, challenges, adversities and their transformational actions. Furthermore, the thesis shows how
*Tjukurpa Pulka* - following the Law in action, and the inclusion of cultural and ceremonial life - contributes to healing arrested development and enables development to Eldership and the choice to move onto become visionary and sacred leaders. On the basis of my findings, the stories told, point to a contemporary practice of an ancient form of leadership development that mirrors the qualities and traits of higher levels of thinking. It shows how sacred leadership levels can be achieved through participation in cultural life, living in the Tjukurpa – the Law and spiritual business – and engaging in ceremonies, service to community, visioning and healing recovery processes.

This study is important to show that Aboriginal culture has had a generational process of educating children and young adults with the vision of creating Elders as leaders who can serve their communities and it crosses clan groups because of the impacts of separation through colonisation. The research has a contribution to make to the maintenance of Aboriginal cultural knowledge specifically and to understanding the oral teachings and learnings of an ancient culture, as well as showing how this information can be applied to leadership development and theory in the present modern world.
# Table of Contents

Candidate’s Statement of Original Authorship i
Dedication ii
Warning to First Nations Peoples iii
Acknowledgments iv
Abstract vi
Artwork, Figures, Maps, Photos and Tables 13
Glossary of Words 16
Acronyms 17
Prologue 18

The Road to Eldership Geoff Richardson 19
Kuwaripatjara in the Beginning 20
The Dream 22
Writing on Country 24

Chapter 1 **This Thesis Investigates** 27
1.1 Introduction 29
1.2 Why Write About Aboriginal Eldership? 31
1.3 The Research Question 41
1.4 The Thesis Chapters 42

Chapter 2 **Palya Welcome** 46
2.1 Introduction 48
2.2 I am Tjanara of the Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli 49
2.3 My Ancestry: Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli, Irish, Scottish And Welsh 51
2.4 My Identity Now 59
2.5 The Anangu Connection 59
2.6 The Foundations of the Tjukurpa 63
2.6.1 Ngungynateea 64
Chapter 3  Finding the Gap   Literature Review  
3.1 Introduction   
3.2 Aboriginal Eldership and Leadership   
   3.2.1 Early Colonial Observations   
   3.2.2 Cultural and Ceremonial Development   
   3.2.3 Contemporary Research   
3.3 International Indigenous Leadership Studies   
3.4 Relevant Western Leadership Studies   
   3.4.1 Robert Kegan’s Constructive Development Theory: 
      Higher Orders of Consciousness   
   3.4.2 Visionary, Transformational and Outstanding 
      Leadership   
   3.4.3 Sacred Leadership   
3.5 Family Systems Theory and Human Development   
   3.5.1 Erik Erickson’s Stages of Human Development   
   3.5.2 Trauma and its Impact on Stages of Development   
   3.5.3 Acculturation   
   3.5.4 Racism and Identity: Traumatic Issues in 
      Development   
3.6 Cultural Practices and Cultural Representation   
3.7 Transformational Community Development   
   3.7.1 Transformative Community Development 
      Projects: Mutitjulu Community   
3.8 Conclusion
Chapter 4  Building Kanyini Tjungungku - The Research Methodology  
4.1  Introduction  
4.2  Insider Research as an Indigenous Researcher  
4.3  Indigenist Research Methodologies  
  4.3.1  Narration, Storytelling Yarning  
4.4  Different Ways of Knowing Being and Doing  
  4.4.1  Anangu Ways of Being, Knowing and Doing  
  Epistemology, Ontology and Axiology  
4.5  Kanyini Tjungungku an Indigenist Research Methodology  
  4.5.1  The Kurunpa Cycle  
4.6  Conclusion  

Chapter 5  The Road to Eldership  
5.1  Introduction  
5.2  The Storytellers - Anangu Elders  
  5.2.1  Their Country  
5.3  His Story - Kummunara Randall Anangu Yankunytjatjara  
  5.3.1  Development  
  5.3.2  Challenges  
  5.3.3  Transformation to Eldership  
  5.3.4  Returning to Anangu Cultural Law, Country and Family  
  5.3.5  The Kanyini Legacy – A Higher level of Consciousness  
  5.3.6  Conclusion  
5.4  Her Story - Barbara Tjikatu AM Anangu Pitjanjatjara  
  5.4.1  Introduction  
  5.4.2  Development  
  5.4.3  Challenges  
  5.4.4  Transformation to Eldership  
  5.4.5  Relevance to Sacred and Visionary Leadership
Chapter 6  On the Road to Eldership  240

6.1  Introduction  242
6.2  The Storytellers – the next generation  243
6.3  His Story - Dr Paul Collis Barkindji Kunya Pitjanatjara  244
   6.3.1  Introduction  244
   6.3.2  Development  245
   6.3.3  Challenges of Adult Life  254
   6.3.4  Identity as an Aboriginal, Black and Barkindji man  258
   6.3.5  Transformation through Culture  260
   6.3.6  Relationship with Country & Cultural Teaching  264
   6.3.7  Barkindji Men of High Degree  268
   6.3.8  Leadership and Eldership in Barkindji Clan  270
   6.3.9  The Anangu Pitjanatjara Connection  271
   6.3.10  Relevance to Sacred and Visionary Leadership  276
   6.3.11  Conclusion  279
6.4  My Story- Tjanara Goreng Goreng Wakka Wakka  282
   6.4.1  Introduction  282
   6.4.2  Development  283
   6.4.3  Challenges of Adult Life  287
   6.4.4  Transformation through Cultural Business –
          Women’s Business  298
   6.4.5  Relevance to Sacred and Visionary Leadership  300
   6.4.6  Discussion and Conclusion  303

Chapter 7  Wiyaringanyi  Finish  306

7.1  Introduction  308
7.2  Main Findings  309
   7.2.1  Aboriginal Culture had a Cultural Educational
          Development System  310
   7.2.2  Engagement in Aboriginal Culture creates
7.2.3 Visioning is part of Sacred Eldership and Elders Lead Community Transformation

7.2.4 The Pathway to Eldership: A Cross-Clan Pan-Aboriginal Connection

7.3 Implications of this Research

7.4 Conclusion

7.5 Oowa Palya… I am Finished

Appendix A

Bibliography
Artworks, Figures, Photos, Tables List

Artwork
1. The Wandjina Ancestor in Canberra © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2006
2. The Road to Eldership © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2010
4. Two Way Holding Law Sharing Wisdom © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2017
5. Seven Sisters © Rolly Mintuma Mutitjulu 2012
6. Working Together Kanyini Tjungungku 2012
7. The Sacred Storytellers 2016
8. Liru & Kuniya © B. Tjikatu 2008
9. We Grow Together © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2012
10. Sacredness Spreads © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2012
11. The Tjukurpa Will Not Be Colonised © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2015

Figures
1.1 The intersections of Knowledge in this Research
2.1 Map of Australia – Indigenous Language Groups
2.2 The Relationship of Four Elements
2.3 Circle of Elders
2.4 Community Structure
2.5 Lifelong Learning
2.6 Three Laws of Respect
3.1 Robert Kegan’s Levels of Thinking
3.2 Kegan’s Model - Percentage of People at Levels of Thinking
3.3 Levels of Thinking -Adapted Kegan’s Model for Transformational Leadership Work 2010
3.4 Levels of Thinking - Achieving Breakthrough
3.5 Erick Erickson’s Stages of Human Development
3.6 Robert Kegan’s Theory -Higher Levels of Thinking
3.7 Points of Significance Interaction between Kegan and Erikson
4.1 The Soul Cycle of Life and the Kurunpa Human Relationship
4.2 Family Relationships as Researcher
4.3 Relationship in the Research Methodology Process
5.1 Robert Kegan’s Levels of Thinking
5.2 A model of Anangu Learning- Sacred and Visionary Leadership

Photos
2.1 Ban Ban Springs Queensland 1996
2.2 Plaque at Ban Ban Springs - Wakka Wakka Story
2.3 Alick Little and Family
2.4 Eidsvold Station 2015
2.5 Wakka Wakka Elders Native Title Gathering 2015
2.6 My three Uncles Kevin, Ivan and Stanley Stanley
2.7 My Mother and her two younger brothers
2.8 Uluru NT from the Eastern side near Mutitjulu Community 2015
5.1 Uluru and Mutitjulu
5.2 Kummunara Randall Anangu Yankunytjatjara
5.3 Barbara Tjikatu Anangu Pitjanjatjara
5.4 Barbara Tjikatu and others at the Handback 30th Anniversary 2015
6.1 Paul Collis Barkindji Kunya Pitjanjatjara
6.2 Near Bourke NSW Paul Collis 1995
6.3 Bourke Main Street Paul Collis 1996
6.4 Tjanara Goreng Goreng Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli 2012

Tables
3.1 Erik Erikson’s Table of Psychosocial Human Development
3.2 John Bradshaw Healthy and Arrested Development
7.1 Erikson and Anangu Development Life Stages Comparison

Appendix A

Figures
Fig A1 Two-Way Agency working together- part of the Umpiyara Business plan
Fig A.2 Template used for Umpiyara on Country Tours

Photos

Photo A1 Artwork on the Mutitjulu School Wall
Photo A2 Artwork on the Mutitjulu Pool Wall
Photo A3 Barbara Tjikatu and Diamond Rozarkeas
Glossary of Words

Anangu  people of the land
Anangu Pitjanatjara  clan group Central Desert
Barkindji  clan group North West New South Wales
Bogong  a moth (Ngunnawal language)
Dadirri  deep listening
Inma  ceremony
Iwara  Songlines
Kanyini Tjungungku  working sharing together
Kaidaicha  medicine and Law man
Kanyini  to Be, live in harmony
Kanyirninpa  nurturing and taking care of the cultural, spiritual, emotional and psychological growth of the young by those older men and women
Kurunpa  Soul
Kuwairpa  still doing
Kuwaripatjara  in the beginning
Migloo  white people (Queensland word)
Murri  moiety, people of Queensland
Ngarrangu jarndu,  an Indigenous woman
Ngungynateea  Mother
Ngura  land
Ninti  wise, knowledgeable
Noonuccal  clan of North Stradbroke Island, Qld.
Nparji Nparji  mutual reciprocity
Nulla Nulla  a wooden club
Palya  greeting how are you, ok?
Punu  wood
Pirampa  white people (Anangu)
Tjukurpa  sacred business, spirituality
Tjukurpa Pulka  sacred Law in action
Waintarinyi  to Lead
Wakka Wakka  clan group Queensland
Waltja  family
Wiltja  lean to home made of trees
Wiyaringanyi  finish
Wulli Wulli   clan group Queensland

Acronyms
ADC Aboriginal Development Commission
AECG Aboriginal Education Consultative Group
AIATSIS Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ATSIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
APY Anangu Pitjanjatjara Yankunytjatjara
CEO Chief Executive Officers
CDEP Community Development Employment Program
CPA Community Participation and Partnership Agreement
EQ emotional intelligence
FAHCSIA Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs
DID Dissociative Identity Disorder
FCAATSI Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
HREOC Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
IQ intellectual intelligence
MCAC Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation
NAC National Aboriginal Conference
NSW New South Wales
NPY Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjanjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (Women’s Council)
NTER Northern Territory Intervention
OIPC Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination
ORIC Office of Registered Indigenous Corporations
OAM Order of Australia Medal
OLA Oxford Leadership Academy
SQ spiritual intelligence
SLA sustainable livelihood approach
TAFE Technical and Further Education
This prologue begins the thesis about the Road to Eldership with a statement from a respected colleague of mine, who shared his thoughts of our past leader Elders who led our young First Nations people within the dominant culture bureaucracy during the early days of our advocacy and entry into that bureaucracy in Australia. It is a treatise on what our Elder leaders do for the next generation to help us be strong. It is followed by artwork I did about this thesis that inspired my journey throughout from the beginning, and then the dream of this thesis that enabled me to understand in the Tjurkupa and in the real world of academia, why I was doing this. This beginning shares with the reader, the creativity of this thesis as I embed artwork, poetry and knowledge learnt to make it a work of creative storytelling. Utilising creative elements enabled me to use all my intellect; creative, emotional, cultural and mental as a First Nations person. This made me whole and makes the work feel whole for me. In doing so I hope it also makes the reader feel whole about what is being shared. First Nations people are storytellers. I am a storyteller. This thesis is a story. As a culture we use many things in storytelling; music, art, dance, oral story, poetry and writing. Although an academic work, it is a First Nations story being told in a First Nations way by a First Nations person.
The Road to Eldership

Our job in our life is to serve
I serve the mob as best I can

We grew up in an era when we watched our leaders be the Elders
We wanted to be

You’re elected as a voice for the people
People like Charlie Perkins, Sugar Ray Robinson, Birdy Chika Dixon and Paddy McGuinness

In our careers, we have had these icons in front of us
We worked for the greatest people
We knew we were safe with them

A leader should make you feel safe
Because they’re at the front and then you have some behind you watching the flank to be sure you’re ok it’s like the old way
When you walked in the bush, you followed, and they followed you to keep you safe
Always watching to be sure we were ok as young ones

They had the courage to take us somewhere
And show us the way

There will never be people like them again

There were a whole lot of people trying to do the right Thing and we lived it we lived it with them…. You and Me
We had that experience in those early days
Our lives have been full
Our favourite attitude is one of gratitude
DAA NAC ADC
It was real Aboriginal way……
With some imagination
Now I feel we have to capture the thought leaders
Services as a means of Development
If you’re broken, you can’t get services
And to be whole you need development
We’re working on a program right now

G. Richardson (personal communication 22 September 2016)

Geoffrey Richardson
Assistant Secretary
Aboriginal Leadership Program
Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet
Kuwaripatjara In the Beginning

Artwork 1  The Wandjina Ancestor in Canberra’ © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2006
This artwork tells the story of the Wandjina Ancestor of the Ngunnawal people from the land where Canberra Australia’s capital now sits. The dream that follows describes some of this painting. It is the Ancestor lying in the land across the main road of Canberra toward Parliament House across the lake and the footprints of the people on the land. The Wandjina is depicted as an Angel watching over us, over our country and over me. The colours represent special things – the purple is the healing energy of the Ancestors bringing that to us always over time, past, present and future, the gold represents the pure energy of Biaime, our Higher Being that is always with us and taking care of us, the black lines and circles represent the negativity which is embedded in our ways of being and doing in the dynamics of our relationships with ourselves, with each other and the land. The main circles on the Angel’s body represent the roundabouts on the road, the smaller circles represent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities that have lived on that land, past and present and the gold circles represent the healed and well communities of people who are living now by the Law of the Wandjina Ancestor who brought the Tjukurpa Law to this land. The round circle head of the Angel represents our Parliament on Capital Hill and the purple is the hope of healing energy to heal the relationships between the First Nations people and the dominant culture colonial government. The black circle represents the unhealed parts of that relationship such as acceptance of our sovereignty.
The Dream

When I began researching this doctorate at the Australian National University I went up to the women’s mountain, Mount Ainslie, of the Ngunnawal dreaming (Tjukurpa)\(^2\) overlooking the valley where Canberra city lies at the foot of the mountain. It has always been an important spiritual cultural place for me since I moved to Canberra in 1978 from my home country in Queensland. Its importance relates to me is that it sits directly on the Songline of the Bogong Moth. The valley has three prominent important mountains to this Tjukurpa. Black mountain to the right of Mount Ainslie is the man’s place and the Ceremony mountain, Capital Hill, is where Australia’s Parliament stands. Whilst there I performed a ceremony of respect to thank my Ancestors for supporting my life. I often went up Mount Ainslie to do ceremony. This event occurred as a direct result of my request to my Ancestors and Biaime\(^3\) relating to my PhD.\(^4\)

As I walked down the stairs to the front of the memorial of Walter and Marion Burley Griffin, the designers of Canberra, eight crows flew around me and into the trees they landed and waited as I walked to them. The black crow is my Great Grandfather’s spirit. He has been with me for all my life since my birth, he comes to me on my right shoulder, whispering in my ear whenever I need guidance and help. The crows spoke to me telling me to stand still and listen to their voices on the wind. The number eight has an important meaning in many stories, mythologies and cultures. In our Aboriginal culture, many clans share the story of the Seven Sisters as they travelled around Australia. The eighth spirit in the story was originally Biaime\(^5\) and later over time became a man chasing them.

For thousands of years people gathered on what is now called Capital Hill in the Canberra valley, to commemorate and celebrate the journey of the Bogong Moth, a delicacy in their food source. The Ngunnawal invited clan groups from the Yuin, on the Coast, the Wiradjuri of the plains and others to the North, South, East and West, celebrating the journey of the Bogong

---

\(^2\) Tjukurpa Anangu word for ‘dreaming’ or the sacred business is a more direct translation

\(^3\) Biaime is the Wiradjuri language word for the Higher Being, God, Shiva, Allah, Jehovah – we say, ‘same same’ it is the same Light Being.

\(^4\) This experience occurred in June 2011 when I went there to ask the Ancestors advice for my PhD.
Moth following its Songline down to the Snowy Mountains. Capital Hill, where Australia’s Parliament House sits on an ancient ceremonial ground was used by Aboriginal leaders for generations. Is there sacred leadership in Aboriginal culture? If so what does it look like I thought.

I began to draw a picture of what I saw. As I drew the angel, line-by-line, the Wandjina Ancestor emerged across the lake towards the hill. My vision of the Ancestor lying in the valley between the three mountains that form the triangle of the Bogong Moth Tjukurpa at Canberra, is a special one. The three mountains form the rim around the valley with the Australian Parliament House in the centre, this place where the leaders of our nation sit and lead. It is fitting that I begin this story by sharing how sacred this place is for me and for our people for thousands of years before the colonisers came and made it theirs. There are three main roads leading up to Capital Hill, Commonwealth Avenue, the Ancestor’s head, Anzac Parade and Melbourne Avenue. The arms of the Ancestor are the lake on either side of the Avenue. The gold in this dream drawing represents the energy of the Tjukurpa flowing in the land. The purple represents the energy of wellness and healing of returning to the Law and embedding it in the earth of Ngungyratee again. We walk the Songlines and tracks of our Ancestors who journeyed to this place with their families and their trading goods to celebrate and trade. Now Australia elects its leaders who travel to this same place to make Laws and govern our country. White leaders, black leaders and all, journey to this same place as Our Ancestors did and still do, to share, to make laws and to follow the Law. The feeling of the benevolence of the Ancestor emerged as an Angel is in the drawing, following the lines of the river, the lake and Commonwealth Avenue, arms encompassing us all. It is a representation of our ‘Biaime’ our Higher Being that is with us always, reminding us of our responsibility to self, to others, to the Earth the Land – our Ngura, our Ngungyratee – Our Mother through whom we are born.

I learned of the Tjukurpa from my Elders who taught me of the Iwara-Songline Tjukurpa in Australia. The Wandjina created the Songlines of country thousands of years ago and then left our people with the Law, the Stories, and the Tjukurpa. This drawing begins this thesis story because the Wandjina are our Leaders, Our Ancestors, Our Elders – the beings who brought us Our Laws, Values, Principles and ways of being, knowing and doing. The Wandjina sang
Writing on Country

For us land is life. My Elders taught me that everything emerges from the relationship between the Tjukurpa – the sacred Law and belief system, ngura the land, our Mother, waltja, our families and our relationship to all of these. Our Tjukurpa system has within it everything we need to learn how to be and become through the life training that creates our Elders and leaders. It is appropriate to begin this thesis on the lands of those people from whom I learnt how to be a leader and the place which became my home away from my ancestral lands. Native Canadian people consider land as their first leader:

‘A sense of place brings coherence to Aboriginal people and suggests an aesthetic engagement with the land – an intimate spiritual commitment to relationships with all living things…. we accept the Earth as our first embodied concept of leadership. We follow Earth. We respond to the guidance of the processes expressed in our home place. Many say we listen and respond to our Mother.’ (Kenny. 2012 pg. 3)

My first sense of place was my birthplace in western Queensland and then Canberra, my second home where I have lived most of my adult life. It is on the land sitting, walking and being with our Elders that we find our expression, our ways of knowing, being and doing. It is on the land that we practice the spiritual life that sustains us:

‘It is extraordinarily important for Native people to locate themselves spiritually. Our ecological, historical, and humanistic spirituality finds expression in the stories that help shape our lives and guide our days. There is also a sense of immediacy in our Native world for those who choose to feel it. Locating ourselves in the moment calls forth our past and our

---

6 Songlines are the pathways that Ancestral Beings travelled across country and sang the Law into our land – they are commonly known as Songlines and are the major energy lines which are sacred and within we believe are the songs and stories of our Law and Ancestral Beings are held.

7 Italicised to denote a spiritual way of being
future in elegant and expansive perspectives that remind us of the interconnection of all things and an inclusive holism that permeates our worlds.’ (Kenny 2012. p. xi)

The Songline of the Bogong Moth *Tjukurpa* exists to maintain the spirit and energy of the Law and lore of the Ngunnawal Peoples where I begin to write. It is here that this story begins, with the ancient knowledge of my peoples who occupied this land for thousands of years before the British claimed this ‘empty land’ for their Empire. Writing here in the nation’s capital where our nation’s leaders come together is a powerful experience as I challenge the colonising education of our own people to undertake leadership training. I consider this a political action. My interest is in how we make leaders and how our leaders lead from our traditions, Laws and *Tjukurpa*. Given we have been in this land for so long, I thought we must have a system of education in becoming leaders. How do our Elder leaders become this?

In the early stages of research, I thought of the lack of Indigenous peoples in leadership in Australia, in Parliament and in other places. Since then we have had the first Indigenous woman and Indigenous man elected to the House of Representatives and two Indigenous Senator’s to the Senate Chamber. Australia’s Parliament House is located where for thousands of years Indigenous people gathered and celebrated the journey of the Bogong Moth *Tjukurpa* on that hill. This is now the place of our nation’s leadership, the place that we as Australia’s peoples, look toward having our elected representatives provide leadership for our nation. Having lived near this hill for 40 years I have, through observation, seen what this dominant culture leadership looks like.

As a First Nations woman brought up in the traditions of her culture, a system of hierarchical leadership such as this is anathema to me. For us leadership is based in other things; it is circular in nature, it is complementary in imbuing authority in both men and women equally, it is intuitive, emotionally intelligent and you come to

---

8 Australian was known as an empty land- *terra nullius* until this was legally overturned by the Australian High Court in a judgement called the Mabo Law in 1991.
leadership by invitation because of your embodiment in thoughts, word and actions of the Law – the spiritual Law and the value system of our Tjukurpa.

I lived, researched and wrote this thesis in three places in Australia: my country of Wakka Wakka, Wulli Wulli in Queensland, on the lands of the Yankunytjatjara at Uluru in the Northern Territory, and my ‘second home’ of Canberra, Australia’s capital city. For me, and from my observations of Elders during my life, the road to Eldership is one where a person transcends the cultural, physical, mental, social and emotional restrictions placed on them by colonisation, dysfunctional systems, racism and acculturation to grow into higher levels of thinking, knowing, being and doing. In this study, I share the stories of four First Nations people on their roads to Eldership. Writing on the country of my Ancestors, with their spirit and the spirit of my Elder leaders was the most powerful experience. This is the research story.
Chapter 1

This Thesis Investigates...
This artwork was done whilst I was working at Zaffyre International, a transformational leadership company based in Sydney Australia, that specialised in the work of Professor Robert Kegan and other western leadership theorists in the transformational leadership development world. This was where I first heard of his work and it enlightened me. This drawing is my representation of what was occurring in our organisation whilst I was working there. Done after a year of learning and understanding the systemic pressures of leadership and being our own leaders, of observing peoples’ self-management, I saw the pain of the leader and the way the other leaders, including myself and another Indigenous native American man, worked within that system. The purple represents healing, the gold represents the energy of Biaime healing the people, the dynamics and all in the system, the black represents the negativity we hold onto and where in our bodies and spirits, and the red represents the pain of our development, our lives and sometimes our trauma. We were holding each other’s hands as we navigated our relationships and did our best to love and care for each other. I am in the middle, my native American colleague is at the far right and Biaime is at the top radiating the power of transformation so that we can transform and also use that in our leadership mentoring work.
1.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates *Tjukurpa Pulka*\(^9\) the Road to Eldership, how sacred and visionary leaders are created, and how they can inspire and lead community transformation. It examines how Aboriginal processes of life development and learning supports the creation of sacred and visionary leaders whilst looking at western theories of leadership development relating to life development and learning. The research uses the evidence of the four storytellers, growing in their First Nations traditions and how they achieved either Eldership or are leaders in the process of becoming Elders. Additionally, it shares how the two Anangu Elder storytellers inspired transformative community development projects. The research participants are Pitjanatjara Yankunytjatjara Anangu Elders, Uncle Kumnunara\(^10\) Randall and Barbara Tjikatu of the Central Desert in the Northern Territory, Barkindji cultural educator\(^11\) Dr. Paul Collis, and myself.

These storytellers\(^12\) tell how they became senior teachers and leaders following their cultural learning, their western education or engagement in western life, their individual life challenges, transformative experiences and cultural knowledge that assisted them to grow into Eldership–leadership. Utilising the theories of Erik Erickson’s stages of human development (1950) and layering Robert Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive development theory and its application to leadership onto their stories, I discuss how each storyteller navigated the challenges in their life development to move toward becoming sacred and visionary leaders. I utilise Indigenous leadership writers and my analysis of the stories to answer the research question.

---

\(^9\) *Tjukurpa Pulka* literally means Sacred Law in action.

\(^10\) The word *Kummunara* is used when an Anangu male has passed away and the person’s first name is not spoken again, so I have used this throughout the document as Kumnunara Randall passed away in 2015.

\(^11\) Cultural educator meaning that he has gone through initiation ceremonies that give him the tools to teach culture and mentor young men in cultural knowledge.

\(^12\) The name I gave my research participants as they told me their stories for this research.
All Indigenous peoples in Australia are impacted by the process of acculturation over generations of colonisation and this affects each one’s story. This thesis examines events in the life stories of each storyteller and how they dealt with the generational traumas of colonisation to achieve higher levels of knowing, being, doing and thinking. I utilise family systems theory, the knowledge shared by writers of generational trauma and the process of acculturation, to discuss and examine the impact of colonisation on Aboriginal people in terms of their emotional development. The storytellers overcame their traumas to transform, engage in recovery and healing on their journey to Eldership. In doing so they restored wellbeing and were able to mend their arrested developmental during their Eldership journeys. I show that these Elders and leaders have either reached or are moving toward becoming ‘sacred’ based on Robert Kegan’s (1982) sacred levels of thinking and the accepted norms of Aboriginal communities in describing their ‘sacred’ leaders. This is especially shown through the visions that the two older Anangu Elder storytellers had that led to two community transformation events described in the thesis and the transformative impacts of engaging deeply in cultural knowledge to assist them in their transformation.

Each person in this research travelled different paths to learning, knowing, being and doing in their lives. Their stories are testament to using Indigenous knowledge, wisdom, Law and practice as a process of higher learning, to heal traumatic life events to enable movement to higher levels of thinking. Each storyteller, through the experience of their life, chose a path to live in the cultural knowledge systems taught by their Elders despite the deep pressures to assimilate to the dominant colonising culture. This is a significant part of this story, because leadership was practised and embedded in Aboriginal development and educational practices for thousands of years, and through observation in Elders of this, we each choose to maintain and sustain it.

---

13 Adapting to the dominant invading culture in order to survive.
14 Italicised to denote a way of becoming in action as a sacred journey of development.
The four storytellers have all, despite colonisation, held to their Aboriginal traditions, no matter whether they were Anangu, Wakka Wakka or Barkindji. We each chose to live as cultural and spiritual beings in our Indigenous ways of being. In this we have struggled, been challenged, and learned to live in two worlds, holding to our Tjukurpa. We have actively worked at decolonising our conditioning of being assimilated within the mainstream dominant culture. Our goal is to retain and maintain our cultural and sacred roots, and be Anangu, Barkindji and Wakka Wakka in our lives. This is following the teachings and spiritual life of the Tjukurpa and to become ‘ninti’ – knowledgeable of it and ‘pulka’ – living it in action.

1.2 Why Write about Aboriginal Eldership?

Aboriginal Elders are the holders of knowledge and law within Aboriginal communities. They provide teaching through the use of Indigenous epistemology, ontology and axiology. Their role is essential to the development of Indigenous paradigms as they practise Indigenous ways of knowing being and doing (Sherwood 2010, p.137).

During this research, I discovered that Aboriginal Eldership as leadership development and specific Indigenous processes have not been researched nor used extensively in Australia in leadership education. Leadership development tends to be based on non-Indigenous ways that in the dominant culture system has an expectation Aboriginal people will follow and engage in it without question.

As a woman, I know that our Eldership traditions are based in the equal responsibility that men and women have for country and the Tjukurpa and so I wanted to explore the topic from the point of view of both genders as well as inter-generationally. Leadership in our culture is different to the western versions of leadership development I have participated in over the past 30 years. My literature search found many books, journal articles and writings about Aboriginal leadership in particular

16 See glossary.
17 Elders in Aboriginal communities are considered leaders. In this thesis, I use the words interchangeably as I consider them, as do other writers, as one and the same.
fields of education, community, health or public service. I found Bill Ivory’s (2009) comprehensive leadership study of Indigenous male leadership at Wadeye in the Northern Territory included significant research on cultural upbringing. However, I found no literature in Australia that looked at psychological and emotional human development across the lifespan, according to the theories I wanted to examine, Erik Erickson’s (1950) Stages of Development and Robert Kegan’s (1994) Higher Levels of Thinking in education leadership psychology. I looked to Native cultures in North America, the Canadian First Nations and the Maori in New Zealand and found a number of studies that enabled me to reflect on their Indigenous aspects of cultural leadership development in comparison to Australia’s.

Ivory (2009) shares a speech by Patrick Dodson, a Yawuru Elder and now a Senator in the Australian Parliament, in which he ‘addressed the issue of equitable governance and appropriate and responsible leadership’ (Ivory 2009, p. 28). Dodson argued that ‘one of the great strengths of Indigenous society has been the fact that no one member of any tribe or group held absolute authority’. Further he states, that ‘governments today are now enticing young spokespeople with status and recognition to become the contemporary keepers of the brass plates’. 18 He was referring to the early British colonialists’ tradition of putting brass plates around the necks of those Aboriginal people whom they perceived were chiefs or leaders of clan groups. Dodson argues:

that same imperative that has driven the holders of the law and ceremony for millennia must be sustained if we are to avoid the suggestion that as a people we have been dispersed by the tides of time (cited in Ivory 2009, p. 28).

I began to think, what type of leaders were we and what type of leaders would we become if our traditions, wisdom and knowledge systems were completely assimilated to the dominant culture? It was important to me to think about decolonisation and decolonising the leadership education for our people. If we didn’t

18 P. Dodson, Speech at Cranlana Program, Myer Foundation Melbourne, 2004
we could lose the Eldership we had which I felt was so deeply founded in caring for self, family, community, country, land and the environment, not just on a practical level but on a spiritual and sacred level? Aboriginal Elders always talk about our sacred sites, our sacred ways of being and passing on the teachings. I was impacted by the sacredness of my own Elders and I wanted to explain how and differentiate it from just ‘leadership.’ My questions began to emerge, how did our Elders and leaders get created in our society and in our developmental processes of growing up children to adulthood and leadership? What is Indigenous leadership, what does it look like, what do our Elders teach us, what is important to hold onto and teach to the next generation, and what would I as a leader, as an Elder and teacher of Law be like?

Aboriginal leaders, in particular Elders, have led the political, social and civil rights movements since invasion, and in particular since the advent of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and its rights agenda in the 1970s in Australia. They have been at the forefront of transformation in Aboriginal policy and the setting of the agenda because of their leadership and as members of advisory groups and councils established by Federal and State Australian governments. Elders have always been the leaders in Aboriginal communities and there is an established developmental engagement and education cycle in cultural, intellectual, mental, emotional and spiritual life. My research impacts on Aboriginal affairs as many only see a small group of people as the ‘leaders’ in Aboriginal communities. It also impacts on leadership development as many Aboriginal people currently are engaged in leadership education experience it as based in western and non-Indigenous paradigms of leadership education and development theory. For Aboriginal people the cultural knowledge is left out and not applied to the education of future leaders and this creates an assimilationist and colonised agenda.

---

19 The Aboriginal Tent Embassy was established by four Aboriginal men under a beach umbrella on the lawns in front of the then Australian Parliament House in 1972 as a protest about the lack of rights, including land rights for Aboriginal people.
For real self-determination and sovereign rights to operate free of dominant culture influence, Aboriginal people must be able to educate their future generations in their own lore and Laws, and ways of thinking, knowing, being, and doing. This will enable us to hold onto Law and cultural knowledge and, within their own systems, develop and create leaders beyond the influence of the dominant culture agenda who are not ‘colonised’ in their thinking and education. Utilising Indigenous knowledge is vitally important to maintaining our future cultural transitions, human development and to remain ‘Indigenous’ in our thinking and agendas. Assimilation has had a huge impact on our education and development often to our own detriment emotionally and mentally, and to our society culturally. We may have lost vital parts of Indigenous knowledge to the early demise of Elders and the inability to sustain some cultural traditions, practices and languages.

Current developmental leadership education and training for Aboriginal people and the space in which our Aboriginal way of cultural development in family and community could be integrated as a holistic transformative leadership development program was the first consideration of this research. I didn’t know if there is a significant difference between western leadership training and Aboriginal leadership development, but I was interested in investigating what it was, if it was different, and how it impacts on our development.

Overall many leadership development programs in western dominant culture systems emphasise the intellectual and practical aspects in leadership education. As I moved more into middle and higher management roles, I felt these programs were not providing quality programs for Aboriginal people in workplaces, in particular for myself as an early career leader. I worked in recruitment and career development programs for some government agencies during the 1990s. In these roles, I researched leadership education packages and career development training and found they lacked inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems, and ways to utilise the background of Indigenous participants to value-add to their leadership development. In short, the programs were more assimilationist in nature, as they required
participants to de-emphasise cultural background and diversity and be more homogenous.

Leadership seemed to be about more socialised role-based systems, transactional work engagement, rather than the emotional or spiritual intelligence of the leaders. Since then there has been an awareness of the need for IQ, EQ and SQ\textsuperscript{20} in leadership but still with a homogenous view in educational development. Where was the cultural relevance, spirituality or power of cultural and Indigenous ways of knowing? These programs left out a large area of highly relevant cultural leadership knowledge that Aboriginal peoples used to manage themselves, their clans, relationships to each other and their environment in vitally important ways for many thousands of years as described by Bill Gammage (2011) and Bruce Pascoe (2014).

As a young executive in a management role, I struggled to find professional and leadership development programs that resonated with me. From 1989 to 2006\textsuperscript{21} as part of my professional career, I attended mainstream leadership and management courses based in western American or euro-western knowledge. These courses had no reference to my ways of learning or my identity culturally – which mattered in my work as I managed both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff and was engaged in mainstream\textsuperscript{22} and Aboriginal specific roles. They did not contain material of relevance to leaders from my world that inspired me, nor did they include the knowledge of either spiritual or emotional intelligence, or any references that were familiar or useful to me. I did attend one program called Self Managing Leadership. Created by the founder of the Oxford Leadership Academy (OLA), this course was about how to manage the self as a leader. I learned how to deliver it and later delivered it in central India with industrial corporate managers of mostly large-scale factories. This was the only program that had a transformative effect on me, due to the focus on spiritual and

\textsuperscript{20} IQ intellectual intelligence, EQ Emotional Intelligence, SQ Spiritual Intelligence
\textsuperscript{21} In all mainstream services where I worked, the Australian Government Public Service, the New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland State Public Services, academia as a lecturer and in universities as a middle manager, and the non-government sector in women’s services.
\textsuperscript{22} Mainstream refers to non-Aboriginal work or agencies.
emotional intelligence utilising clever exercises that enabled me to dive deeply into my individual goals, life purpose and focus on utilising my own ways of thinking, knowing, being and doing. The spiritual components resonated with me both personally and culturally.

