A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy of The Australian National University

Charity meets clarity:

A multiple methods and transdisciplinary approach to improving philanthropic investment in Indigenous Australian education
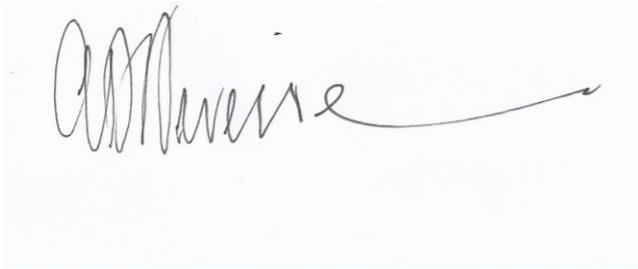
Tony Dreise, March 2018

Student Statement

This statement is to verify that the research contained within this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge, original work. No other person has conducted the research with me.

The thesis contains 98,570 words.

Tony (Anthony David) Dreise

Abstract

This study explores current and potentially future relationships between philanthropy and Indigenous education in Australia. More specifically, it has sought to address an overarching research question, namely 'how can philanthropic bodies more successfully engage with Indigenous people and strategically invest their resources to improve Indigenous education outcomes?' The research has involved a unique partnership between an Aboriginal researcher, the Australian National University, philanthropists, researchers and educators, and five First Nations communities in urban, regional and rural-remote localities. The study has been partly funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) through the ARC Linkage Projects scheme. Supplementary funds have also been provided by the Australian Communities Foundation, a philanthropic body based in Melbourne.

In addressing the overarching research question and in light of the inherent complexity at the philanthropy–Indigenous affairs–education interface, the study has adopted multiple-methods and transdisciplinary approaches. It draws upon history, political studies, business and commerce studies, social sciences, and, especially, upon complexity science and emergence theories to both make sense of the data and to influence the future shape of First Nations education and philanthropic partnerships.

Literature from both Australia and abroad is analysed to provide insights and understand tensions about historical practices, contemporary applications, and future directions in philanthropic investment in Indigenous education. The study has also sought to capture the voices of 'demand' (First Nations communities) and 'supply' (philanthropic bodies). As such, both the study and literature review examine current interventions and investments in First Nations education, and find that philanthropic investments in boarding school opportunities and university scholarships have grown considerably over the past decade. The study acknowledges this, but also argues that philanthropic investment in Indigenous education in its current form is too narrow, nowhere near scale when it comes to current and projected levels of need among First Nations communities, and tends to favour 'fail-safe' as opposed to 'safe-fail' initiatives. The study posits that improvements in Indigenous education are unlikely to present through oversimplified, linear and mono-dimensional interventions. It also concludes that partners in education, philanthropy and First Nations affairs need to think differently about problems and future possibilities by pursuing a course of positive disruption and collective action, where hearts of charity meet minds of clarity.

Acknowledgements

As is our custom, the first acknowledgement, with deep respect, is to the First Nations peoples of Australia; especially to Elders past, present and emerging. I pay tribute to your ongoing custodianship of lands, waters, cultures and lore. You have taught me that the very essence of being Aboriginal is to be blessed and that the notion of 'philanthropy' (giving and sharing) is as old as First Nations Australia itself.

I would like to particularly thank the First Nations people who contributed to this study through your insights, emotion, honesty, and unyielding drive to see a better tomorrow for our people. Equally, to the philanthropic organisations, researchers and educators who gave their time, commitment and considered thoughts to this study, I am so grateful to you. To my 'new found' Elders who sit around the table at the Towards a Just Society Fund, I want to especially acknowledge you for your infinite kindness, warmth, wisdom and courage. You are truly inspiring on so many levels.

To my supervisors, I am profoundly in your debt. Without your perseverance, intellectual craft, and generosity of spirit, this thesis would not have been possible. Not only have I learnt from you in an academic sense, but in a life sense. You will always have a place at our family's table.

To my family, thanks for hanging in there! In many ways, this journey has been like any family trip. How many times have I heard, 'Are we there yet?' Your patience – along with your understandable impatience at times – has spurred me on, including during the times when I was nodding off at the wheel. Love you N, B, B and J with my whole heart and entire soul.

To my parents, you have shown me throughout my life that you are the perfect fusion and very embodiment of charity (hearts) and clarity (smarts). My heroes.

Finally, and importantly, I would like to acknowledge – with both extreme pride and optimism – the First Nations children and young children, including my own, throughout Australia and internationally. You are what drives me; stay *'deadly'* and if you think you are not, learn otherwise!

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Acronyms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
ACE	adult and community education
ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AIATSIS	Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
AIGI	Australian Indigenous Governance Institute
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIME	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
ANU	Australian National University
APAC	Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum (Western Australia)
ARC	Australian Research Council
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (United States)
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ATSIPTAC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council
AUD	Australian dollars
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (ANU)
CBD	central business district
CCD	Community cultural development
CDEP	Community Development and Employment Program
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIAE	Commission for International Adult Education
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSES	Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CSR	corporate social responsibility
DECS	New South Wales Department of Education and Communities
DSF	Dusseldorp Skills Forum
ECD	early childhood development
FMG	Fortescue Metals Group
GFC	global financial crisis
GNI	Gross National Income
HEP	Higher Expectations Program (Cape York)

HREOC	Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services (India)
ICSEA	Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage
LDM	Local Decision Making (model, New South Wales)
MCEECDYA	Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy
NGO	non-government organisation
NHMRC	National Health & Medical Research Council
NSW	New South Wales
NVEAC	National VET Equity Advisory Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RDP	Rural Development Philanthropy (United States)
SES	socio-economic status
STEM	science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TJSF	Towards a Just Society Fund
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States (of America)
UNECO	United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VET	Vocational Education and Training

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Philanthropy is fundamentally in the business of 'doing good' by giving, while Indigenous education (as with all education) is principally about 'becoming better' by learning. This study is interested in the intersection between the two. As such, it explores interfaces between charity (giving) and clarity (learning). If philanthropists in Australia are seeking to make their charity effective, then they will need to develop greater clarity about Indigenous education. Why? Because Indigenous education, and Indigenous affairs more broadly are, complex. So with this in mind – what is philanthropy currently doing in Indigenous education, is it doing enough, can it do more, and if philanthropy is to strategically intervene in Indigenous education, how can it improve its investment? These and related questions are the subject of this study.

The study is broadly located in the overlap between philanthropy and Indigenous education in Australia. The terms 'Indigenous' and 'First Nations' as they are used in Australia and in this thesis specifically include now widely dispersed peoples from hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations. At times the term 'Aboriginal' is used since most of the study sites involved Aboriginal people and communities. A conventional, simple definition of the term 'philanthropy' (and 'philanthropic bodies') refers to private, community-based, and non-government initiatives (and associated organisations) voluntarily working for public good and focusing on quality of life.

The research grew out of and involved a unique partnership between an Aboriginal researcher, an Australian university (the Australian National University (ANU)), philanthropists, Indigenous educators and communities. It sought to address the following overarching research question:

> *'How can philanthropic bodies more successfully engage with Indigenous people and strategically invest their resources to improve Indigenous education outcomes?'*

This chapter (*Chapter 1*) introduces both the topic and the author, by providing background context and an overview of the remaining chapters.

Framing and introducing the topic

The very early stages of this research began with the author's intuition and a hunch. After working for almost three decades in the field of Indigenous affairs and education, this researcher has observed a plethora of initiatives in the Indigenous education space, including those funded by philanthropists. The hunch centred on the researcher's concerns that both the 'problem' (or challenge) in Indigenous education, and the resultant 'solutions' are too often oversimplified. The following quote attributed to Dave Gray (in Hasan, 2014, p.55) sprang to this author's mind - 'When you make the complicated simple, you make it better, but when you make the complex simple, you make it wrong.' This thesis examines the notion of 'complexity' with the view of using it as an analytical tool in improving Indigenous education. Why? Despite hundreds of program and policy fads and dozens of false messiahs, results of philanthropic and public sector interventions intended for Indigenous communities have not improved Indigenous education at the scale or as fast as many people, this researcher included, would like. To truly understand Indigenous educational and wider disadvantage, it is important to look to (among other contexts) history.

Over the course of Australia's post-colonial history, many a noble intent has died on the complex and vexed fields of Indigenous affairs in Australia. From first contact between First Nations people and the colonists, through to today, Australia has struggled with Indigenous-colonial relationships. Australian education and philanthropic institutions – in their many guises and forms – have not been innocent bystanders in this so-called 'Indigenous problem' or the many possible 'solutions'; they have been, and remain, active players. For better or for worse, educational and charitable deeds have long been deployed as defaults in strategic interventions aimed at 'fixing' the 'Indigenous problem'. And yet the role of Indigenous philanthropy in education has not been subject to sufficient robust critical analysis and remains something of a mystery to many schools and Indigenous communities. This study is aimed at shining light on the intersection between philanthropy, education and Indigenous affairs in Australia.

One could be forgiven for thinking that philanthropic activity in Indigenous education in Australia (as witnessed by recent Indigenous university and boarding school scholarships) is relatively new. However philanthropic forays into Indigenous education are anything but new (Mitchell, 2011); they are as old as colonial Australia itself. One of the first schools built in Australia in the early 1800s was the 'Native Institution', ostensibly established to domesticate

and civilise the 'savages' (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2010). According to the rationale of the colonialists at the time the school was founded on colonial sentiments of good will, paternalism, benevolence, and charity. While philanthropy has now developed into something that is more clearly defined, the ties to historical endeavours of benevolence and charity have persisted for over 200 years in Indigenous affairs generally and Indigenous education in particular – and have not been entirely severed.

Many philanthropists operating today in Australia hold an interest in Indigenous education. In seeking to express their 'humanity-loving character', many have chosen Indigenous university scholarships and boarding school opportunities as particular points of endeavour and investment. But, in doing so, is philanthropic investment in Indigenous education akin to a 'one trick pony'? Or worse still, is it a 'one trick phony' if true altruism is made to take a back seat to corporate public relations spin? By focusing on scholarships, is philanthropy potentially overlooking a wider field of intellectual and social endeavour? More importantly, is it engaged in what is arguably the 'main game' in Indigenous education, which is to improve public schooling given that approximately 84 per cent of Indigenous young people attend public schools? (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018) Also, are philanthropic actors prepared to acknowledge that what happens outside of the school gates (that is, in communities that Indigenous children reside), as well as what happens within the school gates (teaching, curriculum, pedagogy) have equal bearing on the educational success or otherwise of the child (Dreise, Milgate, Perrett & Meston, 2016)? No matter what their intention, merit or outcome might be, will scholarships alone 'close the gap' when most Indigenous students are schooled in the public education system? Put crudely and metaphorically, there are plenty of educators and philanthropists fighting to nurture the cream of young Indigenous talent, but who is nurturing and fighting for the milk?

These, and related themes, were the questions that lay behind the topic of this study, which sought to better understand philanthropy – including its motivations, histories, relationships, and sponsorships – in Indigenous education in Australia. The study sought to hear the voice of Aboriginal communities about choices in education and how Indigenous young people are faring both in education and in broader life. Teachers, community leaders, and Aboriginal parents were interviewed as part of this research to explore whether boarding schools were a viable option, albeit for a small number of young people. Community members were also asked about how their local schools might be improved and supported, to ensure better outcomes for

young local people and in order to ensure that young people have a choice to 'stay on Country' (with deep ties to identity and kin) or within close proximity to familiar places, family and friends. The fieldwork which helped underpin this study also sought to investigate the importance of the community environments in which Indigenous children and young people reside, where far too many are victims of poverty, strained relationships, racism, and contact with criminal justice systems (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2013; Vinson, Rawsthorne, Beavis & Ericson, 2015).

Against this backdrop, this study sought, as the main research question posed it, 'to investigate how philanthropic bodies might more successfully engage with Indigenous people and strategically invest their resources to improve Indigenous education outcomes'. The research also undertook to collect field evidence and undertake a critical analysis of these and other related issues. The thesis draws heavily upon literature at various stages (not solely restricted to the literature review chapter (*Chapter 3*), but progressively added where relevant). The reasons for adopting this approach to embedding literature throughout the dissertation are twofold: firstly, in better understanding the challenges within each of the fields of philanthropy, education, and Indigenous affairs; and secondly, in presenting alternative conceptual and strategic models to both consider and deliver stronger Indigenous-philanthropic relationships in education. The study draws on literature and conceptual models that have not normally featured heavily in Indigenous studies, such as emergence and complexity theories, and models such as 'collective impact'.

Aside from the literature review, the thesis draws on new data and insights from extensive semi-structured interviews with philanthropists, educators, and Indigenous people as well as from two strategic dialogue forums involving representatives from Australian philanthropic, education, and Indigenous community sectors. From the fieldwork data and a critical analysis of the relevant literature, the study sought to create a synthesis using theoretical frameworks from the fields of complexity theory, emergence theory, whole child and place development, and collective impact.

Framing my relationship with the field

I feel obliged at the outset to disclose who I am, my research motivations, cultural background and professional experiences; and in so doing, provide a context to this study. In making this

disclosure and using ethnography as one of my main methodologies, I am influenced by Green's (2003, p.135) contention that:

> The ethnographer knows and accepts that their research is not valid in the same way that a scientific experiment would be. In particular it lacks the element of repeatability as a test of validity. The ethnographer recognises that they are deeply embedded in the text that they create and thus they are under a professional obligation to make 'themselves' visible, preferably before they communicate their findings, so that the reader has relevant information when they come to judge the credibility of the research.

With that in mind, let me make myself 'visible'.

My cultural and professional background

As an Australian Aboriginal person of the *Guumilaroi* and *Euahlayi* peoples of the north-west of the state of New South Wales (NSW) and the south-west of the state of Queensland, my Aboriginality underpins, guides, frames, and motivates this research. My family have ties to the Simpson family of Brewarrina and Knox family of Walgett in NSW. Our ties to Country extend into south-west Queensland. Our family has a long history in generously living and breathing learning, dating back some 50 years. As with any children, my siblings and I are products of our parents. My parents are in many ways 'chalk and cheese'; or as I like to think of it, 'salt and pepper'. My mother is an Aboriginal Elder, widely respected within many communities as a kind, compassionate and humorous woman. My mother (as with so many Aboriginal people) is arguably a 'philanthropist' without probably realising it. She has spent her entire life giving to others and acting selflessly. I can vividly recall so many people over many years who always benefited from her altruism (operating perhaps from a cultural belief system that is tens of thousands of years in the making); that is, people could rely on Mum to find a spare bed, a listening ear, a cup of tea, a good laugh, and a feed, even when she had 10 mouths of her own to feed. My mother has never been a political activist, choosing instead to quietly model to her children was perhaps her potent form of activism. My father (with the surname 'Dreise' pronounced 'drice') has heritage that dates back to German and British immigrants who arrived in Australia in the early 1800s. My father was, before retirement, a small business owner/operator. He worked harder than anyone I have ever seen. He could well have been an engineer such was his dream and his intelligence. However, both of my parents did not have the option to go any further than junior secondary schooling. They worked, and

they worked hard. Hard enough to feed at least 10 mouths on a good day. Hard enough to buy our family a brand-new bookcase of *Encyclopedia Britannica* in the 1970s. It was one of most wonderful things that I had ever seen in my childhood. That was about 40 years ago, but I remember it as though it was yesterday. In reflecting upon my parents, I would like to think they provided my siblings and me with a dual force of cool heads and warm hearts.

From humble family roots, my siblings and I developed a passion for learning. Personally, I have spent more than 25 years of my adult years professionally engaged in Indigenous education and First Nations policy in a number of capacities, including as a Senior Executive in Indigenous policy in Queensland, a Director and Principal Education Officer of Indigenous education and training in NSW, as a National Executive Officer of the Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council, and as the Principal Research Fellow for Indigenous Education at the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). I have served in a number of national and regional board roles, including as a member of the former National VET (Vocational Education and Training) Equity Advisory Council (NVEAC), Board member of Adult Learning Australia, past President of the Northern Rivers Social Development Council (in NSW), and former Deputy Chair of the Northern Rivers Board of Regional Development Australia. I have also worked with philanthropists for a number of years. Prior to engaging in this research, I have had opportunities to develop an early understanding of the culture, expectations, aspirations, and limitations within the philanthropic sector, by collaborating with a number of foundations.

As an Aboriginal person, I believe in and operate from several deep-seated principles, including those of self-determination, social justice, caring for 'Country' and cultural affirmation. My world views, cultural relationship, and professional career, have meant that I have developed certain perspectives, standpoints, and, inevitably, certain preconceived ideas and potential biases. That said, as a researcher I am committed to the principles of ethics, rigour, evidence, and reasoned argument. My background has meant that I have not entered into this research merely as a 'passive observer'. Rather, this research has allowed me to operate as both 'observer' and 'participant' (Wacquant, 2003; Heath & Street, 2008); notwithstanding Green's (2003) advice about 'minimising [the ethnographer's] impact so that the interviewee is better able to reclaim the "everyday" while participating in the research' (p.137). I have therefore sought to actively participate with the field through dialogue, advice, questioning, relationship development, and deep listening. More specifically, I have sought to test my own hunches,

assumptions and curiosities. In so doing, I have sought to adopt Heath and Street's (2008, (p.34)) view that:

> We can no longer play on the perhaps still publicly perceived tropes of 'innocent ethnographer' who enters the field with a mind clear of all presuppositions ready to take part as 'full' member. Rather we acknowledge our original hunches and test these against the findings of other researchers. We also enter our field sites(s) open to learning.

Throughout the course of this study, I have sought to adopt such openness towards learning. This research required both an 'open to learning' mindset as well as a capacity to both hold views and change them.

It is also important to note from the outset, that I have sought to adopt (where possible) a narrative-based approach to this study as well as the writing of this thesis. My intention is to write and present it in an accessible manner, especially for those members of Aboriginal communities who have generously contributed to the study through their time, honesty and insights. I have often heard our people say, 'our people think and talk in pictures'. Working from this adage, I have sought to use metaphors and diagrams in some places and adopted a conversational approach in others, without compromising academic and intellectual rigour. Many of the observations and findings of this study are complex. Similarly, certain aspects of the literature in this study are academic and not always easy to follow. Where I can, I have sought to adopt a 'translational' approach to the research, by taking disciplinary and academic jargon and complex concepts, and attempting to translate them into clear and accessible language. In doing this, I have sought to 'clear-up', not 'dumb-down'.

As an Aboriginal person, I have grown up surrounded by Aboriginal politics. I once heard someone say, 'to be born Aboriginal is to be born political'. Working in Indigenous affairs has been both culturally and professionally fulfilling for me. But it has not always been an easy space in which to operate and sustain oneself. I would like philanthropists to understand from this study that First Nations people's spaces are, more often than not, complex (due to history, politics, geography, culture and many other factors) and that Indigenous education problems are by extension, complex. But I also want to emphasise that 'success' and 'progress' are infinitely possible and that the field of Indigenous education can be highly rewarding and intellectually and morally nourishing for philanthropists.

Philosophical underpinnings of this study

The methodological and philosophical approach that I have taken to this study (as it has been in my work in general) is to be normative: to *advocate* and *improve* not simply to *observe* and *describe*. As such, I have been very much influenced by theorists such as Habermas (2006), who recognised the twin importance of empirical research (*what is*) and normative theorising (*what ought to be*). As Habermas noted, such thinking dates back to Aristotle who recognised that empirical research and normative theory 'go hand in hand' (p.411). On one hand, normative theory is concerned with 'values' and is prescriptive in nature. On the other hand, empirical research is concerned with 'what is' and is widely perceived as being a less value-laden and descriptive research technique.

My approach in this thesis has been to consider not just *values* but *principles*, within a normative framework. To explain this distinction, hypothetically a financial bank that decides to act in philanthropic spaces might decide to invest in financial literacy programs because it aligns with the bank's *values* of financial management and is therefore good for business, while a *principled* approach in banking might be the granting of low or no interest loans to financially marginalised people who are looking to incubate environmentally sustainable projects in their communities.

Normative theory is applied across a number of disciplines including philosophy, social sciences, economics, law and ethics. Afzaal (2015, pp.4-5) offered the following definition as it relates to normative theory in both philosophy and the social sciences:

> In philosophy, normative statements make claims about how things should or ought to be, how to value them, which things are good or bad, and which actions are right or wrong (p.4).

> In the social sciences, the term 'normative' has broadly the same meaning as its usage in philosophy, but may also relate, in a sociological context, to the role of cultural 'norms'; the shared values or institutions that structural functionalists regard as constitutive of the social structured and social cohesion. These values and units of socialisation thus act to encourage or enforce social activity and outcomes that ought to occur, while discouraging or preventing social activity that ought not occur (p.5).

On a practical level, I was interested in this thesis to explore how normative theorists operate and apply theory across a diverse spectrum of political and social thought, research and advocacy. There are academic precedents to this approach. For example, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) considered normative theory in their analysis of corporate social responsibility (CSR) models in business management; Weinstock (2001) sought to advance a normative theory in federal systems of government; while Lino (2010) discussed a normative model of Indigenous self-determination. While these three papers (McWilliams and Siegel 2001; Weinstock 2001; Lino 2010) are not discussed in detail in my study, they nonetheless illustrate the diversity of applications of normative theory, including those who pursue research by jointly considering the relationship between facts and values.

In public policy contexts, analysts such as Majone (1989) highlighted the interrelationship between values and evidence. Majone (1989, p.8) argued that:

> Most value judgements are formed in persuasive interchange. To reduce reason to logical calculation and proof about whatever does not matter enough to engage commitment is, as Wane C. Booth has written, to create a torn picture of the world, with all our values on one side and all our rational faculties on the other. Since to say anything of importance in public policy requires value judgements, this artificial separation between values and rational capacities is a threat to all notions of public deliberation and defensible policy choices.

Along with normative theory, several other theories, philosophical approaches, and conceptual models have influenced my study and the line of argument that I have pursued within it. While these theoretical approaches form part of the methodology, my intention has been to also use these approaches to help define the *principles* and *values* that philanthropists might ideally consider when engaging with First Nations communities. The theories that I have found to be most relevant to this study, and are featured throughout my thesis include complexity and emergence theory (as a sense-maker: Kania & Kramer, 2013); normative theory (as a twin ally of empirical research: Habermas, 2006); whole-child theory (as a trigger to think about a multitude of factors in educational success: e.g. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 2012); place-based theory (positing that schools alone do not generate educational success: see Dreise *et al.*, 2016), and collective impact models (acknowledging that isolated programs are unlikely to fully address complex problems: e.g. Kania & Kramer, 2011).

Why I chose the research methods for this study

My research is inclusive of findings from empirical research as well as data from my own ethnographic study. The narratives I listened to helped create 'meaning' from what the interview and forum participants shared with me and with each other. The thesis therefore seeks to be both *descriptive* and *interpretive* in its orientation. But the study is also *prescriptive* in nature in that it makes generalisations about a number of themes and preferences as expressed by the research participants and as demanded by the overarching research question. As such, this research has an advocacy and prescriptive angle. I have made every attempt in the findings (through analysis and interpretation) to turn them into potential future thinking and action, particularly on the part of philanthropists, given that the research question is aimed at the philanthropic community.

It is important finally to note that answering the research question required prescriptive analysis, as it is a question that asks 'how'. An overview of the theories and associated methods that have influenced my interpretation of the research question is provided in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1: Methods and theories adopted in this study

empirical research
- through ethnographical study and fieldwork

analysis & synthesis
- via literature review and alignment to relevant theories

normative theory
- by complementing, and balancing empirical research

sense making
- through complexity & emergence theory; place-based and whole-child theories; and collective impact models
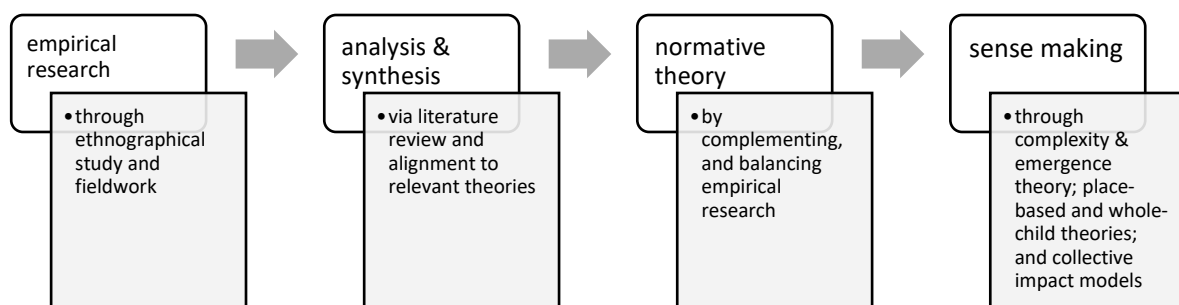
Source: T. Dreise, doctoral research.

By embracing and coupling empirical evidence and normative theory, my aim was to ensure that as a researcher I was not merely promoting certain courses of action without rigorous grounding in empirical study; or falling into the trap of studying phenomena (particularly in socially and politically complex scenarios) in a vacuum of values, principles, ethics and morals.

Given that philanthropy is fundamentally an endeavour where actors (philanthropists) pursue moral or public 'good', it could be argued that philanthropists operate within the field of what Afzaal (2015, p.16) described as the 'theory of virtue', whereby their efforts are 'directed not at what actions one ought to do, but what person one should be'. In other words, any study of philanthropy arguably lends itself to analysis and synthesis through an application of normative theory. With that in mind, I have approached this study both from the point of view of describing 'what is' (through empirical research), as well as, proposing 'what ought to be' (through normative theory). Furthermore, I have deliberately drawn upon a wide range of disciplines and theories to make sense of the data in this study, particularly the findings from the fieldwork.

Background context and purpose of the research

Improving outcomes in Indigenous education is often cited as one of the most pressing social policy challenges in Australia, with many seeing education as central in alleviating poverty and enabling social mobility (Langton & Ma Rhea, 2009; Biddle & Cameron, 2012). To illustrate, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has over the past decade adopted the 'Closing the Gap' agenda which strives, among other important goals, to produce greater parity in educational outcomes (COAG, 2009). The latest progress report from the Prime Minister of Australia showed that gains have been made for First Nations children and young people in early childhood participation and secondary schooling attainment, but the goals in school attendance and literacy and numeracy are 'not on track' (Australian Government, 2018, p.9). Whilst governments have been the biggest players and investors in Indigenous affairs over the past 50 years or more (and are likely to remain so for many years to come given the current scale of Indigenous disadvantage), as this research will show, philanthropy is playing a role in the national pursuit of bringing about greater equity in educational outcomes for Indigenous people. And yet little is known about the activities of philanthropists and how to improve the impact of their philanthropy. This research seeks to provide part[1] of the answer as it relates to philanthropic investment and intervention in improving educational outcomes for First Nations peoples.

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[1] NB: this study does not provide a thorough evaluation of the outcomes or impacts of philanthropic investment in Indigenous education, given both time and financial limitations.

This research is the result of a grant under the ARC Linkage Projects scheme, with the Australian Communities Foundation serving as the industry partner, and the ANU's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) as the research partner. It stems from a goal within the Australian Communities Foundation to better understand and position philanthropic investment and intervention in Indigenous education. At the outset of the research project, the project partners identified the following overarching research question to the study:

> *How can philanthropic bodies more successfully engage with Indigenous people and strategically invest their resources to improve Indigenous education outcomes?*

The following related (or sub-) questions were developed by this author to provide research contours to advance the study:

> *What is 'Indigenous education'?*

> *What does 'improving Indigenous education outcomes' mean?*

> *What strategies can/should philanthropists and philanthropic bodies adopt to ensure their resources and investments are strategically deployed?*

> *What are philanthropists currently doing in Indigenous education and what motivates them?*

> *What are the respective expectations and motivations on the part of (i) the philanthropic sector, (ii) the education sector, and (iii) the Indigenous community? In what ways are they aligned (or not)?*

The thesis addresses these questions through a mixed-methods approach, involving a literature review, a synthesis of theoretical and conceptual mapping, interviews with over 60 people from the fields of philanthropy, education and Indigenous affairs, and outcomes from two forums involving over 100 stakeholders from Indigenous communities, government and education systems, and the philanthropic sector. As will be revealed, the intersection between philanthropy, Indigenous school education and the other stakeholders in any philanthropic endeavour is a complex one, because of differing expectations, understandings, interpretations, and organisational 'cultures'.

In its early stages, the research project was steered by a Project Advisory Committee comprising interested parties from philanthropic, public, education and Indigenous community sectors. The Project Advisory Committee identified the following initial objectives of the research:

1. map the terrain of Australian philanthropic engagement with Indigenous people in the area of education and identify both pitfalls and examples of innovation and good practice

2. document the development approaches, philosophies, principles and programs that guide that engagement

3. conduct strategic dialogue forums between Indigenous community, government, philanthropic, and education sector representatives

4. develop a framework to potentially guide philanthropic and Indigenous partnerships in education, and

5. disseminate research findings to philanthropic bodies, government agencies, non-government organisations, Indigenous educators, community members, and academic audiences.

(Extract from submission from CAEPR to ARC, 2010)

The research was guided by these objectives, but not limited to them. Rather, it sought to be adaptive and flexible – as good social sciences research should ideally be – to ensure that the data that emerged from the field were adequately reflected and accurately represented. For example, rather than pursuing a program of identifying philanthropic 'best practice' – which runs the risk of simply documenting self-promotional material offered by those with vested interests, coupled with a paucity of robust and independent evaluation – the researcher has adopted a critical approach. This approach was essential because of concerns within Indigenous communities expressed during the fieldwork that some philanthropic organisations were elitist, inflexible and exclusionary, and that philanthropic educational interventions for Indigenous people, whilst broadly desirable and improving, had some way to go to be truly engaging, inclusive and culturally responsive. Furthermore, the interviews from Aboriginal (urban, regional and remote) Australian communities as part of the fieldwork exposed larger and troubling social issues that First Nations people continued to confront, which extended well

beyond the school gates but nonetheless impacted on children's capacity to engage in education in a focused, healthy, and motivated way.

Overview of the remaining chapters

The thesis comprises eight chapters in total, the second of which provides an outline of the methods and methodologies used in the study. The author has drawn upon a diverse range of methodological and conceptual approaches in answering the overarching research question. Methodological and theoretical guidance has been sought from three quite distinct fields of prior research, namely: Indigenous studies, philanthropy, and education. Whilst most previous studies in each of these three areas sit broadly under an umbrella of social sciences, each of the three fields have increasingly specialised sub-disciplines including Indigenous methodologies in the case of Indigenous studies; commerce and business studies in the case of philanthropy and CSR; and educational pedagogy and research in the case of education. The researcher initially embraced a *bricolage* approach to the study, in the sense of constructing or creating work from a diverse range of materials. This approach was deemed to be useful in light of the diverse and dispersed nature of the literature and prior research, and because of a paucity of prior research specifically on the subject of 'philanthropy in Indigenous education'. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.4) explain *bricolage* as 'the result of the bricoleur's method and is based on an [emergent] construction that changes and takes new forms as the bricoleur adds different tools, methods, and techniques of representation and interpretation to the puzzle'.

Chapter 2 describes the various methodological influences to the study including problem definition, program design, data collection and analysis, and communication. This chapter explains the key data collection methods including a critical review of the literature along with fieldwork underpinned by methods (including Indigenous methods) of observation and deep listening, narrative, story-telling and re-storying, and making sense of what is happening in the field. The chapter also outlines the theories and practices of recursive research in social sciences (including hunches and thick description) that have been key influences in terms of method. Furthermore, the chapter explains how sites for fieldwork were chosen and provides background on the two strategic dialogue forums that were convened to gather data and insights from philanthropists, educators, researchers and Indigenous community representatives.

The third chapter reviews literature relevant to the study from both multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives. *Chapter 3* examines prior research and literature (including

political and ideological debate) in each of the diverse and contested fields of philanthropy, Indigenous affairs, education and Indigenous education, with a view to identifying threads of commonality or overlap. The literature points strongly to ongoing policy, political, philosophical and cultural tensions, complexities and contestability in each of these fields. The development of the literature review was iterative in nature; meaning it was originally developed prior to fieldwork (which is the subject of discussion in *Chapter 4*) and then revisited following the fieldwork. By adopting this recursive approach to the study, the researcher has tested the literature against the fieldwork, and vice versa.

Chapter 4 outlines the fieldwork component of the research. This chapter documents the experiences and attitudes of philanthropists (as grant-givers) working with education and Aboriginal community agencies, along with the aspirations and demands of Aboriginal community and education agencies as grant-seekers. In addition, the chapter records the views and advice of participants (from philanthropic, education/research, and Indigenous community sectors) involved across two 'Strategic Dialogue Forums'. The Forums were invaluable sources of data and insights.

Chapter 5 revisits the literature in response to the fieldwork data. That is, the researcher has drawn upon complexity and emergence theories as tools to both analyse and synthesise the fieldwork data. More importantly, through the introduction of this additional and highly focused literature, the field data are subjected to 'sense-making' processes. In combination, the field data and the literature are used to tease out the complex set of inter-relationships and multifaceted scenarios at Indigenous affairs–education–philanthropic interfaces. Complexity and emergence theories have therefore been drawn upon to make sense of the field data and in an effort to begin to identify a future framework for joint philanthropic–Indigenous education endeavours.

The research presupposes that education is exosystemic, in that education is much more than what happens beyond the system of students in school. It involves systems of interconnections between diverse social and community settings. The research therefore draws upon 'whole child', 'place-based', and 'collective impact' theories and concepts in response to the multifaceted, complex and exosystemic nature of improving Indigenous education. These and related themes are discussed in *Chapter 6*, which provides the reader with alternative approaches to potentially improving philanthropic investment and engagement in Indigenous education. *Chapter 7* is a logical extension of *Chapter 6* in so far as it offers a new framework

(which the author has called a 'Reframework') to potentially unlock future thinking and collaborative interaction between philanthropy and Indigenous education.

The thesis closes with *Chapter 8* providing conclusions and a summary of the findings as well as posing unresolved problems and areas for further research; and by reiterating the normative nature of the research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Overview

This chapter outlines in detail the methodology and multiple methods that have underpinned and guided this study. Established methods in ethnographic and empirical study are among the multiple methods that have influenced this study, including research techniques such as observation, participation, interviews, interpretation, and sense making. Strategic dialogue forums involving Indigenous educators, researchers, educators, and philanthropists have also been key sources of data and have contributed to the recursive nature of the research design.

Given the diverse nature of the subject under investigation, this research has been influenced by a number of methodological approaches and theories. These approaches are 'multiple' as opposed to 'mixed' in nature. That is, the research does not adopt a classical 'mixed mode' approach that draws upon both qualitative and quantitative methods. Rather, it adopts a 'multiple methods' approach that embraces a variety of qualitative methods and multiplicity of philosophical standpoints (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Cameron, 2015). Such an approach has allowed the researcher to deliberately not only embrace fit-for-purpose methods but to apply established methodological and philosophical frameworks that are both interpretative and prescriptive in nature. Such approaches have been incorporated with a view to advancing knowledge and understanding within a perceived unique interface between Indigenous affairs, education and philanthropy. Typically, *Indigenous affairs* has been studied through the lens of social sciences, economics, political science, anthropological and ethnographic disciplines – to name but a few. These approaches alone were perceived by this author as unlikely to accommodate the multitude of phenomena under study. Equally, whilst *education* is increasingly researched through a distinct paradigm of 'educational research' – with linkages to psychology and increasingly, to neuroscience – there is a risk of overlooking the social, historical, and cultural dimensions of education as it relates to First Nations people in Australia. Studies in *philanthropy*, meanwhile, are not only the subject of social sciences research but also within business studies, commerce and economics given philanthropy's close connection to CSR. Aguinis and Glavas (2017, p.2) suggested that:

> CSR refers to organizational actions and policies that consider several types of stakeholders and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental

performance…CSR focuses on many types of stakeholders, including stakeholders outside of the organization, and on outcomes that go beyond financial results.

Along with studies in the field of business, this study on Indigenous philanthropy has been guided by established research methods in social sciences, educational research, and ethnography, among others. Specifically, it has been influenced by the central features of educational and social research such as those articulated by Kervin, Vialle, Herrington, and Okely (2006), including by defining the 'problem' and by drawing upon personal experience, literature and experts. Kervin *et al.* (2006) also point out the importance of research design and qualitative data collection. In the case of this study into Indigenous education and philanthropy, the researcher's design has centred on qualitative research, and data collection has centred on participant interviews. This research then analyses the data including by testing it against secondary data from other related prior studies, statistics and surveys.

Kervin *et al.* (2006) articulate a number of additional features of social research that also have been important considerations in this research, including *phenomenology*, that is understanding the views, motivations and concerns of people in the social setting. The study is context-specific and interested in 'holism' (the big picture); it is open minded (devoid of preconceptions and judgements), and is mindful of a range of perspectives, as opposed to narrow perspectives (*ibid.*, p.68). The research also adopts Creswell's (2003) model for data management in social research that requires familiarisation with the data, its categorisation, and its synthesis.

Observation, participation, interpretation, sense making

Of the multiple research methods adopted in this study, ethnographical techniques such as *narrative inquiry*, *deep listening*, and *thick description* have been embraced. The researcher perceived that these approaches naturally lent themselves to the study of First Nations education by an Aboriginal researcher. Specifically, the research sought to observe, record and analyse certain cultural groups, in this case groups working within the field of philanthropy and Indigenous education. Specifically, it adopted several characteristics of quality ethnography identified in various literature sources and promoted by leading ethnographers such as Willis and Trondman (2000), including the promotion of theoretical 'informed-ness' and sensitisation of concepts as a way of teasing out patterns from the texture of everyday life (p.396).

This study includes ethnographic accounts in order to generate an understanding of the experiences of those working in the field of Indigenous education and philanthropy. This approach provides what Wolcott (1987, p.11) describes as 'detailed descriptive information, coupled with interpretation and relating that working to implicit patterns which members of that group or sub-groups hold more or less in common'. *Observation* has been a key plank of the study pursued through interviews, roundtables, and field visits. As such, it has sought to be consistent with the principle that ethnographers such as Wolcott (1987, p.4) promote, namely:

> Culture is not lying about waiting patiently to be discovered; rather it must be inferred from the words and actions of members of the group under study and then literally assigned to that group by the anthropologist.

'Culture' has been central to this study, not only from the point of view of Indigenous culture but also the group-cultures within educational and philanthropic sectors with an interest in Indigenous communities. The research has therefore been concerned with how 'actors' (as told by informants) in this field, this author included, view their experiences and reflect upon them. It was therefore conceptually influenced by the Willis and Trondman (2000, p.396) view of the 'increasing imperative for all social groups to find and make their own roots, routes, and lived meanings in societies undergoing profound processes of restructuration and detraditionalization'. In other words, this research has sought to detect and understand how the social groups under study are handling major changes (whilst at the same time maintaining core cultural identity) in their communities, businesses and organisations, including managing the unpredictable and emergent properties within the places in which they work and live. Issues associated with unpredictability and emergence will be discussed in detail in *Chapter 5*.

The study has also sought to meet one of the foundational challenges of quality ethnography which not only provides 'exquisite site description but also needs to try and make sense of what is being observed' (Wolcott, 1987, p.3). Analysis, including critical analysis, has therefore been an important aspect of the study.

Recursive process: Hunches, curiosity, literature, field research

Of the multiple methods that have shaped this study, Heath and Street's (2008) position on quality ethnography that integrates observational data, hunches, and theory and concepts drawn from literature have been a major influence (see Fig. 2).

Fig. 2: The recursive process in doing ethnography: Theory and practice
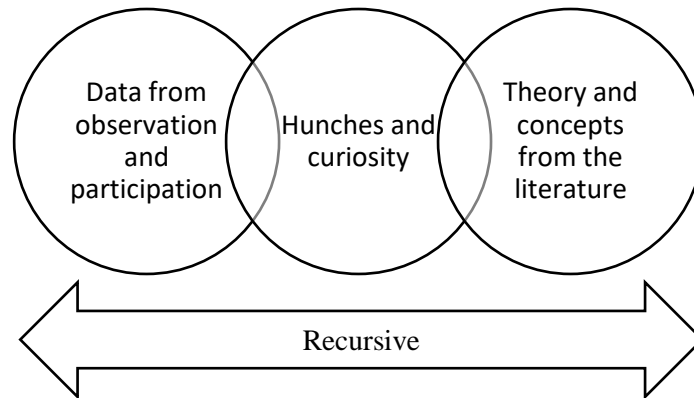
Source: T. Dreise translational diagram based on Heath and Street, 2008.

The research has adopted a recursive process by drawing upon theories and concepts currently available in the literature in Indigenous educational philanthropy (notwithstanding that, as an emergent field the literature, the literature on this specific topic is not extensive) and by coupling and testing these theories with data from observations and participation in the field (interviews, roundtables, and field visits). It also draws upon the author's personal hunches and curiosities as noted earlier. These 'hunches' were particularly important in framing the interpretations and analysis of the data that have been collected.

To advance the aims and outcomes of the research, a number of firmly established methods have been deployed from the fields of social sciences and anthropology, including those identified by Murchison (2009) such as empirical data gathering through fieldwork and case studies; participant observation including identifying themes and common issues; interviews, interpretation and analysis; roundtable dialogue, interpretation and analysis; and referring to secondary sources of information.

Interviews and forums

The research has relied heavily on knowledgeable informants from Australian philanthropic, education, and Indigenous community sectors through interviews and a series of roundtables, augmented by participants sharing networks of other informants whereby commonalities in narrative and experience have unfolded. As Wacquant (2003, p.5) suggests, effective ethnography requires:

> …close-up, on the ground observation of people and institutions in real time and space, in which the investigator embeds herself near (or within) the phenomenon so as to detect how and why agents on the scene act, think and feel the way they do.

More than 60 semi-structured interviews were conducted with people involved in philanthropy, education, and/or Indigenous communities. Four criteria were applied to the selection of interview sites, namely geographical diversity (urban, regional, remote); varying scale of philanthropic endeavour (small to large); nature of philanthropic investment or intervention models; and balancing the voices of supply (philanthropy) and demand (schools and communities) and in some cases both (that is, foundations that rely on bequests, corporate and individual donations to provide scholarships, professional development programs, learning resources and bursaries).

In addition to the interview sites, over 100 people from each of the three sectors were involved in two Strategic Dialogue Forums convened by the Project Advisory Committee and hosted by the Melbourne Business School's Asia Pacific Social Impact Leadership Centre.

It is important to note at this point that the names of the Forum participants and the communities visited have not been revealed. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the anonymity of interviewees given that the Indigenous education–philanthropic interface is relatively small, and in order to gather frank and fearless views. This approach to confidentiality was a commitment given to the participants prior to and during interviews, and as approved by the ANU's Human Research Ethics Committee.

Deep listening and thick description

One of the key goals of this research has been to listen carefully so as to adequately and accurately reflect what participants had to share. As such, two research methodologies – one from First Nations research and the other from social sciences research – have influenced this study. The first is the concept of 'deep listening'. The Ngangikurungkurr people of the Daly River in Australia's Northern Territory use the word 'dadirri' to describe the cultural practice of deep listening (Katz, Newton, Shona and Raven 2016). Katz *et al.* (2016, p.32) have helped capture both the essence of 'dadirri' and its potential application in Aboriginal research methodology:

'Dadirri' is a word…used to describe 'inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness'…Dadirri in a research context requires the researcher to continually be reflexive of their relationships with others, the reciprocal role that the researcher and participants/community have in the research, and in sharing stories with each other.

Aboriginal author Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann (2002, p.1) described 'dadirri' in the following terms:

Dadirri is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call 'contemplation'. There is no need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening. In our Aboriginal way, we learnt to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened. This was the normal way for us to learn – not by asking questions. We learnt by watching and listening, waiting and then acting. My people are not threatened by silence. They are completely at home in it. Our Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and to wait. We do not try to hurry things up. We let them follow their natural course – like the seasons.

This current study's methodology sought to affirm this practice of deep listening. During the course of interviews, there were periods of silence, pausing, reflection, sadness, body language such as heads down, animation, agitation, group dynamics and passionate (and on occasion, fiery) advocacy; all reaffirming the importance of observing not only what was being said, but also how it was being communicated.

All interviews for the research occurred in their 'natural settings'; including in schools, universities, TAFE [Technical and Further Education] colleges, philanthropic organisation offices, and even at the kitchen table of two philanthropists. In this way the research was qualitative in that it sought to make sense of the social phenomena within these natural settings. It shares the characteristics of qualitative research as described by Kervin *et al.* (2006, p.37) in so far as the research 'involves holistic inquiry in a natural setting'. The research employed a number of qualitative methods and 'inductive data analysis' and 'emergent design' (*ibid.*, p.37). Furthermore, the points made by Kervin *et al.* (2006) in relation to embracing a 'multiplicity of viewpoints' along with an acknowledgement of the researcher's intuition, subjectivity and personal knowledge' have been observed and adopted (*ibid.*).

Another key influence in this research's methods is that of 'thick description'. Thick description could be described as a natural extension to deep listening, as it takes the listening and richly describes what was observed and heard. One of the forefathers of 'thick description' was American anthropologist Clifford Geertz. In his text *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Geertz (1973, p.10) explained 'thick description':

> What the ethnographer is in fact faced with except when (as, of course, he must do) he is pursuing the more automatized routines of data collection – is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render.

More recently, Kervin *et al.* (2006, p.85) suggested that thick description is a highly effective method in social sciences as it can be used to document

> …the participants' feelings, attitudes and views towards the research focus; determine the social structure and context of the natural setting; and put all the collected data into a holistic, all-encompassing, phenomenological picture.

Thick description is used in qualitative social research to present descriptive data gathered from multiple sources (such as interviews, workshops, and observations in workplaces and other natural settings), effectively communicating the depth, richness and thickness of the social phenomena under study. As the fieldwork component of this current study was conducted across multi-sites (namely, two capital cities, a regional city, and two rural–remote communities), it shares the features of what Carney (2017) described as 'multi-sited ethnography'. Multi-sited ethnography usually involves thick description on two levels – within each community and at a translocal level (*ibid.*). To that end, this study has identified both site-specific phenomena and patterns across communities.

Story-telling and narrative as method

As oral based cultures, story-telling is fundamental to First Nations people's ways of life as expressed through song, dance, ceremony, art, and instruction to young people. Narrative inquiry, as a methodological technique in human research, lends itself well to Indigenous studies. It is also a research method with significant application in educational research. As

Sikes and Gale (2006, no page numbers) noted in their paper called 'Narrative approaches to education research':

> Narrative research is research that is concerned with stories. These can be stories as told and they can be stories that we enquire into: narratives as data, data as narratives. Referring specifically to sociologists, although, we would argue, with application to any of the social disciplines, David Silverman observes: all we sociologists have are stories. Some come from other people, some from us. What matters is to understand how and where the stories are produced, which sort of stories they are, and how we can put them to intelligent use in theorizing about social life.

At a macro level, narrative research sits well with the *orality* of Indigenous cultures. That is, while formal, contemporary academic research has largely Anglo-Celtic origins (Gorman & Toombs, 2009), human narrative is universal as demonstrated by peoples throughout the world and throughout the millennia. Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998, p.2) offer the following definition of narrative research:

> Narrative research refers to any study that uses or analyses narrative materials. The data can be collected as a story or in a different manner (e.g. field notes of an anthropologist). It can be the object of the research or a means for the study of another question. It may be used for comparison among groups, to learn about a social phenomenon or historical period, or to explore a personality.

Narrative inquiry is used across disciplines and in an interdisciplinary way, including in education, psychology, sociology, linguistics, literature, history and anthropology. It has many forms, uses a variety of analytic practices and is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines, with close links to other qualitative research methods such as ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology (Creswell, 2003).

Significantly, theories that underpin narrative research underscore the importance of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. As Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) explain, it is about both *method* (data description) and *phenomena* (relationships that lead to accurate and fair interpretation and analysis) of study. Narrative inquiry is also closely related to grounded theory research, which is interested in capturing and understanding the unfolding of 'events' under study, 'core phenomenon', influences and 'causal conditions', 'strategies', and 'consequences' of processes and interventions used (Creswell, 2003, p.66).

In methodological and practical terms, narrative research can take the form of fieldwork, including descriptions of things observed and taxonomies of types of stories. It is concerned with seeking and understanding themes across stories, with a view to interpreting and analysing data. Clandinin and Huber (2010, p.1) help explain the process by suggesting that narrative inquirers 'think narratively about experience throughout inquiry. Narrative inquiry follows a recursive, reflexive process of moving from field (with starting points in telling or living of stories) to field texts (data) to interim and final research texts'.

First Nations cultures in Australia have long conveyed and passed down lore and law through story, dance, visual arts, and song. In a contemporary sense, yarning or *yarnin'* are synonymous with Indigenous approaches to policy consultative and community engagement processes. Bessarab and Ng'andu (2010) help identify a number of forms of yarning from a Noongar (Western Australia) perspective, including *social* yarning, *research* yarning, *collaborative* yarning, and *therapeutic* yarning. In light of these multiple forms and benefits of yarning and story-telling that social researchers (for instance, Katz *et al.* 2016, p.31) find such techniques as being potentially effective and highly important in Indigenous research.

First Nations peoples from other parts of the world share broadly similar approaches, that value of collective orality, such as used by Native Americans and Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Kovach (2010, p.42) helped capture the phenomenon from an Indigenous Canadian perspective:

> The conversational method aligns with an Indigenous worldview that honours orality as means of transmitting knowledge and upholds the relational which is necessary to maintain a collectivist tradition. Story is relational process that is accompanied by particular protocol consistent with tribal knowledge identified as guiding the research.

As with any research, narrative research in Indigenous contexts involves risk, including misinterpretation, over-generalising, miscommunication, and breaches of confidentiality. Such risks can be offset by the application of a number of design principles. Putt (2013), for example, highlighted the importance of an ongoing dialogue between researchers and participants about intentions, values and assumptions throughout the research process, by suggesting that:

> A number of core values characterise good practice in social sciences, including respect for subjects or participants; voluntary participation; informed consent; and ensuring privacy and confidentiality (Putt 2013, p.2).

Researchers in Canada also highlight values to underpin quality Indigenous field research. For instance, Baydala, Placsko, Hampton, Bourassa and McKay-McNabb (2006) argued that cooperative exchange of academic (Western) and cultural (Indigenous) knowledge are necessary in setting the agenda for research and inquiry from the outset, by offering the following practical advice:

> Community meetings, the sharing of food, travelling to participant's communities, observing cultural protocols, and providing honoraria develops relationships in which people can reflect on their communities and their experience and openly share ideas (*ibid.*, p.49).

The literature from both Australian and international sources points to the necessity for researchers to develop and maintain trust and respect with participating Indigenous communities (Baydala *et al.,* 2006; Kovach, 2010; Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), 2012). Trust can be achieved by negotiating and validating intentions and research design, along with careful listening. Kovach (2010), from Canada, identified dialogic participation and relational approaches as being essential in Indigenous Canadian contexts, including respect for Indigenous ontology (world views and belief systems) and epistemology (knowledge nested within the social relations of knowledge production).

Dialogical approaches can be just as effective in educational research contexts as they are in Indigenous contexts. Clandinin and Connelly (2000, p.20) underscored their importance:

> Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding their inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experience that make up people's lives, both individual and social. Simply stated…narrative inquiry is stories lived and told.

In education and other social research contexts, narrative research is carried out in a number of ways, principally through the production of 'field texts' via interviews, observation, recording, literature, notes obtained out of session, and media such as video and online media. Creswell (2003) promoted the process of 'restorying', whereby the researcher organises field stories into a general type of framework. He described the process of '...deconstruction of the stories, an unmaking of them by such analytic strategies as exposing dichotomies, examining silences and

attending to contradictions' (*ibid.*, p.56). Like any story, fieldwork involves the creation of sequence and chronology, along with a description of events, plot, tensions or struggles, an ending, and perhaps a moral. Creswell (2003) described the moral or core of a story as its 'essence'. He cited phenomenology theory in upholding this idea; phenomenology is a process of seeking common phenomenon or the 'essence' or essences of a story. It not only involves description, but also an interpretative process in which the researcher makes an interpretation of the meaning of lived experiences.

Stories and narratives occur in a context. Sarbin (1986), a researcher in psychology, suggested that only a world view based on *contextualism* is sufficient to account adequately for human action. To discover such contexts, it is important that researchers put aside their own experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective or look anew (Creswell, 2003). Creswell (p.57) also highlighted the importance of the relationship between researcher and informants in the following terms:

> As researchers collect stories, they negotiate relationships, smooth transitions, and provide ways to be useful to participants. In narrative research, a key theme has been the turn toward the relationship between the researcher and the researched in which both parties will learn and change in the encounter.

Finally, ethnography and narrative inquiry can (and often should) be advocacy-based (Creswell, 2003; Putt, 2013). Creswell (2003, p.70) explained that critical ethnography 'is a type of ethnographic research in which the authors advocate for the emancipation of groups marginalised in society'. Likewise, Putt (2013, p.1) noted that 'Indigenous researchers argue the focus (of research) should be on working with Indigenous people who hold the knowledge and expertise of their circumstances past and present, and on positive change'. In addition, trustworthiness of data and analysis is a critical ingredient of quality narrative research. As Giovannoli (2000, p.46) noted:

> Narrative research does not aim at certitude, prediction, and control; it is about interpretation that is trustworthy, valid and well grounded, having such force as to compel acceptance.

Building trustworthy relationships, embracing Indigenous methodology and ways of knowing (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; National Health & Medical Research Council (NHMRC), 2003; AIATSIS, 2012; Katz *et al.* 2016), and adopting narrative approaches have all been key design

principles in this research. The research has sought to be truthful to the spirit of deep listening and the important principle of thick description in story-telling. Narrative-based research is particularly important when it comes to capturing the stories of Aboriginal communities visited as part of the fieldwork. Their stories reflect an overwhelming unmet need on the part of Aboriginal children, adults, and learners.

Furthermore, the methodology has adopted a recursive approach to research. Using this approach, both the fieldwork and literature can be tested against one another. This enabled the researcher to visit the literature early in the research project, and return to it again following the completion of fieldwork in order to interpret and analyse the fieldwork findings. Within this recursive process, and having outlined the various design underpinnings and methodological schema for this research, the next chapter of the thesis critically analyses the literature as it relates to complexity in Indigenous affairs, philanthropy, and education.

Chapter 3: Literature review

Overview

In order to advance the overarching research question of this study, the literature review seeks to broadly cover the domains of philanthropy, Indigenous affairs, and education. The review draws upon a *bricolage* (Rogers, 2012) of literature in an attempt to capture the many interdependencies and interrelationships that exist within education–philanthropy–Indigenous affairs interfaces. By necessity, the review traverses a wide range of academic disciplines, theories, contested political narratives and public commentaries, and historical analyses. In addition, it seeks to balance perspectives from the respective sectors – education, philanthropy and Indigenous affairs.

The review adopts a transdisciplinary approach (Davis & Sumara, 2009) and is both Australian and international in scope by weaving together a tapestry of pertinent studies including in history, politics, social sciences, education and business. This is necessary both in linking seemingly disparate fields (philanthropy, public policy in Indigenous affairs, and education) and also in lieu of prior studies on this specific topic. The review is interested in the convergence of this complex interface and certain tensions in philanthropy, Indigenous affairs, education, and Indigenous education and is organised accordingly.

After considering these diverse fields individually, subsequent chapters of this thesis present an analysis of various normative and descriptive theories, along with their potential application to future intersections between philanthropy, education and Indigenous communities. These theories (particularly *emergence*, *complexity*, *whole-child*, *place-based*, and *collective impact* theories), in turn, provide an important framework for the final parts of the thesis, which presents a framework for shaping potential future partnerships between philanthropic, education and Indigenous communities.

The development of the literature review has been iterative in nature: it was initially developed prior to the fieldwork component of the research project, and revisited as a result of it. Whilst the first iteration of the review involved an initial and very broad sweep of prior research and existing literature (notwithstanding that literature on the specific issue of Australian philanthropy and Indigenous education is limited), it has been amended to accommodate, critique and test various hypotheses, claims, theories, and observations given and made in the

field. For instance, and to illustrate, while the initial cut of the literature review did not have a particular focus on alternative and expansive approaches to curriculum offerings for First Nations young people, this later became a particular point of interest given that a significant number of Indigenous community members and educators highlighted these issues as a sizeable barrier to learning among Indigenous youth. This overall approach is in keeping with recursive methodology as outlined earlier.

The literature review, in parts, adopts a story-telling mode by drawing upon narrative as shared by Aboriginal people in published literature. As such, some of the following passages quote these narratives extensively, including provocative language from political actors and moving testimonies from First Nations people who have been adversely impacted by charitable (philanthropic) and educational institutions, including in recent decades. Philanthropists and others will, ideally, be aware of the power of language and the sensitive nature of political discourse in Aboriginal affairs. These narratives help illustrate the complexity of the topics under investigation, which in turn is central to the underlying argument of this thesis: that simplistic interpretations of the 'problem' and promotion of simplistic 'solutions', far too often, fail to accommodate the diversity and complexity of Indigenous affairs, including the sphere of Indigenous education. Furthermore, such narrative approaches serve to highlight the intricate nature of and interdependencies between schooling, family and community wellbeing, history, policy and politics.

