Linda Mae Ford is the author of the thesis entitled:

‘Narratives and landscapes: their capacity to serve indigenous knowledge interests’.

This thesis may be made available for consultation, loan and limited copying for the purpose of study and/or research in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968 [Australia].

This thesis was submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and is the result of the authors own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that the thesis in whole or part has not been submitted for an award including a higher degree to any other university or institution.
Narratives and Landscapes: Their Capacity to Serve Indigenous Knowledge Interests

by

Linda Mae Ford
M.Ed, Grad.Dip.Special Ed, Dip.T(Primary)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University

November, 2005
I certify that the thesis entitled "NARRATIVES AND LANDSCAPES: THEIR CAPACITY TO SERVE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE INTERESTS." submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

I also certify that any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any university or institution is identified in the text.

Full Name.......................................................... (Please Print)

Signed .................................................................

Signature Redacted by Library

Date.................................................................
Language use in this Thesis

The languages used in this thesis are Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu, Marrithiel, Amiyingul, Creole and English. These languages are distinguished in the thesis as follows:

- **Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu** is typed in **bold** font
- **Marrithiel** is typed in **italics** font
- **Creole** is typed in **bold italics** font
- English is typed in normal font

The orthography for Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu, Marrithiel and Creole is drawn from my lived understanding and that of my circle of language speakers and co-researchers: Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, Ki-la Yilngi Atie, and Delyek Wanjamul-Margaret Daiyi. The Tyikim above have not been taught in bilingual programs and nor have I, but in order to complete the thesis I have written down to the best of my understanding our orthography of the languages that we use.

Tyikim is the Mak Mak word for ourselves. It is equivalent in meaning, for example, to Yolngu (East Arnhem, NT), Blekabella (NT Creole), Murri (QLD), Koorie (Vic/NSW/ACT), Palawa (Tas), Nunga (SA) and Noongar (WA). In this thesis, Tyikim is used in preference to ‘Indigenous’ with the following exceptions. When the word ‘Indigenous’ is used, it refers to Indigenous peoples from other countries, to Indigenous Australians as indicated in quotations or to where there is a policy or institutional reference to Indigenous Australians. In this thesis I have used Tyikim to refer both to Mak Mak clan members specifically and to Indigenous Australians generally.

Padakoot is the Mak Mak word for non-Indigenous people. It is equivalent, for example, to Balanda (East Arnhem, NT), Watjibella (NT Creole), Guba (Vic/NSW/ACT), Migaloo (QLD), and Wadjula (WA).
Acknowledgements

Yu! Waki ni-nni ngung Wurrkama kaka-nga-ni ngathu ngawul wuwa ng-ung yana Kudindju and Charles Darwin University. Ngatla ni-nni! Wuwa ng-ung kayaman tyangi! Pulu ngung! (The country’s listening to me and watching my actions of work for my countryman!). I would like to acknowledge and recognise the following for their contributions to Wurrkama ngung: Yu! Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu: Kundu ngany ga Pulu Tyitapit-Mark Ford, nga-thi mayading – Ngelebe-Chloe Ford, eh, Tyaemaen-Emily Ford. Yu! Ngangy ga ngunggu Kudindju: Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, Pulu Mutjiga-John Waditj, Daiyi, Djekaboi, Waditj, Melyen, Bright, and Nickoloff.

Yu! White Eagle and Twin Hill Aboriginal Corporations members, especially Ki-la Yilngi Atie from the Rak Amiyingul, Nganthawudi and Marrithiel Community. Yu! Ngung Unnga Pulu Pardu-Martin, eh, Ng-ya Koonie Koonie Manjbal-Mabel Jimerin Marrithiel from Merrepen Community, of the Marrawalgut Nation of the Wagait and Daly Region, Northern Territory.

Yu! Pa-nun Colin Deveraux, Delyek Leten-Roslyn and Pa-nun Bruce Jones, Ngali Margaret Ford, Ka-li Peter and Ah-la Judy Tyers, Wungala Karringingi-Stephanie Henry, extended family and friends.

Ma-a! Indigenist research Wurrkama ngung: Yu! Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, Tyillii Yilngi Atie, Delyek Wanjamul-Margaret Daiyi, Delyek Pulum-Kathleen Deveraux, Delyek Mangalimba-Pavalina Henwood, Delyek Yinirrkun-April Bright, Ma-na Mudjita-Richard Daiyi, Pa-nun Punnalmuk-Lesley Waditj and Yarra ngung Mulluk-Calvin Deveraux of the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu family. Yu! Delyek Tanyah Nasir, Delyek Barbara Nasir, Auntie Nancy Gibb, Delyek Anne Marjar, Wungala of the Singh family from Belyuen, Helen Cubillo, Rosetta Smith-Cubillo, Alma Smith, Demelza Canuto, Tanya Peris, Marie Roe, Julie Turner, John Anstess, Glenn Randell, Vicki Pascoe, and Sheryl Francis were the local Tyikim community representatives and their families.
Yu! Delyek Wendy Brabham, Pilu Karrimalla-John Henry and Professor Terry Evans of Deakin University, and Pilu Pulanjurrputj-Greg Hill, Dr Suzanne Parry, Dr. Allan Arnott, Professor Ian Falk, Dr. Lyn Fasoli, Ruth Wallace, Jungarai Geoff Freeman, and other academic colleagues of Charles Darwin University, whose contribution to the research-in-action of my doctoral study ‘Landscapes and Narratives: Their Capacity to Serve Indigenous Knowledge Interests’ is valued and will be treasured always. Yu! Marrung. Thank you all for your trust to get this Indigenist research completed together in the landscape of the University. Ma!
Ngutla Wurrkama waki ni-nni!
Abstract

The thesis is a culmination of my research which drew on tyangi wedi tjän Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marrithiel knowledge systems. These awa mirr spiritual knowledge systems have guided our Pilu for millennium and have powerful spiritual affiliation to the land and our continued presences. The understandings of the spiritual connectedness and our practices of relatedness have drawn on Pulij, our deep awa mirr spiritual philosophy that nourishes us on our country. This philosophy gave us our voice and our presence to act in our own ways of knowing and being on the landscapes created by the Western bureaucratic systems of higher education in Australia to bring forth our Tyikim knowledge systems to serve our own educational interests.

From this spiritual ‘Puliyan kunun’ philosophical position the thesis examines colonising constructions of Tyikim peoples, Tyikim knowledge systems in education, Tyikim research and access to higher education for Tyikim students. From the research, it is argued that the paradigm, within which the enclave-derived approach to Indigenous higher education is located, is compatible with the normalising imperialistic ideology of higher education. The analysis of the Mirrwana/Wurrkama participatory action research project, central to the research, supported an argument for the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Indigenous higher education. Further analysis identified five key pedagogical principles embedded within this new model as metaphorically equivalent to wilan~bu of the pelangi. The thesis identifies the elements of the spirituality of the narrative exposed in the research-in-action through the “Marri kubin mi thit wa”. This is a new paradigm for Tyikim participation in higher education within which the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model is located. Finally, the thesis identifies the scope for Tyikim knowledge use in the construction of contemporary ‘bureaucratic and institutionalised’ higher education ngun nimbil thit thit teaching and learning experiences of Tyikim for the advancement of Tyikim interests. Here the tyangi yigin tjän spiritual concepts of narrative and landscape are drawn upon both awa mirr metaphorically and in marri kubin mi thit wa Tyikim pedagogical practice.
List of Acronyms

Abstudy   Aboriginal Study Grant Scheme
ANU       Australian Nation University
ARP       Participatory Action Research Project centred on the delivery of a Bachelor of Teaching Unit of Study to Indigenous students at CDU in Semester 2, 2003.
ATAS      Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme
ATF       Aboriginal Task Force
BBQ       Barbeque
CDU       Charles Darwin University
CRCATH    Corporative Research Centre Aboriginal Tropical Health
CINCRM    Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management
DUHREC    Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee
EHS       Faculty of Education, Health and Science
FATSIS    Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
FIRE      Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education
HOS       Head of School
IASL      Indigenous Academic Support Lecturer
IRA       Indigenous Research Agenda
IRRA      Indigenous Research Reform Agenda
LBA       Law, Business and Arts
NAEC      National Aboriginal Education Committee
NT        Northern Territory of Australia
NTU       Northern Territory University\(^1\)
NTUHREC   NTU Human Research Ethics Committee
PAR       Participatory Action Research
Ph.D      Doctor of Philosophy

---
\(^1\) Prior to 2004 the CDU was called the Northern Territory University (NTU). In order to avoid confusion the University in the Northern Territory where my research was conducted from 2001 to 2004 is referred to in this thesis as CDU.

\(^2\) NTU was renamed CDU in 2004
SAIKS  School of Aboriginal and Islander Knowledge Systems
SITE  Faculty of Science, Information Technology and Education¹
TAFE  Training and Further Education – Vocational Education and Training Sector
TLDC  Teaching and Learning Development Committee
VAEAI  Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.
UNEP  United Nations Environment Programme

¹ In 2004 SITE was reorganised and changed to EHS. As the School of Education remained intact in this restructure of the Faculty and in order to avoid confusion I refer, in this thesis, to the Faculty within which my research was conducted as SITE.
# Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study. Ma! .................................................. 1
  Introduction........................................................................................................ 1
  My Research Project ....................................................................................... 3
  Learning Sites, Narratives and Landscapes .................................................... 5
  Indigenous Knowledges and Western Education .......................................... 7
  My Research Direction and Focus .................................................................. 8
  Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 9

Chapter 2: Positioning the Researcher in the Study ...................................... 11
  Cultural Context of the Researcher ................................................................. 11
  Tyangi wedi tjän kinin ..................................................................................... 14
  Mathutapu – Holders of Mak Mak (Indigenous) Knowledge ......................... 16
  The Researcher’s Journey in Education ......................................................... 22
  Concerns about Indigenous Higher Education .............................................. 25
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 28

Chapter 3: Positioning the Study .................................................................... 29
  Introduction........................................................................................................ 29
  Non-Indigenous (White) Constructions of Indigenous (Black) peoples as
  ‘Other’................................................................................................................ 30
  Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Education: an overview of the contemporary
  scene .................................................................................................................. 38
  Indigenous Research Agenda and Indigenous Research Reform Agenda ....... 49
    Indigenous Research Agenda ........................................................................ 49
    Indigenous Research Reform Agenda ......................................................... 56
  Indigenous Access to Higher Education ......................................................... 60
  Conclusion ......................................................................................................... 68

Chapter 4: Research Methodology ................................................................. 70
  Introductory Comment: Indigenous Research Reform Agendas ..................... 70
  Introduction to the Research Methodology ..................................................... 71
  Mirrwana and Wurrkama Ceremony ............................................................... 71
  Paigu, Kundu dap kunin Wurrkama ngun! (Working Together!) ...................... 76
  Firing the pelangu ......................................................................................... 77
  Participatory Action Research ....................................................................... 81
  Research Procedures ....................................................................................... 87
  The Landscapes of the Research Project in Symbolic Form ......................... 89
  Ma-wadi ......................................................................................................... 91
    Description of the Ma-wadi ......................................................................... 91
    Interpretative Summary of the Ma-wadi ...................................................... 95
    Marrung Pulu ni-nni (My story in the ma-wadi) .......................................... 98
  Concluding overview the ma-wadi ............................................................... 99
  Conclusion .......................................................................................................100

Chapter 5: Case Study: Wurrkama - getting to the sweet bread in Mirrwana..... 102
  Introduction: the Indigenous Metaphorical Underpinning to the Case Study ... 102
  Phase 1: Talking the idea into existence ....................................................... 105
  1998: Beginning with my Mak Mak Marranunggu Family ............................ 105
  1998: Beginning with the Higher Education System ...................................... 110
  2003: The Project Proposal .......................................................................... 115
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives of Proposed Research:</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Proposed Project</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Outcomes from the research:</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2: “Doing It”</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Action Research Project (ARP)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done It!</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3: ‘A Success or What?’</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beyond the ARP-based ETU323 Pilot of 2003</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concluding Comment</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: Analysis on the Case</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urra ngung ngi–ing yangi marri!</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Project and Organisational Changes at CDU 2000 - 2004</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit ETU323 as a cultural representation of the Indigenous Cultural Identity</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Nginaba ngung?” “Who are you?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit ETU323 and the ARP Project as an example of Indigenous Research-in-Action</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ARP Project and Indigenous Access to Higher Education</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7: Narratives and Landscapes in Indigenous Higher Education</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kar-na Marri gu nidin kan!</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Authentic Place for Indigenous Knowledge within Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Expanded Mirrwana/Wurrkama Model of Indigenous Higher Education</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Barriers and Obstacles to the Mirrwana/Wurrkama Model of Indigenous Education</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Principles in Indigenous Higher Education</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative as Pedagogy</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationality as Pedagogy</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discursiveness as Pedagogy</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Integrity as Pedagogy</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenist Research as Pedagogy</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Principles as a holistic approach to Indigenous Higher Education</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8: Conclusion to the Study</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marri gu Waki tjjan!</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing My Research Questions</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marri yigin ga kabalwa parrp wanti nging wa</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Figures

Figure 1: The Action Research ‘Moments’ and Spiral (Diagram from McTaggart (1991, p. 32)) .......................................................... 83

Figure 2: Mapping the Changes in Indigenous Education at NTU/CDU .......... 154

Figure 3: The Mirrwana/Wurrkama Model of Indigenous Higher Education applied to one Unit of study in a Pre-service Teacher Education Degree Course at CDU .... 156

Figure 4: An Expanded Mirrwana/Wurrkama Model of Pre-service Indigenous Teacher Education .................................................................................................................. 182

Figure 5: Addressing Indigenous Knowledge through Pedagogical Principles acting Holistically in Higher Education .......................................................... 202
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study. Ma!