In 2007, I won a NAB Bank Indigenous MBA Scholarship to undertake an Executive MBA program at Melbourne Business School. Unfortunately, this program was a waste of time and money for me. I learned next to nothing. The focus was on accounting, supply chain management, data, statistics and financial management was not useful. I know this knowledge was useful to the majority of participants who were senior executives, Chief Operating Officers, General Managers and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). These subjects may be useful to a transactional manager, but as a leadership program it was of no consequence personally to my growth as a human being, as a manager and leader in business, looking as I was to become a leader like my Elders. Yet, it was very expensive and one of the well-regarded business schools in Australia. It did increase my knowledge of accounting, financial acumen, marketing and making money. It enabled me to travel the world to see other university leadership training programs and corporate sector innovation processes. But it did nothing for growth of my inner wisdom, for someone who had already been in career leadership roles or develop my capacity to manage others, relate to them humanly in the workplace and grow with them. I learnt so much more at home in my own culture and with my senior Elder teachers, who shared their wisdom with me; those who were older than me who were tasked with the role of bringing me up in culture and those whom the Ancestors sent to guide me.

The road to leadership is paved with land, ancestors, Elders, and story – concepts that are rarely mentioned in the mainstream leadership literature. They are embodied concepts unique to Native leadership (Kenny 2009, p. 4).

---

23 This term means to grow me up holistically to be a strong healthy adult and leader.
These mainstream (western) leadership development programs were more about becoming more assimilated – becoming a white leader. They were about my assimilation into western ways of thinking, knowing and being. In no way could I develop my own self into knowing how to be the leader I wanted to be, based on my ways of being, knowing and doing, as a young Aboriginal woman living on my country. I began to wonder if western leadership and the leadership executive education development movement had any relevance to Aboriginal people. I wondered about the leadership education of the next generation of Aboriginal managers and leaders. What if the education they received assimilated them to such a degree that our ways of knowing, doing, and being were watered down with each generation of the dominant culture education? What if that education made them give up being Aboriginal, made them lose more of what that means? Thinking of this led me to the question: Is our cultural development under the guidance of older teachers and Elders in the value system of our Indigenous culture, a process of leadership development and could this be utilised in leadership education?

It seemed logical to me that making leadership educational programs more culturally relevant and culturally values-based would be useful. Allowing a focus on our cultural processes of learning, including its knowledge systems, whilst utilising examples of Aboriginal knowledge systems would make it more valuable to Indigenous leadership education, surely? Reflecting on the impacts of colonisation on that process of learning and development, issues such as historical trauma, did this affect our capacity and developmental processes in cultural learning to becoming Elders?

Was there any psychological human framework that was comparable in both systems, and did this have any relevance? From my work in therapy and psychotherapy for dependency, violence, abuse and addiction recovery, I learned of the impacts of arrested development. This knowledge was used at Zaffyre International, a transformational leadership company I worked at in the mid-2000s. We utilised this knowledge in the mentoring process to enable leaders to break through to higher
levels of thinking and in transforming the way they led their organisations. It was based on the knowledge of family systems theory and defensive mechanisms that are learnt in families of origin\(^{24}\). This knowledge, when used with these leaders, had powerful transformative effects on the individual, the company’s work and strategic business operations. This company utilised educational psychologist Robert Kegan’s (1982, 1994) theories of higher levels of thinking in leaders or sacred leadership, where he describes the levels of leadership that people move through to reach the higher state of ‘sacred’ leadership and the impact of family, cultural and social upbringing on human development. Kegan describes these sacred leaders as transformational in their style. Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) investigate Kegan’s theories of transformational leaders:

Transformational leaders are qualitatively different kinds of individuals who construct reality in markedly different ways, thereby viewing themselves and the people they lead in contrasting ways (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987, p. 649).

Further:

The transactional and transformational theories of leadership developed by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) used constructive developmental theory to explain how critical personality differences in leaders lead to either transactional or transformational leadership styles. (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987).

Erikson’s (1950) theory of human development does the same, noting that the nurturing developmental stages of human life impact on how people act as adults, in particular in Kegan’s (1982, 1994) work, in leadership roles. This psychological development process impacts on a person’s ability to move to higher levels of consciousness and ways of being. I became very interested in how these theories were useful in leader transformation and I began to wonder if they were known of in our Indigenous knowledge system. Did our cultural educators and leaders understand human psychosocial development and is that why rites of passage and transitional aspects of ceremony occurred to enable a person to move from one stage of development to the next with the guidance of their Elder teachers? Did cultural

\(^{24}\) Family of Origin- meaning the family you grow up in.
training guide a person throughout their life and did this knowledge form part of our system in how Elders and leaders are developed? I had heard Elders say that ceremony occurred to assist transition during growing up and especially at puberty initiation. I was told that rites of passage enable a person psychologically to move from one age transition to the next.

As I had experienced Aboriginal Elders who had ways of being that were of a higher degree, I was always drawn to Elders with value systems like mine and I used them to help me understand and grow. Were these Elders the sacred and visionary leaders that Kegan and others in leadership education describe? I began to think more deeply about my own Elders and how they embodied the practices that these authors were describing and writing about.

I took my Uncle–Father, Kummunara Randall to this leadership company’s office and watched as his presence transformed people. The Chair cried and talked of how she felt she was in the presence of a sacred being. Some of the Senior Consultants behaved similarly and asked how it was possible to be such a person after knowing about his life experience. As he told them his story and the stories of how we lived as Aboriginal people in this world, the power, the forgiveness, his simplicity left many of them speechless. He was a sacred being, and he embodied it in his way of being and yet he did not make any issue of it. He was just being the way he always was with anyone, whether a child or a Prime Minister. This impacted on me to such a degree that I decided then that it was important to me to investigate sacred leadership further.

Many of the Elders and leaders I knew had suffered and were traumatised by colonisation, many grew up or still lived in poverty, on missions or the edges of towns in fringe camps, but they showed they had a deep capacity to be available to anyone, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. They helped organisations, government departments and staff learn how to engage and work with Aboriginal people, often voluntarily. They mentored those younger than them to grow up with a value system of regard, unconditional acceptance and respect for all humans, animals and the Earth. They
taught us about two-world two-way politics and how to survive in the dominant culture world. They challenged injustice and fought for basic human rights. They challenged dominant culture assumptions about us as Aboriginal people and transformed how we were perceived. They were selfless and willing to counsel, engage with younger people and teach them how to carry on their cultural traditions. They embodied the value system of our culture and they showed that in their practice. It was these leaders that I looked up to and learnt how to be a leader of purpose from. I considered the spiritual, interpersonal and contemplative practices in our culture that I had learned to practice, under the teachings of Elders and how these had transformed me. These enabled me to utilise these practices in my way of being as a leader. How did they come to be like that and how did they know to do that? Were their ways of being important to Indigenous leadership development? Were they important on the road to Eldership?

The foundations of Aboriginal culture are embedded in story-telling, music, song, dance, cultural expression, art and performance where Elders carry on those traditions, build new ones, teach the old ones and embed training and personal development in these methodologies, that it is important to consider the artistic in Indigenous leadership development. In the *Restorying Indigenous Leadership* volume, Michelle Evans, an Indigenous leadership researcher, artist and writer points out the unique contribution that artists can make to conversations about leadership:

Indigenous artists are navigators and leaders of the twenty-first century. They see and feel the world and interpret it in novel ways. They traverse time and space through bodily and cognitive engagement with both. They connect the past, present, and future through practices and outcomes of their work, sharing with us visions of their world(s). They are the cultural producers, the content makers, the cultural movers and shakers of our world. We can learn more about leadership by studying their practice and the context they practise within (Evans 2015, p. 179).

This made me think about how I would approach my topic of exploring the developmental education of Aboriginal leaders on their roads to Eldership utilising
storytelling, artistic expression and poetry in describing the storyteller’s roads to Eldership.

The intersections of this research are shown in Fig. 1.1. As this research involves two cultural knowledge systems, one Indigenous and one non-Indigenous, it is important to consider all aspects relevant to the investigation of the question.

Fig. 1.1 Intersections of Knowledge in this Research

I utilise aspects of these knowledges as part of the research and its development, beginning with refining the question.

1.3 The Research Question
Is there an Aboriginal Road to Eldership as a process of human emotional, cultural and spiritual development, that creates sacred and visionary leaders, and can these sacred and visionary Elders inspire transformation?

Kummunara (Uncle) Randall, an Anangu Elder, told me during fieldwork, ‘people are invited by the people in the community to become Elders’ (B. Randall, Interview, 11 August 2013). Other people see their qualities and wisdom lived in their way of being. This makes them trust them and want them to be their Elders. Both men and women occupy these places. They are recognised leaders and knowledge holders of sacred wisdom. In other places on the east coast of Australia, where colonisation occurred much earlier than in the Northern Territory, there has developed a modern or contemporary version of ‘Eldership’ based on age. This different to the areas where Aboriginal people still live by the Law on their lands, such as the Anangu in this study. This thesis interrogates the concept of ‘eldership’ as ‘leadership’ in Aboriginal traditions. What does this road to ‘Eldership’ look like and does it create sacred and visionary leaders who can impact community transformation? I wanted to explore our ancient ways of teaching and bringing up children and how that is passed on; and how people navigate the traumas of colonisation to go beyond their sorrows, angers and hurts to inspire others, such as those Elders in my life. I wanted to explore how they became sacred and visionary leaders.

1.4 The Thesis Chapters

Kuwaripatjara – In the Beginning introduces this thesis through a dream explaining how I came to it and its reasons for being. As I tell this story it enables me to share with you my connections to Wandjina Ancestors and Songlines. I begin the thesis journey with artwork that inspired me. I talk about my home and connections to the topic.

Chapter One This Thesis Investigates…… introduces you to why I wanted to study this topic. I talk about my experience as a young executive and manager, and the pressures during my professional life to learn, educate and implement my learning about leadership in my work. The studies in leadership that I undertook and the impact
these had on me, and particularly how I searched for more as an Aboriginal woman. This chapter sets out my study intentions and the chapters of the thesis in more detail.

Chapter Two *Palya* welcomes the reader to the story of the thesis. This chapter introduces the reader to myself as the researcher, my cultural affiliations, relationship to country as a traditional custodian and relationship to the participants and my insider-outsider status as the researcher. In this chapter I bring the reader into a deeper understanding of *Tjukurpa*, the sacred and important cultural spiritual concepts of Aboriginal culture taught to me by my Elders. I introduce some of foundational cultural concepts such as *Ngungynteeea, Iwara* and *Tjukurpa*. The purpose being to enable the reader to understand these concepts.

Chapter Three *Finding the Gap* is the literature review. This chapter covers the theories of sacred, visionary and transformational leadership, family systems, acculturation, generational trauma, racism and identity, cultural representation, stages of human development, transformational community development, and studies in native and Aboriginal leadership and Eldership. The literature review enabled me to explain the foundations of the study, and how I utilise the literature to present my case, answer my question and prepare the research.

Chapter Four *Building Kanyini Tjungungku* is a literature review of Indigenous research methodologies and describes the Indigenous methodology I chose to use for this research project. This Indigenist methodology was created as a process of engaging with the Anangu Elders during this research. Whilst on fieldwork and throughout my many years of living and being with Anangu people it is appropriate to follow cultural protocols. As a direct result, I began to engage in a particular way as a research methodology. I began to build a methodological approach to research that was new and based in their ways of being and relating. It is based on the concept of deep listening, silent observation, sharing and caring, relating and engaging in a deeper relationship of family and accepted cultural family member, rather than just as researcher. It involves the development of a deeper cultural relationship over years of interacting, coming into and going out of the familial and community relationship.
It involves following Elders first and cultural laws in the way of interacting and engagement. The methodology builds on other Indigenist research methods. I examine them in detail and their relevance to me as an Indigenous researcher deciding on the appropriate methodology to use. Researching Indigenous methodologies and their history in the academy, my ways of working with my Anangu relatives and other Aboriginal clans over my working life became a focus of how I did research, consultation, engagement and work with them. I wanted to ensure my methodology was based in ways of being and doing that was relevant to my storytellers. The Indigenous ontology and epistemology developed and used in this research is included to honour and respect my Anangu Elders who shared their stories, homes, lives and deep knowledge with me. Decolonising research is important. This is part of the decolonisation process – to work in our ways of being so that I stand aside and do not impose my colonisation on the process. The resultant methodology is ‘Kanyini Tjungungku’ named by one of the storytellers, Barbara Tjikatu AM, who gave me those words to describe our way of being together in this research process.

This new research methodology can contribute to the field of Indigenist research methodologies and methodology in general. Being with, talking with and becoming with Anangu as a researcher meant I was transformed through this ontological and epistemological process. Being together as we walked, slept, talked, lived with and made things on the land, in the natural flow of our daily lives transformed me on my own road to Eldership.

Chapter Five the Road to Eldership begins the Eldership Journeys with the stories of two Elder Anangu storytellers. This is the evidence and data material of the research, the stories of how these Elders grew in their lives with their families and communities. The storytellers in this chapter are two Elders who are accepted as Elders in their Anangu culture, have followed their Elder-teachers and carried on the generational practice of teaching those younger in their community. Their journeys to Eldership are shared here to show how they become sacred in their way of knowing, being and doing. The information also helped me analyse whether they reached sacred levels of
leadership. It is in places like Uluru Kata Tjuta and on the Anangu Pitjanjatjara Yankunytatjara lands that you learn non-Indigenous ways are not that important until they impact on your daily life. Holding culture, generational legacy, teaching the secrets and sacredness of the Tjukurpa, of ourselves as human beings, of our relationships to each other and to our Ngungynteaa – our Earth, land and country is so much more important than what happens in the migloo world. My Elders acted to teach the Tjukurpa and to lead, as is their responsibility to me and to the Tjukurpa to share what they learnt from their Elder teachers with those younger leaders who chose to follow. These stories are recorded via the methodology and form the core of the study, assisting the reader to understand the motivations of the study and the details of each person’s ‘road to Eldership’. I analyse their roads to Eldership and the relevance to sacred leadership.

Chapter Six on the Road to Eldership, shares the stories of the younger generation of cultural teachers recorded for this work. They share their life stories, their arrested development, trauma and how they navigated the challenges of human development to reach higher levels of thinking, being and doing. This includes how their Elder teachers and their engagement in cultural practices assisted in the healing and recovery of their arrested development. It examines how they grow into their Eldership and leadership as cultural educators and leaders in their lives. In this chapter I discuss and analyse their development to sacred leadership.

Chapter Seven Wiyaringanyi – Finish, sets out the main findings of this research. Weaving the learning and observations from the four storytellers, I consider the work of the thesis to ascertain whether the storytellers and evidence answers my question. Have these Elders achieved the level of Eldership considered to be sacred in their ways of being, knowing and doing as described by Kegan’s theories? How did they navigate Erickson’s development stages in a way which enabled them to go beyond socialised and egocentric in terms of their Eldership? Is there an Aboriginal cultural

---

25 Migloo is a Queensland Aboriginal language word for white people
learning development system throughout the lifespan and what does it look like? How did cultural engagement, learning, ceremony and knowledge enable the storytellers to navigate arrested development in childhood to reach higher levels of thinking, being and doing? What did that look like and what influences were provided by other Elders on the Roads to Eldership? Through a discussion of the study outcomes, I share the discoveries of this research.
Chapter 2

Palya Welcome

Artwork 3  My Country My Tjukurpa  © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2014
This artwork was painted at Kummunara Randall’s home in the Mutitjulu community at the base of Uluru NT. I was visiting in 2014 for this research, when one of the storytellers and I painted this acrylic artwork on canvas. It tells the story of the ‘colours’ of Uluru’ as part of my country of Australia the continent and my Tjukurpa – my sacred business in women’s business. The colours are the colours I feel whenever I am on the country of my Anangu Elders - they and their country brighten my life and I feel alive. This painting depicts how I feel about my country, my homelands in both of my clan countries my born one and my adopted cultural one. It shares women’s business as the shapes represent women sitting down talking and sharing and the way I felt when I was welcomed onto their country and their shared their lives with me.
2.1 Introduction

Welcome to my doctoral research. *Palya* translates as welcome. It is the Anangu Pitjanjatjara language of two of the participants in my research. *Palya* welcomes us to their Country, to the relationship of *being with, listening deeply together, hearing each other’s stories and learning from each other*. It is a relationship of *nparji nparji* which means mutual reciprocity. *Palya* also represents the beginning of our engagement and relationship for the time it takes you to read this and come to understand the story. Allow me to introduce you to the study, the research storytellers, my ideas and our Indigenous culture in Australia, our traditions and ways of *being, knowing and doing* and to the findings of my study.

For the duration of your reading this thesis, our relationship will be shared through learning and discovery, critique and analysis. We will come to understand something deeper about First Nations Peoples and our spiritual, cultural lives. This way of *being* encapsulates the concept of *Palya welcome*. In coming into an engagement and relationship we always begin with the invitation, and then say *Palya* again as we finish our business and leave each other. The word has multiple meanings and depending on the context can be used to say welcome, thank you, how are you and I’m good!

In my own Wakka Wakka (Wulli Wulli) Country in Central Queensland, we sing to invite people onto Country and sing when we arrive at the boundary of another clan’s territory. In this way people know who you are, what you want and why you want to traverse their land. If you were visiting my Country, you would wait and ask to be invited in. We would either welcome you or not and we would sing to you this song, given to me by my mother Maureen (Mookie) Quinn Stanley Williams. The song ‘Garin Inna Narmin’ has been shared across central and southern Queensland for thousands of years. My mother learnt it from her Grandfather when she was growing up, she sang it and taught it to us. I often sing it when I’m going onto someone else’s Country, either to myself, or if I have the chance, to the custodians of that place. Now in the modern way, people can introduce themselves by presenting themselves to an
Elder or Elders of that place; let them know who they are and ask for permission to be on their Country. This is the modern version of Palya – Welcome.

2.2 I am Tjanara of the Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli

In the Wakka Wakka Aboriginal way, I introduce myself to you so that you understand where I belong, my connection to Country, ancestral knowledge, and stories, songs, Songlines and heritage. I take my stories, my belonging to Land and Country and connection to spiritual and cultural life from my Wakka Wakka and Wulli Wulli clans. I also belong spiritually to the place of my birth, Longreach which is on Iningai country. This place is sacred to me because it’s where my Spirit was born on the land. In our tradition, I can have responsibility for both areas of Country. I feel a deep affinity for both these lands.

I am Tjanara of the Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli of Central Queensland in Australia. My main Wakka Wakka Elder is my mother, the granddaughter of our last full blood Ancestor, Alick Little and his wife Fanny. I have always known I was Wakka Wakka and found out I was Wulli Wulli when our mother talked about Grace, Fanny’s mother, one day at home in the late 1990s. She said Grace’s parents were full blood Wulli Wulli. The Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli ancestral lands are between the Gubbi Gubbi to the south and the Goreng Goreng to the east of Central Queensland. Wakka Wakka Country is west over the Burnett Ranges of the Great Dividing Range reaching from above Kingaroy in the south to Eidsvold, Monto, Cracow and to near Theodore in the north, north-east. Wulli Wulli Country is to the north of Wakka Wakka Country. My descent is matrilineal for both Wakka Wakka and Wulli Wulli ancestry via my mother’s great grandparents. Great-Grandfather Alick’s parents were King Billy and Maria of Bundoomba Station. They are listed as one of the major native title familial descent lines for Wakka Wakka lands. Our Great-Great-Grandmother Grace and her daughter Fanny are listed on the Native Title Claimants register for Wulli Wulli as one of the major descent familial lines. Fanny Fitzpierce Joyce, was a Wulli Wulli woman, whose father was a white man, Fitzpierce Joyce, the son of Irish aristocrats who settled our Country.
I never lived or grew up anywhere on my Great-Grandfather’s Wakka Wakka Country, but my mother did and so I feel it and know it from her. I have travelled and stayed there often over the years during childhood and adulthood, and my spirit feels the connection to his lands and my Ancestral family. If Great-Grandfather’s Country had not been invaded and colonised and families forced to move further north, south and west, we would have all been born on our traditional lands.

Figure 2.1 Map of Aboriginal Australia (Source: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Canberra, recovered from www.abc.net.au)

The Map of Aboriginal Australia (Fig. 2.1) shows where Aboriginal clans and their geographical locations are recorded. On this map, the Wakka Wakka and Wulli Wulli are located at the arrows I have placed there.
Our Great-Grandfather Alick was born nearby Ban Ban Springs near Gayndah in Queensland. This is sacred place for the Wakka Wakka and the water never dries up. It is the place where the Rainbow Snake surfaced and spoke to the Elders of the sacred waters. Ban Ban Springs is seen in Photos 2.1 and 2.2.

Photo 2.1 Ban Ban Springs © Bill Errington 2002

2.3 My Ancestry: Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli Irish, Scottish and Welsh

My Great-Grandfather Alick’s parents were King Billy and Maria who lived and worked at Bundoomba Station in Queensland. We have no stories about them, except we know who they are, where they lived and worked and that we are their descendants. Alick, their eldest son, was born sometime in the late 1860s and grew up on his lands before and during first contact in Central Queensland. Alick was lost for three years between the age of four and seven when he walked onto Eidsvold Station, a large cattle property on the banks of the river near Eidsvold Township. Eidsvold is 780 kilometres to the north-west of Ban Ban Springs.
He stayed and worked on Eidsvold Station from early childhood and during his early adult life. The station owner gave him his English name. Fanny Fitzpierce-Joyce was my maternal Great-Grandmother who married Alick when they were in their early twenties.

They are pictured with their children in Photo 2.3. He is on the left and his wife Fanny is on the far right. My mother’s mother (Grandmother) Beatrice is the girl behind Alick with the other children, three girls and four boys. In the photo, Beatrice looks about 17 years, and this would place it in the early late 1900s, as she had my
mother some years after this was taken, in 1929.

Photo 2.3 Alick and Fanny Little with their children

The Joyce brothers from Ireland, were one of the first group of settlers on our lands in Central Queensland. Over the following generations they and their descendants, became a prominent pastoral family, establishing Eidsvold Station as a large cattle and
sheep property near the town of Eidsvold in central Queensland in the 1850s. It still operates today (see Photo 2.4).

![Photo 2.4 Eidsvold Station, Eidsvold Queensland owned by the Joyce family](image)

From early colonisation the Department of Aboriginal Affairs kept comprehensive records of Aboriginal people in the Central Queensland area including my great-grandfather and my mother. Alick had an exemption under the Queensland Act\(^{26}\) to live on his own Country and travel about. As he had lived on Eidsvold Station since he was a young boy, he got an exemption-pass as it was called, with the help of the station owner, Fitz-Pierce Joyce.

On my father’s side, I am Irish and Welsh. My father George Williams married my mother Maureen Stanley-Quinn in 1948 and had seven children. I am the middle child. We were born in Longreach and grew up on No Go Station until I went to primary school, when my parents moved to town after building our house. I am also Scottish

on my mother’s father’s side. Beatrice, my grandmother had my mother in 1929 with Clive Quinn, an Aboriginal man who had a Wakka Wakka mother and Scottish father. My mother went to live with her grandparents, Alick and Fanny when she was a small child around 1935 until 10 years of age in 1939. She maintains vivid memories of her life with her Grandfather Alick and the cultural knowledge he shared with her. She learnt her Wakka Wakka language and the songs and dances from her grandparents.

At a Wakka Wakka Native Title Gathering in Gayndah (2015) my cousins, elder brother and I drove to Eidsvold Station to see where grandfather and our relatives worked and lived. At the meeting we met some Elder women who had grown up with Alick and still remembered him. The Elder depicted on the right in the Photo 2.5 below, shared this story about grandfather:

Alick was a little boy when he went missing and turned up later at Eidsvold Station. The explanation for his (Alick’s) missing years was that he had escaped a massacre and was hiding from the migloos who were settling on his traditional lands, as it was known there was a massacre in the area at that time (T. Stanley, Interview, 27 June 2015).
My favourite Uncles; Kevin, Ivan and Stanley with whose families I spent most of my time are pictured in Photo 2.6. My mother was my great-grandfather’s eldest granddaughter and she is still alive at 89 years. She has five brothers, all whom have passed away and a younger sister who is now 75 years. They are our Elders and lived through the difficult colonisation history of removals from lands, missions and assimilationist policies from 1860 to the 1970s.

My mother (pictured in Photo 2.7 with two brothers) and her siblings lived in and around Rockhampton, Longreach and Winton in central western Queensland with their mother and grandfather, and later when they married they all moved into homes
in these towns. They all had exemptions under the Act and therefore could not be transported or forced to live on the missions.

Photo 2.7 My mother Maureen Williams aged 16 with two of her younger brothers

I grew up with my extended Aboriginal family around me in central Queensland and I was not aware of the mission system or the removals until I was a young adult. As a young child, I was drawn to knowing about our culture and always took notice of the
songs and language my mother sang and spoke. As I got older I realised that she was
very careful about where and how she sang and spoke language as people were shot
or killed because they spoke their language or engaged in any cultural business.

Being born in the late 1950s near Longreach, my family and I lived under a State
Government policy of separation or apartheid, where most Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander people were forced to live on ‘missions’. Under the 1897 Aborigines
people were placed at the mercy of state and church authorities with power over all
aspects of their lives. The Aborigines Preservation and Protection Act and the Torres Strait
Islanders Act replaced this legislation in 1939. Many of the measures of the previous
legislation remained, such as the reserves systems where Aboriginal people were
forced to live. Other measures in the new Act excluded Indigenous people from voting
in state elections, gave authorities powers to resettle Aboriginal people by force, made
it unlawful for any Aboriginal person in Queensland to receive or possess alcohol,
restricted their movements, denied them any rights to their lands or the lands of the
reserves where they were relocated, and curtailed their access to the normal processes
of justice available to non-Aboriginal people.27 Under this Act however some
Aboriginal people could get exemptions that required them to carry passes and
present them to the local police upon arrival in a new town or region.

My Great-Grandfather Alick had such an exemption. Usually people with an
exemption had to prove that they could support themselves and their families and
remain in gainful employment. Thus, generations of our family were spared the
indignity of living on reserves such as Woorabinda in the east, Cherbourg in the south
or being removed to Palm Island in the north of Queensland, where many of our
extended relatives were removed to live. Under this same Act, Aboriginal people in
Queensland were not allowed to speak their languages to their children, however my

great grandparents taught my mother her language and songs when she lived with them and she passed this onto us.

2.4 My Identity Now
I can now identify as Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli, something I couldn’t do as a child or young adult. We were forbidden. We knew from fear and control by the colonising dominant culture, that speaking language, doing ceremonies, being Aboriginal publicly, or any other form of expressing our spirituality, our culture or our race was forbidden under the fear of death. You were ‘niggers’, ‘boongs’, ‘coons’, ‘mission or fringe dwellers’ giving rise to a feeling of insects or scorpions that lived beneath the neat beauty of the white towns that dotted the land. Now I am no longer ‘nigger’ or ‘coon’, these discriminatory and derogatory names are outlawed by anti-discrimination legislation and also because society finds them abhorrent on principle. But I am still ‘black’ or ‘Aboriginal’ and now it is more acceptable for non-Aboriginal people to ask you which Country you are from or ‘where’s your Country?’ rather than ‘how much Aboriginal are you?’ Back then these derogatory names and terms incited a feeling of nothingness in me, of not belonging or being nothing more than the kangaroos, brolgas and emus living on the plains nearby.

2.5 The Anangu Connection
I have a culturally adopted family of Anangu Pitjanjatjara Yankunytjatjara who live at Mutitjulu near Uluru in the Northern Territory. To them I owe cultural knowledge learnt with them during my adult Aboriginal life and the inclusion of two Elders and Traditional Owners in this research. I first travelled to their Country in 1985 for the Handback ceremony of the Title to Uluru Kata Tjuta and there met Barbara Tjikatu Nipper, her husband Nipper Winmarti, and other traditional custodians. This large

---

28 Culturally adopted - when another clan group or family adopts you to teach you cultural business.
29 The Australian Government gave the Traditional Owners the Title to Uluru Kata Tjuta on the condition of 99-year lease back arrangements by the Traditional Owners to the Federal Government which established the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park.
celebration with the Governor General, various Ministers and senior government officials, the Pitjanjatjara Land Council members and staff, a large media contingent and many national and international supporters, was held at the site for some days. I travelled there by car from Alice Springs with a group of Elder women and a friend from the government. At the time, I worked at the National Aboriginal Conference as a senior researcher. I chose to stay at Mutitjulu and sleep in my swag\textsuperscript{30} on the ground. I was profoundly affected not only by the people there but also by what I saw. At this time, I was 25 years old, a new mother and beginning to embark on a deeper cultural journey as a young adult woman. To be surrounded by these cultural people who had never been removed from their land or their traditions as many of ours were on the east coast, was profound. During the Handback, sleeping under the stars next to Uluru, I had a dream related to \textit{Tjukurpa} Ancestors, my grandfather and other Elders. This experience connected me very deeply spiritually and culturally to Uluru and this community. I did not know then what it meant but it has been revealed in the 30 years since. The same Songline connections and cultural sacred paths exist in our clans as in the Anangu clans of this sacred place. There is an overarching story told to me by those women and men who taught me as I was growing up. It is this story of the Songlines that I share in Chapter Two.

I travelled to Uluru many times over the next 30 years. In 2006 I specifically went there in my role as Director of Community Engagement in the Policy Unit of the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA). My boss and I had a series of meetings planned with the community council, the local Mutitjulu Corporation CEO and women’s groups. It was during this time that Kummunara, Tjikatu and members of the extended family and I developed a very close relationship that saw us go through a highly charged political situation over the next three years. At this time, I learned where I resided in connection and relationship to others, my Tjamu – grandfather, my teachers, my Aunties, my in-laws, my nieces and nephews in the Anangu communities at Mutitjulu, Areyonga and

\textsuperscript{30} Swag is a rolled-out bed consisting of a mattress with canvas cover which is often used by people who travel and camp in the bush
Docker River. I returned many times from 2006 but specifically to begin this research in 2011 with deeper questions about the sacred journey to Eldership. It is there in the shadow of Uluru that I lived with, dreamed, talked, walked with, and shared Inma and medicine practice with my storytellers and friends. It was there I began to understand deeply what this research study was about. In this sacred place, where I had slept 31 years before as a young woman; under the wind, the rain, the sun, those stars in the Milky Way and the moon, I began again to hear their voices, listen to their hearts, minds and souls and write of them with the same deep love, honour and respect they had given me. Uluru is a compelling place; Photo 2.8 shows only one of its faces.

![Photo 2.8 Uluru from the eastern side near Mutitjulu Community](image)

My Ancestor Beings were visible in this place. I had seen them, they had walked, talked and dreamt with me since birth. I had imagined them and their Light, seen them in many places before, but it was not until I went to Uluru, in the central desert that they revealed themselves more deeply to me. It was in this same place, where my research companions and I shared our lives, dreams, stories and visions as part of this study.

From 2011 to the present, we immersed ourselves together to share this story. We ate, shared, cared, sat on Country, walked across Country and talked of lives, our learning and our being. We didn’t say that this was what we were doing, we didn’t talk about it nor declare it, we were just together and shared our research story. We followed
our feelings, our Spirits our hearts and our minds. We walked as one, as two, as three, as four. Our Ancestors were with us whenever we were together. I could feel their energy, see them in the eyes of my Elder companions and feel their calming, peaceful way as it permeated every day I was there. Us younger ones were growing up as they had grown up, and they were showing us how to do that so that we would become teachers, Elders and follow in their footsteps on Country and become cultural lighthouses as they were.

During this study I did fieldwork, research, writing, thinking and dreaming on their country. I followed the Ancestors, my Songline, their Songlines, these Elders, my teachers and my Country’s heart. I am telling the whole story from beginning to end. I returned to Uluru often, sometimes six or seven times a year to stay for more than three to six weeks, living with Kummunara and extended family. I travelled across their Country to the western and eastern edges and to places in the south and north with him and his family. This is how it had to be done for me.

The learning, sharing and being together in the research was part of our family, cultural, political and community lives. I was never apart from it and neither were my research companions. We did not set timetables, I followed my cultural companions when they needed to speak and when they were ready. I followed my own heart and kurunpa. I dreamt about them weeks before I went as I felt them pulling me to come to Uluru. My only timetables involved my flights there and back and those were based on being called. They were present to me from the moment they dreamt me up, called me up and then saw my face. My Elders were always joyful when I arrived, and they showed it by welcoming me always.

The following section shares knowledge that was given to me by a succession of Elders over my lifetime. It is this knowledge that is the basis of our Tjukurpa lives and is the

---

31 An intuitive feeling of them calling to me or singing me would come over me and I felt it was time to return.
32 dreamt me up meaning they were thinking of me or dreaming of me in the Tjukurpa.
foundation of my cultural knowledge. I was told that this knowledge of our culture extends across different language groups and clans; this was shared by the Ancestors in the *Tjukurpa* many thousands of years ago and that this remains the same.

2.6 The Foundations of the Tjukurpa

The foundational principles I share here are part of our education in the *Tjukurpa*. The three principles I share were given by the Ancestors in the *dreaming* to assist our people follow the spiritual laws as human beings and to educate children about how to live the Law. This foundational knowledge forms the basis of the cultural education process for leadership training for all young people during their development. Some clans still do this, others do not as a result of removal from lands, language and ceremonial practices due to colonisation as societies and families broke down.

I share it here for the purpose of explaining what each of the storytellers in this research have learnt in their lives as a basis for their cultural training and development as leaders and later Elders. However, when we understand and know about the Songline *Tjukurpa* we know that all clan groups’ knowledge is held in their Songlines and it never disappears. The Anangu shared with me that all clans Songlines traverse Uluru, as our most sacred site, and that the history and knowledge in those Songlines is never lost.

The colonisers who came to our lands in 1788 did not see, recognise, nor accept the thousands of years of civilisation that existed here: our lifelong education system, our governance systems, our environmental policies and practises, nor our cultural and spiritual lives, our ceremonial and ritual lives. They did not see nor comprehend much of our ways of being and knowing that nurtured our children, families, and the Land. They did not really understand or see our systems of Law, punishment, interrelations, diplomacy or customary business. So, diverse was our Country in 1788 that Wiradjuri writer Kevin Gilbert (1973) said that up to 650 different clans, and 250 language
groups existed. At that time, we didn’t count such things and neither did the British, so numbers cannot be exact. However, our transgenerational stories and knowledge from what our Elders and others have passed down to us is valid reference material for consideration and these suggest the existence of great diversity across the continent. Recently it has been reported the existence of dated bones from beyond 65,000 years. (Clarkson, 2007, p.309) An old civilisation by anyone’s standards.

Each Aboriginal group has stories of creation, of how men’s and women’s business is done, how food, resources, and aspects of the land were created and the song cycles of importance. What I am sharing with you is the knowledge, shared and taught to me by those who hold some of that knowledge. Our lands are of different geographical locations across the continent now called Australia. We are told that they come from our Ancestors and the creation stories, Laws and knowledge are shared to teach us our value systems and principles of behaviour.

Following are three foundational knowledges that I share with you about our land, our mother the Earth, the Songlines, wisdom which binds us all together and the Tjukurpa, our belief system.

2.6.1 Ngungynateea – the name we call Our Mother the Earth

Ngungynateea is the name of this land, this continent, and this Country as she is our mother, she births us through her womb and for ever watches over us, nurtures us and sustains our life as human beings. She birthed her children through the womb of Uluru and holds all Aboriginal people as her children (Maureen Smith, Minmia, Wiradjuri Elder cultural teacher, 1995).33

Women’s business stories shared with me revolve around our birth coming from the womb of our mythical creation woman, Ngungynateea, who continues to always give birth to our children. This is an ancient story passed on for many years that has been shared between clan groups in different parts of Australia. The Elder who shared this

story told me that Ngungynateea is our mother, she never leaves us and resides in the formations of the land. There are formations and landscapes in the land across the centre of Australia that shows her lying across our lands after she gave birth to all the kurunpa of Aboriginal children. She is the mother of all clans and all peoples and symbolically she continues to birth our children. Her womb is in Uluru and Biaine, the creator being comes through Uluru when it comes to the land. The relationship between these two is part of our creation from spirit – kurunpa beings to human beings. Like many other world spiritual traditions where there is a ‘world mother’ or ‘mother creation’ figure, Aboriginal people had Ngungynateea.