Complexity and tensions in philanthropy

Ancient roots

The term philanthropy stems from the Greek word *philanthropia*, meaning 'love of mankind' (Payton & Moody, 2008, p.36). According to writings attributed to Greek playwright Aeshylus some 2,500 years ago: Zeus, the king of the Greek gods, decided to destroy the good people, but Prometheus, a Titan whose name meant 'forethought' out of his *'philanthropos tropos'* or 'humanity-loving character' gave them two empowering, life-enhancing gifts – fire, symbolising all knowledge, skills, technology, arts, and science; and blind hope or optimism.[2] As Payton and Moody (2008, p.36) explain, 'philanthropy still retains its ancient meaning of

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[2] Retrieved on 11 May 2012 from http://www.theoi.com/Titan/TitanPrometheus.html

general benevolence, of kindness, of generosity toward humanity. It affirms a value, a concern for the wellbeing of people beyond oneself, and a concern for the public good.'

A short history of philanthropy and Indigenous Australia

The relationship between philanthropy and Indigenous Australia is not new. It is arguably as old as colonial Australia itself. At the outset of colonial Australia, Governor Arthur Phillip was instructed by the Crown to ensure that the Indigenes were treated in a 'friendly and humanitarian manner'.[3] This could be reasonably interpreted as meaning that colonisers were to act in a philanthropic manner.

Mitchell (2011) helped chart the various forms that early philanthropic endeavour would take during the course of colonial Australia's relationship with Indigenous people between the years 1825 and 1855. According to Mitchell (2011), this endeavour centred on 'evangelical philanthropy' (p.3), 'to make them (Indigenous people) like ourselves' (subjects of the British Crown) (p.21); and measures to overcome their status as 'Godless political experiments' (p.39). Mitchell (2011, p.6) noted that:

> Philanthropists mixed imperial loyalties, their dependence on the state, and their wish to incorporate Indigenous Australians as British subjects sat uneasily beside their distress at the harm caused by dispossession, their mistrust of white colonists, and their disputes with Indigenous people over questions of authority.

Mitchell (2011) also observed that by the 1840s, the philanthropists' (or missionaries') reports to the colonial government and the Empire were becoming increasingly pessimistic as Indigenous Australians were increasingly described as being 'hopeless and doomed' (*ibid.,* p.180). Despite this growing pessimism, certain missionaries believed they had the answer including one who believed that they (Indigenous people) 'should be recompensed for their loss, by being gathered together and taught to become Christian farmers' (*ibid.*, p.93).

If one is to accept broader definitions of philanthropy (as Mitchell appears to) – namely 'charity', 'humanity-loving', 'missionary' and 'benevolence' – then there is extensive evidence of 'philanthropic engagement' throughout Australia's post-colonial period, the most obvious of which were the church missions established throughout Australia to 'protect' Indigenous peoples from both themselves and the new colonial society (Berndt & Berndt, 1985). No matter

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[3] Retrieved on 11 May 2012 from http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/phillip-arthur-2549

how well intentioned they were, with the benefit of hindsight, these missionaries inflicted enormous harm to the collective Indigenous psyche by oppressing and confusing identity, inflicting corporal punishment, and denouncing first cultures in a despairing way. Berndt and Berndt (1985, p.498) wrote that:

> Some (missionaries) were intent on stamping out Aboriginal culture entirely, even to the extent of calling for police assistance in breaking up initiation camps, and speaking of all traditional practices and beliefs as devil-sponsored, leading inexorably to hell and eternal damnation.

Many missionaries were fanatical about influencing a cultural change in children. Berndt and Berndt (1985, p.499) again noted that:

> With this extreme attitude went other aspects, handled with greater or less rigidity, forcibly taking children into dormitories and forbidding or restricting access to parents, interfering with marriage customs, undermining the authority of older people, for instance by overriding or even openly mocking at their attempts to influence the young, holding up sacred objects to ridicule, and displaying to children or to women things which were not only sacred but conventionally secret to adult men.

Lines (1992) referred to this missionary zeal as the 'great Christian enterprise'. Lines found that the Christians, like the broader colony, often held a dim and pessimistic view of Indigenous people and their future in the new colonial society. Lines (1992, pp.114–5) wrote:

> God, the missionaries said, was colour blind, and in the mansions of the Lord the black man would be fair as the white. Their efforts reflected age old priorities. 'I would rather', Bishop Augustus Short of Adelaide told a South Australian Committee of Enquiry in 1860, 'they (Aborigines) die as Christians than drag out a miserable existence as heathens. I believe that the race will disappear either way.' Most settlers believed the natives constitutionally incapable of understanding the superiority of European civilisation, and did not want Aborigines civilised; their mere presence was deemed inconvenient. Anthony Trollope, who visited several missions in the early 1870s, was shocked by the sight of healthy Aboriginal children and believed the missions seriously erred in their encouragement of Aboriginal procreation: 'an increasing race of aborigines in the land...would be a curse rather than a blessing...Their

doom is to be exterminated; and the sooner their doom be accomplished...the better will it be for civilization'.

Paradoxically, there are a number of small scale examples of non-Indigenous Australians acting philanthropically with genuine care and respect during these early periods of Australian post-colonial history. Berndt and Berndt (1985) for example found that not all missionaries adopted such extreme views and dim expectations. Others were keen to engage, understand and work with culture and language (*ibid.*, p.499). Meanwhile, Lines (1992, p.46) cites an example of noble intent in the 1800s through George Augustus Robinson, a Christian man driven by a philanthropic mission to replace Tasmanian Aboriginal culture with theocentric subsistence agriculture in 1830s. Additionally, Broome (2010) cites the case of Jason Noble, an Aboriginal stockman in the late 1800s, 'who was educated in the evenings at Scone Grammar School, at the expense of his bosses' (p.164).

Moving forward to the 1950s and 1960s, in particular, saw significant shifts in the number of non-Indigenous people sensing a grave national injustice and striving to turn things around through philanthropic endeavour, volunteering, and political activism. Bain Attwood's text *Rights for Aborigines* provides an extensive documentation of such political endeavours. Attwood (2003) cites a number of examples of non-Indigenous people funding, volunteering or joining various organisations to change Australia's outlook on Indigenous affairs, especially in the lead up to the 1967 Referendum which resulted in the inclusion of Indigenous people in the census, and allowed the Commonwealth government to make laws for First Nations people. Other examples include the fact that non-Aboriginal people would join Indigenous people in helping fight for the extension of age pensions to Indigenous people in the 1950s (*Tracker Magazine*, July 2011, pp.60-61).

In the 1960s, the Myer Foundation (Australian) and van Leer Foundation (international) began to make early philanthropic contributions to Indigenous education and development in Australia. The Myer Foundation's involvement in Indigenous affairs started in the early 1960s when it provided 'a small grant to the University of Adelaide for the recording of traditional Aboriginal music at risk of loss' (Liffman, 2004, p.66). Not long after, in 1966, the Myer Foundation was drawn into one of the most significant bodies of research into Indigenous Australia, which led to the appointment of Charles Rowley as the Director of the Aborigines in Australian Society Project. This project at a then cost of AUD$68,000 was to consume the entire budget of the Myer Foundation in that year (*ibid.*, p.68). The project came at a time of

great change in Australia, especially with the pending Referendum in 1967, and resulted in one of the most seminal and foundational pieces of anthropological and ethnographic work in Australia's post-colonial period. Manne (2003, p.2), for instance, would later commend Rowley's work in the following terms.

> The [Great Australian] silence of which Stanner spoke was, in fact, broken by the three-volume study sponsored by the Social Science Research Council and authored by Charles Rowley – The Destruction of Aboriginal Society, Outcasts in White Society and The Remote Aborigines, published in 1970. Rowley's trilogy represents one of the great scholarly and moral achievements of Australia's intellectual history. With its publication and absorption into the nation's bloodstream, Australia became a significantly different country.

The Myer Foundation's investment in Rowley's work proved to be one of the more significant strategic philanthropic investments in post-colonial Australian history. The Myer Foundation would go on to fund a number of Indigenous education and social justice projects in the 1970s and beyond including the provision of a small grant to an Aboriginal group at Yirrkala to obtain legal advice on applying for a lease as well as an Aboriginal leadership development programme in 1973. In the 1980s the Foundation was to provide funds to (notable Australian public policy leader) Nugget Coombs and the Pitjantjatjara Council for a feasibility project into schooling on outstations in remote Australia (Liffman, 2004).

The Aboriginal Education Archives at Flinders University helped document the introduction of the van Leer Foundation into Aboriginal Australia in the 1960s (Schwab & Sutherland, 2001, p.8). In 1966, the Netherlands-based van Leer Foundation was established in 30 countries across the world, with the aim of expanding education provision to disadvantaged children. Projects were set up and financed to study the challenges facing these children and to develop education methods and supports to compensate for or overcome these challenges. The van Leer Foundation funded a range of initiatives in Indigenous Australia including a preschool project in South Australia and education projects in Ernabella and Marree. More significantly, the Foundation funded an innovative educational initiative in 1969, which led to the establishment of 12 Aboriginal Family Education Centres in NSW in places such as Toomelah, Woodenbong, and Tabulum (*ibid.*).

Philanthropy in its various forms today

Payton and Moody (2008) provide a detailed explanation of philanthropy, including its various forms and functions, in more contemporary times. Payton and Moody's text is quoted extensively in the following passages as it provides an overview of the various modes and styles of philanthropy. Payton and Moody (2008) start by outlining a number of what they call 'narrower meaning and connotations' of philanthropy that the lay person invariably understands philanthropy to be, including that philanthropy refers to giving (or perhaps giving and service both) and is therefore distinct conceptually from the non-profit sector. Philanthropy according to Payton and Moody (2008, p.37) is giving, and non-profit groups are the entities that receive that giving. They note (*ibid.*) that philanthropy refers to large scale giving by wealthy 'philanthropists', a meaning that was cemented a century ago as a way to describe the relatively new phenomenon of massive giving by people such as John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie in the United States (US). Finally, they consider that philanthropy refers solely to giving by private foundations or other institutional grant-makers (*ibid.*).

Payton and Moody (2008) contrast these conventional and well known definitions with a number of more contemporary meanings and manifestations, including corporate philanthropy, private giving and altruism, volunteering, advocacy, service delivery, as well as the intersection with private and public sectors. They identify five roles of philanthropy, which can help explain the various motivations and applications of philanthropy both in Australia and internationally. Payton and Moody (2008) firstly identify a 'service' role in which philanthropic organisations are providing services and meeting needs, especially when other sectors fail to provide them. Secondly, they recognise that philanthropic organisations can play an 'advocacy role', whereby they are advocating for reforms and change agendas for particular groups in the population and for wider public good. A 'cultural' role is the third category that they identify. Payton and Moody (2008) describe this role in terms of cherishing, expressing and preserving cultural values and traditions. Fourthly, the authors suggest that philanthropists can play a 'civic' role by stimulating social capital, fostering civic engagement, and building communities. Finally, they argue that philanthropists and philanthropic organisations can play a 'vanguard' role, whereby they are sponsoring and serving sites for 'social innovation, experimentation, and entrepreneurial invention' (*ibid.*, pp.34–35).

As Payton and Moody (2008) suggest, philanthropy is more than the granting of money. It can involve political advocacy, the giving of time, and the lending of voice to those who need it.

The peak body for Australia's philanthropy, *Philanthropy Australia*, in its *Overview* explained philanthropy in the following terms:

> Philanthropy is a desire to improve the welfare of humanity through the giving of money, time, information, goods and services, influence and voice for community good. (It) can be carried out by individuals, groups, families, or companies. There are also organisations which have been created as legal vehicles for philanthropy; these are known as trusts or foundations.[4]

Leat and Lethlean (2000) suggest that there are generally four types of foundations operating in Australia. The first are 'private foundations', such as the Myer Foundation and the Ian Potter Foundation, administered by a group of trustees to distribute grants. Leat and Lethlean (2000) suggest these types of foundations are often established by bequest. 'Community foundations' are the second type of foundation: these concentrate their activities in certain geographical areas, such as the Canberra Community Foundation and the Melbourne Community Foundation (*ibid.*). The authors go onto to identify 'corporate foundations' as the third type. Corporate foundations, such as the AMP Foundation, are attached to parent companies but act as legally separate entities. Company profits are usually placed into the foundations to support their work. The fourth and final type of foundation is government-initiated, and generates income from taxes on such things as gambling (*ibid.*). An example of government-initiated foundations is the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia 'which allocates grants based on government priorities' (Schwab & Sutherland, 2001, p.3).

In drawing upon the work of Leat and Lethlean (2000), Schwab and Sutherland (2001) reflected upon various objectives and roles of Australian philanthropies. Schwab and Sutherland (2001, p.4) described the diversity of motivation within the sector from redistribution, to innovation, to the search for positive social change in the following terms:

> The redistribution of resources from the rich to the poor – although this has always been one of the traditional roles of philanthropy, in recent years there has been a growing emphasis on funding disadvantaged groups and communities through foundations that operate with endowments built upon business profits or investments in the marketplace. This is particularly true for corporate foundations, many of which have found themselves caught in the glare of negative media attention that portrays their parent

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[4] Retrieved on 17 September 2014 from www.philanthropy.org.au

company's profits as obscene. Thus foundations associated with Australian banks, for example, appear to be assuming a higher profile in redistributing wealth to those who are poor and needy.

Schwab and Sutherland (2001, p.4) also reflect upon the preparedness of philanthropic organisations to take risk:

> The promotion of innovation – unlike governments with voters to please or corporations with shareholders whose eyes are fixed on share prices, foundations have the luxury of investing in innovative programs or projects with less concern about whether or not a risky venture will yield success. The promotion of social change – with no obligation to voters or shareholders, foundations can promote social change in ways governments or corporations cannot. There are many examples of foundations that have promoted conservative movements as well as those that have funded projects in support of progressive social change.

Schwab and Sutherland (2001) highlight the fact that philanthropic organisations can potentially fill a void left by governments. That is, they argue that with governments moving to more conservative and centrist-right positions, then foundations are in a position to provide 'alternative views, social experiments and civil liberties' (*ibid.*, p.4). The authors add that:

> The promotion of policy and practice change – free from the constraints of government and the marketplace, foundations play an increasingly crucial role in funding objective evaluations of existing policies and practices as well as in the development of new ones (*ibid.*, pp.4–5).

Philanthropy: Divergent motivations

While Payton and Moody (2008) differentiated various sectors into government, business and philanthropy (including public versus private good and power, wealth and morality), these lines are increasingly becoming blurred, especially through the advent of corporate philanthropy. For instance, the Rio Tinto company in Australia for many years managed an Aboriginal Fund, before announcing a change in business strategy in 2011 away from philanthropy to Indigenous employment within their own company. To their prior credit, the company had previously provided grants to Indigenous communities outside of their mining footprint; which could be argued as being truly philanthropic. In contrast, employing Indigenous people within the

company (which on face value might appear positive from the perspective of affirmative action in employment) does mean that Indigenous workers are drawing income for themselves and their families and contributing to the profit base of the company, as opposed to a philanthropic act which is contributing to the wellbeing of Indigenous communities outside of the mining footprint.

During the fieldwork for this study, the author not only constantly heard the question, 'What is philanthropy?' but also 'Who are they?' This latter question was interpreted as not only meaning 'who' (as in the names of individuals or organisations) but 'why' are they doing what they are doing? That is, what motivates the philanthropist and what is their agenda? Understanding the motivations of philanthropy (such as Rio Tinto's) is particularly important for Indigenous players who seek to engage with it.

Prince and File (1994) helped illuminate the divergent motivations among philanthropists in the US in their book *The Seven Faces of Philanthropy: A New Approach to Cultivating Major Donors*. Prince and File (1994) suggested that philanthropists could be driven by 'communitarian', 'repayer' and 'altruistic' instincts, in so far as doing good feels right and makes societal sense. They contrasted this to other motivations among philanthropists such as those who are driven by 'devout' (God's will) instincts and 'dynast' (family tradition) motivations. One of the other of their 'seven faces' refers to those philanthropists motivated by 'socialite' instincts, that is doing good could be fun, including attending the opening of galleries and exhibitions. Finally, Prince and File (1994) suggested that some philanthropists could be motivated by 'investor' instincts – that is, it is good for business.

Most people perhaps see philanthropy in a fundamentally altruistic light; put simply, the act of wealthy people giving money to poorer people through grants and sponsorships in areas such as welfare, health, research and education. But as proposed through the following model, developed by this author, philanthropy might reasonably be construed as having a number of differing motivations for, and interpretations of 'good'. Indigenous people or organisations seeking to engage with philanthropic organisations will need to be mindful of these motivations, and vice versa, in order to develop a constructive relationship built on trust, reciprocal understanding and an alignment of each party's intent. The model proposed, summarised in Table 1, was developed by the author following a review of the literature and interviews with philanthropic actors in the field. It creates categories for four domains of

philanthropic motivation that are briefly explained by drawing upon literature, anecdotes, brief international and Australian case studies.

Table 1: Four philanthropic motivations

1. Altruistic Good for people, society & environment	2. Intellectual Good for innovation, knowledge (both personal and societal), & entrepreneurial spirit
3. Ideological Good for economics, public policy, political & market preferences	4. Commercial Good for business, company branding, public relations & legislative compliance

Source: T. Dreise, doctoral research.

Quadrant 1: Altruistic

This quadrant centres on those who give for the sake of helping others. The quadrant includes philanthropists whose motivation is essentially altruistic and directed towards people, society and environment. The *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (2016, no page number) describes altruism in the following terms:

> Behavior is normally described as altruistic when it is motivated by a desire to benefit someone other than oneself for that person's sake. The term is used as the contrary of 'self-interested' or 'selfish' or 'egotistic' – words applied to behavior that is motivated solely by the desire to benefit oneself.

Lawton, Doh, and Rajwani (2014) help capture a culture of giving and altruism, including among highly successful business people. In the US, arguably the home of such large-scale altruistic philanthropy, a heightened culture of corporate philanthropy has taken hold, perhaps best illustrated through the multibillion dollar investments of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett and through a spread of business ethics teachings across business schools throughout the US. This altruistic culture of giving seemingly seeks to grow on the shoulders of US philanthropic 'forefathers' such as Henry Ford, W.K. Kellogg, Joseph Rowntree,

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Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller (*ibid.*, p.25). Carnegie was a major player in American and Scottish philanthropy in late 19th and early 20th centuries when he sold his steel plant for US$300 million, keeping US$30 million to live on and donating the rest to various charities and causes, especially education. Carnegie famously said, 'Anyone who dies rich, dies disgraced'. Meanwhile, Rockefeller, an oil magnate in the 1800s, donated US$550 million to his foundation, which focused on public health, medical training and the arts. He provided US$80 million to the University of Chicago alone. Kellogg, the inventor of Cornflakes, was equally passionate about education. He donated more than US$66 million in 1934 from his company's stock and other investments into the W.K. Kellogg Trust, which in 2017 had assets in excess of US$7 billion, making it one of the biggest private philanthropic groups in the world providing significant outlays into education for the disadvantaged. On the other side of the Atlantic, Rowntree was one of the first business people to establish pension schemes for workers. Lawton *et al.* (2014, p.25) describe Rowntree as a 'British Quaker, chocolate magnate, and champion of social reform' Rowntree established a model village for the poor that included libraries and free schools.

Business leaders in 1800s such as Kellogg, Rockefeller, Carnegie and others helped established a culture and practice of giving in the US (Wilby, 2008). This extends to a culture of giving in the US in the form of foreign aid. Whilst in sheer volume terms, the USA is an international leader in philanthropy as evidenced by it granting US$30 billion in foreign aid in 2012, in percentage terms data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indicate that the USA (and Australia for that matter) fall well behind Scandinavian countries in terms of national generosity (Sauter, Weigley & Hess, 2013). Measuring generosity or defining what proportion of it is altruistic is problematic. Drawing upon data from the OECD, Sauter *et al.* (2013) found that national generosity can be measured by the amount of money given as a percentage of their Gross National Income (GNI). Australia did not appear in the top 10 giving countries and was ranked 16th. The top five most generous countries (in ascending order) were The Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, with Luxembourg being the most generous (*ibid.,* 2013).

Australia's relatively poor altruistic culture in Australia has been the subject of criticism among a number of high profile leading Australian philanthropists. The 2011 Australian of the Year philanthropist, Simon McKeon (in a newspaper article by Steffens, 2011) joined fellow philanthropists – most notably Dick Smith and Daniel Petre – in criticising their Australian

wealthy peers for being 'morally bankrupt' and for not being 'overly generous'. Steffens' (2011) article argued that Australia's philanthropic record makes for 'bleak reading'. Petre suggested that wealthy Australians donate just 1–5 per cent of their wealth to philanthropy, compared with American philanthropic allocations of between 30 to 50 per cent (up to 90 per cent in the case of Buffett and Gates). In an online article[5], Petre (2010, no page number) labelled Australian wealthy attitudes to philanthropy as both 'appalling' and 'greedy' by issuing the following challenge to his wealthy peers:

> While we have had a couple of examples of donations in the $20 million-plus range (all one off) generally you can be a top 10 donor in this country with total donations of about $5 million–$8 million a year – a rounding error for a billionaire. Our largest philanthropic foundations are those created by people long departed. With the exception of the Pratt family, none of our living most wealthy have created new philanthropic foundations with significant resources involved. At its most basic level our wealthy do not seem to have a sense of responsibility to the society that was the platform for their success.

Such a lack of altruistic giving among the wealthy is not restricted to Australia. Experiments by Piff, Kraus, Côté, Cheng and Keltner (2010) at the University of California, reported in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, suggested that it is the poor, not the rich, in America who are more inclined to charity. The findings of Piff *et al.* (2010) were garnered from approaches to 115 participants from various ethnic, economic, and geographical backgrounds across the USA. The researchers concluded that people in lower socio-economic areas orient toward the welfare of others in order to collectively adapt to stressful environments. Piff *et al.* (2010) further found that people in lower classes tended to be more helpful, trusting, egalitarian, prosocial, and compassionate.

In Australia, measuring the exact volume of philanthropic investment and the extent to which it is altruistic is highly problematic. Estimates of total philanthropic donations range from hundreds of millions to billions in Australian dollars. Amy and Pearce (2008, p.3) report that Australians donated AUD$5.7 billion in 2004. The *Our Community* website reports that Australian individuals and businesses donated approximately AUD$11 billion over the same period. Meanwhile, Davies (2011) cited data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

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[5] Retrieved from https://www.crikey.com.au/2010/11/18/daniel-petre-the-decline-of-generosity/ on 14 February 2018

indicating that the Australian public donates about AUD$4 billion per year, six times the amount Australian business donates. More recently, Dalton and Cham (2016) found that there were 1,240 foundations (or private ancillary funds) in Australia as at December 2014. However, Dalton and Cham (2016) also found that despite there being $AUD4 billion of operating capital, only AUD$1.7 billion was distributed to the community. The authors also expressed concerns about a 'secret cache of funds' among foundations. Dalton and Cham (2016) drew on Australian Budget papers to show that foundations received AUD$935.468 million in tax benefits between 2001 and 2009, which is more than double the amount they returned to the community in grants ($461.77 million) over the same period. This resulted in the authors questioning whether all foundations were fulfilling their philanthropic obligations.

Measuring the Indigenous slice of the philanthropic dollar is problematic. Despite the paucity of publicly available data, the Christensen Fund, Rio Tinto, and Greenstone Group (2010, p.19) found that of the relatively slim Australian philanthropic dollars that are on offer, Indigenous projects attract just 8 per cent. Whilst this 8 per cent slice is almost three times higher than the Indigenous population share of Australia (of about 3 per cent), it does not appear commensurate with the volume of overwhelming need when one considers the level, extent and severity of Indigenous disadvantage in Australia. To illustrate, Doyle and Hill (2008) found that young Indigenous Australians experience disadvantage on a number of fronts, including a reduced likelihood of going to preschool; more likely to fall behind in literacy and numeracy; less likely to have access to a high school in their local community; more likely to be absent from school; less likely to finish Year 12; less likely to complete university; more likely to earn low incomes; more likely to live in poorer housing; more likely to experience health complications; and more likely to die younger (p.22). More recently, both Mission Australia (2015) and Redmond, Skattebol, Saunders *et al.* (2016) identified a number of social and educational stressors experienced by First Nations children and young people.

The Christensen Fund *et al.* (2010, p.60) appeared to have considered alarming indicators of Indigenous disadvantage when they argued that the 'current levels of grant making, while very welcome, are embarrassingly low'. Smyllie and Scaife (2010) also found that whilst there has been an encouraging start to philanthropic–Indigenous relationships in Australia, there is a risk that these established relationships may be elitist (that is, preference may be given to First Nations individuals and organisations with established relationships with philanthropic bodies)

and in turn hamper wider Indigenous access to altruistic funding in Australia. In short, Australia has a long way to go with regard to altruism in Indigenous contexts.

Quadrant 2: Intellectual

The second quadrant, developed by this author, seeks to define 'intellectual' motivations among philanthropists. It acknowledges that philanthropists can be driven by a desire to overcome complex social challenges. Many philanthropists, especially wealthy ones, have backgrounds in business and are therefore likely to possess skills such as problem solving, creativity, salesmanship, project management, and talent management; all contributing to a capacity to generate wealth. Logic suggests that, generally speaking, they are intelligent and strategic people. Henley (2012, no page number) suggested that philanthropy is increasingly becoming 'strategic' in so far as business people are 'supporting good causes in a smart, 21st-century way.' Henley (2012) also found that strategic philanthropists are likely to adopt targeted, informed, planned and hands-approaches to their work. He argued that new-age philanthropists are likely to treat their giving in much the same way as they treat their investments and businesses, by constantly using language such as 'rigorous due diligence', 'scalability', 'return on capital', 'leveraging the investment', 'accountability to stakeholders', 'agreed targets', 'excellence in delivery', and 'accurately measured outcomes'.

Arguably the most well-known former international businessperson, now philanthropist, is Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft. His motivation appears to be as much intellectual and ideological as moral or altruistic. He and others have shown an eagerness to bring an entrepreneurial spirit to solving social problems. Gates has been particularly active in trying to 'fix' schooling in the USA, outlaying US$2 billion to this cause (Strauss, 2014). In spite of the scale of this investment and his undoubted generosity, Gates has not been without his critics, including Professor Diane Ravitch (a high profile educator in the USA), who has questioned the logic of Gates' intervention and criticised his ideological agenda of promoting privatisation, de-professionalisation, and high stakes testing as fixes for American public schools. Ravitch (2011, no page number) wrote:

> About a decade ago, he [Gates] decided that the biggest problem in US education was the size of high schools, and he proceeded to spend $2 billion to persuade school districts to downsize their schools. He told the nation's governors that the American comprehensive high school was 'obsolete'. Districts lined up to get grants from his

foundation to break up their high schools, and more than 2000 of them converted to small schools, with mixed results. Some fell into squabbling turf wars, some succeeded, but Gates' own researchers concluded that the students in large schools got better test scores than those in his prized small schools. So in late 2008, he simply walked away from what was once his burning cause.

The Gates Foundation itself has conceded more recently that its US$2 billion investment to help create better schools failed to improve, in any significant way, students' achievement (Strauss, 2014). Regardless of the success or otherwise of Gates' investment, it highlights the motivation among some philanthropists to pursue complex problems with a goal to fix them. This is, by its nature, an intellectual exercise (if not ideological, which will be discussed shortly). It also illustrates the 'vanguard' nature of philanthropy as expressed earlier (as will be revisited later in the thesis). That is, philanthropy extends beyond the notion of charity. It is important at this point to differentiate philanthropy from charity. Gordon, Harvey, Henderson and Shaw (2010, pp.3–4) offer one distinction:

> Unlike charity giving, contemporary approaches to philanthropy go to the root causes of social problems by using various forms of capital to identify and deliver solutions to challenging social and economic problems rather than making charitable donations alleviate the inequalities created by these problems.

Frances (2008) argued that charity will not deliver social justice, instead suggesting that positive social change can only come through a value-centred market economy. Following the global financial crisis (GFC) and the resultant economic malaise in countries such as Greece and Spain, there has been deep introspection and debate – including within the business community – about capitalism, the magnitude of its inherent risk, and the merits or otherwise of it as a prevailing model for societal management and development (Robinson, 2011).

Kramer (2009) challenges philanthropists to move beyond 'conventional' approaches to philanthropy (which is typically guided by questions such as, 'Which organizations should I support and how much money should I give them?'), by embracing 'catalytic' philanthropy (which typically begins with a question such as, 'How can I catalyze a campaign that achieves measurable impact?'). To that end, Kramer (2009, p.33) shared a case study involving a philanthropic donation for research into a rare disease among children, which exemplifies the catalytic model in practice:

These newly energized donors became deeply knowledgeable about the issue and actively recruited collaborators, sometimes even creating a new nonprofit to further the cause. The donors stopped thinking about which organizations to support, and started to think about how to solve a specific problem, using every skill, connection, and resource they possessed. The donors formulated clear and practical goals that enabled them to identify the steps needed to succeed. Above all, the donors took responsibility for finding solutions to the problem instead of waiting for the nonprofit sector to approach them with a proposal.

Another example of this solutions-based approach in philanthropic practice is the formation of a philanthropic network dedicated to providing 'solutions' for rural decline in the USA. The US Centre for Rural Strategies, for instance, suggested on its website that private philanthropy is one of the key institutions that rural communities need to thrive. The Centre for Rural Strategies posited that a combination of 'inside' (internal to rural communities) and 'outside' (large national foundations) philanthropy is key to rural development:

> When coupled with strong local leadership, a vision for the future, and individual initiative, philanthropic investment can be a catalyst for positive change. Outside philanthropies such as major national foundations have a responsibility to invest in rural communities. But it's also true that rural communities can invest in themselves to build a stronger, more sustainable future. *Donors Ourselves* promotes private and public policies that create healthy communities through local and national philanthropy. [6]

Given the highly complex nature of Indigenous affairs, there appears to be some potential in matching philanthropic organisations that are keen to solve 'problems' working with Indigenous educators and organisations through joint intellectual (and catalytic) endeavour, as much as moral motivation.

Quadrant 3: Ideological

This quadrant discusses 'ideological' preferences among philanthropists, including their preference for market-led forces and free markets devoid of state interference. Given that many philanthropists have backgrounds in business, it should not be surprising that they might hold ideological preferences of market over state. Philanthropic organisations are making value

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[6] Retrieved on 22 March 2013 from www.ruralstrategies.org

judgements on a daily basis about causes, investment priorities, and relationships. This process – by its very nature – is political if not ideological.

By returning to Bill Gates' philanthropic endeavours in US education, and Ravitch's (2011) related criticism of them, it is possible to further contemplate the ideological nature of philanthropy in practice. Ravitch argued that Gates has pursued an ideological agenda of privatisation, de-professionalisation, and high stakes testing in US education. She referred to Gates and other philanthropic groups (namely the Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation and the Walton Family Foundation) as the 'billionaire boys club'. Ravitch (2011, no page number) was particularly scathing of what she perceives to be Gates' attacks on US teachers:

> Now, he [Gates] has thrown his support behind the idea that America has too many bad teachers, and he is pouring billions into the hunt for bad teachers…he has bought the support of a wide range of organizations, from conservative to liberal. He has even thrown a few million to the teachers' unions to gain their assent. Unmentioned is that Gates has gotten the federal government to join him in his current belief that what matters most is creating teacher evaluation systems tied to student test scores…So far, the main effect of Gates' policy has been to demoralize millions of teachers, who don't understand how they went from being respected members of the community to Public Enemy No.1.

The Gates case study arguably highlights an example of neo-liberal ideology pursued by philanthropists with an inherent preference for performance, measurement, evaluation, and forcing schools into a contested marketplace under the banner of 'consumer choice'.

Another example of philanthropic groups acting 'ideologically' – albeit at the other end of the political spectrum – can be found in philanthropic investments and interventions in the environmental space, both by those who are concerned by climate change and by those who actively question or oppose it. For instance, the ongoing national debate in Australia about old growth forests is a case in point. Australian philanthropists Graeme Wood (founder of online accommodation search engine, *wotif.com*) and Jan Cameron (founder of Kathmandu clothing) purchased the Triabunna woodchip mill in Tasmania, not to maintain the operation but to close it down (Atkin, 2014). Wood and Cameron have been reported as being significant and active investors in environmental protection in Tasmania. Those with a vested interest in the forestry industry such as Mark Poynter have been highly critical of this type of 'philanthropy'. In his

article entitled *Tasmania: When green philanthropy becomes a wrecking ball*, Poynter (2011) singled out Wood and Cameron along with other philanthropic investors such as Dick Smith, the Myer Foundation, and the Reichstein Foundation as acting recklessly at the expense of the State, whole towns and forestry employees.

Philanthropic groups are often in search of relationships with partners that align to their own values and goals. This quest is seemingly shared by both private benefactors and corporate philanthropic organisations. For example, the Macquarie Group Foundation, a foundation attached to one of Australia's largest investment banking companies and a major investor in the Cape York Institute (a north Queensland based Indigenous organisation), noted in 2011 that their Foundation seeks to ensure an 'alignment of the Foundation's programs with the Group's business activities at both division and group-wide levels' (from Macquarie Bank's website). The Macquarie Group Foundation reported that they 'prioritise funding to areas which reflect Macquarie's goals and values'. In turn, they explicitly define their goals and values as:

> Macquarie aspires to be a pre-eminent provider of financial services over the long haul. We recognise that, however our achievements to date are judged, the quest for improvement is never ending. The Macquarie culture is represented by the way in which we act and work together. The values to which we aspire can be summarised in six principles: Integrity, Client commitment, Strive for profitability, Fulfilment for our people, Teamwork, Highest standards. Our commitment to these six principles is vital for continued growth and prosperity.[7]

Such quests for philanthropic action aligned to corporate goals are examples of values-driven capitalism. The Macquarie Group Foundation serves as an example of a wider phenomenon in the international business community emphasising the roles and responsibilities of business, especially in a post-GFC era. Pirson (2009) points to the fact that business viability will not only be determined by efficiency and profit, but by larger forces of 'trust, inequality, and sustainability' (p.46). Meantime, Heath (2009, p.69) posed a related question in this way:

> Is it possible to live well and to be good? Two popular theories of business ethics, the theory of social responsibility and the stakeholder theory, suggest that commerce must be properly reformed if it is to be ethical. However, neither of these theories is compatible with the actual practice of business as essentially exchange for profit. There is however

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[7] Retrieved on 16 January 2013 from www.macquarie.com.au

an alternative account: a life in commerce may be embedded within the virtues of common life, and in this way business and morals will function in tandem.

Whilst corporate investment in philanthropic activity is increasingly the norm through worldwide CSR movements, there are nonetheless concerns among those (see Kinsley, 2009; Holme, 2010) that argue that CSR and corporate philanthropy could be a distraction and sideshow that muddies the ideological waters between the respective roles and responsibilities of private and public sectors. Drawing upon the thoughts of renowned economist Milton Friedman, some argue that the private sector should stick to doing what it does best – making a profit – and that the social/public sector, operating from revenue derived from taxation, should be left to address social inequities and market failures such as environmental degradation and social injustice (Kinsley, 2009).

Wilby (2008, no page numbers) argued that philanthropy can compound disadvantage by undermining democracy, by mounting the following argument:

> Why should rich people, who wield enormous economic power, also determine social priorities? As Robert Reich, secretary for labour under President Clinton, has observed, governments used to collect billions from tycoons and then decide democratically what to do with it. The new philanthropists bring business attitudes into an area where they are not always appropriate. Not-for-profit organisations often exist to tackle problems that are beyond conventional market-led approaches. If charities and voluntary organisations are to be judged according to their success rates, they will tend to avoid the most complex and expensive issues and ignore the people who are most difficult to reach.

This is a particularly salient point for First Nations Australia – which is fundamentally more difficult to reach – culturally, politically, and geographically. There are those who welcome philanthropic involvement in socially complex issues as they not only bring financial resources, but also highly capable people, innovation, business acumen, creativity, leverage, networks and political influence.

Frances (2008, p.37) provides another ideological perspective on philanthropy by discussing value-centred market economics, while Kinsley (2009) shares a number of essays where writers – including Gates and Warren Buffett – promote alternative capital models such as 'creative capitalism', whereby social equity and public benefit is intertwined with private profit.

Robinson (2011) appears to share Gates' optimism in the market's capacity to support human development and wellbeing, by suggesting that 'corporate' and 'capitalism' are curse words when he says 'I will offer a different view: that the free market has not failed, is not morally bad, and in fact serves deep human values' (p.28). Robinson (2011, pp.28–32) mounts an argument that consumerism is necessary, competition is freedom, profit is productive, the market is pro-democracy, wealth is good, success is just, and capitalism is as good as it gets. Whilst Gates has faith in the positive social power of the market, Kinsley (2009, p.41) contends, however, that:

> …most of his [Gates'] specific ideas are at bottom philanthropic, and they ultimately depend on the generous instincts of rich people, which are not bottomless, or on government, which means the generous instincts of the voters, which are not bottomless either.

Other authors including Kinsley (2009), however, rebuff civilised capitalist models by warning that corporate philanthropy can be a dangerous sideshow if it distracts from the core business of accountability to shareholders and making profit, whilst others argue that the rich should simply be taxed and the job of redistribution left to democratically elected governments. Paradoxically, and in the Indigenous space more specifically, some argue that philanthropy could provide a welcome break from the 'output driven, inflexible and dogmatic …cup a tea mob' in government (Smyllie & Scaife 2010, p.4). Smyllie and Scaife instead view philanthropy as the ideal place for true innovation and risk taking.

Quadrant 4: Commercial

The fourth quadrant of this author's model is 'commercial'. Put simply, this domain is where companies 'do good to look good', since being seen to be good can be good for business. Companies throughout the world are increasingly engaging in CSR or corporate philanthropy as a way to build confidence in their brand amongst customers and the wider public (Kinsley, 2009). That is, businesses are recognising the importance of philanthropy in a public relations sense. For example, the Chairman of the Australian Davos Foundation, Michael Roux, has been reported as saying that the public's trust in corporate Australia would be eroded if it walked away from philanthropy. Roux (2009, no page number) has been quoted as saying:

> A drop in philanthropic support would destroy what little trust the public retains in corporate Australia. Confidence in the business community is in freefall. Confidence

needs to be restored in business, which is a critical part of a functioning and stable society.

This relationship between capitalism and corporate philanthropy may result in companies engaging in 'double talk' with two audiences, namely business profit shareholders on the one hand and community integrity stakeholders on the other. la Cour and Kromann (2011, p.267) suggest that such double talk can, in turn, lead CSR into minefields of 'euphemisms and hypocrisy'. In Australia, the mining sector provides a prime example of this dichotomous double talk. At a very fundamental and cultural level, Aboriginal people see themselves of the land and many view mining as an assault on Mother Earth. On the other hand, an increasing number of Aboriginal people see mining as an inevitable feature of land use planning and an opportunity for economic development and self-sufficiency (Walsh & Mitchell, 2002).

It is unclear how much philanthropic activity by mining companies is motivated by legislative compliance and public relations rather than pure altruism. In other words, mining company investment in Indigenous employment and community development could be 'good for business' when companies are trying to win public relations battles and garner political support in a highly sensitive political arena. Engaging with Indigenous people and their interests, principally through native title, is often a process that mining developers need to engage in. The National Native Title Tribunal (2010, no page number) explained:

> Native title is the recognition in Australian law that some Indigenous people continue to hold rights to their land and waters, which come from their traditional laws and customs.

Furthermore, the National Native Title Tribunal has explained that First Nations groups have a right to negotiate with those seeking or having gained a grant of exploration and mining tenements. Arguably one of the highest profile cases that have seemingly blurred the lines between corporate philanthropy and native title obligations is the case involving Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) and the Yindjibarndi people of the Pilbara in north-west Australia. Media reports[8] in July 2011 scrutinised FMG's 'negotiations' with Aboriginal groups near Roebourne in Western Australia. These reports appeared to highlight a blurring of lines between altruistic philanthropy and commercial interests. This blurring comes in the form of deals which enable

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[8] Retrieved 23 September 2013 from http://www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/mining-giants-accused-of-bullying-indigenous-groups-20110718-1hlj8.html and http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-07-18/four-corners-pilbara/2799148

the 'giver' to accumulate wealth and share a fraction of it as opposed to the more classical interpretation of philanthropy as an altruistic exercise of sharing money once wealth has been acquired. The mine's chief proponent, Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest is someone who has been widely reported as being active in philanthropic and Indigenous affairs spaces (Long, 2015; Cleary, 2017). Media reporting, however, suggests that Forrest offered local Aboriginal groups just AUD$4 million per annum for a project whereby FMG stood to generate up to $280 billion (Trenwith, 2011). This case does not appear to reflect the classical definitions of altruism and philanthropy as it might be more conventionally defined, particularly given that Aboriginal people are landowners and traditional custodians. Therefore, it could be argued that the relationship from Forrest's perspective needed to be 'commercial' in nature. That is, negotiations were supposed to occur in 'good faith' as per the *Native Title Act*.

A number of authors have criticised Forrest and questioned his motives. For instance, Andrew Burrell (Twiggy Forrest's unofficial biographer) offered the following insights to *Four Corners* television program in July 2015:

> He [Forrest] professes his love for Aboriginal people. He has worked to reduce disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. Ah, but when you look at specific examples like the Yindjibarndi case, you can see that he doesn't actually have much time for Aboriginal people who, ah, stand in the way of his mines. (Transcript from media report by Long, 2015)

> I think Twiggy has a, a long history of, ah, declaring he's acting in the national interest when in fact he's acting in his own commercial interests. (*ibid.*)

Journalist and academic Paul Cleary raised similar concerns about the FMG–Yindjibarndi dispute in an article for *The Monthly*. Cleary (2017) reflected on Forrest's hard bargaining and his ideological (if not, commercial) view that granting too many royalties to Aboriginal groups was akin to 'mining welfare'. Cleary (2017, no page numbers) offered the following insight:

> While multinational companies operating in the Pilbara have paid the 0.5% royalty and helped set up trust funds to manage the money, the Yindjibarndi are up against Australia's Fortescue Metals Group (FMG), founded by Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest, which dismisses these payments as sit-down money or 'mining welfare'.

So why do businesses operate this way? US Judge Richard Posner (2009, pp.63-64), a senior lecturer at the Chicago Law School, suggested that the motivations for corporate philanthropy can be multifaceted:

> Corporations have long made charitable donations, quite properly from a profit-maximising standpoint, in order to curry favour with politicians and interest groups, advertise the corporation to potential consumers (as by underwriting cultural events), create diffuse goodwill, disguise greed, and ward off criticisms…the pressure to take part in PR charity has increased.

The *Corporate Watch* organisation in the United Kingdom (UK) is equally wary of motivations underpinning CSR agendas, arguing that:

> CSR diverts attention from real issues, helping corporations to avoid regulation, gain legitimacy and access to markets and decision markers, and shift the ground towards privatisation of public functions. (www.corporatewatch.org, accessed 27 September 2013)

As far back as 1970, economist Milton Friedman stated that CSR is 'bunk'. Heath and Ni (2008, p.3) elaborate that:

> He [Friedman] sparked decades of controversy by arguing that the only responsibility of publicly held companies is to increase profits – the efficiency paradigm of organisation excellence.

Heath and Ni (2008, p.1) nonetheless suggested that CRS 'can help build a foundation for image/reputation management, brand equity, relationship management, issues management, and crisis management'.

The genuine underlying motives of philanthropic activity are likely to be key questions among potential Indigenous partners, particularly against an historical backdrop of protectionism, manipulation, and paternalism in Australia dressed up as 'charity' and 'benevolence', as outlined earlier in this paper. First Nations groups might therefore consider the above *Various philanthropic motivations* model (Table 1) developed in this research, along with other motivations as identified by Prince and File (1994), which include evangelical and dynastic motivations. It is important that any Indigenous group seeking to engage with philanthropic

organisations, and vice versa, are aware of each other's motivations and values. An alignment of values and genuine negotiation between potential partners is ideal.

Philanthropy and Indigenous Australian education over the past decade

There is relatively little public information and certainly no authoritative summary of the financial side of philanthropic giving in Australia (Lyons, McGregor-Lowndes & O'Donoghue, 2006). Consequently, little is known about the scale of involvement of philanthropic bodies with Indigenous Australians (Schwab & Sutherland, 2001; Scaife, 2006; Christensen Fund *et al.,* 2010).

In 2008 a report titled *Our Children, Our Future* (Doyle & Hill, 2008), published by the AMP Foundation, Effective Philanthropy and Social Ventures Australia drew together a valuable summary of the educational status of Indigenous Australians and provided some useful ideas for philanthropic bodies that might wish to engage with Indigenous people, schools and communities around education. Specifically, the report identified a number of intervention (investment) options or 'change levers' and specific programs or investments where philanthropic bodies had been involved. The report (Doyle & Hill, 2008) provided a series of case studies that appeared to have succeeded, but did not specifically endorse any of these; indeed, it is not clear which of the case studies had actually involved exclusive philanthropic funding. In this way the report highlighted a significant gap in research: a lack of specific investigations into philanthropic engagement and evaluations of the impact of interventions.

In theory, philanthropy should be well placed to pioneer new approaches to overcoming Indigenous educational disadvantage through more innovative and perhaps higher risk strategies than governments are able or willing to undertake. Government departments or statutory bodies act within politically sensitive environments, strict legislated frameworks and legal accountability structures. By contrast philanthropic bodies are essentially free from external audit and able to fund programs as their directors see fit, without being beholden to political masters or election timelines. That said, corporate philanthropy is often ultimately accountable to shareholders and an alignment of corporate and philanthropic values is therefore important.

There is a growing awareness that philanthropic interventions in the Indigenous space have not always been successful; where they have been successful they appear to have involved effective partnerships between these organisations and Indigenous peoples, despite involving

partnerships that were often very difficult to achieve (Smyllie & Scaife, 2010). The limited literature suggests such partnerships require new visions and practices in order to address Indigenous community needs and social justice (Gallagher & Cham, in Smith, 2004) and avoid the potential for perceptions or practices involving philanthropic sponsored 'benevolent paternalism' (Behrendt, 2002). Rather, philanthropic organisations would need to consider established principles for Indigenous engagement such as those identified by Hunt (2013) including 'an appreciation of – and the cultural competency to respond to – Indigenous history, cultures and contemporary social dynamics and to the diversity of Indigenous communities' (*ibid.*, p.2).

While some philanthropic groups (Doyle & Hill for the AMP Foundation 2008; Christensen Fund *et al.*, 2010) have identified what appear to be a handful of key features of successful partnerships (such as principles of respect and commitment to self-determination), these partnerships have not previously been objectively and critically explored. Indeed, the nature of engagements between philanthropic bodies and Indigenous people is an area of research that has hitherto been largely under developed, under theorised and unexplored. This is arguably important, for accountability reasons, when public monies are added to the philanthropic mix. For example, various governments in Australia (both federal and State) have provided matched or supplementary funding to various philanthropic investments such as the Clontarf Academy (an organisation that delivers sports programs in schools for Indigenous youth) and the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (an organisation that provides scholarships for First Nations young people to attend boarding schools). These initiatives have attracted sizeable public dollars in previous federal budgets. Care needs to be taken that such public–philanthropic partnerships do not fuel Indigenous community concerns about closed networks, elitism and undemocratic processes in Indigenous affairs policy and grant making. Furthermore, as Purdie and Buckley (2010) have highlighted, initiatives in Indigenous education need to be independently and robustly evaluated, with the evaluation results made publicly available.

Complexity and certain tensions in Indigenous affairs in Australia

This part of the literature review discusses some of the political debates, complexities and tensions in Indigenous policy, including the historical role played by philanthropists in fuelling these tensions. It has been developed to provide insights of relevance to philanthropists about some of the more significant political moments in Australian post-colonial history, many which

still manifest in 2018. It then discusses some implications and lessons for today's philanthropists who are seeking to engage in a First Nations space.

An overview of political debates in Indigenous policy

For the best part of Australia's colonial and post-colonial period, public policy has struggled with Indigenous affairs. Mitchell (2011) documented an historical account of missionary and philanthropic intent in the early stages of post-colonial Australia. At its most fundamental level, philanthropy means 'voluntary action for public good' (Payton & Moody, 2008, p.6). Working from this notion it could be argued that the early colonists in Australia sought to be philanthropic, but history would soon show that they struggled or failed. To illustrate, in spite of an early edict from Governor Arthur Phillip that the first peoples were to be treated in a 'friendly and humanitarian manner'[9], it did not take long for Australia to descend into violent conflict whereby Indigenous resistance was met with 'extreme and disproportionate violence' (Reynolds, 1981, p.63). In addition to violence, a deep-seated paternalism would quickly take hold. Lines (1992) described the prevalence of missionary zeal within the colony as the 'Great Christianising Enterprise'. Missionary-like practices extended well into the 20th Century through, among other interventions, the widespread practice of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families under various 'protection acts' (Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 1997).

Educational, charitable and religious institutions were active agents in the abuse and ridicule of Indigenous adults and children under banners of 'protectionism' (Sanders, 2009), 'assimilation' (Nakata, 2007), and 'philanthropy' (Mitchell, 2011). When measured against such bleak historical backdrops, it is perhaps not surprising that Indigenous affairs policy has been fundamentally lacking in accord and coherence. The discord can be neatly captured by contrasting those who advocate for an extension of social justice and rights to First Nations peoples, with those who espouse 'self-help', social integration, mainstream economic participation and cultural absorption. Policy has invariably swung in the continuum between these extreme and competing ideologies – from engagement and co-existence, to extinguishment, to separatism and protectionism, to assimilation and equality, to self-determination (Sanders, 2009).

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[9] Retrieved on 18 October 2013 from http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/phillip-arthur-2549

The zenith of these tensions, and the fight for ideological or political supremacy within them, are perhaps best framed through the 'history wars' or 'culture wars', which found champions from opposing sides in two former prime ministers of Australia, Paul Keating and John Howard.

Maddison (2011), Kelly (2010), Manne (2003, 2011), Broome (2010), and Soutphommasane (2009) help illustrate the ideological and political discourse that has led to an ongoing discord and fuelling of the culture wars. They all recognise that the Indigenous affairs issue goes to heart of Australian identity, self-image, and patriotism. Manne (2011, p.6), in particular, argued that:

> Australia was founded on the basis of the destruction of Aboriginal society. As a result, no question has so haunted the national imagination. During the course of the long dispossession, historians described the process of destruction with emotions ranging from racist denigration and callous indifference to genuine pity.

Maddison (2011, pp.2–3) shared a similar interpretation:

> White Australia was settled on a land that did not belong to us. Deep in our hearts every Australian knows this to be true. Australia was not conquered through war nor were treaties signed with the original inhabitants. Rather, the British who arrived in 1788 advanced a brutal program of violent dispossession that spread from Sydney Cove to all corners of the continent, eventually inflicting trauma upon every single Indigenous man, woman and child, with devastating effect. Almost without exception, efforts to talk about the wrongs of our past and our guilt in the present have been characterised as not in the national interest.

This 'national interest' test and associated tension was to reach its political apex in the 1990s. As political commentator Paul Kelly extensively documented in his text, *The March of Patriots: The Struggle for Modern Australia*, former Prime Ministers Keating and Howard were to use Indigenous affairs to open up a national identity debate about Australia's past and future. They placed Indigenous affairs at the centre of the 'cultural wars' and 'history wars' that raged for more than a decade. Keating developed a view that reconciliation with First Nations Australians was central to Australia's international image and self-esteem. Kelly (2010, p.96) provides the following quote from Keating, which exemplifies Keating's 'big picture' outlook for Australia.

We [the Labor Party] dream the big dreams. We have a sense of a compassionate, creative society…How many countries have the chance to put together a new society? Here we are, on the oldest piece of crust on the earth's surface, with the oldest nation on the Earth, Aboriginal Australians. What a phenomenal opportunity we have to develop a new country, a multicultural country, a new society with new resonances. Labor is about creating that society.…I thought how great…it will be when we are as one. When we say sorry and mean it.

Keating held that the very essence of Australia's patriotism was intimately tied to the nation's capacity to reconcile itself with the First Australians. He actively challenged the 'great Australian silence' towards the unsavoury moments in Australia's history and the orthodoxy in which this history was recorded. In Redfern in 1992, Keating delivered a landmark speech of truth like no other offered by an Australian Prime Minister before:

We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. We brought the diseases. The alcohol. We committed the murders. We took the children from their mothers. We practised discrimination and exclusion. It was our ignorance and our prejudice. And our failure to imagine these things being done to us (quoted in Soutphommasane, 2009, p.55).

Soutphommasane (2009) positions the centrality of the 'Indigenous issue' when explaining Australia's sense of patriotism:

According to [Donald] Horne, it is simply impossible to separate Australian patriotism from a history of racism and xenophobia. Any contemporary embrace of patriotism would indulge the old logic of preserving 'the British race', 'the Anglo-Saxon race' (p.27).

The Australian national tradition has always had one especially dark part of its history that a patriotic narrative seems to do better without – the treatment of Aboriginal Australians at the hands of British settlers and their successor society (p.53).

Kelly (2010) too recognised the extent to which the question of Indigenous relations was central to an ideological and political struggle over Australian patriotism, particularly as it relates to an interpretation of Australian history. Kelly (2010, p.65) quotes Keating as saying,

'I pressed the starter's pistol on the history wars, no doubt about that'. Kelly (2010, pp.335–336) described Howard's outlook on Australian history as being starkly different:

> The Black Armband polemicists, he charged, said Australia's past was a 'disgraceful story of imperialism, exploitation, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination'. Howard, by contrast, declared that 'the balance sheet' was 'one of heroic achievement'.

Kelly (2010) quoted Howard as saying, 'My government does not support a formal national apology…[We cannot] be held accountable for the errors, wrongs, and misdeeds of past generations'. Howard maintained this position for over a decade, reasoning that, 'I don't believe in apologising for something for which I was not personally responsible. It's as simple as that' (*ibid.*, p.355).

Yet Howard seemed unable to adequately justify his position. In 2007, Howard explained. 'The challenge I have faced around indigenous identity politics is in part an artefact of who I am and the time in which I grew up.' Kelly would describe it as 'a tempting line, but untenable'. Kelly (2010, pp.355–356) explained:

> After all, Paul Keating was a 1950s child. When Howard and Keating first entered parliament their attitudes toward Aboriginals was similar – unsympathetic and uninterested. But Keating grew and Howard stultified.

One interpretation of the Howard and Keating 'culture wars' is that because they largely agreed on an economic reform program to modernise Australia's economy, this left open cultural and social policy as fertile soil for political differentiation. In any case, the 'culture wars' opened up charges from historians and commentators on both sides of the political divide about historical revisionism based on patriotism. They were to reach fever pitch following the High Court's *Mabo* judgement. Among other authors, Broome (2010, p.289) recognised the enormity of the ensuing political tension:

> The Mabo turmoil between conservatives symbolised by Geoffrey Blainey and Hugh Morgan, and small 'l' liberals or progressives like Henry Reynolds and Nugget Coombs, reflected different views about division and unity in Australian society. The conservatives, in pessimist and fearful tones, claimed a united Australia was being divided by legislation that supported Indigenous rights: land, culture and special welfare programs. Progressives optimistically argued that Australia was already

divided, but could be united by Indigenous rights and positive discrimination to extend justice and equality of opportunity to Aboriginal people. The progressive position was closer to the facts of history than the conservatives. Australia's history reveals black and white Australians were divided by colonialism, white power and racial ideology, discriminatory legislation, and by the Constitution itself, which was indifferent to Aboriginal people and their rights. While civil rights were gained in the 1960s, Indigenous rights were still in the process of fulfilment, and equality of opportunity and reconciliation were fledging movements. National unity cannot exist without equality and respect for difference.

More recently, in tackling the issue of the Howard Government's Northern Territory Intervention in the mid-2000s, the former Chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and now Senator for Western Australia, Patrick Dodson (quoted in Manne, 2008, p.29) provocatively posed the following challenge:

> Is this nation committed to recognising and celebrating the cultural identity and legitimacy of Indigenous societies in Australia? Or is it dedicated to assimilating Indigenous people into mainstream settler society? Have the last three decades, during which the language of cultural recognition and self-determination found its way into Australia's public policy lexicon, simply been an aberration, as the nation prepares to resume its historical trajectory of extinguishing the cultural legacy of thousands of generation of human occupation of these lands?

By contrast, public commentators such as former Keating Government Minister Gary Johns have questioned the effectiveness of self-determination (Johns, 2011). In his earlier text, *Waking Up to the Dreamtime*, Johns (2001, p.iii) wrote that:

> For at least the last thirty years, money, programs and white advisers have engulfed Aboriginal people. Some Aborigines [Johns suggests that most of these are the 'mixed bloods' or 'half castes'] have survived the deluge. They have found a place in society that suits them. Some have not survived the deluge. They have been swept away by despair, grog and violence. Some have become leaders, and they have been looking for followers. They are seeking to build a new Aboriginal society, fully 200 years after the modern world came to this continent. They see their future in promoting a separate Aboriginal identity. The trouble is, many of their troops have moved on. They have

moved into the Australian society. They regard their identity as a matter for themselves, not something that comes in a government program or in an Aboriginal politician's speech.