Introduction

Ngung Payi. Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu marrung ngo-wung ngimbi-ngi Kurrindju waki ni-nni. This can be translated: Payi is a woman of spirit of the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu (White Eagle) family and is knowing of her ways on her land Kurrindju.

This is a particularly dangerous time for us of the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu family. In the recent past we have maintained our knowledge system. We now need to develop our country held by us through the ‘Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976’ process of the Northern Territory and the ‘Native Title Act (Cth) (1994)’ process of the Commonwealth Government of Australia, but to do so exposes our family members to the ‘outside’ assimilative forces of Australia’s institutions and legislative requirements. These forces are felt by all, but more so by the younger generations of my family. These same forces have been strongly felt by other Tyikim Clans and Nations around Australia beginning at different times since Padakoot invasion of this country from 1788 onwards.

I am concerned to engage with and resist these assimilative forces through our own Tyikim knowledge systems. I recognise the need to engage with the bureaucratic and institutional forms of the colonising Australian nation-state but understand the dangers inherent in this for my people. The education systems of the nation-state are powerful purveyors of knowledge that undermines our Tyikim cultural and knowledge heritage. This knowledge drawn from the Western imperialistic knowledge system has the effect of working to disempower each generation of my people with the intention of assimilating us into the dominant cultural formation of the colonising nation-state. My observation is that the outcomes for many Tyikim Australians of contact with these assimilative forces through engagement with Western educational institutions are cultural and identity confusion and dysfunctionality within our own communities and elsewhere. We must address this
situation through the strength of our own knowledge systems. The issue for me is how to do this within the education systems that are now in place and where the educational resources of this country are now located. I am concerned to offer choice for Tyilkim Australians within these bureaucratic educational systems that have been up to this point so dangerous for us. Our strength in meeting this challenge is to be found from within us, from the knowledge systems that have sustained us for millennia and which we can draw upon now.

Landscapes within the Westernised education systems can be defined as Pulitj wuwa ngangy. Pulitj wuwa ngany are dangerous and sacred places on Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu country. These places are forbidden and people avoid them because they know that their knowledge and understanding of these places is insufficient. They really do not know what they would be fooling around with, but they know it is dangerous, and that there are severe penalties (both direct and indirect) for error or foolishness (Rose 2002, p. 169).

We have to tread carefully when entering an unknown landscape pulitj wuwa ngangy with all our senses alert and behaving appropriately with a family group. We call upon Pilu (ancestral beings) to look after us. In some places we call upon our grandparents and higher knowledgeable people in the family. Similarly, when moving into Western education places we must have our senses alert and we need protection from the powerful narratives within our own cultural representations.

Western education places are akin to places where the Kla-k wic-wic distorts our senses and takes away our faculties. This curlew bird puts mungarda in people’s eyes and ears that has been ‘sung’ by those in greater power causing people to change.

Kla-k wic wic kudabu miri, tjan-gi nguda. W-adi bu-gum tjan).

Dat girl/boy yimin different kind na – too much dey bin trichem. Yimin go der an cum bek no good na. Poor thing! Tj-tj.
This causes people to talk in a different way and to go in a different direction to that of Tyikim people, to be of a different ‘kind’.

My Research Project

This thesis explores the possibilities for engaging the landscapes of Western education through Tyikim narratives and by treading carefully with all our senses alert and behaving appropriately with the equivalent of Tyikim family groups but now naming what is discussed with more understanding and detail in its explanation as a Tyikim teaching and learning group. My research investigated the potential for making landscapes established under Western education cultural regimes culturally safe places for Tyikim teaching and learning. We need to negate the potential of Kla-k wic wic to act as an agent of the powerful Western colonising forces upon our students and ourselves in these education places and build up our own cultural representations of ourselves through the curricula of these places.

My journey has been to research the issues obstructing the flow of Tyikim knowledge into Australian education sites, with particular reference to higher education, by attempting to bring about change through action directed towards introducing Tyikim knowledge into the curricula of these sites. By investigating through teaching and learning actions at a specific higher education site, Charles Darwin University (CDU), I have been able to explore more fully the prospects for sustaining a Tyikim knowledge presence within universities. This exploration has enabled me to identify clearly the barriers and obstacles to establishing, as a matter of normal institutional practice, Tyikim people’s knowledge inputs into the curricula of higher education. The research ‘froze’ proceedings about Indigenous education in this place, CDU, in terms of teaching and learning about Tyikim knowledge by capturing educational ‘events’ for description, analysis, interpretation and critique. The research examined the nature of selected events with reference to the contemporary contexts of Indigenous higher education and the dominant paradigm that informs the underpinning ideology of these contexts.
Through my Mak Mak oral teachings and learning experiences I can share levels of my Tyikim knowledge. In the context of this research Project I feel comfortable enough to share the Tyikim knowledge associated with the research journey reported in this thesis. I feel this because I consider that what Tyikim knowledge I have to contribute will be sufficient and transparent enough to:

- Engage the Tyikim community, academics and the wider community;
- Enable people to experience the research journey through my narrative account;
- Increase people’s awareness of Tyikim knowledge in the context of institutional education;
- Assist people to understand that Tyikim knowledge systems are not homogenous; and
- Assist people to understand that Tyikim knowledge systems are substantial and that each Tyikim Nation has its own ‘business’ to consider according to its own Tyikim philosophies.

I believe that Tyikim researchers, working closely with their Tyikim communities, must express their experiences of the Australian education system if they want to see the changes that will benefit their next generations. It is up to us to speak up and tell of our experiences. If we are unable to fulfil the aim to continue the Tyikim knowledge flow of our Tyikim communities and those of our Tyikim ancestors into these new places and landscapes, then we are left with the dying legacies of Tyikim knowledges. How shameful that would be, that as Tyikim clans and nations we were not able to ensure that Tyikim knowledge is sustained in the contemporary educational settings that influence the minds of our people and into the future.

I believe the hard part for Tyikim communities to manage is getting Padakoot people who control the curricula and pedagogical agendas of education systems and their institutional entities (schools and universities, for example) to accept and acknowledge our intellectualisation of Tyikim reality and worldview, and to acknowledge in curricula our high knowledge. A key focus of my research has been
the unveiling of the struggle for survival within these contemporary educational entities as Tyikim people drawing on our own Tyikim knowledge systems. In general terms, the research has been about coming to a new understanding of Indigenous education in Australia and Tyikim peoples’ determination to reform the Australian Education system to become inclusive of Tyikim knowledges.

Learning Sites, Narratives and Landscapes

The learning ‘sites’ through which Tyikim people gain knowledge are, firstly, the knowledge generating and transmitting contexts within the Tyikim clan itself. This is the Tyikim community domain of knowing, being and doing and, as such, provides the origins for Tyikim knowledge and, through this knowledge, as Tyikim we know people’s identity, languages and country. The second learning ‘site’ for Tyikim people today are those knowledge generating and transmitting contexts located within the Western Australian society, and to which Tyikim people have access. This is the Western community domain, the domain that provides the frameworks for domination, rationalism, Western religiosity and mono-lingualism with an emphasis on individualism amongst the other colonial forces we all experience. For the purposes of this research, the Australian institutionalised education systems were of significance here.

The third ‘site’ is where knowledge from these two separate ‘sites’ or domains interact within us as mediating ways of constructing cultural meanings and identities. This is the ‘interface site’. For me, this is not a new domain but an expansion of the Tyikim community domain of knowing, being and doing into a previously alien landscape. At the interface site Tyikim are the learners and, as active knowers (creators and appliers of knowledge), draw on both Western and Tyikim knowledge systems to create new, for them, ways of knowing that are primarily Tyikim. This must not be confused with cross-cultural education or any of its derivative forms. This ‘site’, and the possibilities for knowledge creation here, has been the primary location of investigation for this research project.
For the purposes of the research, the principles governing narratives and landscapes, as a theoretical position within Tyikim knowledge systems, also constructed the philosophy of the research. Narratives and landscapes, as broad metaphorical concepts, provided me with the opportunity to explore a philosophical framework, common to my research participants and myself, that had the capacity to serve diverse Tyikim knowledge interests through our teaching and learning settings at an interface site in higher education. At the interface, particular narratives and landscapes were expected to connect with the journeys of the Tyikim teachers and learners participating in the research Project and to call into action new ways of being and doing based on newly formed meanings and understandings of those contemporary situations and events under study. It was anticipated that the knowledge status of each learner would construct and guide the teaching and learning pathway of the participant group in the research.

 Narratives can be used to describe the nature of the events studied at the interface site established by my research Project. Importantly, these narratives have many similarities to the way knowledge is transmitted in Tyikim oral knowledge systems. Tyikim knowledge systems are located in the narratives of the landscape and are controlled by an appropriate order of business determined by a Koonie Koonie/Pilu – a person of high cultural knowledge in the local Tyikim community. The Koonie Koonie in the case of my research was Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi. She advised my on the appropriate use of Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marrithiel knowledge at the interface site within my research. As the level of access to the local Tyikim knowledge increased for Tyikim knowers in my project, I, as the researcher in this Project, expected the understanding of the educational events shared and studied by the Indigenous higher education students to change. Further, I expected the change to be in the direction of improving student outcomes in Indigenous higher education.

 The Tyikim worldview is the central feature of my research. For me, a Tyikim worldview is a form of active knowing that pulsates and expands to integrate and build upon opportunities for new learning from within the Tyikim community. The
Tyikim communities are inclusive and sharing of their Tyikim knowledge as this is a Tyikim cultural expectation and practice. Listening and speaking Tyikim knowledge is important to Tyikim people. I took this characteristic of a Tyikim worldview into my research. The research was premised on the expectation that the interface site would become the site of active Tyikim knowledge creation through listening and speaking within a Tyikim community formed by the participants in the research Project and, through them, to other Tyikim communities and organisations.

**Indigenous Knowledges and Western Education**

The Northern Territory, where my research was conducted, has distinctive knowledge nations defined through unique languages and spirituality. But this distinctiveness may have a limited future. The relationship for Tyikim people with the coloniser and, through being colonised, is an oppressive one whereby the majority of the Tyikim population have been denied their Tyikim heritage within the schools, colleges, institutes and universities of the nation-state. There is now an urgency for reform.

Corson (1999) identified the issue as follows:

> Changing the education of aboriginal (sic.) peoples, is the obvious place to begin discussing the practical reform of education for diversity, because the injustices and unsuitability of past policies and practices stand out most strikingly when we look at the education of students from aboriginal (sic.) backgrounds (Corson 1999, p. 44).

This proposition identifies the dialogical and praxis-oriented space that Tyikim people must now inhabit in order to bring about the reform of education for Tyikim knowledge interests in Australia’s educational systems. The role of Tyikim researchers is paramount, for theorising the basis for this reform and for facilitating culturally positive linkages for Tyikim communities to these education systems.

From a Western bureaucratic educational perspective the core business of education provision tends towards cultural uniformity. However, when Tyikim knowledges permeate the interface of the knowledge communities, the ‘third’ space as explored
through my research, these knowledges will reflect the country (landscapes and
narratives) of the Tyikim learners and teachers and referenced communities. This
form of delivery of Indigenous education to the Tyikim learners is expected to be
counter-hegemonic to the normalising uniformity of the dominating Western form of
institutionalised education.

My Research Direction and Focus

My research aims to make explicit my journey as part of my personal and
professional growth as a person working and theorising within Tyikim constructions
of cultural values, beliefs and languages; constructions that firstly, resist other forms
at all levels and secondly, inform me of new ways of acting as a Tyikim person
within places previously without Tyikim cultural landscapes. Specifically, the
purpose of my research has been to explore and examine Indigenous educational
processes that engaged levels of access to Tyikim knowledge within one higher
education institution within the Northern Territory.

This research has been focused by a series of questions. The first most general
question is: how can the Australian education systems better address the educational
needs of Tyikim people? A more specific question is: what are the prospects and
possibilities for an authentic place for Tyikim knowledge within the higher
education educational systems of Australia? Subsequent questions of interest are:
what are the inhibitors that create barriers to Tyikim knowledge flow for Tyikim
people in the higher education system of Australia; and what are the praxis-oriented
interventions referenced back to the knowledge traditions of our Tyikim
communities that facilitate the successful achievement of higher education outcomes
for Tyikim students?

This sequence of questions framed my research study and set me out on a journey to
investigate the scope for Tyikim knowledge use in the construction of contemporary
‘bureaucratic and institutionalised’ higher education teaching and learning
experiences of Tyikim Australians for the advancement of Tyikim interests.
These questions were addressed by examining critical points where selected events occurred within teaching and learning settings associated with the knowledge interface site created by my research Project. The description and analysis of these events are included in the Chapters that follow.

From this research I have developed a theoretical approach that I claim is suited for the development of a model for Indigenous higher education that incorporates Tyikim knowledge in an authentic way for Tyikim participants and their knowledge communities.