2.6.2  Iwara – Songlines

Your Songline is connected to Uluru; it travels there and back again forming a triangle from here in our Country to this place in the north of the Cape down again here to our lands encasing all the rivers and waterways…your sacred business is water taking care of water and rain is your business, you hold this medicine, water is healing medicine I walked this Country our Country following that Songline, making sure it was strong and passing it on so we would never lose it I hold it, you hold it, your mother held it, your grandmother and great grandmother held it now you keep that water strong…we sent you to that place and the other places when you were young where those other Elders taught you how to look after and sing up the water that’s why you travelled that Songline in your life, so you would learn to keep this strong…

T. Goreng Goreng, Personal dream, 1988).34

In this personal dream, my Great-Grandfather Alick Little and I were together in the Tjukurpa, flying together across our lands Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli Country. Below us were the mountains, flatlands, grasslands, rivers and trees of that land where he had lived and walked and travelled in the Tjukurpa. These included Ban Ban Springs where he was born and other places he had been. He was a senior man whose father was named King Billy by the military soldiers of the time. They recognised him as a ‘leader’ by naming him a ‘King’ and gave him one of the breastplates they gave to those whom they considered ‘chiefs’ of clan groups. Alick was a scarred, initiated man

34 This was a personal dream in which my Great-Grandfather Alick Little told me this.
and he carried his hunting spears and *nulla nulla* with him. I met him as a small child before he passed away. My Aunty Ruby described him to me as a ‘fighting man’, and said he was known as the *nulla nulla* man, because he always carried his *nulla nulla* and was an important man in our clan and families.

The Anangu call the Songlines – *Iwara*. I was taught that all the Songlines traverse Uluru and are thus connected to each other. It is how our clans, languages, history and Law is connected. The Songlines are the paths of the Ancestors as they travelled the Country. At certain places they sat down and camped. We talk about them as acting like humans knowing in fact that they were spirit beings, come from the other dimension to share the Law and teach us how to *be* as spirit form in human bodies. The Songlines are energy grid lines in the Earth, magnetic and made of Light. The Ancestors travelled on them as they were Light Beings. The Ancestors are painted as *Wandjinas*, particularly in the Kimberley region. When I was working in Kalumburu in the eastern Kimberley area, the Elders there showed me many rock paintings and of *Wandjinas*, and their paintings on slate rock used like canvas. These *Wandjinas*, are drawn with light around their heads and dark holes where eyes usually are – this is to denote no judgement or body consciousness as their consciousness was of pure spirit. They are not painted with mouths as they did not speak language as humans do but communicated via telepathy and intuitive knowing. Whilst there I experienced visions of *Wandjinas*, tall light beings on the horizon and felt their energy and presence.

The Songlines were created when the Ancestors travelled across the continent now known as Australia in the *Tjukurpa*, a time before time. As Lawlor (1991, p. 5) shares ‘Aborigines did not have any words in any of the languages for time or possession’. Time, space, the internal and external world are all integrated and exist in a cycle of energy that relates to everything in it. *Wandjinas* came to Earth during the *Tjukurpa* or creation time many thousands of years ago to leave the Law and our *Tjukurpa* sacred

---

35 *Nulla nulla* – a fighting instrument made of wood somewhat like a club.
knowledge in the land. This is a period of timelessness and in our own way we do not measure our lives via time. This is a western construct brought with colonisation. Thus, the Songlines are timeless and exist for time immemorial.

As the *Wandjina* travelled on the magnetic energy grid lines of the Earth they sang the Law and our way of being into our *Iwara*. These magnetic grid lines, known to us as Songlines, hold *Ngungynateea* together. We see the Ancestor Beings as completely pure and positive in their energy and they were able to create such powerful energy in the *Iwara* that the memory and practice of following this way, still exists the same way as when it was created. They imbued the *Iwara* with the energy of *Tjukurpa* Law and the way of being for Aboriginal people all along the *Iwara*. Through our practice of following them and the Laws they gave us, the energy in the Songlines would sustain that energy, knowledge and that memory for thousands of years and generations.

Barbara Tjikatu one of my research storytellers, a Pitjanatjarra Elder and Traditional Owner of Uluru Kata Tjuta, spoke of how the Songlines traverse the entire continent and connect with each other via Uluru. In our cultural relationships, Tjikatu is my grandmother. When sharing this with me, she drew a picture in the sand showing me what this looked like (B. Tjikatu, Interview, 13 August 2012). I understood then the significance of Uluru’s sacredness and connection to all the language clan groups. Uluru is the most sacred site for Aboriginal peoples. It stands on the lands of the Anangu Pitjanatjarra in the central desert of Australia, close to the South Australian border. Tjikatu continued to explain that each clan has their own *Iwara* that relate to their group and Country and that all the *Iwara* connect this way. This knowledge has been passed down for millennia.

...we sing the songs of the *Iwara*...we sing them...this looks after *Tjukurpa* and *Inma*. We sing up Country...we hold *Tjukurpa* this way.... Always (B. Tjikatu, Interview, 12 August 2014).
Kummunara Randall, another Anangu Elder and storyteller for this research describes the Songlines as *dreaming tracks* across the land. He talks about the connectedness of all Aboriginal people in the country through these dreaming tracks:

> The dreaming tracks crisscross all of this country, from east to west, and south to north, and every other direction from the middle of the continent. So, you can see that these energy lines, all the way from Central Australia, are right across the continent. What keeps the spirit – *kurunpa* alive is the *Kanyini*, the unconditional love and responsibility towards all things. (Randall 2003, p. 21).

Aboriginal spiritual belief is described by the Anangu as the *Tjukurpa* meaning the belief system as described below.

### 2.6.3 *Tjukurpa* – The Belief System


We learnt from our grandmothers and grandfathers and their generation. We learnt well, and we have not forgotten. We’ve learnt from the old people of this place, and we’ll always keep the *Tjukurpa* in our hearts and minds. We know this place – we are *ninti*, knowledgeable (Traditional Owner speaking to National Parks 2011).

The *Tjukurpa* encompasses all the knowledge of culture, Law. *Tjukurpa* is the sacred business. Our whole way of life, governance, society, relationship, families and community structures, education system and cultural way of life stands on the *Tjukurpa*. ‘Just as a house needs to stand on strong foundations, so our way of life stands on *Tjukurpa*’ (B. Randall, Interview, 12 August 2013). Randall describes this in the knowledge his Anangu Elders taught him:

*Tjukurpa* gave us a strong sense of ‘our-ness’, I see myself as an integrated part of the whole universe. In the ours-ness, I am related in many different ways to everything in front of
me, around me and about me…I feel as if I am all of it. We have no kings, queens, headmen or boss people who put themselves up as special and expect everyone to treat them differently. We all give freely of our gifts and everything we have wherever and whenever it is required…the less fortunate would always be cared for (Randall 2003, p. 13).

Although we have diverse languages and clan groups across the continent, we have a similarity of values, concepts, stories of creation and the *Tjukurpa* that bind us as one group of ‘Indigenous’ peoples. This can be seen through the evidence and stories of the creation, the *Tjukurpa* – dreaming and oral history:

In our memories of the creation time, or Dreaming, the Ancestors travelled across the country, hunting, making camp, collecting and gathering food and being in the world, shaping the landscape and sharing the Law. They slept and dreamed, had adventures and made our animal brothers and sisters, whilst living life on our land and the plants. Everything in our lives today were created at the same simultaneous time by the actions and dreaming’s of our Ancestors. When they had finished they retired to the earth and sky but left their presence in the potency within all they had created (Lawlor 1991, p. 15).

We hold the creation stories, and the symbols, ceremonies, stories of the creation Ancestors in our *knowing* of the dreaming, the creation time and we pass them down from generation to generation. According to Lawlor, ‘every day is lived in remembrance of the day when a place and its creatures first came into being’ (Lawlor 1991, p. 17). The dreaming stories are known by everyone and are common to all Aboriginal people. Lawlor (1991, p. 17) explains ‘the goal of life was to preserve the earth, as much as possible, in its initial purity’.

In Aboriginal cosmology, the spiritual ancestry of each person is interwoven with the birds, insects, animals, and plants through lineages extending back to the dreamtime. (Lambert 1993, p. 124).

---

36 Here, ‘knowing’ has a deeper meaning than just understanding knowledge but more like *knowing* in the context of a deeper spiritual space and deep listening
Aboriginal Elders have the role of sharing and caring in culture, this is a deep relationship of waiting for the learner to ask the questions and then sharing and mentoring the learner on a spiritual journey of transformation.

Lawlor continues:

The death-rebirth cycle is the Dreamtime law, a universal triadic code of creation, preservation, and destruction, inbuilt in the childbearing, nursing, and menstrual cycles of women (Lambert 1993, p. 124).

Anangu Elder Kummunara Randall shared this knowledge with the world in his writings:

We do not separate the material world of objects we see around us, with our ordinary eyes, and the sacred world of creative energy that we can learn to see with our inner eye. For us, these are always working together, and we learn how to see and hear in this inner way from a young age...as a child, I lived in a home without walls. These stars were the ceiling of my house and the earth was the floor. The horizon was just the entrance to another bedroom, nothing separated me from the wind, the heat and the cold, or the sounds of the birds and insects that lived in my Country...this landscape and everything in it was my intimate family (Randall 2003 p. 3).

Our way of being is completely different to the western Eurocentric worldview,

...it took me a while to understand that white people do not experience the world this way...we work through ‘feeling’ when we use this word in this way we are talking more about what white people call intuitive awareness.... we use this to feel out situations, to read people and to talk to Country... (Randall 2003, p. 3).

For him the Tjukurpa was called the Dreaming that joined both worlds of ordinary reality and creative forces and it is not just of this time and place. Kummunara Randall shared that it was not something they dreamt about in their heads, but ‘it is our knowledge of creation itself; past, present and future’ (Randall 2003, p. 4).

Tjukurpa is called ‘dreaming’ because it joins the worlds of ordinary reality and creative forces and because it is not just of this time and place...it is our knowledge of creation itself: past, present and future...once we drew our paintings on the
sand as part of the ceremonies by which we passed on the deepest knowledge of the *Tjukurpa*... after the ceremonies, these sand paintings were dissolved into space, scattered in to the wind, the knowledge now part of us, informing every aspect of how we lived our lives, in our relationship to one another, to Country and to the mysteries of creation itself underpinning all of these are the deeper stories of our links to ancestral creation, the vibrating hum of existence that is recorded in the Dreaming tracks and in our sacred sites...Everything is intimately connected. (Randall 2003, p. 3).

The *Tjukurpa* is recorded in paintings to remind us of the deep connection to Earth, the past, the history, the Ancestors and the stories of our creation and cultural knowledge and Laws. The *Tjukurpa* stories are painted on the body for ceremonial gatherings and it is how we record, teach and educate our children:

In Aboriginal culture, our knowledge is kept alive and passed down through Inma, the epic song cycles of the *Tjukurpa* which are sung, dance and painted, vividly imprinting them in our minds and every cell of our being. Everything we were taught, we remembered. We had no books or tape recorders, so our minds were trained to remember everything...thus, the Songman of Aboriginal culture was historian, teacher and entertainer and this continues in the modern world through those of us who, like me, have become songwriters and performers (Randall 2003, p. 5).

The belief that the sacred business of life is sustained in relationship with four other important things in our world (see Fig. 2.1) is a concept that Kummunara Randall shared with me during our yarning:

The *Tjukurpa* or Sacred Business is sustained in our relationships with three other elements. *Kurunpa* – the Soul, Spirit or Self in relationship with *ngura* – land/Country, *waltja* – family. This is the way in which one can live in *Kanyini* – harmony and unconditional love with all around us. The *Kanyini* principle applied in my life means that I relate in harmony with myself, my family and my Country and this sustains my *Tjukurpa* – my belief system or spiritual sacred life (B. Randall, Interview, 12 December 2012).

Elders symbolically provide the protective circle of knowledge for the community. In the Circle, men would be on one side and women the other, to denote the
complementary relationship between the genders as two parts of the whole. The accepted Elders would be the outer Circle as protectors and observers. In the centre is always the consciousness of being connected to Biaime the Higher Being, the Self as spirit, the relationships with family, land, Country and the Tjukurpa as central to dialogue and decision making.

![Diagram showing the relationship of four elements](image)

**Fig. 2.2 The relationship of four elements (Source: Oral History, T. Goreng Goreng)**

As one progresses in wisdom, age and knowledge more secret and sacred aspects of culture are shared with you, so that you may teach, hold responsibility for, and pass on knowledge to those who come after you. Aboriginal culture is often described by Aboriginal leaders as a ‘pure democracy’ meaning that no one person is in charge. There is no chief or King or Queen. The Elders share the leadership as both men and women have responsibility for growing up children, teaching and caring for Country under the Tjukurpa. The community structure is circular in nature with everyone included from young children to the adult teachers to Elders. Elders are considered the leaders, in the social, political, cultural and spiritual sense. They guide and protect and are responsible for upholding the Law, governance and value system. Elders are drawn in the Fig. 2.3 as protectors located in the outer circle of the community, and
when people come together the Elders usually sit around the outside. The remembrance of the *kurunpa*-soul is in the centre with Biaime, and each circle denotes a movement between age groups as one progresses through each rite of passage eventually to the outer circle as an Elder.
Fig. 2.3 Circle of Elders – Journey to Eldership (Source: Oral History, T. Goreng Goreng)

The community Elders, men to the left and women to the right are always seated as the outer circle, providing protection, support, wisdom and justice. ‘Elders are invited to be Elders by their peers, they maintain harmony’ (B. Randall, Interview, 2 August 2012). This is what *Kanyini* means – *to be* the embodiment of the power of harmony and harmonising the self with everything around you so that you are full of love and peace. This is our definition of a *sacred leader*. Elders become this on the basis that they are humble, in their thoughts, words and actions. They are good teachers, they resolve conflict and create unity and cooperation. They are the embodiment of spiritual power, love and peace and they can teach others how to become that. When Martin (2002) talks about *ways of being, knowing and doing* I understand that she is talking not only about wisdom and knowledge but the spiritual way of *knowing, being and doing*. 
The relationships between people, adults and children are within the community structure as shown in Fig. 2.4. When a community meeting is held, people come together to discuss and make decisions about important governance issues, and at important ceremonial times, they sit within the Circle in a particular place and configuration. Children and young girls and boys under 12–14 years and prior to their puberty initiations are seated on the right side of the Circle with their teachers.

This is the foundational education system of Aboriginal personal development. Children are taught to follow and learn through repetition, observation and imitation from birth to around five years of age. Children are not disciplined by force; behaviour is changed with love and encouragement and they are shown how by their teachers. Women teach all the children, boys and girls until they go through their puberty ceremony. At five years children begin to learn the *Tjukurpa*, the stories, songs and dances, the lore and the Spiritual Laws that they must live by, teach and take responsibility for, and learn all they need to know to take care of Country and self until the puberty initiation. At puberty (12–14 for boys, 10–12 for girls) training in
becoming adult women and men begins as boys and girls are separated to learn with adult women and men respectively. Usually your Aunty becomes your mother in the case of girls; and your Uncle becomes your father, in the case of boys. Your grandfathers and grandmothers are your spiritual teachers. Children are selected for training in special areas such as medicine, based on their skills, qualities and abilities. Elders observe them and note how they are, and this then gives them an idea of what they need to teach. For example, some children may exhibit the qualities of being a good teacher, counsellor or medicine healer and so they will be encouraged on this path by their Elders.

This information fits with our stories of how we become human from spirit form, as we come from the *Tjukurpa* to the Earth and are born human, our system of learning supports our growth. We are taught the ways of being, knowing and doing, of our Spirit Ancestors and the life is then spent, learning from, observing and following our teachers and Elders - who are the embodiment of the Law and learning. We observe them and aim to become like them. They hold us and teach us, and we learn how to be leaders like them. As a person grows older through the ceremonies that mark the rites of passage from one development stage to another, the person moves onto a higher level of learning and they are open to the secret and sacred knowledge.\(^{37}\)

How child’s development and learning occur in a cycle of protection with your Elders and teachers is depicted in Fig. 2.5; it also indicates that learning and education is a lifelong process in Aboriginal life.

---

\(^{37}\) Secret and sacred knowledge in Aboriginal culture is revealed as a person moves through their learning and ceremonial life.
The foundational practices and laws that are part of every group’s ways of being, knowing and doing are shown in the following Fig. 2.6. These form part of the basic education and are a lifelong development process lived in action. These three laws of respect are; Respect and Honour yourself, Respect and Honour Others, Respect and Honour the land, our Earth. As they grow older children learn how to live them in daily life.
Much of the legal justice system is based on maintaining the harmony and balance of the energy in the environment, in the self and in relationships with others. If we act negatively, nature responds, as energy affects energy. Thus, *becoming and being* are part of our way of living in harmony with all things. There is an expectation that you will learn to practice these Laws throughout life and this takes you on your road to Eldership as you grow older and navigate the rites of passage to become *ninti*– full of knowledge. Ceremonies are often times when we commit to following Laws and become the embodiment of what we have learned from our Elder teachers.

### 2.6.4 The Kanyini Principle

I learnt about the *Kanyini* principle from Kummunara Randall one of the storytellers in this research. It describes our responsibility of unconditional love and maintenance of harmony with all things. In the 2006 film *Kanyini* Kummunara produced with the film director Melanie Hogan, *Kanyini* talks about the main principles on which it is situated and how Aboriginal people learn to practice and live it in their daily lives. The film won awards, nationally and internationally and this film became his legacy to the world when he passed away in 2015. In the film Kummunara shared the basis of his belief system and reason for being:
We were all bound by the Law of kanyini from the time of the Tjukurpa, the thread of connectedness, caring and responsibility that links waltja (family and kinship) kurunpa (spirit and soul in all things) and ngura (my Country or home) (Randall 2003, p. 14).

This main Law principle was diluted when people where forced off their Country and forced to give up their practices in accordance with their traditions. People forgot what was required of them. Kummunara Randall was taught Kanyini from his family in his early life and carried it with him throughout his life. It was the basis of his teachings with those who came to his cultural talks, workshops and he tried to live his life according to this principle. (B. Randall, Interview, 12 July 2013). In Kummunara’s story in Chapter Five I share how he continued to measure his practice in the law through living kanyini in his life.

Part of the impact of the Tjukurpa belief system is that it connects a person who is learning it and learning to practice it in their lives, to a spiritual relationship with themselves, others, the higher being Biaime, and the environment and people around them. It imbues within that person a knowledge and way of being that takes them beyond thinking only of themselves into a person that considers not only other people and the tasks, but also the impact of their personal behaviour, feelings and way of living on everything around them. In Anangu tradition the practice of Kanyini is a sacred practice where a person lives in harmony with their internal feelings, relationships with others and the land to such an extent that they ensure each moment, action and thought is based in maintaining that harmony. I suggest that this is a sacred practice imbued in a person because of their choice to live their spiritual cultural life in action.

2.7 The Road to Eldership

This research is about the road to Eldership of four storytellers. Elders are invited to become Elders by their peers and community because they are the embodiment of the Tjukurpa law in their ways of knowing, being and doing. In becoming Elder leaders, being ninti – knowledgeable is an important trait. For three of the storytellers in this
thesis, they describe the intergenerational connections of learning about Eldership from Elders who are not from their own Country and clan group. This may occur for a myriad of reasons, the most common one being that grandparents responsible for your spiritual and cultural life have passed away. These other Elders become teachers who, in relationship with you in your life, pass on knowledge and learning. I walked with, lived with, listened to and participated in cultural life with many different Elders and in particular those Anangu Elders written of in this thesis. I chose them because I know them, and they have inspired me with their vision and sacredness for 30 plus years. I observed them over time as being and becoming the embodiment of learning, growing into and living the Tjukurpa laws. In spending time with them for this thesis, I observed and recorded their journeys, as I investigated their personal developmental process to Eldership. I noted their emotional, mental, intellectual, spiritual, and cultural learning through their life stories shared with me during fieldwork on their countries.

The road to Eldership is a holistic journey to becoming Elder. In some Aboriginal language groups, such as the Barkindji, there may not be a specific process of becoming Elder. As Paul Collis, one of the storytellers in this research described it to me, ‘we do not call the older people Elders, this is a modern phenomenon’ (P. Collis, Interview 12 December 2014). Some say that this is a modern construct relating to age that has come about as a result of the impact of colonisation. Calling older people Elders has become an accepted norm in today’s modern Aboriginal world and of course within the Anangu groups they still call old men Tjilpi, and older women minyima. These Elders are ‘senior Lawwomen and Lawmen’. In the modern Aboriginal communities of this century it is now an accepted term with the meaning that those in your community accept you as an Elder because you have survived into older age.

The impact of Elders in leadership roles means they hold positions of respect as senior men and women, as purveyors of justice, maintainers of Law and creators of songs and ceremonies. In these roles, they mentor and inspire others to become leaders and
they impact community through leading change. Other people may come from other clan groups to learn from them and pass this knowledge on. Through my research, I learned that Elders view their role to always live and teach the Law to ensure the succession legacy, so the young can become leaders and follow them. They have diverse roles in community, in teaching, counselling and mentoring, they impact the aspirational journeys of younger people and encourage community change and development as ‘visionary’ leaders. Generationally, Elders share their journey of becoming the spiritual embodiment of wisdom and practice in the daily life, through our observation of them, their sharing of story, song and dance and leading ceremony. Despite colonisation, the cultural and spiritual education in Aboriginal life still occurs. This journey involves people who have specific roles in community that have imbued meanings to younger Aboriginal people and within their families, community and clan groups. The journey that these people have undertaken marks them as Elder – leaders to other Aboriginal people as well as being recognised as leaders of wisdom and knowledge. Elders in the modern context are given the terms ‘Aunty and Uncle’ using these English terms to show respect. The experience of the other two younger research participants, myself and Dr Paul Collis is that, because our family Elders had passed away, we found Elders in the older generations who could share with us, teach us and take us through ceremony on our own roads to Eldership.

2.8 Conclusion

The process of colonisation and adaptation to the dominant culture has impacted many clans to such an extent that many do not have and are not taught this knowledge. For many, they could not learn or pass on this knowledge because of their circumstances. It is important to understand that in Aboriginal knowledge, all culture, Law, wisdom and knowledge still exists in the *Tjukurpa* and is never lost. However, the first, second and third waves of colonisation from the coastal regions to the central desert regions since 1788 has forced generations to lose touch with this knowledge and how to retrieve it. Because of the forced assimilation and integration policies, many of our people have to be and become like *nigloos* in order to be accepted in the dominant culture. Because many of us work in dominant culture systems and
bureaucracies and live in their cities and towns, we have learned to live and be as they are. Thus, when becoming leaders and managers we are encouraged to take the road of educational or practical leadership training and development based in and of white culture.

I set this chapter out as I did to give you, the reader, a sense of the depth of knowledge that still exists, that I have been able to learn in my lifetime, despite the impacts of colonisation, movement off Country and assimilation to western culture. The structures of our clan groups were to enable us to have a holistic education system that encompassed the *Tjukurpa* and enabled us to grow up children mentally, emotionally, culturally and spiritually to adulthood in a holistic way.

The next chapter sets out the literature relevant to this study and discusses all the topics of this research relating to Eldership, sacred and visionary leaders and their leadership in community transformation.
Chapter 3

Finding the Gap

Artwork 4 Two Way Holding Law Sharing Wisdom © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2017
This drawing tells of the many layers of reading, thinking, asking questions, sharing and holding the knowing in the centre of the study, then following the three Laws of Respect, of walking in the dirt on sacred land, of asking the Elders men and women of the Tjukurpa and on country for the wisdom, understanding and courage to move forward. As the knowledge flows through the laws painted on the boards, my guiding Ancestral Beings, one female and one male, hold the information in the Law and then we write it down to flow like water so that the threads of the learning become a knowing clear and focused on what must be shared. Another layer talks of the layers in the literature review and the threads that draw them together over the next three chapters – the methodology and the stories. The other layer is how Ancestral beings watch over you when you are telling the proper story.
3.1 Introduction

This chapter identifies the literature relating to the topics of this research. This review covers Aboriginal leadership both in the past and in a contemporary context, and international and Australian studies of Indigenous leadership. The relevance of the theories of transformational leadership is explored, specifically Robert Kegan’s Constructive Development theory, commonly described as higher levels of thinking in leadership education, Erik Erikson’s Stages of Human Development, Family Systems theory and Adult Child Syndrome, acculturation, racism and identity, cultural representation and transformational community development. These theories are relevant to the study in examining the human developmental process to leadership (Eldership) in Aboriginal culture, arrested emotional development and the trauma from colonisation, as well as ongoing cultural issues for Aboriginal people which impact their ways of knowing, being and doing. Subsequent chapters will examine these processes in more detail.

Professor Robert Kegan’s (1984, 1992) theory of transformational leadership relating to higher levels of thinking (orders of consciousness) and the connection with human development and dysfunctional family systems are shared. Family systems theory is examined as it relates to generational dysfunctionality and trauma specifically and arrested development that can emerge from the process of being colonised and acculturated. Acculturation is examined as a process of traumatic adaptation that all the storytellers had to navigate to heal and recover their sacred selves. Continuing with this theme, the literature relating to problem families in ‘family of origin’ work is examined in order to explain arrested emotional development and support the evidence provided by the storytellers in their movement to sacred leadership. When Britain invaded the Australian continent, and made it a penal colony, they brought with them their racism, classism, culture, society, religion, war, military officers, value systems and way of life. We know from history that much of this could be considered dysfunctional in its nature – the policy of eugenics and the removal of children for generations, violence, oppression of other humans, imprisonment, slavery, emotional oppression of woman and children, inequality, religious persecution and political
oppression. Family Systems Theory writers such as Dr. Claudia Black (1987), John Bradshaw (1986) see the dysfunctionality in families of origin as a mirror of the dysfunctionality in society, cultures and systems. In addition to these topics I examine racism through the works of Franz Fanon (1952) and Aime Cesaire (1972) and cultural representation from authors such as Stuart Hall (1997).

The examination of this literature leads to finding the gap in the research which is about showing how ‘sacred’ leadership is acquired through navigating the stages of human development to higher levels of being, thinking and doing, within the Aboriginal cultural context and how culture contributes to healing from generational acculturation and colonialism, enabling a rise to higher levels of thinking. It leads to seeing that cultural healing and recovery enables Aboriginal people to grow beyond their generational trauma and lived trauma to become Elders and how those Elders impact those around them and inspire them to engage in community transformation.

The importance of this literature review is in sharing other literature to find the gap in Aboriginal Eldership as sacred leadership, learned within the cultural community and its importance to leadership education and development. The aim is to understand more fully how Aboriginal people develop on their roads to Eldership and how people become sacred Elders and inspire and motivate others. The understanding and knowledge of psychological growth, navigating the traumas of colonisation and the place of Aboriginal knowledge in cultural and human development is important to the discourse on leadership education, which is relevant to Indigenous people in Australia.

3.2 Aboriginal Eldership and Leadership

In the 1970s and 1980s I worked in the Executive Branch of the Aboriginal Development Commission (ADC); in the National Aboriginal Conference (NAC); the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, the Trade Commissioner Service; the Department of Industry and Resources, Defence; and other Commonwealth...
Departments. During those 12-plus years I had the opportunity to work with many senior leaders and executives, eventually becoming a manager and senior executive myself. I worked with the Chairs and Commissioners of the NAC and the ADC, Aboriginal people elected by Aboriginal people to represent them in Canberra and provide advice and political advocacy to Government. Working with Charlie Perkins, Paddy Dodson, Peter Yu, Lowitja O’Dongohue, Heather Sculthorpe, Kate George, Josie Crawshaw, Michael Mansell, Neville Bonner, Pat O’Shane, Bob Weatherall, Maureen Watson, Kevin Gilbert and many senior Lawmen and Lawwomen from around the country, I was exposed to a range of Indigenous leaders. I saw leaders of all sorts, sizes, backgrounds and value systems. They led the political rights movement, they talked of our aspirations, loudly and clearly and were people we all looked to for our leadership. The thread that stayed with me was the way in which our leaders held onto their humility, integrity, and cultural system in all their interactions. I was very close to many of them and also to a range of politicians, parliamentarians and Prime Ministers because of the political and social circles I lived and worked in. I was interested in my own leadership development and observed others with reflection. I was inspired by these early leaders I came in contact with. One of the threads I saw in these leaders was their ability to motivate and inspire people to follow them. This is an aspect of transformational leadership which measures itself by the number of people who follow and engage with the leader. The Aboriginal leaders stood out because of their capacity to think of the whole, not just themselves. I rarely saw ego, in contrast with the non-Indigenous leaders I encountered. Looking back, it was the cultural aspect, the cultural identity and the knowledge that you were a leader on the shoulders of many in your community who needed you to be there for them. This set the Aboriginal leaders apart from the non-Aboriginal ones. Aboriginal leadership is different to non-Aboriginal leadership and this is noticeably so when we examine the early colonial observations of Aboriginal leaders.
3.2.1 Early Colonial Observations

W.H. Edwards (1987) writing about Aborigines and his observations of their leadership in Leadership in Aboriginal Society cites the early Australian explorer, Edward John Eyre reporting in his Journals of 1888 that ‘age produced influence, although the leading men were those in the 45–60 years age bracket, rather than the very elderly. Respect and deference increased when a man possessed the attributes of strength, courage, energy, prudence and skill’. (Edwards 1987, p.154)

Another early explorer, C.G. Tiechelmann, (cited in Edwards 1987, p.154) supported Eyre’s position about Aboriginal leadership he observed. ‘Elders were the leaders, but the only subordination was that of women to men. They were accustomed to living independently and to be their own masters.’ (Tiechelmann, cited in Edwards 1987, p.154) Similarly, John Fraser, writing of the NSW Aborigines in 1982 stated:

the affairs of each section of a tribe are administered by several Elders, among whom one man is considered the leader or chief because of his superior knowledge, wisdom and influence...This Elder man referred to a council, which sat in a circle at a distance from the camp and decreed punishments and decided causes brought before it (Fraser 1892, cited in Edwards, 1987 p.157).

In the same text, Brough Smyth referred to the ‘head of a tribe who was advised by a council of old men.’ In observing the women, he stated briefly, ‘the old women could also exert some influence’ (Smyth 1876, cited in Edwards, 1987 p. 158). Unfortunately, these early white men did not observe Aboriginal women and older Aboriginal women, as they did men. They seemed to have viewed Aboriginal people through the lens of their patriarchal class-structured society brought from England. Thus, Aboriginal women are written about infrequently in these early writings. This is an important loss when writing of Aboriginal Eldership in our modern, complementary, gender equal society in Australia. It means that people misunderstand the equality and complementarity of Aboriginal men and women in Aboriginal society and that Aboriginal gender structures were different to western society.
In his observations of the Kurnai peoples, Howitt referred to ‘associate authority with both age and exceptional qualifications such as intelligence, cunning and bravery. There was no hereditary authority’ (Howitt 1880 cited in Edwards pps.211-212).

Ronald and Catherine Berndt, (1942) referred to:

…[the]camp headman or boss; he holds his position by full membership in his cult lodge, his amiability to all camp fellows, his having the welfare of the camp at heart, and his erudite knowledge of totemic law and mythology (Berndt & Berndt 1942, p. 156).

In his study of leadership in the Northern Territory, Ivory (2008, p. 235) reflects:

…that these early constructs of Indigenous leadership were often based on European military and institutional paradigms as well as past colonial encounters with natives elsewhere...there was a yearning amongst British settlers and observers for visible structures of government, clear hierarchies of power and authority, plus written laws.

Early explorers, observers and social anthropologists made their interpretations and conclusions about the structures of the diverse Aboriginal clan groups they encountered from their own backgrounds, knowledge and experience. Having no prior experience of Aboriginal people of the Australian continent one can only assume that their interpretations were based on their existing notions of civilisation and society. What is interesting in these writings from early colonial history is the absence of information about the role of women, kinship relationships, and the structure and complexity of Aboriginal groups. It is obvious, given what we now know of Aboriginal people that they made their observations quickly, and did not do in-depth studies of the people they were choosing to annihilate or use in their quest to colonise their lands. These colonial perspectives made it impossible for these observers, coming from a Victorian patriarchy, to see the role of women as complementary in Aboriginal leadership. One of the differences is the cultural aspect of Aboriginal life and how Aboriginal society was structured to teach and bring up children to become adults through a development system with ceremonial rites of passage that imbued the value system and Laws of the *Tjukurpa* into each person subject to it.
3.2.2 Cultural and Ceremonial Development

A.P. Elkin (1977, p. 3) noted that ‘Aboriginal life is a life of progress’:

On approaching puberty, the young male...‘dies’ to the former life of childhood and of ignorance of esoteric knowledge and ‘rises’ or is ‘reborn’ to a new life. The latter is not merely in adult life, for which he has been disciplined and instructed, it is much more: it is a life of knowledge and power. At the end of the ritual journey with its trials, loneliness, ‘death’ and revelations, and rejoicing, he can say, whereas previously I was blind to the significance of the seasons, of natural species, of heavenly bodies, and of man himself, now I begin to see, and whereas before I did not understand the secret of life, now I begin to know (Elkin 1977, p. 4).

Throughout the cultural life there is a series of initiation ceremonies – this occurs with both men and women. In these ‘secret’ encounters the person ‘is shown sacred symbols, goes through secret ceremonies and sacred rites, hears sacred chants and is given knowledge of the significance and wonder of what they have seen and heard’ (Elkin 1977, p. 4). People often experience visions, intuitive dreaming and sacred connections with the Ancestral beings during these encounters. I had two such encounters during ceremonies, the first when I was 21 years old and the second when I was 45 years. I saw visions of Ancestral Beings, was given sacred information and told of my sacred purpose for being. The first occurred during a ceremony held with Elders in the mountains when we attended a night-long corroboree and spent a week with Elders learning traditional dance, attending ceremonies and learning songs. The second was when I was older and journeyed on country as part of a ceremony of initiation and healing which enabled me to integrate the trauma suffered as a child and heal completely. This Inma ceremony was also about moving into my own adulthood, leaving behind the childhood and becoming. During this time, I entered into a deep contemplative space. I was sent out on country, I slept under the stars and experienced visions of Ancestors and Elders. At the end of this time I sat with those Elders who sent me and was asked a series of questions about my experiences. After this we celebrated, and I was painted by Elder women and danced in the circle with them.
This is demonstrated by Elkin’s (1977, p. 5) observations:

…the function and purpose of these rituals are complex. They serve to strengthen in all present the realisation of the *Tjukurpa* and the presence and power of its heroes. They also dramatically remind and impress everyone present with all the sanctity and authority of traditional tribal behaviours…and in some cases, they are believed to cause the natural species to increase…so that man may live. In addition to these effects, they create and maintain the unity of emotion, thought and action; they renew sentiments that make for social continuity and cohesion; and so, they bring about a highly desirable condition of social well-being and individual certainty and courage.

I was given the medicine and power of a *ngungkari*\(^{38}\) and felt myself enter into a higher state of being. This was evident on my return to my normal world when I began to perform medicine healings on my friends and others who were ill. I noticed a heightened ability to heal through my hands and an intuitive sense and ability to connect to Ancestral beings in the *Tjukurpa* which had not occurred before. These *Wandjina* Beings would come when I was giving medicine and work in the energy to heal. I can only describe this as a powerful sacred energy which they bring and use. For me this is a sacred way of being. Elkin (1977, p. 7) writes:

…how life’s problems are met sometimes by magic, sorcery and psychic powers, including hypnotism, clairvoyance, mediumship, telepathy, telesthesia and the conquest of space and time…to the Aborigine there is nothing extraordinary about gaining information from these sources.

Elkin (1977, p. 7) notes that ‘when interacting with these phenomena one can always consult a specialist if one is in doubt, these specialists are known as *kadaicha* or *karadji* – men of high degree’. Men and women of high degree are present in every clan and the tradition of growing them up into adulthood and their power has continued since time immemorial and to the present day despite colonisation. Elkin observed such

---

\(^{38}\) *ngungkari* is a traditional Aboriginal medicine practitioner.
men in his study into men of high degree, describing these men as having ‘outstanding personalities’ (Elkin 1977, p. 7).

You could always tell a medicine-man (*walemira*) by the intelligent look in his eyes,’ two Wiradjuri informants told R.M. Berndt, ‘and great ones were enveloped in a peculiar atmosphere which caused people to feel different (Elkin 1976, p. 10).