The 'culture wars' seemingly opened a Genie's bottle for those keen to criticise political correctness and project alternative interpretations of Australia's true history. Right wing commentators – such as Johns, above – writing in outlets such as *The Australian* and *Quadrant*, were keen to challenge the political orthodoxy in Indigenous affairs. Journalist Paul Toohey (2008, no page number), for example, writing in *The Australian* about the Northern Territory Intervention, argued that:

> The Intervention did something remarkable. All that fighting talk we were so used to from politicised Aborigines, of '200 years of white invasion' and its ugly offspring, 'genocide', had been ripped from Aboriginal mouths and thrown right back at their faces. Now it was they who stood accused of slow-burn genocide, of conducting a systemic sexual invasion against their own young.

In a similar vein, former Fraser government Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Peter Howson (quoted in Austin-Broos, 2011, pp.90–91), turned his political crosshairs to Aboriginal pathology:

> The state of barbarism which is now ubiquitous in every remote Aboriginal community in Australia is best described in the words of Thomas Hobbs in Leviathan: 'where every man is enemy to every man...wherein men live without other security than what their own strength...shall furnish them. In such condition is no place for Industry...no account of time; no Arts; no Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all continual fear, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'.

Howson (*ibid.*) blamed the 'Indigenous malaise' on the following factors:

> …land rights, the rhetoric of black suffering and white guilt, the promotion of Aborigines as perpetual victims...the support for self-determination in international fora, and the encouragement of Aboriginal separatism. Australian civilisation has far, far more to offer Australia's Aborigines than the hunter-gatherer life which their forebears endured.

Roger Sandall (cited in Austin-Broos, 2011, p.91), a retired anthropologist, appeared to share Howson's sentiments:

> If your traditional way of life has no alphabet, no writing, no books and no libraries, and yet you are continually told that you have a culture which is rich, complex, and sophisticated, how can you realistically see your place in the scheme of things?

Many Indigenous leaders have been committed, nevertheless, to an agenda of Indigenous self-determination, cultural affirmation, and economic development of First Australians (Behrendt, 1995; Dodson, 1996). Former Indigenous Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Dodson (1996), asserted that when self-determination is weighed up against assimilation, then there is no contest and that self-determination wins hands down. In more recent years, Indigenous advocates such as Noel Pearson and Marcia Langton have argued for Indigenous affairs to mature into a synthesis of rights and responsibilities. Langton (cited in Manne, 2008, p.229) posed the challenge of Indigenous advancement as being about:

> …how to transform the present Aboriginal society, so full of potential and yet so degraded by poverty, alcohol and anomie, into the habitus of happy, healthy, active educated people who should partake of both their Aboriginal traditions and the material and social wealth of the modern nation.

Pearson (2000) in particular has been highly critical of alcohol abuse and 'welfare poison' killing Indigenous people, and argues that an Indigenous sense of responsibility has to take a stronger hold in policy agendas. However, arguments about Indigenous people taking greater responsibility for their own destinies are hardly new. The 1966 Gurindji strike highlighted a desire among people to take responsibility for their own lives devoid of white 'welfare' and 'Vesteys' (Jennett & Stewart, 1987). The precursor programs to the Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP), for instance, saw Indigenous people voluntarily forego welfare payments in 1977 for community-based employment projects. Furthermore, Aboriginal leader the late Dr Perkins argued that while government had not always delivered for Aboriginal people, nonetheless 'we've [Aboriginal people] got to get off our black asses and then we've got to move' (Perkins, 1998). As far back as 1961, government agencies were highlighting the need for responsibility, as the following records of a meeting of 'native authorities' in Canberra in 1961 appear to illustrate:

…to attain the same manner of living as other Australians and to live as members of a single Australian community, enjoying the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities, observing the same customs and influenced by the same beliefs, hopes and loyalties as other Australians (Jennett & Stewart, 1987, p.57).

For many decades now, Indigenous affairs have seemingly elicited the full range of human emotions from moral panic, to outrage, anger, confusion, sadness, fear, identity, aspiration, pride and guilt. Maddison (2011, (p.95) sees 'moral panic' in the following terms:

Indigenous policy in Australia is made in the context of a 'hyper-mediated public sphere' in which it is becoming increasingly common for public and political focus on the challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to take the form of 'moral panics'.

Professor Fred Myers (in his Foreword for Austin-Broos, 2011, p.xix) too captures the vast emotional undertone of Indigenous disadvantage:

Remote Aboriginal Australia is one place where great beauty can be juxtaposed with seemingly endless grief.…For some, remote Aboriginal life is a site of enduring and remarkable difference while for others, the hallmark of that same site is poverty and deep distress.

Indigenous activist and former co-chair of the Indigenous Peoples' Congress, Les Maelzer, taps into the exorbitant human cost of Indigenous disadvantage when describing Palm Island in Queensland some years ago, when he said, 'for our people [Palm] is the end of the road.…the end point of our trail of tears' (quoted in Watson, 2010, p.19).

Watson (2010) extensively documented both the hope and tragedy underpinning Palm Island; and in doing, provided a microcosm of a wider national challenge. She documented the history of Palm Island from its early role as a 'penal colony' in the 1920s to house the 'troublesome characters, incorrigibles, and the destitute'. She fast-forwards to more recent years when a recent Premier of Queensland, Peter Beattie, reportedly labelled the residents 'as lazy and dysfunctional people who should get off their bums and perform' (*ibid.*, p.19). Watson (2010) also recalled the words of Queensland lawyer and advocate for Aboriginal people, Andrew Boe, who after attending the funeral of Mulrunji (who died in police custody in November 2004) observed that:

Not one of the non-Indigenous teachers, nurses, doctors or other service providers thought it appropriate to attend this funeral which attracted about 3000 Aboriginal people from the island as well as from the mainland. The divide spoke volumes about how far true reconciliation is out of the grasp of this community and why in many respects the situation is about race and colour, fear and loathing (cited in Watson, 2010, p.14).

Nowhere has this deep emotiveness in Aboriginal affairs in Australia come to the fore in quite the same way as the issue of the 'Stolen Generations' in the 1990s. Nothing short of pride and dignity was on the line for Indigenous Australians (at an individual and group level) and other Australians (at a national level) respectively. Social commentator, Hugh Mackay (1999, p.123) captures the enormity and gravity of the debate at the time:

Even the issues of the so-called Stolen Generations strike some Australians as vexed. There are certainly cases of Aboriginal children who were rescued from conditions that posed a threat to their wellbeing and who, on reflection, feel grateful to the white families who cared for them and the white communities that gave them an education and a secure place in white society. But such cases are outweighed by the horrific tales of forcible removal of children from their weeping mothers, and of the lifetime of anger, anguish and bewilderment suffered by people on both sides of those separations. In any case, if we were to argue that the end justified the means, we would be on a moral slippery slope. The 'principle' of forcible removal from children from their parents in order to 'civilise' them and socialise them into a Eurocentric culture, is an indefensible principle – unless you accept genocide as a legitimate strategy under certain conditions. 'Genocide' sounds like a harsh judgement on our own quite recent history, yet when the purpose of a policy is to eradicate, over time, the culture of a people, what else can you call it?

Political ideology has been part and parcel of Indigenous affairs for the best part of post-colonial Australia. As Sanders (2009) illustrated in his schema, ideological tendencies, dominant debates and competing principles have swung between choice (self-determination) and guardianship (assimilation and paternalism) for near on 100 years. To this day, Indigenous policy and ideology remains fractured. Myers (2011, p.x) reflected upon this struggle in the following terms:

> For whatever reasons, and there is profound disagreement about these, after nearly four decades the social situation in remote communities has not followed anyone's hopes. With the collapse of a dominant paradigm, ideological warfare has broken out in the ranks of analysts, critics and casual observers.

The Northern Territory Intervention in 2007 was to become the latest illustration of an ideological tendency among governments to control Indigenous lives through agendas of 'stabilisation' and 'normalisation' (Altman & Hinkson, 2007). These types of involuntary 'guardianship' regimes were prevalent in the 1930s through various protection acts operating throughout Australia, including controlled wages and savings regimes in Queensland and NSW. Protectionism would reach its nadir during the period of forced and systematic removal of Aboriginal children from their families (HREOC, 1997).

And yet various recent forays into protectionism or guardianship have been, at times, ubiquitous as seen with the Northern Territory Intervention (2011), and through proposed policy manifestos such as the one proposed by former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott. As the then federal Health Minister in 2006, Abbott called for 'new paternalism' in Indigenous affairs policy by arguing that Aboriginal communities were 'directionlessness' and that 'someone has to be in charge' and that 'administrators' should be appointed to run communities (Abbott, 2006). These forays are not without their critics. The former inaugural Chair of Reconciliation, Patrick Dodson (2007, p.22), described the Northern Territory Intervention in the following terms:

> Instead of being treated as First Nations, we have been reduced by media and government ideologues to sexual deviants and sociopathic automatons. This recurring denigration of Aboriginal culture and existence highlights how short we Australians have fallen in terms of mutual respect for each other, and sustains the blot on our national soul.

In evaluating the Northern Territory Intervention/Emergency Response in 2011, the Closing the Gap Clearinghouse report called *What Works to Overcome Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Learnings and Gaps in the Evidence 2011–2012* argued that top-down paternalism in Indigenous affairs was not supported by evidence (Al-Yaman, 2011). The report stressed the importance of community involvement and shared leadership and argued against the folly of one-size-fits-all approaches across Australia.

Over the past decade, Australian governments appear to have largely 'settled' on an equality/equity/parity agenda to steer Indigenous affairs, as seen with the Howard Government's *Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage* agenda and with the Rudd/Gillard/Abbott/Turnbull Governments' *Closing the gap* policy agenda. And yet these agendas too remain contested as Indigenous peoples strive not only for parity in socio-economic status, but also a right to pursue and sustain unique cultural frameworks (Behrendt, 2003, p.76). In other words, Indigenous people do not seek 'sameness' as implied in 'equality' but also wish for their 'first cultures' and unique cultural identity to be enabled and preserved, and therefore reserve a right to be different. This aspiration is reflected internationally in the following excerpt from the *United Nations Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2007):

> Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination, in accordance with international law. By virtue of this right, they freely determine their relationship with the States in which they live, in a spirit of co-existence with other citizens, and freely pursue their economic, social, cultural and spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity. Indigenous peoples have the collective and individual right to maintain and develop their distinct ethnic and cultural characteristics and identities, including the right to self-determination.

In more recent years, governments in Australia appear to be seeking a recalibration of their relationships with First Nations people. For instance, in its 'Closing the Gap Refresh: The Next Phase Discussion Paper', COAG (2017, p.3) stated:

> Australian governments acknowledge they need to work differently with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. To that end, Australian governments have committed to work in genuine partnership with Indigenous leaders, organisations and communities, to identify the priorities that will inform how governments can better design and deliver programs and services, to close the gap. Governments want to hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples about jobs, economic development, health, quality of life, wellness and participation to inform a new way forward. Following these important conversations, COAG has agreed to work together, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, to refresh the Closing the Gap agenda.

For philanthropic organisations looking to engage in Indigenous spaces in an informed and enlightened way (that is, with clarity), they will need to be aware of the aforementioned historical and prevailing ideological and political debates, along with an appreciation for the aspirations of social justice and self-determination as expressed by First Nations Australia.

Implications and lessons for today's philanthropic actors

Indigenous affairs are, as the previous section illustrated, highly complex, politically charged, and fundamentally emotive. The preceding brief précis of the historical, political and ideological tensions helps underscore the sensitivity and contested nature of Indigenous affairs in Australia today. Philanthropy will need to navigate these 'rocky' ideological and political waters of Indigenous affairs in order to provide constructive contributions that go towards helping solve problems 'with eyes wide open'. In other words, to ignore history is to surely undermine future philanthropic endeavour. Philanthropic actors will be mindful, ideally, of their predecessors' approach to 'voluntary action for public good'. As will be discussed in the conclusion to *Chapter 4*, some philanthropists (who could be described as 'social progressives') have chosen a path of 'social justice' and self-determination; while others have chosen to position their philanthropy on the 'self-help' and social integration path.

Whichever paths philanthropists choose to take, they will need to be cognisant of some of the sage lessons produced by reviews such the evaluation of the Northern Territory Intervention/Emergency Response (Al-Yaman, 2011); namely that top-down paternalism and one-size-fits-all approaches in Indigenous affairs are unlikely to work. Critics of 'top-down' and unilateral public policy approaches to social problem solving can be found the world over. Baroness Warsi from the UK Cabinet Office, for example, noted a few years ago that:

> Somehow we ended up modelling our Government on the top down, mass produced, hierarchical, slow-moving factories that business long ago abolished. And the reality is – it didn't work.[10]

On the other side of the Atlantic, Emeritus Professor Len Syme (2003, no page numbers) of the University of California was equally wary of top-down approaches:

> Of the billions of dollars that are spent each year in the United States, not one dollar actually works to prevent child abuse, suicide, heart disease, stroke, school

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[10] Retrieved from www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

truancy…except funds going to communities who set their own priorities, and are enabled to establish their own programs. Communities in control is the only preventative method that works.

When seen in its entirety, the literature review indicates that philanthropists looking to strategically and successfully operate in Indigenous education spaces will need to have one eye on history, and the other on a brighter future that is co-designed and co-produced with Indigenous communities and educators.

Complexity and tensions in education

Education policy across the world is hotly contested on the grounds of politics, educational philosophy and wider ideology. Debates rage, in Australia and internationally, about pedagogy; codified and standardised-centred learning versus learner- and context-centred learning; universal equity versus elitism; class sizes; teacher performance and remuneration; educational architecture and market design (public versus private schooling and Charter Schools in the US for example); student incentives and high expectations; student and family discipline and aspiration; English literacy and numeracy versus 'mother tongue'; technology; and the relationship between poverty and poor educational outcomes. To illustrate these tensions, Christensen, Horn and Johnson (2008, pp.2–5), while reflecting on educational debates in the US, could well be writing of the Australian experience:

> Everyone has a theory. One is that schools are underfunded…perhaps there's a problem because there aren't enough computers in the classroom.…Another camp blames the students and their parents.…Could it be that the US teaching model is simply broken compared to the models in other countries?…Then the teachers' unions must be the problem.…The way we measure schools' performance is fundamentally flawed.

Hattie (2009, p.2), writing in an Australian context, lamented the plethora of educational theories about 'what works' in this way:

> The research literature is rich in recommendations as to what teachers and schools should do. Carpenter for example counted 361 'good ideas'. He concluded that these good ideas have produced very limited gains, if any. Similarly, Kozol noted that there been 'galaxies of faded names and optimistic claims', such as Focus Schools, Accelerated Schools, Blue Ribbon Schools, Exemplary Schools, Pilot Schools, Model

Schools, Quality Schools, Magnet Schools, and Cluster Schools – all claiming they are better and different, with little evidence of either. The research evidence relating to 'what works' is burgeoning, even groaning, under a weight of such 'try me' ideas.

On quality teaching, Rothstein (2010, p.3) issued the following caution:

Making teacher quality the only centrepiece of a reform campaign distracts our attention from other equally and perhaps more important school areas needing improvement, areas such as leadership, curriculum, and practices of collaboration. Blaming teachers is easy. These other areas are more difficult to improve.

Each of the aforementioned debates about education have impacts (both direct and indirect) on Indigenous education policy making, as will now be explored through an analysis of wider debates in education which impact on Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. The following passages discuss some of these tensions through a lens of universal education impacts that apply to all students.

Universal educational impacts: Pedagogical, professional, and structural issues

Indigenous learners in Australia are affected by a number of universal (or generic) issues and debates in education, both internationally and at home. Five of the more pertinent pedagogical and structural issues are discussed here including funding models; standards-centred learning versus context and learner-centred learning; debates about pedagogy; debates about curriculum; and quality of school and wellbeing of community.

Structural issues and funding models

Australia – like the US, the UK and other Western societies – constantly debates the merits of public versus private schooling. These debates have become particularly fierce in the US, which has led in part to the creation of a third school sector – Charter Schools, which are publicly funded but locally managed. The creation of this third sector appears to be a political response from conservatives to a perception (among neoliberals) of teachers' union stranglehold on public education in America. The issue of teacher tenure versus performance is hotly contested in the US as it is Australia. What appears to be driving educational ideology is seemingly a classic economic rationalist argument of providing 'choice' to parents. Whilst this debate is currently politically 'hot' in the US, it is not new. In 1990, Chubb and Moe co-

authored a book called *Politics, Markets and America's Schools*. As Hill, Piece and Guthrie (1997, p.3) explained:

> They [Chubb and Moe] promote the radical conclusion that unencumbered by bureaucracy and that enjoy high levels of autonomy, namely schools in the private sector or those public schools in trouble-free environments which are able to operate successfully in spite of the system. They argue that control of schools by government agencies produces ineffectiveness and that this is an inevitable result of the democratic process, which subjects public schools to excessive administrative and political authority, makes them captives of democratic politics and subordinates them in a hierarchical system of control.…The authors argue for a form of public choice or market model of education provision, thus aligning themselves with those neo-conservatives who promote rational choice economic models as the basis for how governments should deliver services. And indeed it is clear that when it comes to devolution of responsibility, it is the neo-conservatives who have appropriated solutions first espoused by the 'left' in response to a somewhat different set of underlying values.

For those from low socio-economic backgrounds in Australia, especially Indigenous students, such aforementioned 'choices' are unlikely to present themselves. Indeed, in some remote parts of Australia there is often no viable choice other than to move off community to attend boarding school. Some philanthropic and government sponsored endeavours in programs such as the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation and the Macquarie Bank Higher Expectations Program make this possible for a small number of Indigenous students from rural and remote areas. However, in the vast majority of rural towns, 'Aboriginal students are disproportionately found in the public schools while government-funded private schools are becoming refuges for white families' (Bonnor & Caro, 2007, p.109). More recent research by Bonnor (in McGowan, 2018) reiterated that First Nations students are disproportionately represented in Australia's most disadvantaged schools. Bonnor (*ibid.*) further found that over half of Australia's First Nations students attended government schools in the lowest Index of Community Socio-Education Advantage (ICSEA); in other words – more than 50 per cent of Indigenous students are attending Australia's most disadvantaged school communities.

In his assessment of the state of education in Australia, Reid (2015) found that Australia has a highly inequitable schooling system. He noted that according to OECD data, 'Australia is near

the bottom of OECD countries in terms of equity in education' (p.1). Reid argued that the high levels of social stratification in Australian schools began with the introduction of systematic federal funding to private schools in the 1970s. Financial allocations between public and private schools have long been politically contentious in Australia. The Whitlam government in the early 1970s, acting on the advice from Peter Karmel's *Schools in Australia* blueprint (Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission 1973), moved the Commonwealth very significantly into the funding arena of non-state school funding. As Connell (1993, pp.3–4) explained:

> In the post-war education boom, the Catholic mass school system fell into financial crisis. The federal [Whitlam] government rescued it, rather than funding the public schools to take up the overflow; and 'Schools in Australia' was the decisive moment in the rescue. The [then] $179m recommended in grants to private schools rapidly grew; ten years later the Commonwealth government was spending $676m on private schools, more than the Commonwealth was giving to all public schools combined, and vastly more than was being spent on the disadvantaged schools program. The 'tapering' of grants was revised, and elite schools continued to benefit.

In recent years, the establishment of the *My school* website[11] was partly underpinned by a rationale that it would inform parental choice and also allow governments to more accurately gauge where the highest levels of needs are across Australian schools. What becomes abundantly clear, pre and post-*My school*, is that the postcodes that First Nations young people reside in feature very heavily in the bottom percentiles of educational disadvantage. Analysts have cited disparity between private and public schooling as a significant and unattended issue of inequity, including its disproportionately high adverse impact on First Nations families and communities. For instance, Cobbold (2011) and others involved in the 'Save our Schools' movement in Australia, argued that public funding is being squandered on wealthy schools. Cobbold (2011, no page numbers) contended that nearly AUD$400 million a year in government funding is being 'wasted' on the wealthiest 80 or so private schools in the country, and added:

> They [private schools] achieve no better literacy and numeracy results than government schools with similar, or even lower, SES [socio-economic status] profiles despite

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[11] https://myschool.edu.au/

having double or more their resources.…The gap between high SES private schools and low SES government schools in Year 5 in each city ranges from 75 to 90 points. This gap amounts to about three to four years of learning.…Equal treatment of government and private schools means that the private choices of the wealthiest families in Australia are supported at the expense of the learning needs of disadvantaged students. The disadvantaged have little prospect of a decent education while funding neutrality between sectors prevails.…At present, about 25% of low SES and remote area students and 40% of Indigenous students do not achieve international benchmarks in literacy, mathematics and science and 80% or more of them attend government schools.

Recent levels of funding to disadvantaged schools (particularly in the Northern Territory) poses a very big obstacle to *Closing the gap* between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners (Austin-Broos, 2011); a point not lost upon in the national review of schooling funding chaired by businessman, David Gonski. The 'Gonski Review' (Gonski, Boston, Greiner, Lawrence, Scales & Tannock, 2011) as it became known, recommended a new school funding formula to Australian governments. Such a funding formula would give weighting (in the form of additional resources to schools) that enrol 'students who experience multiple factors of disadvantage' and 'significantly increase support to schools that have high concentrations of disadvantaged students' (*ibid.*, p.xxi). The Gonski panel further recognised the need for additional funding to meet the needs of Indigenous students in Australia.

Standards centred versus learner and context centred learning

The advent of the *My school* website, the Australian Curriculum, and standardised testing such as the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) serve as examples of standards-driven approaches in Australia. Intuitively (in an economics sense at least), standards support a performance culture. By their very nature, standards allow for measurement, which in turn theoretically allows for consumer choice, which is a classical economic rationalist approach. What is problematic is its blanket application to learning, which is fundamentally a very personal experiencew for each individual learner, their teachers their classrooms, and their respective (and differing) community contexts.

The popular discourse in education in Western nations is dominated by concerns about falling standards in education as measured against other nations (Schwab, 2012). The US is

particularly sensitive about falling educational standards in light of mounting economic competition from India and China. Various policy manifestos in the US including *Race to the top* (US Department of Education, 2009) and *Tough Choices or Tough Times* (US National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007) called for higher educational standards through a transformation of US education in order to stay economically competitive. The *Tough Choices or Tough Times* report presented a case for change by citing a number of realities of a globalised era. The paper (*ibid.*, p.4) posed the following challenge:

> Over the past 30 years, one country after another has surpassed us [the US] in the proportion of their entering workforce with the equivalent of a high school diploma, and many more are on the verge of doing so. Thirty years ago, the US could lay claim to having 30% of the world's population of college students. Today that proportion has fallen to 14% and is continuing to fall. Today, Indian engineers make $7,500 a year against $45,000 for an American engineer with the same qualifications.

The Obama Administration created the *Race to the Top* program to drive higher standards in education. The US$4.35 billion program included funding to support a number of core education reform areas, including adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to complete in the global economy; building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction; recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and turning around the lowest achieving schools (US Department of Education, 2009).

This standards-driven program appeared to be a political response to high levels of social and economic sensitivity about educational standards in the US, including in the wake of the high profile film documentary into American education called *Waiting for 'Superman'*, released in 2010. This documentary helped expose vast inequities in educational provision in the US.

On the other side of the standards-driven approach are student-centred or humanistic approaches, long promoted by educational philosophers such as John Dewey (1916), A.S. Neill (1962), and Ian Lister (1998). These kinds of debates in education are at least 100 years old; Dewey reflected on them in *Democracy and Education* in 1918. Dewey pointed to the importance of meeting the needs of the 'whole child' including their physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. He argued that students were not empty vessels simply waiting to be

filled with education by adults. Lister (1998) would borrow from Dewey and other education philosophers in critically reflecting upon structural and systematic approaches to learning in the UK:

> I think in Britain one of the reactions to deschooling was to humanize schools, actually, was to improve schools. We already had a humanistic tradition in schools in this country. Coming from progressive educators influenced by John Dewey and A.S. Neill. So many of the schools were progressive rather than repressive. And there were certain directions in school reforms – like more community oriented schooling, community schools, community studies. So I think there was a move away from traditional schooling in the 1970s and the 1980s (*ibid.*, p.789).

More recently, leading education advocate in the UK, Sir Ken Robinson argued robustly for a full and rounded curriculum. Robinson (2009) was concerned that a narrowing of curriculum based on economic demands in science and mathematics – at the expense of the humanities and the arts – was counterproductive to economic development that he contended would thrive on the bedrocks of creativity, innovation, and imagination. Robinson (2009) made the following case in a *7.30 Report* (Australian) television interview:

> ...[W]e're all born with tremendous creative confidence and abilities. Young children are full of great ideas and possibilities. But that tends to be suppressed as we get older. And it happens in part through this culture of standardised testing that I think is now a blight on the whole of education. But the second thing is that we all think and learn differently.

Robinson (2009) pointed that educational reform is an international pursuit including Australia, Asia, Europe and America. He explained (*ibid.*) that educational reform is:

> …happening for two reasons. One of them is economic; everybody's trying to figure out, you know, as parents and as employers and as students, how on earth do you educate people to find a productive life in the 21st century, you know, when all the economies are shifting faster than we've known them. So the economic thing is really important. But it's also about culture, you know, about how do you give people a sense of identity and what do they need to know to be literate and fluent in these extraordinary times. The thing is that most reform movements are looking backwards; they're looking back to the old system that was the result of the industrial revolution.

Robinson (2009) also posited that all professions and industries seek the same quality in employees – *creativity*. He stated: 'You know, some of our greatest scientists have been inspired by the arts and some of our best artists work on scientific principles.' Robinson concluded by suggesting that education systems need to simultaneously embrace high standards and promote diversity of talent. 'If we get that connection between economic, personal and social development, then we will have the revolution that we've been waiting for.'

Rothstein (2010, pp.2–3) brings another dimension to the debate from the US about standardised curriculum and testing – that is, the risk to teachers. He explained:

> Of course, schools should try to recruit better quality teachers and should remove those who are ineffective. After all, the quality of teachers is an important part of the one-third share of the achievement gap that can be traced to the quality of schools. But before making teacher quality the focus of a national campaigning, school systems will have to develop better ways of identifying good and bad teachers. Using students' test scores as the chief marker of teacher quality is terribly dangerous, for a variety of reasons: it encourages a narrowing of the curriculum because only test scores in one or two subjects (math and reading) can be used for this purpose, and teachers who will be evaluated mainly by these test scores will have incentives to minimize attention to other subjects; it creates pressure to 'teach to the test'.

These types of debates about standards versus humanistic approaches to education are unlikely to abate anytime soon. Indeed, they may well be permanent fixtures on education policy landscapes. Regardless, they are important considerations when it comes to future outcomes in First Nations education. That is, a drive toward equity has to be considered and weighed equally with respect for cultural identity and a responsiveness to the learner's personal strengths, creativity, and their inherent right to be different and themselves.

Debates about pedagogy

Pedagogy, the method and practice of teaching, can be likened to the adage 'horses for courses', but in this case learners for courses. That is, pedagogy should be context driven. Context is found in the individual learner; the classroom dynamic; the school; the relationship between peers; the family and the home; and wider community environment, history, politics, and health. Good pedagogy (or quality teaching) is critical to student outcomes. Lewthwaite,

Osborne, Lloyd, *et al.* (2015) have developed insights into how schools can develop culturally responsive pedagogy for First Nations learners through systematically listening and responding to communities. The authors noted that a deeper level of culturally responsive pedagogy 'shows an understanding of culture in its many manifestations, especially its history and how history perpetuates and manifests in the student-teacher interface in classrooms today (*ibid.*, pp.155–156).'

In a wider debate about pedagogy in schools, Australian journalist Caroline Overington (2011) arguably captured – in an article called 'Funky school' – the essence of a perennial debate about pedagogy and liberalised and student self-directed learning, known in some circles as 'agile learning', versus standards-driven learning in Australia today. The article, which appeared in *The Australian Magazine*, illustrates the desire among some educators to revolutionise not what children are taught, but how they are taught (pedagogy). Educators featured in the article believed that teaching must change to meet the technological challenges of the 21st Century and to not only teach children 'what to learn' but 'how to learn'. Progressive teachers therefore are keen to adopt measures such as technology-based learning, peer directed learning, and self-directed learning. The configuration of new learning spaces is in stark contrast to the 'chalk and talk', didactic, and 'desks in a row' approach of yester year. Overington (2011, p.13) suggested that of the over 9,000 schools in Australia, thousands of schools (both public and private) have adopted variations of the 'agile learning' model. She also noted that this approach is not without its critics and sceptics; with some parents reporting concerns about the unorthodoxy in approach and some educators suggesting the approach does not work. Overington (2011, p.13) quoted one critic in Kevin Donnelly of the Education Standards Institute:

> This [agile learning model] was tried in the 1970s. It was part of the mood of the times, the idea that everybody should be liberated and children should have the same authority as adults. There was a political agenda behind it, in other words. They came and pulled all the walls down and said 'isn't this great? We're so radical'. And it didn't work, because what the research actually shows is that children – especially in primary schools and especially boys – need structure. They need direction. They need rote learning of times tables, and all the rest of it.

Paradoxically, Jillian Blackmore of the Centre for Research and Educational Futures and Innovation at Deakin University suggested to Overington that today's open learning spaces are

radically different to the experiments of the 1970s. Blackmore (in Overington, 2011, p.14) stated:

> I could list 50 ways that this is different. We had the open space, but not the technology. We didn't have the support of government. We didn't have the architects. There was no focus on the pedagogies. And what's important to know is that it's not all about the space this time. It's not even about the beanbags. It's about what teachers can do in the new spaces. That's what people are enthusiastic about.

These types of debates about pedagogy again highlight the highly contestable nature of educational theory and practice, to which Indigenous education contexts are not immune.

Debates about curriculum

Now to the question of what Indigenous and all Australian children should be taught, that is, 'What should be in the curriculum?' Australia over the past decade has moved to a national standard curriculum (known as the *Australian Curriculum*), with 'consistency' and 'national uniformity' cited as the key driving motivators. Historically, curriculum in Australia has been analogous to the country's rail tracks, where the States adopted different gauges; which stymied mobility across the nation. The Rudd and Gillard Governments believed that a national curriculum was crucial in ensuring that Australia remains internationally competitive. Curriculum is a particularly sensitive issue when it comes to Indigenous children. Indigenous parents and educators have for many years pointed to the importance of bi-cultural education – that is, education that both affirms first culture and simultaneously allows learners to acquire skills to navigate wider economic and social contexts, as promoted by pioneering Aboriginal educators such as the late Dr Yunupingu (Colquhoun & Dockery, 2012). The advent of NAPLAN has allowed systems to measure educational gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. And yet fixations on NAPLAN results and related agendas to drive standards may be counterproductive to these goals, in that they run the risk of neglecting the uniqueness of each child and the needs of the 'whole child'. Furthermore, NAPLAN results are arguably being misused when education providers use them to drive marketing campaigns (Fotinopoulos, 2017). As Fotinopoulos (a teacher) acknowledges, the original intent of NAPLAN was to guide teacher training, shape curriculum, and inform funding distribution.

Concerns about curriculum and standardised assessment have implications for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike. Principal Steven Jones (of Our Lady of Lourdes School at

Prahran in Victoria) believes that education is not just about spelling and writing and maths. Jones said (in Overington, 2011, p.17) that he asks every new parent:

> …in seven years' time, what do you want to see? And not one has ever said: I want good NAPLAN test results. They want them to be happy. They want them to have made friends. They want to see them being creative, and to see the whole child – physically, educationally, spiritually – developing.

Such insights, in turn, begs the question – 'what is learning for?' At a foundational level, the Delores Report for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) identified four pillars of learning: namely learning to be (identity); learning to know (knowledge); learning to do (skills), and learning to live together (social harmony and connectivity) (Delores, 1996). Similarly, the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (Australian Government, 2009) offered three simple but profoundly important drivers for the developing child – *belonging*, *being*, and *becoming*. The grave position of Indigenous education outcomes in Australia, and wider social outcomes, suggest that these foundations and pillars of learning are severely fractured when it comes to the Australian capacity to allow cultural identities to *be* and live in harmony together.

In his study of demographics in the remote community of Wadeye in the Northern Territory, Taylor, (2010, p.6) asked the very poignant question of: 'Education for what?'. Taylor points to a vexed relationship between the State's perspective on the value of education and local Indigenous leadership perspectives. Whilst he found some synergy between the two perspectives with regard to the fundamental role and value of education (namely paid employment, achievement of control over one's own destiny, and equality of opportunity with other young Australians), Taylor (2010, p.7) nonetheless made the following challenging observation:

> While there would therefore seem to be some unity of purpose and aspiration in regard to education at Wadeye, even a cursory perusal of participation and performance data indicate that schooling and its intended outcomes have been, and remain far from optimal. As a consequence, the chances of reaping the dividend from demographic change are structurally compromised without immediate and substantial redress.

Taylor's observations also beg the question about how realistic expectations are with regard to paid employment for Indigenous young people post school in remote areas. One option for

young people is to move to places where the jobs are, but relatively poor educational performance – coupled with racial prejudice and strong obligations to kin, family, land, and friends at a local level – do not always make such a transition an easy one for Indigenous young people. Which raises a further question – 'should local schooling lead to jobs in the local economy?' Altman (2007) has developed a hybrid economic model whereby he argues that – properly supported – Indigenous local 'customary' economic activity (fishing, arts, land management, etc.) can continue to provide for Indigenous people. Altman (2007, p.47) argued against what he described as:

> …the dominant Indigenous policy approach in Australia that somewhat myopically promulgates a view that Indigenous economic development can only be achieved via mainstreaming, a term that refers to orthodox engagement with the market either through sale of labour or through operation of commercial business.

Instead, Altman has offered an alternative approach, which he called a 'livelihoods approach' or 'hybrid economic model'. He explained (*ibid.*, p.47) the hybrid economic model in the following terms:

> The customary economy is made up of a range of productive activities that occur outside the market and that are based on cultural continuities: hunting, gathering and fishing occur within the customary economy, but so too do a range of other activities like land and habitat management, species management and the maintenance of biodiversity. A distinctive feature of the customary economy is that it is not monetised; consequently, its value has remained either unquantified or unrecognised in mainstream terms. Researchers, as a general rule, have ignored the value of the customary economy for a variety of reasons, but mainly because it is very difficult to quantify, especially on a regional scale. Case study material suggests that the customary economy can have significant economic value, especially in the tropical savannas and wetlands. The monetary value of the customary economy is most clearly evident when its products are marketed and attract a dollar value, as with the sale of Indigenous art. Even in such contexts there are indications of under-valuation.

The reason for citing Altman's work here is to highlight the point that context-based learning is consistent with the fact that local and regional economies throughout Australia are different, therefore necessitating a locally contextualised approach to learning. White and Wood (2009)

cited data that indicate that programs to overcome Indigenous disadvantage are most successful when they allow for localised and specific programs 'owned by the Indigenous population which they seek to affect' (p.15). In other words, communities need to be supported in co-devising what their learners learn by collaborating in the contextualisation and delivery of curriculum.

Quality of school and wellbeing of community

In perhaps one of the more significant contributions to unlocking 'internal' success in school education, Hattie (2009) prepared a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to educational achievement. On many levels, this synthesis applies to all students, including Indigenous Australian students. Hattie's (2009, p.261) meta-analysis concluded that:

> …experienced experts possess pedagogical content knowledge that is more flexibly and innovatively employed in instruction; they are more able to improvise and to alter instruction in response to contextual features of the classroom situation; they understand at a deeper level the reasons for individual student success and failure on any given academic task; their understanding of students is such that they are more able to provide developmentally appropriate learning tasks that engage, challenge and even intrigue students, without boring or overwhelming them; they are more able to anticipate and plan for difficulties students are likely to encounter with new concepts; they can more easily improvise when things do not run smoothly; they are more able to generate accurate hypotheses about the causes of student success and failure; and they bring a distinct passion to their work.

While this analysis provides invaluable insights into what needs to happen within schools (such as quality teaching and visible learning), what about out-of-school factors and their importance and influences? Is it realistic to assume that the quality of the school can completely counteract poor quality of life outside the school's gates – namely the student's wider environment of family, community, and broader socio economic factors? Cain (2003) cited a study of 'at-risk' youth completed by the Community Network for Youth Development in San Francisco, which recognised that young people deemed 'at-risk' needed the same kinds of support and opportunities for healthy development that were readily available to young people in middle class communities. It found that young people who succeeded in the face of difficult circumstances had the advantage of three critical elements in their lives: caring relationships;

high, clear and fair expectations; and opportunities for participation and contribution. According to Cain (2003), a similar study completed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time and Forum on Youth Investment in 2003 identified parallel qualities of effective after-school settings that promoted positive youth development: safe, stable places; basic care and services; caring relationships; relevant, challenging experiences; high expectations and standards; opportunities for voice, choice and contribution; and personalised high-quality instruction.

Similarly, Biddle's (2011) contribution to research in Australia on the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children found a strong statistical relationship between First Nations child wellbeing and carer wellbeing (family and household structure). Biddle's research (2011, p.vi) highlighted the following financial and social factors which impact adversely on a child's subjective wellbeing:

> The life event with the greatest negative association was the family having serious worries about money. Other variables that had a large association were family break-up, family arguments, alcohol or drug problems, children being scared by other people's behaviour, crime victimisation, and being asked for money.

Rothstein (2010), Ravitch (2011) and Nocera (2011) published similar findings in the US as they relate to poverty and education. For instance, Ravitch (2011, no page number) found that:

> Poverty has a strong influence on academic achievement, and our society must both improve schools and reduce poverty.…Families are children's most important educators. Our society must invest in parental education, prenatal care and preschool. If every child arrived in school well nourished, healthy and ready to learn, from a family with a stable home and a steady income, many of our educational problems would be solved.

Similarly, Nocera (2011, no page number) argued that:

> Going back to the famous Coleman report in the 1960s, social scientists have contended – and unquestionably proved – that students' socioeconomic backgrounds vastly outweigh what goes on in the school as factors in determining how much they learn...(there) are dozens of reasons why this is so, from the more frequent illness and

stress poor students suffer, to the fact that they don't hear the large vocabularies that middle-class children hear at home.

Making schools better is always a goal worth striving for, whether it means improving pedagogy itself or being able to fire bad teachers more easily. Without question, school reform has already achieved some real, though moderate progress. What needs to be acknowledged, however, is that school reform won't fix everything. Though some poor students will succeed, others will fail. Demonizing teachers for the failures of poor students, and pretending that reforming the schools is all that is needed, as the (school) reformers tend to do, is both misguided and counterproductive.

Consistent with this standpoint, Rothstein (2010, p.1) argued that:

Decades of social science research have demonstrated that differences in the quality of schools can explain about one-third of the variation in student achievement. But the other two-thirds is attributable to non-school (family and community) factors.

Are policy makers and philanthropic actors paying sufficient attention to these 'outside of the school gate' factors when devising Indigenous education policy and wider social policy and programs? Two sources of data would indicate they are not. Both the Australian Child Wellbeing Project (Redmond *et al.,* 2016) and a survey of Indigenous youth (Mission Australia, 2015) found that First Nations young people (whilst optimistic about their futures) were faced by a number of wider social issues that are not optimal to their in-school performance. For instance, Redmond *et al.* (2016, p.15) found that Indigenous young people in Year 8 are more likely to go to bed or school hungry (p.15), at a rate seven times the rate of non-marginalised young people. In expanding on this issue for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people alike, the authors (*ibid.,* p.16) added that:

Experiencing food shortages was often more extreme when there was a confluence of significantly adverse events in a young person's life. Events sometimes included a family member getting sick or dying, the break-up of a relationship in the household, or having to move homes for another reason. These adverse events combined with 'everyday' economic stress to create considerable uncertainty in young people's lives.

Redmond *et al.* (2016, p.18) further found that among Year 8 students, Indigenous youth were three times more likely than non-marginalised groups to miss school about every week or more (28 per cent versus 9 per cent).

In a survey involving over 1,000 First Nations young people, Mission Australia (2015) reported that Indigenous young people were more likely to be mobile (that is, more than twice as likely to spend time away from home than non-Indigenous young people). This meant that maintaining study was difficult. Furthermore, the survey found that Indigenous young people are more likely to be extremely or highly concerned by stressors such as drugs, gambling, discrimination, personal safety, and suicide. And yet, as was found in the Redmond *et al.* (2016) report, Indigenous young people reported being optimistic, relatively happy and feeling positive about their lives. This speaks volumes for the levels of resilience among First Nations young people given the sizeable disadvantage they are more likely to encounter.

Certain challenges in Indigenous education in Australia

It is not the intention here to summarise the full, wide and deep spectrum of tensions, challenges and complexity in Australian Indigenous education, for that would simply be too large an exercise. However, a number of tensions are particularly pertinent, based on what was consistently heard during this study's fieldwork. These tensions include the prevalence of 'equity' as the major driver for Indigenous education; curriculum choices; ongoing barriers to education and measuring gaps in education; and racism and the historical legacy and 'bitter aftertaste' of historic Indigenous exclusion from schooling.

Education for First Nations people is a paradox or double-edged sword, in that education has been a source and site of historical disadvantage and oppression, and yet education is arguably the single most important contemporary ingredient in Indigenous community advancement, social liberation, and personal development. This section discusses some (not all) challenges in Indigenous education, starting with proper definitions of 'Indigenous education'.

Properly defining Indigenous education

Indigenous education is far greater than the 'performance' of Indigenous children and young people in standardised testing such as NAPLAN. The author has created a model to reflect the fuller spectrum of Indigenous education. The model is expanded upon later in *Chapter 7*, but in a nutshell it embraces the following key ingredients: Indigenous education is ideally *for*

Indigenous people (through access and equity), *with* Indigenous people (through co-production and partnership), *by* Indigenous people (through knowledge maintenance, first languages, cultural affirmation, teaching delivery and education provision), and *about* Indigenous people (through curriculum and Indigenous studies within schools and the broader community).

If one were to accept this definition, then it becomes apparent that improving Indigenous education is not a challenge for Indigenous communities alone. It requires social change in the wider society (including change fuelled by the philanthropic sector), particularly when data show that Indigenous people are still subjected to racism at worst, or ignorance at best. For example, a survey undertaken by Ferdinand, Paradies and Kelaher (2013, p.23) for the Victorian Health Department in 2011–12 found that 97 per cent of 755 Aboriginal people across four Victorian localities had experienced high levels of racism such as verbal or physical abuse or discriminatory behaviour within a 12 month period.

Racism in education

The prevalence of racism, identified above, suggests that the task of reconciliation and educating the wider public about First Nations Australia remains a major national challenge. Arguably the greatest single impact on contemporary Indigenous education outcomes is a sorry history and legacy of white-black relations in Australia, of which education systems were active agents. Through the course of post-colonial history, schools had been deployed by the state as both the forces and enforcers of social exclusion and separatism. Schools were to quickly become active players in what W.E.H. Stanner described as a conquest by the state for Indigenous Australians to 'unbe' through 'the great Australian silence' (Stanner, 1968). To illustrate: Lines (1992, p.173) cited an Australian parliamentarian who suggested in 1902 that there was no scientific evidence to suggest that the 'Aborigine' is a human being at all. The scientific study of 'the Aborigines', claimed one academic, 'would help trace out the sequence of ideas by which mankind has advanced from the condition of the lower animals to that in which we find him at the present time, and by this means to provide really reliable materials for a philosophy of progress' (*ibid.*, p.173). Lines (1992, p.174) also documented the extent to which authorities went in legislating for Indigenous exclusion:

> An amendment to the *Western Australian Education Act* in 1928 empowered teachers
> to exclude Aboriginal students on the basis of a complaint from a single European

parent. The rule effectively prohibited all Aboriginal children from Education Department schools.

Similarly, Broome (2010, p.178) found that:

> From the 1890s until 1949, New South Wales' educational authorities excluded Aboriginal children from state schools, if non-Indigenous parents objected to their presence, usually on spurious health grounds. Those excluded attended reserve schools where they received a poorer education. This did not apply in Victoria, where there was only one reserve in any case, but it did in Western Australia, where parents could request the expulsion of an Aboriginal child on grounds of health, welfare, or morality. Only one per cent of Aboriginal children in Western Australia in the 1930s were schooled in state schools.

These acts of exclusion and separatism in schooling, as well as the 'domestification' of Indigenous young people, started early in Australia's colonial period. As Broome (2010, p.29) explained:

> In December 1814, on the advice of a missionary named William Shelley, he [Governor Macquarie] established a Native Institution to educate children vocationally and 'to effect the Civilization of the Aborigines of New South Wales, and to render their Habits more domesticated and industrious'. It was Australia's first assimilation policy. It also became a vehicle for the first removal of children via the dormitory system. Although entry was voluntary, once there, children were supposed to remain until around fifteen years of age.

The establishment of the Native Institution in 1814, followed by separate formation of a formal education for European students only some years later, point to the early and deep roots of segregation in Australian schooling.

On explaining historical Indigenous 'apprenticeships', Broome (2010, pp.176–177) writes:

> In all states, Aboriginal Boards operated apprenticeship schemes to place teenage boys and girls into work. Boys did farm work. Young girls were placed into domestic service, where they often suffered exploitation from the double jeopardy of being Aboriginal and female. Like all domestic servants, they were overworked and

underpaid....Victoria Haskins has uncovered a darker aspect to this labour trade in New South Wales. The apprenticeship system was intimately connected to the absorptionist policy, not simply by placing young women in the wider world and off reserves, but because of the alarming rate of impregnation of these by whites – mostly in the workplace...Claims of 'consent' were unlikely, given that young Aboriginal servant girls were working in a controlled situation in the presence of white employers, their sons and male workers, amid a racial discourse that maintained Aboriginal women were 'easy' and 'want it'.

Watson (2010, p.41) provides a microcosm (from Palm Island in Queensland) of a larger agenda of separating whites and blacks in Australian schooling:

The 'native school' and the 'white school' were in two separate buildings on opposite sides of the road. The entire compound was fenced in, with an access gate at end of Mango Avenue and another at the road leading to the bridge. An additional tall wire fence surrounded both the junior and senior girls' dormitories. By the late 1920s, Palm Island had been landscaped to a design with two key principles – segregation akin to apartheid, and containment akin to a prison.

Behrendt (1995, p.35) identified the following linkage between 'schooling' and removal of Aboriginal children from their families:

Aboriginal children were taught on the missions and reserves but the levels were never very high. When the government implemented a policy of assimilation it included removing Aboriginal children from their families and institutionalising them. Education was seen as a way of eliminating traditional values from Aboriginal children. When children were removed from their families, they were sent to institutions where they were taught until their early teens and then sent to white families do domestic work or to work as stockmen.

The HREOC inquiry in 1997 into the separation of Indigenous children from their families extensively documented cases of institutional (including charitable and educational institutions) abuse of Indigenous children. The following firsthand accounts from victims provides powerful and disturbing testimony:

...the people who would come in to work with the children, they would grab the boy's penises, play around with them and kiss them and things like that....it was seen to be the white man's way of lookin' after you (HREOC 1997, p.141).

I was being molested in the home by one of the staff there...All this time she was inserting this cane into my vagina. I guess I was about 9 or 10 [years old]. When I was at Castledare I was badly interfered with by one of those (Christian) brothers. And if you didn't respond in a way, then you were hit. I never told anyone that (*ibid.*, p.163).

Kinchela was a place where they thought you were animals. You know it was like a place where they go around and kick us like a dog...it was just like a prison. Truthfully, there were boys having sex with boys. We had a manager who was sent to prison because he was doing it to a lot of the boys, sexual abuse (*ibid.*, p.167).

The HREOC Report (1997) documented widespread psychological abuse as much sexual abuse. These experiences had left a long legacy for many First Nations people and triggered an inter-generational suspicion and distrust of European institutions. Many remained wary of 'charity' and education in particular. The descendants of the 'stolen generations' are reported as being at high risk and of often lacking role models (*ibid.*, pp.222–228). Take 14-year-old Jo, for example:

As far as his own life is concerned, unless some changes occur Jo is likely to become more depressed and drop out of the education system carrying again this cycle on to the next generation (*ibid.*, p.231).

Another witness to the Inquiry stated that:

I've come to realise that because of Dad being taken away, grief and all that's been carried down to us. We're not organised. We don't know where we're heading (*ibid.*, p.228).

And another:

I was never proud to be black – I never was. It wasn't until I met my family for the first time in my life that I was actually proud to be who I was (*ibid.*, p.228).

Reports such as HREOC's, and seminal oral history works of authors such as Rintoul (*The Wailing,* 1993) provide further graphic evidence of the impact of racism – both individual and institutional (especially in schools). These oral histories also provide glimpses of non-Indigenous people prepared to side with Aboriginal Australians by acting benevolently, if not philanthropically, and on occasions, bravely. The following extensive quotations provide a powerful illustration of Indigenous experiences in education and benevolent institutions:

> We weren't allowed to go to school. Any other nationality in *Colli* [Collarenebri, in NSW] could go to school, but not Aboriginals when I was growing up. So I guess I got about three days' education at the Presbyterian minister's house – three half days – in my lifetime...This minister's wife was very concerned about that aspect. She really wanted to try and get support to get Aboriginal children some kind of schooling, but it wasn't until the mid-forties that Aboriginal kids were finally enrolled in some sort of school, which was segregated (Flick, in Rintoul 1993, p.55).

> A lot of them [forcibly removed children] was taken from out home. Some of them were never seen again, some of them we did years after. They'd come back looking for their people and their mothers and fathers would be gone, died broken-hearted because they never seen their children. And a lot of them never got over it. A lot of them ended up alcoholics, and in and out of jail, and a lot of them turned to violence, lashing out at society. It was an Aboriginal mother's child and they loved it and they were torn away from them...This is all the genocide. Strip everything from you, no matter what you had: your language, your custom. They just stripped it and they turned around and called you a no-hoper. And then they didn't want you in the town and they built a little shanty town outside the town, where they dumped rubbish, while the Australian white people prospered by the land with big businesses, plenty of money and big motor cars driving past, turning their noses up at these poor wretched Aboriginals. There's a lot of good white people, too, who really cared for Aboriginals with their heart and soul, really love them and treat them as equal. But it's only a few and they can do a little bit but not much. They can give them love and friendship – the main thing that Aboriginals need – and understanding (Clarke, in Rintoul 1993, pp.232–233).

> At the white school they attended thirty-five kilometres away across the Queensland border, in Goondiwindi, the children were called 'coons' and 'niggers'. The bus in

which they went to school was known by the white people as 'the Vegemite bus' (Rintoul, 1993, p.251).

All the kids on the mission that were going to school, they're the ones that copped a lot with the racist attitudes from, not only the kids but the teachers as well. They put in the slow learners' class as soon as they attended school at Goondiwindi and they sat there for twelve months, and by the time they'd reached the next grade they'd know very little, because the teachers wouldn't teach them... 'You called us niggers, you called us coons, you had a blackboard – one for the whites and one for the blacks'. That was a fight we had to fight (Whitton, in Rintoul 1993, pp.265–266).

No [I never went to school]. That was hard time. How could I go to school in hard time? White people put me on a horse and sent me the other way. Well....we're not bad with white people, we're all right with good people and we're nothing wrong with any other nation. We're all right here (Purvis, in Rintoul 1993, p.213).

Groome (1994, pp.148–149) captured and summarised racism and segregation in Australian education in the following terms:

The interactions between generations of Aboriginal people and educators have been generally negative. Many Aboriginal parents view schools in the light of their own experiences and communal perceptions. Because of their experiences on missions, reserves and in fostering institutions, many older people have no tradition of needing or respecting European education. The close association between education and the management of the institutions made schooling an unpleasant, controlling and limiting experience rather than an empowering one. School became just another aspect of white domination, something to be avoided. This long history of negative experiences fostered a persistent mistrust of schooling among many families.

To this day, First Nations parents understandably remain wary of non-Indigenous attitudes towards their children. This is affirmed in the data from field interviews as outlined later in *Chapter 4*. Furthermore, Biddle (2011, p.vi) made the following point with regard to the likelihood of Indigenous parents sending their children to a preschool:

Perhaps the most policy-relevant finding with regards to preschool is that those children who have a carer who felt they were discriminated against because of their Indigenous

status are significantly less likely to be attending preschool. Formal, mainstream education has the potential to be alienating for Indigenous students and their families and the analysis presented in this paper gives circumstantial evidence that ongoing discrimination is a further cause of disengagement from formal education.

The ramifications of individual and institutional racism, exclusion, paternalism, and separation – including through the demeaning historical acts of some charitable and educational authorities – cannot be understated and are still reverberating today. History helps explain today's reluctance with regard to formal schooling and attitudes about schooling that have passed down to younger generations. These historical backdrops need to be recognised and understood in carrying future Indigenous education and philanthropic relationships forward.

Ongoing barriers

The inherent complexity in Indigenous education is perhaps best represented through the multitude of barriers that continue to thwart positive access and outcomes for Indigenous people. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council (ATSIPTAC, 1999, p.6) identified four sets of barriers, namely *cultural* (systems take little account of Indigenous languages, forms of knowledge and beliefs, relationships and values); *pedagogical* (confined to classroom based learning); *structural* (constricted in its range and contexts); and *economic* (low incomes).

Dating back some 30 years, Australia has identified improving outcomes for Indigenous people as one of the nation's most pressing educational and wider public policy goals. Data show that while marginal gains have been made in key education indicators, ongoing non-Indigenous educational advancement means the gap is not closing (Biddle, 2012). Furthermore, when geography is factored into the mix, the gap is even more significant (Dreise & Thomson, 2014); which is not to say that Indigenous people residing in urban areas are at parity (Schwab, 2012).

The disengagement of Indigenous young people from formal education is well documented. For instance, Doyle and Hill (2008) found that Indigenous students are absent from school two to three times more often than other students; leave school much younger; and are less than half as likely to go through to Year 12 (p.22). Disparity in Indigenous education outcomes is also reported. The Productivity Commission (2016), for example, reported that only 61.5 per cent of Indigenous 20–24 year-olds had completed Year 12 (or equivalent or above) in 2014–2015. Even though this figure of 61.5 per cent represents a sizeable increase when compared

to the result in 2008 (at just 45.4 per cent), it is still concerning when compared to a non-Indigenous completion rate of 87.9 per cent in 2014–15.

Measuring gaps

Assessment of student progress is an important feature of education. Assessment regimes such as the measurement of students' mathematical, scientific and reading literacy indicate a widening gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In short, Indigenous 15-year-olds are approximately 2.5 years behind their non-Indigenous peers in schooling (Dreise & Thomson, 2014). Every three years, Australian students participate in an OECD survey called the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA measures the mathematical, scientific and reading literacy performance of approximately 28 million 15-year-olds from around the globe. The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) had coordinated Australia's participation in the Programme. In 2012, over half a million Australian youth participated in the survey including 1,991 Indigenous students from across urban, regional and remote settings.

The 2012 PISA results were deeply concerning from a First Nations perspective. In mathematical literacy, the data indicated that Indigenous students were more than 2.5 years behind their non-Indigenous peers. In scientific literacy, the difference of 84 score points equates to about 2.5 years of schooling. And in reading literacy, the gap of 87 points also equates to 2.5 years. In terms of gender, Indigenous females outperformed Indigenous males by 45 score points (450 compared with 405) in reading literacy. This equates to almost one year of schooling.

As with the previous PISA survey in 2009, the relatively low achievement of Australia's Indigenous students continued to be of major concern. When comparing the 2012 PISA Indigenous results with 2009 results, it showed that the gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students grew from 82 points in 2009 to 87 score points in 2012 in reading literacy; 76 points in 2009 to 87 points in 2012 in mathematical literacy; and 81 points in 2009 to 84 points in 2012 in scientific literacy. The biggest fall for Indigenous students was recorded in mathematics literacy, which declined from 441 points in 2009 to 417 points in 2012.

Over the past decade, Australian governments – principally through COAG – have adopted a bipartisan approach to 'Closing the gap' in outcomes (including in education) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The 'Closing the gap' agenda of the Rudd and

Gillard Governments mirrored the 'Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage' approach of the Howard Government in so far as it identified a range of equity performance indicators and looked to tailor investments and interventions to bridge current disparities between Indigenous and other Australians. Of particular interest to governments have been strategies to bridge gaps in literacy/numeracy, as illustrated by the Howard Government's *National Indigenous English literacy and numeracy strategy* (Australian Government, 2000)*,* which commenced implementation in the early 2000s, roughly at the same time as the 2012 PISA cohort of 15-year-olds commenced their schooling.