Conclusion
This thesis is fundamentally about identifying the prospects and possibilities for an authentic place for Tyikim knowledge within the educational systems of Australia. The thesis explores these prospects and possibilities within the landscape of the higher education system or sector. The problem at the core of this study is an investigation of the scope for Tyikim knowledge uptake and use in the construction of educational experiences of Tyikim Australians in contemporary ‘bureaucratic and institutional’ sites for the advancement of Tyikim interests. The sites within which this investigation took place are the Universities of the Australian higher education sector. Charles Darwin University provided the primary terrain over which this problem and its attendant issues were thoroughly interrogated.

This thesis is also about coming to a stronger understanding of Tyikim epistemology and its application in the area of higher education. The thesis therefore explores processes whereby Tyikim spiritual knowledge can be undertaken within a knowledge community informed by Tyikim epistemological principles and metaphors. For the purposes of this study a knowledge community is a group of people with a shared cultural heritage whose discursive practices are informed by a common and accepted way of being, a shared ontology. For the researcher the principal knowledge community is that primarily informed by the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marrithiel knowledge systems of the Northern Territory.
In the next Chapter, I begin my narrative of my research journey with a detailed account of my positioning as a Tyikim researcher in this doctoral study.
Chapter 2: Positioning the Researcher in the Study

Cultural Context of the Researcher

Through my Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu teaching and learning reflections to this point in my personal, professional and spiritual growth, my sense of strength and endurance reinforce my Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu identity. The one person that has made the significant difference in my worldview is Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi. Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi is my Ah-la (Mother), Senior Cultural Elder, and also the last Senior Elder of her generation of Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu. The unique Tyikim knowledge that she possesses about her country is astounding. Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi is my Koonie Koonie, mentor, supervisor and boss. I consult her on all aspects of life. Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi advises me about the possible nature of the events of the learning journeys that I am most likely to encounter and the way to manage those situations. The outcome of this particular research project (my doctoral project) is a joint culmination of the work that Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi has stimulated over her ‘life time’ and my own work. Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi is integral to the research project. Our Tyikim experiences are strongly represented and meshed in this thesis.

As a Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu this is how I identify myself belonging to my country Kurrindju.

Yu Puma ngung: Payi, Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu, Kurrindju wuwa ngangy!
Translation: Yes My name is Payi, Rak = Camp/place/country, Mak Mak = White Breasted Sea Eagle, Marranunggu: Marra = language, Nunggu = us/we/mob, Kurrindju = Name of my country which is Paper Bark Number Two of the Finniss and Reynolds River Catchments, Wuwa = my place!
My identity is defined by the interactions of three ngirrwats or totems. First, my family totem is Awa ngirrwat: Mak Mak (White Eagle). Mak Mak is defined by my mother’s father and this gives me primary custodian rights including my Wali/Wongga (women and men’s) ceremony, identity, language(s) and the country to which my family and I care for as primary custodians. This country, Kurrindju, is located on the Finniss and Reynold Rivers in the Northern Territory of Australia. My secondary custodian rights are defined by my Grandmother’s awu ngirrwat: Watjan du-ngy (Dingo) family totem at Yen Tyalwu and Wudicupildyirr. My third ngirrwat is my awa mirr Kugoon (sugar bag) which is my individual conception totem. The significance of the three ngirrwats entitles me to my position within the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu community.

Mak Mak ceremonies are the governing responsibility of Senior custodians who possess the cultural knowledge and objects that determine my position in the language system of the Marrawalgu Nation within which Kurrindju and Wudicupildyirr countries belong. These totems provide specified signatures in the landscapes that govern the ways of operating and behaving appropriately in social and knowledge circumstances taking into account my gender, my status within my immediate family (husband/wife and children), own family group (brothers and sisters), family group (cousins, etc.) and extended family from other neighbouring family groups (in-laws through the kinship system), and knowledge position within my family in terms of who represents the Mak Mak people on conducting business elsewhere, for example, at ceremonies.

My ngirrwats signatures determine who I am and where I fit into the Tyikim knowledge system of the region. The ngirrwat system provides the necessary information to understand who I can discuss knowledge-based business with and who I cannot discuss this business with. The right senior custodian(s) involvement and participation in any negotiation is paramount to the success of implementing aims and objectives of any projects to do with Tyikim people and their country.
The **Mak Mak** cultural norms are reflected in the:

- Knowledge and practice of living on country;
- Practice and knowledge of ‘rotational harvesting’ of the natural resources thereby sustaining biodiversity; and
- Management of the landscapes of the knowledge ecology of the wetlands of **Kurrindju**.

We’re Swampies! We do what the **Mak Mak** tells us for we are one and identify as such through many forms of resemblance to significant human and raptor characteristics. One example of this is the use of expressions of admiration in hunting and gathering journeys. For instance I say, “**Wedi ngung manim Ngelebe! Tyaemaen, Mak Mak miri eh!**” Or the opposite, “**Miri yigin kulic tjan. Keh!**” The praises for having excellent vision is paramount for practical and successful expeditions to hunt and gather and the prerequisite is to know fully about what **awa** or **awu** (animals) and **miya** or **miyi** (plants) are being hunted and gathered and the educative practices by which we acquire this knowledge are explicit. **Mak Mak** teach!

The **Mak Mak** cultural rules and protocols of the ‘do’s and ‘don’t’ of hunting and gathering, rights to **awu** and **miyi**, sites of harvesting, killing, preparation of **awu** and **miyi** and eating have an explicit theoretical base. As is the case with the economic base of other human cultures, **Mak Mak** have detailed knowledge systems underlying, arising from and informing our hunting and gathering heritage. Our knowledge system is rich in abstracted theoretical understandings centred on metaphorical ways of thinking and understanding the world. This knowledge however is not compartmentalised in the sense of only being applied to hunting and gathering pursuits, but is drawn upon to theorise about the totality of **Mak Mak** cultural and social experience. Also, relevant metaphors can be drawn upon from our knowledge system to inform and guide our thinking and understandings about new endeavours in our contemporary lives. In this way significant metaphors from our rich knowledge heritage come to inform new practices for us in contexts that involve...
us with other knowledge systems but which position us according to our own interests and ways of knowing, and our own understanding of who we are.

This insight is relevant to this thesis. Here the study is focused on teaching and learning paradigms involving Tyikim participants in the context of higher education. But who should be responsible for developing these teaching and learning paradigms? Mak Mak! I used awa ngirrwat Mak Mak as an all encompassing structuring metaphor in this research and as a reflective teaching tool for analyzing practices associated with integrating Tyikim knowledge into higher education. As a structuring metaphor, awa ngirrwat Mak Mak generated expectations about what can be taught and when people were ready to move onto new ideas and ways of knowing. Awa ngirrwat Mak Mak made it easier for me to negotiate with my Senior Elder(s) and family members as my research project unfolded, to review the outcomes of the research and to appreciate the necessity of Tyikim people taking ownership and control of their experiences in higher education.

Tyangi wedi tjän kinin

Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu knowledge and protocols of Aboriginal Customary Law pertains to the intrinsic traditional knowledge framework. The knowledge only remains with a few. This is the fundamental knowledge developed long ago over thousands of years and hundreds of generations. This traditional knowledge provides an impetus for Mak Mak people in the contemporary settings to draw upon our powerful metaphors to apply to leadership, management and planning of programs on Mak Mak country – our way! Our way of learning and teaching our people is about our ways on the land and from our cultural knowledge centred upon this land, all structured metaphorically through awa ngirrwat Mak Mak and other selected powerful metaphors. These are the theoretical principles of Tyikim knowledge for Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu. It is listening!

The sites in the landscape of Kurrindju that simultaneously connect all the metaphors applicable to our knowledge system are relevant to manage our own
education. The spiritual (ancestral beings) resources frame Mak Mak’s position on what is to be valued as of primary importance in any endeavour. The relevant knowledge is told to me by my Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, Ki-la Yilngi Atie, and through “close up family”: Umgga Pardu-Martin and Ngi-ya Manjbal-Mabel Jimerin from Merrepen Community, older siblings: Delyek Pulum-Kathy Deveraux, Delyek Wanjamul-Margy Daiyi, Ma-na Mudjita-Richard Daiyi, and Pilu Mutjiga-John Waditj, Pa-nun Panullmuk-Lesley Waditj, Pa-nun Belyuen-Andrew Djekabo, plus the Pilu (old people now deceased and some extended family). Their knowledge is passed to me and mine to my children through our oral traditional story telling, living on country and sharing Mak Mak Marranunggu ancestral beings’ knowledge and experiences about our cultural heritage and wellbeing. Mak Mak’s past and current knowledge management has created a valued commodity and an intrinsic resource that we can now use to determine our future.

For instance, the ancestral place Patj Patj is powerful. Patj Patj’s ancestral being, Putju Putju, cautions us and behold the terror that this ancestral being inflicts on its victims. Putju Putju makes us aware of danger when ‘travellers’ and ‘navigators’ invade Mak Mak country. The combination of Patj Patj and Putju Putju provides multiple and generalisable metaphors about hunting and gathering practices, plus the identification of tools which, although of utilitarian origin, now have symbolic power. The yeli thowarr milityin is one such tool. Milityin is a hunting and gathering tool made from mowingy.

“We have a special stick called ‘milityin’. It can’t be made from any other tree, only ironwood. Digging stick, made of ironwood. You call a person ‘milityin’ if they’re a really good food gatherer, hunter, good hunter, champion. Like Margaret and Mum, they’re somebody special” (Deveraux 2002, p. 82).

Here the concept of milityin has been expanded to a metaphor that can be associated with people who are highly capable ‘hunters and gatherers’ also in a broader metaphorical sense. Highly capable Mak Mak people are referred to as milityin people with abstract knowledge and skills in particular areas of significance to their clan.
Mathutapu – Holders of Mak Mak (Indigenous) Knowledge

The Tyikim adults are the ‘Ma-thutapu’ – holders of Mak Mak knowledge. The more proficiently you demonstrate your knowledge the more status you have in the community. The knowledge of relevance here is hierarchically organised across different levels of knowledgeable people and typically structured through metaphors linked to hunting and gathering. People of high knowledge are extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of hunting and gathering within our country with its landscapes, seasons and history. But all these ways of knowing are underpinned by deeper levels of knowledge not available to those lower down on the knowledge hierarchy. For example, I have knowledge of my prey, its habitat and its landscape, and skills in hunting and gathering this prey. Given my success in ‘hunting’ and ‘gathering’ and my induction into other ways of knowing I am referred to as a ‘milityin’. The ‘milityin’ description is an excellent Mak Mak ‘spiritual’ metaphor to describe my research as a hunter and gather of knowledge in higher education.

‘Milityin’ people are called upon by Senior Elders in such ways, “Kumina mi-thit thit wa!” Daiyi (2005). Translated into English this means ‘show me’ or ‘tell me’ the best way to be an outstanding hunter and gather of knowledge (in my case, in Indigenous higher education).

Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu have a wonderful and eventful “Kla-k wie-wie philosophy” that reminds parents and extended family members to be watchful of their children’s safety otherwise they will be stolen forever. The teaching and learning metaphors associated with this story are powerful reminders that as a community of Tyikim Educators we have a responsibility to take action that provides a culturally safe place for teaching and learning to occur for Tyikim - yarri tjaputj (small children).

Tyikim knowledge is important and essential for continued safety, security and survival of our Mak Mak families and Kurrindju country. Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi (2002) says:
“Ba! Kuk-tjan ngum-bin-wa arramu, mun-tha-ngirr, a-wad-u-wur-rung nul!
Weddabinni tjang-gi nul arrabul!
Yillii thowarr kun ngum-it wa. Ninin wa! Ngumbin wa! Awu, arramu nul. Baa!

ngung? Yu waki? Ngadi a-pu! Mi-ngari, Mi-ngatji or Ngelebe, mitjiti nul! Yigin
nidin duwurr! (Camp) Tjang-gi wudi wa! Yu! Yigin Milityin!” (Daiyi, N.N. 2002,
pers.comm. 20 June).

Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi’s brief explanation of her knowledge and
experiences to hunt and gather on Mak Mak country cannot be understood without a
deep understanding of its metaphorical content both generally and specifically to the
context with which the speaker and listeners are engaging. This metaphorical content
is the key to our knowledge as ways of knowing carried and communicated through
Mak Mak Marranunggu (White Eagle) and Marrithiel (Dingo), our first two
languages. Here my Ah-la speaks to us in terms of the right season for the right
season’s (dry season) staple food that includes a variety of meat (long neck turtle,
sand goanna and male kangaroo), yams and roots (long yam, cheeky yam, skinny
roots and little red yam), lilies (water lily seeds). Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi’s
family understand and know these words metaphorically and thereby understand her
directions about who is to take what action and when in order to carry out a
collaborative exercise to achieve what needs to be done in a particular circumstance.