Elkin describes important traits as including:

having passed through the ritual experience of being made, has been admitted to a special body of esoteric magic and psychic lore, has been taught insight into the working of peoples, minds, they learn from their teachers and from observation the signs or symptoms of illnesses. Others are that they claim power to predict or control natural phenomena and in the cases in which the clever men claim psychic powers and are expected to practice them, they have learned by instruction and practice how to do so; for example, how to interpret dreams, how to ascertain what is happening at a distance, or how to make those present ‘see’ or believe that they, the ‘doctors’ are moving through the air (Elkin 1977, p. 12).

He continues:

they are recognised by their tribe or community as possessing the power to outwit malign spirits and persons to control the elements, to have foreknowledge of an enemy’s approach and to keep pestilence away from the camp (Elkin 1977, p. 12).

Elkin speaks at length of his research across Australia with a multitude of tribes and medicine-clever men. He notes how they are ‘made’ in great detail and speaks of their skill in the spirit psychic world and in the normal world. These men are made through special events, encounters, tests and ceremonies after many years of learning, training and guidance, but come with skills noted by Elders in terms of ‘a gift’, a wish or desire to be so and an inheritance from other family members who are men of high degree already. Even though Elkin focuses on men in his study, similar processes occur for women and in the central desert where my Elder storytellers reside they are considered *ngungkari*, and senior Law people. Barbara Tjikatu, one of my research
storytellers, is considered a woman of high degree, coming from a family of *ngungkari* with daughters and granddaughters who are also *ngungkari*, and she is a leader in ceremonial Tjukurpa Law. Each of these women are involved in healing via Aboriginal Health Services and practice their craft within their families and communities.

Whilst in the central desert I had the experience of being in the presence of the men and women of high degree as described by Elkin and noted that they had special powers which are recognisable as different to other Elders. Both Kummunara Randall and Barbara Tjikatu were part of this group, both *ngungkari* and healers. These people are treated with a special respect when they come into communities - as some tend to live away from the general populace: ‘this is common practice of medicine doctors and *kadaicha*’ (B. Randall, Interview, 12 August 2013).

An example of their intuitive capacity follows. In 2013 whilst sitting with Kummunara I was asked to go over to Uncle Rolly’s home and collect him for some discussion. I returned to Kummunara’s house and sat with them whilst they talked. At first it was of basics such as buying a car and finding a way to travel to South Australia to pick it up and then it turned to more important events. At the end of this discussion I was aware that there was a deep silence and I could feel an energy coming from Uncle Rolly to me. I felt it as a psychic rush and then noticed that Kummunara was looking at me as if he knew what this communication was about. I asked him, is there something I have to do? And he said, ‘yes, the old man wants to return to his house, but the car is gone so how will you arrange it as you brought him here, you have to take him back.’ I didn’t know how as there was no car, so Kummunara said to me ‘call Johnny and he will bring the car.’ At that moment Johnny arrived at the front gate in the car before I could even call him and said he had come to pick up Uncle Rolly. I asked him if he knew the old man needed a ride home. And he said to me, ‘yes I felt him tell me in my mind, so I came over from the office’. Uncle Rolly was a senior Lawman to Kummunara and one he looked up to and always deferred to as a man of higher knowledge. Uncle Rolly is a tracker, actor, famous painter and storyteller as
well as a senior cultural Lawman living at Mutitjulu near Uluru, his traditional country.

I know that Uncle Rolly was a man of high degree and one of the Elders who took younger men through initiation ceremonies. His role was one of sacred leader and when talking about levels in sacred levels of thinking, he was definitely one who had moved into higher sacred levels because of his training, knowledge and way of being. One could feel it in his presence, in his silences, and in the way he would steer a discussion at any meeting. Others deferred to him and when he said something this was usually the final say about a matter. His painting of the Seven Sisters below at Artwork 5, is how he as an Anangu painter and senior man interprets that famous story from their telling of it. The Seven Sisters story is common across Australia and each clan that tells the story tells it in their own way. The story shares the values and principles it teaches. The importance of always following the Tjukurpa is its foundation. I have learned it as the story of the seven main women who birth the people of Ngungyntee and Biaime our creator being.
Understanding the positions of Elders in communities can be found by looking further into research of Indigenous leadership in the last 20–30 years. So now I examine some of those studies of Australian and international Indigenous leadership through more contemporary research.

3.2.3. Contemporary Research

In their study of oral history and leadership in a rural NSW Aboriginal community, Milliken and Shea (2007) describe Aboriginal leadership and Eldership thus:

Indigenous leadership is not a hereditary process. It is a process that occurs when the need arises. Elders do not have to be old. They are not elected. They simply come about in an idiosyncratic Aboriginal way...Elders are not challenged. They may not always be listened to, but they will be respected by the fact of their being Elders. Their opinions will count in decision-making. Their skills will be valued, their contribution sought after, their involvement with much of the community decision-making will be directly and indirectly canvassed. Elders will be approached individually or as a group and their acquiescence to a decision will often be the deciding factor in whether a direction will be taken. Part of their strength in community is their vast network and contact with many service providers and other community and family groups (Milliken & Shea 2007, pps. 300–301).

In recording their research with this Elders39 group for an oral history of their lives, the region and impact on the community, Milliken and Shea (2007, p. 301) describe their ideas further:

Elders bring a shared values base that is culturally focused and a cultural norm that says simply – we are Aboriginal... [As leaders] their policy and procedures and processes developed have been carefully thought through and stand firmly on a clear understanding of what it means to be Aboriginal in its many guises (Milliken & Shea 2007, p.301).

39 For this thesis, the word Elder is used to denote someone who is spoken of and considered an ‘Elder’ older wise person and therefore a leader within their family community group. The word is used with a capital E to denote respect for them.
In this local community, ‘there is a mutual trust of and by the Elders in the community and there is a strong two-way commitment’ (Milliken & Shea 2007, p. 301), by those Elders to their community. As leaders in the community, there is ‘an acknowledgement that Elders bring a lived experience to their decision making and community engagement’ (Milliken & Shea 2007, p. 301).

Bill Ivory (2009) discusses a male model of leadership development he observed in the community at Wadeye (formerly known as Port Keats), in the Northern Territory and reflects on how literature is focused on Aboriginal leadership:

> Despite the extensive literature on leadership, there are still inadequacies in terms of what can be observed in Indigenous Australia. These functions of leadership are overly structuralist and orientated heavily toward the role of leaders in organisations and companies (Ivory 2009, p. 43).

Ivory shares his findings and develops a model of Aboriginal leadership from a male perspective. This model shows ‘how male individuals are nurtured from an early age and eventually transformed into leaders’ (Ivory 2009, p. 127). He discusses the role of key facilitators on this nurturing journey as individuals, family and clan groups. Ivory (2009) notes ‘markers of transition include age as well as physical and psychosocial development’. (Ivory 2009, p.127) He divides the Port Keats leadership journey into four stages – ‘look after, grow up, make a man, and being offered and accepting responsibility’ (Ivory, 2009, pps. 127-129). He talks about the ‘great man’ or pulen ngala - and why such men were considered great, based on these traits ‘a business man, Law man and sorcerer, or a strong man, a fair man, a man who would give you a hand and a proper business man, a good fighting man’ (Ivory, 2009, p.133). Ivory further explains that a pulen ngala would ‘give a good example of leadership – no showing off, no mucking about, a real man’ (Ivory, 2009, p. 133). Thus, Ivory describes in detail the nurturing of leaders by other leaders, the importance of Country and knowing all the business of Country. Ivory relates stories of how men would be nurtured such as this one of Felix Baunduck relating how his father, Nym Baunduck, nurtured him:
That old man would say, don’t go silly, don’t go anywhere wrong, don’t leave that person alone, go visit him. He was telling me the good things like, ‘get a spear, go to the saltwater’ and I did it, I followed him. Nobody feeding me, I went myself; it’s through actions...like hunting and following. He was a real man (Ivory 2009, p. 134).

Ivory notes that ‘at an appropriate time, a person develops and then begins to acquire leadership responsibilities to his extended family and his clan’ (Ivory 2009, p.134). Kummunara Randall said when I asked him about leadership development, ‘in most communities I am aware of people being grown up into becoming Elders or leaders, and of designated rites of passage into adulthood and leadership’. Further he confirmed:

progression to Eldership is based on understanding the Law, trustworthiness, knowledge of the teachings and practices, the ability to have a moral compass relating to right and wrong, how the person conducts themselves per their age, and the congruence of the thoughts, words and actions (B. Randall, Interview, 6 March 2013).

Ivory goes on to say that ‘Indigenous leadership at Port Keats at the highest level can be likened to the notion of executive directors’ (Ivory 2009, p.137). Ivory notes that Nelson Mandela defined his favoured style of leadership as leading ‘like a shepherd from behind and ensuring consensus’. (Ivory 2009, p.137) Ivory writes that similar leadership in the Wadeye male leaders where meetings always being resolved by consensus. He goes on to state that at Port Keats,

there are three basic layers of leadership; leadership emanating from descent to country, kinship and personal rights and traits. Certain individuals may progress in prowess to a higher level based on ceremonial knowledge and other factors (Ivory 2009, p. 136).

The connections in Ivory’s thesis of how male leaders are made in Port Keats (Wadeye) and the existence of ‘higher levels of leadership’ that appear in his study resonate with my own research. Through recording the stories of my participants, who speak for
thousands of years of tradition as well as for themselves, suggests similarities to Kegan’s work in higher levels of thinking (Kegan 1982). In Chapter Five through telling the stories of Anangu Elders I write of their participation in human development, *Inma* or ceremony as rites of passage, of lifelong training and supervision on the road to Eldership. Ivory also found evidence of higher order leadership in his research with Indigenous Elders at Wadeye and the parallels with Kegan’s theories that relate to ‘higher consciousness that produces sacred leaders’ is evident. Ivory (2009, p. 253) notes ‘that leadership development begins at an early age and builds over time’. His case studies ‘highlight the importance of ceremonial knowledge, and its continuation, plus education and the importance of networks’ (Ivory 2008, pps. 252–253). Ivory’s research evidences a form of leadership which has:

…inherited and acquired responsibility of looking after and working for others, which is reproduced by being born on country and having relationships with kin and by individual development within complex personal and group networks (Ivory 2008, pps. 252–253).

Ivory (2008, pps. 252–253) notes that ‘leaders not only have to be born to lead, they also have to build up and maintain their respect’.

Brian McCoy (2008) in his book *Holding Men: Kanyirninpa and the Health of Aboriginal Men* reflects on the complexity of the way in which young Aboriginal men are ‘held’ and nurtured and he also mentions one of my storytellers:

That day, when I first picked up the marble and considered the Puntu use of the Kukatja word ‘*kanyirninpa*’, translated by the English word ‘holding’, proved the beginning of many further reflections and discussions. Not only did I discover that Puntu use the word *kanyirninpa* in many different contexts, I realised as well that they perceive it as key to understanding *walytja* (family) and relationships. *Kanyirninpa* is deeply embedded in desert life and values. Puntu also believe its absence helps to explain some of the social problems currently being experienced by young men. Myers discussed the concept of *kanyirninpa* in his work with the Pintupi in the early 1970s (Myers 1986) and Bob Randall
discusses the concept in his book *Songman* (McCoy 2008, p. 18).

McCoy (2008, p. 19) suggests that young men’s lives are vulnerable in a world that is changing fast:

That an understanding of *kanyirninpa*\(^{40}\) (one of the key values that has sustained Aboriginal desert life for centuries) may provide the hope of change and better health for all. It also offers insights for all who wish to ‘grow up’ their young people.\(^{41}\)

For the Pintupi that McCoy writes about this word has ‘many contextual meanings’ but most importantly for his work:

It is about the sacred relationship and moral order of nurturing and taking care of the cultural spiritual, emotional and psychological growth of young men by older men in the Law (McCoy 2008, p. 18).

McCoy goes on to say:

That it relates to all people and is especially important in the ceremonial nurturance that occurs throughout the life cycle. The absence of it is noted by these communities when young men do not have it and he says it contributes to a range of youth social problems (McCoy, 2008, p.19)

The anthropologist Fred Myers (1986) ‘maintained that *kanyininpa* derived from those ritual occasions when older men mediated the authority of the *Tjukurpa* at ceremony time’ (Myers 1986, cited in McCoy 2008, p. 20). In Aboriginal communities where leadership was studied by Ivory and McCoy, the journey has been noted as a holistic human, cultural and spiritual development process in which young people grow to be accepted leaders in their family and community groups under the tutelage, education and training of their Elders and Elder teachers. As Kummunara Randall explained, ‘as they become older they are seen to be wise and knowledgeable in the

---

\(^{40}\) Means ‘holding’ in a spiritual, mental, cultural and emotional sense.

Law and some are then invited by Elders to join them in the Elders circle’ (B. Randall, Interview, March 2012). Kummunara Randall describes Elder leaders as people:

who show a high level of competence in their knowledge and practice of cultural heritage matters, management of natural resources, ceremonial and customary Law, traditional ownership of land, and their environment. They lead cultural ceremonial business, women or men’s business and they can teach and share this knowledge in a collaborative way within their family community group. They create unity and bonding and are looked up to for guidance and wisdom in relation to community decisions and future actions (B. Randall, Interview, March 2012).

In her writings, Pat Mamanyjum Torres (2006) talks of her ‘nurturing and caring roles as a woman, a mother, and as a member of an extended Indigenous family’ (Torres 2006 p. 19). Torres says of her role as a cultural diplomat internationally and nationally, sharing her Indigenous knowledge system of the Yawuru, ‘means that my children and others grow up with strong, positive images about themselves as Indigenous Australians, (Torres 2006, p. 20) and ‘that others outside of my cultural space get to understand some aspects of the diversity and richness of Indigenous Australian cultures’ (Torres 2006, p. 20).

She goes on to talk of her ‘perspective as a ngarrangu jarndu an Indigenous woman as having been carefully formed by close relationships with extended matrilineal families, ties to land, people and country and ancestral knowledge of language, culture, history and spirituality’ (Torres 2006, p. 25). Her country of the Yawuru is in Broome and the wider peninsula region of northern Western Australia. She confirms that the teachings of her ‘Yawuru, Jabirrjabirr, Nyikina and Bardi Elders is that the Bugarri-garra – Dreaming Stories, are integral to their identity as the Indigenous people’ of that place. Torres specifically details how, when and through whom her knowledge as an Aboriginal traditional woman was learned, through her ‘old people, known to her as ‘Mimi, jalbi, jamuny’ (Torres 2006 p. 26) meaning grandparent or great grandparent. She talks of the love, the care, the welcoming hugs, women who held her ‘close to their hearts and shared the stories she needed to know and learn of
to become a strong woman of her country’ (Torres 2006 p. 26). In her family, the teachers of knowledge were ‘strong matriarchal mothers, grandmothers, aunties, Elders, sisters and female cousins’ (Torres 2006 p. 26). She says they taught her ‘the realities of being Yawuru’, of what linked her to ‘land, people, the cosmos, and spirituality, taught daily’ (Torres 2006 p. 26).

Torres, like many of her generation, is a product of the two-way education system of learning that we have been in since colonisation. From birth until she turned 15 she was taught the knowledge systems of her family, language, land and country. At 26 she went to a western Catholic secondary school and then on to University where she gained an ‘intensive western European derived education and two degrees’ (Torres 2006, p. 26). Torres says that her learning made her realise the importance of her own belief systems and ‘this was vital to reclaiming my identity and reaffirming my reality as an Indigenous person’ (Torres 2006, p. 27). She talks of realising that she was different from the dominant western culture, ‘because of my culture and my worldview’ (Torres 2006, p. 27). Torres used her education in western culture to ‘be involved in research, study and recording of the stories, poems, songs, storytelling and language revival including cultural business grounded on Yawuru soil’ (Torres 2006, p. 27).

Torres goes on to share how she advanced her ‘knowledge of her knowledge systems through initiation of her brother in the old way’, and her ‘mother’s link to women’s law and her part in those ceremonies’ (Torres 2006 p. 27). She talks of her feelings as a Yawuru woman, who (as Ivory similarly shares about the men he researched with) ‘was grown up, held, and made a woman and then offered and accepted responsibility’ (Torres 2006, p. 27). She writes of the direct relationship of Elder relations as the sharers and teachers of the Yawuru knowledge to her as a girl, a young woman and as the ones who took her and her brother through initiation to her eventually becoming a woman who became the same as her own Elder relatives. Torres had grown into an older woman who then, within a two-way world, did the same in her own community and in the wider non-Indigenous world nationally and
internationally. Torres participated in one of the last ceremonial rites enacted on Yawuru country and was affected by the ‘psychic and visionary energy’ of such practices. The sharing and passing on of knowledge systems learnt from Elders on country in the old way became linked with her western education to allow her to utilise both knowledge systems in a modern context of being an Elder passing on what was passed onto her. This is important as some three to four generations of Aboriginal people have been forcibly removed from country, language and ritualised practices necessary to learning the Tjukurpa in the proper way.

Fred Myers (1986) describes the relatedness of Pintubi society in order to maintain responsibility and harmony as, ‘older people took care of those who were younger’ and the nurturance of older people was authoritative in that their instructions and directions arose from a cosmic imperative’, (Myers 1986 cited in McCoy, 2008 p.20). He also describes Kanyininpa amongst the Pintupi he worked with as important to the responsibility and authority a person’s relatedness had to all things:

Kanyininpa provided a critically important social context for young people to experience autonomy with responsibility, nurturance with authority. The values that linked waltja (family), ngura (land) and tjukurpa (dreaming) were deeply reinforced as older people inducted a younger generation into a cosmic and meaningful world (Myers 1986 cited in McCoy 2008, p.20)

This sense of responsibility to all things on country is described by Kummunara Randall in the film Kanyini (2006) as a practice of living in harmony with responsibility for all living things (Randall, 2006)

In our culture becoming an Elder can be likened to being on a path of enlightenment, as the Buddhists say. It took 45 years for me to not be angry and know about being peaceful especially with things I’ve done in my life and the way people treated us (B. Randall, Interview, 22 June 2012).

In describing his emotional maturity, for Kummunara it was part of becoming older, wiser and an Elder. Managing thinking, feelings and actions is something that others observe in Elders or leaders of wisdom. For Kummunara, his life was about coming
to terms with what happened in his past and what his future as an older Aboriginal man was about, he always wanted to share culture and the idea of *Kanyini* – harmony with all things. He talked of many religious and spiritual paths that helped him ‘learn, change and grow in spiritual way’. Kummunara said that ‘one became Elder as they show in action, their qualities. This then leads to other Elders inviting someone to join them as Elder and from hearing community recognition of their qualities’ (B. Randall, Interview, July 2012).

Indigenous leadership and Eldership occurs around the world. For this research, it is important to look to other Indigenous nations and their ways of engaging in leadership, their thoughts of how it is developed and their own definitions of Eldership and how Elders and leaders occur in their societies. Thus, I look to Canadian First Nations, American Native and New Zealand Maori writers, academics and authors.

### 3.3 International Indigenous Leadership Studies

Indigenous Canadian, American First Nations and Maori peoples described Elders and Eldership in several texts, reports, books and theses. A Canadian First Nations definition of Elder is:

An elder is usually an older person and is defined by that within their communities amongst their peers, leadership, and community members. There is no age definition for an elder in First Nations communities, but they usually have attained the role of an elder by their knowledge, vision, life experiences, leading positive lifestyles, their practices and traditions within their communities. Their knowledge is also seen as a gift from the Creator and has the purpose of sharing it with others. Their roles are important in promoting harmony, respect, spiritual guidance, and their ability to respond to their community in times of need. The journey in becoming an elder is extensive and requires merit and acceptance from their communities. Elders
are highly regarded and should always be given respect in all circumstances.42

In several Indigenous traditions in the world the creation of Elders is linked to how they embody the teachings, knowledge in their lives. In writing of good leadership from a Maori perspective Katene (2010, p. 1) talks of:

transformational leadership models being evident throughout the history of Maori in Aotearoa whether that leadership was of a charismatic, religious, military or social-political nature. Traditional and contemporary Maori leadership has been characterised by leaders who shared a vision, a sense of mission and an agreed course of action, and who earned the respect, confidence and loyalty of their followers, as a group and individually, through their inspirational leadership.

Most Maori leadership is based around connection to clan, being leaders and relationship to government and other leaders. Katene (2010, p. 13) concludes what makes good Maori leadership:

…a good leader paints a picture of some identifiable vision that people have aspirations for and then focus on motivating, encouraging and supporting people to follow them and a mutually beneficial strategy toward achievement of the common vision. This is what a good leader has to do. Perhaps the primary characteristic of leadership….is the importance of transformation leadership and focusing on the vision, rather than the leader. While the leader is a valued member of any team it is the common vision that is most important.

In Maori culture, there are a number of classes of leadership, one of which is the tohunga or ritual leaders who Katene describes as ‘charismatic and mystical and endowed with a gift of divine grace’ (Katene 2010, p. 5). This is as close to the kadaicha in Aboriginal culture as I could find in the literature. Tohunga and kadaicha are considered to be people who are part of the spiritual or sacred path of life in both cultures and includes people who have a capacity beyond others and are thus

respected for it. In the literature of both cultures they are described as having followers and people follow them because of these qualities.

McNally (2009) shares at length the life cycle of the North American Ojibwe tradition: Eldership, respect, the sacred community and Elders as grandparents and teachers. He describes a song that one of the Elders taught others to sing. The Ojibwe text of the song was ‘simply repeated over and over’ and the translation was ‘children listen to elders’ (McNally 2009, p. 41). The Ojibwe ceremonial life centres on the circle and its ‘generative power as a visual cosmological symbol that concentrates everything in life from all four directions and is a powerful vehicle for prayer and exchange’ (McNally 2009, p. 56). McNally goes on to write of how the Ojibwe have a ‘metaphor of spatial passage over four hills to imagine the temporal passage through life, the hills corresponding to infancy, young childhood, youth, adulthood and old age’ (McNally 2009, p. 57). Writing of a study by anthropologist Jeffrey Anderson he shares Anderson’s observations that ‘life movement’ hinges on intergenerational exchanges of respect and deference for Elders’ gifts of knowledge and power. Anderson’s study with the Northern Arapaho shares an Elders knowing of life’s passages thus: ‘Childhood: the age of listening, Youth: the age of doing, Adulthood: the age of giving it back, and Old Age: the age of sacred learning’ (Anderson cited in McNally 2009, p. 60). As McNally describes Eldership he says something similar to what occurs in our Aboriginal communities, ‘although older people in Ojibwe communities are deserving of respect as elder, age alone does not determine one’s position as elder…eldership rests more firmly still on community recognition’ (McNally 2009, p.6).

Intuition plays an important role in women’s leadership in native Canadian communities. Voyageur (2011, p. 73) describes native women leaders:

...many commented that sometimes you just have to go with your gut when it comes to decision making. This means that women leaders feel intuition might be as important as logic or the rational decision-making process gained from
postsecondary education when dealing with the complexity of First Nations community issues.

The community watching and knowing about this person was important in her findings. ‘They would have watched her grow up and determined whether she has leadership qualities’ (Voyageur 2011, p. 74). Money and position were not the main considerations for choosing a women leader and like Aboriginal community leaders, they were asked to step up. ‘Most women leaders were approached by community members and asked to run for leadership positions, instead of putting themselves forward as a candidate’ (Voyageur 2011, p. 80). In terms of contemporary leadership expectation for women in native communities, Voyageur shares:

There is an emphasis on community healing as a means to counteract the ravages of the residential school system that has had a long-lasting impact on the community...[and]...the organisational and household skills traditionally used by women to meet the needs of family can be easily scaled up to caring more broadly for the community (Voyageur 2011, p. 83).

Dale Turner and Audra Simpson (2008) discuss issues of leadership, racism, identity, colonialism and the view that Indigenous peoples in Canada have of themselves in a contemporary context, and how that impacts on how their leaders need to be formed.

Contemporary Indigenous leadership must embrace many facets of modernity; yet, Indigenous peoples continue to assert and protect their distinctive Indigenousness or what has now trendily become known as our Indigeneity (Dale & Simpson 2008, p. 2).

The equality of gender is also a focus in their writing:

In addition, the role of women as social and political leaders is central to the health and well-being of all Indigenous cultures (Dale & Simpson 2008, p. 4).

Dale and Simpson (2008) discuss Fanon and Edward Said (1978) in their critical reflections of colonialism and how it is still much part of our contemporary lives, affecting everything they as native women do:
Colonialism as a physical force has showed its effects clearly, but we are only now examining – in serious ways – its effects on the very way Indigenous peoples have come to think about the world, and more importantly, how we think about ourselves. We also have internalized many of these views about our value in the larger society and sometimes allow certain forms of systemic or institutional forms of racism and sexism to persist (Dale & Simpson 2008, p. 8).

They assert as vitally important that ‘Indigenous peoples have worldviews of their own that have evolved for thousands of years without European influence’ (Dale & Simpson 2008, p.10). And this knowledge, with similarity in Aboriginal communities in Australia, produced leaders of quality in their own communities, long before white man came and imposed their own definitions of what leadership is:

Our leadership is understood by us to be not only formally elected communicators with the state (such as band council officials) but also hereditary leaders, as well as women, youth, intellectuals and others who are in relationships of concern, care and listening, are the social basis of all knowledge-formation within Indigenous communities. They become leaders when they move from a position of concern, care and listening to one of action (Dale & Simpson 2008, p. 11).

This is an interesting definition; it is not only about knowledge and wisdom, learning and caring, but leadership in action. Leadership for them is about doing all those things to become, but then putting that into action. It is not necessarily in relation to just those elected leaders but others as well. This is similar to our ideas in Aboriginal groups in Australia.

Another important aspect of some Native North American groups is the level of affection between leaders and their followers. As Cajete (2015, p. 364) states:

Deep affection for one’s family, community, and homeland was the key dynamic that influenced the development of Indigenous leaders. Community forms of education and traditional Indigenous leadership were inextricably
intertwined and sustained each other in mutual reciprocal relationships. Leaders who could create and maintain group solidarity reflected this affection for their followers. Followers, in turn, cared for and respected their leader. This affective relationship between leaders and followers combined with their adherence to a set of core cultural and community values helped many Indigenous communities survive colonization.

In reading the international Indigenous literature there are similarities in concepts and ideas about leadership and Eldership between Indigenous people globally. One of the threads I noted are that people have a deep level of affection for their Elders. My Elder male Anangu storyteller stated, ‘I love my Elders, I lived with some of them for many years’, and ‘I wanted to follow them, they showed me such love in return and were always there to talk to’ (B. Randall, Interview, 27 August 2012). In later chapters of this thesis, there are further interview sessions where I asked him about transformation and how his Elders showed him how to change. ‘They taught me how to love and let go of anger, how to be with people and share and care’ (B. Randall, Interview, 27 August 2012).

In my life I was taught that Elders portrayed certain qualities, virtues, principles, and abilities in action. They are regarded as senior teachers in culture and Law. They have become the embodiment of the *Tjukurpa*, putting the sacred business in action in the daily life, living as a sacred being. Many of the studies of native, Maori and other Indigenous groups internationally attest to this same process in peoples’ development and elevation to leadership in their communities. I now examine some western leadership studies relevant to this study.

### 3.4 Relevant Western Leadership Studies

There are three main leadership theories or models that will be considered in this research. The first is Robert Kegan’s higher levels of thinking which emerged from his examination of constructive and transformational leadership in an educational
leadership psychology context. The second is visionary, transformational and outstanding leadership and thirdly sacred leadership.

3.4.1 Robert Kegan: Constructive Development Theory - Higher Levels of Consciousness

Robert Kegan’s work on higher levels of leadership emerges from his Constructive Development Theory developed in the early 1980s and the transformation that can occur in a human being as a result of their development (Kegan 1982).

Kegan’s theory of social orders of consciousness was described as a developmental model based on the following tenets: development was lifelong, was a process distinct from life tasks, was more than the accumulation of new information as it represented qualitative changes in the ways we know, was identified by an inherent mismatch between demands and capacities, and transpired through ongoing interaction between the person and the environment (Kegan, 1982 cited in Barbuto et al, 2012 p.236.

Kegan builds on the Stages of Development as described by Erik Erikson, (1950) a colleague of Sigmund Freud and author of psychological human development and says that if children can grow up according to the healthy functional stages of human emotional development, then as adult leaders they can reach higher levels of thinking. It is an approach that is used to better understand leadership dynamics in teams and companies. I learned of Professor Robert Kegan’s work in transformational educational leadership whilst working in transformational leadership mentoring with an international leadership company.

Kegan describes five ‘orders of consciousness’, the first two being navigated in childhood and adolescence and in leadership education we focus on the third, fourth and fifth orders. The fifth order of consciousness that Kegan describes is called the sacred level of consciousness. It was this that explained to me how the storytellers in this research have lived through the generational traumas of colonisation and utilised their spirituality or cultural spiritual practice to navigate traumatic events and move
beyond them. Kegan’s research into knowing at higher levels of thinking (see adapted figures below) was utilised in my work mentioned, to show how the effects of human development in an individual’s family of origin impacts emotional intelligence in adulthood which is especially exhibited in leaders at the higher levels of thinking, knowing, being and doing.

Kegan’s Constructive Development Theory is a model of adult development based on the idea that human beings naturally progress over a lifetime through the stages called the five ‘orders of consciousness’ (Kegan 1982). Kegan collected data over the years on the developmental stage of thousands of adults. As Kegan describes each stage:

Stage one is a young child with no idea of the separate self. Stage two is a young adolescent who has differentiated from others and pursues selfish goals driven only by his or her own needs. Stage three is late adolescence or early adulthood where people are fully socialised adults who look to family, community and organisational workplaces as sources of values and self-worth. In contrast, at stage four an individual has developed a strong, resilient, self-aware ego; and at stage five they have developed the humility and the expanded consciousness to move beyond ego.

Going back to stage three, where we begin to examine leadership qualities, the person can become enmeshed in the roles and relationships around them but can empathise and recognise different points of view. In stage four people develop a value system that is truly theirs, they master the skill of balance, to see and empathise with others, and they have developed their own views about the world and recognise their power. Individuals at this stage are responsible in the truest sense, as they understand the power they have to create their own feelings and responses. They understand the source of their own and others’ values. They are much better able to deal with conflict, since they are not dependent on others for their self-esteem. At this stage, they are able to commit to an institution without being engulfed or overwhelmed by it; they can be a part of a group without being dependent on it. They can move beyond self-blame and blaming others to claim the power they have to step outside themselves, observe the situation, and be a force for change in it. They are the authors of their own lives.
At stage five people can even see the limits of their own value systems. As leaders, people at this stage are most open to ambiguities, most able to perceive and hold polarities in tension, and most concerned with larger systems – not just the corporation for example, but also the country, or the world. They are most able to focus on the whole. The data that Kegan collected shows that most adults, even those in professional or leadership positions in organisations, are primarily at stage three or between stages three and four, not at stage four or five (Turknett & Turknett 2005, pps. 1–2) He describes stage five as the sacred level of leadership.

These developmental stages are based on Erik Erikson’s (1950) Stages of Human Psychosocial Development, relating specifically to emotional, psychological and social development. Kegan (1982) says that each development stage raises our level of thinking and increases our ability to think through issues and find new solutions to significant problems. He suggests that very few adults make it to the highest level of sacred leadership, theoretically 1% of the population (see Fig. 3.2).

Diagrammatic representation of Kegan’s theory of higher levels of thinking is shown in Fig. 3.1 and Fig. 3.2. At the lowest level, egocentric, Kegan says that 15% of adults never make it out of this early development stage. At the egocentric level individuals are incapable of perceiving themselves as separate from their needs. At this stage, people are experts at looking out for themselves and yet incapable of integrating their needs and the needs of others, thus they do not make decisions based on their impacts on others. Layering this on Erik Erikson’s Stages of Human Development, a person does not move beyond egocentric if their development is arrested before the age of seven years. This is because up to that point everything is about the individual and what they need to survive: life is ego based and the individual sees the world in terms of itself and its own narcissistic needs. Children who do not have their needs met before the age of seven stay in Kegan’s egocentric stage as adults and as leaders. Those who make it through to the socialised level often stall at this stage; they are incapable of perceiving themselves as separate from their attachments to role, achievements, relationships, power, possession or status.
About 50–60% of the adult population are located at this level where identity is externally defined. They are their role, their possessions or their relationship. They demand constant external validation of their self-worth. The next level is independent where 25% of people have the courage to move past this level through the confronting process of examining the self. If they do so they reach the level of independence which is identified on Erikson’s chart (Fig. 3.5) located later in this chapter. This level is characterised by a strong sense of self, where people do not draw their identity from things. Their authority comes from within, and they are capable of independent thought and relationship. They are also capable of valuing both their point of view and that of others and can set and stick to boundaries, speak for themselves, live comfortably with difference and mentor others.

Sacred is the highest level of thinking and Kegan postulates that 1% of the population develop past the independence stage to come to the sacred stage. These are the
visionary people who shape the future of the planet in a positive and nurturing way. Sacred leadership is the highest level of leadership one can reach in levels of leadership development. Kegan states that in organisations, ‘sacred leadership level is only reached by 8% of the leaders in the world’ (Kegan 1994, pps. 103–108). In his examples, he quotes those people who may be considered world leaders because of this sacredness: people such as Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama and Martin Luther King. Kegan notes that spirituality and sacredness hold a special place of significance in the leaders we look up to and place on that pedestal of unattainable leadership.

Kegan suggests that if human development is arrested at any of Erikson’s stages of development up to the stage of Identity vs Role Confusion (in the 13–19 year age bracket, see Fig. 3.5), the person will be unable to see themselves beyond their role and identity (socialised), and their way of being is wrapped up in what their work, career position and role. One has to navigate the stages of childhood development to achieve the higher levels of independent and finally sacred thinking. At these levels, a person’s concern is for the care of all the world, the environment, humans and everything in it. Their thinking encompasses the impact that they will have on the world and they become visionary. A person can navigate to higher levels of thinking, it is usually a choice and comes with active personal transformation.
Kegan asserts that going through these levels of thinking and development is not an intellectual process but an emotional and spiritual one. One can choose to reach a higher level of thinking. My suggestion in this study is that the road to Eldership is the journey of developmental transformative action that takes a person to sacred in their levels of thinking, knowing, being and doing.

When I shared these theories with the eldest of my storytellers he commented that ‘the ceremonial rites of passage are a way of assisting a person to navigate their stages of development, like the ones you are showing me’ (B. Randall, Interview, July 2012). This shows a level of knowledge about human development in Aboriginal culture, where groups actively utilise ceremony as part of supporting the transition within the stages of emotional human development. This knowledge mirrors the information in Erikson’s table below at Fig. 3.5. If they do navigate these needs, then they will move into the next levels. Being held and taught by Elders as a child and young adult and utilising cultural ceremonial activities and cultural spiritual development as older adults, enabled the storytellers in this study to go beyond the trauma of their childhoods, to heal the arrested development and move into higher levels of thinking, being and doing.

3.4.2 Visionary, Transformational and Outstanding Leadership

Most theories of outstanding leadership ask the question: How do these leaders have such a large effect on their followers? Shamir et al. 1993) stress the role of vision in providing a vehicle of expression of followers’ feelings, values, and self-concepts. Mumford et al, (2009) investigated the history of 60 notable, 20th Century leaders during their early careers, their rise to power and whilst at the pinnacle of their power, contrasting the behaviours and experiences characterizing outstanding leaders. They found that ‘outstanding leaders often emerge during times of crisis – a point noted by
a number of leadership scholars’ (Hunter, S.T., Bedell-Avers, K.E., and Mumford, M.D., 2009 p. 384)

The idea of leaders being visionary in crises and at such a time being the most outstanding leaders relates well to the situation at Mutitjulu in the Northern Territory of Australia where two of my research participants lived on their country, before, during and after the implementation of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) to Child Sexual Abuse in remote Indigenous communities, implemented by the Federal Government in 2006. During this time of crisis, they became ‘visionary’ in their future thinking and assisted in inspiring a process of community economic development which was transformative.