Despite this and a raft of other initiatives in First Nations education and Indigenous affairs more broadly, over the past decade and more, performance data across a range of sources point to little gain or 'mixed results' at best. For example, a number of audits[12] indicate that government programs have either failed dismally, or have not achieved their objectives, or were unable to demonstrate that they have achieved their objectives. With regard to progress against the national *Closing the Gap* targets in education, the Prime Minister's *Closing the Gap Prime Minister's Report* (Australian Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2018) once again pointed to a mixed report card. On the positive side, the report stated that 'the target to have 95 per cent of all Indigenous 4-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education by 2025 is on track. In 2016, around 14,700 Indigenous children (91 per cent) were enrolled in early childhood programs' (*ibid.*, p.8). The report also stated that the COAG target to halve the gap in Year 12 attainment by 2020 'is on track' (p.9). However, the report found that the target to close the gap in school attendance by 2018 is not on track and that the attendance rate for 'Indigenous students nationally was 83.2 per cent, compared with 93.0 per cent for non-Indigenous students' (p.9). With regard to the goal of halving the gap in reading and numeracy by 2018, the report stated that this goal is not on track. The report (*ibid.*, p.9) stated:

> In 2017, the proportion of Indigenous students achieving national minimum standards in NAPLAN is on track in only one (Year 9 numeracy) of the eight areas (reading and numeracy for Years 3, 5, 7 and 9). However, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students has narrowed since 2008 across all the NAPLAN areas, particularly reading in Years 3 and 5, and numeracy in Years 5 and 9.

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[12] NSW Auditor-General (2011) *Performance Audit: Two Ways Together – NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan*; Victorian Auditor-General (2011) *Indigenous Education Strategies for Government Schools*; Australian Department of Finance (2010) *Strategic Review of Indigenous Expenditure Report*.

The Indigenous results in standardised testing (such as in the PISA 2012 test and NAPLAN tests) need to be viewed within a wider frame of socio-economic and geographical disadvantage. PISA data in Australia show that students (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) who reside in regional and remote areas generally perform significantly poorer than students in urban areas. It is therefore highly noteworthy that Australia's Indigenous population is more geographically dispersed than the general Australian population, with roughly one-third of Indigenous people residing in urban areas, one-third in regional areas, and one-third in remote areas. The 2012 PISA data also show that Australian students from lower socio-economic backgrounds generally perform more poorly than students in the highest socio-economic quartiles. The 2012 PISA survey also shows that Indigenous young people are more likely (53 per cent) compared to non-Indigenous students (41 per cent) to identify family demands and other problems impacting on the time they spent on schoolwork. This highlights the particular demands that Indigenous young people face, including being members of relatively larger, younger, and extended families, meaning smaller average incomes and overcrowded homes. More encouragingly, the survey shows a high degree of 'personal responsibility' and appreciation of the importance of science, maths and literacy among Indigenous young people. The survey in mathematics, for example, shows similar levels of interest and valuing of mathematics among Indigenous and other students. However, the data also show that Indigenous young people are less likely to be confident and more likely to be 'anxious' about mathematics and maths testing (Dreise & Thomson, 2014).

Indigenous education and complexity

The complexity of Indigenous education is partly illustrated by the barriers to education that Indigenous children and families continue to encounter, as identified by Helme and Lamb (2011, p.1) such as physical barriers (e.g. geographic isolation); cultural (e.g. discrimination or language other than English); economic (e.g. high costs, low income); and informational (e.g. lower levels of literacy in communities).

Such cases of complexity require different responses to one-size-fits-all and top-down solutions. A number of reviews have identified the folly of such approaches (Morgan Disney, 2006; Al-Yaman, 2011). Rather, initiatives that are more likely to work require greater innovation and flexibility; sustained investment; stronger collaboration and work across boundaries; ground up resourcing, drive and effort; school leadership; a broad and lateral (not narrow) approach to problem solving. Approaches to improve Indigenous affairs have often

been highly 'siloed' including the creation of new institutes and programs, which have typically been uncoordinated (Mission Australia, 2015). In schooling, a plethora of 'new initiatives' are leading to a sense among teachers of drowning in a sea of fads and disjointed innovations (Hattie, 2009).

In summary, unless educational outcomes for First Nations young people vastly improve, the downstream impact and costs in terms of social wellbeing, welfare, health, employment, and economic sufficiency will be heavy as the Indigenous population is relatively young and growing rapidly.

Early school leaving

The rate of early school leaving is a particularly sensitive challenge in improving Indigenous education. The following passages firstly, examine the rate of early school leaving among Indigenous young people; secondly, explore the reasons behind it; thirdly, examine the impacts of early school leaving; and, finally, consider models to address the problem through potential philanthropic intervention and investment.

At a national level, the ABS (2014) found that the Year 12 retention rate among Indigenous people in 2013 was 55 per cent, representing an increase of four percentage points when compared to the 2012 rate. However, the gap between Indigenous Year 12 retention and non-Indigenous Year 12 retention remained sizeable: 55 per cent compared with 83 per cent. Encouragingly, the gap has reduced over the past decade from 37 per cent to 28 per cent. However, the fact remains that many Indigenous young people disengage from school early, as evidenced by 'the low rates of attendance at school and the high rates of drop-out before completion of the major educational landmarks' (Hunter 2010, p.2). Hunter (2010) also highlighted the importance of first overcoming the 'barriers' to education and training, by beginning with the crucial recognition of the 'diverse and distinct cultural and social life experiences of Indigenous school leavers' (p.1). Likewise, Haswell, Blignault, Fitzpatrick and Jackson Pulver (2013, p.11) observed in their report on the social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations young people that:

> ...many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people experience life circumstances that seriously challenge their social and emotional wellbeing and limit their capacity to fulfil their life potential. This most likely contributes to and results

from the visible disparities across most measures of health, education, employment and involvement in the justice system.

Hunter (2010) pointed to entrenched disadvantage, high rates of contact with police and juvenile justice, and the social cost of educational participation (peer relationships) for explanation. Other literature shows that early school leaving is not a problem encountered by Indigenous young people in remote communities alone, notwithstanding that access to schools represents an additional challenge for Indigenous people residing in geographically remote areas. Schwab (2012) found that Indigenous students in Australia's major cities comprise a significantly higher proportion of early school leavers than their non-Indigenous peers. He pointed to issues such as high stakes testing and curriculum that fail to engage significant cohorts of First Nations learners.

Research undertaken through the 'What works'[13] professional growth program (formerly sponsored by the Australian Government) in Indigenous education highlighted a range of determinants of Indigenous participation and retention in school, including family expectations and responsibilities, poor health and family finance, language and culture, bullying and harassment, teacher attitudes and school atmospheres, past educational performance and educational relevance. The program also found that high rates of Indigenous family mobility were a factor in schooling outcomes.

Pressures on family finances, changes in family structure, and other out-of-school factors impact, often adversely, on Indigenous young people's ability to fully engage in learning. Mission Australia (2013) found that Indigenous young people are more likely to be concerned by family and societal factors and their impact on schooling. Similarly, the PISA Survey of Australian 15-year-olds conducted by ACER found higher degrees of anxiety about school testing among Indigenous students (Dreise & Thomson, 2014).

The downstream effect of early school leaving among Indigenous students is sizeable as measured on a number of fronts. First and foremost, the fact that almost three out of every 10 young Indigenous people is unlikely to successfully complete senior secondary education has a direct bearing on the relatively low rates of Indigenous participation at universities (Pechenkina & Anderson, 2011). Conversely, Indigenous rates of engagement in vocational educational and training (VET) in recent years has been strong and has outstriped population

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[13] http://whatworks.edu.au/upload/1250830979818_file_5Engagement.pdf, retrieved on 22 May 2013

share (National VET Equity Advisory Council, 2012). Unemployment rates among Indigenous young people are very high and contribute to a vicious cycle of poor skills, family stress and social trauma.

The AIHW (2013) observed that whilst Indigenous education and employment rates had improved over the preceding decade, gaps across a range of indicators still remained, including unemployment rates (in 2008) that were four times as high for Indigenous people aged 15–64 as non-Indigenous people in the same age range (17 per cent and 4 per cent) and that only 13 per cent of Indigenous people had a weekly household income of $1,000 or more compared with 33 per cent of non-Indigenous people in 2011. Further, AIHW found that in 2011–12, the rate of substantiated (confirmed) child abuse or neglect for Indigenous children was almost eight times the rate for non-Indigenous children. In addition, First Nations children were around 10 times as likely to be in out-of-home care as non-Indigenous children in 2011–12. With regard to criminal justice data, AIHW (2013) found that Indigenous Australians comprised 27 per cent of the total prison population in Australia (and yet less than 3 per cent of the Australian population) in 2011–12 and that approximately 38 per cent of young people aged under 25 in prison in 2011–12 were Indigenous.

The *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Report* by Mission Australia (2013) found that despite similarities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous responses to surveys, the following differences were noteworthy:

> Participation in full-time education was lower amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Moreover, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were notably less likely to feel that they could choose to go to university, travel or get a job after school;

> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were considerably more likely to be looking for work. They placed a higher value on getting a job compared to non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people and were more likely to nominate employment as a key issue in Australia currently;

> Concern about alcohol and drugs and gambling was substantially higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents;

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were comparatively less comfortable going to a range of sources for information, advice and support including the internet, parent/s, friend/s and a teacher. They were also more likely to feel they had no-one (who was not living with them) to seek support from in a time of crisis (one in five compared to only one in 10 non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents);

One in eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family's ability to get along as poor, compared to only one in 17 non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents;

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were more likely to report being very dissatisfied with the financial situation of their household (7.8% compared with 1.6%); and

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were more likely to nominate crime, safety and violence as an important issue in Australia today. Furthermore, almost one in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated that they did not feel safe in their neighbourhood, compared to one in 11 non-Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander respondents (*ibid.*, pp.4-5).

When both in-school barriers (such as culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy, cross-cultural instruction and academic self-concept) and in-community barriers (such as poverty, child safety, substance misuse and juvenile justice) are considered together, then the goal of overcoming early school leaving among First Nations young people is multifaceted, to the point of being complex. Equally, the downstream costs of not turning early school leaving around are likely to be sizeable. As Haswell *et al.* (2013, p.11) argued:

Getting the right policy settings and programs in place now will have great payoffs in the future because Indigenous young people, as the next generation of parents and community leaders, will have profound impacts on their children. Conversely, failure to respond to current challenges in timely, culturally-appropriate and effective ways will lead to greatly increased costs to society. An appreciation of the various levels of influence, both positive and negative, on Indigenous health and wellbeing is critical when considering the role of governments, non-government organisations, professional and community groups and individuals (including youth themselves) in such endeavours.

Curriculum choices and a case for expansion

Philanthropic organisations, such as the Beacon Foundation and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum (DSF), were established out of concern for the lack of education choices for youth at risk. Both foundations have adopted VET in schools models. Beacon reported in *Overview of the Beacon Foundation 2011* that it has worked in over 180 secondary schools across Australia including in rural and Indigenous communities.[14] Meantime DSF focused more on research, advocacy and development including through its 'Learning choices' initiative.[15] A national scan of alternative learning programs for youth by te Riele (2012), undertaken for DSF, found over 400 programs in 1,200 locations nationally, working with 33,000 young people during 2011. te Riele (2012) added that the vast majority of programs scanned across Australia were small and highlighted that quality and sustainability of programs was a significant issue. te Riele (2012, p.3) noted that:

> The majority of program reports demonstrate an aim to adapt their approach to meet student needs, rather than aiming to change the young person him or herself. Nevertheless, the research warns against the danger of a deficit approach in the aims or mission of a school.

With regard to First Nations youth more specifically, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in 2010 endorsed the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan: 2010–2014*. Ministers made the following key statement with regard to curriculum: 'A curriculum and pedagogy that embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspectives will support attendance and retention.' (MCEECDYA, 2010, p.16). The Plan concluded that:

> It is important that all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are taught by high quality teachers in schools led by effective and supportive principals who are assisted by a world-class curriculum that incorporates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives (*ibid.*, p.22).

Informed by these Ministerial statements, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has been charged with advancing the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives within the curriculum. The Australian Curriculum includes a cross-curriculum

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[14] see www.beaconfoundation.com.au retrieved on 11 November 2012
[15] see www.learningchoices.org.au retrieved on 11 November 2012

priority for all Australian students to develop an understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. ACARA (2012b, p.7) stated that the Australian Curriculum

> …means that all young Australians can learn about the histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of their contribution to Australia, and of the consequences of colonial settlement for Indigenous communities, past and present. For Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, the Australian Curriculum promotes the importance of pursuing excellence within education settings that respect and promote their cultural identity.

Curriculum is fundamentally about 'what' young people should learn. As will be seen in the fieldwork (next Chapter), Aboriginal parents and community members in the communities visited expressed concern that school curricula being delivered locally were almost entirely devoid of learning experiences that affirm First Nations cultures for their children. Australia's experience seems to stand in stark contrast to New Zealand and North American experiences. Indigenous education advocates in Northern America have promoted bicultural learning approaches that simultaneously embrace mainstream subjects with Indigenous goals. Sorenson (2013) reflects on the Navajo School Model in the US where students engage in both a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) program and what they call the 'STAR' program, meaning 'Service to All Relations'. Through the program each student completes a project either individually or as part of a group that is of service to the community or environment; addresses a need in the school of community; and demonstrates at least one core standard of STEM. For instance, Sorenson (2013, p.52) explained that the motivation behind the model involves providing '…an education that was more empowering for the Navajo children and more culturally relevant'.

Indigenous advocates in Australia have long called for similar approaches. For instance, in a 2004 interview (Negus, 2004), the late Dr Yunupingu, one of the Northern Territory's most well-known Aboriginal educators, explained how he sought to deliver 'both ways' learning in his classrooms:

> Our knowledge system wasn't seen to be a classroom thing. But I made that otherwise. I made it happen that our knowledge system would be part of the school system so that you could walk into a classroom and learn about that Yolngu understanding.

At a systems level, various Australian jurisdictions have sought to embrace Indigenous perspectives in curriculum. The NSW Board of Studies has developed the 'Mapping Aboriginal perspectives and cross-curriculum content K–10' document to help guide Indigenous perspectives. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority has also supported the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the Australian Curriculum. Furthermore, the Queensland Studies Authority in 2011 published 'Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in schools: A guide for school learning communities'.[16] A similar approach has been adopted in Western Australia via the 'Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum' (APAC) project. The project aimed to:

> …broaden and deepen students' and teachers' understanding of Aboriginal cultures and ways of being. Teaching APAC will assist all students to be able to look at the world from an Aboriginal viewpoint and understand the different Aboriginal points of view on a range of issues such as reconciliation, social justice and equality.[17]

Indigenous involvement in curriculum

The past several decades have seen a national policy drive to increase Indigenous involvement in educational decision-making and delivery. In 1989, Australian governments agreed to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, which included a goal to establish effective arrangements for the participation of Indigenous people in educational provision, via employment, consultative mechanisms, and through the provision of 'independent advice'.[18] Similarly, the first goal of 'Partners in a learning culture: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strategy for vocational education and training, 2000–2005' by the Australian National Training Authority's Indigenous Training Advisory Council was 'to increase the involvement of Indigenous people in decision making about policy, planning, resources and delivery in VET' (Australian National Training Authority, 2000). More recently, Universities Australia (the peak body for Australia's universities (2011) has developed a document, Guiding Principles for the Development of Indigenous Cultural Competency in Australian Universities, that includes principles about First Nations involvement in university curriculum development.

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[16] Retrieved on 28 September 2014 from ttp://deta.qld.gov.au/indigenous/pdfs/eatsips_2011.pdf

[17] Retrieved on 16 October 2016 from http://www.det.wa.edu.au/aboriginaleducation/apac/detcms/navigation/apac/?oid=MultiPartArticle-id-9193776

[18] Retrieved on 1 May 2014 from http://www.mceecdya.edu.au/verve/_resources/reporta_file.pdf p.36

In terms of Indigenous involvement in school curriculum development more specifically and more recently, ACARA advises in its *Curriculum Development Process v.6* document that it has established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group (ACARA, 2012a). The Advisory Group is responsible for the provision of advice to ACARA on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures priority in the Australian Curriculum as well as protocols and cultural sensitivities that need to be taken into account by ACARA business units.

The approach of ACARA is similar to approaches of State and Territory boards of studies and education departments. New South Wales has been at the forefront of involving Aboriginal people in curriculum development for several decades. The NSW Board of Studies, arguably a pioneer of embracing Indigenous perspectives in curricula, stated back in 2008 that:

> The involvement of Aboriginal people in the development and implementation of learning programs allows a genuine exploration of Aboriginal history, languages, culture and contemporary issues. Building a relationship between schools and their local Aboriginal community will enhance the learning experience of students, and promote Reconciliation through better understanding (NSW Board of Studies, Foreword, 2008).

This quote emphasises the importance of First Nations involvement both at the point of curriculum design as well as in its delivery.

A way forward

The ongoing gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners underscore the importance of First Nations active involvement in education provision and needs-based funding in education. Strategic and highly targeted investment in early intervention literacy and numeracy programs, teacher quality improvement, school leadership, and personalised learning support are key to turning results around. High needs learners – such as Indigenous students in bilingual and/or bi-dialectal settings or with health or disability issues (such as *otitis media*) – often require additional and personalised learning support. Furthermore, the fact that many First Nations children come from homes that do not speak Standard Australian English means that there is often an instant 'catch up' to be made in the early years of schooling.

Personalising learning and removing barriers to learning are key challenges facing teachers and principals in an ongoing quest for school reform and improvement (Hopkins, 2013). Within Indigenous contexts, school reform requires embracing added dimensions of greater cultural competency and tailored student support services including one-on-one tuition in the case of high needs learners (Dreise *et al.*, 2016). Teacher quality presupposes greater attention to systematic monitoring and assessment of student performance, which can be enabled by robust and deep personalised learning plans. Similarly, greater attention might be given to assessment and pedagogy. Adopting a 'growth mindset' in assessment (Masters, 2014) could be potentially highly appropriate to Indigenous contexts (think 'personal best' versus 'world records'); that is, assessment that is equally formative and summative in nature and seeks to measure continuous and personal growth among learners. Similarly, measures that seek to ensure that pedagogy is targeted toward personalised and responsive learning as opposed to the assumption that all children learn the same from the same instruction (Beatty & Pritchett, 2012).

When schools become contextually literate by positioning the school within community via social capital, trust, and networking then greater positive gains are more likely (Mulford, 2011). Likewise, high performing schools will be adopting a wider lens of student wellbeing, as illustrated by emerging models such as in NSW through the *Connected Communities* strategy (New South Wales Department of Education and Communities (NSW DECS) 2011) (which will be more closely examined in *Chapter 6*) and when broader indicators of child wellbeing are considered including material wellbeing, health and safety, family and peer relationships, subjective wellbeing, risk and behaviour (UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), 2007).

Helme and Lamb (2011, p.1) suggested that high performing schools in Indigenous contexts are also likely to adopt a school culture and leadership approach that embraces a shared vision and high expectations of success among students and staff. The authors assert that learning environments need to be responsive to individual needs, driven by continuous improvement. Equally importantly, Helme and Lamb (2011) argued that high performing schools for Indigenous students are likely to involve the Indigenous community in planning and educational provision.

Large gaps in student performance are likely to negatively impact on students' sense of confidence and heighten the risk of early school leaving. Studies point to a range of factors to reduce this risk. For instance, Purdie and Buckley (2010, p.13) cited a number of programs to improve Indigenous retention in schools including programs which feature the following key

ingredients: tutors to assist with homework, study habits, and goal setting; an individual education plan; a mentor to review their (student) school progress and general wellbeing; regular updates on academic performance; educational excursions to develop confidence and skills; a safe and supportive environment to study after school, equipped with computers and educational resources; and career guidance.

Pulling the threads of the literature together

This literature review has traversed widely disparate fields, from literature on CSR, to the discourse about 'history wars' in Australia, to international debates about standardised school testing, and domestic debates about equitable schools funding. When these seemingly unconnected threads are drawn together, they serve to highlight the complexity within and between Indigenous–philanthropic–education sectors and interfaces. Philanthropists with an interest in First Nations education will appreciate that Indigenous education involves a range of complicating factors including history, race, poverty, politics and a quest on the part of First Nations communities for empowerment and social justice. The diverse threads within the literature also serve as a reminder that attempts to neatly compartmentalise government, business and philanthropic sectors are becoming increasingly blurred. To illustrate, Payton and Moody (2008) have identified (see Table 2) a number of defining features of these sectors. However, some of these conventional delineations between the sectors are becoming fuzzy. A prime example of these blurring of lines is corporations who are profit-driven may, for public relations reasons, pursue activity in the public good space.

Table 2: Defining features of the three sectors of society

Sectors	Means	Ends	Defining ideas
Government	Public actors	Public good	Power
Business	Private actors	Private good	Wealth
Philanthropy	Private actors	Public good	Morality

Source: Payton and Moody, 2008, p.49.

The literature points to a number of risks and opportunities on the Indigenous–education–philanthropic interface. It provides lessons from history – both good and bad – and contemporary cases about various philanthropic interventions and investments both in Australia and internationally. What this diverse cross section of literature and prior research highlights is that philanthropic and Indigenous education partners will need to search (through research and development) for greater clarity about the complex nature of the interface between education–philanthropy–Indigenous affairs. All facets of this inherent complexity will need to be taken into account if productive and sustainable relationships between education, philanthropy and Indigenous communities are to be positively forged into the future. This might require an approach that embraces and works with, as opposed to ignoring, complexity (as will be discussed in *Chapter 5*). Before this discussion of complexity science and emergence theory, the next chapter (*Chapter 4*) presents the fieldwork findings of this research. Much like the literature, the fieldwork explores and reveals a complex web of histories, geographies, races, biases, motivations, and rays of hope.

Chapter 4: Fieldwork

Introduction

As noted in the *Chapter 2* discussion of methodology, the main purpose of the fieldwork (through interviews and site visits) was to collect data to help answer the overarching research question of this study. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed not only for an exploration of sub-questions (see *Chapter 2*) but also allowed for an opportunity for interviewees to identify related topics and issues. This was particularly the case for Aboriginal interviewees. Many were keen to discuss their concerns about how their children and young people in their communities were faring and learning (or not). They were frank and much of the data from the interviews were confronting. Great care has to be taken when reading and interpreting this interview and ethnographic material. They derive from extensive interviews undertaken in a number of diverse geographic and Indigenous community locations in three Australian states: two large cities, a major regional centre, and two rural-remote towns – and therefore should not be used to stereotype or generalise the situation for all Indigenous young people across Australia. The author can reveal (without compromising individuals' identities) that one of interview sites was Melbourne, given the high number of philanthropic organisations operating in the city and given that Melbourne hosted two Strategic Dialogue Forums (which are discussed later in this chapter). It is noteworthy (owing to resource constraints) that communities in the Torres Strait were not visited as part of this research, but nonetheless Torres Strait Islander people living on the mainland in Australia were involved in several interviews.

Drawing upon the recursive research approach recommended by Heath and Street (2008), this chapter presents ethnographic data from observation and participation in the field. The data are organised in a number of ways. Firstly, they are used to provide an 'on the ground' snapshot of current philanthropic investments in Indigenous education. Secondly, the data are used to illustrate what communities and schools are saying in their own voices about the barriers and aspirations in Indigenous education. Thirdly, the data are used to provide insights into what schools and First Nations communities are saying about philanthropy and vice versa. The data also include reports from two strategic dialogue Forums (involving philanthropists, researchers, educators, and Indigenous leaders) on the topic of philanthropy and Indigenous education.

Forty-two interviews were undertaken with Indigenous people, while 20 interviews were conducted with non-Indigenous people who work closely with Indigenous students and their families on a daily basis. Interviews were undertaken with First Nations people who work in education, non-government organisations (NGOs), and service providers. Some were undertaken with principals, school nurses and support staff, including teachers and Indigenous members of Parents and Citizen Associations.

Whilst interviews were conducted with people working with Indigenous people in three education sectors: schools, TAFE (Technical and Further Education), and university, the majority were undertaken with Indigenous people directly involved with or as stakeholders in the schools' sector, since not all interview sites had a TAFE and most did not have a university presence. Several interviews were undertaken with Indigenous people who had established a relationship with the philanthropic sector, but the vast majority were conducted with First Nations people who did not currently work with philanthropists. Indeed, as many interviewees stated, they do not know what philanthropy was nor know how to access it.

Importantly, the interview sites and interviewees were selected to hear about what people involved in Indigenous education were experiencing in the field, as well as what they knew or believed about philanthropy and philanthropic interventions in Indigenous education. While a different story might have emerged had the interviews all been conducted in sites and with organisations involved in some way in philanthropic interventions, this strategy would have resulted in a very narrow and biased sample. Nevertheless, some sites included schools and communities with an established relationship with the philanthropic sector. This approach helped to capture the voice of experiences of First Nations education needs 'on the ground', at the same time as allowing a comparison of observations and perceptions between some communities with philanthropic relationships, and some without them. As a result, these field accounts are not representative of Indigenous philanthropic interventions in education across Australia. Instead, these accounts reflect the views expressed in the places visited.

Consistent with the University ethics approval, the names of the interviewees (in all cases) and communities (with the exception of Melbourne for reasons previously noted) have not been disclosed, given that, firstly, some of the communities involved are very small and, secondly, an ethical assurance was provided to all participants that the discussions were confidential. This undertaking not to identify individual participants was important as it allowed interviewees to voice their concerns and ideas without fear or favour from their respective

communities and/or agencies that they worked for and served. Pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of interviewees without compromising them telling their stories. For the same reason specific site locations, identities and other identifying information mentioned within interview transcripts have been edited out.

As noted in the methodological deliberations in *Chapter 2*, five criteria were applied to the selection of interview sites: geographical diversity (urban, regional, remote); presence or absence of philanthropic intervention; varying scale (small to large) of philanthropic intervention; nature of philanthropic investment or intervention models; and balancing the voices of supply (philanthropy) and demand (schools and communities).

Twenty interviews included representatives of philanthropic organisations – large and small. In most cases the interviews were with secretariat or executive support staff. Four of these interviews involved philanthropic trustees directly. In all cases, the interviewees from the grant-making sector were non-Indigenous people.

A snapshot of recent philanthropic investments in Indigenous education

It has not been the intention of this research project to provide a re-analysis of the small number of philanthropic ventures in Indigenous education and affairs. These are already documented, albeit in a relatively uncritical way in a number of non-academic, social sector and industry publications including: *Our Children, Our Future – Achieving Improved Primary and Secondary Education Outcomes for Indigenous Students: An Overview of Investment Opportunities and Approaches* by AMP Foundation, Effective Philanthropy, and Social Ventures Australia (Doyle & Hill, 2008); *Australian Indigenous Guide to Philanthropy* by the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (Smith, 2004); and *A Worthwhile Exchange: A Guide to Indigenous Philanthropy* (Christensen Fund *et al.,* 2010). In addition, a number of websites, principally those of Australian universities and the Aurora Project[19] (providing information about scholarship opportunities for First Nations students). It is highly noteworthy that during the period 2010–2017 there has been little by way of publications on the topic of Indigenous philanthropy. It is difficult to say with confidence what has caused this, but one interviewee to this study suggested that since the disbandment of the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund (and the publication of *A Worthwhile Exchange* by Christensen Fund *et al.,* 2010), there has been a lack of leadership in facilitating collection action among

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[19] http://auroraproject.com.au/, retrieved on 7 March 2014

large scale philanthropy. That said, it is also noteworthy that Woor-Dungin, a small NGO based in Melbourne, was commissioned by Philanthropy Australia in 2015 to act as a 'national moderator' for Indigenous issues. Woor-Dungin (2018) explained the role as follows:

> As National Moderator, Woor-Dungin submits to Philanthropy Australia reports and other media that we believe will help philanthropic organisations keep abreast of issues considered relevant to Aboriginal communities. In this way we help to build connections between philanthropy and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and directly support our respectful relationships initiative.

Notwithstanding the lack of publications over the past five years, Table 3 has been assembled to provide a snapshot of philanthropic investments in Indigenous education over the past two decades. The information that has been used to compile Table 3 is drawn from various websites, press releases and media reports, provided principally by the funding organisations. The author readily concedes that these are not the only philanthropic investments in Indigenous education, but rather are based on readily-available or published information. The snapshot also illustrates a diverse cross-section of types of philanthropic investment in Indigenous education such as scholarships, teacher development, science, and information technology.

Table 3: A snapshot of recent philanthropic investment in Australian Indigenous education

Projects	Overview & Type of Intervention	Geography	Funds in AUD
Bursaries Program sponsored by the Towards a Just Society Fund	Towards a Just Society Fund (TJSF) is a sub fund of the Australian Communities Foundation. TJSF sponsored bursaries for Indigenous students at three Melbourne based universities to help meet expenses associated with university studies.	Melbourne (Three Melbourne based universities)	$228,415
Stronger Smarter Indigenous Education and the National Centre for Indigenous Excellence by the Telstra Foundation	Sponsorship of the *Stronger Smarter* Indigenous Education Leadership Institute. This program provided training and support for school leaders from schools with high Indigenous student numbers to create change that will lead to improved outcomes for Indigenous children.	Brisbane based but Australia wide program	$2.4 million

	In July 2013, the Telstra Foundation announced a $5 million, 5-year partnership with the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence to help create digitally savvy Indigenous students, leaders and entrepreneurs.	Redfern based	$5 million
Various investments in Indigenous Education by the AMP Foundation	Various grants including to the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) and to the Graham (Polly) Farmer Foundation – pathways support to young Indigenous people to complete Year 12 and then enter university, TAFE, an apprenticeship, or employment; through a series of after-school educational support programs, students are provided with intensive and targeted study assistance.	AIME is Australia wide Farmer Foundation is Western Australia based	$100,000 to AIME $300,000 to Farmer Foundation
Higher Expectations Program sponsored by the Macquarie Group Foundation	Sponsorship of the Cape York Institute's Higher Expectations Program (HEP). HEP was established to encourage students in remote Indigenous communities to pursue tertiary education and by enabling Cape York students to attend select Queensland boarding schools and giving them a greater chance to qualify for tertiary study. In addition to funding tuition, the partnership enables HEP staff to work closely with families, communities and schools to support the students involved. The Foundation and Macquarie staff have also provided in-kind support through computers and mentoring.	Cape York in Queensland	$4 million
Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund (Now ceased*)	Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund Support for various Indigenous education programs such as: Indij Readers: which develops and publishes contemporary, Indigenous reading material for students learning to read and write; Clontarf Academy in Katherine: to keep young Aboriginal men in mainstream education until they complete Year 12; and	Australia wide	*The Aboriginal Fund ceased operations in 2011. It had previously provided $1.8 million per annum to innovative Indigenous projects

	Indigenous Australian Engineering Summer School: each January elected Indigenous high school students from all parts of Australia attend a weeklong school where they are exposed to the idea of engineering as a career option; and Tribal Warrior Association: a non-profit Aboriginal community organisation that runs training programs for Indigenous people leading to employment in the maritime industry.		
Change not Charity by the Reichstein Foundation	Community capacity building ($50,000 plus in kind) work with a major Aboriginal organisation in Mildura regional Victoria.	Mildura, regional Victoria	$50,000 plus in kind support
Myer Foundation	Some of the recent work supported by The Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund includes the People on Country project of CAEPR at ANU, the Clontarf Foundation's Football Academies in Alice Springs, and the Stronger Smarter program from the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute.	Australia wide	$50,000 to Stronger Smarter in 2011
The Aurora Project	The Aurora Project and the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law at Monash University working with the Charlie Perkins Trust for Children and Students and also the Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation on a number of education initiatives known collectively as The Aspiration Initiative. Current investments include international Indigenous scholarships; Indigenous scholarship guidebooks and website; and an academic enrichment program for Indigenous students.	Australia wide	*Precise financial figure not found*
Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre funded by Citigroup	Citigroup provided funds to the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre to support course provision, scholarships, travel and accommodation for Indigenous leaders to participate in learning programs that promote economic, &	Canberra based but Australia wide Centre	$424,000 in 2001

	social and cultural development and leadership.		
Australian Indigenous Education Foundation including sponsorship from BHP Billiton and the Australian Government	A program to provide boarding school opportunities for Indigenous young people.	Sydney based but Australia wide	$16.3 million from BHP Billiton $32 million from the Australian Government
Clontarf Foundation	Clontarf Academies are formed in partnership with local schools to engage young Aboriginal men in schooling by harnessing the passion they have for football and delivering a football-based education program	Western Australian based but programs extending to other States and the Northern Territory	$5 million from the WA Mining Royalties for Regions program $13 million from the Australian Government announced in the 2014 federal budget
CSIRO Indigenous STEM education project	A project to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement in STEM education and related employment opportunities	Australia wide coordinated by the CSIRO	$28.8 million in 2014 from BHP Billiton Foundation

Source: T. Dreise, doctoral research.

Since the commencement of this current study, two notable developments have occurred in Indigenous philanthropic education that are worth commenting on here. First, Rio Tinto disbanded its Aboriginal Fund in 2011. The Fund had previously provided grants to Indigenous communities outside Rio Tinto's mining footprint. The Fund, which operated for approximately 16 years, had an emphasis on cutting edge and innovative work to overcome Indigenous disadvantage. In disbanding this fund, the company stated that it wanted to move away from philanthropy towards directly supporting Aboriginal communities in the geographical areas in which it mined, especially in the area of employment.[20] Secondly, the

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[20] http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/news/rio-tinto-cans-indigenous-support-fund, accessed 4 February 2013

sheer scale of public investment from the Australian Government in two initiatives – namely the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation ($32 million from the Australian Government) and the Clontarf Football Academies ($13 million from the Australian Government) – opens up questions of competitive tendering and procurement, and equal opportunities for Indigenous community-controlled organisations. It also potentially exemplifies the point that some community advocates (especially those working in First Nations community-controlled organisations) make that philanthropy can be elitist, closed-network driven and hard to access.

A tale with two tails: What communities and schools are saying about the barriers and aspirations in Indigenous education

In this section, the locations (using pseudonyms) that were visited to undertake interviews will be introduced. Most interviews with community members, teachers, principals and education support staff commenced with the following question:

> How are the Indigenous young people going in this school (TAFE or university) and how are they going in the community in a broader sense?

The following statement from one interviewee neatly captures the essence of what was heard across all cities, regional centres and rural-remote towns visited during the fieldwork:

> 'Half of the kids are going OK, but the other half are going abysmally,' shared Peta, a school nurse from 'Redtown'.

In most interview sites, participants shared similar insights about some of the children who were faring well, while others were struggling. This is supported by national data including, for instance, an indication that only 34.6 per cent of Indigenous young people completed Year 12 in 2016 (Biddle & Markham, 2017). Many Indigenous young people were struggling under the weight of family and community dysfunction, as borne out in data – such as growing rates of child protection orders and juvenile justice detention – that are documented in more detail later in *Chapter 6*.

What was heard in the communities visited can be likened to 'a tale with two tails'. The same tale, across different communities, contexts, and settings. But within each community, the experiences and outcomes for children and young people could be vastly different. The first

tail has a sting. 'Too many kids are doing it too tough. They don't see any hope,' is how Rhonda described the situation for Aboriginal young people on the ground in 'Yellowtown'. The second tail is like any good tail – it provides a rudder, speed and balance. The fieldwork found schools and communities striving to make a positive difference for First Nations young people, and with growing success. These communities appeared to share a common feature: they provided 'wrap-around' services for young people, not just academically, but socially and culturally. They also actively pursued an agenda of community engagement, personalised learning, and quality teaching.

In each of the localities the following question was put to all interview participants (teachers, community workers, health personnel, Elders, parents and citizens):

> Think about a 13-year-old boy and think about a 13-year-old girl from this community. What will they be doing in five years' time?

Responses across communities were broadly similar. Most respondents were concerned by the relatively high frequency of contact of young people with the criminal justice system, unemployment, and teenage pregnancy. Of course there were many exceptions to these responses, which is backed up by national demographic data. Data indicate that the majority of Indigenous Australians do not consume alcohol, attend school regularly and participate in employment. However, interviewees in this study in general were concerned about the fortunes of 13-year-olds. Is philanthropy aware of them, and are they prepared to act? The following passages capture the stories and narratives that emerged from each of the communities visited, which may help answer these questions.

Setting the scene: Introducing the places visited

For reasons of confidentiality, the following pseudonyms are used for four of the communities visited: Silvertown, Bluetown, Redtown, and Yellowtown.

Silvertown

'Silvertown' is one of Australia's largest regional centres. With a population of approximately 60,000 people – projected to grow to 80,000 within 10 years – it boasts significant facilities and services including a growing retail sector, relatively well connected transportation routes, an array of recreational services, a robust agricultural sector, TAFE and university campuses,

and a solid manufacturing base (although as with the wider manufacturing sector in Australia there are concerns about its long term viability). The retail footprint within the city is expanding. It has a train line to a capital city three hours away, a cinema, a local newspaper and a regional airport. Silvertown is serviced by a regional television network and sport is popular both on television and within the community's weekly activities.

Driving around the city, its wealth is apparent. Restaurants are booming. The public parks in the central business district (CBD) are beautifully manicured and maintained. Large fountains shoot water upward to the sky almost as a monument to the prestige and optimism of the place. Tree lined inner city streets are adorned by heritage buildings and large stately homes. The long and enduring reach of colonial Australia dating back to Queen Victoria can be seen and sensed in its built environment.

There is another side to Silvertown. This side of town is more out of sight. It is the side of town where the small and run down homes are. White picket fences are nowhere to be found; rather properties are enclosed by basic wire fencing or no fencing at all. The public parks in this part of town, whilst functional and integrated with the natural environment, are devoid of civic opulence. On this side of town, one can sense stress.

Approximately one out of 10 Silvertown's residents are First Nations people; the majority being Aboriginal people with ties to the traditional owners of the region. Many of the local Aboriginal people with traditional ties to the local area speak Aboriginal English. Indigenous people who descend from other parts of the state/country and have moved into the city in more recent years, speak of feelings of ostracisation from traditional owners with strong ties to the area. Consistent with the wider Indigenous demographic of Australia, the Indigenous population of Silvertown is young and growing. Almost one in two Indigenous people are under the age of 25 years. The fertility rate among Indigenous young people is high. Teenage pregnancy was raised in several interviews undertaken in Silvertown.

Unlike in most other parts of regional Australia, Silvertown is a place with established Indigenous philanthropic activity. Over the past decade, philanthropic entities have invested significantly in Indigenous education, training, sport and employment. On the surface, Silvertown has a lot going for it, including for its Indigenous residents. And yet, its potential is not being fully realised for Aboriginal people. Indigenous unemployment remains a key social and economic issue in the city, despite strong population and economic growth. The interviews

identified serious concerns about the future opportunities and the present and future 'place' of First Nations people in Silvertown. Racism, disunity within the community, and social issues such as alcohol, drugs and violence were openly discussed as major impediments to First Nations progress. The following anecdote shared by an interviewee helps expose the underlying scourge of racism:

> Some families from Iraq have recently moved into the town. I heard one story where they went to the real estate to find a house to rent. They said to the agent, 'We don't want a house near where the Aborigines live.' Welcome to Australia.

Bluetown

In an economic sense, Bluetown's best days are arguably behind it. Once a robust hub for the region's agricultural area, the small and declining rural town is in many ways a microcosm of painful social costs of industry restructuring and economic decline of rural Australia. Whilst Bluetown still provides a thoroughfare for some of the largest movements of livestock in Australia, employment opportunities with the district's primary producers are mainly seasonal. Its town population is only 400 people, with almost half being First Nations people – with either traditional or historical ties. There were once burgeoning Indigenous social and cultural enterprises – supported by the former Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) – but these community enterprises are long gone. Most shops and offices are boarded up, and businesses are now limited to a roadhouse, a cafe, two clothing and homeware shops, a hotel/motel, a hotel, and a small grocery store. None of the businesses are operated by Aboriginal people. Major improvements to motor vehicle technology and safety over the past 30 years has meant that locals are more inclined to travel to larger regional centres for their goods and services as opposed to shopping locally.

The town is serviced by a small school providing classes from preschool to Year 10. Young people who wished to continue their secondary schooling beyond Year 10 were faced with a 'choice' between attending boarding school or travelling 200 kilometres a day to attend the region's closest public high school. For the vast majority of First Nations young people, the first 'choice' is not a 'real' one and most attend the local regional high school, while the majority of non-Indigenous young people (often children of farmers or 'cockies' as Aboriginal locals refer to them) attend boarding schools.

Raising Aboriginal children in Bluetown is very much a wider family affair. This has both positive and negative elements to it. On the positive side, it is consistent with Aboriginal culture and the role of the extended family in raising children. On the more concerning side, grandparents and aunties in particular were often called upon to help raise the children. This was due to some parents struggling with their parental role, as a result of financial hardship, substance misuse, or relationship and health issues. Having children shifted regularly between homes does not always make schooling easy. As one teacher, Maree, shared in one of our interviews, when speaking about children in her school: 'They don't even know where their schoolbag or uniform is, let alone their homework.'

Interviews exposed deep divisions within the town's school community. Two teachers would share with this research that upon appointment to the school, they were asked 'Are you on our side, or the coon's side?' The school Principal is an Aboriginal person who sought to promote Aboriginal culture within the school and faced ongoing criticism and harassment from a group of non-Indigenous parents. These parents charged that the principal was 'trying to turn it into a boong school.' An Aboriginal teacher within the school would share that she was 'too scared' to teach 'Sorry Day' for fear of parental backlash. Teachers interviewed indicated that a number of non-Indigenous parents were concerned about the inclusion of First Nations perspectives in the curriculum and within pedagogy. And yet, school data (such as NAPLAN) showed improvement in the school's performance outcomes. The chairperson of the local Parents and Citizens Association (an Aboriginal woman) said that 'the school has never been better'. The interviews revealed obvious tension within the school community, with its roots firmly grounded in racism.

Within the State's schooling system, the school is considered a 'rural-remote' school, which means that in a resourcing sense it does not receive the financial loadings available to 'remote' schools. This is in spite of school being some 700 kilometres away from the State's capital city and over 500 kilometres away from the closest regional city. The majority of Aboriginal children speak a form of Aboriginal English, meaning that a major challenge within the school is scaffolding learners to Standard Australian English.

Recreational opportunities in Bluetown include fishing, equine activities, a small public library and a local swimming pool. The town is a passionate football community but the town is too small to field teams in the regional competition. There is no local well-surfaced sports oval,

with the exception of the local school oval, which is closed for over 10 weeks in the year. For the rest of the year, football fields are dusty backyards.

One interviewee from Bluetown suggested that in terms of public facilities and political attention: 'We're literally out of mind, out of sight.' A number of community members and teachers interviewed expressed despair about a large 'drinking culture' (of alcohol) in Bluetown, among Aboriginal people and non-Indigenous people alike.

Redtown

Redtown was a place of two tales. In a 'mainstream' sense it was a robust, rural town with a growing retail sector and strong agricultural sector. The population had been reasonably stable for the best part of 30 years. A sense of optimism about the town's future was evident. Employment for non-Indigenous people was strong, less so for Aboriginal people.

People interviewed in the town – including teachers, social workers, Elders and parents – expressed grave concerns about Aboriginal young people in the town, including teenage pregnancy, unprotected and early age sex, drugs, alcohol, diminished parental responsibility, and a culture of low expectations. One interviewee shared the following anecdote that seemingly epitomised concern about the precarious social situation confronting young people in Redtown on a number of levels:

> A 19-year-old whitefella said to one of our [Aboriginal] young girls who was fourteen: 'If you suck me off, I'll give you smokes [cigarettes] and a six pack [of beer].' The next week, the whitefella's mother said to the young girl's mother, 'Keep your girl away from my boy'.

Like Bluetown, a culture of drinking was evident in Redtown. Drinking may be due to the fact that Redtown is a very hot place. It may be due to the sponsorship of local sporting teams by local hoteliers and of high profile football teams that are revered as God-like and invariably sponsored by major alcohol brands on television.

The roads in Redtown are mainly bitumen but the sides are dusty; trucks and 4-wheel-drives abound. Dust stirs often. A river runs through the town, but young people do not swim in it as much as they once did out of environmental and health concerns. First Nations young people play under the streetlights at night. They laugh, they run and they swear.

The town has reasonably good public services including a hospital, ambulance, medical centres, preschools, a public high school and two primary schools (one public, one Catholic). Most of the shops are tenanted and three banks service the town. Two major retail brands provide groceries to the district. Most First Nations children attend the local public school. Along with seasonal agricultural work, Aboriginal housing and health cooperatives are the largest employers of Aboriginal people. Workplace training opportunities for Aboriginal high school students are concentrated in these industries, in spite of interests expressed by young girls in retail and hairdressing. School based traineeship opportunities in the banking sector are offering much excitement about emerging opportunities for local Aboriginal young people, but tensions are expressed by some about these opportunities being taken up by young people whose families have only just identified as being of Aboriginal heritage. 'Johnny come latelies', is how one interviewee expressed it.

Aboriginal parents and community workers appear happy with the local public primary school. They speak highly of the school principal who pursues a vigorous approach to community engagement. They are less complementary of the local high school. They are concerned by a lack of curriculum choices that engage local First Nations young people. With no local TAFE, university or community college, there was no evidence of a culture or practice of lifelong or life-wide learning in Redtown. High school appeared to be the last train to learning and many Indigenous young people appeared to be disembarking early.

A lack of choice in schooling experiences, especially curriculum, was consistently raised by both teachers and Indigenous community members during the course of interviews. Tanya, an Indigenous youth worker, in Redtown expressed the following concerns:

> There's nothing here for the kids. You know, the ones that aren't academic. There's no TAFE and the principal isn't looking at other things like training in schools. And when it comes to work experience, some of the employers won't give our mob a go. One girl has wanted to do work experience in a hairdressing salon for ages but the local businesses always give it to other [non-Indigenous] girls.

Melinda, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an Indigenous community housing cooperative in Redtown, expressed concern about a vacuum in education on the importance of 'culture':

> They've [young people in the community] got no culture, no respect. When we grew up we knew who we were, where we came from. We listened to Elders. Too many now don't know their mob, their skin. We need the school to help grow cultural identity.

Teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections were of particular concern to parents and local Aboriginal community health personnel. The following statement from an Aboriginal community nurse captures a sense of concern about the future prospects of Aboriginal girls in the community:

> At the start of the year she [a 17-year-old Aboriginal girl] was on track to be a teacher. By the end of the year she was pregnant.

Based on the interviews, with Elders, community workers, and teachers in Redtown, every bright ray of optimism was matched with a storm cloud about the future prospects of First Nations young people in Redtown.

Yellowtown

Yellowtown could be described as a classic peri-urban area populated by tens of thousands of 'battlers'. It was approximately 20 kilometres from the CBD of one of Australia's capital cities. The Yellowtown district was a mix of industrial and residential, reflected in its busy roads with cars and trucks putting strain on the already stressed roads. The district's median age was seven years younger than the national average, with a median age of 30 years. The area was culturally diverse with approximately 50 per cent born in Australia, while the remainder comprised immigrants from Vietnam, Africa, India, New Zealand and the Pacific. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up about five per cent of the population. The vast majority of First Nations people had heritage ties to other parts of the State and country as opposed to being local traditional owners.

Housing stock included low cost private housing and a sizeable amount of public housing, including Aboriginal community controlled housing. Houses were generally small and modest, often overfilling with large extended families. Generally speaking, residents had to travel to other parts of the city to access recreational and cultural activities. The social and economic disadvantage and marginalisation of the suburb was not confined to Indigenous people but was part of a wider phenomenon. Single mothers, pensioners and people on disability allowances were common. Average weekly earnings were well below the national average.

Tension between ethnic youth minorities was prevalent; however, locals despaired about the disproportionate and heavy-handed media reporting given to these tensions. There was confidence within the local community that the local issues could be solved locally. The district was served by several government and non-government high schools and primary schools, public TAFE campuses, and the closest university campus was 10 kilometres away. Aspirational parents, with the financial means, were likely to put their young people on a train to attend private schools nearby or to attend the State's most elite public secondary school.

Despite being located within an urban setting; the majority of First Nations students spoke a dialectal form of Aboriginal English. This was due to the mobility of Aboriginal families with ties to reserves and former missions who had relocated from rural and remote areas to urban locations. Aboriginal English is common and fundamental to a sense of identity among families in the district.

Teachers and Indigenous parents interviewed worried about the social circumstances of many young people in the district (First Nations and non-Indigenous alike). They spoke of the high rates of early school leaving, juvenile justice, child protection interventions and the rise of heavier and more socially damaging drugs such as 'speed' and 'ice'. Yellowtown confirmed that Indigenous disadvantage was not confined to remote parts of Australia.

Another notable feature of Yellowtown is the force of its political advocacy. It has a number of high-profile Aboriginal community leaders residing in - or with strong attachments to - the area, including 'Terry' who lamented a lack of cultural frameworks in education offerings. Terry would forcibly advocate:

> Just over 200 years ago we ran this country. And now we've got no power. Our education, our governance, they're all white frameworks.

Who are you? Why and how are you different? What Indigenous communities and schools are saying about philanthropy

Interview participants in each of the locations above, from education, community services and Indigenous community sectors, were asked about their experiences of working with philanthropists. Semi-structured interviews revealed a diverse range of responses across four geographical sites. As previously noted, interview participants varied greatly in terms of their general knowledge of philanthropy and level of prior dealings with the philanthropic sector.

Some had extensive dealings and had forged robust partnerships with philanthropic actors over the course of a number of years. Others had had only 'light touch' dealings through one-off grants. Many others had no dealings at all. Interestingly, some had experiences with philanthropic initiatives, without necessarily internalising or referring to them as 'philanthropic'. To illustrate: one principal spoke of donations of playground equipment to their school from a local major hardware chain and in-kind medical assistance from health departments within universities. It is an important reminder that philanthropic endeavour involves more than the granting of money.

The interviews also revealed both positive and disappointing experiences working with philanthropy. There were those who believed that philanthropy offered welcome relief from a risk-adverse bureaucracy; some found cultural, philosophical, political or personal affinity with philanthropists; while others felt 'let down' by a false promise of philanthropy; and some others found philanthropic processes inflexible and difficult to work with. Many had not the slightest clue what philanthropy was, let alone how to access it. On the positive side, a number of interviewees said that they had formed friendships and close bonds with funders.

Out of the interviews four significant themes emerged: philanthropic processes and procedures; philanthropic footprints in Indigenous education; elitist relationships; and the nature of philanthropic investment. These themes are now discussed.

Philanthropic processes and procedures

A number of interview participants expressed concern about philanthropic administrative systems, especially with regard to grant application processes. For instance, Bill, who worked for an Indigenous education fund, felt that relationships with philanthropists were 'always on their terms' and were transactional and not relationship driven. Robert, the CEO of a First Nations education initiative in regional Australia, felt frustrated by the lack of philanthropic funding opportunities available over long terms. Two project managers involved in providing bursaries to Indigenous families with children in secondary schools in a major Australian city believe that philanthropic processes are too onerous. They felt that the amount of work required in accessing relatively small grants was not worth the effort. Similarly, Martha, a broker of dozens of relationships between schools and philanthropists, felt that schools too often struggle for time to put applications together as they are understandably focused on the delivery of teaching and the assessment of students. She also pointed out that in her experience the vast

majority of schools were simply not aware of the philanthropic sector's presence or potential opportunities.

Katrina, a project officer who worked with a foundation providing bursaries to Aboriginal families, expressed disappointment with trusts that did not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Katrina felt that Aboriginal people were 'emotionally exhausted' by trying to find funds for much needed services to young people. She expressed concerns with application forms with 'word count limits', which were difficult to meet given the complexity of Indigenous contexts. At the same time, Katrina spoke positively of one particular foundation that was 'a joy to work with', as it was prepared to invest over a three-year cycle and ensured that their application and reporting requirements were simple and user-friendly.

Val, an Aboriginal community leader who worked in the same foundation as Katrina, said that some philanthropic trusts were simply 'too tight, too constrained, too inflexible'. She suggested that there was a disconnect between the principles that philanthropists express on their websites and their application forms. 'They don't marry up,' Val said. 'The amount of money on offer isn't realistic', she added. 'Our communities are complex and require long-term relationships. We're interested in partnerships not constantly filling in forms.' Meanwhile, Sonia who worked in brokering relationships between philanthropy and Indigenous communities, felt that this sense of disconnect could be partly explained by the fact that a lot of people operating in the grant-giving sector had backgrounds in business and finance whilst those in the grant application sector had social work backgrounds. 'They're different cultures with different processes and expectations; this leads to a tension,' Sonia explained.

Toby, an Aboriginal project officer with a traineeship program in regional Australia, said he would like to see philanthropists rethink aspects of their relationship with First Nations Australia. His key messages were that philanthropy should 'go whole hearted', 'follow through', become a 'one stop shop', 'go the long haul', and that there should be 'no tick and flick' approaches to the relationship with Indigenous communities. The initiative he worked for drew heavily upon philanthropic grants. Whilst Toby was generally content with his philanthropic relationship, he nonetheless felt that improvements could be made. He particularly highlighted the need for long term funding models as the single most important improvement required.

Sam, who had experienced working with philanthropy across Australia, explained that his first 'pitch' to philanthropists was an 'investment roadmap to Indigenous engagement'. He did this in response to what he felt was a mismatch between Indigenous and philanthropic expectations. As Sam put it, 'So we took a journey together and built a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity [in the Indigenous space].'

Philanthropic footprints in Indigenous education

The scale of philanthropic investment in Indigenous education can be measured in a number of ways, including by geographical area, by education sector (early childhood, primary and secondary school, TAFE/adult education and university), and by initiative type (scholarships, bursaries, systems reform). Interviews with education and philanthropic bodies confirm a widespread perception that philanthropic activity (in a broader sense, not only in education) was more common in Victoria and Melbourne more specifically. A representative of a philanthropic advocacy body interviewed suggested that '80 per cent of philanthropic trusts and organisations are based in Victoria'. That said, as data in other parts of this thesis show, Indigenous philanthropic investment in monetary terms show sizeable investment in the Cape York-based boarding school initiative, the Western Australia-based Clontarf initiative, the Sydney-based Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, and the Brisbane-based Stronger Smarter program. In terms of the scale of investment by education sector, philanthropy appeared to be investing more heavily in secondary schooling boarding and university scholarships.

The vast majority of Indigenous people interviewed were frustrated by the lack of investment opportunities outside of these locations and categories. As an Aboriginal community leader stated, 'Most of our kids are in state schools. But most of the money goes to boarding schools.' Peta, an Aboriginal nurse in a rural town, suggested that, 'Most of our kids want to stay in their communities where their families and friends are. That's our way isn't it? Staying on country. Yes, boarding schools work for some of our kids, but only a few.'

The majority of community and education participants spoke of the need for funding opportunities to be locally based, community driven, and concerned with 'whole of child' initiatives, that is those that were geared toward holistic needs such as the academic, cultural, social, health, recreational, and economic needs of young people. Terry, a city-based Aboriginal community leader, felt that philanthropy needed to play a greater role in ensuring

that Indigenous young people were afforded opportunities to engage in Indigenous culture as part of their schooling. 'It's all a white framework at present', Terry argued.

Participants from the TAFE sector spoke of a complete absence of philanthropic opportunities. Similarly, interviewees from outside of Victoria were puzzled or frustrated by the lack of opportunities for locally based initiatives. A number of interviews in one community felt that TAFE institutions were being completely overlooked both in terms of political and philanthropic attention. A number of participants expressed concern about the amount of funds available in some parts of Australia, but not in other parts of the country with high needs. In sharing these concerns, participants were not arguing against funds going to other communities across Australia, but rather they were keen to highlight the need for equitable funding across the country. In other (metaphoric) words, people were not arguing for bigger slices of the cake, rather they were arguing for a bigger cake.

A number of interviewees from education, community services and Indigenous sectors felt disappointed by the lack of philanthropic donations from Australia's wealthy. Bill, who manages an Indigenous education fund, was highly critical of Australian large companies and wealthy Australians and their lack of giving. As Bill put it, 'Someone needs to write to *The Australian* and expose them. Even when some do donate, it looks good on paper but it's small bickies when it comes to these billion dollar empires.'

Val, an Aboriginal community leader, was aware of various published opportunities to help Indigenous organisations access funds in Victoria, but she was nonetheless concerned whether First Nations communities outside of Victoria would have been aware of them and the fact that the information in the guides was now dated.

Elitist relationships

The interview data confirmed that philanthropic organisations were generally networked within the sector, but these networks were typically closed to outsiders. Martha, who worked with schools in brokering relationships with philanthropists, felt that some schools (especially elite private schools) were in a better position than others by virtue of their strong alumni. Martha said, 'As they say, it's who you know.' While Sonia, a relationship broker, said, 'Philanthropy is inaccessible to the vast majority of Indigenous communities and organisations.' Sonia added, 'Even when there has been a relationship in the past and it hasn't worked out, they [philanthropists] feel once bitten twice shy.' Sonia suggested that current high profile,

philanthropic–Indigenous community relationships were 'elitist' and did not give sufficient attention to the 'long and hard grind' of community capacity building and leadership development. The vast majority of interviewees pointed to the need for greater philanthropic investment in Indigenous community capacity building – over the long term.