To live on the land is to know and understand the tropical wetlands in all its seasons
and moods. It sounds so simple. It’s not simple! We have survived through many
thousands of years in this country and its landscapes through our knowledge and the
narratives we carry with us. Similarly for Tyikim people to survive in the ‘country
and landscapes’ of Australian higher education we need to be able to draw on
Tyikim cultural knowledge in order to create new meanings or understandings that
resonate with what we already know and value. To put these Tyikim cultural
elements of practice and theory into a Indigenous higher education context requires
milityins who possess the cultural skills and knowledge of both Tyikim and
Padakoot cultures and who are capable of ‘hunting and gathering’ across the
interface. The Indigenous higher education milityin is required to hunt and gather
new forms of knowledge to make the new language of the new practice and theory
appetising and palatable for both Tyikim and Padakoot stakeholders of Indigenous higher education. As a military I needed highly specialised knowledge of the higher education landscapes pertaining to Tyikim student access and equity, and familiarity with the accepted narratives (policies) of the sector in this regard. But I also needed powerful guiding metaphors from my Mak Mak knowledge system.

Metaphors connected to Mak Mak cultural landscapes describe for key Tyikim participants (my Ah-la, for example) the reality of the research into the possibilities for including Tyikim knowledge in higher education core curriculum. In addition, there are metaphors within the Mak Mak knowledge system which can intersect with and expand certain Western research methodologies, particularly those that are based on participatory approaches. The guiding metaphors for my research are Mirrwana (cycad) and Wurrkuma (work). These metaphors strengthened me as a Tyikim researcher as I explored the scope for Tyikim knowledge within the university knowledge system.

Mirrwana and Wurrkuma metaphors provide a Tyikim voice to describe and structure the action research process through which the research unfolded over time. The Tyikim voice is a powerful tool to describe in detail the events that occurred in the action research and its significance to my Mak Mak knowledge development through interaction with my Mak Mak knowledge community.

Mirrwana and Wurrkuma metaphors therefore represent the symbolism of Mak Mak cultural practice and theory applicable to this thesis. These metaphors are associated with ceremonies that involve, amongst other aspects, the reaching of consensus or alignments of agreement amongst in-law families over reciprocal obligations. Disputes are settled and future actions are decided upon with responsibilities, obligations and duties allocated across the two parties. Sometimes, depending on specific circumstances, more than two in-law families may be involved. It is argued in this thesis that these same ceremonies can provide a conceptual and lawful basis for Mak Mak for formal negotiations and consultations with representatives from ‘outside’ knowledge communities.
In the context of this research study, the **Mirrwana** and **Wurrkama** metaphors informed for me and my **Mak Mak** community research study reference group about the reaching of consensus over academic responsibilities and obligations amongst **Tyikim** co-workers within Charles Darwin University that was the research site for the study. Teamwork was fostered and mutual agreements were reached to resolve issues as they arose and allocate duties to be undertaken in the delivery of **Tyikim** knowledge through the action research project. These same metaphors also provided a conceptual basis for formal negotiations and consultations with **Padakoot** representatives from the contemporary bureaucracy within Charles Darwin University, specifically those colleagues associated with the Faculty of Science, Information Technology and Education (SITE).

Thus, the metaphorical knowledge basis of my research is contained in the ancestral beings creation stories associated with **Mirrwana** and **Wurrkama**. These complex narratives refer to ‘the object’ and ‘the action’ and the interplay between objects in this world and the action that can take place through and around these. **Mirrwana** is the cycad palm with **pelangu**, the nuts that contain the unpalatable food. This food cannot be eaten without the actions of **Wurrkama** to make it into **lawa** – a sweet bread. Without the necessary actions of **Wurrkama** the food in **pelangu** will make you ill and even cause you to die. **Pelangu** has to be cracked open, wrapped in paperbark, soaked in billabong water for a certain period of time, watched carefully by knowledgeable people, dried and ground into flour, before being prepared and cooked into **lawa**, the edible and nourishing food.

The preparation of **lawa** is part of the ceremonial process that prepares the way for the formal and lawful negotiations amongst reciprocating in-law families. Its consumption is a celebration of the end or closure of one stage with the moving onto the next stage. The metaphorical knowledge contained in this complex narrative is illustrative of **Mak Mak Marranunggu** ways of knowing, ways of being and ways of doing. Here I am providing you with a glimpse into our ontology as our way of being and our epistemology as our way of making meaning and creating knowledge.
An additional narrative, linked to Mirrwna and Wurrkama, that informed my research contains the idea that objects can be ‘called into existence’. Objects in this world were created through the utterances or the naming actions of ancestral beings. In the creation of Mak Mak country, Kurrindju, the ancestral being Pae-Karrimalla (the Old Man Goose) flew down from the high country calling out as he went. He was calling creator beings - philosopher people to come to a ceremony while at the same time naming the features of the landscape into existence. This is a powerful metaphor that still today links the landscape of my country with narratives of my people.

Importantly, Pae-Karrimalla used a kenbi (didjeridu) as his instrument to call the landscape into reality. The kenbi is symbolic of both this ancestral creation narrative and of Mak Mak charged with the daunting responsibility of creating anew within contemporary settings. Creating anew has always been a part of Tyikim life, though this has occurred within a commitment to country as in ‘belonging’, as expressed by the words “Wu wa ngung winin tha Kurrindju waki ni-nni”.

Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu have belonged to Kurrindju for thousands of years. During this time the sea level has changed dramatically, first drying out and then flooding the plains before stabilising about 6,000 years ago to produce the present day mangrove swamps and grasslands. Over this time Mak Mak have adapted, created anew, within the knowledge traditions of their sustained culture. People have belonged to country while the landscape changed and new narratives captured these events while still being true to the deeper level metaphors. Rose (2002) commented that:

Mak Mak people expect to remain in their country ‘forever’. Accordingly, changes in the place, even the most damaging, must be lived with. There are no ‘greener pastures’ for them, because they belong right here (p. 116).

This research drew on these ideas, strong in Mak Mak philosophy, to embark on the research project that sought to call into existence a Tyikim place in the landscape of Charles Darwin University.
In this way members of the Mak Mak Marranunggu knowledge community established the key metaphors for framing my interactions with Charles Darwin University as a knowledge community with knowledge resources significant to my people and other Tyikim people. The approach of establishing the metaphors provides ownership over the research project for the Tyikim people. The approach seeks to privilege a powerful supportive language mechanism to maintain reasonable Tyikim control over what happens at the cross-cultural interface, recognising that the normal literacy and language of the higher education sector produces conflicting cultural cues for Tyikim university lecturers and students.

The research drew on my cultural positioning as a milityin within the Mak Mak family to develop an association of the Tyikim and Padakoot cultures akin to the joint arrangements between the two reciprocating clans. As we say “Wuwa bit ninni ga kurri-ning-yi! Or “Bit tj-an ki-ning!” “Whole lot together – mibella!” Atie (2005). Interlocking and bonding the knowledge interests of Tyikim communities and those of the Australian higher education sector is an extraordinarily complex process. This thesis argues that this process of interlocking and bonding across knowledge communities must be based on powerful Tyikim theories and practices. The thesis also argues that such a basis for negotiation and resolution of differences is the most productive way that Tyikim people are going to have ownership in their educational pathways in Indigenous higher education. The paradigm shift from the traditional models of Indigenous higher education means Wurrkama for those that want to see the shift of paradigm to one controlled and driven by Tyikim people.

Tyangi wedi kinin is required of the Tyikim milityins to lead us to burn the country or the University landscape so that we can have a clear view of terrain as to where to hunt and gather in the area of Indigenous higher education.
The Researcher’s Journey in Education

Pagu milityin ngun Payi. Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu wu wa winin tha Kurrindju waki. Through my Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu teaching and learning reflections to this point in my personal, professional and spiritual growth, my sense of strength and endurance reinforce my Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu identity. In Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi’s and Ki-la Yilngi Atie’s ‘Yuwa kurri ngul’ oral teachings in the Tyikim languages of Mak Mak Marranunggu, Marrithiel and Creole, my teaching and learning journey started long before I was conceived in the “Mirr nganaga Kugoon!” This is referring to my spiritual affiliation to my country – mirr place: Wutjitji and Wadanung since time immemorial.

The Pilu (ancestral spiritual beings) of the country is where the Tyikim knowledge base of ‘tyangi wedi tjan kinin’ Daiyi (2004) inaugurates the education process of the teaching and learning journey. Once the Tyikim child conceptualises the spirituality of their Tyikim knowledge base, they begin to understand that the knowledge is created and spirals forever, regardless of the events that come and go. Daiyi and Atie teaches of “Pulitj nidin gak-unda awu ngirrwat mul” that are the ‘ancestral spiritual beings’ and how prominent they are in our way of identifying places in country with associated ‘Koonie Koonie’s’ (Senior women’s) names and linking their relationship back to the Pilu and to country. The methods that Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and Tyilili Yilngi Atie use to share their knowledge is generous. Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and Tyilili Yilngi Atie distribute their incomparable knowledge, which is a credit to their foresight and vision of Tyikim Australia. Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and Tyilili Yilngi Atie’s method of delivering the knowledge is humbling. There are no other knowledge systems of which I have engaged that have contributed to my spiritual growth and understanding as my Tyikim learning experience. It is awesome.

As we travel through Kudindju country we are aware of the Koonie Koonie’s activities as Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and Ki-la Yilngi Atie recount the nature of each event that took place at particular sites. The narrative flows as the kilometres
roll on over the landscape. Each site in the landscape is identifiable and associated with the movements of the respective Koonie Koonie, and her powerful knowledge linked to the Pilu and to Kudindju. The Tyikim educational journey is across the country taking in the sweet and bitter smell of the landscapes, creating new experiences and learning new ideas. As the Pilu travels further a field, new challenges are presented and managed. When disenchantment and weariness impinge on levels of performance, the Pilu always return to the site of their Pulitj nidin. As my instructors of tyanggi wedi kany (Tyikim knowledge), Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and Tyilili Yilngi Atie have taught me that my duty is to pass this Mak Mak and Watjan du-ngy knowledge to my children. This would be expressed as: “Tyanggi wedi ngin! I have learnt now!”

In my ‘life time’, Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and Tyilili Yilngi Atie provide the Tyikim spiritual guidance that structures my Tyikim knowledge framework. The spiritual guidance teaches about the ancestral philosophers, the thinkers, known as Pilu. The Pilu are the Mak Mak philosophers of Mak Mak’s Putj kimina murriya creators as they ‘showed us’ or ‘gave us’ the lore for Kurridjua country as these constitute a history of knowledge creation and our ontologies. The awa mirrs and awa ngirratts all relate to putj kimina murriya theory – the lore of my land. These relationships provide Tyikim Nations with their lores for their way of knowing, understanding life and acting in the world. These constitute the awa mirr ngunggu lores which govern the course of actions to flow onward into the contemporary setting. The mandate for contemporary action is within the laws of Tyikim Nations like Marrawalgut to be ‘called upon’ for direction.

‘Calling upon’ the Pilu’s and Koonie Koonie’s, the Senior Elders of Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu directed and supported my learning journey to extend my experience in the contemporary settings. They wanted me to have an education in the Western system to inform the family about the Western system of government, including education. They wanted to be in a better position to negotiate with the ‘system’ that was taking everything away from the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu.
To achieve this end my Western education included school education at Batchelor in the Northern Territory and at Saint Barnabas Agricultural College in North Queensland. I completed an undergraduate teacher education degree at Warnambool College of Advanced Education in Victoria and then completed a Graduate Diploma in Special Education and a Master of Education at Deakin University also in Victoria.

**Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu** people have resisted the Australian government’s advancement into their lives. It wasn’t until my generation that **Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu** people first engaged with the Western schooling system. **Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi’s** generation lived a life of caring for **Kudindju** and had little as possible to do with **Padakoot** and their government.

However, this life was not completely devoid of contact with the colonising society of the Northern Territory. The country of the **Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu** was allocated by the government to a pastoralist family as a pastoral lease in 1921 under a peppercorn rent arrangement of ten shillings per 100 square miles per annum. In this time mining operations were also started on the people’s country. The **Mak Mak Marranunggu** people continued to live on their country but now in circumstances that also ‘accommodated’ the pastoral and mining interests of **Padakoot** Australia. This was a difficult period for the **Mak Mak Marranunggu** as it extended into the 1980s and covered the period of intensification of government’s Indigenous protection and welfare policy development and implementation. My immediate family, due to the determination of my **ah-la** (mother) and protection of my **ke-li** (father), survived intact. We emerged from the stolen generation era still connected to one another and to the **Tyikim** knowledge system of our country and its landscape.

With the advent of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* the **Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu** were, after a prolonged struggle, successful in regaining control over a proportion of their Nation’s country under a land claim. This success established the basis for the next steps in the cultural and knowledge work of
the Mak Mak Clan as its members engaged in the tasks associated with ‘community development’. A significant strand of the Mak Mak community development strategy was to engage more fully with the Western education system, but on our terms.

Mak Mak’s determination to manage and ‘control’ our natural and spiritual resources is extraordinarily strong. The engagement of each generation of Mak Mak with Western knowledge systems has provided me with a theoretical basis from which to continue my journey in education. My activism in maintaining and retaining my Mak Mak cultural knowledge while working in the cross-cultural spaces of Western education systems has positioned me to incorporate newly acquired understandings from my doctoral research into a ‘new’ epistemology framework relevant to the cross-cultural interface in higher education where the action research of my study took place. In this way Mak Mak knowledge underpins the knowledge context of the framework.

The Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu have now moved into a ‘space’ where they require access to the knowledge of the Western system in order to maintain the reproduction and flow of their Mak Mak knowledge into the new order of their existence. This is a particularly dangerous time for us. In the recent past we have maintained our knowledge system. We now need to develop our country held by us through the land claim process, but to do so exposes our family members to the ‘outside’ assimilative forces of Australia’s institutions and legislative requirements. These forces are felt by all, but more so by the younger generations, beginning with their entry into the Western education system.

**Concerns about Indigenous Higher Education**

Researchers have claimed that schooling in Australia is reproductive of the cultural traditions of Anglo-Celtic Australians. For example, Brabham and Henry (1991a) argue:

> that the provision of schooling within the nation-state of Australia has been and continues to be assimilative towards the dominant culture, economic and political
interests of the nation-state and, therefore, contrary to Koorie (Indigenous) cultural interests (p. 1).

These same researchers went on to develop an analysis of schooling as a cultural system, with reference to Rizvi’s (1987) claim that schooling:

involves not only the learning of basic life skills but also systems of meaning, aspiration, and purpose through which notions of personal and social identity are articulated (p. iii).

As Tyikim people we understand that the schooling system is destroying our own Tyikim knowledge base. This has been understood for some time. In the 1970s and 1980s, the National Aboriginal Education Committee, working with the Federal government, developed the strategy of increasing the numbers of Tyikim teachers and academics. These people were operating within Western Institutions (schools, universities and education systems generally) so that they could represent Tyikim ideas as well as being vigilant and considerate of Tyikim people’s aspirations, particularly when addressing the future of Tyikim children.

I have travelled through many Tyikim Nations’ countries and, in the process, have learnt from both Tyikim and Padakoot people. This learning has contributed towards my aspirations to enact through this doctoral research a Tyikim knowledge agenda and a ‘project’ that confronts the existing knowledge frameworks arising from Western ideological presumptions of what Tyikim education should look like and how it should be represented through curriculum, pedagogical and assessment actions in schools and universities.

My educational experiences have contributed towards developing and strengthening my resolve to construct and present myself as a Tyikim researcher situated in the contemporary settings of a Western Institution (at the moment, the Charles Darwin University). My journey has provided me with access to the postgraduate educational culture of the higher education system of Australia. This access has enabled me to research further why participation of Tyikim people in the Indigenous education debate is essential, and more importantly, investigate ways to create a ‘space’ for Tyikim people in universities to identify new educational practices supported by
theoretical understandings based on an interlocking of key Tyikim and Padakoot concepts. This practice-oriented activity is intellectualising with the purpose of promoting critical educational changes in the policies and organisational arrangements through which higher education programs are experienced by Tyikim students.

The dominant paradigm structuring the engagement of Tyikim students and Tyikim academic staff in the higher education sector offers a pathway but it does not value authentically Tyikim knowledge, Tyikim ways of knowing nor Tyikim teaching and learning practices. When Tyikim educators and their students step into the reality of Indigenous higher education in its current form they are ‘travellers’ in a foreign landscape, in danger of experiencing the ‘terror’ of Putju Putju. They have higher risk attached to themselves to get lost in Australia’s higher education landscape and often perish, simply because they have not been taught and sponsored by those that have an understanding of their own Tyikim education of the country and the powerful sources of metaphorical knowledge contained therein.

To implement the suggestions for changes in educational practice arising from this research it has been vital to have Tyikim people driving the Tyikim knowledge agenda in education. The Tyikim people involved in driving this agenda need to have a Tyikim knowledge base. Individual Tyikim people with Western qualifications are potentially important in the success of this process, though their presence and advice may well have negative outcomes if they work too far ahead of their community members or if they are disconnected from their Tyikim community knowledge system as a referencing pathway for their innovative work.

This means that Tyikim people need to place a higher ‘value’ on the alternate models of Tyikim education currently existing within Australia’s education systems – examples where attempts are being made to incorporate Tyikim knowledge authentically into the learning of Tyikim students.
The process to further substantiate Tyikim knowledge within Western education contexts must go into this next phase. Today Tyikim students are studying within the Western education institutions across the broad spectrum of disciplines. This occurs in different faculties and departments of universities, vocational education and training institutes, and within the schools.

I am arguing that the involvement of Tyikim people in the Indigenous education decision-making process is needed if there are to be changes to the current systems of education. But in addition, I am arguing that this, of itself, may not be sufficient to bring about the required changes. I am also arguing that the active presence of Tyikim knowledge within the forefront of educational ‘events’ involving Tyikim students is an absolute necessity. By this I mean that Tyikim knowledge must be securely located within the expression of curricula, pedagogies, assessment practices and organisational arrangements of programs through which Tyikim educators and their students participate in education. The inclusion of this final ingredient is the real struggle today.

**Conclusion**

The next chapter of the thesis is a literature review. The literature reviewed will enable me to critique the existing provision of Tyikim education through Western institutions with a focus on higher education. In this way key points raised above in this chapter will be expanded upon in detail.
Chapter 3: Positioning the Study

Introduction

In Mak Mak Marranunggu Daiyi (2002) says:

Urra ngi-nging marrung ngun-ggu!
In Marrathiel she says: Arri ngin-yanng-i!
Nginin-pup-adem Marranunggu, Marrathiel and Western education: read and write
nganun tyangg wedi tjan kinin! You tell the story now. You have the knowledge to
do this. You have been given access to both knowledge systems by me, your
mother. You can read and write about this now and I authorise you to continue the
story and to move on – I've given you this, now tell the story as it is (Daiyi, N.N.
2002, pers. comm. 1 November).

Tyikim people have had access to Western higher education in Australia over the
last three decades since the 1967 Australian Referendum (Aboriginal) which gave my
people full citizenship in the Australian nation-state. Over this time a proportion of
Tyikim graduates have emerged as members of the academic fraternity charting out
careers within academia. But within universities up to now Tyikim academics and
researchers who have been engaged in practising Tyikim knowledge in their own
community life, have found that Tyikim knowledge, if represented at all, gets
appropriated by Padakoot academics and a small percentage of Tyikim academics
that are assimilated to the Western knowledge system. This raises significant issues
and concerns for Tyikim community members over the ownership of their
knowledge within the landscapes of universities and the connections back to
themselves as the custodians of this knowledge.

After three decades there is now an emergence of a reclaiming process of what is
'rerightfully' our knowledge base within universities and ensuring that Tyikim
academics and researchers have a legitimate position in what I refer to later in the
Chapter as the Indigenous Research Agenda in higher education. This is an
anticipated outcome of my doctoral study. What I am aiming to accomplish in this
Chapter is a bold and exhilarating framing of the Tyikim knowledge systems and
Tyikim research debates from which the arguments central to my thesis can be
developed. These arguments are about the authentic positioning of Tyikim knowledge within higher education and the conduct of research for and with Tyikim communities by Tyikim researchers.

In order to focus and structure the following discussion I comment on four areas that I consider contribute to an emergent conceptualisation of Tyikim knowledge systems within the higher education context. An understanding of these four areas has assisted me to identify and name the subtle and not-so-subtle structural barriers that can prevent or diminish the ongoing progress of Tyikim academics as Tyikim researchers steeped in Tyikim knowledge within universities.

The four areas are:

1. Non-Indigenous (White) Constructions of Indigenous (Black) peoples as Others;
2. Indigenous Knowledge Systems in higher education: the Contemporary Debate;
3. Indigenous Research Agenda and Indigenous Research Reform Agenda; and
4. Indigenous Access to higher education.

Non-Indigenous (White) Constructions of Indigenous (Black) peoples as ‘Other’s

A Maori academic, Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (2002) commentary of her Indigenous research journey in contemporary university landscapes of Aotearoa (New Zealand) parallels my own sites of struggle in the Australian university system of teaching and research. Tuhiwai, in reference to the struggle to claim space for Indigenous knowledge within universities, provides a powerful call for strategic action:

To acquiesce is to lose ourselves entirely and implicitly agree with all that has been said about us. To resist is to retreat in the margins, retrieve what we were and remake ourselves. The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices – all may be spaces of marginalisation, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope (p. 4).
My research study has arisen from the margins in the life of the Faculty of SITE at Charles Darwin University with an expectation of shifting the discourse about Tyikim education more broadly in the Faculty and the University. This is the story to be told in this thesis.

Paradoxically, Charles Darwin University locates research about Tyikim people and their issues as a priority but the Tyikim researchers within the University are positioned on the periphery of these research projects. This occurs when Padakoot researcher ‘colleagues’ invite Tyikim academics and researchers onto project teams as convenient tokens with the potential to legitimise the symbolism required by the contemporary higher education research project approval processes within the meaningless rhetorical Padakoot research practices purporting to be research in the Tyikim interest. I have come to understand this practice as a contemporary expression of European imperialism and colonisation. The oppressive impact of these research practices seems to be beyond the consciousness of many of my Padakoot colleagues in academia. In fact, they seem to believe that they are being helpful to me and my Tyikim colleagues. This raises the question; ‘what are the roots of this ideological construction of me as an ‘Other’, in this case an Tyikim female Other?’

Tuhiwai (2002) drew on Said’s (1978) analysis of Orientalism to understand the Western roots of ‘Otherness’ in the European imperial project. Tuhiwai claims that “the collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated” through to the present by “the ways in which knowledge about (I)ndigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented” not only back to the Europeans but also as ‘truth’ back to the colonised themselves (p. 1). This claim neatly embeds the scholarly research of the imperial enterprise and its institutions (universities, for example) with the ongoing construction of Tyikim peoples as the Other. Said (1978) in his analysis of the construction of the Orient as the Other by the West introduces the idea of the scholarly construction of the Other through the discourse within the institutions of the colonising West that “makes statements about it (the Orient), authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching about it, settling it, ruling over it” (Said 1978, p. 3, quoted in Tuhiwai 2002, p. 2). Once again we see the continuing role of the Western
research agenda in the perpetuation of Otherness in both the minds of Padakoot academics and, sad to say, in the minds of some Tyikim academics also. Here I am, like Tuhiiwai, extending Said’s analysis to include Indigenous people generally in the Western construction of Otherness.

Significant to the scholarly construction of the Other has been the research of anthropologists within the imperialistic project of the West. Brickman (2003) provides an insightful deconstruction of how the Padakoot construct us as the primitive Other by tracking the influence of Freudian theory within the discipline of anthropology:

... savages...a well-preserved picture of an early stage of our own development
(Freud 1913, p. 9).

Brickman’s work is a fascinating insight for me as a Tyikim researcher operating on the higher education endeavour. Brickman’s work exposes how Padakoot ‘power’ motives are embedded in the imperialistic mechanisms of Western masculine ideologies, ideologies that are still active today. Brickman disputes the idea that ‘the primitive’ is

"a long-abandoned relic of anthropology’s colonial ancestry, where its invocation of the presumed inferiority of non-white and non-Western people as well as the romance of lost origins had served to contribute to the legitimation of Europe’s colonial and slaving enterprises around the globe" (2003, p. 1).

Primitivity was a psychological category for Freud which has an anthropological meaning that has “remained the racially indexed term of derogation enlisted to discredit the pretensions of civilisation” (Brickman 2003, p. 5). In my case the ‘pretensions of civilisation’ could well pertain to my ‘pretensions’ to be a Tyikim researcher at doctoral level within a higher education institution. Brickman (2003) thus provided a theoretical position that assisted me in naming the potentially disempowering events I experienced while advancing my research study as a participatory action research project within the Faculty of SITE at Charles Darwin University. I resisted these oppressive ‘objects’ and their subjectivities during the course of my research by bringing these events forward with my Tyikim colleagues.
and students for group analysis thereby contributing to further project building. Brickman provided me with a particular language through her critique of Freud as she explicitly unravels the psychoanalysis theory of Freud and how psychology is powerfully wielded by those that want the ‘primitive’ and ‘women’ to remain dominated, subservient and cooperative. Well – I certainly did not get this far in my life to be held at bay by imperialistic colonizers in Tyikim higher education research!

As a Tyikim researcher located in higher education, researching Tyikim education issues within a broader research or evaluation project (a review of secondary education in the Northern Territory, for example) constructed according to the norms of Western academic knowledge and research design, would have been more acceptable to the Padakoot system and therefore to my Padakoot colleagues. However, being a Tyikim researcher in the higher education landscape involved in a research project that seeks to advance an alternative knowledge system to the historically entrenched Western system of academic knowledge has been made extraordinarily complex by its very alienness given the norms of many colleagues.

Further, I found that being a Indigenous female researcher in the higher education landscape seemed to lead, at times, to a questioning of my capability to succeed in an area historically constructed as a white male domain. The imperialistic masculine ideology permeating higher education research as an agenda for academic activity and career advancement empowers those researchers, both Tyikim and Padakoot, that are able to demonstrate their likeness to the requirements of this agenda. Interventions and advice from colleagues affiliated to this agenda tended to temporarily unsettle me, as a researcher, at a subjective level causing me to question myself as a researcher within academia. The Indigenous Community Reference Group (see next Chapter) for my project was the source of strength in these potentially destabilising situations.