Does this concept of visionary leadership that leadership development experts in the western world describe with traits, exist in our Aboriginal world? I did observe the impact of this in my own life and in most of the Aboriginal communities I lived and worked in. Perhaps these practices that engage the person spiritually have a deep impact on their emotional, mental, cultural and intellectual development as they physically grow and transform into adults from children?

Rose Ylimaki (2006) a researcher in educational administration and educational leadership, describes sacred and visionary leaders as having ‘four ways of seeing; intuition, perception, insight, and holistic seeing’ (Ylimaki 2006, p. 1). She describes this as part of a ‘visionary archetype’ that enables powerful leadership in educational settings. Then who are ‘visionaries’ and what does it mean to be a ‘visionary leader’? McLaughlin describes a visionary leader as ‘effective in manifesting their vision because they create specific, achievable goals, initiate action and enlists the participation of others’. (McLaughlin 2001, p.1) She continues that ‘visionary leadership is based on a balanced expression of the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical dimensions. It requires core values, clear vision, empowering relationships and innovative action. (McLaughlin 2001, p.1)
In Aboriginal culture we would say for someone who had vivid imagination were gifted with vision and deep intuitive insight, that they were visionary people. People would follow and act on those visions. ‘Being visionary is an acceptable part of the sacred and spiritual life, a visionary person would be considered someone to listen to as part of the sacredness of community life’ (B. Randall, Interview, 2011).

Transformational leadership was first written about by James Burns (1978), who said that this type of leadership is seen when leaders and followers make each other advance to a higher level of morality and motivation. Bernard Bass (1985) describes a style where a leader ‘identifies needed change, creates a vision to guide the change with committed members of a group’ (Bass 1998 p. 19). According to Bass (1998, p. 4):

…transformational leadership is an extension of transactional leadership but leads to others being motivated by the leader to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. Transformational leaders set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performances.

Bass (1985) expanded on Burn’s (1978) original ideas of transformational leadership and developed Transformational Leadership Theory. Bass (1990, p. 21) says:

…superior leadership performance — transformational leadership, occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group.

Bass (1998, p. 22) explains, ‘they achieve this through charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration’. Parry (1996) shares a type of transformational leadership that consists of ‘role modelling, inspirational motivation, being visionary, individualised consideration; and intellectual stimulation’ (Parry 1996, p. 31). Katene (2010) describes transformational leadership ‘as an extension of transactional leadership but leads to others being motivated by the
leader to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible’. (Katene, 2010, p.2) As Kegan would describe it, transformational leaders are leaders who are engaged to move into the higher orders of consciousness.

What is transformation and what occurs in the transformational process? Transformation is ‘an act, process, or instance of transforming or being transformed’43. We could say that a person changes their behaviour, ideas, attitudes and ways of knowing, doing and being. The transformation could be a movement of consciousness – for example, if a person came to the realisation that their drinking or drug taking caused them to have financial, relationship or work problems and they chose to abstain from doing these things. This would be considered a transformative act. In terms of leadership, transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach:

...that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Enacted in its authentic form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms (Katene 2010, p. 3).

The idea of creating ‘valuable and positive change’ is what interests me in terms of Elders being visionary or transformational leaders. Bass describes the transformational leader as using mechanisms that ‘connect the follower to the mission and vision of the leader or the organisation’ (Bass 1990, p. 20). This enables a leader to optimise the situation, the followers and the vision. Transformational leadership is measured by the impact of a leader on their followers. The followers would feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect for the leader. This occurs because the transformational leader provides followers with and inspiring mission and vision and gives them an identity’.44

43 https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/transformation
44 https://www.langston.edu/sites/default/files/basic-content-files/TransformationalLeadership.pdf
3.4.3 Sacred Leadership

Karl Kuhnert and Phillip Lewis (1987) discuss Kegan’s theory and construct a three-stage developmental model of leadership in detail. In fact, there are six stages in Kegan’s model, but Kuhnert and Lewis focus on the three main stages that relate to adults in leadership roles. They describe ‘transformational leaders as motivators of followers to accept and accomplish difficult goals that followers normally would not have pursued’ (Kuhnert & Lewis 1987, p. 653). They say this type of visionary leadership is made possible:

…when a leader’s end values and internal standards are adopted by followers, thereby producing changes in the attitudes, beliefs and goals of the followers. End values such as integrity, honour and justice that potentially can transform followers…and causes leadership influence to cascade through the organisation (Kuhert & Lewis 1987, p. 653).

Kegan (1982) argued that these regularities ‘are the deep structure of personality which generate people’s thoughts, feelings and actions...’ and ‘throughout this developmental process (which extends into adulthood for most individuals), there is an expansion of people’s abilities to reflect on and understand their personal and interpersonal worlds’. Kuhnert and Lewis (1987, p. 650) further elaborate:

The theory highlights sequential regularities or patterns in ways that people construct meaning during the course of their lives, and by showing how individuals progress from simple to more complex modes of understanding.

Kegan notes that ‘when individuals progress from one stage to the next, what was formerly subject becomes the object of a new organising process’. Kuhert and Lewis (1987, p. 651) go on to reflect that:

…it is important for adult development (and consequently for leadership) to determine what is subject and what is object at various developmental stages and then to understand what implications this distinction has for leaders’ behaviour.
From his work Kegan deduced that individuals who move beyond limited thinking into a realm of spirituality or enlightened behaviour and thinking that he describes as the highest level, are sacred. In order to obtain that level, people develop characteristics through their stages of development that enable them to go beyond ego, role description and independence. One of the leaders to whom Kegan ascribes a ‘sacred’ level of thinking is Nelson Mandela. Ivory (2009, p. 44) quotes Mandela in his own words as developing his leadership style at an early age as he was going through the rites of initiation associated with his cultural, spiritual traditions:

As a leader...I have always endeavoured to listen to what each and every person in a discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. Often times, my own opinion will simply represent a consensus of what I heard in the discussion. I always remember the regent’s axiom: a leader, he said, is like a shepherd (Mandela 1994, p. 25 cited in Ivory 2009, p 44)).

One of the interesting things about Mandela is that as a young man in his own cultural sacred African clan traditions he journeyed through his puberty rite of passage and describes this in his memoir. He is clear that this process of going through ritual ceremonial rites of passage had a deep impact on him and that he utilised that experience in moving beyond ego into the type of ‘sacred leader’ that Kegan ascribes to Mandela.

The following charts of Levels of Thinking (Fig. 3.3 and Fig. 3.4) were ones we used at Zaffyre International with leaders in workshops and mentoring to explain and enable understanding of higher levels of thinking with the participants. As a transformational leadership mentor and consultant, I utilised these in that work. The different stages of development, what the levels of thinking are and what can be achieved as leaders are explained in Fig. 3.3. The chart is developed further in Fig. 3.4 in enabling leaders to begin to question and think about how as leaders their ways of being and thinking could contribute to achieving transformation. It describes how at the independent stage, breakthrough into higher levels of thinking is possible and the kinds of questions one is thinking of to do that.
Fig. 3.3 Levels of Thinking – Adapted from Kegan’s Model for Transformational Leadership
Mentoring Work at Zaffyre International © Zaffyre International
Fig. 3.4 Levels of Thinking – Achieving Breakthrough, Adapted from Kegan 2010 © Zaffyre International
3.5 Family Systems Theory and Human Development

Family systems theory is the theoretical model underlying most contemporary family therapy. Carlfred Broderick (1993) explains how systems theory gave rise to family systems theory and links it to other family theory literature and to clinical practice. Among the topics covered are relational space, family boundaries, family stratification, and child socialisation. Family meanings and such shared realities as family folklore, stories, myths and memorabilia are discussed; and family rituals such as traditions, rites of passage and celebrations are explored.

Kegan (1982) made the connection in his studies of movement between the developmental stages as important to being able to move into the higher orders of consciousness. Human emotional development occurs in our families of origin with our parents and extended family and community. These early experiences embed our understanding, fears, values and feelings about the world and people in it. Arrested emotional development ensures that you cannot move between the stages into higher levels of thinking unless you recover. Trauma that can occur in families of origin impacts our capacity to move out of egocentric into socialised levels and beyond. In order to understand how the people in my case studies recovered from their traumatic life experiences and engaged in cultural recovery processes that enabled them to heal their emotional development and move into higher levels of thinking I need to examine family systems and human developmental theories. I searched in the psychology, counselling and therapy fields with which I was familiar. I decided to utilise the knowledge of family systems theory and specifically Erik Erikson’s work on stages of human development because Kegan uses it to assist in understanding his levels of thinking theories and how people who have arrested development stagnate at one level. Therapists and writers in this field such as John Bradshaw (1986), Claudia Black (1986), Wayne Kritsberg (1988) and others explain family systemic dysfunction and its impacts. Janet Middleton-Moz (1986), whose research I write of presently, describes the impacts of acculturation on families and their systems in Canadian First Nations communities.
The research participants in this study have all lived through the trauma of growing up under the dysfunctionality of colonisation and being subjected to the process of acculturation\textsuperscript{45}. Family systems theory links in with acculturation, higher levels of thinking and the stages of human development that will be explored further in later sections and chapters.

\textbf{3.5.1 Erik Erikson’s Stages of Human Development}

Erik Erikson, a colleague and student of Sigmund Freud, identified the stages of emotional development of children and adolescents as important milestones that had to be navigated within their relationships with members of their family of origin that allows them to become healthy adults. Erikson’s theory was that growing up in families that are emotionally dysfunctional in their behaviours can arrest a child’s development at any of these stages thus disabling that person’s ability to grow into a healthy functioning adult. During his time working at Harvard University in the United States of America Erikson developed family systems theory further by describing the healthy emotional process of human development through his Stages of Human Development. A diagrammatic explanation of Erikson’s Stages of Human Development is shown in Fig. 3.5, relating specifically to the stages that children go through from birth to adolescence. It shows the stages, ages and emotional milestones that children navigate in their development to adulthood.

Engaging in social life, emotional recognition and feelings, being able to share them and get feedback from parents and other adults in the life enables a person to successfully navigate these stages. This is the essence of Erikson’s theory. What we see is that a child, from birth to 18 months of age, enters into a relationship of co-dependence with its parents, depending on them for its existence and safety in the world.

\textsuperscript{45} Adapting to the majority culture in order to survive.
If the parents do not abandon the child physically or emotionally and all its needs are met it will navigate the stage of Trust Vs Mistrust and be able to feel secure in the world and trust those around them. If this doesn’t occur for whatever reason, a child will not develop emotionally beyond this stage and remain in a process of co-dependence into adulthood, learning that the world is a mistrustful place and that they will likely be abandoned. A child learns to trust its needs will be met versus mistrusting that this will occur. This is how Adult Child Syndrome (discussed below in Section 3.5.1) develops.

The stages that are expected to be navigated, and what could occur in both the negative and positive sense, are shown in Fig. 3.5. Each stage is related to an age level of development and expectation of development in terms of emotional management as a human being. Parents who support their children during these developmental stages enable a child to navigate them in a healthy and functional way.
The two theories are then evident when placed together in Fig. 3.6 and Fig. 3.7.

Fig. 3.6 Kegan’s Higher Level of Thinking - Based on Erikson’s Emotional Development Theory © Tjanara Goreng Goreng

Fig. 3.7 Points of Significant Interaction between Kegan’s Higher Level of Thinking Theory and Erikson’s Emotional Development Theory © Tjanara Goreng Goreng
This idea was researched and developed further by family therapist and author, John Bradshaw (1986). He described four problem families: where one or both parents engage in, alcoholism or chemical dependencies, have psychological issues (psychiatric/mental health of a parent), are physically, sexually or emotionally violent to family members or engage in fundamentalist religiosity. Bradshaw argued that these problems impact a child’s emotional development, as they grew up in these families where parents were emotional unavailable and thus abandon them. Dysfunction in the adults means that healthy functional development cannot occur naturally in the children of that family. This is because the parents tend to focus on their own needs in terms of dependency or other obsessive–compulsive behaviours; or for the partner, co-dependency with the dependent partner sets up the emotional dysfunction. During my study of acculturation I read Middleton-Moz’s (1986) research: she says that native Canadian children who grow up in their families exhibit the same behaviour patterns as children of alcoholics. As a result, it seems to me that there is a fifth problem family with the advent of colonisation. That fifth family is a colonised or acculturated family.

John Bradshaw (1986) relates healthy and arrested development to the stages of Erikson’s healthy emotional development in Table 3.1, describing each stage in terms of healthy development versus arrested development. This means that if a child does not navigate the stages successfully, its emotional development will be arrested. Kegan takes this further to say that this impacts on leadership, as a person is affected by this emotional development and cannot manage themselves as well as they would if they developed in a functional way. Thus, they are not there for their children and tend to engage in coping mechanisms such as denial, minimisation, intellectualisation, engaging in their dependency to the detriment of their children. This matrix of abandonment as Wayne Kritsberg (1989) calls it causes the child’s emotional development to stagnate and for fear, shame and hurt to emerge in the child. Shame arrests development whenever it is felt during the developmental stages. Bradshaw shared this adaptation of Erikson’s work to help people understand what is occurring
in the stages of development to explain arrested development and how it can assist in health development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **STAGE 1 Trust Vs Mistrust**  
0–18 months  
Babies learn to trust that their parents will meet their basic needs | Development is arrested at this stage if the child’s basic needs are not met and the child will grow up with a general mistrust of the world |
| **STAGE 2 Autonomy Vs Shame & Doubt**  
18 months–3 years  
As toddlers, children begin to develop independence and start to learn that they can do some things on their own | If a child is not encouraged properly at this age they develop shame and doubt about their abilities |
| **STAGE 3 Initiative Vs Guilt**  
3–5 years  
Pre-schooler children continue to develop more independence and start to do things of their own initiative | If a child is not about to take initiative and succeed at appropriate tasks, they will develop guilt over their needs and desires |
| **STAGE 4 Industry Vs Inferiority**  
5–13 years  
Throughout school years children continue to develop self-confidence through learning new things | If they are not encouraged and praised properly at this age they develop an inferiority complex |
| **STAGE 5 Identity Vs Role Confusion**  
13-21 years  
As teenagers, children start to care about how they look to others they start forming their own identity by experimenting with who they are | If a teenager is unable to properly develop an identity at this age, their role confusion will continue into adulthood |
| **STAGE 6 Intimacy Vs Isolation**  
21–39 years  
In early adulthood, most people fall in love, get married and start building their own family | If a person is unable to develop intimacy with others at this age they will develop feelings of isolation |
| **STAGE 7 Generativity Vs Stagnation**  
40–65 years  
This is the longest period of a human’s life. It is the stage in which people are usually working and contributing to society in some way and raising their children | If a person does not find proper ways to be productive during this period, they will develop feelings of stagnation |
| **STAGE 8 Ego Integrity Vs Despair**  
65 years and older | If a person has led a productive life, they will develop a feeling of integrity, if not they will fall into despair |
As senior citizens people tend to look back on their lives and think about what they have or have not accomplished.

Table 3.1 Healthy and Arrested Development: John Bradshaw’s Interpretation of the Erikson Model (Source: Bradshaw 1986, p. 58)

Alice Miller (1983), a psychologist and psychoanalyst, describes children growing up in families where the narcissism in their parents creates emotional abandonment for the children, thus setting up dysfunctional emotional development which affects them in adult life. Other family therapists, researchers and writers such as Claudia Black (1986) Wayne Kritsberg (1988) and Janet Middleton-Moz (1986) have utilised family systems theory in their rehabilitation and therapeutic work with people who have grown up exposed to addiction, dependency, abuse and psychological illness in their families of origin. They noted in their work with families a phenomenon that as children, their clients had not navigated these stages and achieved each level in an emotionally healthy way. They called these emotionally stunted adults ‘adult children’. These therapists created the term ‘Adult Child Syndrome’ which is said to now affect about 38 million Americans. This syndrome is described thus: at whatever stage your emotional development is arrested you will remain at that stage of development and never grow into a ‘whole’ adult human being; within yourself you have a small emotional child. Kegan suggests that this is one of the reasons that a person whose development is arrested cannot move beyond a level of thinking to a higher level; their emotional development does not allow them too.

3.5.2 Trauma and its Impact on Stages of Development

Trauma impacts healthy emotional development. The age at which it occurs arrests emotional development and causes the person to remain at levels of thinking and development which are dysfunctional.

---

46 ‘Families of origin’ is the term which relates to the family in which you were born and/or grew up.
47 From the National Adult Children Movement, United States 1993.
In 1993 I began investigating my own ideas of how trauma affected Aboriginal people and how to recover from it. I went to train at the John Bradshaw Clinic, at Rosemead Hospital in Los Angeles, an addiction recovery facility. I learned that trauma recovery requires the use of spirituality, healing and emotional redevelopment. As all the storytellers in this research talked of generational trauma in their histories and, in my observations for this research, exhibited their visionary and sacred aspects despite these challenges, I felt this was an area I wanted to explore for this work. My experience working as a therapist gave me the experience of watching people work through life trauma, enabling them to emotionally release the past sufferings which may have occurred on the developmental journey, to move into higher levels of being and thinking.

Aboriginal people have suffered during the generational process of acculturation since invasion. My understanding of family systems theory explains why and how this trauma impacts on Indigenous culture generationally. For Indigenous people acculturation to a dominant culture has been a process of generational dysfunction directly imposed upon them. I first read of this term through the research and writings of Jane Middleton-Moz (1986), a Canadian family therapist, who worked and researched with native Canadian families. The connections with families where addiction and violence and psychological trauma were present spoke to me of similarities in our families. I made the connection that explains the trauma of colonisation producing a generational process of adaptation to survive the onslaught of war, death, attempted genocide and other policies. Acculturation thus produces a form of generational dysfunctional family systems in Indigenous populations that can impact their holistic human development in a similar way to families where the traumas of violence, addiction, abuse, psychological trauma and other fundamentalisms exist. Internalised acculturation explains the current state and much of the behaviour of Aboriginal youth, children, men and women.

The normalisation of violence (or an intergenerational cycle of violence) was identified by the NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce (2006) as a major factor that
influences violent behaviors, and specifically child sexual assault. Violence was reported to be going on for generations and was thus minimalised, as it had become ‘normal’ (NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce, 2006). One participant in the inquiry stated:

The trauma of child sexual assault makes it very difficult for people to develop healthy relationships … because you’ve got, you know, children being raised three generations in a row where sexual and family violence has been part of their life (Transcript 24 NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce, 2006, p. 61).

According to Atkinson (1996), the endemic nature of family violence over a number of generations has resulted in a situation where:

Violent behaviors become the norm in families where there have been cumulative intergenerational impacts of trauma on trauma on trauma, expressing themselves in present generations as violence on self and others (Atkinson 1996, p. 7).

In describing the effects of generational violence that began with colonisation of lands and lives Atkinson (2002, p. 82) continues:

In colonised societies there have been multiple layers of both acute and overt acts of violence, and chronic and covert conditions of control have been established. These separately are traumatic and oppressive. Collectively, and compounding over generations, the pain may become internalised into abusive and self-abuse behaviours, often within families and discrete communities. The rage is not only turned inwards, but cascades down the generations, growing more complex over time.

In some communities where Law and traditional life is still practiced relationships are based both on blood or kin and skin groups as well as biology. Most Aboriginal families are extended groups of individuals beyond the usual western nuclear family configuration. This difference along with the specific cultural upbringing and community governance structures means that Aboriginal family structures are
complex. Our cultural context shapes our beliefs about what is right and wrong, our value system.

Writing to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families (which resulted in the Bringing Them Home Report (HREOC 1997), one respondent described by Harms (2012 p. 14) study describes the impact of the trauma of the stolen generation:

The trauma of the Stolen Generation it goes right through Aboriginal communities. Spirituality and kinships systems have been broken down. A lot of our mob have been raised without a value system.

The trauma from this intergenerational policy devastated hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children. Every Aboriginal person has been affected or influenced by the impact of the forced removals policies of successive Australian governments.

The Anangu Elder storyteller in this research before he passed away in 2015, was the oldest living stolen child from the Northern Territory, having been taken at the age of seven (around 1937) from his mother because he had a white father and light skin. It took him 40 years to find his community and family and the violence from the mission and missionaries where he grew up impacted generationally on his family.

Bradshaw (1986) describes some examples of traumatic stimuli as war, poverty, parental dependency (chemicals or processes), learning I am of no value, parental death, neglect, death of a brother or sister, abuse, abandonment and colonisation as a process of war – invasion of lands and forced acculturation and forced adoption of ‘dominant cultural norms’.

Another writer, Wayne Kritsberg, describing children growing up in alcoholic families with Adult Children of Alcoholics Syndrome, describes ‘chronic shock
trauma’ (Kritsberg 1988, p.42) as a process of having to grow up in any of these environments where any of these stimuli occurs.

3.5.3 Acculturation

In examining this concept, the aim is to demonstrate that Aboriginal people have been impacted by the process of acculturation inter-generationally despite Aboriginal people adapting to colonisation and its traumatic consequences. Diaz and Figueroa (1986, p. 48) describe acculturation:

As a process of progressive adaptation to the dominant culture for the purposes of economic survival and mobility? The first stages of adaptation address: (1) environment and geography; (2) language; and (3) employment and education. Adaptation at this point is marked by the need to survive... as an individual.

Middleton-Moz (1986, p.57) describes acculturation in Canadian First Nations families:

Over the past six years of working with Native families on the reservations and with many native Alaskan people, all of whom suffer the effects of substance abuse within their family system, it has become apparent to me that the effects of the stigma and depression is caused by forced acculturation.

These stories reflect on acculturation as a powerful oppressive process of colonisation as people try to survive. The process of acculturation is a traumatising event for Aboriginal children who grow up in families which have suffered it intergenerationally. Many do not understand and cannot identify it. Understanding family systems theory, and the concepts of acculturation and family of origin, explained the arrested development of Erikson’s model in my Aboriginal family. I’ve experienced it first hand and saw it in many Aboriginal families I worked with in health settings.
Many Aboriginal people in urban and regional areas have been denied their generational cultural path of learning because of the forced removal of them and their Ancestors from their lands. Not living on Country, meant that sacred ceremonies and initiation rites could not be taught, spoken of and practised and the cultural education cycle was impacted. Middleton-Moz recalls her experiences of working with native families as:

Having seen a pervasive sense of low self-esteem and powerlessness, depression, cultural disorientation, alienation from the power and strength of cultural values, and confusion about and distaste for the values of the new culture. I see grief from loss of culture, loss of connection with the kinship network, from early losses of family due to children being sent away to schools, lack of the family role and loss of connections to Elders and parents, and the kinship system for their education in the value systems and culture of their clans (Middleton-Moz 1986, pps. 64–65).

Later she shares what an Alaskan native said:

One of the solutions to the problems being experienced today is to learn from our Elders. It is true our Elders didn’t go to school. It is true some of them don’t know how to speak English. But they are a lot smarter than those who have gone to college. Their wisdom can be used as tools, to alleviate some of the problems (cited in Middleton-Moz 1986, p. 69).

Acculturation is a dysfunctional process that produces trauma in those impacted by it and that trauma can be intergenerational. In families of origin where children grow up with addiction and alcoholism, violence or incest, these families are places where children also must adapt to survive. It is clear from the evidence that children of colonised Indigenous people were impacted by the trauma of adapting to survive the dominant culture during more than 200 years of war, forced assimilation, stolen children and policies of protection. The adaptation to the dominant culture, its ways of being, values systems and behaviours affect healthy emotional development.
Middleton-Moz (1986) describes the impacts of acculturation on childhood human development and the resultant cultural depression and mental illnesses that occur as a result. Oliver-Diaz and Figueroa (1986, p. 55) note in their work ‘that children of acculturation confront many of the same issues as children of alcoholics even when drinking is not present in the system’. They describe how ‘children of acculturated families have all the problems of children of alcoholics’ (Oliver-Diaz & Figueroa 1986, p. 55) Some of the issues are that children live in a world of mixed messages such as become white but don’t lose your roots and children develop feelings of mistrust, guilt, confusion, isolation and fear. ‘If they have both acculturation and alcoholism in their family the burden is double’ (Oliver-Diaz & Figueroa 1986, p. 56)

Middleton-Moz (1986) saw how these intergenerational traumas impacted children and they developed stunted emotional and social development. Since I learned of this I have been studying the impacts of acculturation on our families and children. Some of the effects of acculturation intergenerationally are high levels of abuse, dependency, addiction and violence. These can be directly linked to a culture adapting to survive and to a dominant culture that attempts forced assimilation through murder, massacre, forced removals and other methods to oppress the entire culture in order to take the land and implant their own systems.

Colonisation and acculturation resulted in many Aboriginal people unconsciously deciding to assimilate, integrate and disappear into the dominant culture as a means of survival. Much of the cultural knowledge, Laws and ceremonies were gradually not shared nor practiced, particularly in the areas where the dominant culture population settled in the first 150 years. Many of our people no longer have access to their cultural knowledge because of mission life, forced removals from Country, disallowing ceremonial and spiritual life, forcing people to become Christians through living on Christian missions and ensuring that ceremonies and languages were not spoken by using punitive methods and laws to stop people doing so. However, knowledge, language, some ceremonial practices and traditions remained and were practiced in secret and have continued to be shared. We have shared them across
generations and between clan groups and families so as not to lose this important knowledge and to help those who want to return to culture and the proper way of life and being.

3.5.4 Racism and Identity: Traumatic Issues in Development

Racism and generational issues relating to identifying as Indigenous are part of the ongoing effects of generational trauma and acculturation. Each of the four storytellers who participated in this research had to overcome the oppression of racism and find their identities as Indigenous peoples. Their mental, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual development was affected. The impact of continuing racism and the search for a non-colonised identity is one which each of these storytellers went on, and one which contributed to their recovery, healing and movement into higher levels of thinking and being. As one of my storytellers expressed:

Under their system I was classified as native, then Aboriginal, then black, then Indigenous and later First Nations...it changes every generation...I had to go think all that through...it was Fanon that helped me understand my identity as a Barkindji man...a man of my own country, my own culture, not what whitefellas said I was (Paul Collis, Interview, 21 February 2015).

Aime Césaire (1972) acknowledges the racial construction of the relationship. By identifying the colonial relationship as one based on race, he draws comparisons between his home of Martinique and the colonies in Africa. By equating racism, barbarism, and colonialism, he claims colonisation to be a form of dehumanisation that results from Europe’s racism against black populations in Africa and the Caribbean. This resonates deeply, it is what I felt and what my participants describe their contact with non-Aboriginal people to be like. We experienced colonisation as degrading when as children we fought with children at our schools who objected to having ‘niggers’ in their classes. This was despite the fact that my parents paid the same amount as the white kids for the privilege of being educated by the nuns.
In *Black Skin White Masks*, Fanon (1952) applied psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic theory to explain the feelings of dependency and inadequacy that black people experience in a white world. He notes that a black person’s self-perception is distorted by colonisation, as one who has lost his native cultural origin and had to embrace the culture of the coloniser, this produces an inferiority complex in the mind of that native person. Fanon (1952, p. 122) says that:

Those colonised will then try to appropriate and imitate the culture of the coloniser and a normal negro child, having grown up in a normal Negro family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact of the white world and learn to associate blackness with wrongness.

Interestingly Fanon also notes the dysfunctionality of growing up in a family and growing up with the authority of the State: ‘In Europe and in every country characterised as civilized or civilizing, the family is a miniature of the nation’ (Fanon 1952, p.110). Fanon goes on to describe the dysfunctionality and sickness in the family and the State:

The white family is the agent of a certain system. The society is indeed the sum of all the families in it. The family is an institution that prefigures a broader institution: the social or the national group. Both turn on the same axis (Fanon 1952, p. 115).

And continues:

It is apparent in all such cases that the sickness lies in the family environment. For the individual, the authority of the state is a reproduction of the authority of the family by which he was shaped in his childhood. Ultimately the individual assimilates all the authorities that he meets to the authority of the parents: He perceives the present in terms of the past. Like all other human conduct, behaviour toward authority is something, learned. And it is learned in the heart of a family that can be described, from the psychological point of view, by the form of organisation peculiar to it...that is, by the way in which its authority is distributed and exercised. (Fanon 1952, p. 110)
Fanon asks the question what was it, what was colour prejudice? He uses the words of Sir Alan Burns, a British colonial administrator and Governor of British Honduras and the Gold Coast from 1934-1947:

It (colour prejudice) is nothing more than the unreasoning hatred of one race for another, the contempt of the stronger and richer peoples for those whom they consider inferior to themselves, and the bitter resentment of those who are kept in subjection and are so frequently insulted. As colour is the most obvious outward manifestation of race it has been made the criterion by which men are judged, irrespective of their social or educational attainments. The light skinned races have come to despise all those of a darker colour, and the dark-skinned peoples will no longer accept without protest the inferior position to which they have been relegated (Fanon 1952, p. 89).

Racism is part of the process of generational colonisation and acculturation, adapting to the knowledge that you are perceived as inferior to the coloniser. Knowing that the proud culture, knowledge and traditions of your own race are nought in the face of the imposition of the coloniser and their society is a traumatic process. For the purposes of this study we see racism affecting the identities of the storytellers in Chapter Six, as they describe its daily impact on them and their families and how much they had to do to overcome this profound sense of inferiority to claim their place in their current world. Aime Cesaire (1955, p. 3) describes how:

No one colonizes innocently, that no one colonises with impunity either, that a nation which colonises.... justifies colonisation and therefore force – is already a sick civilisation, a civilization which is morally diseased.

There is a distinct attempt in the process of colonisation to ensure that the colonised and their way of being, life, culture and spirituality is completely disrupted, but to do it in such a way that it brutalises those colonised and the coloniser himself becomes brutalised. Colonisation is a dysfunctional process because it uses force, oppression, violence, war, often attempts at genocide, massacres, rape and other measures to overcome the native population in order to take control of land and resources. It is a systemic dysfunctional process.
Voyageur (2011, p. 1) describes the British Empire’s expansion into North America:

The imperialist power was quick to deal with the people of the *terra nullius* in a manner befitting its preconceived notions of racial, social and cultural superiority. This Eurocentric ideology justified the harsh treatment meted out to the Indigenous peoples, including outlawing many of their traditions and beliefs, reorganising their societies, and subjecting them to extensive regulation. This racist philosophy justified the taking of Indian lands and resources for the coloniser’s sole benefit.

The Northern Territory and remote Queensland and Western Australian clans and communities were the second wave of colonisation in Australia. The first wave occurred from 1788 to the early part of the 20th Century. The second wave began when *migloos* went to the northern and central remote parts of Australia and began stealing the children and rounding up Aboriginal people into camps and missions. Kummunara Randall and Tjikatu were part of the second round of colonisation and Dr Paul Collis and I were the next generation who use our voices against oppression.

Cesaire (1972, p. 43) says:

...that in between coloniser and colonised there is room only for forced labour, intimidation, pressure, the police, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, arrogance, self-complacency, swininishness, brainless elites and degraded masses. He says I am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out.

He continues:

I am talking about natural economies that have been disrupted, harmonious and viable economies adapted to the Indigenous populations – about food crops destroyed, malnutrition permanently introduced, agricultural development oriented solely toward the benefit of the metropolitan countries, about
the looting of products, the looting of raw materials…I too talk about abuses… (Cesaire 1972, p. 44)

And:

They talk to me about civilisation…every day that passes, every denial of justice…these were communal societies, they were democratic societies, they were cooperative societies…they were content to be in them…. they kept hope intact (Cesaire, 1972, pps. 47, 48).

It is a testament to their resilience that some Aboriginal clans held onto culture and tradition, the Laws and ways to live them on their own Country, despite the devastating impacts from the first violent rage of colonisation and subsequent generations of political and policy decision making with the one intent of controlling, subverting and possessing the Indigenous populations as slaves, workers, and labourers. That many held to the Law and passed it on secretly to others and now much more openly to the next generation, is a positive testament amongst a sea of negative statistics. We may despair of those gaps in health, education and employment, but they must be measured up against the resilience and capacity of our culture to maintain its essence despite the constant racism, subversion of cultural identity and the pressures of colonisation and continued oppression.

3.6 Cultural Practices and Cultural Representation

Cultural practice reflects a culture. Healing and recovery from the impacts of acculturation and generational trauma and engaging in cultural practice appears from my research, described in later chapters, to assist in the healing process to enable movement in the development of thinking. Despite over 200 years of colonisation, cultural knowledge, language, ceremonial practices and traditions have continued to be shared and practiced by diverse clan groups across Australia. The Anangu willingly shared that knowledge with me. For the storytellers who participated in this research, particularly the two younger people described in Chapter Six, our experiences as we travelled deeper into our cultural knowledge, was that sharing in culture and cultural practices provided a form of healing which nothing else could approach. The knowledge, the wisdom, ceremonies, languages and practices that still
exist and are shared, represent deep meaning to those that hold them and those who do not have them. Stuart Hall talks about the emphasis on cultural practice and its importance:

That participants in a culture give meaning to people, objects and events. Within a certain boundary marker, within a certain context of use, what philosophers call different language games, it is by our use of things, what we say, think and feel about them - how we represent them – that we give them a meaning. We give objects, people and events meaning by the frameworks of interpretation we bring to them (Hall 1997, pps. 3-5).

He goes on:

Culture we can say then carries meaning and value for all of us, culture permeates all society, it distinguishes the ‘human’ element in social life from what is simply biologically driven. The study and practice of ‘culture’ underlines the crucial role of the symbolic domain at the very heart of social life.’ (Hall 1997, pgs. 3-5)

For Aboriginal people, language, ceremonial practices, songs, rituals, dances and objects have meaning. Language in particular, as Hall (1997, p. 5) describes it ‘is a signifying practice. It represents functions. It is part of the language of national identity, a discourse of national belongingness’. For Aboriginal clan groups, language distinguishes them and gives shared meaning. When Aboriginal people speak language in gatherings it is a profound experience as it sets you apart from the dominant culture and gives pride and meaning to your identity. Hall (1997, p. 5) goes on to note that ‘it is through culture and language that the production and circulation of meaning takes place. It is tied up with both identity and knowledge.’

Hall says, ‘In recent years, and in a more social science context, the word culture is used to refer to whatever is distinctive about the way of life of a people’ (Hall 1997, p. 2). He goes on to suggest that it can also be used to describe the shared values of a group or a society. Culture is also about ‘feelings, attachments and emotions, as well as concepts and ideas’ (Hall 1997, p. 2). Hall says that:
It is participants in a culture who give meaning to people, objects and events…it is by our use of things and what we say, think and feel about things – how we represent them – that we give them a meaning…Culture…permeates all society (Hall 1997, p. 3).

Cultural groups may include members with diverse personal histories but those members ‘share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in similar ways’ (Hall 1997, p. 4). This can be seen in Aboriginal groups.

For myself, having culture, belonging, being taught by Elders and encouraged to reach a higher level of thinking, being and doing was a sacred path. I was educated by Aboriginal people I consider by all the aspects of the definition to be sacred leaders, visionary leaders, who worked with their visions to achieve political, social and civil rights. These people inspired me to want to go on that same road – for me this shows visionary leadership, for your own leaders to encourage and see your capacity for higher ways of being. This gives you a sense of purpose, will, integrity and knowing that makes you face adversity and want to grow through it to a higher way of being. This has been my lived experience. In terms of this study, culture and becoming an Elder in culture is mapped through your intuitive ability to lead and teach others.

To enable an understanding of impacting community development, I include here a section on transformational community development as the second part of my research question is about the impact of leaders and Elders on community development.

3.7 Transformational Community Development

The two Anangu Elders who participated in this research envisioned and inspired a process of community development that I believe was transformative and inclusive. As a community development practitioner, I saw first-hand how Elder-driven community-based development can have a positive impact on community change during the late 1980s in New South Wales around the impact of violence and abuse
on the education of young Aboriginal women (Parbury & Goreng Goreng 1991). At Mutitjulu in more recent times, because of political events, community Elders began to envision a future for their families and communities that would enable movement from welfare dependence to independence and interdependence through the development of an enterprise on their homeland.