Interviewees in a number of communities visited felt that they were being completely overlooked by philanthropy. Some offered theories as to why this is the case. Some felt that it was very difficult for First Nations groups to gain the attention of philanthropy outside a number of high profile initiatives and leaders who enjoy high levels of exposure in the press. Gerri, an Aboriginal education researcher, was concerned that too much philanthropic activity in Indigenous education was 'celebrity based'. Meanwhile, a principal in one remote community felt that many of the issues confronted by their community were similar to issues in other parts of Australia that seemed to attract disproportionately high levels of philanthropic and public investment, but added that 'The only problem for us, is that we're not in the media'. Val, an Aboriginal community leader in an urban community, called on philanthropy to recognise and respect the diversity of Indigenous Australia. 'They think all the blacks live up north,' is how she expressed it.

A number of interview participants (on both philanthropic and community sides) pointed to ideological and philosophical misalignments between certain funders and fundees. As Anthony, a foundation funds manager, said, 'They [the board of the trustees he worked for] will fund [a 'conservative' Indigenous activist] but not [a 'radical' Indigenous activist].' Anthony pointed out that many philanthropic trustees were fiscally frugal and politically conservative. He suggested that trustees find appeal in initiatives whereby Indigenous people were 'pulling themselves up by their bootstraps'. He explained that risk, reputation and an alignment of shared political and ideological values were all important considerations in the deliberations of his board. 'Some of them are political,' Anthony said of his board. Meanwhile Harry, a project manager with a large corporate philanthropic unit, candidly explained, 'This business [corporation] is looking for good PR [public relations]. They want to find partners that make the business look good. Aboriginal leaders with high profiles are attractive to this business.' Sonia made a similar point that 'some [corporate philanthropists] just want their annual reports to look good.'

Gerri expressed concern that many First Nations organisations with good ideas were being overlooked by philanthropy. She felt that public and NGOs were too fixated on 'cookie cutter'

approaches to Indigenous education. She called for funders to recognise that Indigenous Australia is extremely diverse and not homogenous. Robert provided a very different account of his relationships with philanthropy. He had found the philanthropists he worked with to be highly supportive and flexible. He noted that he had found political and ideological affinity with a number of sponsoring organisations. Robert spoke of the need for Indigenous people to work and overcome a 'welfare mentality'. He was highly critical of what he described as a 'self-serving Aboriginal industry', implying that a number of philanthropic bodies shared this view. Like Val, a community leader, and Beth, an Aboriginal school teacher, Robert worried about a 'learned helplessness' in Indigenous communities. Chris, an Aboriginal Elder and highly respected public figure, suggested that First Nations communities and organisations need to 'get out there and show their wares to them [philanthropists]; there's good stuff happening in our communities and we need to go show them.'

Geoff, from an urban-based university, also found his relationship with a small philanthropic trust to be a highly productive and positive. 'They allowed us to be flexible. They weren't trying to centrally control things. It boils down to trust.' Likewise, Sam who had worked on a number of Indigenous education initiatives funded by philanthropy across Australia was impressed by relationships that provided 'space and flexibility and time to make changes as required'. Sam was keen to point out that while not all First Nations communities were the same, nor were all philanthropists. 'My favourite is [a small trust fund] who are on the ground, relational driven, listening, risk taking, and constantly signalling to government and other philanthropists about positive change and buy in.' Sam added that he was relieved when a philanthropist told him, 'We're not going into this with an eye to the exit sign.' Katrina, too, identified the qualities of her favourite funder as being the one that '…doesn't get bogged down in progress reporting, but trusted us and gave us a commitment to sponsor [our program] for at least three years.'

Nature of philanthropic investment

Philanthropic investment in boarding schools was a common and often contentious area of discussion among interview participants. The majority of interviewees from First Nations communities felt that boarding schools were attracting far too much public and philanthropic attention and resourcing. With the overwhelming majority of Indigenous students attending public schools in Australia, participants felt that much more attention needed to be given to improving education in places where Indigenous young people resided. They were particularly

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supportive of the idea of community capacity building, leadership and enterprise development initiatives that provided families and young people with local opportunities and allowed them to 'stay on country'. As Terri, an Aboriginal community worker in a small rural town, put it, 'We want to improve this place [town], not send our young kids away.' Lara, a principal in a regional city, believed that philanthropy needed to invest '…in families not just kids'.

Val, an Aboriginal community leader, felt that philanthropists needed to combine their efforts. 'There are too many piddly funds,' Val suggested. 'These one-off Indigenous grants are killing momentum and stability.' Val suggested that philanthropic organisations who were committed to improve Indigenous education needed to '…join forces and fund larger scale for impact'. She added that critical mass was important in making inroads in a couple of key areas. As Val put it, 'Don't spread [philanthropy] too thin.' A number of interview participants supported the idea of a 'hub' or brokerage model to join-up philanthropic effort and promote a 'community of practice' which facilitated coordinated engagement between Indigenous communities, education and philanthropy.

Gerri, an Aboriginal education researcher, felt that 'answers [to Indigenous education and social disadvantage] have to come from within community for it to work'. Gerri believed that philanthropy needed to 'empower locally…and acknowledge along the way, that sometimes it [change] is hard to measure'. She posed the following questions and challenges for philanthropy: 'Am I empowering community? Is my investment meeting the needs of community as identified by the community?'

Tom, who held a senior position in a state education department, felt that philanthropy needed to reach across to government and vice versa. He expressed concern that good ideas that had emanated out of the public education system were too often ignored by philanthropists who generally did not provide grants to government agencies. He elaborated, 'If it appears to be a government idea, then philanthropy won't fund it.' Tom identified appeal in the idea of philanthropy being prepared to shake-up the status quo in education. 'The inertia in education is enormous, it needs disruption,' Tom suggested.

Returning to Sam and his explanation of his favourite funders, 'They're intellectual, as well as relationship builders and they're people driven.' Sam felt that the majority of philanthropists, like government, had too 'many frameworks which stymie innovation, creativity and risk taking'. He expressed disappointment that too many philanthropists were conservative about

and completely adverse to risk taking. Robert had a different view to Sam. He felt that the philanthropists that he had worked with were prepared to take risks. Robert added that politicians in the main are also prepared to take risk. 'The problem are bureaucrats', he suggested.

Sam felt that philanthropy, whilst largely positive, nonetheless needed to be made more accountable to government as to whether or not they were generating and delivering 'public good'. He noted given the tax breaks that are available and the presence of philanthropic-public sector partnerships in Indigenous education, this is a reasonable ask. He feared for a heightened state of 'collusion' between government, philanthropy and certain NGOs. Sam pointed to public audit reports that had slammed the lack of progress in Indigenous affairs, of which the philanthropic sector had, in some quarters at least, been a part. He expressed concern about 'mercantile' educators who saw big dollars in boarding schools. Sam worried about a 'just send them off to church' attitude among some philanthropists who see Christian boarding schools as the 'great saviour' for Indigenous young people. He suggested that this attitude had been the default position within colonist thinking and that some of today's philanthropists had not graduated beyond it. Sam also worried that 'the place for Aboriginal people in the national consciousness is closing' and that effective philanthropy should and can make sure that it remains open for as long as it needs to.

Martha, who brokered relationships between schools and philanthropists, offered the following explanation as to why scholarships are seemingly the default position among philanthropists: 'Scholarships are tangible. Philanthropists can see them, understand them, and therefore support them', because in Martha's words, 'I can tell my Board'. Martha pointed out, however, that there was a 'contrast between the envisaged and lived experience in school–philanthropic relationships' by citing a flawed predisposition among philanthropy that assumes that they could simply innovate and then 'scale up'. She suggested that the problem is that philanthropy for many schools is a 'whole new word, a whole new world'. Her experiences told her that a 'good fit' between schools and philanthropists is the one that exercises 'reciprocity'. Martha pointed out that NGOs can and do play a critical 'middle role'. She explained that 'They [NGOs] are in a better position to understand and have more experience in working with philanthropists compared with schools.' Martha was concerned, however, that elite schools were in better positions than poorer schools because of their strong alumni. Martha highlighted

the need for programs to 'build up a joint knowledge about each other [schools and philanthropy]'.

The majority of interview participants from schools and Indigenous communities promoted culturally appropriate quality teaching and diversification in curriculum offerings as the most important areas for philanthropic reform in Indigenous education. A group of Aboriginal youth workers in a small regional town, for example, felt that the 'whole curriculum needs an overhaul at high school'. They felt that this could take the form of more cultural education programs and school based training opportunities. Terri, an Aboriginal community worker in the same town said, 'In this community, there is no career education or traineeships.' She felt that such programs needed to simultaneously build the cultural sensitivity of local employers. 'Some employers in this town are anti-Aboriginal,' she suggested. Terri was also highly critical of 'trials' whereby funds were not offered over the long haul. As John, from an Aboriginal land council, put it wryly and poetically, 'There are more pilots in this place than Qantas.'

The interviews with participants from the community and education sectors, in summary, highlighted the need for philanthropic agencies to develop relationships that were partnership driven (as opposed to submission driven), long term in nature, and responsive to community aspirations and holistic needs. In addition, the interviews highlighted concerns about the wellbeing of First Nations young people; not only their academic wellbeing but their wider social, emotional, physiological and social wellbeing. The fact that the TAFE and adult and community education (ACE) sectors are seemingly overlooked by the philanthropic community is also of concern given the significantly high number of First Nations young people and adults that attend TAFE or engage in ACE. How philanthropy can improve its outreach to parts of Australia that have not previously attracted philanthropic attention (but have demonstrable need) is an important consideration going forward.

It's hard: What philanthropists are saying about the challenges and opportunities in working within education and Indigenous affairs

Politics: Black and white

Based on the themes coming through the interview data, if two words were to sum up why philanthropists want to work in the Indigenous space they would be 'social justice'. If two words were to sum up why they may not remain in the space they would be 'black politics'. This neatly captures, albeit in a simplified way, the essence of what came out of interviews

with a diverse range of philanthropists. The interviews in general revealed that philanthropists were aware of the highly disadvantaged state of many of Australia's First Nations peoples. They were also aware of the nation's reconciliation agenda and were mindful of the historical injustices that Indigenous Australians had encountered. They appeared to have a basic understanding of the politics of Indigenous affairs. Among them, however, they had differing views as to how to perceive and tackle the 'problem'.

It is fair to say that at least two of the philanthropic trusts interviewed belonged to different sides (left and right) of the political fence. On the right, the CEO of one trust said his members were generally conservatives who find affinity in the notion that Aboriginal people need 'help' in taking greater responsibility for their destinies. On the left, a number of trustees felt that Australia was in a 'shameful' position with regard to First Nations people and that a 'great moral wrong' stood uncorrected.

In the middle stand people that could be described as 'philanthropic practitioners'. Generally speaking, these are people who have embraced the 'just cause' but have learnt through experience (sometimes bitter) how difficult the task is. They are the ones that are looking for answers, evidence, and strategies for improvement and 'what works'. One foundation, for example, understood that community capacity building was highly important to Indigenous advancement. They had invested and become involved first hand in a community capacity building measure in regional Australia. They were willing to assist a community's quest for self-development and community control. But their experiences had led them to question their own effectiveness. They cited issues such as poor governance, turnover of key personnel in the community, community-level politics, and lack of 'buy in' from government and other non-government actors.

The interview participants included three individuals directly involved with philanthropy: Arthur worked for a philanthropic group 'on the right' of the political spectrum; and Jane and Judith worked for a group 'on the left'. Jane and Judith were two trustees of a donor group small in size but big in moral clarity and courage. Jane and Judith were stirred by the plight of First Nations people. In Judith's case, she drew upon a comparison with the 'persecution of the Jews'. They pointed to the politics within First Nations communities whereby Judith believed there needed to be 'one voice'. Jane, on other hand, suggested that politics must be expected in 'developing communities'. Judith maintained, however, that 'disunity is death'. Both Judith

and Jane were highly 'family'-oriented in their advocacy. Judith suggested, 'If you teach a man, you teach a man. But if you teach a woman, you teach a family.'

Jane and Judith believed that philanthropists were looking for 'solutions' in the Indigenous space that were well researched and 'tangible'. They shared how they had developed their interest in Indigenous affairs. Jane explained that:

> My mother was an artist. She was always interested in Aboriginal people. My father always spoke highly of Aboriginal people when we lived in [remote Australia]. My husband and I joined the Aboriginal Progress Society. We saw disadvantage, but we also saw 'good stuff'.

Judith identified that her passion and obsession was '…social justice and human rights. I want for Aboriginal people what I wanted for my own [Jewish] people, freedom from persecution.' Judith went on to suggest that 'racism is the greatest evil'. Jane believed that post-colonial Australia had been a 'total disaster' for First Nations people.

Both women believed that 'social justice was the bottom line' in Australia. To that end, Jane approached her children one year and asked for their support in spending their inheritance, to allow her and her late husband to establish a trust for the benefit of First Nations people. Her children seized the opportunity and two of them were now involved in the running of the trust. Both Judith and Jane conceded that while there was 'good intention', they did not know where to start to make a difference in the early stages of the trust's formation. The trustees' deliberations and engagement eventually led to the establishment of a bursaries program for Indigenous university students, a program that they were proud of and which had delivered effective outcomes.

Returning to the 'right side', Arthur, the CEO of a philanthropic trust, said his trustees had financial and political backgrounds. He explained that his board was both financially prudent and politically conservative and that his board was looking to work with Aboriginal people who wished to take responsibility for themselves. He even observed that at least one of his board members had openly suggested that 'they [Indigenous people] already get their fair share'; seemingly referring to targeted and supplementary sums of public monies that are expended on Indigenous affairs.

Relationships versus expressions of interest

Arthur also shared what he describes as his trust's 'strategic approach' to Indigenous affairs engagement. 'We test it and leverage government because there's not enough money in philanthropy to go to scale,' Arthur explained. He talked of his board's preference for boarding school initiatives. He drew upon the words of an Aboriginal academic who believed that educational efforts should focus on Indigenous 'middle to top achievers'. Arthur recalled a story whereby Aboriginal parents of boarding school students 'laughed' at suggestions that boarding school opportunities were a new form of 'stolen generations'. He also suggested that long-term investment in the Indigenous space is ideal but not always possible because of the nature of philanthropic decision making processes and reporting requirements. He spoke of an 'impatience' in philanthropic spaces, claiming that, 'If we were more patient, we'd engage directly with communities.' Arthur suggested that 'relationships' take time and that time is not always easy to find. Arthur believed that philanthropists always say, 'We want to collaborate', but suggested that 'they rarely do'. He further explained that philanthropic trusts 'risk shift' to 'middle' organisations that do the daily work of finding Indigenous students boarding school or other educational/training placements.

Arthur defended certain aspects of philanthropic application processes, especially 'expressions of interest' [or EOIs] in funding, because in his view they might help unveil 'hidden gems' and new players. He also suggested that the sector needs 'new blood' to get bold action happening. Arthur affirmed a point made by others that philanthropy can be 'elitist'. He cited the 'who you know' factor especially through alumni, suggesting that there is an 'insider' culture in philanthropy.

Taking risks

The board that Jane and Judith sat on prided themselves on taking risks, making application and reporting processes easy, as well as fostering 'people to people' relationships. Jane added, 'There's no guarantee of total success. We get that.' They shared their experiences in working with peak Indigenous organisations by indicating that had been a source of frustration. They eventually changed strategy by engaging with Indigenous 'go-getters' on the ground. Jane explained, 'We want to empower people. Support good people. Invest in young people.' She suggested that money alone was not the answer, but that empowerment and mentoring were.

Ben, who worked for a philanthropic brokering service, had firsthand and research experience in working between philanthropic and Indigenous spaces. He shared knowledge of measures such as Philanthropy Australia's Indigenous Affinity Group and Woor-Dungin (a Melbourne-based organisation established to assist Aboriginal communities to work with philanthropy) as measures to overcome a problem whereby philanthropic groups were not receiving applications from Aboriginal communities. 'There was a sense within philanthropic circles that support was required to help the community apply for grants,' Ben explained.

Ben believed that philanthropy could 'help make the change' in Indigenous affairs and education. He believed that philanthropists wanted to see financial 'wastage reduced'. He suggested that more and more philanthropists see the value of investing in education opportunities for First Nations young people. 'The other [interventions and options] are just band aids,' Ben contended. He recognised the ideal of long-term investments in the Indigenous space, but pointed out that most philanthropic grant givers were making only short-term funding decisions, typically annually. Like other interviewees, Ben suggested that there was disconnection between donors and grant seekers. 'Donors generally have business backgrounds, and seekers have social service backgrounds,' he explained. Ben believed that donors wanted to fund 'tangible' things, for example 'a building to open'. He noted that Indigenous preferences for a 'yarn' might not meet donors' preferences for an 'elevator statement'. Ben shared experiences of some Indigenous groups wanting control and resources without having to be micro-managed by donors. He suggested that this was rarely possible because trusts are necessarily accountable to boards.

Jack was in a similar position to Ben, being responsible for working to a board of trustees who were keen to work with First Nations communities. He described his board as 'fabulous and prepared to take risk'. Jack suggested that his board were 'relaxed' about evaluations and data. However, he felt that his trust was disappointed by 'gate keepers' within the Indigenous community. He had found that facilitating relationships between public, philanthropic and Indigenous community agencies was difficult and 'frustrating'. Jack expressed concern about what he described as 'middle men' in the Indigenous space who failed to deliver on what they were there for or simply failed to return phone calls and attend key meetings. Jack worried that resources in the Indigenous affairs sectors tended to be controlled by certain families. He indicated that his board were keen to work with Indigenous groups 'directly on the ground' by providing 'stimulus money', 'backing winners', and working from a 'needs based' approach.

Jack indicated that his board had switched strategy away from nominating preconceived priorities to being responsive and opportunistic to First Nations people who emerged with good ideas and energy. Jack was also concerned about groups that had been established to broker relationships between First Nations communities and philanthropy, suggesting that these brokerage bodies needed to engage in conversations that were 'more strategic and less loquacious'.

Two worlds meeting

This section concludes with a story about Miles. Miles was on the board of a small group of donors. He was a non-Indigenous retiree with an extensive professional background in business and project management. Colleagues on the trust described him as highly logical, a very good thinker, and risk assessor. 'He is a systems man, great at business plan modelling and processes,' is how one colleague described him. Miles was a member of reconciliation groups and provided both financial and in kind support to Indigenous causes. The researcher had the pleasure of meeting and interviewing Miles on several occasions. Miles could be described as person with a warm heart, but not a bleeding one. In an interview, Miles described a project that he worked on with an Aboriginal small entrepreneur called 'Gary'. The donor group supplied financial and in kind support for Gary's business start-up idea. The project started well and a prototype was developed. This researcher saw the end product and quickly became impressed with it. While the researcher did not get the opportunity to interview Gary, the researcher nonetheless gained a sense from Miles that during the course of the project that 'two cultures' were held in suspended tension. Miles' background meant that he adopted a methodical step-by-step approach to the product's development, production and marketing, while Gary was concerned with the product itself including its cultural and creative integrity.

The reason for sharing Miles and Gary's story and its underlying cultural tensions is two-fold. First, 'culture' is more than black (Indigenous) versus white (non-Indigenous). Secondly, cultural pluralism involves the accommodation of differing ways of thinking. In the philanthropic space, it sometimes means tensions emerge between those with an eye to process and those with an eye to the 'prize', so to speak. Some funders simply want financial aid and for the donor (be it government or philanthropy) to simply 'get out of the way and let us get on with it'. Donors on occasions want to ensure that certain processes are followed to ensure that the product in question is optimised, be it in the form of product exposure, take up or sales.

This tension is perhaps more common in the form of in-kind donations than funds giving as it brings differing disciplines, world views and mindsets to bear.

The key themes or lessons stemming from this set of interviews once again underscore the need for relationally driven partnerships, which strive for greater 'clarity' about Indigenous education and First Nations people, coupled with a genuine appreciation of – and commitment to – broader Indigenous cultural, economic and social aspirations. Philanthropic organisations are being called upon by Indigenous leaders to invest in risk, innovation, and ventures that are ideally Indigenous developed and driven. This topic will be explored in further detail in *Chapter 7*, which presents a potential framework for future partnerships.

Doing good: A summary of two strategic dialogue Forums on philanthropy and Indigenous education

As noted in *Chapter 2* on methodology, two Forums were held as part of this research project. The Forums were entitled 'Doing Good' and 'Doing Good II'. The Forums were anticipated in the original methodological design proposal that was submitted to, and was eventually supported by, the ARC. The purpose of the Forums was to bring together experts from philanthropic, education and Indigenous community sectors to engage in dialogue about what was happening in Indigenous education (including initiatives sponsored by philanthropic organisations), what works in Indigenous education, and what needs to happen for more effective philanthropic investment in Indigenous education in the future. The following section provides an overview of discussions emanating from the two strategic dialogue Forums.

First Forum

On 26 October 2011, approximately 50 people from Indigenous, philanthropic, public and education communities met at the Melbourne Business School to consider the question of how philanthropic bodies might best invest and 'intervene' in Indigenous education. The purpose of the Forum was to gain information and insights from stakeholders in advancing the overarching research question for this study.

Forum participants were provided with a pre-Forum Discussion Paper and were invited to provide written feedback post-Forum. The first Forum commenced with background context followed by discussions involving an expert panel comprising leaders from education,

philanthropic and First Nations communities. Following the panel session, four small groups were formed to explore both ideas and issues relating to philanthropy in Indigenous education.

A rich array of views were offered across the Forum, including on what it would take to improve Indigenous education – with some arguing that definitions of 'success' in Indigenous education were critically important and that larger social barriers had to be removed in order to unlock the rewards and potential of quality education. Furthermore, the Forum suggested a number of ways forward including investing in research and evaluation, avenues for joint effort (such as a 'hub' or community of practice), and a recognition that it 'takes a village' to raise a child.

A variety of views

Not surprisingly given the diversity of backgrounds among participants, the panel's insights, issues, tensions, perspectives and ideas on the topic of philanthropy and Indigenous education varied significantly. Nonetheless, a number of key themes, tensions, and principles emerged. One participant, a professor, argued that learning needed to be seen as more than 'institutionalised education'. 'It [learning] is lifelong and much of it happens informally, and yet funding favours formal learning,' the professor argued. He went on to suggest that unlike education in the Nordic countries, a strong lifelong learning culture and policy is yet to emerge even in mainstream Australia. Another panel member, also a professor, argued that quality teaching was fundamental to improving outcomes for all learners, including First Nations learners. 'There is an urgent need to focus on defining and delivering "success" in Indigenous education,' the professor argued. A number of Forum participants expressed concern about a 'deficit driven' discourse in Indigenous education.

An Aboriginal community leader and educator on the panel argued that 'culture' matters and that education frameworks need to better accommodate Aboriginal cultural diversity and preferences. The panel session also exposed pervading tensions between intercultural ('black and white') frameworks and between risk/innovation and outcome accountability that require greater resolution. One panel member felt that more work needed to be done in defining 'What it means to grow up Indigenous'.

It takes a village

Both the panel session and the small groups identified that learning and wellbeing among all people (including children) are iteratively bound up, which is particularly salient for First Nations communities that are suffering from poor health, housing, and employment prospects. One participant felt it vitally important to recognise and properly resource the significant role of the public education system, which serves the vast majority of Indigenous Australian school students. Participants felt that there was a greater role for philanthropic sector to find its leverage points within the public schooling landscape.

The critical importance of involving families and communities in education was a recurring theme. One participant noted that it takes villages to raise children. Without community buy-in, participants cautioned that Indigenous education was unlikely to improve. One participant felt that 'expectations can shape or shadow aspirations', meaning that sending signals of 'high expectations' was of paramount importance. The need for steering philanthropic effort to be grassroots-initiated, collaborative, contextual, and long-term footing was also highlighted.

Self-determining and empowered communities

One small group identified a number of principles, protocols, opportunities and risks in any philanthropic–Indigenous education relationship. Principles identified include the preference for Indigenous-led initiatives that support self-determination and respond to Indigenous notions of 'success'. One group felt that 'grass roots is the way to go' and 'one size does not fit all', while another group found that 'relationally-driven approaches are important and they take time'. They felt that relationships – and conversations within them – had to be open, honest and respectful. Participants felt that long-term, intergenerational planning and action is required. Another small group placed a premium on 'innovation'. They argued that philanthropists should be prepared to take risks in order to bring positive change, especially in areas whereby government 'can't or won't' disrupt.

Joined-up action

With regard to cooperation, participants reasoned that cross-sectoral (government, community, philanthropic) and joined-up approaches were ideal. This is particularly important given that any enduring or large-scale impact will require collaboration over the long haul. To this end, one group suggested that relationships had to strive for sustainability and not just focus on

short-term 'wins'. Governments and philanthropic bodies should work with communities to co-produce the outcomes which local communities aspire to. 'Take a holistic approach,' one group stated. While another group felt that philanthropic organisations had to 'truly partner with community, not just fund them.' One way in which the philanthropic sector could do this is by supporting Indigenous social entrepreneurs by building relationships that go 'beyond pilot projects'. Conversely, one participant argued that since philanthropy cannot fund long-term solutions governments and businesses are important in 'going to scale'. The participant added, 'They [philanthropic organisations] are rarely coordinated.'

An evaluation culture

With regard to performance measurement and evaluation, participants posited that evaluation needed to be robust but manageable (that is, not onerous) particularly when working with small non-government organisations. One group felt that philanthropists needed to 'adopt a different risk profile'. Participants stated that risks are inherent when attempting to scale-up initiatives; that is there needs to be respect for local contexts, which means that transferability to other communities can be problematic. One group noted that 'local action needs to be supported by national frameworks', not the other way around.

On the topic of research, participants argued that successful pilot/local projects need to be documented and shared and 'by finding interesting spaces for effective application'. One group argued that not enough time is spent on the nexus (or coordination hub) between Indigenous education and philanthropic groups. The group contended that unless philanthropy builds a space for collaboration, then change would not happen. They further suggested that philanthropy needs to interrogate its own models, by adopting a longer-term view over 30, 50, or 100 years. Equally, the group shared that the education sector also has to take a long-term view.

Participant evaluation of the first Forum identified great value in networking, learning and listening. A number of participants expressed an eagerness to go further and deeper at the second Forum by exploring the relationship at a level of practice not just principle. Feedback included the idea that the second Forum stimulated 'evidence', including who's doing what and why and how are they successful. Others called upon the development of a 'framework' for philanthropic investment in Indigenous education, including the identification of points for

philanthropic investment and intervention in Indigenous education. For instance, one participant was keen to explore how philanthropic effort:

> …innovates away from expectations moulded by centralised mainstream education norms and standards without risking marginalisation of Indigenous students' futures from that mainstream, but rather helps build their confidence in how to be successful Aboriginal people in a competitive, globalised, 21st-century Australia.

Investing in a hub

As earlier noted, a number of participants expressed interest in considering the notion of an 'ideas hub' to inform and guide philanthropic relationships with Indigenous education. They felt that this 'would be valuable to kick-start other comments and set the scene for follow-up activity.' One of the groups identified the need to spend time and invest in a 'nexus'. They flagged the idea of a 'business case', which looked at longer-range processes and 'infrastructure' to support First Nations education and philanthropic relationships. Further, the group highlighted the need for funded work that advances partnership development and administrative/project development support. This same group stated that 'large scale impact needs collaboration'. To this end, another participant suggested that a strategy that focused on wider philanthropic sector 'buy in' was critical. While another commented:

> I would have liked to come away [from the first Forum] knowing more about what, if any, philanthropic initiatives in Indigenous education are showing promising results, and why, and an understanding of how one might better resolve the tensions practically between cultural ('black and white') frameworks and between risk/innovation and outcome accountability.

Further participant feedback from the first Forum included the following point:

> The small group discussions seemed to go down a general pathway of how philanthropists should generically engage with Indigenous community and their projects. While useful it didn't go that extra step on what is specific about education. Yet the Discussion Paper did raise some of these interesting questions around what to fund and then also questions of how to evaluate progress, however we didn't discuss these topics in any depth. It would be very interesting to discuss what is a good model to look at change, what are the range of specific interventions for educational change,

what empirical support do they have, how can they be designed to effect system change and where does a philanthropist get the most leverage. The next question would be – 'what are the existing good demonstration projects in this area and should we start a collaboration of some sort?'

Similarly, one of the small groups posed the following questions:

How do we gather the results of successful pilot/local projects? How can these be 'scaled' up when community focus is critical? We have learned from practice we can identify interesting spaces for effective application...(we) need to look to other places – best practice!

Summary of first Forum

The first Forum provided an initial meeting point for stakeholders from a broad cross-section of Indigenous, education and philanthropic sectors. Their disparate but critical views, preferences, and summaries have helped inform this thesis. Many of the participants were representing their organisations and were therefore not necessarily in a position to commit to certain courses of action on the day. That said, a number of key principles and themes emerged during the course of the dialogue. Principally, the participants were in the main interested in engaging in ongoing discourse, particularly via conversations about how to gather information about pinpointing strategic investments in Indigenous education and an enduring point of engagement between philanthropic, education and Indigenous community stakeholders. Some participants appeared to prefer a future framework which focused on immediate replication of best practice models that can be taken immediately to scale, while others seemed interested in cultivating the fertile ground of long term relationships and discourse between Indigenous, philanthropic, and education sectors in an environment that, they argued, was fundamentally complex. These multiple perspectives, between taking 'best practice' to scale, as opposed to laying strong foundations for working in complexity will be further explored in *Chapter 5*. Before that however, the following section captures the key discourse from the second Forum that has also informed this thesis.

Second Forum

On 5 March 2013, over 50 representatives from philanthropy, education and Indigenous communities gathered at the Melbourne Business School to take part in *Doing Good II,* the

second Strategic Dialogue on Philanthropy and Indigenous Education. The forum was independently facilitated by members of ACER. Participants were asked to consider the following guiding questions both in the whole group format and via small working groups. Participants were advised that the first question was compulsory, while the small groups could decide whether to address all or some of the final four questions depending on time and levels of interest within the group. The five questions presented to the forum were:

1. We all know that 'collaboration' is vital in both improving outcomes for Aboriginal communities and bolstering the work of philanthropists. And yet collaboration can be elusive. What are your suggestions in terms of what needs to happen next in this space? For example, the formation of a 'Community of Practice' or a 'Strategic Hub'?

2. When it comes to scale, the philanthropic dollar in education is akin to a 'drop in the ocean'? How does philanthropy make that drop ripple as far as it can?

3. There have been calls for philanthropists to be more 'disruptive'? What can the philanthropic sector do to bring about greater disruption and 'break the chain' of repeated failure in Indigenous education systems and outcomes?

4. Are current measures of 'success' in Indigenous education hitting the right marks? In other words, is the challenge greater than achieving 'parity'?

5. In lifting education standards, governments invariably invest in activities within the school gates – curriculum, teachers, facilities, equipment. Does Australia need to invest more in 'outside the school gates' to improve Indigenous education outcomes?

Participants were also asked to participate in both whole group and small group dialogue to begin to map out a future framework for Indigenous community–philanthropic engagement based on the preliminary fieldwork results, their own experiences and preferences, literature on the topic as presented in a discussion paper, and dialogue with each other. The small groups were composed in a way to ensure that each of the sectors (philanthropy, Indigenous and education sectors) were equally represented. The resultant themes emanating from the dialogue are categorised around four topics: firstly, around deep-rooted context: background, motivations, need, opportunities; secondly, around the key ingredients of collaboration and productive relationships; thirdly, around potential future forms such as strategic hubs and communities of practice; and finally, around 'positive disruption' outside and inside the school

gate. Before these key themes are discussed in detail, it is important to outline the preliminary fieldwork findings that were presented to the whole forum before it broke into small groups. That is, the researcher shared with the forum the early findings from research across a number of urban, regional and remote communities. These preliminary fieldwork findings helped frame the resultant dialogue between philanthropic, First Nations and education stakeholders involved in the second forum.

Forum participants were advised of the fieldwork to date (involving a cross-section of Indigenous, philanthropic and education communities), the nature of sites visited and the key themes stemming from semi-structured interviews. The following provides a summary of the findings both as they related to 'Indigenous education and community voices' and 'philanthropic voices'.

Indigenous education and community voices from the fieldwork

Indigenous interviewees' experiences with philanthropy ranged from high levels of involvement to none at all. In terms of the latter, their questions to philanthropy could be pinpointed as 'Who are you? and, 'Where are you?' Participants in a number of communities were unaware of 'philanthropy', its meaning, its role and the potential opportunities that might emerge from such activity. Once the nature of philanthropy was understood, interview participants felt that philanthropy could provide a welcome relief from their frustrations in dealing with government. They called upon philanthropy to stay true to being a point of difference to government.

In the communities that *were* aware of philanthropy, a number of interviewees were disappointed by the 'celebrity' nature of philanthropic investment in Indigenous education. Several said that unless you had a high profile or opinion piece in *The Australian* and other newspapers, then you were most likely to get overlooked. A number of the participants advocated the importance of philanthropists focusing on whole of community, family-based and 'whole of child' intervention models, not just academic models.

Participants across all interview sites were extremely concerned about how First Nations young people were faring across urban, rural and remote settings. They were also concerned not only with young people's academic wellbeing but also their wider social wellbeing. In addition, a number of participants were concerned about the wellbeing of Indigenous teachers and educators working in school, VET and university sectors. Some participants shared stories of

racism in the schools and communities in which they worked and lived. Of most concern to participants was the lack of imaginative curriculum offerings to address the issue of early school leaving among Indigenous young people. They spoke of the need for increased opportunities in cultural education, vocational learning and 'agency'-based learning to overcome local challenges.

Participants across all sites articulated a range of principles that might ideally underpin future relationships, including long-term relationships, reciprocity, common ground, realistic expectations, accessibility and equal opportunity, deep listening, and risk taking.

Philanthropic voices from the fieldwork

Interview participants from the philanthropic sector were from diverse backgrounds (in terms of organisational type, size and nature) and expectantly expressed diverse views. They all agreed that working in the Indigenous space was often 'hard' – politically, relationally, and in terms of satisfying mutual expectations. They expressed concerns about poor governance, political in-fighting and the limitations of philanthropy without strong community leadership.

A number of participants felt that big philanthropic and corporate trusts were fundamentally 'conservative' in nature. Conversely, a number of participants from smaller trusts showed strong signs of valuing personal relationships and local level action.

Interview participants held divergent views on 'how' to best tackle disadvantage in First Nations communities. For some, the simplest and most effective thing to do was help send Indigenous young people to boarding schools. For others, place-based action was seen as important in meeting the demands of Indigenous communities to develop their communities socially and economically. Philanthropists interviewed were mindful of needing to improve relationships with Indigenous communities. They generally expressed the view that a 'mechanism' (meeting point, hub, practice community) was required to better broker relationships into the future. A number were keen to see 'new blood' in the sector who were in a position to provide innovative and creative ways to go about future work, based on research and evidence. To a person, they were seeking a sharper picture of 'what works' and 'what's best'.

After the researcher presented these preliminary fieldwork findings (above) to the second Forum, a number of key themes emerged from the resultant discourse. The first was the

importance of understanding deep-rooted context. Participants in the second Forum agreed that 'context' was vitally important. Context includes place, Australia's history, the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia, the role and limitations of philanthropy, past relationships between philanthropic and Indigenous groups, and the purpose of the current research. Participants also felt that rather than going straight to the process of collaboration between philanthropy and community, it was important to firstly map the 'players' in this area: philanthropy, community and government. One small group noted that there was 'distinctive space' within the philanthropic landscape that is about forging improved relationships with First Nations groups. This space was seen to have its own distinct and important language, processes and protocols. The group suggested that the first protocol is time related. They noted, 'The time required can be extreme.' They further highlighted the need for patience, including valuing the reciprocal nature of relationships whereby each party was guiding the other. That said, some of the group challenged the notion that *everything* is complex in this space by positing that intersections between philanthropy and Indigenous education are knowable and that one did not need to start from scratch. 'Complexity can scare people off. There are simple things that can be done,' the group argued, without elaborating upon what those 'simple things' might be.

Leadership the key

Another group placed an emphasis on 'leadership' as opposed to innovation. They argued that innovation was 'just the rampant copying of good ideas'. While another group identified the 'fear' of working with First Nations communities, they thought that rather than looking at fear through an historical lens, philanthropy had an opportunity to build a new lens. They also felt that 'bridges' needed to be built between Indigenous homes and education providers.

Adding further to context, one group argued that philanthropy could be dangerously self-promoting. They suggested that quality philanthropy was responsive and proactive as opposed to being 'PR [public relations] driven'. Governments wanted to know and promote 'what works', not what *isn't* working. One group suggested that philanthropy could put money toward research to find out 'what works'.

Another group suggested that the 'dead hand' of bureaucracy had to be kept out of initiatives concerned with innovation and disruption. 'They just want to make the minister or department look good and ignore appropriate design, delivery and timing', the group wrote. The final group

noted that that it was important to differentiate between philanthropic environments of collaboration and competition. They concluded that some players are naturally collaborative while others are competitive in nature.

Education is a social instrument

In terms of 'educational equity', all groups believed that the quest of building parity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students was 'non-negotiable', notwithstanding that other broader measures of 'success' were important. They also noted that the 'easy bit' in the 'Closing the Gap' framework was to identify gaps and set targets; the 'hard bit' was how to get there.

One participant offered the following noteworthy picture of 'context':

> Education is a social instrument which takes place in a local environment, and if that local environment suffers under multiple factors of educational/social disadvantage, then it cannot prevail in any meaningful sense.

The participant posited that 'hard decisions, lots of listening, lots of collaboration, multidisciplinary approaches, multi-agency involvement, and don't take on the impossible but name it for what it is' were all-important contextual considerations. The participant added, 'Educational success is a personal thing. It means different things to different people. Differing measures of success (e.g. individual versus communal).'

Understanding philanthropy

Another group suggested that it was important to understand the motivations of corporate involvement in philanthropy, including tax incentives and jobs growth in their industries. They noted that decision makers on boards were typically conservative. They noted that politics in Indigenous affairs tends to focus on the 'remotes' and overlook 'urbans'.

Forum participants felt that philanthropy needs to engage in informed and ongoing discussion about 'what's needed, who needs it, best delivery method and just as importantly, knowing what not to touch'. They suggested that philanthropy all too often waits for projects to be generated and then responds, rather than proactively meeting and engaging with First Nations communities. 'If you just ask for projects that is all that you get,' wrote one group. The group believed that it was essential that philanthropists talk to the community. They explained that

'…people can be a physical space (place) or a group of people (organisations).' They also suggested that philanthropic involvement could be at strategic points of a project or product's development as opposed to involvement throughout the entire project.

One group argued that 'collaboration' was an overused word in education, and that it was a difficult thing to do as it required human resources, time and financial resources. They added, however that '…when it is done properly, it is great.' They suggested that highly effective collaboration requires deep listening among partners.

Another group thought that philanthropy needed to be more responsive to community, with 'no strings attached'. The group conceived that collaboration was a process not necessarily defined by 'outcomes' or 'measures', but rather relationships. They suggested that philanthropists were looking to put their resources into 'trusted processes'. They said that collaboration was an 'important building block but it won't (by itself) change things'. They also warned that some aspects of the Indigenous space were 'gated' by 'middle players' such as Indigenous peak bodies. Another group felt that collaboration needed to be 'democratic', whereby government had a stake but not necessarily as a major funder but as a supporting facilitator.

Ways to improve and strengthen relationships

Participants also advised that effective collaboration required getting to know people first, that is, relationship building. They reasoned that 'cold calling' does not work. They believed that 'genuine relationships' meant '…getting out from behind your desk' by taking the time to listen and looking 'outside the box'. They cautioned against entering relationships with 'preconceptions'. One group felt that it was important for philanthropists to help empower First Nations communities and enable 'genuine self-determination'.

Shared values and principles for working were highlighted by participants. One group called for 'minimum documentation' as reporting and measuring can sometimes bog down collaboration and outcomes. They argued that action should be 'grassroots up' not 'top down'.

Potential future Forums: strategic hub and community of practice

A key 'take out' message from the second strategic dialogue forum was that a space or place for collaborative planning, research, and implementation was worthy of further and critical examination. Such a space/place might offer a 'meeting point' for shared information, evidence

and knowledge, and potentially for joint investment at scale and geared for impact. To that end, the participants in the second Forum envisaged a range of potential 'structures' to enable and realise such collaboration, including the idea of a 'strategic hub' or 'community of practice'.

A range of views about a potential 'meeting point' were canvassed by participants and small working groups. One group noted that the two 'Doing Good' Forums had provided a basis for ongoing collaboration and dialogue between Indigenous, philanthropic and education stakeholders. They suggested that the Forums provided the seeds for a future 'community of practice', but recognised that funds were required to sustain such Forums and communities of practice. They felt that deep listening had to cut both ways (Indigenous and philanthropic) to ensure healthy collaboration. They added, 'It's important to be clear about *why* we need to collaborate and various reasons exist, to achieve the ends and (to be) clear about *who* to collaborate with.'

Forum participants suggested that it would be useful to try to conceptualise a 'strategic hub' including its purpose and its potential participants. In terms of what role such a hub might play, one group recommended that it adopt a mentoring role whereby people were learning from experience. It (the hub) could be a space for networking and collaboration. They felt that the first stage of developing ideas requires support – 'an incubation stage is very important'. The hub could support this 'incubation'. They also envisaged that a hub could support community groups develop their work given that education and philanthropists were in a position to 'fund their own work'. One participant argued it was important, for the 'Indigenous community to come to the table empowered'.

Participants felt it was important to first define the 'hub' space before creating it. As one participant put it, 'the demand side is articulating a need but who's engaged on the supply side?' That said, one group foresaw that a hub could potentially 'help make the connections between philanthropists and local people based on a collaborative model.' Another group posited the importance of 'cultural brokers who can walk between the two worlds (such as navigating local community politics and someone who understands the reality).' They felt a space was required for informal (talking and listening) initially, 'with NO speed dating'. They also suggested it was important to 'grow' the community of practice by encouraging more philanthropic agencies to enter the space. They added that 'social media and crowd-cloud sourcing' was a good way to go. If a hub or community of practice were formed, participants

felt it was important for it to be 'non-hierarchical, coming together, talking, trust, doing, connection, (with) resources'.

In terms of an operating model for a hub, participants recommended that 'the hub idea would work in a way whereby information comes into the hub and strategies are generated'. They added, 'We need both – bringing Aboriginal people and teachers together for example (and) generating ideas that feed in to the hub'. The group suggested that 'the ideas and projects will be constructed in such a way that they are meaningful to the collaborators; i.e. collaboration for a purpose, having meaningful ongoing relationships.'

Forum participants noted that any future design work needed to have the full spectrum of players accommodated including philanthropy, education, First Nations communities and government. They further felt it was important to have protocols to overcome any possible domination by one local community. One group felt it was important for a hub to operate in a way as to 'see past' organisations that are too strongly based on family ties to the exclusion of the larger First Nations community. They felt it was important for a hub to provide 'information to providers about who is doing what, where and when, and supported by whom'. The hub would be in a position to advise on likely funding sources and the best approaches. The group posed two questions that they suggested might be considered in devising any hub: firstly, 'Who has done it before and who can I talk to?' and secondly, 'Who else is going to have a crack at this that I might be able to talk to?'

Participants also highlighted the importance of getting big-scale philanthropic (corporate) players on board so as to 'shift their thinking and practice from large exclusive projects to safeguarding and engaging in collaboration'. They felt that too many large philanthropic grants were going to 'big sexy projects' that preclude 'collaboration'. They were concerned that too many corporate philanthropy models were 'hierarchical'. One group noted that existing models (such as Philanthropy Australia's Indigenous Affinity Group) comprised employees and not decision makers, which made 'on the spot' commitments almost impossible.

The idea of alternative learning programs as being important for some Indigenous learners was highlighted by participants. They discussed the model in Healesville, Victoria by highlighting the need for 'safe places', where attitudes to schooling as 'handed down to them by parents' could be addressed. Another group spoke of the need to build evidence, document outcomes,

and track participant progress in and outside school. One participant highlighted that not all learning happens in the classroom, as 'it's not the Aboriginal way'.

Participants suggested that one 'can't divorce between outside and inside school gates'. They expressed interest in more holistic models for child development such as the 'Connecting Communities' project in NSW. One participant felt that hard work in the school was 'not enough in highly disadvantage communities'. Another felt that building capacity for people meant 'getting and staying well – mentally, physically, emotionally'. Another participant spoke of 'systems' reform as opposed to achievements on the back of 'charismatic' reformers. They offered the following written thoughts:

> Sometimes where a particularly charismatic educator is involved, many will achieve. BUT [their emphasis], we need the vast majority to achieve, through a system which can deliver success via 'ordinary' good educators without having to rely on the extraordinarily skilled and dedicated one (there just aren't enough of them!)

This participant went on to add that schools with Indigenous populations generally operate within environments with 'inadequate employment opportunities, cultural dissonance, (where) no one else works or tries hard, minimal aspiration, based on minimal information/understanding of, for example, the professions'. The participant was concerned by 'few models of moving to opportunity – indeed little understanding of what opportunities are (out) there, with little mentors or models'.

A heightened focus on early secondary schooling was highlighted by participants in recognition of disproportionately high levels of Indigenous students who drop out. Forum participants advised that definitions of 'success' among students needed broadening beyond school completion, to include such things as healthy lives, safety, love, respect, confidence, happiness, and 'contributing more than taking from society'. One participant noted that, 'We (education systems) report success as an absolute, not distance travelled.' Participants suggested that philanthropy could play a positive role in disrupting the status quo, including educational reporting by 'distance travelled or personal improvement'. They advocated for models that focused 'on Year 9 drop out' and 'engage parents in learning'. They challenged philanthropy to think about investment models that were funded over ten years or more in response to the enormity and complexity of First Nations educational and wider social disadvantage. Such

complexity will be considered in more detail in the next chapter, through an analysis and synthesis of the data from literature, fieldwork, and the two strategic dialogue Forums.

An interpretative summary of findings from the fieldwork and Forums

Both the fieldwork research and associated dialogue Forums, in the end, traversed a diverse terrain of geography, philosophical and historical perspectives, sectoral interests and standpoints (education, philanthropy and Indigenous communities), political and ideological views, first-hand experiences, and so forth. What clearly emerged from the fieldwork and the Forums is that the voices of both 'demand' (Indigenous and education communities) and 'supply' (philanthropic organisations) were varied and diverse. This diversity of voices, concerns and frustrations, expectations, preferences, experiences and opinions has overwhelmingly meant that the field (Indigenous education and philanthropy) is complex. The fieldwork findings have pointed to a need for all actors (education, philanthropic and Indigenous communities) to consider and accommodate both diversity and complexity of views and voices in order for there to be stronger relationships and mutual growth and understanding. Several common threads and shared themes have emerged from the dialogues and interviews, which are now examined.

Firstly, the fieldwork highlighted that Aboriginal young people need to be seen as more than 'students'. First Nations young people are both young citizens and young human beings who require holistic growth and development, including growth that is cognitive, social, cultural (and cross-cultural), emotional, physical, and spiritual in nature. The fieldwork found that too many (not all) young Aboriginal people are stressed, vulnerable, marginalised, and, too often, without voice. The fieldwork data have indicated that government or philanthropic responses that limit attention to young people's cognitive and educational development (or in-school performance) alone are unlikely to accommodate enabling factors that could improve academic performance, such as bolstering children's broader social, cultural, emotional and physical wellbeing. Research participants highlighted the fact that too many Aboriginal young people are not going to school on a regular basis, and if they are, too many are going to school hungry, without school basic equipment, and stressed (if not, 'shamed'). Quite a few interviewees highlighted that many young people are growing up in households that are mobile, unstable, and overcrowded. Several participants spoke about children being shuffled between home and extended family that meant they (children) were not always ideally prepared for school (in terms of homework, uniforms, equipment, and lunchboxes). Such instability was in part due to

cultural obligations of being members of extended families, but at the same time, young people lived in environments whereby some families were financially and emotionally stressed, with the manifestations of such stress including volatile household relationships along with alcohol and drug misuse. Furthermore, fieldwork participants lamented the fact that young people in communities were too often residing in communities without municipal facilities and societal choices that people in more affluent areas of Australia take for granted, such as recreational and sporting facilities, transportation, libraries and information technology labs, safe and interesting gathering spaces for youth, and places that promote and celebrate culture and identity. In addition, Aboriginal community representatives and Elders were concerned that schools and tertiary institutions were not adequately fostering opportunities that nourished Aboriginal children's and young people's cultural pride, while simultaneously fostering greater understanding among non-Indigenous learners and citizens about pre-colonial and post-colonial Australia.

What the fieldwork also showed is that the conventional, national policy discourse about 'closing the gap' is far too narrow. Informants argued for a broadening of discourse beyond a narrow focus on 'Indigenous student performance' in tests. Rather, they highlighted that greater attention had to be placed on 'non-Indigenous student performance' in understanding and appreciating First Nations peoples, cultures, histories and contemporary circumstance. Put simply, the fieldwork found that 'closing the gap' policy discourse and resultant program responses need to be seen as a 'two-way' challenge whereby overcoming Indigenous disadvantage is one way and overcoming Australian ignorance about Indigenous peoples, cultures and histories is the other.

With regard to Aboriginal community views about the philanthropic sector, again these views varied depending on levels of exposure and experience. For those communities without established philanthropic relationships, some argued that they were 'out of mind, out of sight'. Several community members (in urban, regional, and rural areas) emphasised the need for philanthropists to recognise that Indigenous Australia extends well south of the north of Australia. Of those communities with relationships with philanthropic organisations, again views varied. Some felt that philanthropic grant processes were too onerous given the relatively small quantum of funds on offer. On the positive side, a number of community organisations interviewed were pleased when philanthropic organisations adopted relationally driven, innovative and long-term partnership models.

A number of community organisations, education providers, and small philanthropic organisations claimed that big corporations in Australia needed to 'step-up' and do more in the Indigenous education space. One interviewee felt that Australian companies and rich people should be publicly shamed in national media. Another argued that rich people in Australia acquired their wealth 'on unceded Aboriginal sovereign land'.

Informants working in the philanthropic sector and those working in community and research sectors reflected on some of the political and ideological views held among philanthropists. These views could easily be charted along a left-right political continuum. On the left are community foundations led by social activists and liberal progressives, who expressed that post-colonial interventions were (and remain) unjust and unfair. On the right, are conservative foundations managed by people with business and conservative political backgrounds, who held the view that Aboriginal people needed to engage in more 'self-help'. In short, the political and ideological views held among philanthropic actors interviewed could be interpreted as sitting somewhere between 'hand up' (assistance), 'hand out' (paternalistic welfare), and 'hands clasped' (political and social solidarity) mentalities.

Philanthropic expectations of what needs to happen to improve Indigenous education varied. One employee of a large corporation who was interviewed believed that his company was only working in the Indigenous community space with high-profile Aboriginal leaders for 'PR [public relations] reasons'. Another philanthropic trust manager implied that foundations were looking for neatly bundled project proposals built on 'what works' and their ability to go to scale. Scalability of initiatives emerged as important from a number of interviews. Equally, several informants lamented a lack of an evaluation culture and practice in the philanthropic sector.

The fieldwork also showed that education, philanthropic and Indigenous community participants were interested in ongoing engagement and dialogue, based on mutual respect and honesty. Some referred to such a point of engagement as a 'hub', while others expressed preference for a 'community (or communities) of practice'. A 'meeting place' was envisaged as an attractive concept among many interviewees that would involve two-way learning, where ideas could be shared, models could be debated, and initiatives could be jointly funded.

In some ways, this part of the thesis represents somewhat of a fulcrum. That is, the fieldwork, Forums and literature review have pointed to the fact that the space (Indigenous-education-philanthropy) is a complex and diverse one. The next two chapters will offer a number of analytical frames from which this complexity might be better understood and critically analysed, and be further explored beyond this thesis by future conceptual frameworks that acknowledge and positively respond to this complexity.

Chapter 5: Analysing and synthesising field findings via complexity and emergence

Overview

This study – through both the literature review (in *Chapter 3*) and via the fieldwork findings in the previous chapter – highlights the inherent complexities within education, philanthropy and Indigenous affairs. From the fieldwork site visits alone, the myriad complexities of modern social, economic, cultural and political life for First Nations people in urban, regional and rural-remote life is clearly evident.

The current study provides new evidence to support previous research in Indigenous affairs, education, and philanthropy, which recognised that complexity looms large across all of these landscapes. There was little evidence, however, in the current research that anyone within the Indigenous affairs policy community in Australia has openly and consistently adopted the principles of complexity science or emergence theory to analyse this complexity; nor applied the conceptual signposts that the theories have to offer to help navigate through (as opposed to trying to occlude) complexity. Instead, there was evidence from the fieldwork of many projects and interventions based around top-down control, mono-dimensional responses, and one-size-fits-all solutions. There was also evidence in this study of a propensity among some philanthropists and governments to turn to 'white saviours', 'black knights', and 'silver bullets' to solve complex problems. The observed complexity arguably demands a different way of thinking and acting.

Indigenous affairs policy in Australia is clearly complex. There are many other policy issues both domestically and internationally that share the properties of complex policy, such as globalisation, climate change, and rapidly evolving information and communication technology. Against this backdrop, researchers and policy makers are increasingly turning to complexity theory to help inform and shape policy and research responses. Complexity theory is currently being applied across diverse fields and disciplines such as health (Thompson, Fazio, Kustra, Patrick, & Stanley, 2016); governance (Ansell & Torfing, 2016); criminal justice (Pycroft & Bartollas, 2014); and education and language development (Ortega & Han, 2017). In the area of social inequality, Walby (2007), for example, argued that '[the] old concept of social system is widely discredited; a new concept of social system can more adequately constitute an explanatory framework. Complexity theory offers the toolkit needed for this

paradigm shift in social theory' (p.1). Similarly, Fenwick (2010) suggested that the principles of complexity science are 'enticing for those committed to more creative, more humane and better functioning organizations' (p.95). More recently, Meek and Marshall (2014) have reflected upon how complexity theory can inform and positively change public administration. In their paper, the authors submitted that complexity theory is 'useful in developing interpretations of public policy and how public service can be advanced through an understanding of dynamic connections and relations among deeply interdependent components of our governance systems' (*ibid.*, p.4).

In terms of Australia's Indigenous affairs more specifically, the head of the Prime Minister's department, Dr Martin Parkinson (2017, no page numbers), recently reflected upon the myriad complexities within the sector and how to respond to them (including by letting go) in the following terms:

> In our attempt to forge ahead with dependable technical responses, I wonder whether we've missed the obvious: that the underlying complexities in Indigenous Affairs require transformation in our own practice, and of our own leadership. The challenge we face, therefore, is an adaptive one. Adaptive in the sense that it will require constant revision and reflection, and an ongoing reassessment of the way we have typically gone about addressing difficult problems in the past.

> …if we are truly to do things 'with' and not 'to' communities we need relationships of trust; we need to 'let go'. By that I don't mean handballing the problem and sitting back to observe success or failure, but truly participating with communities in developing shared approaches to agreed problems.

So how can Australia (including philanthropists) better respond to complexities in Indigenous affairs? This chapter explores the notion of 'complexity' from both theoretical and normative standpoints. It does this in order to make sense of what was observed in the field and discovered in the literature. The chapter begins by providing definitions of complexity and emergence theories. It then presents a synthesis of complexity within and between philanthropy, education, and Indigenous affairs. With the fieldwork findings about Indigenous education in front of mind, the researcher then discusses how stakeholders might think differently in situations of complexity in order to develop greater sense-making and clarity. The chapter then examines

the *Cynefin Framework*, with a view to drawing potential lessons and applied learning for philanthropists that are seeking to improve their strategic investment in Indigenous education.

Defining complexity theories

Hillier (2010, p.1) explained that complexity theory is essentially a theory of change with particular emphasis on evolution, adaptation and survival. As such, complexity theory grew out of the natural sciences in the 1960s and is now being applied in organisational studies, public health, education studies and public policy studies, among other disciplines (Eppel, Matheson & Walton, 2011). Instead of using linear, causative models, the theory embraces organic, holistic approaches and particularly emphasises networks. Analogously, as an organism responds to its environment, this environment too is changed and in turn this changes the organism. This dynamic relationship is the cornerstone of complexity (Hillier, 2010).

Likewise, Apgar, Argumedo, and Allen (2009, p.9) suggested that complexity theory – and the complex adaptive systems within it – are characterised by:

> …having multiple interacting parts that exhibit non-linear behaviour leading to unpredictability and being made up of nested systems that are open and mutually affecting with each level exhibiting patterns that emerge out of the interactions of the parts.

The authors highlighted the importance of moving from central-control systems to guidance and empowerment at the local level. Hoppe (2010), meanwhile, described modern society with 'wicked' social and political problems such as climate change as 'hypercomplex'. This term is used to describe competing problem formulations and resultant policy solutions which only temporarily address 'wicked' problems, and which are implemented onto the existing tangled web of policy action (Hoppe, cited in Hillier, 2010, p.1). Complex systems also have a history, which continues to influence what happens in the future (Eppel *et al.,* 2011, p.49).