It is important for Tyikim researchers to understand that the higher education landscape functions as an active agent of colonization and entrapment. As a Tyikim
researcher entering this landscape by researching Tyikim higher education, as I did with my doctoral study, I was, in essence, opening up the field of higher education itself to critical scrutiny. In the process I encountered the normality of higher education academic practice as matters cloaked with the bias of colonial and imperialistic attitudes. These were expressed as engendered nuances so ingrained and embedded within cultural practices of many academic colleagues acting now as the colonisers’ steeped in the Western knowledge system of the higher education context. These nuanced expressions of ‘interest and advice’ about my project during its development exposed to me the incomprehensibility of my project for many of my colleagues and the subsequent positioning of my research as exotic, primitive and peripheral to the ‘mainstream’ of academia.

The mere presence on the higher education landscape as a Tyikim female researcher had not prepared me for the subjective oppositions that were to be named and made visible to me. Tuiwi (2002) and Brickman (2003) have made it possible for me to name and disclose the ideological forces by which the minds of Tyikim researchers can so easily be colonized in the higher education landscape and so become dominated by those academics and researchers that position one without necessarily fully understanding the colonising agenda that informs their thinking. As a Tyikim researcher the colonisers’ subtleties towards me about being both a ‘primitive’ and a ‘woman’ meant jeopardy-plus for my research interests ever seeing the light of day given that my research project questioned the ‘traditional’ orthodoxy of higher education research agendas of male dominance and colonising epistemological practice.

Brickman’s (2003) explication of Freud’s theory provided me with a deeper understanding of the colonisers’ imperialistic views and, perhaps, why Tyikim researchers are facing difficulties in the higher education research culture. Central to Brickman’s analysis of Freudian thought is the domination by the father which entails submission of the son and the links of this domination and submission to the construction of primitivity and femininity.
Freud's theory of primitivity was construed largely in terms of the sons. It was the phylogenetic drama of the primitive sons that provided the oedipal model of rebellion and remorse, recapitulated in the ontogenetic trajectory of the contemporary subject. And since regression involved a tracing backward of the path already followed, the primitivity to which the modern subject was said under certain circumstances to regress, like the primitivity out of which he had developed, was the primitivity of the son. So it is the primitivity of the son which becomes central in the comparison between primitivity and femininity (p. 107).

According to Freud the key characteristics of femininity were passivity, submissiveness, narcissism, masochism, lack of intellectual, moral and rational development, excessive emotional ambivalence and a difficult or restricted sexuality. Within his theorising these characteristics are all shared by the primitivity of the son and, by racial extension, to the primitive Other. Further, "the primitive is said to desire oppression as the feminine is said to be masochistic" (Brickman 2003, p. 107).

As both a woman and a purported 'primitive' Other, I must register at this point my rejection of these ideas, which Brickman claims are still finding ideological and hegemonic force in contemporary Western cultures. Why would anyone want to be dominated harshly and would want to subject a person or a people to a harsh or cruel form of domination? Who would relate to or experience the desire to be humiliated and abused by others in order to feel sexually fulfilled? Who would like and invite misery and enjoy it? But to continue ....

Brickman explores the construction of the feminine and the primitive Others within Freudian thought in terms of the inherent incapacity of these Others to gain higher order moral and rational levels of thought themselves. This path to a superego is only available to members of the Other through assimilation into Western civilised forms of culture, knowledge systems and thinking. This is akin to Brickman’s civilised boy in the quotation below:

Both the feminine and the primitive ... are characterized by a greater sense of ambivalence: it is only the civilized boy who is capable of successfully negotiating ambivalence by projecting his hostility completely onto his father and leaving his mother as the unalloyed recipient of his love, freeing him to pursue the psychic consequences of his hostility completely onto his father, and so leading to the internalization of the superego (p.107).
Brickman expands upon her exposé of Freudian penetration into modern imperialistic thinking as follows:

... both the primitive and the feminine are represented by psychoanalysis as compromised in their ability to fully develop a superego. ... the primitive psyche is the psyche without a superego: neither the primitive father with his unlimited powers nor the primitive sons, slavishly restricted in their exercise of libido and rationality, are able to perform the psychological task of the internalization of prohibition which founds both civilization and subjectivity. The primitive languishes at the narcissistic level of cultural development, in bondage to authority tempered only by the illusory consolations of animism, lacking access to the possibilities of civilized culture (p. 109).

And

... the primitive lacks the capacity for cultural self-representation (p. 109).

According to this analysis of the ideological and hegemonic force of Freudian theory into modern Western institutions, those without completely formed superegos are incapable of occupying fully-fledged positions in “language, culture, and the social polity, and are thus excluded from the rights and protections that civilization promises” (Brickman 2003, p. 111). Importantly for my argument, this feeds into an ideology of help and assistance to the primitive under the governance of colonising institutions; or as Brickman succinctly puts it, the primitives’ “need for the guardianship by those who purportedly have no such lack” (p. 111).

Taking the perspectives developed by Brickman and Tuhiwai, I am able to position my doctoral research as research on higher education practices from the margins. Importantly for me, it is from the marginalised place in the landscapes of higher education of Tyikim language, culture, and social polity as expressed through forms of thought, understanding and meaning-making informed by Tyikim knowledge systems that my research project expanded and intersected with the lives of my academic colleagues and my students. At a deep level of emotionality, many responded to my research in ways that can now be named as attempts to block or re-direct my researched efforts at Tyikim cultural self-expression within this imperialistic place. I was perceived, ideologically, to be claiming a ‘superego’ and therefore attempting a project of Tyikim cultural reclamation while, at the same
time, being characterised and confused, in the psyche of my colleagues, as both a feminine and as a primitive. In other words, the normalising expectation from academic colleagues was that I should behave as a subordinate Tyikim researcher with an inferior position in the academic hierarchy and must behave in ways compatible with the colonised representation of the higher education research culture’s expectations. This analysis allowed me to understand the colonising force of higher education research as a paradigmatic praxis, a praxis that has effectively been internalised by many Tyikim and Padakoot researchers in the area of Tyikim higher education research at Charles Darwin University and beyond. Interestingly for me, my research journey has indicated to me that many Tyikim people reflect back the “collective memory of imperialism” (Tuhiwai 2002, p. 1) and continue to believe that researchers ought to be Padakoot either in embodiment or in knowledge form. This position is one that I described as a truly colonised internalization of disempowerment and oppression.

The positioning of Indigenines as powerfully Other by white academics and researchers, as explored above, also acted to position my research project as Other with respect to the conventions of doctoral research in higher education.

This analysis together with what I have written about my own Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marrithiel knowledge systems has engaged me to think about two core issues central to my thesis: where do these understandings of the impact of Western imperialism position Tyikim research now and in the future? and where am I positioned as a Tyikim researcher in Tyikim research in higher education?

There is a sense of foreboding that invigorates and yet frustrates my research journey through this complex landscape full of uncertainties.
Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Education: an overview of the contemporary scene

“Piya, ngatla!” This expression in Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu language refers to a person’s sound reasoning about and understanding of our Mak Mak cultural knowledge.

This study is a direct challenge to the ideological belief that “the primitive lacks the capacity for cultural self-representation” (Brickman 2003, p. 109) within Western institutions, particularly within the institutions of higher education – within universities. This is a challenge taken up by a number of Tyikim academics in Australia and elsewhere. The ideas of these pioneering academics is discussed in this section.

The higher education landscape exposed to me ways in which to understand Western constructs of my ‘primitive’ and ‘feminine’ as an ‘unconscious’ reality in universities that privilege the ‘white-male’ domination and the construction of their elitist positioning towards Indigenines and feminines as the ‘Other’. The authorisation of the ‘primitive’ construction is embedded in the Western psyche and as I came to articulate and understood this through my research, my ‘academic’ struggle to accommodate the Western higher education knowledge system revealed the historicising plot based on the ‘us and them’ notion.

The events that happened in the university landscape and its construction of my research project had a profound impact on my ability to manage my Tyikim knowledge systems within this space. I had to consider the actions that occurred that cause me to divert my research as required in order to overcome some of the potential dangers that were likely to cause the delay or closure of the project. At the time these events occurred I thought that what was happening was the normal and tangible course of action in any higher education teaching and research exercise.

From the literature I now realise that the deeper theoretical constructions of Otherness and imperialism are ingrained into the Western knowledge system and
culture of universities. It became obvious that many of my academic colleagues believe the Western knowledge system is the only ‘knowledge’ system worthy of a place in higher education and that this must colonise that of any of the minority groups venturing onto this landscape. This was made clear to me during one of my discussions with a Padakoot senior academic colleague at Charles Darwin University in the School of Education who inquired: “What is an Indigenous knowledge system?” For a senior academic asking this of me, I found extraordinary and offensive. No wonder that there are few Tyikim lecturers in the University’s higher education sector when you have senior academics imposing their ‘unconscious’ Western cultural disempowering and oppressive views onto what Brickman refers to as the ‘feminine and and the primitive’, as the ‘Other’.

In the debate about Tyikim knowledge systems in higher education, the discussion appears to me at times as if some Tyikim academics have internalised the coloniser’s identity of ‘primitivity’. These Tyikim academics appear to leave elements of their so called ‘primitive’ cultural ‘Other’ and linguistic identity together with their linkages to their past in their subconsciousness. These Tyikim academics seem to have internalized the coloniser’s assimilative praxis and their understanding of epistemology (whether it is conscious or unconscious) is captured by their thrall with the obvious power of the Western knowledge traditions of the colonisers.

Tuhiwai (2002), writing from another Indigenous context, comments on the dominance of Western, European culture and history on the Indigenous and non-Indigenous contestation over knowledge legitimacy. With reference to the ‘traditional’ world views of Maori, Tuhiwai claims that these are:

ample examples of Maori efforts to seek knowledge, to organise it and to learn from it. . . . Maori knowledge represents the body of knowledge which, in today’s society, can be extended, alongside that of existing Western knowledge (p. 175).

This standpoint on Indigenous epistemology is informative for my own study as are the viewpoints on Tyikim knowledge systems expressed in the recent literature by Australian Tyikim academics. These viewpoints are most often expressed in terms of epistemology, identity and language as signifiers of Tyikim cultures.
Lester Irabinna-Rigney (2002) comments on the legal status of Tyikim languages in Australia and compares the situation in Australia with that in Guatemala, South Africa, Aotearoa and Wales where legal recognition of Indigenous languages has been incorporated in domestic law (p. 9). Irabinna-Rigney noted that:

It would seem that Australia is slow to incorporate the necessary legal mechanisms to maintain its own linguistic heritage. Most Indigenous peoples speak some variety of Indigenous language or Aboriginal English. Indigenous languages reinforce worldviews and identities whether the language is spoken fluently or not. Similarly they are fundamental to the maintenance and revival of Indigenous culture (p. 15).

For Irabinna-Rigney it is not possible to conceive of a national Australian culture and identity without Tyikim cultures and languages. Tyikim languages, as carriers of Tyikim knowledge systems, then become essential not only for the expression of learning about Tyikim ways of knowing, but also for framing the pedagogical and curriculum events that constitute a Tyikim knowledge-based education program.

When our (people) engage in the journey of education that does not do violence to their culture, it teaches them to dream of possibilities and not to be a prisoner of certainty. ... Education that welcomes Indigenous identities reinforces Indigenous cultural views of the world. ... Bright futures are only possible from strong pasts. For being strong is what it means to be Indigenous (Irabinna-Rigney, p. 1).

Irabinna-Rigney (1997) broadens his discussion of Tyikim knowledge systems with reference to the valuing of Tyikim experience. “Indigenous peoples must now be involved in defining controlling and owning epistemologies and ontologies that value and legitimates the Indigenous experience” (p. 116). In this context, Irabinna-Rigney calls for new anti-colonial epistemologies that enable Tyikim people to “construct, re-discover and/or re-affirm their knowledges and cultures” (p. 116). Irabinna-Rigney refers to these new epistemologies as “liberatory epistemologies” (p. 116) and:

... in theorising Indigenous epistemologies I call on the powerful life experiences and history of myself and my community (p. 117).

What is relevant in Irabinna-Rigney’s thinking about Tyikim knowledge systems to my own research is his identification of Tyikim lived and historical experiences,
ideas, traditions, dreams, interests, aspirations and struggles as central to the construction of knowledge by us about us (1997, p. 121).

In contrast to the positioning of Tyikim knowledge systems as comprising knowledge construction, language and identity formation and advocacy within a full and living cultural formation carried forward and embodied by Tyikim people themselves, there is a field of academic work underway in Australia that defines Tyikim knowledge systems more narrowly. This narrow definition arises from an initial appreciation of Tyikim knowledge systems as the “totality of information, practice, belief and philosophy unique to each Indigenous culture” (Posey 1996), but this then defaults (Warren 1995) to a technocratic focus on the contribution of Tyikim knowledge to the issues of bio-diversity management within the Western-generated movement for environmental sustainability (see Chambers & Richards 1995, Muchena & Vanek 1995). This positioning and construction of Tyikim knowledge values the potential of Tyikim knowledge to contribute to the salvation of contemporary land degradation but locates the ‘new’ (or ‘old’) knowledge within Western scientific knowledge disciplines normally applied to environment studies.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems are gaining recognition as being very relevant, valid and useful to the task of environmental management. However, there is a tendency of environmental managers to see the process as obtaining the knowledge from Indigenous people, verifying it within a scientific framework, and applying it in a context over which the Indigenous people have no control (Hill, 1998).