Davies, White, Wright, Maru and LaFlamme (2008) write that ‘there is value in promoting a systemic understanding of the linked, social, cultural, economic and ecological issues that impact on Aboriginal development in desert Australia’. Fisher argued

> It is counter-productive to consider a simple framework as a source of answers to difficult questions which have characterised aboriginal affairs for decades. However, the sustainable livelihoods approach incorporates key elements that have been overlooked by conventional planning in the past, such as the importance of social networks and access to land. (Fisher 2002, p.15)

This is obvious in the current condition of Mutitjulu and its sister communities at Imanpa, Docker River and Areypnga, where members of both the Nipper and Randall families live. Mutitjulu itself waxes and wanes according to the policies of successive governments and thus no long-term sustainability plans are ever made at the Corporation level or at the government agency level in terms of its viability as a settlement. Now the community is located within the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park and is subject to control by the National Parks Service. These Elders wanted to return to their homeland of Umpiyara near Yulara Resort just outside the Park and build a more sustainable livelihood for their families.

In 2001, Dianne Smith conducted a research consultancy for the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) with a view to community development, specifically of a community participation agreement with the Mutitjulu Community. She describes some of the community development issues (Smith, 2001 p.44)

> An important early challenge is the generation of a shared vision amongst community residents of how an Agreement should
operative. This issue will be relevant in every community. The Mutitjulu research suggests it will be a time-consuming process that must be based on ongoing discussions within the community. Inevitably, Community Participation Agreements will be as much about community governance, development and management, as about individual and collective welfare rights and needs.

She does suggest positively (Smith, 2001 p.45) that; there are important community and local corporate strengths that, if realistically built upon, could assist the process of implementing an Agreement at Mutitjulu—and conceivably elsewhere. The agreement never came to pass and with the continuing restrictive welfare reform policies of the Howard government Mutitjulu continued to muddle along with no significant community development support.

In 2004 the Ministerial Taskforce Charter (2004) focused on three urgent priorities to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal people, the one most relevant to this study is ‘building Indigenous wealth, employment and an entrepreneurial culture’. Clearly generations of welfare dependency had not improved the livelihoods of Anangu people at Mutitjulu. In Mutitjulu senior leaders and others saw how the welfare dependence, lack of incentive, employment and the reduction later of Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) funding was denying them and their children access to self-determined and self-sustainable income, the tourism sector and worthwhile local jobs. They knew that ‘sit down money’ was killing them and that their children could not live all their lives on welfare. Thus, the earlier catalyst for their self-determined approach was brought up again with the advent of the Northern Territory Intervention.49 The Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007 was introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament as a response to the Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Indigenous Children from Sexual Abuse, commissioned by the Northern Territory Government. Using the Little Children Are

48 The Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) was a program instituted by the Commonwealth Government of Australia in the 1980s to enable Aboriginal communities to pay members of their communities to work for what were welfare payments.
49 Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007 (Cth) (NTER Act), House of Representatives, Australian Parliament
Sacred Report (Wild & Anderson 2007) to go into NT communities and implement an ‘unrealistic’ and ‘unworkable’ intervention (Altman 2007, p.12) sparked Altman, 2007,p.13) to write that the NTER:

on theoretical and comparative historical, national and international grounds the overall approach seems a recipe for disaster. It is neo-paternalist, imposed without consultation, top-down, racist, non-discretionary, disempowering and nowhere implemented in its totality.

He continued:

despite the suspension of critical thinking owing to the invocation of a ‘national emergency’ crisis, a number of the measures appear to have no link to the issues of child sex abuse.

The NTER applied oppressive restrictions on some remote Aboriginal communities including the introduction of income quarantining through the introduction of a Basics Card for welfare recipients, community store management, more police presence, which for some was a positive, and other measures in which areas of their lives were further controlled by government intervention. The Racial Discrimination Act 1975 was suspended for these measures to be applied specifically to these Indigenous communities. The Australian Parliament introduced an Act that states the object was ‘to improve the wellbeing of certain communities in the Northern Territory’ (HofR: 2007). At Mutitjulu, the first community that the Australian Army entered at the behest of the Government, the NTER shamed them but it also heralded a strong sense of self-determination about their future.

In Mutitjulu a local community meeting of Anangu community members was called because of issues with a Mutitjulu Community Aboriginal Corporation (MCAC) employee who had confidential meetings with Federal Government employees; members of the MCAC Board were being questioned about activities in relation to this government employee. The MCAC and some community members were involved in legal actions relating to an ABC Lateline report that portrayed their community as full
of paedophiles and warlords. The community was challenging many of the facts in this report, having felt ashamed of how Mutitjulu was being presented in the mainstream media. This was a turning point for those at the meeting; they must now, self-determine their future. Anangu had lived in this region for tens of thousands of years and had sustained their livelihoods for millennia; therefore, they knew what to do and how to do it. The Anangu Elders in this study saw the impacts of successive government interventions and changes in policy and program funding to their community. They knew in their own words, ‘that it was time to make change happen their own way’ (B. Randall, Interview, 2 November 2012).

Most Anangu people live on the only income available in their remote community, Centrelink payments. Many do not have the education, nor incentive, to work in the professional roles available and most only find low-level positions within the National Park Ranger Service or at the Voyager Yulara Resort nearby. Most other positions within the Mutitjulu community are held by outsiders who are not Anangu and there is no longer any CDEP funding. The MCAC has at various times employed a small number of local people who have lived or been educated elsewhere and returned to live within the community.

The Elders in this study often articulated community development and what they would choose to do as a sustainable livelihood approach when we discussed the enterprise development. They and their families had the skills, knowledge and ability to engage with the tourists and other ventures that came to their country, precisely because they had a business idea using their cultural knowledge in an eco-cultural tourism business. Being the traditional custodians with centuries of information about the natural sustainability of their lands and environment, with the understanding that their health and wellbeing and those of their children, grandchildren and future generations depended on them, they could provide ‘an authentic Indigenous

51 Centrelink is the Australian Government agency which manages the income support regime for the Australian welfare system within the Department of Human Services.
experience for visitors to the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park’ (B. Randall, Interview, 3 November 2012).

As Davies says, the sustainable livelihood approach (SLA)\(^{52}\) advocated in international development and underutilised in Aboriginal communities in Australia:

...has potential value in supporting this direction because of the focus on supporting disadvantaged people to use such means as might be readily available to them to generate wealth (Davies 2008, p. 60).

Advocates of the SLA say that there are two key components to a sustainable livelihood approach and these are, firstly, a framework that helps in understanding the complexities of poverty and, secondly, a set of principles to guide action to address and overcome poverty.

Additionally, the SLA has seven guiding principles. They do not prescribe solutions or dictate methods; instead, they are flexible and adaptable to diverse local conditions. The guiding principles are to be people-centred, be holistic, be dynamic, build on strengths, promote micro-macro links, encourage broad partnerships, and aim for sustainability. Thus, people with influence over other people and roles suggest, encourage, facilitate and mentor others into these roles. Evident in the early discussions of the establishment of the business was the Elders involved suggesting the engagement of family community members in varied tasks of the development process, based on skills and knowledge. These tasks included learning about tourism development, getting bus and tourism operator licences, and developing land management plans in addition to preparing the sites and learning business tools.

Because of the lack of sustainable employment for which Anangu people are sufficiently educated, their poverty, and a punitive welfare system, these Elders began thinking of other ways to create and sustain their futures, thus creating energy for

\(^{52}\) [http://www.ifad.org/sla](http://www.ifad.org/sla)
renewal and business engagement thinking in their families. Through many years of poverty, violence, dependency on chemicals (alcohol and other drugs), and welfare as their only source of income creating a dysfunctional dependency on the State, these communities and families have struggled to live in a self-sufficient and self-determining environment. However, core people have maintained their power of cultural knowledge and wisdom, and since the imposition of the Northern Territory Intervention have emerged as a strong and decisive voice. In this case, as all successful community development should, the change comes from within and thus community transformation should be possible. The question is whether it can occur as they envisage it, is it possible and how can it happen? As is usual in the Aboriginal way, the next generations bring into action the community vision of their Elders. Utilising the education and knowledge of their children and each other, they could work together to bring it into action – *Kanyini Tjungungku – We Care Together*. Their leadership in a cultural educational setting on their lands at Uluru in the Northern Territory gave them a very real and important role to play in supporting community change.

The ideas that the Elders had for the creation of economic independence is vital to future economic viability of the group of families who live at Mutitjulu, especially since the advent of the Intervention which has halved the amount of Centrelink cash income they receive and increased poverty and depression. Some of the effects of the NTER are described as ‘increasing hospitalisation, declining rates of school attendance and increasing reports of violence’ (Altman & Russell 2012, p.11).

The Elders and their family members had the desire to do meaningful work that is of benefit to them culturally and fits within their own cultural and lifestyle practices as Central Desert peoples. They therefore envisioned engagement in cross-cultural educational tourism on their homelands near Yulara and within the range of both Uluru and Kata Tjuta. This would enable any visitor to explore the World Heritage listed National Park and spend time ‘on Country’ with Senior Elders and Traditional Owners whilst enabling younger community members to listen and learn how to run
businesses, earn their own income doing what they know and enjoy, and become independent of welfare. The idea included having other Anangu community members come to the homelands to learn business tourism skills and participate in their cultural traditions, as well as engaging in learning cultural business and use their own cultural education skills as teachers and holders of knowledge with a goal of cultural maintenance.

Altman (1987) undertook a study on The Economic Impact of Tourism on the Mutitjulu Community at Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park. His report covers the issues relevant at the time, in terms of the Handback Title, employment aspirations, community aspirations, economic development, tourism development and historical issues relevant to the community. Altman describes how the Memorandum of the Lease to National Parks had as a goal to raise the employment and training of local Anangu to work in the National Parks Service and to develop economic business specifically relevant to tourism operations. He noted that there was a specific desire by Anangu to establish enterprises within Uluru National Park rather than outside the Park at Yulara, but there was a degree of uncertainty about details of enterprise development. Altman (1987) goes on to note that one assumption was that Anangu were dissatisfied with their current economic status.

Altman (1987, p. 87) states that Anangu at Mutitjulu:

...have a perception of the economic gains that could be accrued from involvement in the tourism industry and that they have clear perceptions of the social and cultural disruption that can result from such involvement.

He further states:

...that people are keen to both control and cautiously assess this trade-off and; that Anangu are adamant that the Rock is theirs and that they feel that the symbol of Uluru if it is to be marketed, then they are entitled to do this themselves (Altman 1987, p. 87).
Altman also advocates a hybrid economy model developed over some years of research and engagement with remote communities. Such a model links the market, the state and the customary economy of Indigenous community in which productive activities based on cultural economy can occur. For example, ‘a positive spin-off benefit for Australian tourism is generated on Aboriginal land (in Kakadu National Park)’ (Altman 2001, p. 5) that eventually could be remunerated and quantified in economic terms. Altman (2001, p. 10) goes on to say that ‘challenges to utilise the expanding Aboriginal estate so as to provide economic opportunities to the growing Indigenous population are significant’.

This became the case in the example of community development enterprise which was started via visions of the Elders and described in Appendix A of this research.

3.7.1 Transformative Community Development Projects: Mutitjulu Community

The two Anangu Elder storytellers in this research had visions about tourism development that became the Umpiyara homeland Eco-Cultural Education Tourism Project, developed by two family members that was established as a private company working with a community based Aboriginal corporation to sustain culture and invite visitors to experience Aboriginal culture with Elders and senior teachers from the families of the two Anangu Elders. The second project was a collaborative community-based artwork project that became known as the Painting a Different Picture Project. This involved collaboration between senior community artists, external artists and two non-Indigenous people who were inspired and motivated by their relationship with the Anangu Elders.

The Umpiyara project began when Tjikatu said ‘I want to see buses with 60 people coming here every day’ (B. Tjikatu, Interview, 21 July 2012) and Kummunara said as we walked around Milk Tree Hill, his traditional land near Uluru outside the National Park, that he wanted to ‘establish an Anangu University’ (B. Randall, Interview, 16 August 2012). They both talked about establishing a cultural educational ecotourism business as bush camps for national and international tourists on Umpiyara
Homeland as well as ways to use this tourism venture to sustain and teach culture on country to the next generations. The next generation of family members of the Anangu Elders were inspired to develop these projects together. The discussions and establishment of their visions occurred over a two-year period from 2006 to 2008 and the first on country camping tour began in April 2008.

The Elders were moved to do this because of their desire to leave a legacy for the future of their children and grandchildren. Additionally, the need to have more control over their lives, their employment options and incomes, and self-management led the Elders to their visioning and to put those visions into action. They had specific cultural knowledge to share and there were people nationally and internationally who wanted to share in this knowledge and come to their country to learn. This was a way of building economic business gains and assisting younger people to engage in employment not otherwise available to them in this remote area. In terms of the principles of the sustainable livelihood approach in community development, this was a way of emerging from poverty. Engaging in their cultural education with non-Indigenous people could enable them to build a future for the Elders, their children and grandchildren.

Community members were inspired to have Mutitjulu become a Tourism Cultural Education Hub for a range of service industries in cultural eco-tourism to employ the whole community. Their actions in this engagement of transformational community development were based on the seven guiding principles of the SLA.

### 3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I shared the research, theories and literature which are vital to my research. From Erikson’s theory of stages of development, Kegan’s higher levels of thinking, the theories of family systems including families of origins and

---

53 The transformational process of community development was a movement from something past that wasn’t working to something completely new that could transform people’s lives from an economic and social perspective.
dysfunctionality, to acculturation, racism and identity to sacred, visionary and outstanding leadership. These issues are all vital to the study of how I see my Elders develop into leaders who are *Tjukurpa Pulka* – showing cultural sacred Law in action in their lives, living the *Tjukurpa* on a daily basis. This is how Aboriginal Elders and society understood the emotional, mental, cultural and spiritual development of humans to such a deep degree, that they ensured the structure of their society and the learning education system enabled people to have the most successful psychological development path possible. Oral and observational learning is combined with ceremonial and spiritual experiences at just the correct time to ensure the successful transition from one stage to another in their human development process and the creation of Elders in their clans is an important cultural practice.

This is an important study to determine the historical traditional cultural and intergenerational passing on of traditions, values, and ways of *being knowing and doing* that are ancient and still taught in the modern world. Where other researchers have studied parts of this topic, there has been no study to show that Indigenous Eldership development is a holistic human development pathway that can grow a person to choose higher levels of thinking, being and doing and develop their leadership ability in a cultural context. Examining the parallels between western-led leadership education and the type of education and learning environment that Aboriginal people enjoyed and still do in some clan groups, it is possible to suggest that Aboriginal governance structures and society established a base in which a person would be *held* to grow up into an emotionally, mentally, spiritually and culturally powerful individual with their right to self-determination and self-sovereignty firmly established in this process of community education and life-long learning.

As I undertook this literature review and began to consider my research methodology I began to read the literature on Indigenist research methodologies in order to decide on my methodology. I considered my experience of being with these Anangu Elders over time and what I had learnt from them through observation, interaction and engagement. I noted that there was this specific way in which they behaved that was
part of their way of being and doing. It involved certain protocols, relationships, interactions and sharing and I wanted to craft it as an Indigenous research method.
Chapter Four

Building Kanyini Tjungungku

The Research Methodology

Artwork 6    Working Together. Kanyini Tjungungku © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2012
This artwork is a depiction of people of both white and Aboriginal communities coming together equally and in an equitable relationship of sharing and caring. They are all holding hands, the white dots represent the head of people with the black lines representing their bodies. In the middle circle there are two people with white bodies who represent all white people as the minority on our country in terms of the Tjukurpa - sacred Law. We are the majority in that and it’s our responsibility to hold it, share it and pass it on to everyone not just our own children. Around the outside of the circles are depictions of rainbow snakes carrying the Law to all in the circles and they are living in the sands of the desert and the red earth of my country. At the top and the bottom of the painting are two curled Rainbow Snakes who represent the equality of men and women and the equality of black and white living together on country.
4.1 Introduction

Building *Kanyini Tjungungku* is how I utilised the observations and knowing I discovered in the field to discern an Indigenous methodology of research with my storytellers. It relates to their ways of being, knowing and doing. I built on my observations of Anangu people to utilise an Indigenous research methodology to give credence to the importance of cultural sensitivity and safety, and to explain the effectiveness of my engagement as an Aboriginal scholar in this research. Whilst undertaking research with my participants on their Country, it was important for me as a younger Aboriginal woman, to show deep respect to my Elders and teachers by utilising their ways of being in this work. I hope that it adds to the already important literature on why Indigenous research methodologies are so important when undertaking research in our communities. The methodology has been developed on the foundation of other Indigenous methodologies but specifically related to the Anangu participants and the spirituality of Aboriginal culture. As I got to know the participants by being with and sharing with the family, extended community, and Elders, I began to discern a way of working in research in terms of how the participants were relating to me. This was where I began. Seeing these Elders as our leaders enabled me to see the specificity of their leadership in the sacred realm as I discovered through reading and working with the theories of Robert Kegan. What began to emerge was the idea that Aboriginal culture had its own developmental process of leadership across the lifespan which deserved examination. I wanted to explore if it was a method of leadership development that could be useful to our future leaders. These leaders exhibited quiet, still behaviour and an intuitive sensing that made me think it should be the way in which I engage with them as a method of research.

Through the course of engaging and moving into and out of the storytelling, the circles, the ceremonies and the lives of my storytellers, I came to understand what worked best with us as a research method. Because of my Indigeneity and my desire to explore and research using Indigenist methodologies, the foundation of my research has been informed and crafted by Indigenist research philosophies and
practices developed and utilised by other Indigenist researchers. This chapter examines this in more detail, to describe to the reader why and how I have chosen an Indigenist methodology. My motivation was to honour and respect an ancient form of education, sound in its epistemology and ontology and translated here across cultures. This research is about Aboriginal peoples and is conducted by a Wakka Wakka Wulli Wulli woman who has been adopted (culturally) by the Anangu Elders involved, on a subject matter of central importance to First Nations people and for the First Nations community in Australia.

4.2 Insider Research as an Indigenous Researcher

In terms of scientific research methods most researchers are assumed to be ‘outsiders’ in the research. In Indigenous research Linda Tuhiwai Smith says, ‘there are multiple ways of being either an insider or an outsider in the Aboriginal context’ (Smith 1999, p. 138). She notes, that ‘the critical issue with insider research is the constant need for reflexivity’ (Smith 1999, p. 138). As a cultural relative of the family participants in the research, and as a researcher participant, I am an insider who needs to be reflexive in my research. I am also a researcher who needs to step outside when needed, to reflect on the research. Smith concludes that the difference between insider and outsider research is that ‘insiders have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day to day basis for ever more and so do their families and communities’ (Smith 1999, p. 138). Smith also says that ‘insider research has to be ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical as outside research. It also needs to be humble’ (Smith 1999, p. 140).

When Indigenous people become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, and people participate on different terms (Smith 1999, p. 193).

As Aboriginal researchers, we belong to communities as a member of them or as a member of the families in them, ‘we have a different set of roles and relationships, status and position’ (Smith 1999, p. 193). Often with non-Indigenous researchers accepted amongst their own peers, Indigenous voices have often been silenced or othered in the process of the research. Smith says that:
...negotiating and transforming institutional practices and research frameworks is as significant as carrying out actual research programs, thus Indigenous research is a highly political activity and whilst this is understood by outsiders this can often be a very threatening activity to the academy’ (Smith 1999, p.141).

In the academy, researchers are trained to conform to the models provided for them and work within those parameters. Indigenous researchers must do this also and address Indigenous specific criteria that may be judged by a group or community as not useful, not Indigenous, not friendly or just not from their perspective. Thus, Indigenous research challenges us to work across these boundaries and negotiate the sometimes-difficult pathways of engaging in research with our Indigenous communities. As Sherwood (2010, p. 138) notes:

An insider/outsider perspective is provided through the personal stories of my experiences of Aboriginal health research, both good and bad. As an Indigenous researcher, I am considered to have both insider and outsider status. I am an Aboriginal community person with connections to multiple Indigenous communities – Insider, and in the position of research trained and working within a Western academic organisation – Outsider.

McDowell (1992) noted that:

researchers must especially take account of their own position in relation to the research participants and research setting. In particular, the reconstructing of insider/outsider status in terms of one’s positionality in respect of education, class, race, gender, culture and other factors, offer us better tools for understanding the dynamics of researching within and across one’s culture (England, 1994; Merriam et al., 2001; Rose, 1997).

In the case of my research, I positioned myself clearly as cultural family and an insider researcher. In relation to the research participants and the setting I was ‘adopted family’ accepted as a member of cultural family, although not biological. This position gave me a deeper access as a result of this closer familial relationship. Thus, as a researcher I had access to cultural ceremonial activities, accepted status as someone with whom they would share stories, a close personal relationship with both Anangu Elders for example and a close long personal relationship with the other younger
storyteller. By sharing my own story in the research, I become part of the research in a deeply personal way. My education may have set me apart from the Anangu storytellers, but acceptance for my own cultural wisdom, gender and as family did not. Having such close personal relationships with each participant meant that I was privy to deep personal information and insights and I was trusted with this information. It was accepted that I would handle it according to the appropriate cultural protocols. This insider status positioned me within a deeply personal cultural framework and provided a depth of cultural safety, recognition and acceptance as a researcher who was a family member to be trusted with important information.

Autoethnography is also used in my methodology. As Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) describe it:

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product. (Ellis, Adams, Bochner, 2011, p.1)

In this research I describe my own personal experience and the personal experience of others in the research in the process of observing and writing of their experience in their cultural settings. This assists me to understand the cultural experiences that they live through on their road to Eldership. As an outsider in each of their communities and cultural experiences, observing, noting and writing of their lives, enabled me to have insight into the political and social aspects of their worlds. Stories of First Nations people in their lives and settings are often complex and so require a researcher such as myself who has a deep interest in whom I’m working with to enter into their culture and cultural experiences, to ensure I don’t exploit the people involved or write about this in a clinical way. I embedded myself personally and deeply in the experiences and in learning about their lives and listening deeply to their experiences. I wanted the research to be meaningful and to record their lives in a meaningful way. Much of the contents of the biographical stories in this research are of traumatic times
in colonial history and may evoke deep feelings amongst the reader as they did for me as the researcher. As a researcher I am part of these stories and my own biographical story is included as part of the research and as such it is accessible, evocative and grounded in personal experience, not only of my own life but within the lives of those other storytellers, living and sharing with them as I did during the research. Ellis, Adams and Bochner go on to say:

autoethnography is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodate subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist. (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p.2)

In the case of this research I as the researcher accommodated emotionality and placed my own influence on the research as an important cultural insider. I did not hide from matters that were emotional, subjective and important to the storyteller and this was an intimate part of the process of research. I also felt deeply the respect and trust that the storytellers in the research had in me to share their stories in a meaningful way for the reader in order to achieve answers to my research question. Much of the approach in my use of autoethnography was in interactive interviews and narrative ethnography as well as co-constructed narratives to illustrate the meaning in our related experiences. It also involved personal narrative. This work also heightened the relational ethics in my research. As Ellis, Adams & Bochner describe it ‘auto ethnographers not only implicate themselves with their work, but they also implicate close, intimate others’, (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, pg.4) Autoethnography therefore is seen as an important aspect of Indigenous research and especially one such as this, where deeply personal stories of the storytellers and the researcher are part of the research data and story directly related to answering the research question.

4.3 Indigenist Research Methodologies

The philosophy, methodology and methods used in research within the academy are vitally important. As an Indigenous academic wishing to grow the cross-cultural experiences of professional research and teaching colleagues to understand us more deeply, the desire to do this was vitally important to me. From within a Western
paradigm, the research methodology outlined in the thesis is guided by an Indigenist framework, premised on the work of other Indigenous scholars who have gone before me. These scholars have provided deep and rich writings to inform other researchers. My research methodology is based in many years of understanding colonisation both as an intellectual and from personal experience, and in the choice to decolonise myself, my education, my practice as an Indigenous academic – and in ‘decolonising’ the research I undertake with Indigenous people in Australia. As a researcher interested in ancient practices that have been affected by the process of colonisation and acculturation, this leads me to decolonise this research by utilising our way of communication, narrative, story and yarning through an Indigenist method based in the ancient traditions of two Elders in the research. In this way, we all learn, share and know a way of being and learning together. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) describes:

research methodology in its simplest definition generally refers to the ‘theory of method or the approach or technique being taken…decolonising methodologies is concerned with the context in which research problems are conceptualised and designed and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities’ (Smith 1999, p. 2).

Thus, my methodology is based on sound Indigenist research methods already used in the academy and is embedded in the clear observation of how the storytellers in my study will be affected and supported by the method of research utilised. The literature of academics working in the Indigenous Studies field shows an increasing knowledge and application of Indigenous research methodologies utilised with Indigenous peoples.

Martin Nakata (1998), a Torres Strait man, writing on Indigenous standpoint theory, says that:

Indigenous scholars study texts that have been written about them that because of the content and context of the text, is an intellectual pursuit and, an emotional journey that often involves outrage, pain, humiliation, guilt, anxiety and depression (Nakata 1998, p. 2).
For some studying, researching and writing of our own history and ways can be a painful emotional journey. For some Indigenous academics, it is hard to navigate the academy whilst talking, and sharing about the painful history of our colonisation, trauma and relationships with the dominant culture world. Nakata (1998, p. 3) also writes that:

...western academic conventions impose themselves on Indigenous people and it is only recently that we have been allowed the academic freedom to negotiate our own ways of knowing and writing in the academy.

Lester-Irabinna Rigney (1999), an Aboriginal academic of the Narungga Nation of South Australia, says that an Indigenist research approach must occur in the context of cultural safety, and be based on ‘rights, respect and responsibilities’ in research (Rigney 1999 p. 3). In order to do no harm in our research when working with Indigenous people, cultural safety and security is of significant importance. Cultural safety suggests that the space is made safe for Aboriginal people, where the values and principles important to them are considered paramount. The space then becomes a place where they can feel respected and safe to share their values, cultural traditions and views unencumbered by non-Indigenous peoples’ attitudes, words or denigration. Rigney further identifies Indigenist research as encompassing three fundamental and interrelated principles. These are: ‘resistance as the emancipatory imperative, political integrity and the privileging of Indigenous voices’ (Rigney 1997, p. 12).

In an Indigenist research approach such as the one used here, the history of Aboriginal lives and their voices in that history (my storytellers in particular) have been acknowledged as fundamental. Their history of colonisation that continues to include the physical and emotional, mental, cultural and spiritual genocide, focuses on their survival and resistance against oppression by ‘uncovering and protesting continuing forms of oppression’ (Rigney 1997, p. 12). Validation of stories in peoples’ lives is central:

…it is research which attempts to support the personal, community, cultural and political struggles of Indigenous
Australians to carve out a way of being for ourselves in Australia in which there is healing from the past oppressions and cultural freedom in the future (Rigney 1997, p. 12).

Rigney says that to ensure the political integrity of Indigenist research, Indigenous peoples themselves must undertake the research, ‘thereby providing a social link to the political struggle of the communities’ (Rigney 1997, p. 12). As an Indigenous researcher I undertook research during an Indigenous community struggle, and in doing so made myself responsible to that group of people and families in the community. This was a deeply personal experience, as members of the extended family of the research participants were affected by the politically oppressive events at the time. In a research process involving Aboriginal participants, those voices must be honoured deeply. I chose to do this because I could not do otherwise to fully reflect their struggle, oppression and need. As Rigney says:

> Indigenist research is research by Indigenous Australians whose primary informants are Indigenous Australians and whose goals are to serve and inform the Indigenous liberation struggle to be free of oppression and to gain power (Rigney 1997, p. 14).

My research as an idea, began during the implementation of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and this was a very oppressive and deeply personal experience for the research participants. Out of this struggle grew the visions for transforming their lives.

Karen Martin, an Aboriginal Noonuccal scholar, acknowledges the responsibility that Indigenous people have to define their own research needs, and to deliver their own research in ways that are meaningful to them, using a research paradigm that is ‘liberatory, emancipatory and confirming, and undeniably political’ (Martin 2001, p. 26). As an Indigenous researcher I observed, developed and worked in ways with my storytellers and the community, that made the process a personal and decisive one for them because we were working together toward a common goal and this made it meaningful for them. The process of describing my research and methodology to my
University Ethics board was a political process because I was creating an Indigenist research methodology that many did not understand. 54

Caroline Atkinson (2007) quotes Winch and Haywood’s (1999) work in her thesis describing how Indigenous people have:

> Identified qualitative research methods incorporating oral histories stories or narrative-style interviews and focus groups, for example, as preferred methods of data collection, as the way to promote their voices in the research process (Winch and Hayward 1999, cited in Atkinson 2007).

Atkinson continues that, in her own estimation:

> …in providing a setting for the stories to be heard, it is important not to deconstruct the narratives too vigorously but let the stories stand in their own integrity, weaving the research outcomes through, building relatedness between childhood and adulthood — allowing the voices of those informing the research to be validated (Atkinson 2007, p. 53).

It is essential that Aboriginal peoples themselves contribute to the ongoing dialogue and debate, and actively provide alternative solutions to issues directly affecting them from a culturally informed and knowledgeable position. As a researcher, I can assist them in this process by providing that information and allowing their own voices to drive the research in the way that they feel works best for them.

*Dadirri* is an Aboriginal concept referring to a deep contemplative process of listening to one another in reciprocal relationships. Miriam Ungunmerr, an Elder from Arnhem Land, produced in a speech in late 1998 a manifesto called *dadirri* to provide a framework for listening to each other based in her clan’s relationships as a way of reconciliation. She talked about healing between cultures white and black, using her clan’s way of *dadirri* to enable a researcher to ‘listen deeply’ to the Aboriginal voices they are working with. This ensures that Indigenous voices are privileged within the

---

54 ANU Ethics Approval for this research was obtained in June 2013 where I obtained free prior and informed consent from each Storyteller to record their stories for the research. As part of this Ethics process, compliance with research methodology with Indigenous peoples was stringent.
process and that research is conducted in an empowering and meaningful way (Ungunmerr, M., in Stockton 1995).

Judy Atkinson, as quoted by Caroline Atkinson (2007) used *dadirri* as a research method that:

> ...suggests using the principles and functions of *dadirri*, privileges an Aboriginal research approach, encompassing Aboriginal worldviews, and guides the process in the Aboriginal community in a way that is both ethical and credible (J. Atkinson 2002, cited in C. Atkinson 2009, p. 54).

Judy Atkinson goes on to explain that *dadirri* is a term belonging to the language of the Ngangikurungkurr people of the Daly River area of the Northern Territory and is a deep listening practice that occurs in many other groups in Australia.

> The Gamalaaraay [people] have the words *winangar* (listening) and *gurri* (deep) so *winangargurri* has a similar meaning to *dadirri*. Aboriginal peoples of central Queensland talk of *yimbanyiara* (listening to Elders), which has similar meanings and behavioural responsibilities to *dadirri* (J. Atkinson 2002, p. 97).

In Anangu culture the value of *nparji nparji* denotes mutual reciprocity. It is recognised in our sharing of stories, and the responsibility to act with fidelity to those stories, ensuring that research participants feel safe and that issues of confidentiality are respected. I also note the crucial aspect of adhering to cultural safety as non-intrusive observation, quietly aware watching, deep hearing with more than the ears, and observing the self. As well as in relationship to others, a reflective non-judgmental consideration of what is being seen and heard, a purposeful plan, based on lessons learnt from listening, with actions informed by learning and wisdom. The informed responsibility comes with knowledge, responsibility to act with fidelity to what has been heard, observed and learnt, an awareness and connection between the logic of the mind and the feelings of the heart and acknowledgement that the researcher brings to the research his or her subjective self. As Caroline Atkinson suggests in her work:
By incorporating these principles and functions of *dadirri* into the research, the researcher can embrace the worldviews of Aboriginal peoples, and does so with the ethical responsibility and sensitivity necessary to ensure that Indigenous voices are heard and honoured (Atkinson 2009, p. 55).

### 4.3.1 Narration Storytelling and Yarning

In doing this research I choose to follow an ancient tradition of Aboriginal peoples, to tell story, to narrate a story or event or a life and ‘yarn’ about it as we say. ‘Story as a cultural tool, serves to communicate knowledge and operates as a structure to organise and give meaning to human life’ (Bird 2014, p. 378).

In answering my question, I wanted to hold onto the way our Elders share and communicate our knowledge, and this is usually done through story, song, dance and ceremony. For this study then, storytelling and yarning is an appropriate mechanism for Indigenous research. As Maggie Walter (2010), an Indigenous Tasmanian researcher describes it, storytelling has been an ancient methodology and is now an accepted modern Indigenist methodology within the academy. This methodology embedded in the cultural interactions of Aboriginal people is one in which they can relate to the researcher as a safe methodology of engagement, deep listening, learning, sharing, and caring and elucidating a story. The method engages the participants initially by asking them some indicative questions to allow them to begin sharing the story. When writing of this methodology in my ethics protocol application I discussed how this ancient form of Aboriginal engagement is a safe and appropriate process of sharing when undertaking research with First Nations people. They would feel safe with the researcher as they are focusing the sharing within a process familiar to the participants. Calling them storytellers fits with the cultural protocol of requesting people to share of themselves in a deeply personal way to be able to answer the questions of this research. When the ethics committee requested further information

about this methodology I explained its importance in a cultural context, in that First nations people understand this method, are comfortable with it and engage more readily with a researcher when we use informal methods of ‘yarning’ as we are together in any given situation we may find ourselves.

The way in which storytelling may occur is when we yarn in informal settings over cups of tea, in cars on a journey to the homeland or the beach, sharing in a natural setting as we would in any way of being together. When I talked with Barbara Tjikatu about this method of research and the way in which we were talking and being with each other, she described it by saying Kanyini Tjungungku to me and then explained its meaning as ‘caring and sharing together’ (B. Tjikatu, Interview, 21 July 2013).

Storytelling through creative and intellectual mediums based in an Indigenous methodological foundation displays the journey to Eldership as a cultural spiritual journey of growth where knowledge is shared within a strong societal governance structure. The whole person is taught, and the learning is based in spiritual cultural knowing. It is a holistic combination of human and kurunpa – soul development that occurs to create spiritually, emotionally, mentally and intellectually powerful beings. As these young Aboriginal people grow older, through tasks and ceremony, they show in their own being and doing the growth and support they had through mentoring and learning with others how to grow similarly. Then the cycle continues. Their power enables them to grow into self-determined self-sovereign transformative beings, following their Elders as ‘visionary leaders’, engaging in their own inner transformative journeys as a result.

Enabling Aboriginal voices is of paramount importance and further emphasised using qualitative information and narrative storytelling. The individual narratives or stories of the people participating in this research will give meaning and validity to the study and the emphasis on their words will showcase Aboriginal Indigenist methodology, in which the story is the primary tool of validation:
Stories provide a framework for members of a culture to construct, organise and interpret experience, where the meaning of experiences serves as an introduction to and confirmation of one’s culture (Bird 2014, p. 377).

This research includes stories of first contact and childhood trauma, as one of the Elder participants was stolen and returned to country and family as an older man, and of losing grandparents and parents to the ravages of acculturation and colonisation. As an Aboriginal writer of important Aboriginal Elders and their life stories, I am, as other Aboriginal writers, committed to the telling of these stories in a way that allows their truth to be told. James Youngblood Henderson (2002) maintains that stories are more than repositories of information and knowledge, ‘not only do stories transmit validated experiences, but they also renew, awaken and honour life forces’ (Henderson 2002, p. 266). As Karen Martin explains:

> Ways of knowing are about the past, our ancestry and heritage but equally about our present and future. These are the stories of our relatedness. Our stories continue as they incorporate change according to social, political, historical and spatial dimensions of individuals and the group (Martin 2007, p. 45-47).

Aboriginal cultural knowledge and ways of knowing are unique and wise in the ways of managing self, country, the environment, social relationships and spiritual interactions with other dimensions – a culture lived for thousands of years in a landscape of extremes and spiritual dimensions of great complexity.

### 4.4 Different ways of Knowing, Being and Doing

‘Stories have power and give power’ (Martin 2007, p. 46). Karen Martin uses relatedness theory to explore the philosophy and practice of Indigenist research in defining ways of knowing; ways of being; ways of doing. Martin discusses these three principles relating to storytelling. As she explains:

> Stories are our law. Stories give identity as they connect us and fulfil our sense of belonging. Stories are grounding, defining, comforting and embracing. Stories vary in their purpose and content and so Stories can be political and yet equally healing. They can be shared verbally, physically or visually. Their meanings and messages teach, admonish, tease, celebrate,
entertain, provoke and challenge. However, there are protocols to observe with Stories, and one such protocol is that you must only tell a Story, as you know it (Martin 2007, p. 45).