Dawoody (2008) cautioned that in a world of uncertainty, organisations and systems can no longer rely on a naïve confidence that long term results can be accurately predicted. Dawoody (2008, p.3) argued that:

> Instead, the emphasis needs to shift to a much greater flexibility which prepares any current structure to respond adaptively to unprecedented changes. When changes occur

in the environment, we need to have organizations that can allow for changes to take place within their structure even to the degree, sometimes, of collapsing the existing order to make way for the new. This bold and courageous understanding will enable us to embrace change and emergence of the new.

Eppel *et al.* (2011) also noted that the boundaries of complex systems are fluid and difficult to define. In human social systems, boundaries are constructed by the human 'components' that make up a system. As Gallard-Martinez (2008) explained, complexity involves a whole range of predicted and unforeseen events, all making solutions finding a whole lot harder. Government policy changes, key leaders leave, important contact people shift to another role, new technologies emerge, recession reduces available resources, a bitter conflict erupts, and so forth, which all contribute to a complex picture. With every new variable entering an equation, this in turn produces 10 other ramifications, which in turn produces tens of other reactions and so forth (*ibid.*, p.4).

In educational contexts more specifically, Johnson (2008) posited that complexity theory can reveal alternative approaches to accountability in education. While Johnson's study focused on education provision in the US, the lessons appear to be pertinent to the Indigenous Australian context given that forces such as cultural customs, local and national history, and state regulations and policies are equally important (and complex) features in Australia's education environment. Johnson (2008, p.1) wrote that:

> There has been a growing recognition of the importance of context in understanding various aspects of education, and systems approaches to understanding change have become increasingly common. Yet, the simple linear algorithm implicit in current policy such as the *Adequate yearly progress* provision of *No child left behind* fails to take into account the complex and dynamic nature of education and represents an inappropriate oversimplification of educational outcomes and their measurement.

Johnson (2008, p.3) also argued that oversimplified approaches tend to overlook external factors or the 'exosystem', which:

> …represents the larger social system, and encompasses events, contingencies, decisions, and policies over which the developing person has no influence. The exosystem thus exerts a unidirectional influence that directly or indirectly impacts the developing person. The exosystem of an individual school might be comprised of such

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structures as, for example, state regulations, local economics, federal mandates, and local disasters.

Johnson's model suggests that wider social, cultural, and economically attributable factors have an equal (if not more important) bearing on an individual's success or otherwise to school itself. Johnson (2008, p.5) stressed that:

> The underlying rationale for a process-person-context research model is applicable to organizational development as well, and is a useful model for understanding how developmental processes (e.g., teaching and learning) and outcomes (e.g., student achievement) vary as a joint function of the characteristics of not only the school itself but also those of the ecological systems or environment surrounding the school.

This current research also affirms Johnson's central argument in relation to being attentive to in-school factors and exosystems that either promote or inhibit growth and wellbeing among – in this case – First Nations children and young people. That is, a multitude of external (out-of-school) factors have equal bearing on a learner's capacity to succeed in schooling. These factors are multifaceted and complex in nature, and include socio-economic status, intergenerational disadvantage and trauma, wellbeing (or lack of) in households and communities, health, geographical isolation, and social inclusion.

Working from the insights on complexity identified by Johnson and others, this researcher has developed a model (see Fig. 3) to illustrate the multi-level factors that were uncovered in this research on Indigenous Australian education and are likely to have a bearing on a young First Nations person's (or learner's) ability to experience educational and wider success.

Fig. 3: Multi-level factors of Indigenous educational complexity

Social Level Factors
Socio-economic status
Historical & post-colonial factors
including intergenerational trauma
Community functionality
Government policy & practice
Infrastructure
Culture
Inter-cultural

Historical and
contemporary socio-
economic factors
impacting on schooling
policy and systems

Historical and
contemporary socio-
economic factors
impacting on wellbeing
among learners

**Complexity:
in-school &
exosystem factors**

School Level Factors
Curriculum
Teacher quality
Facilities & technologies
Pedagogy
School culture
Aboriginal culture
Inter-cultural

Individual Level Factors
Cognitive development
Physical health
Emotional wellbeing
Personality
Family Functionality
Trauma
Culture
Inter-cultural

Source: T. Dreise, doctoral research.

With regard to social level factors, what the fieldwork of this study showed is that too many young Aboriginal people are under pressure as a result of poverty, tensions within community, lack of community services and infrastructure, and First Nations cultures being oppressed and disrespected by the larger dominant society. At an individual level, this research found that in the communities visited, some children may not be receiving the physiological experiences and services that are critical to a healthy life and body and brain development, including nutrition, sleep, exercise, and positive social relationships. Furthermore, the pressures that parents and families are under, be it through financial hardship, imprisonment, drug and alcohol misuse, overcrowding, or unemployment add to the stress on children and young people (as reflected

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in data from AIHW, 2015; Mission Australia, 2015; Redmond *et al.*, 2016). At a school level, the fieldwork indicated concerns about curriculum and pedagogy that failed to embrace First Nations cultures and provide deep, rich and wide choices in curricula (e.g. through vocational education programs, place-based and project-based learning, creativity and entrepreneurial studies, and school excursions). Furthermore, past government policy and historical practice in schools that saw a devaluing (if not ridiculing) of First Nations people and cultural practice have resulted in an intergenerational suspicion of schools and educational policy. All of this adds up to highly complex environments.

A further overlay of complexity that relates specifically to this study is that of Indigenous cultures and the ongoing impacts of colonisation, as evidenced not only in Australia but internationally. In explaining culture, Gullestrup (2001, p.2) suggested that culture is:

> ...the philosophy of life, the values, norms and rules, and actual behavior - as well as the material and immaterial products from these – which are taken over by man [sic.] from the past generations, and which man wants to bring forward to the next generation - eventually in a different form – and which in one way or another separate individuals belonging to the culture from individuals belonging to other cultures.

Gullestrup (2001) identified a range of factors within culture and cross-cultural exchange, which makes cross cultural factors more complex, namely the relativity of each culture, the co-incidence of the cultures, the changeability of each culture (dynamics), and the ethical problems related to cross-cultural study and exchange (p.5). To place this thinking about culture within an Indigenous Australian context, Maddison (2011, pp.81–82) argued that:

> Ignoring the fact that the same patterns of postcolonial Indigenous struggle and disadvantage are evident the world over, in widely diverse Indigenous cultures, the collectively guilty conscience is easily persuaded by the suggestion that the fault is not really ours but theirs. This is a triumph of colonial liberalism.

What both Maddison (2011) and Gullestrup (2001) help illustrate is that culture, colonisation, and intercultural exchange (and tension) lead to environments of contestation and complexity, which are common in both Indigenous Australian and international First Nations contexts. These contestations, in turn, provide further tangible examples of complexity within Indigenous education.

Defining emergence theories

Emergence theory is similar to complexity theory but places somewhat more emphasis on unpredictability on events, outcomes and interventions. Kania and Kramer (2013) described 'emergence' as events that are unpredictable, that result from the interactions between elements, and which no one organisation or individual can control. They suggest that there is rarely a single solution in complex environments beyond the process of continual adaptation within an ever-changing environment. As well as 'continual adaption' being an important feature of emergence, Osberg and Biesta (2010) recognise 'self-organisation' as another. Osberg and Biesta (2010, p.5) explained that:

> The idea of self-organisation introduces an important distinction between 'complexivist' and mechanistic approaches to understanding continuity and change as from a 'complexivist' perspective a particular state of a system is not thought to be deterministically caused by a previous state. This phenomenon is generally discussed with reference to the notion of 'emergence'.

Fong (2006) too noted the importance of self-organisation, referring to emergence as being the essence of self-organisation, in that it brings new states, while old forms die and new forms proliferate. In other words, Fong suggested that if an old system is unable to adapt, it will die and a new system will emerge spontaneously, which then creates a new environment. This notion of emergence implies that, given an adequate degree of complexity in a particular environment, new and, to some extent, unexpected properties and behaviours emerge in the environment. Fong further described emergence as the way that behaviours and qualities of systems emerge from local, uncoordinated interactions. Fong (2006, p.3) argued that emergence cannot be predetermined but rather it 'can create diversity and new opportunities'.

Morrison (2005) offered another consideration about emergence theory: 'The argument for emergence is that innovations and changes rarely happen in isolation, but in tandem' (p.5). In other words, as Davis and Sumara (2009) later proposed, emergence requires a simultaneous examination of phenomenon in its own right (for its particular coherence and its specific rules of behaviour) and paying attention to the conditions of its emergence, namely the agents that come together and the contexts of their co-activity. Davis and Sumara (2009) added a caution that schools (and one could add communities) cannot be seen in the same way as a laboratory

or a one-on-one engagement, for schools and communities are simply too multi-layered with constant and numerous 'intertwining happenings' (pp.34–35).

So what do complexity and emergence theories mean for philanthropists, educators, policy makers and First Nations leaders who are looking to improve Indigenous education? Put simply, complexity forces us to think differently. The next section provides a synthesis of complexities at play before discussing how players need to think differently.

A synthesis of complexity at philanthropy–education–Indigenous affairs interfaces

The nature, scale and scope of complexity in Indigenous education, including its complex intersection with philanthropy, as demonstrated in the fieldwork of the current study, needs to be brought to 'front of mind' when considering future philanthropic investment. This inherent complexity can be seen on a number of levels. For starters, Indigenous Australia comprises hundreds of different nations. Secondly, the challenge of service provision to First Nations communities is likely to grow in scale and complexity given that the Indigenous population of Australia has grown to almost 800,000 people (Biddle & Markham, 2017), which is a considerable increase since the 2006 Census. The fact that the First Nations population structure is much younger than the non-Indigenous population (with a median age of 22 years compared to 38 years) has major implications for education policy and social services delivery now and into the future.

With regard to education provision more specifically, the complexity of First Nations education is further illustrated by a number of additional realities. Firstly, Indigenous students could be participating in one of over 9,300 schools across the country (they could be in schools made up entirely or predominately of First Nations students or they could be the only Indigenous student in the school). Secondly, Indigenous students could be attending either a public school (which is most likely) or a Catholic school or an independent school (including an Indigenous community controlled school); which is not to overlook the fact that many young people of school-age will not be attending school at all. Thirdly, Indigenous learners are less likely to have their parents or guardians in a position to help them with schoolwork due to language differences and historical issues (including the legacy of having their parents or grandparents actively excluded from formal schooling, triggering intergenerational resistance towards these institutions). Fourthly, First Nations students can be residing in a state or a territory with different policies, programs and resources to the neighbouring jurisdictions. Fifthly, First

Nations children and young people could be a part of the 60 per cent of the Indigenous population living in a major city or inner regional areas; or Indigenous learners could be a part of the 20 per cent living in outer regional areas; or a part of the 20 per cent residing in remote/very remote areas. First Nations students may be enrolled in one of five sectors of formal education (early childhood, primary, secondary, VET or community education, and higher education), but are more likely than non-Indigenous people to have left formal education all together. They could also be undertaking learning in 'non-formal' (non-western) settings such as on Country, or in community enterprises, or in cultural events and practices. Finally, they are likely to belong to one of 200 or so First Nations each with their own dialects, traditions, stories and connections to Country.

This complex picture of First Nations education is made more complicated when one considers the social injustices that Indigenous people continue to encounter. Arguably the most significant (and alarming) observations made in the field were the multiple social stressors faced by far too many Aboriginal young people and families. The fieldwork provides a microcosm of Aboriginal young people and families under pressure – whether through economic marginalisation, cross-cultural tensions (and racism), intergenerational poverty and trauma, social exclusion, or cultural loss. This multifaceted stress among parents can and does manifest into alcohol and drug misuse, child neglect, financial worries, and mental ill health. The use of methamphetamines by young people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) was a particularly concerning anecdote shared by a number of community members interviewed across all sites. This research does not suggest for one moment that such problems are widespread (nor does it seek to feed into deficit-based discourses), however it does reflect the concerns expressed by well over 20 interviewees across the field sites about contemporary challenges confronted by Aboriginal families and children. The social stressors within the fieldwork communities visited appear broadly consistent with national data about the threats to wellbeing among First Nations children, young people and families, such as data from the AIHW (2015), a survey of Indigenous youth (Mission Australia, 2015), and the Australian Child Wellbeing Project (Redmond *et al.*, 2016), as outlined in *Chapter 3*.

The fieldwork also found that some teachers – principally in 'Bluetown' – were under significant pressure to suppress cultural identify as a central tenet of the school's philosophy, curriculum and pedagogy. Furthermore, the fieldwork reveals a yearning among Aboriginal communities – for political and societal recognition and respect, social justice, enterprise

development opportunities, and for children and all people to live a life free of racial prejudice. It also confirms a resilience and optimism among communities and a determination to 'turn things around' at the local level. In short, community life in the places visited is often harsh and complex; and yet hope lingers given the affinity people have with place and Country.

Improving educational, social and economic outcomes for Indigenous people – including in the communities that participated in this research – is therefore and fundamentally a complex undertaking. Communities, governments and education authorities have long been frustrated by slow or little progress. For instance, the most recent review of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory showed only marginal gains at best, and regression at worst, over the past 15 years (Wilson, 2014). As was noted in the earlier literature review in *Chapter 3*, Indigenous affairs policy is complex, if not 'wicked'. Indigenous affairs policy easily fits the definition of 'wicked public policy problems' from the Australian Public Service Commission (2007), in so far as it is difficult to clearly define, is multi-causal, and has many interdependencies. Further, the complex nature of Indigenous affairs (including Indigenous education) has no single or clear solution as it is socially complex and leads to unforeseen consequences.

Indigenous disadvantage and disparity, including in education, is longstanding, highly contentious, seemingly intractable, and multifaceted with an array of historical, racial, political, moral, and social dimensions (Groome, 1994; Maddison, 2009; Rowse, 1998). The frustrations of those operating in the field are often emotively expressed in the following terms: 'false dawns' and 'déjà vu' (from researcher's notes), 'crisis' (Anderson & Potok, 2011), 'heartbreakingly difficult' (Jarvie and Stewart, 2011), and 'Groundhog Day' (Hughes, 2010; Pearson, 2011). The 'Groundhog Day' metaphor was used to described the fact that governments too often will launch a policy, implement a program, only to turn around and announce a new policy and pursue a new program soon after, and on it goes, all in an attempt to improve things from central control and top-down standpoints. In recent years, the contestation and complexity of Indigenous affairs is perhaps best illustrated by the debate surrounding the Northern Territory Emergency Intervention, extensively documented in a series of essays titled *Coercive Reconciliation: Stabilise, Normalise, Exit Aboriginal Australia*, edited by Altman and Hinkson (2007).

Similar perceptions of 'difficulty', 'complexity', 'worry', 'trickiness', 'hard', 'frustration', and 'hardship' were also recurring themes in the interview data from First Nations community members, philanthropists, and educators throughout the course of this research. Several

representatives conceded that Indigenous affairs are complex, and sometimes this leads to philanthropic organisations shying away from the area. In addition, Aboriginal community representatives were keen to highlight the complex interdependencies between school life, home life and community life. Similarly, teachers and educators spoke consistently about their concerns about the health and wellbeing of some Aboriginal children, along with a concern about non-Indigenous attitudes towards embracing Indigenous perspectives into curriculum and pedagogy.

Research into Indigenous affairs reform such as those undertaken by Jarvie and Stewart (2011) into the COAG Trial in Indigenous Service Delivery (usually referred to as the 'COAG Trial') in NSW further highlight the complexity of social reform in Australia. In their review of the Murdi Paaki Trial (in north-west NSW), Jarvie and Stewart (2011, pp.1–2) described the policy and reform context as complex, conflicted, multilayered, and ideologically fierce. Indigenous theorists such as Nakata (2007) have argued for recognition of the contested space that Indigenous people now live in, referring to it as the 'cultural interface'. Furthermore, Maddison (2009) provided evidence of a number of domains of complexity, paradox, and tension in contemporary Indigenous politics that continue to fuel debate both *between* Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia and *within* Indigenous Australia. Maddison (2009, p.xxvi) wrote that:

> These intersections of history, culture, experience and identity have produced an extraordinarily complex political culture that, in general, is very poorly understood by non-Aboriginal people.

If Indigenous affairs can be generally accepted as being both complex and contested, then an overlay of philanthropy and education potentially makes the picture even more complex and contested. The following précis of issues canvassed both in the literature review and fieldwork of this study, backed up by stakeholder insights from both Forums, provides an illustration of the inherent complexity within philanthropy. To begin with, philanthropy is increasingly taking on many different forms and processes, motivations (altruistic, commercial, intellectual, ideological), expectations, foci and applications, such as 'vanguard philanthropy', 'strategic philanthropy', 'corporate philanthropy', 'knowledge philanthropy', 'evangelical philanthropy', and 'change philanthropy'. Furthermore, the contested nature of philanthropy range from those who would label it 'undemocratic', to those who view it as simply 'public relations' on the part of corporate philanthropists, to those who believe it to be inaccessible and

'elitist'. In addition, philanthropy is made more complex when one considers the broad nature of social issues that philanthropists can choose to buy into, be it to school reform, climate change, global health care, or poverty in developing countries. In short, philanthropy is a fundamentally 'contested concept' (Daly, 2012).

When taken collectively, the field data and literature amplify the inherent complexity that schools and Indigenous affairs environments operate in and that philanthropists will need to potentially navigate or, at the very least, be cognisant of. How philanthropists make sense and work toward greater clarity of Indigenous education and broader Indigenous affairs environments is likely to require them to think differently.

The next section offers a number of definitions of complexity and emergence theories, which, among other things, promote the need for different thinking in complexity that goes beyond linear thinking, causation and predictability.

Complexity and emergence demand different thinking

Social problems such as poverty and poor outcomes in education cannot be fully known, understood, and predicted in advance with 'predetermined solutions' (Kania & Kramer, 2013). Even if solutions were known, Kania and Kramer (2013) cautioned against the likelihood of one individual or organisation being in a position to compel all other actors and factors involved in it to adopt it. Importantly, complexity and emergence perspectives do not mean that all existing analysis methods should be abandoned. Instead, actors need to draw upon 'multiple methods, diverse perspectives and an iterative approach to policy design and implementation' that is sensitive to endogenous change in systems (Eppel *et al.*, 2011, p.54). Hillier (2010) suggested that complexity theory is not a new or even startling theory but rather brings together certain constructs in a pursuit of coherence. Hillier (2010, p.2) contended that the theory:

> ...recognises the tensions, dynamics and complexity in examining policy and particularly recommends attention to *practices* which are complex, value laden and contended. It embraces change, uncertainty and unpredictability. This goes a long way to help us consider future activities and practices as experiments rather than protocols.

Juarrero (2010, p.1) highlighted the importance of interconnectivity within complex dynamical systems, by suggesting that:

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….only complex dynamical systems theory and its related disciplines and tools – network theory, agent-based modelling - provide the appropriate prism through which interdependent systems such as social groups can be understood, and coherent, integrated policy recommended.

One of the central features of a complex system is that they are very rarely in equilibrium. They are, by their very nature, unstable. And yet, as Kayuni (2010) noted, policy systems rather optimistically set themselves the goal of achieving and maintaining a state of equilibrium and policy stability for progress. In contrast, Kayuni (2010, pp.8–9) argued that:

> …policy stability is rarely achieved and should not necessarily be the goal of a policy system. More often than not, policy systems are in a state of disequilibrium which leads to a seemingly chaotic situation. In this way, chaos theory is an *evolutionary* system theory.

The international literature on complexity theory suggests how complexity can be reduced, held in paradox, or creatively navigated as opposed to completely eradicated. Fenwick (2010), for example, writes about 'sustained paradox', noting that complexity is unconcerned with differential power among a system's elements, but rather with what emerges in their nonlinear interactions. But in order for 'sustained paradox' to work, it must allow for equity among various perspectives within the complex system (such as equity within schools and First Nations communities in the case of this study). Fenwick (2010, p.93) explained this notion of 'equity' in the following terms:

> ...[I]n organizations some perspectives hold greater legitimacy and visibility, while others are unrecognizable, or voiced in language that cannot penetrate the existing configurations in order to offer the contrasting feedback. Some mobilize or subjectify others, and some accumulate density and intensity in the organizational pattern in ways that exert more force than others.

Fenwick (2010, p.94) also pointed to the importance of organisational or systems leadership in balancing different and competing views, by suggesting that leaders:

> …must be astute analysts of these complicated politics, resistances, coalition-building and position-jostling among stakeholders and hierarchies.

Complexity theory also emphasises the importance of ground-up creativity. It argues against top-down and unilateral action. Fong (2006) submitted that complexity theory should encourage creativity and efficiency to emerge spontaneously within organisations rather than solutions being imposed and decisions on the boundaries being fixed. Fong (2006) further suggested that education systems are too complex to comprehend in simple linear ways, adding that the interdependence and connectedness of issues cannot be overlooked (*ibid.*, p.2).

How all of these perspectives and insights offered by complexity theorists might inform and shape future philanthropic investment in Indigenous education is the subject of the next section.

Lessons from theory to improve future philanthropically backed Indigenous education practice

The literature, such as from Geyer and Rihani (2010), in emergence and complexity theory both highlights the application of complexity theory to improving public policy, practice, and social outcomes and points to a number of possible strategies to embrace emergence as a key analytical, planning, and decision-making tool. Strategies might include 'feedback loops', 'self-reinforcing webs', 'zooming out', 'participatory models', 'safe to fail' environments, and 'broad stakeholder involvement'; which are now analysed.

Eppel *et al.* (2011) described the patterns of interdependent influence between the components of a complex system, which are called 'feedback loops'. To explain, Eppel *et al.* (2011, p.48) suggested that:

> ...sometimes a desired change might not occur because the feedback loops between the policy designers and implementers is such that the patterns of influence and interaction between the parts do not follow predictable rules, that is they are nonlinear. Outcomes are therefore not necessarily proportional to inputs, nor can they be predicted from the parts of a system or their initial actions.

Another implication of complexity theory in policy making is the question of long term planning, target setting, and change. Eppel *et al.* (2011) advised that complexity theory provides an understanding of how social systems change over time. They (*ibid.*, p.53) suggested that:

Such an understanding allows for policy action that over time should move systems in the desired direction of change, although highly prescribed targets are unlikely to be met.

Given that complex problems, more often than not, involve multiple causes, it is important that a range of interrelated actions is simultaneously explored. Eppel *et al.* (2011, p.53) argued that policy designers and managers needed to facilitate a 'process that gives rise to a coherent, self-reinforcing web of reactions that move the overall system in the desired direction'. They added that 'participatory policy practices' which draw upon different perspectives and expertise (technical, practice and experience) should be brought together and acted on. Put simply, they concluded that 'no one person or organisation is likely to have sufficient information or resources to understand a complex system' (*ibid.*).

Dawoody (2008) promoted participatory processes, via an elimination of what he perceived as the outdated notion of central-control mechanisms and long-term planning (p.2). In promoting a shift of dynamic from failure to success, Dawoody called for a transformation of thinking from a linear approach toward a systemic complex approach. To achieve this, Dawoody (2008, p.3) recommended investment and intervention models that are invigorating, adaptive, complex and sensitive to changes in the environment. Dawoody (2008) further argued that change agents must be autonomous but also highly connected with other agents within a network that is flexible, unrestricted, and possesses a greater resiliency in the face of change. Dawoody (2008, p.6) explained that:

> This means the entire network of connected agents and environments form a *complex adaptive system* with a capacity for ongoing adaption to environmental changes. If the system is not operating in such a complex and adaptive manner, it will either die completely or result in an unwanted worse state of affairs.

In the case of program resourcing and policy evaluation, Eppel *et al.* (2011) documented a number of additional important considerations that are potentially relevant to philanthropy and Indigenous education. They promoted the merits of initiatives that go beyond the boundaries of any one agency and their accountabilities, and also extend into organisations and individuals outside of government (the philanthropic and non-government sectors being obvious ones). This, Eppel *et al.* suggested, requires new ways of configuring leadership, performance and financial accountability to match the complexity of the problems being solved and the

information and other resources needed for their solution. The authors added that project and policy managers need to take into account longer timelines, which accommodate broad stakeholder engagement, initial set-up phases, and flexibility in project design. For example, some implementation activities might precede final policy design, hence allowing for experimentation and testing (*ibid.,* p.54).

Education at all stages and in all forms invariably exhibits all the features of complex systems: be it in early childhood education (Fong, 2006), in schools (Johnson, 2008), in higher education (Hillier, 2010), or learning outside of institutions (Osberg and Biesta, 2010). It follows that complexity appears in various aspects of education such as school leadership, research, curriculum, and pedagogy. Johnson (2008, p.5) for instance suggested that educational systems '…are complex, dynamic systems with multidirectional linkages and processes that interconnect the different layers within the system'. Complexity and emergence theories might therefore provide insights and lessons for Indigenous education practitioners and education policy actors. The first is to recognise the innate and fundamental paradox in education. Osberg and Biesta, (2010, p.1) explained that, 'Education opens up pathways and opportunities but also, and often at the very same time, limits, reduces and even closes down ways of doing and being.' Osberg and Biesta, (2010) questioned the machine metaphors that are often used to describe the pursuit of education 'production' and its 'perfection'. This of course overlooks the reality of natural, human and social systems, which are dynamic, fluid, and unpredictable. In promoting the merits of complexity's emphasis on nonlinearity, unpredictability and recursivity, Osberg and Biesta, (2010) added an important qualifier, however; namely that it is not meant as an argument against or a denial of order. Osberg and Biesta, (2010, p.2) further argued, 'It should instead be understood as a case to see order differently, not as something that can be predicted and controlled from preceding conditions but rather as something that emerges in genuinely generative ways.'

When complexity is seen this way, Osberg and Biesta (2010) indicated that many educationalists have found complexity theory helpful for describing, characterising and understanding the dynamics of education differently, not in the least because:

> …the language of complexity makes it possible to see the non-linear, unpredictable and generative character of educational processes and practices in a positive light, focusing on the emergence of meaning, knowledge, understanding, the world and the self in and through education (*ibid.*).

In education, complexity thinking might help educators and policy makers better understand the fundamental gap between 'input' (teaching, curriculum, pedagogy) and 'output' (learning) (see Biesta, 2004 cited in Osberg and Biesta, 2010). Johnson (2008) made similar observations about developmental processes (teaching and learning) and outcomes (student achievement). Johnson recognised that wider factors outside of schools (such as social, cultural, and economic attributable factors) have an equal (if not more important) bearing on an individual's success or otherwise. Johnson (2008, p.5) found that:

> [Educational] outcomes vary as a joint function of the characteristics of not only the school itself but also those of the ecological systems or environment surrounding the school.

Acknowledging and addressing complexity also makes it possible to highlight the fact that individuals emerge in and through educational processes in unique and unpredictable ways. Osberg and Biesta (2010, p.6) stressed that education is not only about qualifications and socialisation, but also a concern for 'the coming into presence' of unique, individual beings.

In relation to tertiary education, Eppel *et al.* (2011) suggested that complexity might help create a holistic picture of dynamics and systems change. The authors offered a number of examples of these including: non-linear effects of changes in funding policies; co-evolution between different parts of tertiary education, such as industry training organisations and polytechnics [or TAFE in the case of Australia]; self-organisation and emergence of new courses, new patterns of student recruitments and enrolments (Eppel *et al.*, 2011, p.50). With regard to educational research, Eppel *et al.* (2011) suggested that it cannot in all cases prospectively tell us what will work, and for whom, in all contexts. They cautioned, 'The policy domain concerned will be influenced by events that happened in the past in ongoing ways that are difficult to detect (Eppel *et al.,* 2011, p.52).' This point underscores the limits of predictability, causality, and linear thinking.

Complexity theory also provides new insights at the level of educational leadership. For instance, Fenwick (2010, p.94) noted that for leaders:

> …a better attunement to the nonlinear dynamics and emergence of complexity in their own organization is no doubt helpful for all sorts of leadership activity: becoming more self-reflexive about their entanglement in the system, amplifying desirable emerging patterns, and anticipating surprising new turns.

Fenwick (2010) added a caution however for school leaders, suggesting that any move to developing a leadership strategy from complexity science must be approached with caution, by warning that:

> The issues of clashing ontologies on the one hand, and power relations, politics and responsibility on the other, are easily left aside when one adopts a theoretical sensibility that recognizes neither (Fenwick, 2010, p.95).

Being able to 'zoom out' and adopt a big picture perspective is an additional recommended process in complexity theory. The 'spider web' metaphor used by Gallard-Martinez (2008) helps illuminate this point. Gallard-Martinez (2008, pp.4–5). explained that:

> There are aspects of society that are woven together, much like a spider's web, which envelop the education arena to include policy, reform efforts, research, learning, teaching, and the preparation of future teachers.

The spider web metaphor, as Gallard-Martinez (*ibid.*) suggested, is a reminder that:

> …whether the web is influenced in the middle or on one of the outer threads, the moment the tension is disturbed, the spider receives the message through its sensory abilities because the individual cells are connected in such a manner that one informs the other.

Gallard-Martinez (2008, p.5) also suggested that education systems and education research need to act more 'spider-like' in creating and recognising the elaborate nature of webs by better understanding its function and provide sustenance necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning.

Johnson (2008) too recognised the imperative of adopting more holistic approaches in better understanding the complexity of education systems. Johnson (2008) formed the view that too many methods of investigating the educational outcomes of individual schools fit the class-theoretical model, in that they are based on linear algorithms that simplify and break down systems into isolated, component parts for predictability. She wrote (*ibid.*, pp.5–6) that:

> While appropriately predictive of some static, closed systems, these models fail to adequately predict the behavior of or capture the essence and emergent properties of complex systems involving three or more interacting components.

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Instead, Johnson (*ibid.*) promoted the idea that education research and evaluation should be based on '…field theoretical models' whereby complexity theory might offer '…an appropriate paradigm for understanding how changes in complex systems such as schools are often discontinuous and non-linear, and can lead abruptly to unexpected forms or states'.

Dennard, Richardson, and Morçöl (2008) likewise cautioned that complex social problems are not areas whereby experts armed with all the appropriate information are necessarily the best source of solutions. Rather, Dennard *et al.* (2008) supported the idea of 'robust' dialogue among diverse participants in complex policy analysis processes. Equally, they argued that policy analysts should be more focused on the modelling process in complex situations than with advancing the merits of one model or another. Dennard *et al.* (2008, p.17) concluded, 'Learning takes place as much in the development of models perhaps as in their implementation. Models are (therefore) experimental, amendable, and disposable.'

The risks of trying to transplant one model or approach from one community to another are also exposed by Eppel *et al.* (2011). They highlighted that differences in conditions, such as geographical and social context, are likely to have significant and unexpected influences on policy interventions over time. No two communities will be identical and small differences matter (*ibid.*, p.53). They added (*ibid.*), 'Nationally-directed policy action is likely to have limited ability to respond to local contexts, including subtle differences in the initial conditions and the specific people and organisations involved.' Rather, Eppel *et al.* (2011) advanced the merits of locally-directed policy action in responding to local contexts, notwithstanding the need for a national approach to policy and resource allocation to enable local design and action. This in turn, reinforced the notion of government (or indeed philanthropy) as enablers not controllers. It also affirmed the importance of 'place' and local context (which will be explored in more detail in the next chapter).

International research into complexity and Indigenous practice – most notably by Apgar, Argumedo, and Allen (2009), pinpointed the importance of collective dialogue and transdisciplinary approaches. Following a study of the Kuna peoples of Panama, Apgar *et al.* (2009) developed participatory models that simultaneously embraced complexity, traditional adaptability, and the maintenance of autonomy and self-governance. In practice, this led to culturally attuned programs such as bilingual intercultural curriculum with an emphasis on *processes* and not simply outcomes, by ensuring that process interventions were 'made in the right spirit and [would] protect Kuna autonomy and wellbeing' (*ibid.*, p.9). The researchers

also found that processes which simultaneously embrace complexity theory together with traditional Indigenous practices are best advanced through collective dialogue and 'frameworks that can support a world view of humans as a part of nature are important underpinning elements for such transdisciplinary approaches' (*ibid.*, p.15).

Students, regardless of age, gender, race, and socio-economic status bring a history, a present and a future to classrooms and wider social settings (Gallard-Martinez, 2008). What is missing in terms of education and policy research, according to Gallard-Martinez (2008, p.8), is an:

> …admission [by policy makers] that there is a set of socially constructed societal expectations that parallel both society and teaching and learning, which, as a consequence, serve to continue to enfranchise and disenfranchise the same students.

Another key feature of appropriate responses to socially and culturally complex environments is the creation of 'safe-to-fail' environments, especially if innovation, experimentation, and exploration are to flourish. Juarrero (2010, p.9) argued that public policy actors have traditionally counselled for 'fail-safe' strategy. As such, the goal in policy and education environments traditionally has been the pursuit of social organisations that would remain forever in equilibrium. Juarrero (*ibid.*) elaborated that 'The traditional goal of public policy makers, in other words, has been stability, the minimization of fluctuations'. In contrast, Juarrero (2010) argued for 'safe-fail' strategies and environments. A safe-fail strategy is one that Juarrero suggested '…optimizes a cost of failure and even assures that there are periodic 'minifailures' to prevent evolution of inflexibility' (*ibid.*). In other words, Juarrero (2010, p.9) argued that public policy should pursue a goal of resilience, not simply stability. The creation of 'safe-fail' environments is similarly outlined in the Cynefin Framework (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003), which is the subject of the next section.

Looking to the Cynefin Framework for positioning philanthropic investment in Indigenous education

One way in which philanthropists might consider the inherent complexity within Indigenous education and affairs is through the Cynefin Framework. This author – along with a larger group of educators and Indigenous stakeholders – met in 2008 with Dave Snowden, a Welsh intellectual, complexity theorist and co-creator of the Cynefin Framework. Snowden has

considerable professional background in applying and promoting complexity and emergence theories throughout the world. He has been engaged by a diverse range of organisations, including the Pentagon and the White House, to help organisations to better identify and deal with complexity.

Snowden had developed a strong interest in Indigenous education and affairs in Australia from the other side of the world. Snowden and this researcher co-facilitated a workshop in 2008 on Indigenous education in Lismore, NSW. Snowden presented the audience of educators, researchers and Indigenous community leaders with the Cynefin Framework, which is reproduced in Fig. 4 and briefly explained.

Fig. 4: The Cynefin Framework

(Source: www.cognitive-edge.com)

'Cynefin' is an Indigenous Welsh word broadly meaning 'habitus' or 'place' (see Kurtz & Snowden, 2003). It is fundamentally about how to categorise problems and how to respond to them accordingly. The model is divided into four quadrants, each representing the differing nature of problems (*complex*, *complicated*, *simple* and *chaotic*) along with processes to deal with them (*emergent*, *good*, *best*, and *novel* practice). Snowden described 'simple' problems as those already successfully tackled and advanced elsewhere, whereby the solution can be simply replicated based on what has already been achieved by someone or another organisation working in similar contexts. Snowden described 'complicated' problems as ones whereby an expert can be brought in to help solve the problem given that the expert has made breakthroughs with similar problems, situations and environments in areas/contexts in which they have

worked. Snowden suggested that with 'chaotic' problems, then one needs to act and evaluate later (such as in the case of natural disasters). That is, time is of the essence. Of most interest to this study, is Snowden's description of 'complex' problems (based on theories of complexity and emergence). He suggested that in areas of 'emergence', exploration and experimentation, where one probes and senses, is one of the more effective responses.

Providing an example from the field of health, Kania, Kramer and Russell (2014) drew upon the work of Snowden in seeking to reposition philanthropy to embrace 'emergence' strategy. Kania *et al.* (2014, p.26) described Snowden's approach to 'simple' problems as being based on 'well-understood formula', such as building a hospital. With regard to 'complicated' problems, Kania *et al.* (*ibid.*) provided the development of a vaccine as an example, in that it '…may take many attempts before a successful formula is developed, but each successive attempt builds on prior knowledge and experience, and once the formula is discovered, it can be repeated with equally predictable results'. In contrast to simple and complicated problems, Kania *et al.* (2014) described 'complex problems' as being entirely different. They provided the improvement in health among a particular group of people as an example of complex problems. They (2014, no page number) argued:

> These [complex] problems are dynamic, nonlinear, and counter-intuitive. They are the result of the interplay between multiple independent factors that influence each other in ever-changing ways. The health of a population is influenced by the availability and quality of health care, but also by economic conditions, social norms, daily diet, inherited traits, familial relationships, weather patterns, and psychological well-being. The interplay of these factors creates a kaleidoscope of causes and effects that can shift the momentum of a system in one direction or another in unpredictable ways. Each intervention is unique, successful programs cannot reliably be repeated with the same results, and learning from past efforts does not necessarily contribute to better future results (*ibid.*).

Based on these differentiations between simple, complicated and complex social problems, Kania *et al.* (2014) argued that philanthropy works well for simple and complicated problems. They found, 'Many funders support programs like after-school tutoring and institutions like hospitals, which help alleviate the consequences of complex societal problems in education and health without directly addressing the problems themselves (*ibid.,* online article page not

numbered).' Kania *et al.* (2014) concluded that if philanthropy wants to get to the root cause of complex problems, then they would need to embrace emergence as a strategy.

Snowden, along with the co-developer of the Cynefin Framework, Kurtz, have drawn upon complexity science to argue the case for 'self-organising' capabilities versus 'central control' (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003). In other words, they are interested in how things emerge from the bottom-up as opposed to controlled from the top down. They explained, 'There is a fascinating kind of order in which no director or designer is in control but which emerges through the interaction of many entities (*ibid.*, p.464).' Kurtz and Snowden (2003) drew upon a 'bird flocking' analogy to explain that certain patterns that form are not controlled by a directing intelligence; they are self-organising.

Another dimension of Cynefin which is potentially relevant in Indigenous education and philanthropic contexts is the fundamental belief that humans are not limited to one identity, and are therefore complex beings. As Kurtz and Snowden (2003, p.464) explained, 'Individually, we can be a parent, sibling, spouse, or child and will behave differently depending on the context'. This rings as true for First Nations people as it does for anyone else; that is, First Nations people can be Aboriginal, professional, parent, Uncle or Aunt, musician, dancer, community worker, artist, activist or sports player. That is, First Nations identity – as with other identities – can exist at both personal and collective ('norms') levels, and is therefore complex.

Cynefin also embraces the notion of 'contextual complexity', meaning that the Cynefin Framework is used not only for recommending courses of action, but rather for the exploration of possibilities and the generation of ideas (*ibid.*, p.465). The model contrasts 'ordered' systems and 'unordered' systems. This is not done in a hierarchical or values-laden way, but rather to point out that situations and environments are both ordered and unordered at once. Kurtz and Snowden (2003) explained that, 'In many organizations, for example, formal command structures and informal trust networks support (while simultaneously competing with) each other (*ibid.*).' Kurtz and Snowden (2003, p.446) suggested that ordered-systems allow derivation and discovery of 'general rules or hypotheses that can be empirically verified and that create a body of reliable knowledge.' Un-ordered systems, by contrast, do not work on such assumptions. Rather, because they are chaotic or complex, they offer fields for exploration and action, including 'seeding', 'swarming', 'inspired leadership', and 'gut feeling'. Kurtz and Snowden (*ibid.*) further suggested that:

Learning to recognize and appreciate the domain of un-order is liberating, because we stop applying methods designed for order and instead focus on legitimate methods that work well in un-ordered situations.

Of particular interest to this current study, Kurtz and Snowden (2003) identified various strategies and methods appropriate to intervention in complex systems, most notably innovation and exploration. They recommended that policy actors and organisations operating in such environments share strategies through a process of 'letting go', by 'creating freedom within heuristic boundaries to allow new patterns and new leadership to emerge'. Kurtz and Snowden (2003, p.479) explained such movements as '…liberation because it breaks the entrainment of bureaucracy – but [also acknowledges that] like all letting go, it is difficult. This is one of the most threatening of transitions to entrenched managers, but one of the most important'.

In summarising the potential for emergence and complexity application to improve philanthropic practice in Indigenous contexts, the following argument made by Kania *et al.* (2014, p.28) is arguably a standout and an enticing proposition:

Emergent strategy does not attempt to oversimplify complex problems, nor does it lead to a 'magic bullet' solution that can be scaled up. Instead, it gives rise to constantly evolving solutions that are uniquely suited to the time, place, and participants involved. It helps funders to be more relevant and effective by adapting their activities to ever-changing circumstances and engaging others as partners without the illusion of control.

So what are the potential implications of complexity and emergence theories as they relate to philanthropic investment in Indigenous education? These implications will now be outlined in this chapter's conclusion by capturing some of the key 'take out' messages from interview participants in the field, insights from both Forums, and a synthesis of insights derived from complexity theories.

Conclusion

First Nations educators, parents, community representatives and leaders involved in this research all spoke of local empowerment on the ground. They expressed a keen desire for the devolution of resources and for philanthropists to be relationally driven as opposed to top-down, process (or application) driven. The emphasis from interviewees was on 'place' and

localism. Meanwhile, philanthropists identified preferences to deliver 'what works' and 'what could go to scale'.

The possible implications from complexity and emergence theory for philanthropists that are looking to improve their investment in Indigenous education could not be clearer: invest in initiatives that allow for flexibility and adaptation as opposed to imposed 'solutions'. Look for initiatives that couple endogenous action with exogenous resourcing. In addition, incubate local innovation and experimentation in safe-fail environments. Invest in networking and dialogue opportunities involving stakeholders in Indigenous education and philanthropy. In other words, pay attention to the 'spider web' (Gallard-Martinez, 2008) which is influenced both by activity in the centre and on the outer threads. Think about pursuing autonomous and collective action simultaneously, with a view not only to their implementation but to their evaluation, monitoring, shared lessons, and feedback loops.

Complexity theory points very clearly to interdisciplinary approaches to context and 'place'. As Byrne (2005, p.95) explained:

> ...the interdisciplinary understanding of reality as composed of complex open systems with emergent properties and transformational potential. A crucial corollary of complexity theory is that knowledge is inherently local rather than universal. Complexity science is inherently dynamic.

Improving educational outcomes among First Nations learners will require attention to both in-school and in-community factors. Complexity theorists in education such as Johnson (2008) highlight the importance of broader social environments in improving education. Johnson argued that internal (in-school) and linear thinking in improving education is far too narrow in that it overlooks the 'exosystem', which 'represents the larger social system, and encompasses events, contingencies, decisions, and policies over which the developing person has no influence' (*ibid.*, p.3). Within the context of this research, philanthropists looking to invest in Indigenous education would ideally consider opportunities that sit within and outside of the school gates. Complexity also demands that philanthropists rethink beyond their own disciplines (which this research has found tends to favour business or commerce thinking). Davis and Sumara (2009) highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary understanding and action within complexity, by going a step further. Rather than focus on the more conventional approaches of *interdisciplinary* or *multidisciplinary,* they argue that complexity and extreme

diversity warrants a *transdisciplinary* approach which, put simply, requires conceptual level-jumping and border crossing by 'stepping outside the limiting frames and methods of phenomenon-specific disciplines' (*ibid.*, p.35).

Finally, complexity theory points to the centrality of innovation, exploration and experimentation, ideally in safe-to-fail environments. In this context, innovation is best seen as a process not an ideology or outcome in and of itself (Seelos & Mair, 2012). In spaces of vast complexity (or hyper-complexity), a premium needs to be placed on creativity. As Kayuni (2010, pp.9–10) explained:

> According to chaos-complexity theory, this is the best scenario for an organisation or policy system because there is a higher degree of creativity and innovativeness hence the term thriving on the edges of chaos.

Herein potentially lies a great opportunity for philanthropy in Indigenous education: brokering and sponsoring innovation, creativity, and risk taking in Indigenous education. As a peak philanthropic forum in Australia stated in 2009, 'Risk taking is necessary in order to innovate and achieve results (Australian Davos Connection, 2009, p.10).' The Australian Davos Connection (2009, p.18) Forum added that:

> We need to find better mechanisms to support community, social infrastructure through funds of socially responsive investors, government backed bonds or indeed guarantees to take government bond returns, but de-risk capital into important community and philanthropic projects.

Arguably the most fundamental value proposition of philanthropy is to facilitate or enact positive social change. As Epstein-Korten (2009, p.xiii) argued:

> Philanthropy has a critical role to play in supporting grantees as they move social change forward. Yet the ferment and creativity in the social change sector has not, for the most part, been matched by resources or commitment from philanthropy.

To this end, complexity demands risk-taking, devolved empowerment, innovation and collaboration on the part of philanthropists, communities and government alike. The fieldwork and Forum findings from the current study affirms this proposition. Interviewees and philanthropic stakeholders spoke of positive social change beyond the status quo in

communities toward a desire for shared resources, know-how, data, and collective action on the part of public, community and philanthropic players. *Chapter 6* that now follows explores potential alternative models that might provide conceptual guidance to meeting Indigenous peoples' education needs, coupled with forging new positive relationships, coalitions, and collaborations between Indigenous communities, educators, and philanthropists.

Chapter 6: Alternative models for philanthropic investment in Indigenous education

Chapter Introduction

Both the literature and fieldwork findings of this study have clearly pointed out that the intersection of Indigenous affairs, philanthropy and education is, more often than not, a complex one. Indigenous affairs alone are often politically vexed and historically charged. Against this backdrop of considerable complexity and highly interrelated social and economic factors (as outlined in the chapters on literature and fieldwork), the following normative question emerges: 'How might philanthropists, communities, and governments turn this situation around?' It would be glib (although true), to answer by responding with 'by working together'. As important as this response may be, the creation of refreshed and innovative organising frames, theoretical platforms and conceptual maps are equally important. Without pursuits inspired by notions such as 'positive disruption' (Christensen *et al.*, 2008; Leadbeater & Wong, 2010), then repeated failure in the area of Indigenous education and child wellbeing is almost certain.

Drawing on field findings, this chapter provides three ideas for simultaneously improving First Nations child wellbeing outside of school gates and boosting Indigenous learner performance inside schools. The three concepts are 'place-based' thinking and action; 'whole child' theory and action; and 'collective impact'. These three concepts were chosen given that the fieldwork found that First Nations communities visited were too often out of mind, out of sight; children's holistic needs were largely being unmet; and policy, program and service delivery responses tended to be uncoordinated, haphazard, and isolated to one another. Each of these theories are potentially positively disruptive and normative in nature, and go to the heart of how philanthropists might improve their strategic investment in Indigenous education.

The chapter begins with definitions of whole child and place-based theories. It presents a case as to why whole child, place-based approaches are important in Indigenous Australian contexts, including in the communities that were visited as part of this study. The chapter then offers international examples/case studies of these two approaches in action. It concludes with a discussion about the merits and potential of centring whole child and place-based approaches at the heart of future Indigenous education-philanthropy relationships, leading to an

examination about the future potential for 'collective impact' in Indigenous education and child wellbeing. The final part of this chapter discusses 'collective impact' in more detail.

Looking to 'whole child' theory

The field research identified consistent concerns about the current social, economic and cultural state of Aboriginal young people. Informants spoke not only about how children were performing in school, but also how they were faring in their communities. Parents, educators, and community organisation leaders and workers all expressed serious concerns about the development of young people on multiple fronts, including socially, culturally, academically, and emotionally. The observed vulnerability among many Aboriginal children and young people in the communities visited (urban, regional and rural) can be partly explained by intergenerational disadvantage and trauma along with locational marginalisation. So how do these wider perspectives of wellbeing and holistic (beyond academic development) gain stronger traction, including among philanthropists? One way to consider this question is through the lens of the 'whole child'.

'Whole child' theory emerges out of early childhood development literature. For instance, Wise (2013), in explaining early childhood development, also helped to explain whole child thinking by recognising the interrelated and holistic aspect of child development. Wise (2013, p.3) stated that:

> Early childhood development is a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from before birth to 8 years of age, their parents and caregivers. It is aimed at ensuring all children have an equal chance to thrive and grow. It encompasses the interrelated or holistic aspects of children's development, which includes the physical, social-emotional and language-cognitive domains.

The notion of whole child approaches extends beyond the early childhood years. It is a particularly important goal in child safety contexts where children are at risk. For example, the Ministry of Social Development in New Zealand (2004) stated that whole child approaches meant 'focusing on the big picture, on the child's whole life and circumstances and the links between individual issues and other aspects of their lives; focusing from the outset on what children need for healthy development and wellbeing', and 'looking across the whole public service at what can be done to support children's healthy development' (p.6).

Whole child thinking is more than a consideration of the academic development of children, but also is concerned with physical (body), social (relationships), emotional (psychological), recreational (pleasure), and spiritual (belief/faith). In returning to Wise (2013, p.9), she defined quality early childhood development (ECD) in the following terms:

> Healthy ECD requires a focus on the whole child including children's health and nutrition, social-emotional and language-cognitive development. The evidence comes from paediatrics, psychology, nutrition, child development and anthropology, which tells us that all areas of growth and development are intimately related and mutually supported. Supporting healthy ECD means tackling the wider social determinants of health; that is, the 'upstream' family and community factors that contribute to disparities in early life outcomes.

There is another tier to whole child theory, which sits specifically within the realm of school curriculum. The tier relates to calls for balanced and holistic curricula to ensure that children and young people are simultaneously growing academically, socially, morally, emotionally and physically. A truly holistic approach does not, however, suggest that all of these areas should be compartmentalised and taught separately in curricula. Rather, they should be highly integrated and embedded throughout curricula. Noddings (2005, pp.8–9) explained that:

> Even when educators recognize that students are whole persons, the temptation arises to describe the whole in terms of collective parts and to make sure that every aspect, part, or attribute is somehow 'covered' in the curriculum...working within the present subject-centered curriculum, we can ask math and science teachers as well as English and social studies teachers to address moral, social, emotional, and aesthetic questions with respect and sensitivity when they arise.

In practical terms, if policy actors and community advocates are seeking improvements in Indigenous child wellbeing, then a wider lens beyond any one portfolio (education, health, child safety, community services, etc.) is most likely required. In the US for instance, the ASCD has been at the forefront of 'whole child' thinking and action. The organisation has developed a number of 'tenets', along with accountability maps, professional learning, and performance frameworks to help drive whole child development. The ASCD (2012, p.2) posited that:

> For too long, we have committed to time structures, coursework, instructional methods, and assessments designed more than a century ago. Our current definition of student success is too narrow. It is time to put students first, align resources to students' multiple needs, and advocate for a more balanced approach.

What the ASCD proposed instead is that educators, families, policy makers, and community members push for redefinition of what a successful learner is and how to measure that success. The ASCD (2012, p.3) proposed a number of key markers (or 'tenets') including that each student

> ...enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle; learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults; is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community; has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults; and is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

In India, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme provided an additional conceptual model for holistic development among children, especially highly vulnerable children and young parents. Kapil (2002, p.597) described the ICDS as an 'integrated approach for converging all the basic services for improved childcare, early stimulation and learning, health, (and) nutrition' aimed at mothers, children and adolescent girls in a community. Holistic services with the ICDS model, Kapil explained, included 'psychological, physical and social development of the child' (*ibid.*, p.598). The program was also established to drive greater and more effective coordination of policy and implementation among government departments. More significantly, Kapil noted that the ICDS is a 'long-term development program and is not an emergency relief operation' (*ibid.*, p.600).

While holistic development theories and actions are firmly entrenched in early childhood education theory, they do not feature as strongly in research and policy as it pertains to youth and young adults. This is interesting (if not, concerning) from the perspective of Aboriginal youth development, given so many young people are vulnerable, economically, educationally, socially, emotionally, and with regard to the justice system (AIHW, 2013). Jensen Arnett (2000) explored the topic of 'emerging adulthood' from a psychological perspective and argued that a theory of development was important among late teens through to their twenties. He

argued that like adolescence, 'emerging adulthood is a period of the life course that is culturally constructed, not universal and immutable' (*ibid.*, p.470). More pertinently as it relates to First Nations youth and the subject of this thesis, Jensen Arnett (*ibid.*) argued that 'limitations in educational and occupational opportunities also influence the extent to which young people can experience their late teens and twenties a volition period'. He found that social class, as much as cultural background, have an effect on young adults' ability to explore and experience life directions.

Diamond (2010) argued that if societies and systems want to improve school outcomes for children and young people then they must support the 'whole child'. Diamond (2010, p.781) argued that:

> A human being is not just an intellect or just a body; every one of us is both – and we are not just cognitive and physical, but also emotional and social. We ignore any of those dimensions at our peril in raising and educating children. Programs that address the whole child (cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs) are the most successful at improving any single aspect for good reason.

Diamond (2010, p.783) also posited that children's cognitive development is hampered when there are feelings or loneliness, social isolation, or stress. In addition, brain development and thinking also suffer, Diamond argued, when children and young people do not get enough exercise or are sleep deprived (*ibid.*, p.784).

In considering Diamond's findings (and the 'whole child' literature more broadly) from the perspective of the Aboriginal communities that were visited as part of this research, it could be safely deduced that too many Aboriginal children are not benefiting from holistic services that seek to support their academic development, along with their social, emotional, physical, and cultural growth. More holistic development among First Nations children and young people should be a key consideration of philanthropists who are looking to invest in Indigenous education. Furthermore, as Diamond (2010, p.789) argued, 'Children learn what they live.' To this end, it is critically important that the 'places' in which Aboriginal children grow up are receiving equal attention to the schools they attend. The notion of 'place' is now discussed.

Definitions of place-based theory

All of the Aboriginal communities (urban, peri-urban, regional, and rural-remote) that were visited as part of the fieldwork component of this research showed signs of stress (emotionally, economically, and cross-culturally). What became increasingly apparent to the researcher during the field visits was the absence of coordinated, integrated, and holistic place development thinking and action, which positions children, young people and families at the heart of community planning. This leads now to a discussion about 'place' and 'place development'.

'Place' is more than geography. It has multiple dimensions, applications and interpretations, including cultural, economic, social, and political. The notion of place can have a cultural or spiritual meaning, socio-economic meaning, and a meaning which goes to the essence of one's *identity*. In an Indigenous context, 'place' is more likely to be referred to as 'Country'. In his address to the National Press Club in 2009, Aboriginal Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Dodson, helped explain the notion of 'country' and its deep cultural and ancestral affinity that Aboriginal people have to place (or Country):

> When we say country we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. We are not necessarily referring to a geographical place. We're talking about the whole of the landscape, not just the places in it. For us, country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. All of it is important – we have no wilderness, nor the opposite of wilderness, nor anything in between. Country is country – the whole cosmos (Dodson, 2009).

In addition to identity and spiritual meaning, 'place' is an increasingly common public policy term, particularly when the term 'place-based' is coined as a level of investment and positive intervention. The concept neatly ties to the idea that community capacity building and social development is best coming from the 'ground (place) up'. In a paper written for the Australian Government in 2012, which considered 'place' from a socio-economic perspective, Burkett (2012, p.9) issued the following challenge, 'In Australia, disadvantage has a postcode.' Research by Vinson, Rawsthorne, Beavis and Ericson (2015) showed that Aboriginal communities feature heavily in most such postcodes of disadvantage.

Place-based development, in public policy terms, is concerned with the identification and mobilisation of 'endogenous potential', allowing local people to draw upon and grow their own resources, especially their human capital and innovation (Tomaney, 2010, p.6). Barca (2009, p.8) defined place-based policy as a 'long term development strategy aimed at reducing underutilisation of resources and social exclusion of specific places, through the production of integrated bundles of public goods and services'. Barca (2009, p.8) added that place development strategies are 'determined by extracting and aggregating people's knowledge and preferences in these places and turning them into projects' (*ibid.*). Governments (and philanthropic organisations) can exogenously promote place development 'through a system of grants subject to conditions and multilevel governance' (*ibid.*).

The idea of 'place' as an approach to Indigenous education has long been of interest to this researcher and is central to this study's analysis of fieldwork findings. In previous research by this author (Dreise, 2016), 'place' has been considered from a number of dimensions. Firstly, 'place' as an approach to educational pedagogy and curriculum (such as the role of place in outdoor, cultural or environmental education); secondly, 'place' as a more holistic approach to improve educational outcomes for learners by improving their wider social environment; and thirdly, the idea of education and training as a site for investment and an intervention tool to break a cycle of locational, inter-generational and multiple disadvantage (*ibid.*, p.6).

The findings from the fieldwork (as discussed in *Chapter 5*) suggested that 'place' should be a critically important policy and service delivery consideration among governments and philanthropists alike. All communities visited as part of this research showed clear signs of stress. Even in communities where a school was operating effectively, the communities were lacking in wider services such as recreational, social and cultural facilities. Put simply, it could be argued that for learners to succeed, they need to be healthy – physiologically, psychologically, relationally and in terms of their nutrition. The next section draws upon design principles in planning and implementing place-based approaches.

Getting place-based designs principles right

Both an international example and an Australian example are now explored to exemplify the importance of design principles in place-based development. They are discussed here to guide and inform thinking and interaction in place-based development in Indigenous Australian

spaces. In the interests of balance, the two examples are followed by a discussion of pertinent debates in place-based development discourse.