This is not to say that Tyikim academics and researchers are not involved in this field of work and attempting to secure Tyikim control over the process of Tyikim knowledge acquisition and use. Morrison (2002), for example, is interested to promote Tyikim people in the research of biophysical aspects of environmental capacity building. He sees a need for more Tyikim academics so they “can then do the research themselves rather than being researched ... working with Indigenous people and knowledge collection and collation” (p. 6). This approach may open the way for a fuller representation of Tyikim knowledge relevant to caring for country, a representation that goes beyond ‘technical’ information to include deeper metaphorical knowing underpinning Tyikim community Elders’ capacity to ‘read the land’. However, the prospects of achieving this outcome within a dominating
Western knowledge system are dependent on the openness of both the Tyikim and Padakoot academics and researchers to the custodian community’s Tyikim knowledge system in full.

Langton (2003) also positioned Tyikim knowledge systems for a national forum for libraries, archives and information services in terms of the retention of biodiversity-related knowledge while emphasising the links between natural and cultural diversity and the significance of Tyikim cultural institutions to the process. The critical areas focused on by Langton were the maintenance of language diversity connected to biodiversity-related traditional knowledge and the documentation of this knowledge along with its legal protection through mechanisms that recognised community custodians’ intellectual property rights.

Langton (with Ma Rhea) worked on a project for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on the protection and maintenance of traditional biodiversity-related knowledge. Her regional report (Australia, Asia and the Middle East on the Status and Trends Regarding the Knowledge, Innovations and Practices of Indigenous and Local Communities) fed into a composite report developed in Montreal in 2003. All regions covered under the composite report produced examples of Indigenous knowledge having either disappeared or at risk of disappearing while at the same time attempting to navigate the complexities of defining Indigenous knowledges from around the world. Of interest to my study were the statements in the composite report relevant to Indigenous education. The statements are couched in the diplomatic language of the United Nations and read as follows:

Where appropriate, (I)ndigenous knowledge should be integrated into formal, local or national systems of education, which are directed towards local or (I)ndigenous communities. Incorporation of (I)ndigenous and traditional knowledge into mainstream formal education can both ensure that (I)ndigenous people educated within such systems do no lose touch of their traditional knowledge and practices, and can increase familiarity with, and respect for, such knowledge among the non-(I)ndigenous public.

And
Offer appropriate education and training to (I)ndigenous and local communities that can enable sustainable development while being compatible with their traditions. Education and training programmes should be established, by or with the close involvement of local and (I)ndigenous communities, with the purpose of passing on traditional knowledge and appropriate education to members of the community (UNEP 2003, paragraphs 18 & 19).

Further, the report to the UNEP Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, based on the composite report regarding Knowledge, Innovations and Practices of Indigenous and Local Communities, included amongst its three recommendations on the environment the following:

The Forum recommends the establishment of an international ethical code on bio-prospecting in order to avoid bio-piracy and ensure the respect for (I)ndigenous cultural and intellectual heritage. Under the framework of the Convention, a mechanism should be established for the repatriation and devolution of genetic materials collections to (I)ndigenous peoples. The Forum recommends to the Convention secretariat that the global taxonomy initiative incorporate an ethical principles and social framework for the protection of (I)ndigenous peoples’ rights to their lands, traditional knowledge and resources before its implementation (UNEP 2003, paragraph 57).

To me this construction of Tyikim knowledge systems is captured within a framework of technical, practical and scientific Western knowledge world views dressed up with the expectation that Tyikim culturally sensitive information gathering, collating and categorising protocols will somehow protect Tyikim peoples and their knowledge systems. It is hard to appreciate what ‘protection’ means in circumstances where the Tyikim knowledge required for a global taxonomy initiative has been selectively appropriated into a more dominant and less spiritual way of understanding the land.

A further construction of Tyikim knowledge systems by Tyikim academics is that represented by Smallacome (1999). This construction of Tyikim knowledge systems builds from the historical pasts of Tyikim peoples and Nations. The primary sources for this way of thinking about Indigenous knowledge are the archival material collected and collated by Padakoot researchers and government public servants since the beginning of colonisation of Australia. Smallacome (1999) puts the argument as follows:
Government dealings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were recorded on files and as a result, a large collection of records exists in archives, much of which has lain unread for generations. These records form an important part of the cultural heritage of Indigenous Australians and access to these records is vital for assisting people to trace their families, communities and their histories (p. 1).

Added to these archival records are the physical artefacts collected and stored in Western museums and other ‘knowledge-storage’ institutions including universities and libraries. All this disembodied material is, of course, important to my people and to our understanding and appreciation of our ancestral past. Smallacombe notes that access to Tyikim archival information has been a bureaucratic struggle for Tyikim people and an issue of considerable sensitivity.

Institutions holding Aboriginal-related records have generally perpetuated harmful and disempowering myths about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is evident by the use of racist and offensive subject headings in catalogues, access to secret and sacred material and the general lack of Indigenous involvement either as staff members, or as representatives on boards and councils (p. 1).

Smallacombe identifies a determination on the part of Tyikim Australians to reclaim their history and to take control of the archival sources of historical information. “Who owns these archival records?” (p. 1). Us, is Smallacombe’s answer. Access to and ownership over genealogies, mission records and welfare reports, for example, “are vital for people who want to recover their cultural identity that has been denied to them” (p. 1).

While recognising the urgency people feel about this issue I have difficulty with this avenue to the identification of Tyikim knowledge through a re-claimed cultural identity based on disembodied facts, objects and information. For me, knowledge is more than information, an idea I will pursue in later chapters of this thesis.

A prominent Tyikim Australian academic, Martin Nakata, examined the state of play in Australian Universities for Tyikim knowledge representation (2004). He advanced his argument on the potential status of Tyikim epistemologies through an examination of the place of Indigenous Studies within the higher education
curriculum and where this work is going in offering a Tyikim academic/scholarly perspective on the topic of Tyikim knowledge systems.

Once largely confined to support activities, increasing numbers of qualified Indigenous academics teach Indigenous Studies, some within the disciplines, most from the Indigenous centres or in special programs. Indigenous Studies is increasingly under the nominal authority or management of Indigenous academics even if it continues to be taught by non-Indigenous academics. A growing cohort of Indigenous scholars has emerged that is contributing to Indigenous Studies in important ways (Nakata 2004, p. 5).

Nakata’s positioning of a discussion of the possibilities for Tyikim knowledge penetration into the curriculum of universities reflects the history of Tyikim access to higher education since the early 1970s – from support programs to Indigenous Centres located essentially outside of the curriculum-creating work of university Faculties and Schools but for whom Indigenous Studies became their academic ‘grandchild’. This issue will be re-visited in detail in the final section of this Chapter.

In his detailed account of the potential place of Tyikim knowledge in higher education Nakata (2004) reviews developments undertaken by Indigenous academics overseas. He identifies a consistent viewpoint being expressed in the international literature that “Indigenous Studies as a discipline that can be developed from within Indigenous epistemologies to continue tribal knowledge traditions” (p. 8). He asserts that this development and dialogue surrounding it has not been taken up by Tyikim academics in the Australia context. With reference to Battiste et al, 2002; Cook-Lynn, 1997; Meyer, 1998; Smith, 2000; Thaman, 2003; Wildcat & Pierotti, 2000, Nakata identifies the purpose of this approach to Indigenous Studies is to both decolonise the experience of students undertaking these studies through a ‘revival’ of Tyikim knowledge and by re-instating Tyikim ontologies and epistemologies (p. 8). But after outlining a range of propositions advanced by Indigenous academics from North America, Hawaii and Aotearoa on how to position this revival and re-instating agenda with respect to providing access to Indigenous knowledge, Nakata concludes with the following observation:

Despite this theorising, in practice, in these contexts, Indigenous Studies has emerged in universities as a cross-disciplinary specialization in much the same way
as it has evolved in Australia – a field expanded across the disciplines as Indigenous issues have been taken up by those disciplines (p. 9).

Nakata, in reviewing the developments made by Tyikim academics in Australian universities, notes that ‘Indigenisation’ has been the catch-cry for reform. For Nakata, Indigenisation:

has been about making a space within universities that is recognizably Indigenous - a space formed by inserting and asserting content, practices and processes that culturally affirm Indigenous people, students, community and perspectives (Nakata 2004, p.9).

This concept of Tyikim spaces within the landscapes of universities constructed through the flow of culturally affirming ways of knowing, acting and working things out has resonance with the key questions of my own study. However, Nakata asserts that while this approach has worked well in serving Tyikim interests it has presented Tyikim academics with deepening concerns over the continuing difficulties associated with cross-cultural education. By this Nakata means:

both the task of educating Indigenous students without further erosion of culture or assimilation by the Western way of thinking and the task of educating non-Indigenous) students to more fully understand the Indigenous perspective of world view (p. 10).

Here Nakata has extended the possible scope of Tyikim knowledge systems to include studies being undertaken by all students, Tyikim and Padakoot, enrolled in Indigenous Studies programs. This is an extension of the application of Tyikim knowledge systems beyond what is central to my own study where my concerns are about researching the scope of Tyikim knowledge systems in higher education for Tyikim students enrolled in programs offered by Faculties not necessarily offering Indigenous Studies.

So while Nakata wants “deeper acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies and pedagogies (and) … recognition and representation of our own systems of knowledge and thought within the academy” (p. 10), he is referring to Indigenous Studies as the site of contestation with Western knowledge. This is for Nakata the cross-cultural space of interest to him, a space essentially “circumscribed
by non-Indigenous systems of thought” (p.11). But he does acknowledge, within this space, an intersection of knowledge systems which form a complex and layered interface. But for Nakata this is a complex and many layered interface where many different ways of knowing interact.

Explorations at this interface where two different sets of knowledge and historical understanding meet, reveal, not simple oppositions of black and white, us and them, but a tangled web of where we are caught up, some clear boundaries perhaps, and some very blurred boundaries (p. 13).

The way through this complexity of knowledge intersections, as defined by Nakata, is improved theorization driven by constant negotiation. The hope is that these negotiations will advanced Tyikim ways of knowing within higher education according to Nakata’s statement below.

There is much of value in (Western knowledge) that benefits us and which we need to master, but where this knowledge circumscribes the ways that Indigenous people, (Indigenous interests (and) (I)ndigenous issues can be understood ... we should be exploring, investigation, interrogating, unsettling, responding to re-interpreting, constructing alternative opinions, theories, and reshaping the knowledge of those (Western) disciplines in relation to their (I)ndigenous circumscription (p. 13).

This final position reached by Nakata is helpful in articulating my own research study further – a study exploring the scope of Tyikim knowledge systems, ontologies and epistemologies within the Western discipline of teacher education for Tyikim Tyikim student teachers and Tyikim teacher educators. My research interests are, to use Nakata's language, to reshape the knowledge of the discipline of teacher education in relation to its Tyikim circumscription.

Karen Booran Mirrabooka Martin’s (2002) thinking is particularly relevant to my approach to scoping Tyikim knowledges within the landscapes of higher education institutions. Martin develops her ideas about Indigenist research from her own people’s way of being – from a Quandamooka ontology. While writing about reforming research on Tyikim issues, Booran Mirrabooka Martin introduces her argument by outlining her own people’s knowledge base in terms of ways of being and ways of knowing. Her Quandamooka ontology and epistemology underpin her academic work as a researcher. She explains her positioning as follows:
My belief as an Aboriginal researcher is that I actively use the strength of my Aboriginal heritage and do not position myself in a reactive stance of resisting or opposing Western research frameworks and ideologies. Therefore, I research from the strength and position of being Aboriginal and viewing anything Western as ‘other’, alongside and among Western worldviews and realities (2002, p. 3).

Here Booran Mirrabooka foregrounds her Indigenous cultural heritage shifting the active construction of otherness to herself and her own people thereby defining Westernness as the ‘Other’. Booran Mirrabooka’s words resonate with Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi’s construction of Padakoot as the ‘Other’ in her dealings with government officials and university academics. Although Booran Mirrabooka does not use the term ‘Indigenous or Aboriginal knowledge system’, she does identify principles that in action are informed by a Tyikim knowledge system that underpins Tyikim ways of knowing and of being. These principles are:

- Recognition of our worldviews, our knowledges and our realities as distinctive and vital to our existence and survival;
- Honouring our social mores as essential processes through which we live, learn and situate ourselves as Aboriginal people in our own lands and when in the lands of other Aboriginal people;
- Emphasis of social, historical and political contexts which shape our experiences, lives, positions and futures;
- Privileging the voices, experiences and lives of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal lands. (2002, p. 3).

Booran Mirrabooka’s principles show a way of actioning the knowledges of Tyikim peoples and their clans and Nations around Australia respecting the differences that may exist amongst different nations. This important insight can be attributed to Errol Japanangka West and his Indigenous teaching and research paradigm.

The teaching and research paradigm I propose eliminates the need to seek knowledge of the quality of cultural universality in Aboriginal Australia ... What is left to establish are the fluctuations of intensity and the compelling orientations of a research action, in the connection of non-white methodologies and frames of reference, in the action of research (Japanangka West 2000, p. 11).

Booran Mirrabooka’s principles guide the actioning Tyikim research as well as the action of teaching and learning in higher education informed by Tyikim knowledge systems.
These Tyikim academics and researchers have provided me with a shared understanding of where these various higher education milityin's are traveling in their own individual vessels as we all struggle to survive. I can see now that Tyikim academics and researchers have their own awa mirr within the university landscapes. We are all in the unspoken (spiritual) membership of the Tyikim research as experienced in modern times. We all share a similar vision but acted out in different ways of continuing our own struggle against colonization of our Tyikim knowledge systems.