When a person shares a deeply personal story it can transform those listening – this is one of the powerful aspects of story and storytelling. As one relates history, oral history, ancient stories, stories of life, learning, knowledge and wisdom other people relate deeply from their own personal space and place. This is how Aboriginal people use stories to share the past, the heritage, the knowing and the wisdom. These stories relate each to each other and share political, social, personal and cultural meaning. Stories are listened to with respect, honouring the speaker and the listener. This is the principle of dadirri. It is the way of teaching and sharing with those learning, where they were taught and expected to behave this way as a part of the three Laws of Respect: specifically, Respect and Honouring the Self, Respect and Honouring Others, and Respect and Honouring the Land on which one is sitting.

4.4.1 Anangu Way of Knowing, Being and Doing: Epistemology, Ontology and Axiology

The research methodology is designed to ensure the cultural integrity of the Indigenous participants in this research, the Elder teachers and the next generation of cultural teachers. It is specifically based on 30 years of experience and engagement and during this period of research, five years of observation and documentation. Being with my research participants, Kummunara Randall, Barbara Tjikatu and my other Anangu Elders inspired me to follow their way of engaging and working that respects their ways of knowing, being and doing. I also equate this to our original way of knowing, being and doing that existed prior to colonisation. A way of being that Anangu people have sustained through generations of cultural teaching, based on the way their society has operated where assimilation and integration into some aspects of western cultural traditions are mostly rejected. They speak their language (English is usually a fourth or fifth language), they utilise their skin names and traditional birth names, and they observe the cultural traditions and protocols of their Pitjanjatjara or Yankunytjatjara lore both in the grandparents, parents, children and grandparents’
generations. In being with them, I concluded that western culture is there, and some things are useful to them, but maintenance of their cultural way of being is more important and comes first, well before the benefits of western culture. As a respected Anangu Elder explained:

Our country, specifically the Central Desert area that surrounds Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Attila, three magnificent monolithic structures that rise out of the landscape with strength and purpose makes us feel the same as it (B. Randall, Interview, 3 December 2012).

Thus, we have strength and purpose when born on it, growing up on it with family and community, and actively living an Anangu way of life as it has been lived under the Law for many generations where the connection to it is not severed by forced assimilation \(^{56}\) or active colonisation \(^{57}\). As expressed by the Anangu Elder:

Our traditions enable us to live in the moment, to live the Law actively in daily life with purpose and to hold onto this is the most vital thing in our lives (B. Randall, Interview, 3 December 2012).

Anangu people spend a lot of time in observation and silence, articulating when they are ready in very succinct terms. They tend to have a deep intuitive practice of observation and sharing when they have formed their ideas clearly. I noted early in my engagements with the storytellers even prior to the research that they watch and wait, they act when ready and they allow their intuition to form their actions. I tried to emulate this way of being as I began to consider and think about the research over many years of discussion prior to formal engagement. As a methodology Anangu observation is an important part of cultural engagement as they tend to observe before engaging and interacting especially with new people. As a newly accepted ‘culturally adopted’ family member, people would observe me, in fact over some years, before

\(^{56}\) Being stolen and not being able to reconnect or come back to country and teachings with teachers on your own country, being forced into mission life and becoming more white than Aboriginal, and other ways utilised by colonisers to ensure you become like them.

\(^{57}\) My meaning of ‘active colonisation’ is where Aboriginal people decide or follow the generations before them into assimilation and integration into the colonising culture and become a mixture of both cultures with a focus on ‘being’ western in their way of being, doing and knowing rather than choosing not to follow.
engaging with me or including me in meetings or gatherings. Thus, I have chosen to employ this methodology in the research method. I spent many years observing their interactions with others but in terms of the research would then ask questions whilst yarning over food, or whilst out in the bush if I had questions about particular relevant things. Yarning and observing is a way of cultural operation with these family groups and so I chose to follow them in formulating how I would go about engaging with them. This was important in the context of a culturally safe and secure environment in which to undertake research with them. I only used the data I collected during the formal parts of my fieldwork although this did go on over a period of years. All participants elected to not be confidential informants particularly the older Anangu storytellers as they wanted their stories recorded. Parts of their story that they did not want to reveal were indicated and not recorded or documented in the research and I honoured that request. This was necessary to ensure their trust in me during this process.

To honour the uniqueness of these traditions and way of being, the research methodology follows the Anangu way of being as it exists and is practiced on their country – the Pitjanjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands between Uluru, Kata Tjuta, and Attila. It is specifically based in and of their tradition of sitting quietly where your Elder teacher asks you to ask of them what you need to know, where they answer and continue allowing the story to unfold; their teachings follow in the yarning and sharing. Where oral learning is shared and taught in the reciprocity of *nparji*58 where the sharing and painting of pictures, drawings, painting in the earth, singing songs, creating music and song together and sharing stories to explain complex issues in an understandable way for the younger person. This study will specifically record the participants in their own cultural ways of being and knowing, ensuring protocols of importance are maintained. Their ways of knowing and being are paramount. The following explains it in more detail.

---

58 The way of mutual reciprocity where giving, sharing and receiving occurs between people, parties or groups – in this case the researcher and cultural teacher/Elder.
4.5 *Kanyini Tjungungku: An Indigenous Research Method*

This research felt like an inner transformative spiritual journey of engagement and being together. I asked permission to call the methodology *‘Kanyini Tjungungku’* which most literally in English means ‘to be – to have harmony in sharing and working together’. It is essentially about the relationship of *being and knowing* and then sharing in a process of equality with respect to researcher and participant. The cultural relationship of Elder and younger learner never changes. The researcher is not the expert; the researcher is sharing and caring in a deep cultural spiritual relationship of *being*.

For the purposes of this research I will focus on the practice of *Kanyini Tjungungku* ‘caring together’ as the basis for the research methodology used in this study. Within this Yankunytjatjara concept is the process of listening deeply and caring for all – *kurunpa* (self-spirit), *waltja* – family, *ngura* – land, and the *Tjukurpa* – belief system. It is the foundation of the methodology used for gathering the information and is built on the Indigenous methodological research already described.

Aboriginal interests, experiences and knowledge must be at the centre of research methodologies and the construction of knowledge about Aboriginal peoples. Thus, I cannot ‘do’ research with Anangu Elders but must wait until the right moment emerges where I can ask or be asked to participate, to record, to share, to know. This process may take years and time is of no consequence. First, it is important to show patience, respect, stillness and the ability to manage myself, to do what I am asked to do, to help and to share and then the action of *nparji nparji* occurs where we begin to share in equal measure. These processes always occur before you are given any information. Being Anangu also means that there are further requirements of honour and respect that you must show if it is not your country – qualities must be seen to be within you before you are included. On the one hand, they are extremely inclusive and exclusive at the same time. Anangu live with duality in a very powerful way – a way that does not appear difficult for them. A small example was given to me by Uncle Bob (B. Randall, Interview, 10 May 2012) that someone could ask you for $100
and you would have $100 right under your hand and visible to all; but you could say to that person that you have no money and even though it was obvious in sight that you had $100, that person would accept that you had no money to give them despite this. This duality is entirely acceptable in this world, as it matters whether the person wishes to acknowledge or not acknowledge access to the money although clearly visible.

*Kanyini Tjungungku* incorporates the principles of harmony, responsibility, reciprocity, working together, learning and sharing together, caring together and encapsulates the ideas and principles of *dadirri* – deep listening and walking beside in a process of political and personal emancipation on the research and learning journey. The method is one of engaging slowly into a group as a participant researcher and undertaking a series of storytelling recordings of each participants’ journey in their lives to become people who are highly regarded and respected in their own communities as Elders. Thus, they are leaders who are respected not only for their values, ideas and ways of working but who have cultural and spiritual significance to others and a depth of intellectual and emotional intelligence which others consider wise. The research methodology draws out these critical aspects from the stories listened to deeply and shares them as they are in mutual respect for each person’s journey. *Kanyini Tjungungku* thus emphasises action and activist research and study which is mutual and reciprocal in a community-based setting which enables the participants to decide and to control all aspects of the research method.

### 4.5.1 The Kurunpa Cycle

The whole life is a journey cycle with no end and no beginning. The *kurunpa* – travels this cycle continuously in the *Tjukurpa* through life, death, life and death infinitely. We are first the spirit experience, and then the human experience but always from the *kurunpa* perspective. The Soul or Spirit is considered the important *being* and we come to Earth to live a human experience. This is why our Ancestors, gave us the Law by which to live – it assists us to live as human beings. The belief system is that we are all spirit beings in human form having a human experience of relationships with the
self as a human, with each other as both spirit and human, and with the land as our spiritual mother, and then Biaime, the Higher Being as the spirit creator being within the Tjukurpa. Thus, the first relationship is with the self as a soul, others as souls or spirit beings and then the Earth, the land and country as mother – Ngungynateea and with Biaime. We come from the Tjukurpa as kurunpa and begin our human life – to live that human life on the Earth and we have the consciousness of being kurunpa – a Soul or Spirit to enable us to have that experience more easily – to enable us to live the spiritual Law of our lives as human beings.

This Indigenist methodology is based on the interaction of Anangu life relating as a way of knowing and being. Relating begins always with the Kurunpa - soul and is maintained within and from the kurunpa. We are taught that the primary purpose of being human is relationship and to have relationships with other human beings and the land during our lives. Therefore, relating is the essence of the method of research. What is important is the way that I relate to my First Nations participants and how I relate as an insider-outsider researcher (as discussed in Chapter 1). Thus, this research methodology is a particular way of relating and relationship development based on the spirit engaging first as spirit with other spirits – kurunpa. It begins as a sacred relationship. The left-hand side of Fig. 4.1 gives a visual representation of this process.
It is this way that is the research methodology, to respect and honour this way of being. Because I do have to consider myself an outsider (not blood family): I have always related that way in order to be respectful of all the blood relatives.

In the right-hand section of Fig. 4.1, I am a human being who has a soul—kurunpa inside that relates to all other kurunpa – souls I come in contact with as human beings. We are taught that the soul – the kurunpa – drives behaviour as a human being and it is this spiritual aspect of ourselves as a being that we use to relate to each other. Coming from the soul–kurunpa has to be the focus of our relationships. Therefore, relating is the essence of the method of research. What is important is the way that I relate to my Anangu and Barkindji participants and how I relate as an insider–outsider researcher. Thus, this research methodology is a particular way of relating and relationship development.
The centrality of my relationship to each one in the family and extended family relationship is shown in Fig. 4.2. The relationship begins from the first engagement as a young woman – spirit to spirit connection made in meeting Kummunara Randall, his children and extended families. He adopted me into his family in 2007, when we began to work together on his country. He and other relatives in the extended family became my teachers and mentors. For some 35 years, I learnt from them and built a relationship with them, visiting and working with them and then as a researcher on this thesis.

![Fig. 4.2 Family Relationship as Researcher](image)

I stayed at the community as I interacted with and met more people from there and other lands who had travelled to be there. From 2004 to 2017 I returned to Mutitjulu and to Yulara taking visitors and my friends from overseas, introducing them to Kummunara and others, and visiting friends and family and enjoying the land. One shares wisdom, shares of oneself, gives and receives as part of the relationship of nparji nparji – giving and receiving. I brought clothes, other goods, food, took people to country numerous times, gave of my knowledge, time and effort to build the business
we were involved with, until eventually my relationship changed to one of being and becoming family.

My way of being in this situation was one of quietly observing, waiting to be invited and asked to share who I was, information about myself and why I was there. These things emerged in communication over time, but what was most important and most observable to my research participants was how I related to everyone. The respect I paid to all was very important and observed by those around me. People do relate to your spiritual energy: they feel it, they intuit the way in which you work together and often one does not have to talk or ask. It just happens. Always they are the traditional custodians and I am the learner observing, not making judgements and quietly sitting with them. Being a spirit being means having the consciousness of spirit-soul in relating to others, before the consciousness of being a human doing. Thus, speech, actions, words, behaviours, attitude and consciousness in the engagement process are everything and this then develops from your way of being. One cannot fake this as people feel it and make decisions about you based on it. As Anangu see how you be they come to relate their being to yours and the relationship is established and continued.

Sharing occurs in Tjukurpa knowledge and Law and all things. In the research process, it is important to spend the time to do this process and it takes what it takes. I always defer to them in terms of their timing, their availability, and their feelings. It is not about my timetable or my need. The feeling is one of flow, timelessness, allowing and being as the land is a feeling of timelessness, of living in the moment and allowing all to flow.

Being kurunpa can be expressed by the following:

To be the embodiment:

- Of stillness
- Of peace
- Of living in the moment
- Of waiting for things to come to you
- Of Sacred in thought word and action
- Of living in the Tjukurpa (the Sacredness)

And this leads to the understanding of being. What occurs because of this relationship energy and being with is that you become intuitive and in tune with each other, the Earth, the needs and become part of the entire action and story.

To give an example:

My Tjukurpa and responsibility is for water. My animal connection is the White Owl passed down from great grandmother. Thus, I don’t just look after these things and relate to them I can become water and become Owl. I become as the flow of water in my thoughts, words and actions as a human as this consciousness is driven from my kurunpa – my spirit. If my Tjukurpa totemic animal connection is emu or turtle and any animal or Earth process I become this. I develop the traits of the animal, I become as they are, I accentuate the positive traits and I learn to deal with and love my shadow traits – or negative traits. This makes my deep connection to Earth, to animals, to land and country – thus we are relatives in the way in which we related.

This enables growth for both and all Beings in the relationship, in learning, knowledge sharing, wisdom, decision-making, collaboration, transformation and BEING. Thus, the catalyst for all relationship and relating begins with the kurunpa and spreads outwards making connection with all required. The relationship becomes easy, without effort. It only requires consciousness. It’s like the energy of a stone in a pond – it spreads out, resonates and affects all in its path. This leads to engagement as it hits the kurunpa of others and they connect with it if required to and then it draws them toward you or you are all drawn toward each other for purpose. Living on country with family who has always practiced this enables one to easily do this. For example, an Elder or person will have the thought to speak with you and you pick it up intuitively and act on it. This always happens when I’m on country with my adopted family. It also happened with my biological family and my daughter and mother particularly. It’s like intuitive telegraphic messages because the kurunpa are aligned with each other. If I put my human intellect or emotions before this process I might
say to myself ‘no that’s silly’ and not act on it and miss the chance, but Anangu people recognise that this is our first language – the language of the *kurunpa* – the language of silence. So, we first learn to practice this and this is what is required to engage this way in relationships in order to use this methodology.

A relationship of sacredness, based on the spiritual aspect of soul to soul sharing, is established through the process of epistemology and ontology – knowing, being, and doing. Every interaction thus occurs in this way. In time the researcher goes in, sits with, records, engages, discusses, asks questions, relates information about the self, shares story, listens to stories, performs in dances, songs and ceremonies and engages in cultural activity with participants; the *kurunpa* engages in the process of *‘Kanyini Tjungungku’ to be in harmony with whilst working sharing and caring together*. This is the research methodology. Thus, everything needed for the research is fulfilled as the relationship is intuitive, innovative, sometimes obvious, spoken, shared, asked for and sometimes it naturally occurs without question once the relationship is established.

The catalyst for all relating and relationships begins with *kurunpa* and spreads outwards in action, making the connections with all as needed. The relationship is easy and without effort as it comes from my consciousness, my way of being. The engagement begins as each *kurunpa* that comes in contact with you, connects, and then is drawn to you as the connection is made. You then wait for people to approach and the sharing begins where the relating continues. This enables growth for both beings in the relationship, in learning, knowledge, sharing, wisdom, decision-making, collaboration and transformation. The research methodology happens as shown in Fig. 4.3. It continuously occurred in a cyclical process and extends beyond the finalisation of the research as the relationship is firmly embedded in the consciousness of each person.
The *Kanyini Tjungungku* Indigenous methodology is a gentle intuitive relating from my being to the participants’ being, doing whatever we need to do in the moment. Being present and in the moment is the only way to develop the intuitive connection necessary to engage as you pick up on the other person’s *kurunpa* energy. It becomes a natural process. For the purpose of researching and writing this thesis, I engage certain amounts of time with my storytellers and then leave that relationship. My experience has been that the relationship becomes so close that I belong, from that time on, in a relationship of deeper meaning. Once the relationship is established – which can sometimes take many years – the closeness of *knowing, being and doing* with each other becomes a natural process that has no time and requires no language, schedule or arrangements. Everything happens naturally, and we intuitively begin to enter an energy of intuitive knowing that allows the transition of knowledge from one to the other and back again. This can then be recorded and shared not just in the physical relationship of being together on country but the intuitive relationship of the *Tjukurpa.* The connection emerges in such a way that all things align so that the research can occur. You feel you are always with them; never separated and so information is shared across space and time as we share in *Inma* and in the *Tjukurpa.*
feel like I’m always with them on country sitting down talking, learning, doing and Being.

We walk gently on the Earth we be gently on the Earth – We sit and wait for everything to come to us and we can also create it. We don’t force it – we use the way of deep listening, living in as much silence as occurs, and not creating anything that would disturb the Kanyini – harmony of our relationship with self and with others and the land. It takes as long as it takes, as in nature, so in relationships. We tolerate, we listen, we discern, we co-operate, we judge, we decide, we move forward, we act, and the feeling is intuitive, sacred and deep. This is the way of Kanyini Tjungungku research engagement. This methodology happens intuitively – one cannot teach it scientifically as it requires a soul to soul – spirit to spirit – kurunpa to kurunpa relationship gained through continual community engagement.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the development of an Indigenous research methodology to honour the research participants and Anangu Elders I worked with and to describe a soul to soul relationship as the beginning of engagement. This enables the building of intuitiveness between each. I have explained how it came about, its foundation, and relationship to the work and to other Indigenous research methods. I have also shared and discussed other prominent Indigenous research methodologies developed by Indigenous academics working in the academy who have gone before me. Our reasons why it is necessary to utilise such methodologies with our communities have been explored. I have built on previous Indigenous research methodologies in order to incorporate the particular intuitiveness of Anangu ways of being with people. I have explained its relationship to other methodologies, in particular Martin’s (2001, 2007) relatedness and Atkinson’s dadirri.

I utilised this adapted methodology in my fieldwork and research engagement with the participants, their families and extended communities and thus I can say the research experience was a deeply felt one on both sides. I felt connected, accepted and
engaged as I believe they also were. In doing Indigenous methodologies with our communities and building on the diversity of Indigenous groups ways of being and doing, we are broadening the experience, knowledge and range of research methods with our First Nations people and helping to education non-Indigenous research academics about how to engage in research with First Nations people in Australia.

Building *Kanyini Tjungungku* as a research methodology involved observing, wondering, following, thinking, reading, sharing and listening, putting into practice what was being taught – to not act out of greed, attachment, ego, anger and lust. The research methodology was to manage the self by putting spirit – *kurunpa* – first and seeing others in the same way. By learning to let go of control, of fear, of time and knowing, then active decolonisation of the mind and heart would lead to the soul-*kurunpa*. In understanding the deeper connections to spirit, spirituality, sacredness, humanness, ways of understanding, learning, sharing and being I have could utilised that knowledge and wisdom.
Chapters 5 & 6 are restricted from open access for 12 months due to death of the research participant and at the request of the others.
Chapter 7

WIYARINGANYI   Finish

Artwork 10   Sacredness spreads……© Artist Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2012-2017
This artwork was begun during the early part of my PhD and finished near the end. I dreamt it over those years and drew it bit by bit. It emerged as a feeling of Biaime spreading the sacredness (gold), healing (purple), and love through the connections in the Tjukurpa and in the Land, bringing those two worlds together to allows us to be together across time and space. The sacredness comes from Biaime and spreads through our Souls (kurunpa) as we share ourselves with each other and we live by the Law in our lives on the Earth. We see the Elders and Ancestors sitting down around Biaime talking about and feeling this sacredness and then sharing it through their teaching and their ways of being and doing. We young ones then follow. The water Tjukurpa of my dreaming is at the edges of the drawing telling me that my Tjukurpa heals and holds me throughout my life. This is how sacredness of our Tjukurpa spreads by sharing, doing, knowing and being together with each other.
7.1 Introduction

In this research, I have examined the stories of four Aboriginal people on their roads to Eldership, analysing the development of Aboriginal leaders as a path of human emotional, mental and cultural development that enables them to reach a higher level of thinking, knowing, being and doing. I utilised the theories of Erik Erikson’s Stages of Human Development, Robert Kegan’s theory of constructive development and higher levels of thinking and the writings of other Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership researchers. I have drawn on authors in trauma, acculturation, family systems theory that impact on human development, to understand the impact of trauma on these storytellers. Additionally, I have suggested that sacred and visionary leadership is a process of cultural learning and development, whereby Elder teachers bring up others to become leaders by being inspirational through their own ways of knowing, being and doing. Each of the storytellers has been involved in a system of cultural educational development that enables sacredness development based in the Tjukurpa Aboriginal cultural belief system. Tjukurpa Pulka is living the practice of the sacredness of Aboriginal culture in our daily lives, in our way of knowing, being and doing. The stories have shown how the storytellers did this, through examining their developmental stages, their life challenges and their transformative changes.

Sacred leadership is about going beyond being egocentric, socialised and dependent to reach a higher order of consciousness as a leader. This requires integrative thinking of the self, others and the world. The two Anangu Elder storytellers in this thesis have navigated beyond the adversities of generational acculturation to become sacred in their way of knowing, being, and doing. The other younger storytellers are on their road to sacredness. Sacredness is the fifth higher order of consciousness in Robert Kegan’s constructive development theory and is the highest level of thinking that a leader can reach. It enables them to be integrative and inspired and motivates others to follow them. The two Anangu Elders in this thesis were visionary leaders and utilised their visions to inspire others to engage in economic and social development.
This thesis examined the lives of the four storytellers to illustrate that despite having experienced disruption in their lives, they developed their consciousness to levels of independence, interdependence and sacred in knowing, being and doing and they inspired projects in community transformation that are still ongoing. I participated in the lives of the Anangu Elders, as an observer, a researcher and as a cultural family member, who assisted in bringing their visions to fruition. These Elders impacted the lives of their family members, the two younger storytellers and others to engage in bringing their visions into action. This chapter shares the major findings of my research and makes some relevant conclusions related to the question of this research.

### 7.2 Main Findings

This thesis has researched the question;

*Is there an Aboriginal Road to Eldership that creates sacred and visionary leaders, and can these sacred and visionary Elders inspire community transformation?*

There are four main findings from this research. These are:

1. that Aboriginal culture had its own form of development and education across the lifespan to develop people to higher levels of thinking, being, knowing and doing

2. that engaging in the *Tjukurpa* knowledge and practice in life can create individuals who become sacred and visionary leaders with a view to ensuring a generational legacy

3. that visioning is part of being an Elder leader at the highest level of thinking and that those individuals can impact and lead community transformation, and

4. where the Aboriginal generational cultural education process is disrupted there is a pathway back that is cross-clan with other Elders, leaders and teachers for healing and recovery of arrested development.

Each of these findings is described in the following sections.
7.2.1 Aboriginal Culture had a Human Developmental System

Erik Erickson (1950) worked in America and Europe where he wrote of the Stages of Development in a western dominant culture context. I could not find any evidence of his research and development being undertaken outside a European, western population. I am not aware if his research included other cultural contexts or Indigenous populations. Robert Kegan’s leadership development and higher orders of consciousness work (1982, 1994) appears to have come from a similar context, within the educational leadership field at Harvard University, in North America. However, these theories, research and work resonated with my own experience and learning as a human being within my Aboriginal cultural history and my own stages of development. My discovery of their work many years ago was the foundation for my exploration of other western therapists researching and writing in the family systems field about families of origin, arrested development and recovery. My training with therapists working in America in clinics directly with adult children in abuse, addiction and violence recovery, and my experience working with people from many cultural backgrounds in recovery from these issues, enabled me to see the relevance of this knowledge to my own culture and community. It explained to me how to recover from the impacts of generational acculturation in my own family of origin, of trauma recovery and of how to transform the self when early childhood development is impacted by these issues.

My question in this research was whether Aboriginal culture had a development system that engaged a person across the lifespan, in a process of cultural learning, education and emotional development that led to higher levels of consciousness. Did the Aboriginal system develop in people a way of knowing, being and doing at the fifth order of consciousness – the sacred level as described by Kegan? The research was not to prove that the Kegan and Erickson’s models were applicable to Aboriginal culture, but to investigate whether Aboriginal culture engaged in its own process of developing people to leadership on their life journey to Eldership. This research has found that through the Tjukurpa Law and our developmental learning and education
system, there were developmental processes that enabled healthy and functional development in children to adulthood where people were mentored to reach sacred levels of leadership. Aboriginal people understood the emotional, mental, intellectual, spiritual and physical developmental needs of human beings and applied that knowledge to their own processes of child and adult human development through their own system. They established and utilised this system to provide a lifelong learning platform that assisted people to engage with and learn a value system where principles, attitudes and purpose were aligned. The system supported growth to a level of consciousness in Elder leaders that ensured responsibility for the whole. In this system everything was integrated, a person had a vision of the whole, self, family, the Earth, animals and all energy in a way of knowing that was harmonious and based on humility, love, caring and sharing and teaching the next generation to be the same. As a result, people growing up through this lifelong learning process were supported through the stages of human psychosocial development, by engaging in a life of sacred learning, of ceremonial life passages that marked each transition of emotional growth from early childhood, to childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, adult and older life. In being mentored and supported through these stages by Elder teachers, individuals would eventually be invited to become Elders and continue the tradition. Becoming Elder was an invitation based on your being a person who exhibited sacred leadership at a higher level of consciousness. For some, that process enabled the development of ways of knowing, being, doing and thinking that led to sacred and visionary leadership. In fact, Aboriginal culture expected their leaders – Elders to be of a higher order of consciousness. They had to have a sacred way of knowing, being and doing in order to be so.

The four storytellers investigated show how this was possible in their lives and how they developed on their roads to Eldership, through a system of learning and mentorship by other Elder cultural teachers, into individuals who then later in life evolved into sacred leaders or are on the road to becoming sacred. The Anangu Elders specifically had an ancient process of development that ensured young men and women were held by their teachers, as they went from one stage to the next. Each
storyteller in this thesis has described their early developmental stages as supportive, healthy, functional and full. Kummunara Randall’s assessment that engaging in the four elements of family, belief system, relationship with land and country and the practice of the spiritual life – *tjukurpa pulka*, particularly *kanyini* enabled the development of a whole and healthy functional being, intellectually, emotionally, culturally and spiritually is evidenced here. I have described how the Anangu culture enabled the two Elder storytellers to navigate their early stages of development healthily, so that during the traumatic circumstances of later development and engagement with white colonisers, they could utilise that functionality to manage themselves. This cultural learning and sharing of cultural knowledge, ceremony and Law, supported healing so that people could regain those parts of their stages of development that had been arrested. The two Anangu storytellers expressed in their own terms how ceremonial life passages and teaching seemed aligned with Erikson’s stages of development.

During the research I was searching for evidence of a system that included Erikson’s and Kegan’s knowledge to ascertain if Aboriginal culture had a development system that enabled healthy, emotional intelligence development and sacred leadership consciousness. Aboriginal people are human beings, who live in a particular cultural context that has been ongoing for more than 65,000 years. As human beings I surmised that these stages of development and higher orders of consciousness may be applicable and evident to Aboriginal people, but how? I had the experience of this in my own life and had seen it in my earlier research in family systems work, but what did it look like? I decided to do a comparison table of the stages of development with Anangu culture as it was the one that had been least impacted over time by colonisation, and my Anangu Elders had grown up and lived intact in the Anangu development system. Using the Erikson table, discussing it with them and through observation in their families and extended community, I developed the comparison table with Anangu lifespan development (Table 7.1). The table shows the equivalent of Erickson’s Stages of human development within the Anangu life cycle and the related activities that occur in Anangu development.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ERICKSON’S STAGE</strong></th>
<th><strong>ANANGU EQUIVALENT</strong></th>
<th><strong>ANANGU STAGE/ACTIVITIES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOPE</strong>&lt;br&gt;Trust Vs Mistrust 0–18mths</td>
<td>Early life is full of constant love, attention, sharing and mothering with multiple women together in order to ensure that trust and hope are developed very strongly. Children are exposed to the <em>Tjukurpa</em> and traditional life through constantly being carried around during gatherings and events that occur throughout the daily life. They learn who their mothers, grandmothers and teachers are, and they bond with the extended family. Shaming never occurs during this time and no force or discipline is used. Children are considered sacred, beings who come from the <em>Tjukurpa</em>, so they are treated this way in order to give a strong foundation for their life.</td>
<td>Infancy&lt;br&gt;When a child is born it is covered with earth and ochre to assist the soul and human form into integration. A child is usually smoked with its mother at birth and grandmothers do the required ceremonies over the child to allow the <em>kurunpa</em> to enter the human world in a good way. Other ceremonies may occur during this time according to need, season or other <em>Tjukurpa</em> requirement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WILL</strong>&lt;br&gt;Autonomy Vs Shame &amp; Doubt 2–4 years</td>
<td>Children are allowed entire autonomy and freedom at this age to explore and be happy and to learn that they can develop their own will, but usually their grandmothers give them gentle boundaries by showing them the proper behaviour. Children are never disciplined with any force during this time.</td>
<td>Early Childhood&lt;br&gt;Children are always included in any traditional business including ceremony at this age but are not expected to participate but stay with the women in the circle. It is to ensure they are exposed to cultural life. This is an important time for the ego development and so it is allowed with gentle boundaries from grandmothers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early life is full of constant love, attention, sharing and mothering with multiple women together in order to ensure that trust and hope are developed very strongly. Children are exposed to the *Tjukurpa* and traditional life through constantly being carried around during gatherings and events that occur throughout the daily life. They learn who their mothers, grandmothers and teachers are, and they bond with the extended family. Shaming never occurs during this time and no force or discipline is used. Children are considered sacred, beings who come from the *Tjukurpa*, so they are treated this way in order to give a strong foundation for their life.

Infancy
When a child is born it is covered with earth and ochre to assist the soul and human form into integration. A child is usually smoked with its mother at birth and grandmothers do the required ceremonies over the child to allow the *kurunpa* to enter the human world in a good way. Other ceremonies may occur during this time according to need, season or other *Tjukurpa* requirement.

Children are allowed entire autonomy and freedom at this age to explore and be happy and to learn that they can develop their own will, but usually their grandmothers give them gentle boundaries by showing them the proper behaviour. Children are never disciplined with any force during this time.

Early Childhood
Children are always included in any traditional business including ceremony at this age but are not expected to participate but stay with the women in the circle. It is to ensure they are exposed to cultural life. This is an important time for the ego development and so it is allowed with gentle boundaries from grandmothers.
encourage self-sufficiency, toddlers develop a sense of autonomy – a sense of being able to handle problems on their own. If caregivers demand too much too soon or refuse to let children perform tasks of which they are capable, or ridicule early attempts children may develop shame and doubt about their ability to handle problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initiative Vs Guilt 4-5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The child is learning to master the world around them, learning basic skills and the principles of physics. Things fall down, not up, round things roll around. They learn to count and speak with ease. At this stage, the child wants to begin and complete their own actions for a purpose. Guilt is a confusing, new emotion. They may feel guilty over things that logically should not cause guilt. They may feel guilt when an initiative does not produce the desired results. The child learns to take initiative and prepare for leadership and goal achievement roles and may develop negative behaviours as a result of a sense of frustration in not being able to achieve a goal. They may engage in aggressive behaviours and be overly assertive to parents e.g. throwing objects, hitting or yelling. Independence in planning and undertaking activities is important; if adults discourage the pursuit of independent activities or

| Pre-Education Years |

Children begin to be taught concepts relating to law, country, culture, food and relationships. Children are never disciplined with any force or violence, loud words or shouting during these years. The primary idea is to ensure a child develops its place in the world and begins to use rational logic to understand its purpose and allow it to develop initiative and creativity. As they explore their humanness they are encouraged to enjoy and love themselves and each other. Sharing and caring about self, others and country begins to be taught through singing, stories and ceremony.

Ceremonies are performed and children at this age are included, they have ochre rubbed on their bodies and designs are also painted. They are encouraged to dance with the older dancers, boys with men and girls with women. Children usually begin to explore their genitalia and notice the difference between male and female characteristics, this is encouraged and gently taught through games, boundary setting, song and dance e.g. boys begin to go with older boys and girls with older girls.
dismiss them as silly, children develop guilt about their needs and desires.

**COMPETENCE**

**Industry Vs Inferiority 5–12years**

The child must deal with demands to learn new skills or risk a sense of inferiority, failure and incompetence. The child at this age becomes more aware of itself as an individual. They will grasp the concepts of space and time in more logical, practical ways. They gain an understanding of cause and effect and of calendar time. Children are eager to learn and accomplish more complex skills, reading, writing, telling time for example. They also begin to form moral values, recognise cultural and individual differences and are able to manage most of their personal needs with minimal assistance. Children might express their independence by talking back, being disobedient and rebellious. This is a critical time for the development of self-confidence. If children are encouraged and then praised for their accomplishments, they begin to demonstrate industry by being diligent, preserving at tasks until completed and putting work before pleasure. If they are ridiculed or punished for their efforts or if they are incapable of meeting the expectations of teachers and parents, they will develop feelings of inferiority. At this age children begin to recognise their

---

Education and training begin more formally during this time. Children are taught all the animals, flora and fauna on their country and begin to learn how to harvest it, use it for food and medicine. It is a very important time of learning, boundary settings, learning the Law, learning about country, how to be a warrior, a hunter or gatherer and how to fulfil the requirements and expectations of the group/clan or family. Children are taught everything about land, Law, *Tjukurpa* and so on during this time.

By the age of 12 or puberty initiation they are expected to know it all and to have a high level of oral knowledge about country, relationships and the Law. The development of their self-confidence and self-esteem is ensured by the mentoring of Elder teachers and young people learn the beginnings of how to become 'boss of themselves', how to use their voice, develop opinions and begin to express them. Children are given boundaries but not in a shaming or harsh manner so that the fragile ego will not be disturbed or displaced. Talents and gifts are encouraged and development. Special attention is paid by the Elder teachers in each child to see what gifts or talents they may have so these can be developed under the guidance of specialists e.g. *ngungkari*, traditional medicine practitioners if they have the gift.

---

**Childhood before Puberty – Education Time**

Children have more formal education and learning arrangements. All boys and girls are taught by the women until puberty initiation separates the sexes. This is the time of industry in terms of taking care of country and developing a strong sense of capability and knowing their own skill. They learn from their failures and are taught to understand that failure is a test.