In Canada, Bellefontaine and Wisener (2011, p.5) articulated a range of important design principles including that strategies are 'designed (or adapted) locally to meet unique conditions' and 'engage participants from a diverse range of sectors and jurisdictions in collaborative decision-making processes'. Bellefontaine and Wisener (*ibid.*) suggested that place initiatives should ideally be opportunity driven, 'dependent on local talent, resources, and constraints'. They also argued that every attempt should be made 'to achieve synergies by integrating across silos, jurisdictions, and dimensions of sustainability', by leveraging 'assets and knowledge through shared ownership of the initiative' and by frequently attempting 'to achieve behaviour change' (*ibid.*).

In Australia, the Murdoch Children's Research Institute commissioned research work undertaken by Laidlaw, Fry, Keyes and West (2014) to identify a number of key themes for successful place-based investment, which are again potentially instructive for First Nations contexts, including the need for 'new skill sets to deliver place-based initiatives and expertise in collaborative practice and co-production with families' (p.5). Laidlaw *et al.* (2014) also identified the importance of 'evaluation for learning and impact' and 'a more rigorous and coordinated research agenda' (*ibid.*). Furthermore, they highlighted the need to find 'better ways to exchange knowledge and information, particularly across practitioners, along with a pressing need for greater advocacy and leadership on place-based approaches in Australia' (*ibid.*).

Place-based approaches are not without contestation or contention. When it comes to welfare, governments invariably 'intervene' or 'invest' through support payments to individuals and families rather than to places. Glaeser (2000, no page numbers) provided the following insights into the contested nature of investment in 'place' as opposed to investment or intervention at the 'person' level:

> Place-based strategies can have real advantages, primarily because of what economists now call 'neighborhood effects' – outcomes that are very much a function of the people who live nearby…But place-based policies suffer from several major problems. The biggest pitfall is their tendency to attract the poor to (or repel the rich from) areas of high poverty...The second problem occurs even when a given policy attracts everyone,

not just the poor. An enterprise zone, for example, may temporarily increase local employment. This will cause some families to stay in a poor area instead of moving. But moving might have been the best thing the family could have done, especially for its children…The case for focusing on children is also based on research that suggests that neighborhood effects are more important for them than for adults. More generally, policies directed at children have effects that are reaped over a longer time period.

Griggs, Whitworth, Walker, McLennan and Noble (2008, p.xix) made the point that a mixture of 'person' and 'place' based approaches can make a difference in education, further education, and employment in disadvantaged areas particularly when:

> ...the greatest impact can be attained by focusing individually tailored packages of provision on the most disadvantaged while simultaneously ensuring that excessive, confusing complexity is avoided. There is also fair consensus that policies blessed with clear, measurable and achievable objectives and implemented by competent, appropriately trained and well-managed staff are likely to be most effective.

Advocates for place-based action in Australia have highlighted literature pointing to its success. Trudzik (2012, no page numbers) for example wrote that:

> There is a growing awareness, both in literature and of policy makers, that today's major public policy challenges play out in local places:

>> Geographers studying innovation in the knowledge based economy emphasise the importance of localised knowledge clusters for national economic success.

>> Analysts of social inclusion describe the multiple barriers that people face living in 'distressed neighbourhoods'.

>> Rural areas and smaller centres face another set of risks, managing change with declining, and often ageing, populations.

Why whole child and place approaches are important to this study

As previously noted (both here in *Chapter 6* and in the preceding fieldwork chapter), Aboriginal children and young people residing in the communities that were visited as part of this study's fieldwork, were encountering disadvantage and stress on multiple fronts. They

exhibited signs of economic marginalisation, intergenerational trauma, social exclusion, and inter-cultural tension. Many (not all) of the children in the communities visited (as told by parents, teachers, and community workers) are neither receiving services proportionate to their needs or being treated in a holistic manner. When considering whole child and place-based theories and actions together, particularly from a First Nations perspective, then an integrated working definition of place-based development, as developed by this author (which goes to the very heart of the research question of how philanthropists might strategically improve their investment), could be:

> A long-term development strategy which coordinates, aligns, and leverages endogenous and exogenous resources (human, financial and other) to improve outcomes for Indigenous children and youth – educationally, socially, economically, physically, culturally, and emotionally – at a locational or place level.

The lack of long-term development strategies identified in the communities that participated in this research, suggests that such strategies desperately need serious policy consideration at a national level. National data highlight a multitude of risks confronting Indigenous children such as: child protection (AIHW, 2015), hospitalisation and violence (*ibid.*), juvenile justice (AIHW, 2012), self-harm and suicide (Georgatos, 2013), and unemployment rates (DPMC, 2016). Data from AIHW (2011) illustrate the considerable challenges confronting Indigenous children and families (such as those in the communities that participated in this study's fieldwork), including the fact that when compared to non-Indigenous young people, Indigenous young people are twice as likely to die from all causes (six times as likely from assault and four times as likely from suicide); 10 and six times as likely to have notifications for sexually transmissible infections and hepatitis respectively; six times as likely to be teenage mothers; six to seven times as likely to be in the child protection system; 15 times as likely to be in juvenile justice supervision or in prison; twice as likely to be unemployed or on income support; three times more likely to live in overcrowded housing; and two to three times as likely to be daily smokers (*ibid.*, p.vii).

Behind these statistics based on national averages are real people, young people who are under multifaceted stress. Nothing short of more concerted, targeted and ramped up approaches to improving whole child growth in the places in which they reside and the schools in which they attend, is likely to 'close the gap'. If out of school risk factors are not overcome, it is unlikely that major improvements in Indigenous education outcomes will present anytime soon. Data

show strong relationships between education and wider aspects of Indigenous wellbeing. Analysis by the ABS (2011) pointed to positive correlations between Indigenous educational attainment and health, employment, housing and crime and justice outcomes. In other words, in order to improve education outcomes, highly supportive social and economic environments have to be developed. Biddle and Cameron (2012, p.36) similarly suggested that wider issues such as demography and socio-economic status are significant factors in education and early childhood development:

> Indigenous children in their first year of school were identified as being more likely to be developmentally vulnerable in all 15 of the domains included in the Australian Early Development Index.

Rowse (2010) found that Aboriginal people score high in the bulk of areas that define social exclusion, including low labour force participation, low home ownership, high levels of violence and homelessness, low levels of school retention and literacy/numeracy, and reduced life expectancy. Vinson *et al.* (2015) also developed a major report on persistent, multiple and place-based disadvantage in Australia. Their *Dropping off the Edge 2015* report examined socio-economic disadvantage in Australia by postcode. The 2015 report followed on from a similar study conducted almost a decade earlier (Vinson, 2007). In considering the Vinson *et al.* 2015 report from an Indigenous perspective, it was apparent that the most disadvantaged communities in Australia tended to have sizeable (or near exclusive) Indigenous populations within them. Rather than going through each and every jurisdiction of Australia at length, a cursory observation of the Vinson *et al.* (2015) data from NSW and Queensland (which are most populous states respectively in Indigenous population) showed that in most cases the most disadvantaged locales in these jurisdictions have either a sizeable or majority Indigenous population. Similar findings were earlier found by Vinson (2007), confirming that there has been little to no gains for these communities in the intervening 12-year period. The communities in the most disadvantaged ('Band 1') category in NSW and Queensland are shown in Table 4 on the following page. It is important to note that the vast majority of these communities comprise mainly Aboriginal people.

Table 4: Most disadvantaged communities in NSW & Queensland

New South Wales	Queensland
Brewarrina	Aurukun
Claymore	Doomadgee
Lightning Ridge	Kowanyama
Walgett	Mornington Island
Wilcannia	Woorabinda
Windale	Yarrabah
Bourke	Cherbourg
Bowraville	Inala

Source: Based on data in Vinson *et al*., 2015.

The multitude of financial, emotional, relationship and social challenges and stressors confronting parents and guardians, families, guardians and communities in communities such as those above (and the communities visited by this researcher) is, in turn, likely to adversely impact on the success of Indigenous young people in education. That is, if school performance among First Nations people is to improve, then their wider social environments also need to improve.

The relationship between local rates of disadvantage and local school performance is not a phenomenon unique to Indigenous communities in Australia. Research from the UK and the US, for example, demonstrate strong associations between poverty, social disadvantage and educational outcomes. For instance, Zhang (2003) established clear links between school absenteeism and child poverty in parts of the UK. More recently, Clarke's (2014) research also in the UK highlighted that adolescents from low socio-economic backgrounds are still more likely to underachieve academically and continue to be in a cycle of poverty.

The relationship between poverty and school absenteeism is not confined to geographical remoteness either. Researchers in the US, for example, have explored the relationship between locational disadvantage and school outcomes in urban settings. The US National Center for Education Statistics (Lippman, Burns & McArthur, 1996, p.v) noted '…the growing challenges of educating urban youth who are increasingly presenting problems such as poverty, limited

English proficiency, family instability, and poor health', concluding that 'students flounder in decaying, violent environments with poor resources, teachers, and curricula, and with limited opportunities'. Almost 20 years after the Lippman *et al.* (1996) study, Anyon (2014), Cashin (2014), and Milner (2015) have each highlighted persisting inequities in the political economy, which have explained poor educational outcomes in impoverished communities in the US. Such issues of social inequity are equally pertinent in the Australian context, as highlighted by the *Review of Funding for Schooling,* more commonly referred to the 'Gonski Review' in recognition of the report's chief author (Gonski *et al.* 2011).

To improve Indigenous education is to improve the wider environments in which Indigenous children reside and vice versa. This represents a key message for philanthropists and goes to the key question of how philanthropy can more strategically invest in Indigenous education. As Ainscow, Dyson, Goldrick and West (2012) found, people from socially and economically disadvantaged areas struggle to establish and maintain engagement in formal education. The authors highlight the dual importance of school leadership and reform coupled with an improvement of home circumstances to adequately tackle education issues.

The fieldwork within this study has affirmed an ongoing case for needs-based funding in schools and in communities. In some cases, educational outcomes for Indigenous young people have not improved over the past decade (Dreise, 2014). These troubling results yet again stress the pre-eminence of needs-based funding to bridge social and educational divides in Australia (Bonnor & Caro, 2007; Cobbold, 2011; Gonski *et al.* 2011; Reid, 2015; Bonnor in McGowan, 2018). The PISA results need to be viewed within a wider frame of socio-economic and geographical disadvantage. PISA data in Australia in 2012 showed that students in regional and remote areas on average perform significantly more poorly than students in urban areas (Dreise, 2014). The data also showed that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds on average perform more poorly than students from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Census and other data highlighted that Indigenous households are more likely to earn less, live in overcrowded housing and live in lower socio-economic areas. The 2012 PISA study also demonstrated that Indigenous young people are more likely than non-Indigenous students to identify family demands and other problems impacting on the time they spend on school work (*ibid.*). This highlights the particular demands that Indigenous young people typically face as members of relatively larger, younger and extended families living on smaller incomes and in

overcrowded homes (*ibid.*). Once again, these data point to an overwhelmingly case for needs-based funding in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage.

So how do parties with an interest in this space (government, communities and philanthropists) turn these results around? In short, top-down public investment needs to empower 'ground up' action. This could take the form of early intervention literacy and numeracy programs, teacher quality improvement, personalised learning support models, culturally responsive curricula, and building stronger relationships between schools and families, and between schools and community service organisations. The OECD released a report in 2016 entitled *Low-performing students: Why They Fall Behind and How to Help Them Succeed* (OECD, 2016). The report analysed data from the 2012 PISA survey of 15-year-olds. As Earp (2016, no page numbers) explained:

> The report highlights socio-economic status of students as probably the most important risk factor, but adds there is no single or universal factor that can account for low performance. In response, it recommends educators and policymakers take a multi-pronged approach, tailored to local needs.

Reports such as these from the OECD (2016) and Gonski *et al.* (2011), along with research in other parts of the world (Lippman *et al.*, 1996; Anyon, 2014; Cashin, 2014; Milner, 2015; Ainscow *et al.*, 2012), all highlight the need for additional investment in schools (and places) of high socio-economic disadvantage in order to generate stronger results for young people in education, and in life more broadly. The next section explores international models for place development.

International conceptual approaches to place-based and whole child action

In thinking about the communities visited as part of this research and the deep-seated vulnerability within them, the researcher has sought out models whereby 'place' and 'children' are at the heart of local planning and interaction. The subsections that follow presents a number of conceptual and policy approaches that international jurisdictions are pursuing, or have pursued, to tackle educational disparity and social exclusion through 'place-based' models. The three international models in place-based approaches discussed here are *Big Society/Community Budgets* in the UK, *Promise Neighborhoods* in the US, and *Learning on Place* in Germany. These three models based on 'place-based' interventions are then followed by an exploration of thinking and action in the 'whole child' space, principally via a case study

of the ASCD (2012) in the US, which has arguably long been at the forefront of 'whole child' thinking and action in the US.

It is important to note, that in presenting these models it is not meant to be an evaluation or endorsement of each of the respective initiatives, but rather provides conceptual guidance to possible initiatives in shaping future Indigenous education-philanthropic partnerships in Australia. It is also noteworthy that some of these initiatives are not without criticism, especially the *Big Society* manifesto (Slocock, 2015). While these models below are not 'Indigenous specific' nor Australian, they nonetheless serve to highlight innovative approaches to tackling locational disadvantage which are so desperately needed in Indigenous Australian spaces, as evidenced by the fieldwork findings from this research.

Big Society/Community Budgets (UK)

Over the past 20–30 years, both the former Blair–Brown and Cameron governments (and now, the May government) in the UK have been actively considering ways to improve social policy and economic outcomes in places of disadvantage through a variety of initiatives and interventions at the local level. Most notably, they pursued a policy ambition often referred to as 'localism' (Evans, Marsh & Stoker, 2013). That is, the empowerment and growth of local communities through 'grassroots up' action rather than top-down control. The Blair–Brown governments introduced the *Total Place* program to test these concepts of localism. This was followed by a *Community Budgets* program during 2010–2015 under the Cameron government (Sandford, 2015, p.3).

The Community Budgets program had at various stages identified priority areas, including the 'Troubled Families' initiative over 2010–15. A Briefing Paper from the House of Commons Library (Sandford, 2015) noted that the government was aiming to break down silos and improve efficiency of contact between a variety of public services and troubled families (p.4). The program was aimed at fostering local solutions to local problems. In considering what is necessary to deliver efficacy in community budgeting, Wilson and Gallagher (2013, pp.6–7) offered the following observation:

> Community Budgets go further than any previous initiatives in placing control in local areas – not just to design solutions but also to define the problems in the first place. When this has been successful, it has been built on strong local leadership and buy-in from all partners.

Slocock (2015, p.6) questioned the effectiveness of reform to date under the former Cameron government's *Big Society* manifesto, by pointing out:

> Despite efforts under successive governments, key public services are still failing to respond effectively to the needs of those who most need them, with stubborn educational attainment gaps and health inequalities between the richest and poorest.

Notwithstanding her own reservations, Slocock (2015, p.7) added the following qualifier:

> However, the potential to unlock the power within society has also been demonstrated but it remains to be realised on a significant scale.

It would be fair to deduce that such a significant reform agenda aimed at shifting resources, authority and decision-making from central government to the non-government and local government sectors would have required sizeable lead and implementation times given the scale and scope of the task.

The *Total Place* and *Community Budgets* initiatives are illustrative of the idea of devolved decision-making and ensuring coordination and cooperation across agencies (both government and non-government). It is worth serious policy consideration in an Indigenous Australian context, given the current lack of success stemming from 'silo-based' approaches to Indigenous development (World Vision, 2013).

Promise Neighborhoods (US)

Given that the fieldwork revealed evidence that the holistic needs of Aboriginal children and young people are not being met, attention is now turned to an overseas model, which could provide conceptual guidance to 'whole child' development. The *Promise Neighborhoods* program in the US is one example of holistic children services. The program had the aim of 'bringing together community partners to provide children and families with comprehensive, coordinated support to improve results and reverse the cycle of generational poverty' (McAfee & Torre, 2015, p.37). The then Obama Administration introduced the program in 2010–11 based on and inspired by the *Harlem Children's Zone* model (Jean-Louis, McAfee & Millar, 2014). The program aimed to provide cradle-to-career services designed to improve the educational achievement and health development of children. The program was founded on the premise that overcoming interconnected challenges in high poverty neighbourhoods (such as

poor health, low educational attainment) would require interconnected solutions. The White House, at the time, was driven to the program out of concern about 'Struggling schools, little access to capital, high unemployment, poor housing, persistent crime, and other challenges that feed into and perpetuate each other call for an integrated approach so residents can reach their full potential'.[21] The model reinforced the logic that one department of government or one agency in the community sector cannot by themselves tackle the complexity and interconnectedness of social issues. The US Department of Education (2014, no page numbers) offered the following explanation of the program's strategic intent:

> The vision of the program is that all children and youth growing up in Promise Neighborhoods have access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them to attain an excellent education and successfully transition to college and a career. The purpose of Promise Neighborhoods is to significantly improve the educational and developmental outcomes of children and youth in our most distressed communities, and to transform those communities by: (i) Identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible entities that are focused on achieving results for children and youth throughout an entire neighborhood; (ii) Building a complete continuum of cradle-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center; (iii) Integrating programs and breaking down agency 'silos' so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies; (iv) Developing the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood; and (v) Learning about the overall impact of the Promise Neighborhoods program and about the relationship between particular strategies in Promise Neighborhoods and student outcomes, including through a rigorous evaluation of the program.

In 2010, advocates from agencies attached to the Harlem Children's Zone initiative, that helped inspire the *Promise Neighborhoods* program, outlined a number of overarching goals that should drive performance under the *Promise Neighborhoods* banner, namely 'that children are healthy and prepared for school entry; children and youth are healthy and succeed at school; youth graduate from high school and college; and families and neighborhoods support the healthy development, academic success, and well-being of their children' (Jean-Louis, Farrow,

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[21] https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oua/initiatives/neighborhood-revitalization, retrieved on 16 September 2014

Schorr, Bell & Fernandez-Smith, 2010, p.3). While a national and overarching evaluation of the *Promise Neighborhoods* initiative has not been discovered by this author, reviews of local level programs under *Promise Neighborhoods* umbrella indicated favourable results. For example, McAfee and Torre (2015) reported a number of positive outcomes at the Chula Vista (in California near the Mexican border) Promise Neighborhood. A review of the Chula Vista program found that among 3rd grade students, writing at or above grade level increased from 3 per cent to 22 per cent. Proficiency in mathematics among third-grade students increased from 6.5 per cent to 37 per cent. Results among 5th grade students in reading at or above grade level increased from 19 per cent to 40 per cent, and mathematic from 3 per cent to 33 per cent. Furthermore, chronic absenteeism among 6th grade students declined from 11 per cent to 3.4 per cent (*ibid.*, p.42).

The *Promise Neighborhoods* program has shown encouraging signs of positive impact. While this thesis does not suggest that models such as *Promise Neighborhoods* should be simply picked up and replicated in Indigenous Australian contexts as a more nuanced and tailored approach is clearly required, programs such as *Promise Neighborhoods* nonetheless provide potential conceptual guidance in turning around sizeable educational, social and economic disadvantage in First Nations postcodes in Australia.

Learning on Place (Germany)

Another program worth deeper consideration in the context of place-based and holistic development in Indigenous Australian contexts is the *Learning on Place* program in Germany. In 2009, the German Government commenced funding the program (Reghenzani-Kearns & Kearns, 2012). Forty projects were supported under the program to, among other things, improve school participation, strengthen employability, manage demographic change, and improve transitions between education sectors. The program was preceded by a similar initiative called the *Learning Regions Promotion of Networks*. Reghenzani-Kearns and Kearns (2012, p.341) explained that both of the programs had their focus on human capital development aimed at giving regional learning communities in Germany a boost in tapping the power of education as a means to location (or place-based) transformation. Reghenzani-Kearns and Kearns (2012, p.357) further explained:

> The projects not only involve educational providers but other community resources in improving education outcomes. Family learning, coordination between education

sectors, and neighbourhood based education are features of a number of the projects. One project aims to develop a vision for 'parent education'.

Reghenzani-Kearns and Kearns (2012, p. 362) also suggested that:

> The *Learning on Place* initiative will provide models for place management in building coherent arrangements to foster lifelong learning, while also addressing major challenges posed by social and economic change.

The program was initially driven by a number of strategic objectives for learning communities identified by Thinesse-Demel (in Reghenzani-Kearns and Kearns, 2012, pp. 340–1), including:

> …educational counselling to foster change management – organisational guidance and instruments for guidance through counselling institutions, youth authorities, employment offices (mandatory) and other agencies; the creation of learning centres – curricula, courses and certification; continuance between lifelong learning stages (from the cradle to the grave) – including transition from school to employment; small to medium enterprises as relevant partners and referents for training and qualifications; and communities as specific learning centres – learning cities/regions.

Certain aspects of the *Learning on Place* program appear to have potentially high appeal to Indigenous Australian contexts. For example, the idea that learning should include both children and parents, that learning should be interconnected across systems and generations, and that learning should be 'lifelong' and 'life wide' in its orientation are both consistent with Indigenous traditions and more likely to foster a culture of placing learning at the heart of societies.

In summary, all three of these place-based models (in the UK, US, and Germany) provide innovative ways to consider holistic child development and growth and place-based wellbeing, which are critically important from an Indigenous Australian perspective. Whilst evaluations (Reghenzani-Kearns and Kearns, 2012; Slocock, 2015) of some of these initiatives pointed to mixed results to date, they are nonetheless of interest to this study of Indigenous children and place as they potentially point to a suite of design concepts and principles that could ideally underpin place-based action in Indigenous Australia. These include local empowerment through a devolution of resources to the local level; a more holistic approach to improving education by recognising wider social determinants that impact on educational outcomes; and

recognising the importance of parents and neighbourhoods and not just institutions in enabling lifelong and life-wide learning. This research now considers 'whole child' development more deeply from an Indigenous Australian perspective.

Consideration of whole child approaches from an Indigenous Australian perspective

A number of key themes from the international literature and models (above) on place-based development and whole child theory stand out as being particularly and potentially pertinent to Indigenous contexts, namely: *health* (given relative poor health in Indigenous communities), *safety* (given the high-risk nature in many Indigenous communities), *connectedness* (given the unfinished business of Reconciliation in Australia), *personalised* (given that many Indigenous children have to 'catch up' if they are from homes that do not speak or read in Standard Australian English), *caring* (given history and ongoing issues of racism in Australia), and *prepared* (given labour markets are thin in many parts of Australia).

This holistic approach to child growth, however, appears a long way from constant political debates that tend to dominant Indigenous education discourse in Australia, namely Indigenous results in NAPLAN and others standardised testing (Schwab, 2012). Whilst growth in literacy and numeracy, for example, are incredibly important in preparing young people for life, they are not the sole indicators of child and youth success or growth. To this end, Schwab (2012, p.13) mounted the following argument:

> High-stakes tests are dull tools of assessment. Certainly, testing is an integral tool for assisting and supporting learning but tests should be used as one of many strategies professional educators employ to diagnose and address student strengths and weaknesses. The risks inherent in high-stakes test are numerous and the potential consequences (sometimes unintended) – whereby diversity is crushed by standardisation, autonomy replaced by prescription and trust by suspicion – are grave. It is important that education targets are shaped by professional educators in the classroom and community, not by politicians.

Schwab (2012) drew upon a number of lessons from a diverse range of education systems from throughout the world in identifying principles for school improvement. Schwab (2012) noted that Hargreaves and Shirley (2008), have studied systems in Finland, Canada, England and the US, to identify some common principles for improvement, including:

…a compelling, inclusive, and inspirational vision for economic, social and educational development; a more enriching and engaging curriculum for all, not to replace the basics, but to bolster and move beyond them; the inspiration, support and professional discretion that will attract and retain the very best teachers and accord them the high status their responsibilities deserve; and a national strategy to develop and renew educational leaders who can build and constantly improve strong professional learning communities; and recasting parents and communities as actively engaged partners rather than as consumers, recipients or targets of external interventions or government strategies and services (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2008, pp.142-143).

With regard to personalisation of learning and assessment, consideration should be given to the idea of 'growth mindsets'. Masters (2014, p.3) explained that growth mindsets (which could extend to Indigenous education contexts as with any learning context) are:

…focused on establishing the points that individuals have reached in their learning, setting personal stretch targets for further learning, and monitoring the progress that individuals make over time. Underpinning this approach is a belief that, at any given time, every student is at some point in his or her learning and is capable of further progress if they can be engaged, motivated and provided with relevant learning opportunities. Rather than expecting all students of the same age to be at the same point in their learning at the same time, this approach expects every student to make excellent learning progress over the course of a school year, regardless of their starting point. In other words, this third approach sets high expectations for every student's 'growth'.

This approach stands in contrast to the idea that students simply pass or fail tests. Moving toward an agenda of learner-improvement and teacher-assisted growth is more likely to ensure that children are learning each day, each month, each year.

In summarising this section, the task of improving Indigenous education is a classic 'chicken and egg' paradox; in that education offers the keys out of disadvantage, and yet at the same time, disadvantage locks in low educational outcomes. What the data make clear is that policy actors and advocates have to tackle in-school and out-of-school inequity simultaneously.

The next section of this chapter considers two models that are emerging in Indigenous Australian spaces that appear to seek parallel improvements in-school outcomes and in-

community outcomes. They are potentially illustrative of the principles of 'whole child' and 'place-based' development in action and contextualised for Indigenous Australian settings.

Emerging models in 'whole child' and 'place' in Indigenous Australian contexts

In considering models for whole child and/or place-based development from a First Nations perspective in Australia, five emerging initiatives are noteworthy in light of the findings of this current research, namely: the *Children's Ground* initiative in the Northern Territory (Children's Ground, 2013); the *Connected Communities* program in NSW (NSW DECS, 2011); the *Local Decision Making* model in NSW (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2015); the *Maranguka Justice Investment Project* in Bourke, NSW (KPMG, 2016); and the *Empowered Communities* national initiative involving eight communities/regions across Australia (Wunan Foundation, 2015). The central tenets of the programs are presented below. While these five initiatives are at various stages of development (and evaluation), they nonetheless appear to illustrate a number of desired design principles argued for in this thesis, namely a heightened attention to holistic child and adolescent development (in the case of the *Connected Communities*, *Children's Ground*, and *Maranguka* initiatives) and a quest for devolved local decision making (in the case of the *Empowered Communities*, *Maranguka*, and *Local Decision Making* models).

Children's Ground

Children's Ground is an organisation that has been established in Melbourne to combat intergenerational poverty and equity at a place-based and whole child level. The first site for Children's Ground implementation was in Kakadu, Northern Territory, where the organisation has worked with the Mirarr people through the Gundjeihmi Aboriginal Corporation (Children's Ground, 2013, p.3). More recently, the organisation has forged a partnership with community leaders in Alice Springs, Northern Territory. The Children's Ground website noted:

> In March, 2016, at the request of a group of Arrernte grandmothers determined to create a different future for the next generation of children, Children's Ground commenced our Community Engagement, Planning and Action phase – or 'Walk & Talk' – with families across four locations in central Australia: Irrkerlantye (Whitegate); Yarrenyty Arltere (Larapinta); Ewyenper Atwatye (Hidden Valley); and Mpweringke/Anapipe (northern outstations) (Retrieved on 11 January 2018 from http://www.childrensground.org.au/page/10/where-we-work).

Children's Ground is based on the principle of empowering local communities to create environments that support early childhood learning and child wellbeing, including through the employment of grassroots people in service delivery design, delivery and evaluation. In its prospectus aimed at eliciting philanthropic and government investment, Children's Ground (2013, p.3) provided the following explanation of the model:

> Our model has been developed with reference to a robust evidence base. Global evidence supports our guiding principles that key social determinants, including education are critical to future social and economic wellbeing, and that long term change can only occur through the agency of local families and communities … Just as important as 'what' we deliver, is 'how' we deliver. We are working with communities experiencing generations of complex trauma. We will build relationships so that people have agency in Children's Ground as designers, researchers, users and deliverers. We will be guided by, but not limited by the evidence. Our community led research (with our partner leading research organisations) will build and contribute to the evidence that is currently lacking about how we redress complex and extreme disadvantage in Australia and globally.

The Children's Ground initiative appears to empower local people through all stages of program design, implementation, evaluation and research. The initiative has overtly stated that it will use research and evidence to address complexity.

Connected Communities

The *Connected Communities* strategy is an initiative of the NSW Government, led by the NSW Department of Education (previously called the Department of Education and Communities or DECS). The program commenced in 2011 and an interim evaluation was released in 2016. In 2011, DECS stated that the program was 'driven by the need for a "new" approach to address educational and social disadvantage; and re-positioning schools as "community hubs", delivering services to support children and young people from birth through school into future training, study and employment' (NSW DECS, 2011, p.2). At its outset in 2011, the strategy identified a number of key features including cultural awareness training, teaching Aboriginal language and culture, new school executive positions, personalised learning plans for all students, early intervention and prevention focus, and partnerships with communities, TAFE colleges and universities. The strategy sought to widen the conventional role of schools to also

embrace 'place-based service delivery model' for children and young people and 'opportunity hubs' leading to post-school employment or further learning opportunities (*ibid.*, p.3).

Furthermore, the strategy articulated a number of key deliverables (*ibid.*, p.3–4), including:

> Aboriginal children being developmentally ready to benefit from schooling – in their physical health, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills and communication; Aboriginal families and community members are actively engaged in the school; Aboriginal students are increasingly achieving at or above national minimum standards and overall levels of literacy and numeracy achievement are improving and students are staying at school until Year 12 (or equivalent training); Aboriginal students are transitioning from school into post school training and employment; and Aboriginal students and communities report that the school values their identity, culture, goals and aspirations.

An interim evaluation report, produced by the (NSW Government) Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2015), found, '…it is too early to conclude with any confidence that Connected Communities is having an impact on student academic outcomes, although it is important to note that the data presented in this report only covers up to the midpoint of a five-year strategy (p.9).' That said, the interim report presented mixed results including a failure to innovatively engage more parents in both discussions with teachers and their children about learning (*ibid.*, p.10); the ongoing need for a whole-of-government response to the economic and social disadvantage experienced by the families of students (*ibid.*, p.10); and patchy engagement with universities (*ibid.*, p.47). More concerning, the interim report found next to nil engagement with TAFE Institutes (*ibid.*, p.47), which is startling given that TAFE sat within the Education Department's portfolio. On the positive side, there appeared to be encouraging inroads in the provision of Aboriginal language and culture in schools (*ibid.*, p.33). With regard to the finding about schools as service-delivery hubs for children, the interim report noted that establishment and maintenance of interagency linkages had been variable, notwithstanding that most schools have established relationships with Aboriginal Medical Services (*ibid.*, p.38).

As a state-sanctioned initiative of this scale that seeks to reinvent what schools are there to do for Aboriginal children, the *Connected Communities* program appears to be the only initiative of its kind in Australia. The idea of positioning schools as service delivery 'hubs' for children within communities is unique, as is the attention to Aboriginal language revitalisation. From

the standpoint of this thesis, the model is of particular interest to the notions of 'whole child' and place-based development.

Local Decision Making

Another initiative of the NSW Government – through its Aboriginal Affairs agency – is the Local Decision Making (LDM) model (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2015, p.1). The LDM model sits within the Government's larger plan for Aboriginal affairs, a plan called OCHRE (standing for opportunity, choice, healing, responsibility, empowerment). The primary objective of the LDM model is:

> Aboriginal communities to gain more control of government services in their communities, and move along a pathway of self-governance to build management skills and decision making authority (*ibid*).

Under the LDM model, 'accords' are being developed to 'to bind NSW Government agencies and [Aboriginal] regional alliances to the commitments they make about: how they will work together; how agreed priorities will be addressed/actioned; and what investment will be made to build leadership and governance capacity; and accountability and reporting requirements' (*ibid*.) The model seeks to redefine the relationship between Aboriginal communities and government, principally through sharing information and decision making power. Service delivery will be redesigned according to needs and priorities negotiated and agreed between Aboriginal regional alliances and government. Six initial sites have been identified under the LDM model, namely: Far Western NSW, Illawarra Wingecarribe, North Coast, Central West, Central Coast and New England North West (Aboriginal Affairs NSW, 2015).

Empowered Communities

As with the international models discussed earlier in this chapter, the *Empowered Communities* program is of interest to this study as it is fundamentally concerned with the devolution of resources and decision-making to the local or regional level, which the fieldwork data show as being important considerations for philanthropists and governments. A 'Design Report' produced by the Wunan Foundation (2015) and funded by the Australian Government, outlined an ambitious agenda to recalibrate the relationship between governments and Indigenous communities. The Design Report identified a headline policy proposal entailing three parts: (a) the empowerment of Indigenous people to take responsibility for our lives and futures; (b)

focusing all activities on achieving broad-scale social, economic and cultural development; and (c) increasing Productivity across Indigenous affairs (*ibid.*, p.19). The Design Report also reinforced a number of well-established principles and ideals in Indigenous affairs policy, including self-determination, mutual responsibility, and community development. The Report also repeated a long-standing call for the centre of gravity in Indigenous affairs to move from government to Indigenous people, by repositioning government as an enabler (*ibid.*, p.41). The Report argued that:

> The problem with the current paradigm of Indigenous affairs is that it is sclerotic. Its centre of gravity is the old disempowerment, based on passive welfare and government overreach into areas where Indigenous people need to be responsible, and neglect in areas of proper government responsibility. It is not based on productivity and development. It is therefore not possible to reform the current space occupied by Indigenous affairs. Rather, a new space must be located based on empowerment, productivity and development – and Indigenous affairs must be migrated to this new paradigm (*ibid.*, p.31).

Models such as *Empowered Communities* are potentially informative when it comes to designing place-based initiatives that benefit Indigenous children, young people and learners, which is the subject of this thesis. As the time of writing this thesis, the eight communities attached to the *Empowered Communities* were in the early stages of implementation. An important consideration for government will be how it treats this unique alliance of eight communities, whilst at the same time retaining (or indeed increasing) interest in the hundreds of other communities that constitute First Nations Australia, including those that choose not to opt-into the *Empowered Communities* model. Furthermore, government will need to consider the efficacy of initiatives that have already been tried in Indigenous affairs and feature in the Design Report (such as 'Negotiation Tables' in Queensland) based on independent evaluation. In addition, a potential consideration for both government and philanthropy is rigorous and more robust evaluations of similar initiatives operating in international contexts such as pooled funding models (such as those in the UK as discussed earlier). Another factor for government will be the extent of 'community buy-in' in each of the regions. In the case of one of the *Empowered Communities* locations, Cape York for example, a number of elected mayors from Aboriginal communities in the Cape – including Aurukun, Mapoon, Lockhart River, Kowanyama, and Napranum – have been reported in the media (Kim, 2013) as being concerned

about having a regional body control funding, policy and service delivery on Cape York, as opposed to a more localised and nuanced approach. Nevertheless, an independent and publicly available evaluation of the initiative at some stage will be critically important in informing wider insights and future directions in Indigenous affairs policy in Australia (including possible lessons for philanthropic investors in Indigenous education).

Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project

The Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project based in Bourke, NSW aims to re-divert the exorbitant (social, emotional and financial) cost of incarcerating First Nations young people into prevention and early intervention measures. Just Reinvest (the agency working with local stakeholders in Bourke) explained that:

> …justice investment focuses on why crime is occurring in the first place. When young people offend, there are often other issues at play such as homelessness, child protection, disability, high-risk drug and alcohol use, violence, poverty and a lack of appropriate services.[22]

The initiative was established in response to persistent and alarmingly high rates of juvenile justice convictions in Bourke, a small geographically isolated town of approximately 3,000 people in far north-west NSW. 'Maranguka' is a word from the traditional owners of the region, the Ngemba First Nations people, meaning 'caring for others and offering help'. The word (and more importantly, the sentiment and spirit behind it) has provided inspiration and guidance for an initiative that seeks to change outcomes for young people growing up in Bourke.

First Nations young people in Bourke and across Australia are entering criminal and juvenile justice systems at highly disproportionate rates. To illustrate, Just Reinvest (2018) has compiled the following data to underpin a call to state and federal governments for urgent action in preventing juvenile and criminal justice contact in Bourke, NSW, and nationally. Just Reinvest (2018) have pointed to:

> …record high prison populations [in Australia] at a cost of $3.7 billion a year…Aboriginal people are over-represented at every stage of Australia's criminal justice system…Aboriginal imprisonment has increased by a staggering 50% in just ten years…Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners make up just over a quarter of

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[22] Retrieved on 16 May 2018 from http://www.justreinvest.org.au/our-work

the total Australian prisoner population whilst making up only 3% of the total population…Most people in prison have been there before. It's one of the reasons imprisonment rates are sky-rocketing…in NSW the prison population has never been so big, boasting a 17 per cent increase in just two years to reach record highs in December 2015…NSW has the largest adult prisoner population, accounting for 33% of the total Australian adult population…in NSW, over half the children in prison are Aboriginal yet Aboriginal young people make up just 2.2 per cent of the population…in fact, Aboriginal young people are 28 times more likely to be placed in juvenile prison that non-Aboriginal young people. [23]

The Maranguka project aspires to work differently to previous programs. That is, the project aims to forge a highly integrated and coordinated courses of action to prevent crime and intervene early in supporting young people at risk of juvenile justice contact. In 2016, the accounting and evaluation organisation, KPMG, was commissioned by the project to undertake a preliminary evaluation, which concluded (KPMG, 2016, p.xiii):

> …[the] Justice Reinvestment approach was found to be promising on a number of criterion. The approach has the potential to address the underlying causes of crime, the approach is data driven and the approach is community-led.

One of the central and defining features of the Maranguka project is that it was founded on a theory of social change called 'Collective Impact', in that it embraces a 'common agenda', a 'backbone organisation', and a 'shared measurement system' (*ibid.*). To varying degrees, each of the aforementioned models (*Maranguka*, *Children's Ground*, *Connected Communities*, *Local Decision Making* model, and *Empowered Communities*) appear to align to design principles from 'collective impact' approaches, which are explored in the next section.

Collective impact

The concept of 'collective impact' is guiding social change in parts of the US, and to a lesser (but emerging) extent in Australia. Collective impact, in a nutshell, is the idea that organisations need to rally around a shared mission and share resources and data to tackle socially complex and seemingly intractable problems. This section commences with definitions of collective impact. It then examines a 'case for change' in Indigenous education and broader affairs. The

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[23] Retrieved on 16 May 2018 from http://www.justreinvest.org.au/our-work

section then discusses how the notion of collective impact differs from 'coordination' and how the approach could potentially guide philanthropic investment in First Nations education into the future. The section then discusses where collective impact is being applied in Australia and then considers why collective impact is worth greater consideration in First Nations Australian contexts.

What is 'collective impact'?

Social Leadership Australia and the Benevolent Society (2013, p.2) defined the fundamental value proposition of collective impact in the following terms:

> The underlying premise of Collective Impact is that no single organisation can create large-scale, lasting social change alone. There is no 'silver bullet' solution to systemic social problems, and these problems cannot be solved by simply scaling or replicating one organisation or program.

'Collective impact' emerged as an idea and framework promoted by Kania and Kramer (2011) in the *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. The framework is grounded in emergence and complexity theories. Advocates for collective impact argue that real social change (in highly complex social scenarios) is better achieved through 'centralized, strategic, and coordinated action, rather than through decentralized and isolated interventions that can often work at cross purposes' (Moss, 2013). Kania and Kramer's (2013) framework has five elements to it, as reproduced here in Table 5.

Table 5: Kania & Kramer's five conditions of collective impact

The Five Conditions of Collective Impact	
Common Agenda	All participants have a shared vision for change including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.
Shared Measurement	Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants ensures efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Participant activities must be differentiated while still being coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.
Continuous Communication	Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
Backbone Support	Creating and managing collective impact requires a separate organization(s) with staff and a specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies.

The intent of collective impact extends well beyond the idea of collaboration between players and partners; the latter runs the risk of being passive and only marginally aligned. Collective impact, on the other hand, is suggested (*ibid.*) as requiring a deep and enduring commitment between agencies to marshal around and align their activities to the same agenda; to share ideas, personnel and data; and to put their trust in a 'backbone' organisation to coordinate.

Kania and Kramer (2013, no page numbers) conceded that their framework posed a number of challenges both at the stage of conception and implementation, including 'the difficulty of bringing people together; competition and mistrust between funders and grantees; the difficulty in agreeing on shared metrics; the risk of multiple self-anointed backbone organisations; and the perennial obstacles of local politics'. The authors (*ibid.*) remained undeterred however in advocating for the framework by suggesting that:

> The power of collective impact lies in the heightened vigilance that comes from multiple organizations looking for resources and innovations through the same lens, the rapid learning that come from continuous feedback loops, and the immediacy of action that comes from a unified and simultaneous response among all participants.

Kania and Kramer (2013) further stated that the key difference between collective impact and other coordination efforts is that the process and results are 'emergent' in nature rather than predetermined. Kania and Kramer (2011) also argued that mere 'collaboration' has failed to solve many social problems over many decades. They suggested that conventional models of collaboration lack the elements to deliver collective impact, including models such as 'funder collaboratives' that are 'interested in supporting the same issue who pool their resources', but generally 'do not adopt an overarching evidence-based plan of action or a shared measurement system, nor do they engage in differentiated activities beyond check writing or engage stakeholders from other sectors' (*ibid.*, p.39). Likewise, the authors are concerned that 'public-private partnerships' are too often 'targeted narrowly, such as developing a particular drug to fight a single disease, and usually don't engage the full set of stakeholders that affect the issue, such as the potential drug's distribution system' (*ibid.*). As for 'multi-stakeholder initiatives', Kania and Kramer (2011) expressed concern that 'these initiatives lack any shared measurement of impact and the supporting infrastructure to forge any true alignment of efforts or accountability for results' (*ibid.*). With regard to 'social sector networks', the authors

claimed that 'collaboration is generally ad hoc, and most often the emphasis is placed on information sharing and targeted short term actions, rather than a sustained and structured initiative' (*ibid.*).

Kania and Kramer (*ibid.*) also argued that collective impact initiatives are:

> …long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem. Their actions are supported by a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, and ongoing communication, and are staffed by an independent backbone organization.

Accordingly, in his article titled 'Catalytic philanthropy' Kramer (2009) challenged philanthropists to move beyond 'conventional' approaches to philanthropy (who should I give my money to and how much?), by embracing 'catalytic' philanthropy instead (how do I catalyse a campaign to achieve measurable impact?). Catalysing campaigns within a 'collective impact' framework could offer appeal to communities and philanthropists that are jointly looking to operate in a 'vanguard' way.

A case for collective change

In light of the multiple levels of complexity in Indigenous affairs, education and philanthropy (as reflected in the data and findings from this study including through the literature review, fieldwork, and subsequent analysis) there is arguably a case for renewal in Australia's approach to First Nations education and community development. At the very least, there is a pressing need to better understand how the plethora of current initiatives interact with one another and lessons that emerge from those interactions. Regardless of the merit of individual programs, an overarching concern looms large in the form of disjointed efforts, siloed activity, and duplication, which only serves to undermine the very objectives that organisations are seeking to advance. For instance, there are at least three foundations operating in Australia, all with the objective of improving Indigenous literacy. While conversations with one of these foundations during the course of this study revealed that the foundations speak to each other, there was limited evidence of highly coordinated and sustained planning, resource sharing, and collaborative effort between the three. This may be because the foundations could be in competition with each other as grant-seekers.

Organisations (community, public, and philanthropic alike) operating in the Indigenous development space ideally will be actively considering ways to leverage each other's expertise, resources and share data and knowledge in an aligned way. Individual efforts, working in isolation, are not working to the degree that First Nations communities need them to (Morgan Disney & Associates, 2006; Al-Yaman, 2011; Stewart, Lohoar & Higgins, 2011; World Vision, 2013). As earlier noted, unless community wellbeing positively improves, then children are unlikely to prosper in and out of school. One of the more recent reports by the Productivity Commission (2014), entitled *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2014* documented little to no progress across a number of wellbeing indicators, including Indigenous hospitalisations for self-harm; psychological stress, rates of disability and chronic disease; adult imprisonment and juvenile detention rates; literacy and numeracy results at school, which are particularly poor in remote areas; and family and community violence. Left uncorrected, these wider social outcomes are likely to undermine efforts to improve academic development and wellbeing among First Nations children and young people.

Against this backdrop of community stress, there is a clear case for change. Theorists and public policy actors are sensing that old siloed ways of working are not fit for purpose in complex public policy arenas. Boxelaar, Paine and Beilin (2006), for example, suggested that actors in rural development and natural resource management needed to not only adopt different practices in complex fields, but the very body of knowledge that we tend to operate under needed to be reframed, by arguing that:

> The government's orientation towards collaborative arrangements has significant implications for the way in which policy decisions are made and the role of knowledge in that process. Traditionally rational modes of thinking, a belief in objective knowledge and an absolute truth as well as the logic of optimal choice have dominated the policy process. However, with many contemporary societal issues we are faced with a situation where what is considered legitimate knowledge differs from one situation and group of people to the next. There is often no single and comprehensively accepted body of knowledge that can be referred to in order to settle debates, and consequently uncertainty prevails. Moreover, many issues are so complex that they are beyond the capacity of one single agent to grasp and control (pp.113–114).

Boxelaar *et al.* (*ibid.*) further argued for a more constructivist (learning) and dialogical approach to complexity, as opposed to a sole reliance on positivist approaches, by suggesting that:

> This [complexity] implores us to reject the prevailing positivist concept of objective, value-free and absolute knowledge as an *a priori* basis for decision-making and, instead, adopt a constructivist theory of knowledge that emphasises how knowledge is socially constructed through an ongoing dialogical process between interdependent stakeholders. In other words, the collaborative approaches that are implemented in the face of uncertainty and complexity can only be successful if we recognise that knowledge is located between the interdependent stakeholders in a particular context and that so-called 'rational' knowledge is contested by diverse knowledge claims that arise from the interaction with the broader community of stakeholders in the rural development process.

Breaking down silos and opening up collaborative and dialogical processes are particularly important in Indigenous affairs. In a report prepared by World Vision (2013) for the Australian Government, stakeholders (from Indigenous, government and NGO sectors) involved in a research project collectively identified a number of common themes and principles that are important in enabling Indigenous community development. These included: that First Nations people want to control their futures; place-based approaches to Aboriginal community development need to be reinforced using an evidence base and effective monitoring and impact measurement; the need to learn from and build on existing initiatives; and that government, NGOs and other agencies are presently working in silos to the detriment of Aboriginal development (*ibid.*, p.3).

Similarly, Stewart, Lohoar, and Higgins (2011, p.2) found that several factors impede Indigenous educational and wider community development, including the lack of 'time and resources (human, capital and financial) for community coordination initiatives' and 'lack of skilled program leaders, practitioners and staff'; 'risk-averse organisational cultures'; 'inflexible organisational structures or service delivery models, including silo-based frameworks'; 'one-size-fits-all approaches that ignore local diversity'; and 'program partners that lack clearly defined roles or responsibilities'. Stewart *et al.* (*ibid.*) also noted attempts on the part of Australian governments to shift 'towards a 'whole-of-government' approach to provide long-term place-based initiatives and 'joined-up' services with a view to improving

efficiencies, avoiding duplication, and to move away from departmental silo-based frameworks'.

Given that First Nations children and young people require holistic services that encompass education, housing, health, safety, culture, and recreation, a renewed emphasis on joined-up and collective planning and implementation is warranted.

Enter 'collective impact'

Communities of disadvantage (including many First Nations communities), both in Australia and elsewhere, face many systemic and seemingly intractable social challenges such as poverty, inequality, violence, racism and drug abuse, to name but a few. How governments and philanthropists respond to this can either help or hinder solutions. Collaboration and coordination are of paramount importance but remain largely elusive, and may not be enough.

In response to complex social problems and frustrations about silo-based thinking and action, the philanthropic and community sector in Australia in recent years is adopting an increasing interest in 'collective impact' models emanating out of the US. Graham and O'Neil (2014, p.104) for example, believe that:

> …the time has come for a 'step' change in the way we respond to social disadvantage in Australia. We know that no single policy, government department, organisation, or program can tackle or solve the increasingly complex social problems we face. The current practice of governments and others of funding more and more projects and programs through a competitive funding system is simply not working and the data above proves it. We need a completely new way of working.

Graham and O'Neil (2014) argued that Australia needs to invest more time and money enacting systemic change and enabling collaboration, by focusing less on conceiving social change through the lens of programs and organisations. 'We need to move beyond siloed responses and fragmented programs (2014, p.104).' Graham *et al.* (*ibid.*) further posited that:

> The next lens is that we need to stop doing things 'to' people and start doing things 'with' them. The social system – governments, nonprofits, philanthropists, and business – need to start engaging citizens in the design and delivery of systemic change as well as services. And our last perspective is that we need to measure progress and impact.

Not just for accountability reasons, but to create a culture and practice of learning and improvement; to have a basis from which to assess calculated risks for innovation, knowing when to scale what works and how to stop what doesn't.

Graham and O'Neil (2014) have called upon government and philanthropists to invest in collective impact initiatives in Australia. They suggested that combating Indigenous disadvantage is one area in which Australia could focus its attention. Graham *et al.* (2014, p.105) concluded that:

While governments in Australia have not yet engaged beyond isolated pockets, their decade long focus on 'place-based' funding structures has become an enabler of this (Collective Impact) movement. Communities across Australia are seeking to reorient and leverage place-based funding into Collective Impact initiatives. And the government is starting to take more interest.

Where is 'Collective Impact' being applied in Australia?

Graham and O'Neil (2014) have helped document the 'birth of an Australian movement' of collective impact. With support from the Centre for Social Impact, the authors undertook a study tour of collective impact sites in the US. Following the tour, Graham and O'Neil (2014) reported that they helped convene Australia's first collective impact conference and have designed an 'immersive learning experience for participants to move beyond 'what is' collective impact and into the 'how to' (*ibid.,* p.102). The authors shared a couple 'lighthouse' case studies in Australia that illustrated the power of collaborative models, namely the *Blue Mountains Stronger Family Alliance* and *90 Homes for 90 Lives* (*ibid.,* p.105).

Within Indigenous Australian contexts more specifically, a small number of Collective Impact models are emerging. The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute (AIGI) stated on its website, for example, that it is looking to 'generate a more integrated collective impact across the wider Indigenous governance arena' by establishing partnerships, and forming strategic alliances with existing service providers and research institutions to achieve AIGI's core objectives. On their website, AIGI identified a number of collective impact relationships that they are pursuing, including:

…program alliances, including collaborating on specific projects; knowledge partnerships, including sharing of information and collaborative research activities;

strategic relationships, including high-level advocacy pieces and enhanced dialogue; and strategic partnerships have been identified in AIGI's business plan.[24]

Whilst not citing literature on 'collective impact', the recently formed *Empowered Communities* model[25] nonetheless embraces one of the five 'conditions' of collective impact, namely 'backbone support' (Wunan Foundation, 2015). Meanwhile, in Alice Springs, Lucas (2016) documents the Pre-birth to 4-Year-Old Collective Impact initiative and reports that the initiative has 'resulted in strong project outputs and early credible signs of success for young Indigenous and non-Indigenous children as the collective creates a shared vision and integrates activities with purpose' (Lucas, 2016, p.10). Lucas explained that members of the initiative have adopted a vision of 'Learning and living are one' (*ibid.*) and that agencies have aligned their activities to a number of objectives, including using data and evidence to inform future directions. Lucas (2016, p.11) indicated that 'the aligned approach is working' by sharing a number of early outcomes including that attainment outcomes and two-year growth for the demonstration Primary School in Literacy and Numeracy have increased at a rate three times higher than the expected improvement rate; that parental engagement and participation has increased exponentially; and that attendance figures have increased from 75 per cent to 93.7 per cent.

The three models above (AIGI, *Empowered Communities*, Alice Springs Pre-birth to 4-Year-Old Collective Impact) provide early glimpses of collective impact thinking and application in Indigenous Australian contexts. But in the interests of balance, Woolcock (2015, p.2) outlined the following challenges and cautionary notes about the approach in Aboriginal spaces in Australia:

> There has been considerable hype and fanfare in Australia recently accompanying the North American-informed Collective Impact (CI) approach and its claims to deliver real transformative social change for individuals and communities. CI actively promotes its principal incentive and distinctive trait, namely to concentrate the energies of its collaborators to achieve real, long term, measurable and sustainable outcomes, oft quoted as a Social Return on Investment...

Woolcock's (*ibid.*) next point potentially provides a salient point for philanthropists:

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[24] http://www.aigi.com.au/collective-impact/, retrieved on 11 January 2018
[25] http://empoweredcommunities.org.au/, retrieved on 12 December 2017

Not coincidentally, the rise of CI's visibility has emerged alongside rapidly diminishing public funding for social change initiatives, with a corresponding and somewhat belated turn to the philanthropic sector to partially meet this funding shortfall. Early signs across Australia indicate that philanthropic funds are no less driven by a 'value for money' imperative that has left many lamenting the shift in community organisations working to satisfy donor expectations rather than working with and for local communities.

Woolcock (*ibid*.) goes on to contrast collective impact approaches with community cultural development models, as demonstrated by Beyond Empathy's 'Maven Project' in northern NSW:

In this context [satisfying donor expectations versus working with communities], some serious questions have already been raised about the Collective Impact approach and ambition, particularly how CI can meaningfully engage with long-term disadvantaged local communities and realistically agree on what successful outcomes would look like for such communities. Community cultural development (CCD) would seem to offer a useful counterpoint to the CI approach with its enduring emphasis on authentic process and bottom-up solutions but CCD too has received its own share of criticism for an obsession with process to the exclusion of real and tangible social outcomes. Whatever approach's claims are to be tested, this paper starts from the standpoint that their veracity will only be significant if they can actually show they're making a difference in Australia's most disadvantaged communities and populations.

Woolcock's (2015) point about collective impact initiatives being able to demonstrate value and efficacy is entirely legitimate. But what is equally legitimate is that collective impact in Indigenous Australia is still in its relatively early days. Nonetheless, public and/or philanthropic investors of collective impact initiatives will need to consider not only investment in the initiatives themselves, but equally, investment in robust and independent evaluation at the outset of and throughout projects, not just at their end point.

A case for collective impact in Indigenous education

A perennial challenge in Indigenous affairs - including in Indigenous education - is greater coordination and alignment of effort between departments, sectors, governments, and organisations. The evaluation of the COAG Trials highlighted the elusiveness of coordination

in Indigenous affairs (see Morgan Disney & Associates, 2006). One of the chief architects of the COAG Trials, former Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department Dr Peter Shergold, has publicly lamented both personal and systems failure in public policy in Indigenous affairs (Karvelas, 2013).

There is a myriad of public, corporate, philanthropic and community groups with a stake in Indigenous affairs and education, and yet their efforts on far too many occasions are akin to 'ships passing in the night'. Silos are seemingly a serial and omnipresent threat to positive and collective impact in Indigenous affairs and Indigenous education. As noted in *Chapter 4* of this thesis, there is no shortage of initiatives in Indigenous education and education more broadly operating across Australia. In addition to the myriad of policies, programs, and units of people and work that sit within government departments, universities, institutes and schools throughout Australia, there are also a number of supplementary and specialised programs tailored for and targeting Indigenous students and are funded by government and/or philanthropy.

This thesis does not argue against the need for specialised and supplementary programs in Indigenous education. As data collected in the fieldwork overwhelmingly show higher (and often unmet) educational, social and economic needs among Indigenous young people, give rise to the following pertinent question: is there scope for greater collective impact? In considering the potential for a 'collective impact' agenda in Indigenous education, a potential starting point is likely to be more concentrated and deeper research (that is, an extension of research beyond this thesis) which maps the terrain of current and specific activity in Indigenous collective impact spaces and gauges the extent to which the initiatives are making a difference not only in terms of their individual program outcomes, but more specifically in terms of their collective impacts. Such research would be conducted against a backdrop whereby rigorous evaluation and robust evidence in Indigenous education is sorely lacking. Notwithstanding Indigenous peoples' reticence toward more research, the need for robust research in Indigenous affairs, including Indigenous education, has never been more important. The Australian Department of Finance in its *Strategic Review of Indigenous Expenditure* for the Australian Government in 2010, for instance, advocated for major improvements to data and evaluation, by stating (p.12):

> Robust evidence is lacking on the performance and effectiveness of many Indigenous programs. Program evaluation activity in this area has been patchy at best, and many

of the evaluations which have been conducted have lacked a suitable measure of rigour and independence. More robust evaluation arrangements are needed for the future. Evaluation efforts should be concentrated on those key policy measures (such as the Northern Territory Emergency Response and Remote Service Delivery strategies and major programs in which significant resources are invested, and which have the potential to contribute materially to the achievement of the *Closing the Gap* targets. Data improvements are also needed, both for evaluation and reporting purposes: the lack of robust baseline data, for example, has been a key weakness in many evaluation studies.

Equally, Purdie and Buckley (2010) in their paper for the *Closing the Gap Clearinghouse*, provided a guide to where attention and effort in Indigenous education evaluation and research needs to be bolstered. In particular, Purdie and Buckley (2010, p.2) argued for more research higher up the evidence hierarchy, by positing:

> Evidence hierarchies reflect the relative authority of various types of research. The studies least likely to produce good evidence for policy and practice are single case studies, followed by descriptive studies that may provide helpful lists of quotations but do not offer detailed analysis. Greater weight is given to conceptual studies that analyse data according to conceptual themes but these studies may be limited by a lack of diversity in the sample. Studies using conceptual frameworks, appropriate sampling and data analysis techniques, and that can be generalised to a wider context are considered to provide the best evidence for policy and practice development.