Children go out every day to gather food, learn how to make spears, grind food, dig for honey ants or other food, prepare medicines and plants for their various uses. They also travel across country so that they know the routes for travel, the seasons of travel and where to find food and water. They begin to make the deeper connections to earth and animals and the mysticism of Aboriginal life. Children are taught the properties of every plant on their country, they are taught the dreaming stories and song cycles. They engage in ceremony and develop a deeper sense of spirituality and sacred life and living during this time.
special talents and discover interests as their education improves. They begin to pursue activities of interest. If they are not allowed to discover their own talents in their own time, they will develop a sense of lack of motivation, low self-esteem and lethargy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIDELITY</th>
<th>Puberty through Adolescence Extending into the early 20s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity Vs Role Confusion 13–19 years Adolescence</td>
<td>Both boys and girls undergo puberty initiation. After birth this is the next most important ceremony in their lives. They are prepared for many years and instructed in knowledge they must show their competency in. They are given their role and identity in the group as young men and women and if they have special gifts they are given a mentor to encourage and teach them e.g. ngungkari medicine healers. The ceremony at this time is to ensure identity is embedded and that there is no role confusion within the societal group. Elders also watch those with special gifts and encourage that in their leadership development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The adolescent is newly concerned with how they appear to others. The child develops a sense of sexual identity as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood, they ponder the roles they will play in the adult world. They may experiment with a variety of behaviours and activities in order to find out where they fit in society. In this time, adolescents may experience an ‘identity crisis’ – as they reconcile between ‘the person one has come to be’ and ‘the person society expects one to become’. This fifth stage in development corresponds with a crossroads – this is the special sort of synthesis of earlier stages and the anticipation of later ones. This is the bridge between childhood and adulthood. They are confronted with the need to re-establish boundaries for themselves and to do this in the face of an often-hostile world. The adolescent must be able to freely experiment and explore and they can emerge with a firm sense of identity and</td>
<td>Children become more socialised during this age time. They are placed into separate sex groups, boys with men and girls with women. This begins young adulthood, they are being taught their roles are leaders of the future and the expectation of taking over from their Elders as Elders in their later years. There is a clear expectation of stepping up and speaking up. They learn what it means to be an adult and how one is expected to behave. They are included in all community meetings and activities and they are expected to contribute to discussions and activities. They also begin to mentor younger ones in order to learn what it means to do that. They are given tasks and boundaries, engaged in the moral questions of the community and develop their own sense of morality. They are strictly mentored by their teachers at this time so that their identity is developed strongly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
an emotional and deep awareness of who he/she is. If not allowed to they will develop the problem of role-confusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOVE</th>
<th>Intimacy Vs Isolation</th>
<th>20–39 years Early Adulthood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The intimacy vs isolation conflict is emphasised at around the age of 30. Young adults are still eager to blend their identities with friends, they want to fit in. They may become afraid of rejection, e.g. being turned down or partners break-ups in intimate relationships. Once people have established their identities, they are ready to make long-term commitments to others. They become capable of forming intimate, reciprocal relationships (through close friendships or marriage) and are willing to make sacrifices and compromises that these relationships require. If they cannot form these intimate relationships, a sense of isolation may result, arousing feelings of darkness and angst.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This time is about marriage and consolidation of one’s position within the clan and family group. Although young people may marry earlier (and perhaps to an older man if you are a young woman) this is the time to enter the world of adult relationships, sexual intimacy and its expectations. Strict boundaries are indicated here, and young people are taught what is required under the Law regarding adultery, love relationships, parenting and partner expectations. The Law is very strict in terms of intimate relationships and if broken people are often banished. If a girl is a second wife she learns from the others what is expected and how to behave.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Early Adulthood–Adulthood Around 20–40s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usually marriage ceremonies or partnering relationships are formed here. Sexual intimacy and relationships are different to western culture and thus adherence to the Law in relation to them is paramount – although people are permitted multiple sexual partners they are expected to choose them from the correct moiety group under the Law. Women learn about marriage relationships, children and deeper women’s business during this time. They also become teachers of younger women to develop their leadership and mentoring, deep listening skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING</th>
<th>Generativity Vs Stagnation</th>
<th>40–64 years Adulthood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generativity is the concern of guiding the next generation. Socially-valued work and discipline are expressions of generativity. The primary development task is one of contributing to society and helping guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is the time of leadership engagement, and Eldership. Showing emotional, mental, and spiritual intelligence is paramount and Elders seek to watch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40–64 years Mature Adulthood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is the time for engaging everything under the law of Kanyini and the principles of harmony with everything, people, relationships, land, animals, earth, seasons etc. Ceremonies are held at regular 10-year intervals at 35, 45, 55, and 65 to denote the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the future generations e.g. raising family, working toward betterment of society, a sense of generativity and accomplishment results. In contrast a person may be self-centred and unable or unwilling.

those in this time to advance them to Eldership through invitation.

Responsibility for clan business is given to individuals and responsibility and fidelity to tasks is expected and required in terms of reporting and auditing (in Anangu way). Your way of becoming a leader and Elder is noted by the Elders of the group.

passages of movement in terms of letting go of ego, social position, becoming independent and moving toward becoming ninti or wise.

| WISDOM | In Anangu life becoming ninti or wise is very honoured. Those who begin to move in this direction have developed their emotional, mental, spiritual intelligence to such a degree that they are expected to be invited to be Elders. They see their world globally as an integration of all things and interact accordingly. They manage their emotions and instil learning and valuable lessons in those younger than them. They become beyond the industry of the group in order to focus on being judges, law-keepers, higher level teachers and they sit quietly with their wisdom. These are considered the visionary and sacred leaders who have developed into interdependence and sacredness as per Kegan’s model. For some this stage is not reached which is why some are invited into the Eldership of a group with other Elders and by those Elders and others become older people. Still older people are considered important and their role in the community is one where they are expected to hold the integrity of the Tjukurpa and the cultural knowledge, education and development systems so that it continues generationally |
| Older Age – Eldership/Fluid timeframe according to development |

Elder ceremonies are performed, and you become considered a Senior Law Keeper, Senior Traditional Owner and speaker for the group. You are invited to become one of the outer circle of Elders (although not everyone is considered so). This is because you have been able to integrate, have high integrity and the values associated with sacred leadership.

As an Elder you are a sacred leader and protector of all things, the Tjukurpa, the Law, and you become a Judge. Some people become Kaidaicha (men and women of high degree) and are called upon to mete out punishment for law breakers. Special ceremonies are held for these.

Table 7.1 Erikson and Anangu Development Life Stages Comparison (Erik Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development, 2017, cited in
In Table 7.1, Column 1 sets out Erik Erikson’s Stages as he described them and what has to be navigated by the child, adolescent or adult through each stage. Column 2 is my research evidence of the Anangu equivalent in terms of their system of development and Column 3 is the Anangu name for the equivalent time in life and activities undertaken. In the research I noted that three storytellers encountered these stages at different times of their lives because of arrested development, and their return to heal and recover it sometimes occurred at different times to the set age as stated by Erikson. For example, Kummunara Randall returned to his Anangu cultural and ceremonial life in his late forties to undertake developmental tasks that would have occurred much earlier in his life if he had not been taken from his family. Dr Paul Collis and I returned to the healing and recovery of our arrested development during our mid-thirties to fifties, to stages that we normally would have navigated in our adolescence and young adulthood. During my reading of Erikson’s work, he does say that some of the developmental tasks can occur out of sequence; my finding is that these storytellers, in choosing to return to cultural engagement as adults, did then navigate these arrested stages at a much later age and heal them.

### 7.2.2 Engagement in Aboriginal Culture creates Sacred and Visionary Elders

This finding discusses how engaging in Aboriginal cultural practices and being mentored by Elders contributes to development to the sacred level of knowing, being and doing. Each storyteller had an early childhood filled with cultural experience that supported their early emotional, spiritual, mental and intellectual growth. The storytellers, from the ages of seven, 12, 13 and to some degree Tjikatu from age 16, were subjected to some level of trauma that arrested their emotional development and put them on paths of addiction, abuse, violence and grief. Each storyteller had to deal with generational acculturation, the colonisation of their lands and their own realisations that being Aboriginal was a difficult space to live in in Australia. Despite disruption in their lives, the experience of all the four is that their development continued under the guidance of other Elder teachers, although adaptation occurred during colonisation, even cross-clan training and mentoring. I liken this to a pan-Aboriginal process. It enabled these storytellers to become leaders in both the western
dominant culture and in their own. The process of development in Aboriginal culture helped these people move through the stages of human development described by Erikson and as described in Anangu culture. In Tjikatu’s case, there was always an expectation due to her cultural and social boundaries as an Anangu woman, that she would grow into Anangu Eldership as a traditional custodian and knowledge holder. The fact that she never moved from her country, nor had a western education, meant that her road to Eldership was focused and clear in her Anangu tradition. The only disruption to her life was white people coming to her country when she was around 16 years of age and where she and her family worked on cattle and sheep stations or other businesses. In her case the disruption to her development was minimal. She did experience the grief and pain of watching children being taken and of others in her community engaging in using drugs and alcohol and of the next generation of her family moving away from cultural activities. But Tjikatu has maintained her role as a senior law custodian and encourages members of her extended family to engage in cultural activities on country. Each year both men and women still go on country for ceremonial and sacred business related to their Tjukurpa and as a grandmother she takes children through Law and passes on knowledge, language, song, ceremony and dance.

As they grew older, each storyteller was able to utilise their cultural engagement and knowledge development to transform themselves and heal any arrested development. This enabled them to move into a higher level of knowing, being and doing. In each story, we see the thread of this. As part of their Tjukurpa belief system and ceremonial engagement, each person passed through rites of passage that marked their emotional, physical, mental and cultural, spiritual development. If the engagement or return to engagement in the case of the youngest storytellers, had not occurred they would not have healed and recovered from their generational trauma, nor been able to move forward into higher levels of being as they move toward sacred leadership.

As a person progresses in the later stages of development, their peers and their community accept them and elevate them to the status of Elder leader where their
knowledge, experience and capacity to engage all in collaborative consensus, shows their capacity for higher levels of thinking according to western leadership theorists and the sacredness of Eldership as described by Indigenous leadership researchers. Both Kummunara and Tjikatu achieved this and both the younger storytellers are moving into their Eldership. They are called ‘Aunty’ and ‘Uncle’ which is a sign of respect and leadership in Aboriginal communities.

The cultural engagement, cultural learning and experience is crucial to this development process and depending on the individual capacity of the person, leads to higher levels of thinking and knowing, being and doing. I theorise that the engagement in returning to culture ensures reaching higher levels of consciousness as a person heals, recovers, transforms themselves and is guided by other sacred leaders. A critical finding of this study is that Aboriginal culture, the belief system – the Tjukurpa, the Law and its sacredness, the living it in practice and willingness to transform, is what enables a person to move into sacred levels of thinking, knowing being and doing. It is this that separates such a person from other ‘leaders. Their spiritual, emotional, and mental transformation gives them the insight into their self-management, their management of healthy and functional relationships with other people and their consciousness of interconnectedness to the environment, the land and the Earth on a global scale. As Kummunara states in his teachings about Kanyini, the way of harmony and unconditional love, this principle is applied to the relationship with the self, with others and the Earth, noting that it is a practice of a way of being in action in each present moment. I consider this a benchmark of sacredness and the ability to be a sacred leader at a higher level of consciousness.

The Anangu Storytellers told me of the qualities of Elders that needed to be present for them to be invited into the Elders Circle. These are:

Humility, the practice of humility and in managing the ego in relationships and practice all the time, the ability to resolve conflicts between people, communities and groups, the ability to create co-operation and unity, to judge wisely, to be tolerant and accepting of everything, to make wise decisions (to be decisive) and to have a way of knowing, being and doing where your
qualities and values are lived in thoughts, words and actions consistently (B. Randall & B. Tjikatu, Interview 23 October 2013).

These qualities resonate with the other theories and writers in leadership as being the qualities of people who are at higher levels of consciousness. The Indigenous leadership writers I mentioned in Chapter 3 discussed the qualities and systems of First Nations leadership that were important. These qualities are the qualities of sacred and visionary leaders. These writers, Steigelbauer (USA), Katene (Maori) and Cajete (USA) to name a few, described these traits these leaders as having attained the role of an Elder by their knowledge, vision, life experiences, leading positive lifestyles, their practices and traditions within their communities. These Elders were leaders who shared a vision, a sense of mission and an agreed course of action, and who earned the respect, confidence and loyalty of their followers, as a group and individually, through their inspirational leadership. They were leaders who showed their commitment to holding onto traditional knowledge and practicing it in their life, their ability to communicate effectively, to be a good listener, a good teacher, to be non-judgmental, non-critical, sticking with commitments, ability to communicate with younger generations, having hope for the future generations, They had the traits of being knowledgeable of ceremonies, of leading ceremonies, of patience, of being in touch with reality, of being the embodiment of positive qualities and a commitment to improving the quality of life of First Nations people. These qualities are also evident in First Nations Elders in Australian communities.

The two Elder storytellers have negotiated challenging stages of their human development to move into higher levels of knowing, being and doing in the orders of consciousness and the two younger storytellers are displaying this sacredness in their consciousness. Tjikatu, due to her not leaving living on her country, has been displaying these qualities since she was a younger woman with responsibilities for country, ceremony, song cycles and Law in her Anangu family and by virtue of her role as a Senior Lawwoman who has also been recognised in western culture as an Elder and leader of her clan.
Through the evidence provided here, I conclude that the Anangu Elders have been on the road to sacred levels of thinking for some time and have reached it, and if the younger storytellers continue on their spiritual and cultural trajectories they will also reach a higher consciousness of sacredness achieved by their Elders in their older age.

In Chapter One I wrote about the importance of decolonising leadership education and including the important cultural aspects of our own leadership and Eldership in order not to lose the ancient wisdom of Elders and leaders based in our own cultural traditions. My purpose in writing about sacred Eldership in Aboriginal culture is to make the argument for decolonising leadership education with First Nations people in Australia, so that they may experience aspects of their own cultural traditions that are so important to their own development into Elders and leaders. This would be more beneficial to those First Nations people that want to become leaders in both cultures, living and working as we do in both cultures today. The inclusion of our own cultural traditions in the development of quality and applicable leadership education is culturally appropriate, provides aspects of cultural safety and capability and will enable those engaged to reach higher levels of consciousness as Aboriginal culture has a value system and way of knowing, being and doing, that can only benefit our emerging leaders. It may also benefit non-Indigenous people and systems to know more about our own cultural traditions of Eldership where that sharing, and learning occurs.

An important finding of this research is that the two younger storytellers, even though they become leaders in their thirties in western management roles, because of the trauma of their own acculturation, they had to return to their cultural traditions and engage with their cultural Elders to heal and recover. They both needed and used this cultural foundation as the rock on which they built their later adulthood in both career and Aboriginal life as they became Elders in training under the guidance of their cultural mentors. The cultural engagement reinforced and affirmed their identity, capacity and capabilities as young leaders on their roads to Eldership. They had before

59 I like to use this term to describe the journey that Dr Collis and I have been through these past 30 years on our roads to Eldership.
them Elders who had already navigated and achieved this in culture and were role models on which they could base their own transformation. This then enabled us both to go back into the western dominant culture and continue with our bureaucratic roles with a deeper strength, because of the cultural mentoring and recovery we had engaged with.

7.2.3 Visioning is a part of Sacred Eldership and Sacred Elders lead Community Transformation.

Sacred and visionary leaders are developed in Indigenous life and this is evidenced by certain gifts, qualities and traits they possess that has been described in this research. In Aboriginal culture people often see visions during ceremonial rituals or at other times and these visions are purposeful. If you see visions and discuss them with Elders they ask what you have seen and then make meaning of it. I have had this experience many times and it was described to me by others who have gone through ceremony and transformation. The more I changed, the more intense and frequent the visioning became. The storytellers in this research began to experience visions in their life as they grew older and as part of their process of transformation.

Visioning is an intuitive, emotional and spiritual tool that comes with wisdom and practice and openness to the Tjukurpa. Many sacred leaders are visionary and as a result people choose to follow them and are motivated by them. Indigenous writers in leadership shared in Chapter Three, have described visionary leadership in their Indigenous cultures. Visioning is an intuitive knowing, where people see visions of the future, lead from their intuitive wisdom, and this drives their caring for country and other people beyond the self. These are the qualities of sacred and visionary leaders. The Elders in this research had visions that showed them how to leave a legacy of their lives for the next generation and the younger storytellers described experiences of visioning as they transformed.

To have the qualities described in the literature of a visionary leader are also the signs of a sacred leader. where sacred and visionary leaders are honoured, respected and
followed. If western theorists in leadership and Indigenous researchers in leadership eventually come to the same conclusions about ways of thinking, being, knowing, doing and consciousness of sacred and visionary leaders, then the evidence is clear: sacred and visionary leaders are developed in Indigenous life.

The specific visions I included in this research occurred because the Anangu Elder storytellers wanted to help their families, their children and their community and leave a legacy. They did this by visioning the development of their on-country enterprise described in detail in Appendix A. The two Anangu Elders had visions of the tourists coming to their country and these visions inspired myself and others to establish the eco-cultural educational tourism venture on their homeland and two of my non-Indigenous friends to engage in community development projects assisted in transforming aspects of the community. These Elders wanted their community to recover from the negative media that had occurred during the NTER. They visioned a community transformed, where they could engage their families and in particular, young people, in working in a cultural sustainable eco-cultural tourism venture on their country. The successful development of the business led by the Elders over eight years shows that the Elders who motivated their families to establish the business were visionary, having seen the business working in the future. These Elders had altruistic intentions of leading their children and grandchildren out of welfare dependence and poverty and making their community a better place to live. This was achieved for some years until the business was stopped due to one of the Elders passing and due to sorry business they decided to not operate the Umpiyara Tourism venture for a period of time.

‘The Painting’, a different picture art project which was the second project that was visioned, inspired some external community supporters to engage with children and their families to engage in transforming their community (see Appendix A). The external partners, through their relationship with the Anangu Elders in this thesis, bought funding, materials and helpers to enable the project to be implemented.

---

60 ‘Sorry business’ occurs when someone dies, and people have a period of mourning.
The Pathway to Eldership: A Cross-Clan Pan-Aboriginal Connection for Healing and Recovery of Arrested Development

The storytellers, with the exception of Barbara Tjikatu who never left her land, clan or cultural process, each had Elder leaders and teachers from other clan groups who supported and mentored them through their cultural education in the clan group that they came from. Where the generational cultural education process was disrupted each storyteller found a pathway back via a cross-clan healing and recovery process as adults. Kummunara Randall had Elders from Arnhem Land and Croker Island, traditional custodians of their own clan knowledge, who shared those aspects with him, mentored him and kept him close to his Aboriginal roots, the Law, the Tjukurpa. This ensures that his connection to Aboriginal business was not as broken as it could have been if they had not been present in his life. Until he found his Anangu family further south later in his adult life, these Elders men of the other clans loved and shared with him their deep knowledge. This meant that although his forced removal as a young child disrupted his Anangu education, the time spent on the mission with other Aboriginal people from different clan groups and the Elders who lived on their country in Arnhem Land filled that void until he returned to his people, his country and his own clan’s knowledge system. Similarly, both Dr Paul Collis and I experienced the benefits of other Elders in different clan groups on different country in NSW and Queensland who mentored, taught and led us through our cultural business so that we experienced a cross-clan learning which enabled us to maintain our cultural business in our adult lives. We experienced teachings and ceremonial rites with Elders and cultural teachers in clan groups who saw our desire to hold onto culture and to participate and progress on our cultural journeys. This meant that we too experienced, despite the disruptions of forced assimilation, boarding schools and white education, and our own sufferings from generational trauma, a connection to Tjukurpa, country, cultural knowledge and Elders in a pan-Aboriginal context. These unbroken connections meant that we three were able to engage in cultural healing, medicine, mentoring, counselling and the unconditional love of Elder teachers to ensure we stayed on our roads to Eldership. The cross-clan connections enabled our long process
of healing and recovery knowing that we were not alone, and we were supported by other Elders who looked out for us and kept us close. This sharing of culture and love is a unique feeling and process that was a foundation on which we could build our recovery and return to the Law and the *Tjukurpa* that requires us to be love full, caring, to share and follow our Elders and to maintain our responsibility to Law, Land, kin and culture. This cross-clan, cross cultural knowledge sharing meant that we could maintain the generational responsibility of passing on and sharing in knowledge as could the Elders who took care of us.

### 7.3 Implications of this Research

What can this research contribute to the field of leadership development and especially leadership educational development for First Nations people in Australia? In thinking about this, there are a number of future uses for the research that I envisage.

This research can be utilised to support the sustenance and maintenance of our ancient knowledge systems and support Indigenous people to engage in cultural knowledge and learning for their own individual benefit as leaders. It also shows how valuable our knowledge is and how important it is to continue to use it, engage with it and utilise it in the development of our children and the maintenance of our society. It may also be useful for governance purposes, for boards and organisations and their continuous learning and development.

The research demonstrated how it is possible to achieve recovery and intergenerational healing of our people to enable them to overcome the thinking that culture is lost if it is not passed on by your own Elders of your own clan groups. Many of our people think that if your Elders are gone then your cultural knowledge is lost and cannot be recovered, and in some cases, this may be true; but this research has shown a cross cultural aspect of utilising the knowledge of other clans and systems to support individual recovery. The research has also shown that healing and recovery is possible using a return to *Tjukurpa* and cultural engagement and knowledge. Thus,
its applicability to many areas of Indigenous life are endless, from health, to education, leadership development, mental health, social and cultural health recovery, generational trauma recovery to name a few.

The findings are very important for leadership education and development for our First Nations people who aim to be the leaders and Elders of the future. Leadership education in Australia can be decolonised and become more appropriate to our people. For Indigenous people this research can support the development of culturally appropriate leadership education programs in all areas of work for Indigenous people in Australia (and overseas). It can contribute to the development of our leaders utilising our own knowledge systems, *Tjukurpa* and training under our Elders. Utilising Elders and cultural teachers in mentoring and leadership education would be extremely valuable. Additionally, this research contributes to the areas of western leadership development in that the value systems, the system of governance in Indigenous communities, meant that childhood development emotionally, culturally, spiritually and mentally is monitored to assist young people to grow into the leaders of the future and their learning is specifically organised to do so. Its contribution to the field of developmental psychology and early childhood development is also clear in that Aboriginal systems had an ancient form of lifespan development under the teachings of Elders and leaders in the community based in value systems that respected all things including the impact on the planet of people’s actions. Their systems were wholistic and had a deep systems awareness and awareness of strategic impact on relationships with self, others and the Earth, important concepts in leadership development.

Lastly, I would like to develop a culturally appropriate leadership education and mentoring tool, like a 360-degree instrument, for First Nations people who aspire to be leaders in both their own organisations and dominant culture bureaucracies. Such an instrument is often used in leadership development programs and it would be a beneficial tool for Indigenous leaders and mentors to enable them to manage their roles of being in a western environment where their knowledge systems and value
systems are included. Such a tool could integrate the qualities of Eldership, sacred leadership, principles of the *Tjukurpa* and Aboriginal Law and our own knowledge development system in a beneficial education tool. Using such a measure in this way will maintain an ancient tradition in a new contemporary setting.

The methodology of the research may be limited in other Aboriginal settings as it is specifically related to the Anangu people’s way of relating to each other and the world around them. Even though in this case it was a strength of the methodology to use the gentle observational and non-interventionist way of the Anangu people I worked with, this may not work in all Indigenous settings and researchers should note that some of the aspects of this methodology may only be specific to Anangu and Anangu-related peoples. However, similarities of Indigeneity and protocols do exist in which this methodology may be utilised or used partially. Deep listening is a trait of many Indigenous groups and can be utilised in any engagements and research with First Nations peoples, whereas other aspects such as the relatedness and protocol of not telling people what to do or interfering in an adult’s actions and choices may not be suitable in other First Nations communities. I utilised this method here as it was a respectful and honouring thing to do for my Elders.

7.4 Conclusion
The research examined, through the lives of Aboriginal storytellers, utilising an Indigenous research methodology, the way in which sacred and visionary leaders are created in Aboriginal life as people move into leadership and Eldership through their life journey. The research investigated the development of sacred and visionary leaders through an Aboriginal lens by layering human development theory and education leadership development psychology theories over Indigenous processes of human learning and development. This process of learning involved cultural learning including expected values and norms in Aboriginal culture of the behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of Elders as leaders brought up in communities.
Recovery from the trauma and grief of the generational acculturation process that began with colonisation, was necessary for these storytellers to have lives of meaning. Engaging in recovery and cultural support enabled them to heal and become leaders who moved into higher levels of consciousness. As Middleton-Moz, Bradshaw, Kritsberg and others have shown, intergenerational family addiction, abuse, grief and violence can impact a child’s early emotional and mental development and stunt their emotional consciousness as adults. In order to reach sacred leadership and therefore higher levels of knowing, being and doing, these storytellers had to go through their own personal recovery processes to let go of the generational past and their own life traumas. As Atkinson notes intergenerational trauma impacts every Aboriginal person and the effects of acculturation are generational. Breaking that cycle and recovering was a courageous choice for three of these storytellers. In doing so they moved forward in their roles as older cultural teachers and leaders. These storyteller’s lives have provided evidence that arrested emotional development does not need to hamper your healing and recovery, and that engagement in cultural practices can assist your return to wellness and being a leader at higher levels of consciousness.

This research contributes to the literature and study of leadership by providing evidence of a unique system of development in an Aboriginal context in Australia that enables the development of sacred and visionary Elders. The Road to Eldership and living it in daily life practice – Tjukurpa Pulka is a sacred journey of spiritual and human development that was built into the system of Aboriginal human development for millennia and occurred from generation to generation. It also contributes a unique perspective of a pan-Aboriginal cross-clan cultural learning process that has been an adaptation by Aboriginal people to ensure this system of sharing and mentoring from Elder teachers to younger people on their roads to Eldership, occurs and continues, despite colonisation and disruption. The research also contributes evidence that healing, and recovery of arrested development is possible as people choose to engage in and return to their cultural teachings and ceremonial participation under other Elders. This is important for First Nations people in Australia to know, that there is a way that recovery from the disruptions of colonisation is possible, and that with a
return of cultural engagement, people can heal and become teachers and mentors of others, continuing our ancient tradition.

Aboriginal Elders are unique in the world of leadership because their leadership and Eldership is based in the sacredness of their ways of being, thinking and doing. It is a spiritual path, not just an emotional, intellectual and cultural learning journey but one which involves the practice of self-awareness and self-reflectivity that comes with spiritual practice. Elders are the purveyors, holders and wisdom sharers of Aboriginal culture. From childhood we are born sacred, we grow up sacred and we can become sacred leaders.

As Juanita Sherwood, an Indigenous academic researcher writes of our Elders:

Aboriginal Elders are respected and selected for their knowledge, wisdom and integrity. Developing wisdom through both lived and learned experiences physical and metaphysical. Eldership does not become acknowledged for those of a certain age, rather it is earned. Elders have always been the custodians of knowledge, cultural practice and protocols as passed down from the Dreaming. Their responsibilities have been to nurture and grow Aboriginal peoples in their law, education, language, culture, ceremony and philosophy. This is to live as respectful beings accepting of their relationships and responsibilities to the physical and spiritual ecosystem. Teaching through mentorship, their role requires them to be both strong and sound in their ways of knowing, being and doing (Sherwood, 2010, p. 143).

7.5 Oowa Palya…. I am finished

There is a deep respect for the wisdom of Elders, who are at the same time both teachers and guides, while they are participating in the collective choosing. They are extraordinarily skilled at listening to the ‘spirit’ not merely the ‘will’ of a large group of people; at being in touch with how the people about them are feeling and participating (P. McIntyre 2001, p.2).

As Anangu people say when they are finished something... Oowa Palya... I am finished. This research has taken many years and lots of learning, observing, deep
listening, thinking, sharing and caring. For my life it is immeasurable what I have learnt, experienced and engaged in. It is not just a journey of research and scholarship, but part of my life’s purpose to heal, share and maintain the long generational legacy of my Ancestors and Elders, and my own sacred way of being, knowing and doing. I am honoured to have been given the chance to do it, and for my Elders to entrust me with the task and for their love, honour and deep respect in sharing knowledge with me so I could share it with the world. Kummunara, Tjikatu, Paul and all the Others: thank you.

Oowa Palya I am finished…

Artwork 11  The Tjukurpa Will Not Be Colonised © Tjanara Goreng Goreng 2017

This drawing shares the story of the whole PhD. It shows how Biame created the path of sacredness in the beginning as a way of sustaining our human lives. In setting spiritual
sacredness into the Tjukurpa and into the way of life of our Ancestors who brought the
Tjukurpa Law Songlines and ways of being, knowing and doing to our lands we remember
Biaime and these Wandjina Ancestors and honour them by following the road of sacredness
so that all the generations that follow can be as we are and be as the Ancestors were and
follow the Songlines as we should and hold to culture for time immemorial.

The Great Binding Law

The thickness of your skin shall be seven spans -which is to say that you shall be proof against
anger, offensive actions, and criticism.
Your heart shall be filled with peace and good will and your mind filled with a yearning for
the welfare of the people of the confederacy.

With endless patience you shall carry out your duty and your firmness shall be tempered
with tenderness for your people.
Neither anger nor fury shall find lodgments in your mind and all your words and actions
shall be marked with calm deliberation.

In all of your deliberations in the Confederate Council, in your efforts at law making, in all
your official acts, self-interest shall be cast into oblivion.

Cast not over your shoulder behind you the warnings of the nephews and nieces should they
chide you for any error or wrong you may do but return to the way of the Great Law which is
just and right.

Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the
present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of
the ground – the unborn of the future nation.

© The Constitution of the Iroquois Nation Confederation 61

61 Cited in Wheatley, M., 2017, p.259, Who do we chose to be: Facing Reality Claiming Leadership
Restoring Sanity, Brett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., Oakland, CA
APPENDIX A

PROJECT 1  Umpiyara Homeland Eco-Cultural Education Tourism

The community business development enterprise was inspired by both Anangu Elders and became known as Kanyini Tjungungku – Working Together. It involved two organisations, Kummunara Randall’s company Kanyini Pty Ltd and Umpiyara Aboriginal Corporation which was established with Barbara Tjikatu’s extended family. The project was developed over three years from 2008 to 2011 with various agencies including the Central Land Council, the Northern Territory Government, Anangu Jobs, and other interested agencies. The Corporation was registered through the Office of Registered Indigenous Corporations (ORIC). The project was based in Anangu Tjukurpa wisdom of caring for self, country and culture and sharing Anangu knowledge on country with visitors from overseas and Australia. Senior Elders were employed to show and teach cultural traditions on country and other family members were employed in support roles learning how to engage with tourism in a cultural way on their country. The purpose was to provide income to community members involved on a regular basis for nine months of the year to work and learn how to impart cultural knowledge to non-Indigenous visitors.

A diagram was developed as part of Business Plan for the Umpiyara Enterprise (see Fig. A1). This helped stakeholders such as the Central Land Council, the National Park Management and the Northern Territory Government understand how the business would work. These groups were examining ways in which traditional owner groups could develop and establish viable businesses on their country and provide additional cultural activities for specialist groups on country. They did not understand how Kanyini Pty Ltd, a private company owned by Kummunara and an Aboriginal Corporation could communicate and work together, share intellectual property, legal and financial arrangements, advertising and marketing. This diagram, which was part of a bigger planning document, showed these agencies how this would work.
When it was shown to the government agencies involved they became enthusiastic in supporting the venture. Umpiyara Eco-Cultural Educational Tourism operated successfully with special groups of 15–20 people from companies on leadership retreats, community and social groups, government agencies and people interested in authentic Anangu on country experiences, from overseas and Australia for 4-day retreats between March and October each year. This continued until Kummunara’s ill health from 2014. After his death in early 2015 it was decided to leave the homeland business for a period of time so that sorry business could be observed.

The following document is a copy of the template used for Umpiyara Tours during the period 2008–2013.
UMPIRYARA TOURISM ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

TOUR ITINERARY

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES:
A full range of activities may include the following and we would like you choose those you prefer from this list and return to us with your contract agreement.

(Please keep in mind that we will discuss these with you as Umpiyara will provide the best range of activities according to the weather/season and Teachers/Elders availability in the Central Desert)

1 Cultural education – Sharing Stories, Shared History
Cross cultural awareness and education (Additional Services - Cultural Security and Cultural Competency Training)

2 Gathering Bush Tucker (food)
Marku – witchety grubs; Tjala – Honey Ants; Marlu Wipu – Kangaroo Tail;
Tinka – Goanna/Lizard;

3 Gathering and Making Bush Medicines
Irmanka - a rubbing medicine

4 Painting and collecting Punu – Wood
Elders & Teachers will assist you make your own clap sticks, animal carvings etc.

5 Painting on Canvas
You will be taught how to paint your own to take home, Anangu style

6 For Men: making Spear/Woomera/Boomerang; collecting Tjanpi (spinifex) and learning how to make glue for the items – demonstrations and teaching included

7 Inma (Dance) Preparation
Making Strings and collecting bush items for dances e.g. leaf, stick

8 Kanyini Dance
1. Inma: Singing / Story telling & dance With Inma we will be separating the men and women according to the numbers of each
2. Contemporary dance workshops (based on contemporary Aboriginal dance style developed by Dorethea Randall – contemporary Aboriginal dance performer

Fig.A2 Program Activities Template used for Umpiyara On Country Tours 2009 © Umpiyara Aboriginal Corporation Tjanara Goreng Goreng
PROJECT 2     Painting a Different Picture

In 2013, Diamond Rozarkeas and her husband Brian James to come and spend time with Kummunara and the family on country. They had expressed an interest in community engagement and humanitarian work with Central Desert communities. During the visit we all spent time on country at Uluru, Kata Tjuta and Umpiyara Homeland and the Elders shared their visions for improving the community. They were inspired to sponsor and engage in a community development project with both Elders, the Corporation and the community to develop the idea of ‘painting a different picture’. The project engaged with community professionals such as the CEO of the Aged Care Centre to use the old aged care building, the School Principal to engage with the children and teachers, and the CEO of the Mutitjulu Corporation. This enabled bringing in children, their parents and other community members to be part of its design and implementation. Its success has inspired the Community Development Team at the Mutitjulu Corporation to take over these projects full time.

This project continued for three years from 2013 to 2016 and is still ongoing. Painting a different picture involves collaborative artistic projects between outside artists and Anangu community artists to put artwork on walls of buildings at the Mutitjulu community.

1     The Artwork on the Mutitjulu School Wall
The Mutitjulu Pool can be seen at the entrance to the community. The painting below was done by senior Elder Malya Teamay with Xiao Ping and is called Broken Law. It is the story of how the Law was broken and the vision for its restoration where people work together to maintain the Law. Xiao Ping collaborated with inclusions of his own work on the same aspects within the painting.

The outcome of the Painting a Different Project was that it imbued a sense of self-esteem in people in the community. The Elders involved see this project as great way to influence children and young adults in inspiring their love of their stories, and their art and in living in Mutitjulu rather than going to Alice Springs. The local stories are important and other senior artists like Malya Teamay, who the children know and look up to, became involved in painting the larger murals. As Diamond said:

They have very important stories to tell, the children learn from these Elders and learn to carry on their beautiful traditions, knowledge, Law and culture. They have that pride and respect in their knowledge and so will never lose it (D. Rozarkeas, Interview, 12 December 2016).
Photo A.3 Barbara Tjikatu and Diamond Rozarkeas in the kitchen of the old Aged Care Facility at Mutitjulu
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Altman, J 1987, The Economic impact of Tourism on the Mutitjulu Community in the Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park, Dept. of Political and Social Change, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra
Accessed 23 July 2016


Anderson, P & Wild, R 2007, Ampe Akelyernemane Meke Mekarle Little Children are Sacred: Report of the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Child Sexual Abuse, Northern Territory Government Darwin 2007,
Viewed 28 June 2015


Black, C 1987 It’ll Never Happen to Me, Hazelden Publishing, Minnesota


Bolger, A 1991, Aboriginal Women and Violence, North Australian Research Unit, Australian National University, Darwin, Northern Territory.

Bottoms, T 2013, Conspiracy of Silence, Queensland’s Frontier Killing Times, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, NSW.


Collins, P 1990, Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment, Unwin Hyman, Boston, MA.


Together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Wellbeing: Principles and Practice, 2nd edn., Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Dudgeon, P & Mitchell, R 1991, Internalized Racism and Drug Abuse: The Consequences of Racial Oppression in Australia, Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia, Perth, WA.


Freire, P 1972, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Penguin, Middlesex, UK.


Kegan, R 2010 *Levels of Thinking, Adapted Model*, Zaffyre International, Sydney


Kendall, C 1994, ‘The history: Present and future issues affecting Aboriginal adults who were removed as children’, *Aboriginal and Islander Health Workers Journal*, vol.18 pp. 18–19.


Pascoe, B 2014, *Dark Emu*, Magabala Books, Broome, WA.


Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development and Robinson, B 2000, *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women’s Task Force on Violence Report*, Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Policy and Development, Brisbane.


Wesley-Esquimaux, C & Smolewski, M 2004, Historic Trauma and Aboriginal Health, Aboriginal Health Foundation, Ontario, Ottawa.


**OTHER WEBSITES**

*The Bungalow*


*Uluru Handback*


*Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER)*

Tjanara Goreng Goreng OIPC House Raid- Mutitjulu Incident

Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation

Dissociative Identity Disorder

Positionality in Research
http://dissertationscholar.blogspot.com/2013/04/what-is-positionality-in-practitioner.html Accessed 16 October 2018

Autoethnography
http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095
Accessed 16 October 2018