With these lessons in mind, a number of research design principles are important to consider in Indigenous education, including rigorous evidence about the performance and effectiveness of programs; truly independent research and analysis; co-production of research with Indigenous communities; robust baseline data to underpin performance measurement; and research methodologies that combine strong conceptual frameworks, appropriate sampling, and rigorous data analysis techniques. By adopting such principles and methods in a First Nations collective impact research space, there is potential for philanthropic, community, and government to embrace and advance collective impact in Indigenous education through a program of co-produced and evidence-informed action research.

Conclusion

As the data and discussions within this chapter have shown, there is an overwhelming case for change and innovation in Indigenous affairs, especially as it relates to Indigenous children and young people. In considering their future investment or positive intervention in Indigenous education, philanthropists are invited to consider the potentiality of collective impact, whole child theory, and place-based approaches in improving Indigenous education and wellbeing among children and their families.

Philanthropic investors – working with Indigenous communities – would be wise to reposition human capital growth and 'place' development at the heart of Indigenous and social policy and program design. To do otherwise would only see more Indigenous young people dropping off the edge socially when they should be at the cutting edge economically, culturally and environmentally. In other words, to put First Nations people first is to put 'place' first. How this could be done is the subject of the next chapter (*Chapter 7*), which presents a framework for future philanthropic investment in Indigenous education, which this author has called 'Reframework' – for reasons that will soon be explained.

Chapter 7: 'Reframework'

Chapter Introduction

'Reframework' of course is not a real word. Rather, it is a play on words. This author has deliberately devised it as a catchy way to interweave a 'framework' (which was identified as one of the original goals presented to the ARC for this research) and the need for what Knight (2012) calls 'reframing'. Knight (2012) hypothesised that many of the world's trickiest problems might be better tackled through a change of focus, which he dubs 'reframing'. Knight argued that by searching for answers outside our current frames of vision, we could better advance a range of global and societal challenges. For example, he suggested that fighting terrorism (networks) is different (and less effective) than fighting terrorists. Knight drew upon the principles of evolutionary biology (variation and selection) in thinking about how the world can generate more effective ideas, as opposed to simply seek more ideas. He further argued that we too often ask the wrong questions in our pursuit of answers, and that we need to focus on improving processes (that are adaptive and are conducted over realistic timeframes), rather than favouring singular, top-down solutions.

With Knight's counsel and inspiration in mind, this research provides a *Reframework* – this author's term to illustrate a need for reconceptualisation of the supposed 'problem' and potential 'solutions' in First Nations education; and to respond to the overarching research question of this study.

Three conceptual approaches (whole child, place, and collective impact) have emerged as being critically important from the new data generated by this research (as outlined in the previous chapter). The models are not offered as 'silver bullets' but rather as conceptual frames that could be added to (and actively challenge) the present mix of measures, dialogues and interactions aimed at improving Indigenous education outcomes.

'Reframework' as presented in Tables 6 and 7 aims to provide strategic guidance to philanthropic bodies on community engagement and future strategic investment on four levels: individual, 'place', systems, and societal.

Table 6: Reframework: Improving philanthropic investment in Indigenous education at individual and place levels

At an individual level	At a 'place' level
By sponsoring initiatives that:	By investing in place-based development models that put Indigenous young people and learning at the centre of community development and support young people in their quest to *be*, *belong*, and *become* (as per the Australian Early Years Framework) in their childhood years but also adolescent and adult years.
▪ enable Indigenous young people to pursue their dreams in professions or vocations through scholarships in higher education and vocational education and community education;	
▪ demonstrate and elevate 'whole child' development models by investing in initiatives that 'join the dots' for children and young people between education, culture, health, family wellbeing, and play;	Place-based educational investment is not limited to funds flowing to schools. Instead it recognises that learning success is influenced by factors both within and outside of schools' gates, and responds accordingly.
▪ embrace wider notions of Indigenous learning such as those presented in the *Learning, earning, yearning* model; and	Learning can happen beyond formal, institutionalised education; it can happen in workplaces, libraries, cultural centres, Men's Sheds, women's community cooperatives, sports clubs, over the internet, on 'Country', and in other community settings.
▪ acknowledge that learning is fundamentally a social process and is ideally both life-long and life-wide in nature, as well as community-driven. As such, wider lenses of investment should be actively considered. By building 'learning cultures' within individuals, families and communities, then young people can recognise and appreciate learning as a 'norm'.	Place-based investment could incubate learning opportunities within youth centres, sporting clubs, libraries, homework and breakfast clubs, and other community cooperatives. Place-based investment means investment in the 'bricks' (health, education, recreation, etc.) and the mortar (collective impact backbones).
Key message in a bottle to philanthropists:	*Key message in a bottle to philanthropists:*
Growing learners' proficiency in reading, scientific and mathematical literacies is a key goal of education, but fostering learning for a life of wellbeing and meaning is a far greater aspiration.	*In order for schools to be thriving; then school communities need to be not only surviving, but striving socially and economically, and reviving culturally.*

Think creatively, act courageously, and invest over the long haul

Source: T. Dreise, doctoral research.

Table 7: Reframework: Improving philanthropic investment in Indigenous education at systems and societal levels

At a systems level	At a societal level
By funding evaluations that advance both a culture and practice of measurement at a 'collective impact' (place) level, not simply at input, output, outcome, and program levels.	By collaborating (not just with money but with advocacy) with educators and researchers to advance and promote the full spectrum of Indigenous learning, including learning:
By sponsoring initiatives that support organisations to co-produce and share data and identify a common agenda for positive change in an area ripe for potential philanthropic attention.	*...for Indigenous people* – learning opportunities in community, excursions to other places of learning, bursaries, and scholarships;
By co-building the capacity of communities to undertaken research and evaluation through Community Participatory Research methods.	*...about Indigenous people* – resources in Indigenous studies for all people (including non-Indigenous school students) about Indigenous Australia, the truth of the past and present;
Research and development that (i) embraces positive disruption and complexity thinking, (ii) stimulates and gauges 'Collective Impact', and (iii) explores the relationships between nodes in Indigenous education.	*...by Indigenous people* – empowering Indigenous educators to undertake research, development, and innovation and to collaborate with each other; supporting Indigenous demand and supply sides in markets of choice;
	...with Indigenous people – collaborative projects between researchers, educators and committed and learned partners, especially in the areas of evaluation (what works), innovation (what's worth trying), and understanding within wider society (combating ignorance and racism).
Key message in a bottle to philanthropists:	*Key message in a bottle to philanthropists:*
Silos may benefit departments, but communities are far greater than the sum of the parts of departmental activity, and are therefore unlikely to benefit from siloed thinking, nor siloed activity.	*Societal ignorance hurts communities, while enlightenment empowers them.*

Think creatively, act courageously, and invest over the long haul

Source: T. Dreise, doctoral research.

An explanation of 'Reframework'

As was established earlier in this study, philanthropic organisations in Australia are very diverse. They can differ in terms of scale (big corporate organisation to small family trust); focus (priorities and interests); geographical footprint (from local to national); and nature of giving (process-driven versus relationally-driven). With these variations in mind, *Reframework* has been designed with a 'suite of options' in mind, namely investment at individual, place,

systems, and societal levels. Such a suite potentially provides investors with a choice depending upon their preferences and level of resources (human and financial).

The framework also draws upon relevant and diverse literature to potentially explain and inspire different ways at looking at learning among Indigenous children and young people, given that so many of them – as this study has found – are disengaged, disinterested and dispirited.

Within *Reframework,* philanthropic bodies could seek to position their community engagement and strategic investment on one of four levels or any combination of all four. The following sections explain the four levels (individual, place, systems, and societal) in more detail.

Individual level

As the 'snapshot' (Table 3 in *Chapter 4*) showed, philanthropic organisations already invest in Indigenous young people, especially through the granting of university and boarding school scholarships. This will remain important into the future, particularly if the rate of First Nations participation in university studies remains stubbornly low (Pechenkina & Anderson, 2011). Equally, philanthropists might give thought to the extension of scholarships into vocational and community education. Adult and community education for Indigenous Australians is a desperately neglected area of education, so there is much scope for philanthropic leadership in this space. It should be remembered that learning happens in all types of settings, including workplaces, libraries, cultural centres, camps and excursions, Men's Sheds, women's community cooperatives, sports clubs, over the internet, on 'Country', at learning festivals, and in other community settings. By investing in adult and community education, communities can send a strong message to young people that 'learning is life'.

Whole child development is a central feature of *Reframework* at the individual level. This study has provided evidence that governments and philanthropic bodies with an interest in Indigenous education need to invest in not only Indigenous learners (in schools), but First Nations young people (in communities). Children need to be seen as more than academic units, operating in a vacuum of community, culture, economics, family relationships and societal factors. Dreise *et al.* (2016) recognised whole child development as an important aspect of balancing Australia's education systems to improve outcomes for Indigenous young people, as reflected in their model represented in Fig. 5 below. The model calls for a balance between 'demand factors' in education (namely building learning cultures, learner responsiveness and

whole child development) with 'supply factors' (namely, quality teaching, challenging curriculum, and equitable resourcing). Too often governments respond to educational disparity through pulling 'supply' levers without attending to 'demand' levers (*ibid*.).

Fig. 5: Balancing demand and supply in Indigenous education
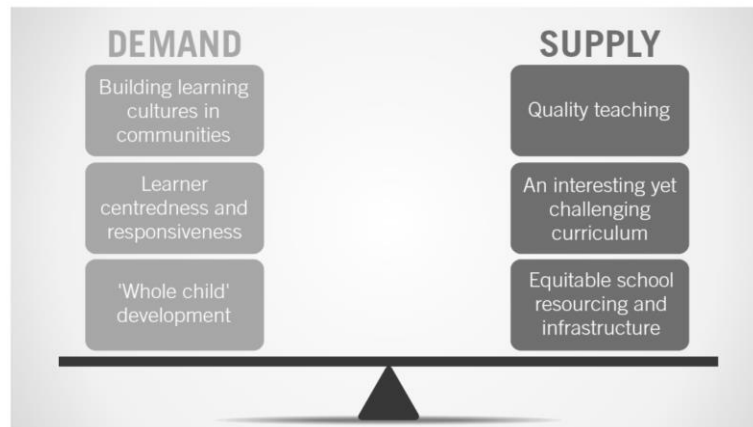
Source: Dreise *et al.,* 2016, p.3.

Dreise *et al.* (2016) also concluded – as does this thesis – that appropriate school and community resourcing is imperative in meeting the holistic needs of children and young people, and propose that:

> Measures that simultaneously empower learning dispositions among Indigenous communities (by facilitating the valuing of, and demand for, lifelong and life-wide learning), and adequately equip schools to meet the needs of the whole child, are worthy of greater policy consideration (*ibid*., p.3).

Dreise *et al.* (2016, p.15) further argued that:

> Holistic, multi-faceted, co-produced models of interventions are particularly important in communities that are experiencing high levels of intergenerational and cumulative disadvantage, acute poverty, and family stress caused by social inhibitors such as overcrowded housing, racism and dispossession. To increase school attendance two streams of effort have to be embraced and run concurrently: empowering communities (outside of school gates) and targeting resourcing to schools (inside school gates) to meet the needs of the whole child.

In explaining the model further, Dreise (2016, online article with no page number), in an article written for teachers, wrote:

> You will also note the reference to 'whole child development' in the [Dreise *et al*., 2016] model. By this we mean that children need to grow not only academically but emotionally, socially, physiologically, and culturally. Strong relationships between schools, families, and community agencies (in health, children's services, etc.) are therefore critically important. In order for children to learn, they need to be safe, nourished, stimulated, engaged, and ideally confident.

In terms of the multitude of 'in-school' and 'out-of-school' factors that adversely impact on Indigenous young people's success and confidence, these could include parental attitudes based on their own negative experiences of schooling. Furthermore, ongoing inequities in early childhood and primary school education outcomes have meant many Indigenous young people are not equipped with prerequisite knowledges and skills required in high school. A lack of curriculum choices and poor pedagogy are also likely to impact on young people's sense of engagement, excitement and relevance toward learning. Racism both within school gates and outside of them remain real and perennial threats to Indigenous wellbeing and confidence. Family pressures including a lack of financial resources and the impact of overcrowding, alcohol, drugs and violence within some family units also place stress on First Nations children and young people. A lack of access to community services and facilities (including recreational), infrastructure and transportation represent further pressure points.

One way in which philanthropists could support Indigenous learners at a secondary school level, is through greater learning choices. To this end, the author has developed a model called *Learning, earning, yearning* summarised in Fig. 6.

Fig. 6: Learning earning yearning model
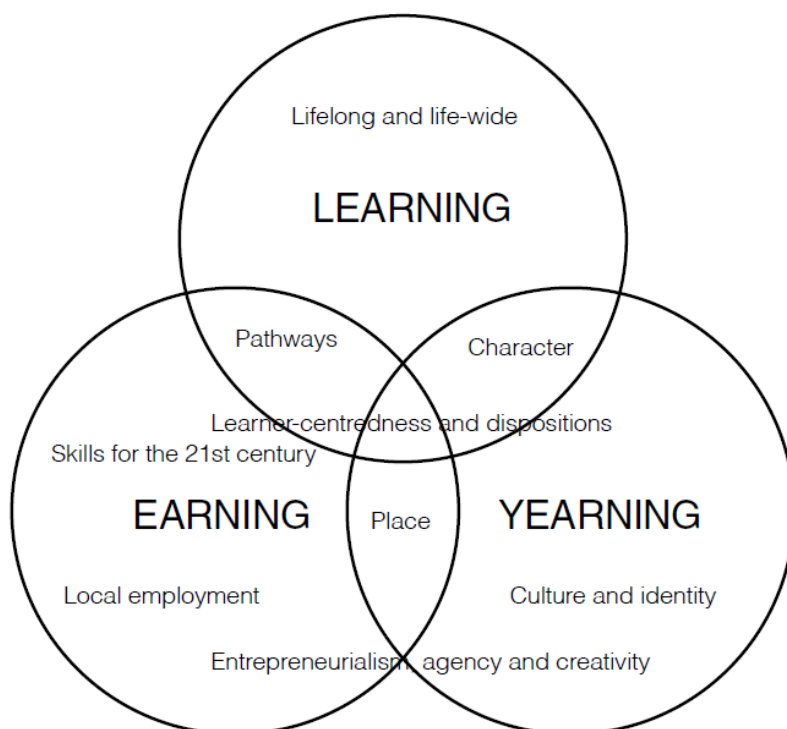
Source: Dreise, 2015, p.84.

The model has 'Reframework' and is built on an expansive approach to education. It responds to the quest by Indigenous young people – as affirmed in this research and discovered in other research – for safety, connection to culture and place, jobs, inclusion and support measures aimed at reducing the stresses of schooling and life outside school. At the heart of the model is the notion of learner-centredness and learning dispositions to reflect the fact growing a passion for lifelong learning is key. 'Place' is another key driver, given that approximately 84 per cent of Indigenous young people attend a local public school and in light of Indigenous cultural preferences for 'living on Country'. Developing entrepreneurial mindsets, supporting personal agency and fostering creativity underpins the model so that learners are not simply recipients of teaching, but active co-producers of learning. Further, the model simultaneously embraces the idea that young people should grow not only their identity but their character. Lifelong and life wide learning is at the top of the model to symbolise the importance of learning which extends well beyond classrooms and formal education.

School education (especially secondary schooling) is not engaging all Indigenous young people. For instance, about one in three Indigenous young people in Queensland leave school

at or around Year 10 (Queensland Audit Office, 2017). Such levels of non-completion, in turn, adversely impact upon their ability to go on to university and earn reasonable incomes through pathways to and within employment.

The call for more engaging learning experiences for young people is an international one. For instance, the ASCD (n.d., no page number) in the US contended that:

> For too long in too many schools, young people have been provided a learning experience that so undermotivates, undereducates and underprepares that they are left reaching for remedial preparation for the careers, further education, and civic participation they seek. In the worst situations, young people are neither healthy nor safe, neither engaged nor supported, and certainly not challenged.

Lucas, Claxton and Spencer (2013, p.50) in their book *Expansive Education: Teaching Learners for the Real World* suggested that future education programs will need to cultivate 'dispositions for learning' among young people. This includes the ability to be adaptive, creative and collaborative. Similarly, Voogt and Roblin (2012), in their comparative analysis of competencies in the 21st century, highlighted the importance of learning dispositions. They referred to 'mind workers' as being critical in a future that is likely to be complex and unpredictable (p.300). As complexity is part and parcel of contemporary Indigenous Australia, Australia's ability to help grow the 'mind workers' (as opposed to just mine workers) of the future is critically important to the very future of Indigenous Australia as a whole. Given that approximately 40 per cent of the Indigenous Australian population is under the age of 17 years, it is vital that they are being prepared – and are preparing themselves – for the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow. To this end, their personal 'agency' is key. Hannon, Gillinson and Shanks (2013, p.137) help explain this notion: 'Agency is all about the ability to take control of our lives – to see, understand and act on what we believe to be important'. Research points to the importance of contextualisation and personalisation of learning. Neal (2013), for instance, contended that secondary schools are less 'student centred' and more 'subject centred' than primary schools. He cited a number of characteristics of student-centred approaches, including: 'being based on a challenging curriculum connected to students' lives, catering for individual differences in interest, achievement and learning styles, and developing students' abilities to take control over their own learning' (*ibid.*, p.18).

McCombs and Miller (2009) criticised the notion of one-size-fits-all models of learning, standardised curriculum and enforced testing. Instead, they drew upon large scale research that finds that learner-centred education reaps dividends for students and teachers alike. Their study included a sizeable meta-analysis to support their claim that person- and learner-centred education is associated with large increases in student participation and motivation. Their analysis also showed positive effects in self-esteem and fewer incidents of school drop-out. McCombs and Miller (2009) and Meier (2002) highlighted the need for learning that is relevant, meaningful and authentic. Meier suggested that inquiry-based learning and project-based learning enjoy high levels of success, particularly with struggling students.

Leadbeater and Wong (2010) advocated for learning innovation by suggesting that while school reform is important, it is not enough to provide learning experiences that are meaningful, relevant and impactful for students from disadvantaged areas. Instead, they called for 'disruptive innovation' through a blend of formal and informal learning. Hannon, Gillinson and Shanks (2013) provided highly relevant conceptual guidance for the types of learning challenges and opportunities that First Nations young people potentially face. They advocated for empowering learners to develop personal agency that takes them from being mere consumers of learning to active producers of it. They identified a model whereby young people are facilitated through a process of skills updating and matching, to generating solutions to local challenges, to creating local economic and social possibilities. Fadel (2012) posited that 'knowledge' needs to be connected to the real world to ensure that learners are engaged and motivated. He argued for a greater balance between conceptual and practical learning and consideration for knowledge that sparks student entrepreneurialism and ethical behaviour. With regard to 'skills', Fadel highlighted the '4 Cs': creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. He was concerned by curriculum that is overloaded with content when students should be 'deep diving' into projects. Fadel's model emphasised the importance of 'character' and moral traits (integrity, justice, empathy, ethics), along with young people's capacity to learn how to learn. Fadel also highlighted the significance of interdisciplinarity in helping position young people to respond to current and future demands.

If Australia wants to see more Indigenous young people complete Year 12 and go onto tertiary education, employment and participate fully in civic life, then complementary action is likely to be required both outside school gates (in overcoming the significant obstacles they face, such as poverty) and inside school gates (including the provision of learning experiences that

truly engage). Customised curriculum (without losing intellectual rigour) provides a way forward.

The *Learning, earning, yearning* model draws upon the above-mentioned themes by placing them firmly in an Indigenous Australian context. The model is in turn a key conceptual underpinning of 'Reframework'. The author has placed lifelong and lifewide learning at the top of the *Learning, earning, yearning* model to symbolise the critical importance of fostering learning dispositions from birth to Eldership, and across the full spectrum where 'learning' (as opposed to formal education) occurs, such as in workplaces, community organisations, the natural environment, and on 'Country'. The model is partly inspired by the Navajo School Model in the US that simultaneously embraces 'mainstream subjects' with Indigenous goals. As discussed in *Chapter 3*, Sorenson (2013) documented this initiative in which students engage in both a STEM program and what they call the 'STAR' program – meaning 'Service to All Relations'. STAR involves project-based learning, which is designed to create benefits for the community, the environment and place.

Place level

As outlined in *Chapter 6*, place-based strategy is a conceptual and strategic approach whereby local or regional communities are empowered to devise and implement solutions to multidimensional problems, or to seize opportunities at the local level. It is fundamentally different to programmatic or target group approaches to policy design and program delivery. Place-based strategy, as a public policy approach, is particularly evident in communities of disadvantage. As previously discussed, the idea of place as an approach to Indigenous education has been grouped by this author into three categories: firstly, place as an approach to educational pedagogy and curriculum, for example, by playing a role in outdoor, cultural or environmental education; secondly, place as a more holistic approach to improve educational outcomes for learners by improving their wider social environment; and thirdly, place in education and training as an investment and intervention tool to break a cycle of locational, intergenerational and multiple disadvantage. In practical terms, the second and third categories could be advanced by providing communities of disadvantage with purchasing capacity, perhaps in the form of 'place learning accounts' driven by an integrated and holistic community development plan as opposed to limiting funding to institutionalised equity group programs.

The *Learning, earning, yearning* model also aligns 'place' with culture and identity, pathways and opportunities, and local employment. The model is based on the proposition that positive place development is more likely to become a reality when it is underpinned and spurred by a community's capacity to pursue entrepreneurialism, agency and creativity. This means communities need to be resourced to foster such capabilities from the ground up.

Systems level

The Australian education and training system is both large and complex, with over 9,000 schools operating across a vast geographical footprint. The majority are run by the States and Territories, and others managed by independents and faith-based organisations. On top of this, the system involves transitions from and between early childhood, schools, vocational education (or TAFE), adult and community education (or ACE), and universities. So how do philanthropists – seeking to make an impact for Indigenous people – best invest in such a large theatre of operations, that is, at a *systems level*? Two key concepts are discussed here to guide potential thinking and investment, namely 'positive disruption' and 'collective impact' evaluations.

One could be forgiven for a sense of *déjà vu* when tuning into the annual tabling of the 'Closing the Gap' report in the Parliament. Gains, including in Indigenous education, are either marginal or static. In areas of complexity, then, innovation and research and development are key. So too is the notion of 'positive disruption'. With its conceptual roots in business and commerce, the idea of 'positive disruption' is now spilling into social and educational spaces. Christensen *et al.* (2008, inside cover) argued:

> If we [the US] hope to stay competitive – academically, economically, and technologically – we need to rethink our understanding of intelligence, reevaluate our educational system, and reinvigorate our commitment to learning. In other words, we need 'disruptive innovation'.

Christensen *et al.* (2008) posited that a heightened focus on learners would deliver more customised learning programs for students, including through student-centric classrooms and via new technologies that aid learners and bolster learning processes. In an Indigenous learning context, this might result in support for First Nations languages and bilingual apps, games-based learning technologies, and interactive audio-visual learning materials. Philanthropic

investment in bringing such technologies to scale would represent positive disruption in Indigenous education.

Another way in which the philanthropic community could positively disrupt education, is through sponsorship of Indigenous education entrepreneurs. That is, by investing in Indigenous educators with vision, passion, and learning products and services that stimulate positive ripples across education systems. The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience and the Stronger Smarter Institute are two examples of Indigenous education entrepreneurs already operating in Australia.

Smith and Landry Peterson (2008, p.2) defined 'education entrepreneurs' as '…a rare breed of innovator whose characteristics and activities may lead to the transformation - not merely the slight improvement – of the public education system.' Smith and Landry Peterson (2008) further suggested that education entrepreneurs are able to think about the current rules and resource constraints by bringing a passion and 'sense of urgency that literally compels them to take the risks necessary to realize that vision' (*ibid*., p.3), and in so doing compel others to act.

In Indigenous education, philanthropists could double their search efforts for both Indigenous education entrepreneurs (those working on the outside to positively disrupt) and intrepreneurs (those working within education systems). Creative thinkers, who are prepared to take risks, will require not only financial investment but the creation of 'safe to fail' environments to ensure that innovation can truly take hold.

A number of reports and studies lament the lack of investment in 'evaluation' in Indigenous affairs. For instance, in NSW, a performance audit of the former *Two Ways Together: NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan* found that the majority of Aboriginal specific program evaluations in 2008 showed little to no evidence of value for money (NSW Auditor-General, 2011). The NSW Auditor-General (2011, p.18) further noted that:

> If more rigorous evaluations were undertaken there would be a better evidence base of what contributes to program success. Without that it is difficult to say whether funding is going where it can be most effective; funding is properly allocated; funding is spent on the programs it is allocated to, and government services are being used.

These observations are broadly consistent with the views rising out of the Productivity Commission's Roundtable Report on *Better Indigenous Policies: The Role of Evaluation*, which argued (2012, p.6) that:

> …as in social policy more generally, there is a lack of rigorous impact evaluation of Australian Indigenous policies and programs. Significant gaps exist in the Australian evidence base, due to lack of mandated evaluations.

Further, in the Indigenous education space more specifically, Purdie and Buckley (2010) expressed concern about the lack of Indigenous education programs that are subjected to independent evaluation and scrutiny given that millions of dollars have been allocated to them.

Philanthropy is well placed to invest in evaluations that join the dots between programs and gauge their collective value, through 'collective impact' (or 'place') evaluation, as opposed to evaluations confined to input, output, outcome, and program levels. To put this in metaphorical terms, while systems may have a handle on the value of the 'bricks' (programs), they may be less aware of the value of the 'mortar' (the linking of nodes and networking mechanisms) that reinforce the bricks by bringing and holding them together.

Philanthropic investment to support backbone organisations to co-produce and share data platforms across organisations working in the Indigenous child development space (education, health, recreation, community services) and develop a common agenda for positive change represents an area for potential philanthropic attention. Building the capacity of Indigenous communities and scholars to undertake research and evaluation through Community Participatory Research methods in collective impact spaces provides a potentially strong starting point. Such research endeavours could look to simultaneously embrace complexity and emergence thinking and measure positive disruption; stimulate and gauge 'Collective Impact' in Indigenous child development at local and regional levels; and explore the relationships between nodes (or 'mortar') in Indigenous education.

By investing in collective impact evaluations and by sponsoring Indigenous education entrepreneurs, silos could be worn down. This would be a welcome development, because current silos are not working, and in fact stymie Indigenous progress (Stewart *et al.*, 2011).
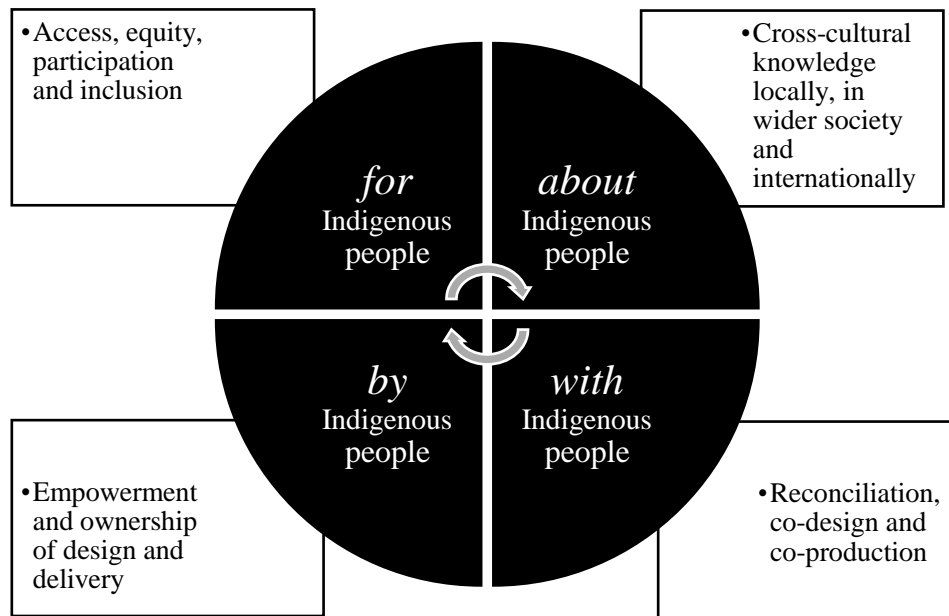
Societal level

Working from the data and findings emerging from this study, it can be reasonably deduced that Indigenous education, at the very least in the eyes of Indigenous people, involves far more than 'closing gaps' – important as they are. The fieldwork in this study indicates (if not confirms) that Indigenous people desire an education system that is not only fair and just, but also culturally responsive. Furthermore, First Nations communities want to see more involvement and empowerment in education including through teaching and student support services), through thought leadership (scholarships and community participatory research), and through ownership/co-ownership of school governance. In addition, the fieldwork demonstrated that community members want to see Indigenous teachers respected and Indigenous children's cultural identity affirmed and treasured.

Promoting knowledge among all people (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) about First Nations peoples, societies, values and world views, and history was also highlighted by fieldwork interviews with community members and educators. So too was the need for greater policy and program responsiveness to the harsh realities (social, economic, environmental, cultural, political) on the ground.

Chapter conclusion

With these important community-derived messages in mind and in considering how philanthropists might improve their engagement and more strategically invest their resources, this author, having considered both literature and interviews in the field, has developed the following overarching schema (Fig. 7) of Indigenous education for consideration among philanthropic, education, and Indigenous community change agents who are striving to make an impact at a societal level.

Fig. 7: Education for, about, by, with Indigenous people

- Access, equity, participation and inclusion

- Cross-cultural knowledge locally, in wider society and internationally

for Indigenous people

about Indigenous people

by Indigenous people

with Indigenous people

- Empowerment and ownership of design and delivery

- Reconciliation, co-design and co-production

Source: T. Dreise, doctoral research.

The four parts of the schema are based on findings from the fieldwork, two Forums, and literature review attached to this study. The first part relates to educational opportunities *for* First Nations people; that is, it is concerned with access, equity and inclusion in education from early childhood to adult education. The second part of the schema recognises that non-Indigenous people in Australia and abroad could, or should, be interested in the human history of Australia that is tens of thousands of years in the making. As such, it is concerned with generating greater understanding and appreciation within the broader population *about* Australia's peoples, histories, and cultures. The third part of the schema relates to reconciliation through stronger application of the principle that education (curriculum, pedagogy, policy) should be co-designed and co-produced *with* First Nations people. Finally, the fourth part of the schema relates to the idea that educational provision for First Nations children and adults should be owned, designed and delivered *by* First Nations peoples and organisations.

As well as attempting to accommodate the full spectrum of drivers of 'Indigenous education', the schema seeks to promote potential delivery points and outlets that respond to the drivers. There are five opportunities that are offered here. Firstly, the opportunity for philanthropic and public investment that ideally enables an Indigenous share within the educational provider market of the future (including online provision). Secondly, there is an opportunity for philanthropic investment to boost recruitment and retention of Indigenous talent within

educational institutions. Thirdly, the opportunity for philanthropic intervention to embrace research and evaluation as a 'core' component of Indigenous education and community development. Fourthly, a chance for philanthropy to recognise the multiple outlets in which Indigenous learning does and can occur, including excursions, learning on 'Country', universities, training institutions, and community education settings. Fifthly, the opportunity for philanthropists to maintain scholarship opportunities (in educational settings *outside* of community), as well as bolstering bursaries (to enable learning *within* community – and, in so doing, recognise that approximately 84 per cent (ABS, 2018) of Indigenous children and young people attend a local public school). In addition, philanthropy can help foster ideas-exchange across educational stages (early childhood, schools, TAFE, university), across countries and places (via excursions and multimedia), across cultures (via social media and educational exchange programs), and across disciplines (including Indigenous cultural studies, education, social sciences, business and economics, public policy, and environmental studies). Furthermore, philanthropy can help pursue a balanced and collective research agenda that simultaneously builds *evidence* (by establishing what works not simply at a program level but at collective and nodes levels); *innovation* (by experimenting with change levers that are worth trying and can positively disrupt the status quo); and *knowledge* within communities and within wider society (by promoting resilience, embracing complexity, and combating institutional and societal ignorance and racism).

In considering, and more ideally seizing upon, a fuller suite of philanthropic investment points in Indigenous education, then philanthropists are more likely to avoid the risk of becoming a 'one trick pony'. Even more importantly, they are potentially more likely to be exposed to a wider array of opportunities in Indigenous education and in so doing, develop greater clarity about Indigenous education, its history, its frustrations, its multiplicities, and its promise. These and other considerations outlined in this thesis are summarised, recapped and concluded in *Chapter 8*.

Chapter 8: Thesis Conclusion

Overview

This conclusion provides a summary of research findings. It shares personal reflections on how the author's thinking has changed (and remains unchanged) as a result of the study. It also offers ideas about further research, collaboration, and evaluation. Finally, it presents a possible way forward which reinforces the case for greater collective impact, attention to the 'whole child', and innovation between philanthropic, First Nations and education community actors within place-based settings.

Summary of research findings

In seeking to answer the overarching research question - *How can philanthropic bodies more successfully engage with Indigenous people and strategically invest their resources to improve Indigenous education outcomes?* - this dissertation has drawn from a diverse cross-section of theoretical, historical, political, conceptual and empirical data and landscapes. It has adopted a recursive, *bricolage* and transdisciplinary approach by, first, collating and analysing literature from seemingly disparate and yet connected theoretical domains. The second aspect of the study saw the researcher immersing in the field (with philanthropic, educational and First Nations communities) and gaining insights from participants through empirical study on the ground. Third, the author drew upon his own personal, Aboriginal, familial and professional experiences, curiosities and hunches over a lifetime. The thesis has been deliberately normative in its approach, by not simply asking 'what is' but 'what ought to be'. Following a review of literature, fieldwork, and a process of critical analysis (including returning to the literature and prior studies), the thesis has offered a new framework (called *Reframework*) to potentially inform and steer philanthropic investment in Indigenous education into the future. As has been demonstrated throughout the thesis, the 'answer' to improving Indigenous education is not simple, linear or mono-dimensional. There are no 'silver bullets', 'black knights', or 'white saviours'. How philanthropists think about the multitude of barriers and the suite of potential investment 'sweet spots' and positive disruptors will be crucial going forward.

The job of philanthropy, fundamentally, is about the business of 'doing good', as opposed to simply 'looking good'. In seeking to 'do good' in Indigenous contexts, this thesis concludes that philanthropists are at times good at doing good and sometimes not so good. Philanthropy

in Indigenous Australia has had both high points and low points since colonisation. On the high side for instance, the ground-breaking investment of the Myer Foundation in Charles Rowley's work in the 1960s helped overcome what Stanner called the 'Great Australian Silence', and provided a seminal example of the positive and disruptive force of philanthropy. This single investment represented a meaningful contribution in awaking the Australian consciousness and assisted First Nations advocates and their fellow travellers in laying the groundwork for the successful Referendum in 1967. It serves as an example of philanthropy being prepared to not only provide money, but also be politically active and influential. Paradoxically, philanthropy also has an unfortunate history in Indigenous Australia, if one is prepared to accept wider definitions and manifestations of 'philanthropy' to include 'evangelical philanthropy' and its various outlets such as charities, churches, educational institutions, and especially missionaries.

Colonial and post-colonial scholars and missionaries were often active agents in arriving at dim and disparaging assessments of Australia's First Nations peoples. Paternalism and protectionism were pervasive undercurrents in a number of these historical incidents. It could be argued that, far too often, the historical 'relationship' seemingly took on the following form – 'they (Indigenous people) need our (philanthropy) help'; that is, it has been largely underpinned by 'deficit-based' thinking dating back to the 'Native Institution' in 1814. Such 'help them' mentalities continue to this day; arguably morphing into more recent neo-liberal thinking, whereby First Nations people should simply assimilate into today's dominant political and economic model. This is coupled with a near political intolerance toward the notion of separate or unique development and cultural affirmation. First Nations people who participated in this research expressed a very strong desire for not only economic participation and social inclusion, but a right to be different by affirming their first cultures and having them respected, if not treasured.

This study has further affirmed that the lines between private, philanthropic and public sectors are becoming increasingly blurred. This is a wider phenomenon, spurred in part by the emergence of corporate philanthropy (or CSR). The lines between private, philanthropic and public sectors are particularly 'muddy' in situations whereby governments, along with corporate philanthropy, provide grants to high profile organisations under the banner of supporting Indigenous 'advancement'. For example, recent federal budgets have provided grants to education initiatives with very little publicly available information relating to competitive tendering, procurement, rigorous reporting, independent evaluation and public

disclosure of results and program efficacy. Furthermore, corporations that operate within legal requirements of 'Native Title' obligations and yet promote their activities as 'philanthropic', open up questions as to whether their actions (under the banner of corporate philanthropy) are truly 'voluntary' and 'altruistic' in nature, especially when one considers and accepts the classic definitions of philanthropy. The disbandment of the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund is a particular case in point, with Rio Tinto's decision to abandon investment in Indigenous-designed and delivered initiatives emanating from communities outside of the company's mining footprint. Instead, the company has, in more recent years, switched business focus to Indigenous employment opportunities within the company and within the company's mining footprint. It begs the question: do such actions constitute 'public good' or 'corporate good'?

Against this backdrop, this research proposes new (and not so new) ways of thinking about philanthropy's role in Indigenous development built on the philosophical foundations and First Nations' aspirations of *empowerment*, *equal partnerships*, *co-production, localism,* and *innovation*. It finds that contemporary philanthropy has now morphed into a sector with a myriad of legally constituted forms, players and outlets, including corporate philanthropy, private trusts, community foundations, and 'old philanthropy' tied to trusts that are now several decades old. Indigenous people, and representatives of organisations working with them, interviewed during the course of this study highlighted a number of concerns about them. They felt that philanthropic investment in First Nations education was not at scale (that is, not enough philanthropic opportunities to meet demand), was largely inequitable (favouring high profile activists), and was geographically uneven (across regions and states). Of those in relationships with philanthropy, they expressed concerns about the transactional nature of the relationship. Some grant-receivers thought that application and reporting processes were too onerous, especially in cases where the amount of funds on offer were not that significant given the time required to prepare applications. Conversely, interviewees from the grant-giving sector highlighted the need for project outcomes to be reported to their Boards for accountability reasons. In a number of Indigenous communities (especially outside of Victoria), many were not aware of philanthropy, its potential or motivations. To a person, participants rejected the notion (indeed, trap) that a model developed in one part of Indigenous Australia could be simply picked up and replicated in another community. The First Nations of Australia are simply too diverse for that approach.

First Nations communities that participated in this study called on philanthropy to sponsor opportunities to renew social and economic development opportunities *with* and *within* Indigenous communities at local and regional levels (not only in remote areas but in regional, urban, coastal and peri-urban areas). They highlighted the importance of recognising the diversity of Indigenous Australia, dating back tens of thousands of years, and, at the same time, wanting to send warning bells to public policy and philanthropy temptations toward one-size-fits-all solutions, linear thinking, and 'scaling up' all local models. That said, the field data suggests that philanthropic activities operating in complex realms will legitimately require hotbeds of experimentation which are invariably not at scale, but nonetheless sit within a wider ecology of Indigenous philanthropy, social change and improvement in education.

This research further finds that in Indigenous contexts, philanthropy is playing a major role in the provision of scholarships to university and boarding schools. This is a welcome development, which offers hundreds of Indigenous young people and their families opportunities that they would not otherwise be able to afford, especially for young people from remote communities who often do not have the choice of local schooling. However, for the vast majority of Indigenous Australia (that is, tens of thousands), philanthropy remains largely out of mind and out of sight. With approximately 84 per cent of Australia's First Nations young people attending a local public school, philanthropy will need to widen its scope if it aspires to make a transformative impact in turning Indigenous educational disadvantage and disparity around. At present, and in the main, relationships are nowhere near scale; are concentrated in private boarding schools and universities; are not always open or accessible, and are therefore too narrow.

On the other hand, this study found small pockets of innovative and strategic thinking among smaller community-based (as opposed to corporate-based) grant-giving organisations with strong connections to local (urban and rural) community causes particularly to reconciliation and community development agendas (the respective work of the Towards a Just Society Fund and Reichstein Foundation serve as examples). This 'nesting' within wider agendas helps ensure that these particular organisations are politically attuned, culturally nuanced and founded on community-derived *need* and *aspiration*.

What this dissertation concludes is that the task of improving outcomes in Indigenous education is a complex undertaking. To borrow from public sector nomenclature, Indigenous affairs (and Indigenous education) have the hallmarks of 'wicked' social policy challenges, given the

plethora of interdependencies and multi-causal elements involved. This research also concludes that on one hand there are encouraging developments in Indigenous education, such as the record numbers completing secondary schooling and improvements in early childhood participation opportunities. On the other hand, there are persistent inequities in Indigenous higher education participation and stalled performance in literacy, numeracy, science, and senior secondary completions. That said, the study also found that 'success' measures as expressed by Indigenous parents and communities need to extend well beyond standardised test results, to gauging young people's levels of happiness, social connection, cultural identity, confidence, health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, these wider indicators of success and wellbeing are severely underdeveloped and are not being systemically measured in Australia at present.

The data generated through this research also affirm that solutions to current inequities sit both within and outside of school gates. While internal reforms to curriculum, pedagogy, school resourcing and leadership all remain important, it is unlikely that great strides will be made when First Nations young people remain vulnerable to poverty, mental ill-health, self-harm, incarceration, child protection orders, overcrowded housing, early school leaving, unemployment and racism. Accordingly, these research results call for a heightened focus on 'whole child' and 'place-based' development.

Despite the inherent complexity of Indigenous education and Indigenous wellbeing, the thesis provides a new lens from which issues could be considered by philanthropists and public sector agents, in the form of complexity and emergence theories. The thesis concludes that Indigenous education sits principally within the field of 'emergent practice'; which is not to suggest that elements of leading practice do not exist within Indigenous education. However, it is difficult to establish and promote best practice given a paucity of robust, independent evaluation in the space.

This study found that some philanthropists have clear preferences for 'what works' in Indigenous education to enable (from their perspective) both replication and scaling-up. The study concludes that where there is clear evidence of initiatives working (notwithstanding concerns about truly independent evaluation in Indigenous education), then there may be merit to these initiatives being scaled-up. However, this study concludes that what works in one location in Indigenous Australia may not be replicable in other parts, given the complexity and diversity (traditional, historical, contemporary) of First Nations across the country. With this

in mind, the study concludes by inviting philanthropists to consider their potential points of investment and engagement against conceptual guidance offered by the following adaptation of the Cynefin Framework (Table 8), followed by an explanation of each of the elements involved. While recognising that the presentation of tables in thesis conclusions does not represent academic orthodoxy, the author has nonetheless deliberately chosen to include the following table here as it responds neatly and directly to the overarching research question of this study.

Table 8: Conceptual guidance offered to philanthropists using the Cynefin Framework

Types of Problem	Types of Practice	Potential Responses
Simple Problem	Best Practice	Scale up
Chaotic Problem	Novel Practice	Act & then evaluate
Complicated Problem	Good Practice	Engage experts & researchers & share findings
Complex Problem	Emergent Practice	Innovate, experiment, evaluate & disseminate lessons and insights

Source: author's research based on an adaptation of Cynefin Framework by Kurtz and Snowden, 2003.

Where independent and robust evaluation finds certain initiatives to be authentically 'best practice' (that is, someone or some organisation has made significant and proven inroads into a problem in Indigenous education), then philanthropists or governments may wish to replicate this initiative by scaling-up. In areas of chaos, (say, a sudden outbreak of violence in a school), then key players need to simply act and evaluate their response later. In areas of 'good practice', then philanthropists may wish to engage experts and researchers to 'dig a little deeper' in order to make inroads in a location/context based on the positive experiences in another location/context. In areas of 'good practice', practitioners have made progress into complicated problems without completely solving them. In other words, they are on the right track but not quite at the desired destination. This thesis finds that much of Indigenous affairs and Indigenous education is in the 'complex' realm. Complexity means that practice is emergent in nature. For example, the fact remains in Australia that far too many First Nations young people drop out

of schooling at or before Year 10 across a number of jurisdictions in Australia (despite a myriad of programs and financial allocations). This indicates that the space is complex and emergent, which may require responses that are innovative, experimental, daring and evaluative in nature.

Philanthropy is potentially well placed to not only invest in Indigenous education, but also to positively disrupt it and by embracing its emergent properties. When the rates of Indigenous higher education participation and performance in standardised testing are held in mind, then the status quo simply will not 'close gaps'. The Indigenous population of Australia is young and growing fast. While the wider Australian population contemplates an ageing population, First Nations Australia is facing both opportunities and threats in terms of its youthful population. Philanthropy that acts in a *catalytic* and *vanguard* manner is more likely to suit the emergent nature of Indigenous education.

The study has sought to balance a diverse range of views and perspectives within the thesis. For example, the study invites philanthropists to consider broader definitions of 'Indigenous education' to include education *for* Indigenous people, education *about* First Nations Australia, education *with* Indigenous people, and education *by* First Nations people. When the latter three elements are strong and healthy, then education *for* Indigenous people may be more likely to improve. The study also offers a suite of investment and engagement options as outlined in the *Reframework* model, and as influenced by a variety of conceptual models (such as collective impact) and normative principles (such as empowerment and localism) from which all three sectors might consider their future joint efforts. In presenting conceptual models (such as the *Learning, earning, yearning* model and the idea of a strategic hub and networks of communities of practice), the author has not done this in a reductionist sense. They are not offered as *the* sole answer. Rather, they are presented to stimulate further dialogue, add to the knowledge base, and provide further 'food for thought' at a collective level.

Personal reflections: How the author's thinking has changed and not changed

As disclosed at the outset of this paper, the author has come into the study not merely as a passive observer but with an obligated sense, and a desire, of being an active participant. This is due to a range of factors including the author's cultural heritage; having grown up in a small rural-remote town with sizeable unmet need; having served for many years in senior public and community sector positions; having worked with philanthropists before undertaking the study;

and by virtue of being a teacher by profession. The author's thinking about this space has both not changed <u>and</u> changed as a result of the study.

What has changed in this author's thinking is a keener appreciation of the difference in cultures between Indigenous communities and philanthropic organisations. This can be partly understood by the former (First Nations communities) seeking a 'yarn' (that is, building trust resulting in a long term relationship), while the latter is seeking an 'elevator statement' (rapid propositions about 'what works'). In some instances, tensions were observed during the course of this study between grant-seekers with *social* backgrounds, with grant-givers with *financial* backgrounds; with both parties speaking different languages and often operating from divergent cultures.

What has not changed in the researcher's thinking is that wealthy Australians are not doing or giving enough in the social justice space. This study affirmed that some Australian philanthropists have been highly critical of other wealthy Australians and their reluctance to share and give. While the GFC may have legitimately led to a temporary nervousness among Australia's wealthy to 'give', this can no longer be held up as an excuse. As was very recently reported in the Australian media (Hutchens, 2018), the top one per cent of Australians own more wealth than the bottom 70 per cent combined. The media report further noted that whereas there were 14 billionaires in Australia around the time of the GFC in 2008, in 2017–18 there were 33 billionaires; which prompts the question – how many of the 33 are actively in the business of voluntary giving and philanthropy, including in Indigenous education?

What also remains unchanged in this author's thinking is that philanthropy needs to couple its quest for charity with a pursuit of clarity. This means philanthropists opening their eyes, ears and hearts as well as wallets to the aspirations of Indigenous people to be not only included in Australian society and economy, but also to confidently prosper as unique First Nations peoples, the oldest continuing cultures on Earth. While strides (partly fuelled by philanthropy) have been made in Australia in seeking to redress Indigenous disadvantage and social exclusion, an unreconciled tension still exists whereby Indigenous 'worth' will only be proven when there is equity, then equality, and 'sameness' and 'assimilation'. Many Indigenous communities continue to strive for development, including through education, on their own terms.

Unresolved problems and further research and action

This dissertation has been interested in a 'strategic hub' or 'communities of practice' or both as a way of providing ongoing dialogue, negotiation, co-design and co-production in the relationship between Indigenous communities and philanthropy. These are not new ideas. In the mid-1990s, the Lumbu Indigenous Foundation was established to serve as a 'hub' and interlocker between Indigenous communities and philanthropy. It dissolved in May 2007 after only a few years of operation. There is a paucity of publicly available information regarding the reasons behind its cessation. Further research in this area would be useful in informing and shaping any new interface between philanthropy and Indigenous communities in the future. Likewise, more recent initiatives such as Philanthropy Australia's Indigenous Affinity Group and the Woor-Dungin project in Melbourne would benefit from closer study and independent evaluation to capture their experiences and the learnings that could stem from them.

What these issues serve to highlight is a need for more concentrated research and developmental work on the best way to provide a truly national 'meeting point' from which philanthropy and Indigenous communities from across Australia might engage and commence a dialogue in a holistic and coordinated fashion. Such a process could start with a thorough 'stocktake' and scoping and mapping exercise of current actors and points of engagement.

This study also affirms an ongoing requirement for further published and independent research – especially rigorous evaluations – into the outcomes and impact of major initiatives in First Nations education that have been funded by governments and philanthropists. While various publications such as the Christensen Fund *et al.* (2010) have been produced, generally speaking, these publications provide little by way of critical or longitudinal analysis. Rather they tend to 'showcase' various interventions and investments without 'digging deeper' or critically into their efficacy, sustainability and impact as informed by independent and robust evaluation. Care needs to be taken in leaping too early in branding particular initiatives as 'best practice'. Evaluations can be time limited, in so far as they only make evaluations or provide a 'snapshot' at a particular point in time. Therefore, evaluations of a more longitudinal nature would be highly useful.

A final area for further development and research is gaining stronger insight in the blurred lines between joint investment by government and government and philanthropy. For good public policy reasons, this is an important area of work. For instance, sizeable government investment

in various initiatives in Indigenous education open up questions about competitive tendering, procurement, and independent evaluation. Evaluations need to be independently conducted, results published and findings openly and widely shared given the amount of public monies going into a variety of Indigenous education initiatives.

A way forward

The space between philanthropy and Indigenous education communities should exercise both patience and impatience at the same time; that is, impatience toward current social and educational outcomes for First Nations peoples, coupled with patience about how long progress from any intervention realistically takes. This has implications in terms of timeframes offered by philanthropists, a particular sore point in terms of the community sector's expectations. Ten-year and beyond investment cycles are more realistic given the magnitude and complexity of the task ahead. Any 'solution' is likely to require a level of interaction and long term commitment of the kind that has not been seen before in Australia.

This study further concludes that truly great philanthropy is not only kind but brave. To increase its effectiveness in Indigenous contexts, philanthropy will need to embrace 'safe to fail' (as opposed to 'fail safe') environments, by encouraging and fostering innovation, experimentation and positive disruption. The single greatest and potential strength of philanthropy is arguably its *disruptive* capabilities; not only in terms of the provision of much needed financial resources to help drive change and innovation, but by being politically active and awakening the wider public's consciousness about the needs, strengths and aspirations of the First Nations of Australia. Australia has yet to fully recognise that these aspirations may not always accord with those in the majority population or dominant culture; and yet such recognition is important both in fulfilling Australia's international obligations under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007), and, more importantly, in preserving the world's oldest continuing cultures.

This study has sought to analyse a point of convergence by relaying the voices of 'supply' and 'demand' on the ground and by critically analysing what remains unsaid, unanswered and unresolved at holistic and strategic levels. That is, while there is little doubt that significant activity now exists at the Indigenous–philanthropy intersection (as evidenced by a sizeable growth in the number of Indigenous scholarships on offer to boarding schools and university study and by an emergence of Foundations, Institutes and other organisations drawing upon

the philanthropic dollar), larger questions remain. To this end, the dissertation has presented two key conceptual frameworks to inform future deliberations among philanthropists interested in Indigenous education. Firstly, it calls for a reframing of Indigenous education to include not just education 'for' Indigenous people but 'by', 'with' and 'about' Indigenous people and cultures. A more expansive approach to Indigenous education, could lead to multiple considerations and opportunities such as the role of Indigenous people in delivering teaching and learning; the theatres of learning beyond classrooms; the need for a national embrace of reconciliation and Indigenous standpoints; a move from deficit-based to strengths-based learning; and seeing learning as a process of active co-production not mere consumption (such as the type championed by Hannon *et al.,* 2013).

Secondly, the thesis provides a model (*Learning, earning, yearning*), which helps conceptualise expansions of learning choices for Indigenous young people. Much attention in public policy has been given to 'supply' side levers in education, such as pedagogy, curriculum, teacher quality, infrastructure and technology. These are important in the provision of any quality education. By and of themselves, however, they are unlikely to catalyse change for the better in a vacuum of the 'demand' side. That is, First Nations communities need to find a sense of ownership, relevance and attraction in education. Culturally responsive education forms part of these demands. Learning experiences have to have meaning and relevance – socially, historically, economically, environmentally and culturally.

How education is provided in First Nations communities into the future warrants deeper consideration beyond institution only based education. The fulcrum of Indigenous learning needs to partially move from 'education' (institutions) to 'learning' (movements) – including adult and community education – so as to unlock Indigenous motivations for learning that leads to ecological sustainability, economic and social participation, and cultural affirmation.

Concluding statement

The purpose of this study has been to offer answers and provide insights to the following question:

> *How can philanthropic bodies more successfully engage with Indigenous people and strategically invest their resources to improve Indigenous education outcomes?*

In seeking to answer this question, the study has perhaps opened up as many questions as it answers. Some readers will be disappointed to read that one 'silver bullet' does not sit within the thesis; the author openly concedes this without reservation or apology. Further research and ongoing developmental work is clearly required in this field (especially by way of evaluating the 'collective impact' of Indigenous education and child wellbeing measures at a 'place' level) given the paucity of published and independent evaluations.

Indigenous education is an incomplete project, not only in terms of equity indicators (Close the Gap), but in terms of it needing to be 'reframed'. Indigenous education has a wider meaning beyond educational equity 'for' Indigenous people, meaning that it includes 'with', 'by' and 'about' First Nations people. To the last point first: Indigenous people continue to strive for long overdue respect and recognition within the Australian polity. Media reporting about online outbursts, racial assaults on public transportation, and harassment of Aboriginal sports stars all show that racism is alive and (un)well in Australia.

Philanthropy can improve its effectiveness in First Nations education when it embraces complexity and paradox by discarding classical economic thinking about cause and effect, linear thinking, predictability and risk mitigation. Future relationships may need to be built on innovation and sustained over the long haul. Quick wins and feel-good PR spins are unlikely to yield the kinds of gains that are required, not only in terms of providing First Nations young people with quality education, but in keeping children and young people safe, healthy, happy, confident, and culturally affirmed.

What this study confirms is that quality philanthropy is not just about the giving of money, but also the brave granting of political influence among the philanthropic community to change mindsets in the national psyche. Philanthropists bring financial resources, yes, but they also bring access to networks and skills and knowledge aligned with the dominant political economic system. At present, philanthropy is not at scale, tends to be big city and big personality centric, and tends to favour more *conservative* based interventions (that is, initiatives that could be described as 'mainstreaming') rather than disruptive and politically progressive ideas that bolster First Nations' aspirations.

The relationship between Australian philanthropy and Indigenous education is at a crossroads. It can either continue to concentrate (and potentially over-saturate) its efforts in boarding schools and university scholarships, or it can couple these types of opportunities (which remain

important) with a pursuit of 'collective impact' in geographical 'places' that are currently out of mind and out of sight (including in peri-urban, regional and remote areas). By adopting 'place-based development' models, actors in philanthropic, education and Indigenous community spheres can, for example, seek to collectively and positively 'disrupt' early school leaving among Indigenous teenagers. In so doing, they would ideally adopt a 'whole' child and 'whole' community approach whereby not only academic barriers are addressed (such as through curriculum, pedagogy, school-community partnership reforms), but 'out of school' factors that enable educational success such as good mental health, employment, income, anti-racism, social inclusion, cultural pride, and learner agency.

Innovation and the incubation of 'safe to fail' environments are additional key considerations for philanthropy and Indigenous communities going forward. For future relationships to work, First Nations communities and educational organisations may need to respect and respond to philanthropic demands for accountability, robust planning, and community inclusivity. At the same time, and consistent with emergence theory, philanthropists may need to 'let go' and empower communities and their local aspirations, strengths, and quest for self-determination.

The thesis concludes that philanthropy is more likely to have optimal impact through three avenues of strategic effort. First, when it operates in 'place' and 'whole child' settings; second, when it 'positively disrupts'; and third, when it builds a true understanding of the challenge by digging deeper into the reality of, and approaches to, complexity – as opposed to the temptation of flashy policy fads, celebrity knights and silver bullets, feel-good public relations and spin.

The study finds that there is little question that many Australian philanthropists mean well, but nonetheless concludes that good intentions are more likely to lead to greater collective impact in First Nations education when hearts of charity are matched with minds of clarity, and more ideally, with backbones of audacity.

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