This discussion of Tyikim knowledge systems within higher education has intersected with the current debates over Tyikim research. These debates are referred to under the terms ‘Indigenous Research Agenda’ and ‘Indigenous Research Reform Agenda’. I now turn my attention to the literature informing these debates.

**Indigenous Research Agenda and Indigenous Research Reform Agenda**

My observations of the Tyikim higher education scene informed me that the area of Tyikim research is an area within which there are greater levels of contestation and debate than is the case with Tyikim student access to teaching and learning in universities. The paradigms shaping Tyikim higher education learning will be discussed later in this Chapter.

**Indigenous Research Agenda**

I am making a distinction between the Indigenous Research Agenda (IRA) and the Indigenous Research Reform Agenda (IRRA). The strong, direct distinction here was informed by Tuhiwai’s (2002) position that the IRA is driven by Indigenous peoples with full ownership over the research agenda – referred to as Kaupapa Maori research (p. 182), and Irabinna-Rigney’s definition of Indigenist research. Irabinna-Rigney identified three principles underpinning this form of research. These principles are:
• Resistance as the emancipatory imperative in Indigenist research;
• Political integrity in Indigenist research; and
• Privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenous research (Irabinna-Rigney 1999, p. 116).

From my perspective this is Indigenous business and, as such, connects strongly to Errol West’s (2000) conceptualisation of a Japanangka Teaching and Research Paradigm.

By contrast the IRRA is a matrix of Tyikim and Padakoot business. The struggle here is not unrelated to the discourse occurring under the IRA but here it is focused on reforming the colonising institutionalised forms of research still dominant within universities and other centres of Western research. This is essentially a decolonising project being mounted by Tyikim academics and researchers with Padakoot colleagues.

As for my own approach towards the IRA, I want to ensure that the Tyikim knowledge of the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marrithiel clans is embedded in my own Tyikim interpretation of education research servicing my Tyikim education needs. I wanted this so that others that read my work are aware that my Mak Mak identity is strong and powerfully represented in my Tyikim education and research reality, a reality expressed through the creation of a thesis servicing Tyikim interests. I want my Mak Mak philosophy to be known! I want it to be heard and shared and by doing the research in this way people will know that I exist and that I am not a figment of the ‘colonizing gaze’. The thesis is a testimony that these two Tyikim languages (Mak Mak Marranunggu and Marrithiel), so-called ‘dying languages’, are organic and their continued use in our lives is as real as it was prior to colonization.

Even so, my experience in conducting this research study has provided me with a prime example of the continuing colonising grip on higher education research. This is demonstrated through the representations of the English language and the written text used to present information about Tyikim knowledge systems. The Tyikim is thwarted through the Western academic institution.
In my case the Doctoral process has been scrutinized by ‘interested others’ according to the quality of the research as it supports an argument grounded in Tyikim knowledge. I have been subtly called to demonstrate the importance of my research study for educating Padakoot academic colleagues about the Tyikim struggle over inequities and access issues for Tyikim people engaged in Indigenous higher education in Australia; a task that was understood by Western ‘others’ as simply requiring new information to better support Tyikim students in the higher education curriculum delivered as an established given without a complementary change in knowledge - knowledge as Tyikim ways of knowing, being and doing.

It is from these experiences that I appreciate the need for the work of Tyikim colleagues under the IRA. Over the past three decades there has been huge political agitation by Tyikim people and their communities to reform Western research practices in Tyikim research. As Tyikim researchers today, we continue with the same struggle that the Australian Research Council (1999) identified:

> Political groups which have advocated political advancement moved to advocacy and demand for Indigenous rights (human rights, land rights, minority rights). There was (and is) a continuing demand for Indigenous perspectives and participation in the academy (1999, p. 23).

The push for autonomy and decolonisation has been registered by Tyikim peoples in Australia across the domains of political and human rights and now into the domain of knowledge rights. The struggle over Tyikim knowledge rights is squarely in the field of Tyikim research. This struggle is over research-in-action (Japanangka-West 2000) undertaken by Tyikim people ourselves.

The three principles of Indigenist research (Irabinna-Rigney 1999), resistance, political integrity and privileging Indigenous voices in research management and practice seem to me to be significant in the struggle over Tyikim knowledge rights. Research implemented in isolation from the principle of resistance as an emancipatory imperative is a dangerous option for Tyikim communities given the ideological force of Western research as a field of imperialistic knowledge-creation.
Research applied without a clear understanding of the principle of political integrity for *Tyikim* community interests or without privileging *Tyikim* voices during the research-in-action, have much lowered prospects of satisfying the fundamentals of Indigenist research (Henry et al 2002b, p. 13).

Nakata (2004) expresses concerns about the achievement of the goal of Indigenist research as research-in-action supported by *Tyikim* ontologies and epistemologies while this struggle is being played out within the Western higher education sector of Australia. He presents his concerns through the following questions:

What does it mean then for an Indigenous academic to participate in the continuing production of knowledge about Indigenous people, from within the academy, when our goals and commitment are to serve our own people, to rebuild communities and futures? What does it mean for our participation in the continuing production of knowledge ... if what we do, if our Indigenous perspectives, knowledge and analysis are inscribed in and through the Western ontological world and circulate back to shape practice in Indigenous contexts in similar ways to Western production (p. 6).

The answer for Nakata is through “deeper acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledges, epistemologies and pedagogies” (p. 10); through an extended conceptualization of ‘Indigenisation’. This is dangerous and high-risk ground for *Tyikim* academics to be stepping out onto. The higher education landscape has already been quite securely shaped to reflect Western ways of knowing, being and acting. *Tyikim* academics, acting as “custodians, authorities, and points of references for Indigenous perspectives in the curricula” (Nakata 2004, p. 12) and research, but isolated from their own community knowledge well-springs and energy, are in danger of losing their way in the struggle towards attaining the goals of the IRA. Nakata acknowledges the complexities of the epistemological intersection as experienced by *Tyikim* academics and the difficulties he and others have “in developing deeper understandings of the cross-cultural space at the intersections of Indigenous knowledges, cultural practices and histories and non-Indigenous ones” (p. 10).

However, my research study is not framed within a cross-cultural rhetoric, although I am interested in exploring the possibilities for *Tyikim* ways of knowing to penetrate
across the interface between Western and Tyikim knowledge systems onto the higher education landscape. I am wanting to move onto the exploration of the possibilities in Tyikim higher education unfretted by the barrier of cross-cultural education. This is why I am wanting to define Tyikim research as research by Tyikim people with and for ourselves, as Indigenist research.

Irabinna Rigney’s and Japanangka West’s thinking on Indigenist research is reflected in Booran Mirraboopaa’s proposition for Indigenist re-search informed by her principles (see above). But central to Booran Mirraboopaa’s thinking is her father’s knowledge system referred to by her as Quandamooka ontology (2001, p. 3). From this Tyikim ontology Booran Mirraboopaa develops a framework for Indigenist research.

Booran Mirraboopaa (2001) identifies the Quandamooka country as the land, waterways, skies, spiritual and law systems of the Quandamooka people of Minjerripah, Moorgumpin and Moreton Bay and part of the adjacent coastal mainland of Queensland. This is akin to my Kurrindju. She then identifies the Ngirrwats for her people determining relationships amongst families as sand and saltwater people. Relational Entities (Ngirrwats) include not only people but land, waterways, plants, climate, skies and spirits. A relational ontology encompasses all within a holistic system “where relations serve to define and unite, not to oppose or alienate (Booran Mirraboopaa 2001, p. 4). Further:

As saltwater people, the motions of tides, phases of the moon, movements of wind and sand each structure and inform our worldview. The continual movement of air, sand and salt water is arresting, cleaning and healing as much as it is harsh and contradictory. … Other times, the Entities restore what has become depleted (Booran Mirraboopaa 2001, p. 4).

Booran Mirraboopaa (2001, p. 5) continues in her paper to outline further dimensions of the Quandamooka relational ontology before outlining her theoretical framework for Indigenist research. This framework draws on what is known about Entities (ways of knowing), establishing relations amongst Entities (ways of being) and practicing ways of maintaining these relations (ways of doing). From this
understanding of Quandamooka ontology, a three dimensional framework for Indigenist research is constructed.

For Booran Mirrabooka, ways of knowing are informed by metaphorical knowledge relating to social, political, historical and spatial dimensions of individuals, the group and interactions with outsiders. Knowledge is accessed “through processes of listening, sensing, viewing, reviewing, reading, watching, waiting, observing, exchanging, sharing, conceptualising, assessing, modelling, engaging and applying” (2001, p. 5). But sets of knowledges are attributed to particular persons or Entities associated with specific roles. “(N)o one person ... knows all” (2001, p. 6) but there are different types and levels of knowledge functioning for the group in maintaining a network of relationships.

Further, ways of being are derived from protocols and obligations and reciprocal relationships people exercise while on their own country and that of others. These extend to relationships amongst Tyikim people more generally. “In these instances, we immediately set about establishing identity, interests and connections to determine our relatedness (2001, p. 6). Relationality is a core aspect of Tyikim ways of being.

And, ways of doing are expressions of individual and group identities and roles. These are a synthesis of Tyikim ways of knowing and being. “We become tangible proof of our ontology and its construction ... we are able to show (Do) respectfully and rightfully (Being) what we know (Knowing)” (2001, p. 7).

For Booran Mirrabooka these three dimensions of her Tyikim ontology or knowledge system inform Indigenist research-in-action as advanced by Errol Japanangka West and Irabinna Rigney. Here I am seeing the possibilities for an epistemological basis for Indigenist research drawing on Tyikim knowledge systems. This leads to an understanding of the possibilities for Indigenist research methodologies advancing the tradition of Tyikim knowledge creation but now in the higher education context. This leads to a deeper appreciation of Indigenist research
methods that are compatible with these methodologies. This insight from the work of Japangaka, Irabinna and Booran Mirraboopa is highly relevant to the framing of my own research for this study. The research methodology and methods taken up by me for my study are discussed in full in the next Chapter.

Here goes ... this is a hunting and gathering story as a metaphor from my oral tradition that reinforces the idea that Tyikim ontologies can help in theorising Indigenist research and its management by senior Tyikim academics in universities.

I have drawn from my childhood and adult experiences of growing up in Northern Australia where we relied on the skills, experience and expertise of older siblings and Elders in our kinship system. They knew and understood the landscape and what was required of them in their duty of care for us younger ones’ safety and security, as we all had to survive for the day. We would all head off together, laughing, cajoling and coaxing each other on our journey to where we knew there would be plenty of good things to eat and plenty of fresh water to drink. We all understood that the landscape would nourish all of us as it had plenty to offer. As we would arrive at particular ‘hot spots’ the eldest children would cordon off designated areas for harvesting by each of us and we weren’t allowed to ‘trespass’. We all had to find our own source of nourishment, unless you were the youngest or a ‘visitor’ and then one of the elder children or adults would share their spoils with you.

These hunting and gathering rites as ways of knowing, being and doing can be related to the IRA. One would expect senior Tyikim academics to assist new Tyikim researchers to ‘harvest’ the research landscape in appropriate ways sharing their Tyikim ontologically informed knowledge instead of adopting a position of authority within the University’s imperialistic ontology and acting as the ‘gatekeepers’ to Tyikim research on terms that are contrary to the IRA philosophy. Tyikim research must have the ‘hunting’ and ‘gathering’ ideologies embedded in its theory and practice to ensure that Tyikim knowledge systems have a chance of being accommodated authentically within this alien landscape.
Indigenous Research Reform Agenda

Having discussed the IRA I now turn to the literature on the Indigenous Research Reform Agenda (IRRA). These two agendas are interconnected but the IRRA is embedded in the struggle to reform the research enterprise of higher education from within. The IRRA is about shifting research-related practices across all levels including project initiation and design, project approval, project management, research conduct and dissemination of research outcomes, for example.

I think the difficulty with transformation or reform of higher education research towards an Indigenous Research Agenda is the ignorance and lack of understanding of the Tyikim knowledge systems by those captured within the Western knowledge system. Tuhiwai (2002, p. 39) discusses this in terms of ‘recovering our own stories’ in Indigenous research. Nakata (2004) takes a bleaker view.

In universities the great mediator between Indigenous and non-Indigenous understanding is not us, is not Indigenous people or academics, but the ontological world of Western knowledge systems (Nakata 2004, p. 12).

While recognizing the strength of the Western ontologies and epistemologies in mediating discourses about research in higher education, I believe we have more scope for taking action to shift the existing paradigm of higher education research as an institutional form or enterprise than indicated by Nakata. In fact, there are Tyikim people who are saying why bother with this debate about reforming research agendas (Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, Delyek Wunjamul-Wanjamul-Margaret Daiyi, Delyek Wendy Brabham, for example) - why not get on with it on our own terms. This leads back to the discussion above about Indigenist research.

Currently, Western research is structured to allow Tyikim academics to engage as individual researchers similar to the way Padakoot academics engage in research work. Thus Tyikim research, as undertaken by these academics, privileges Tyikim academics and bureaucrats operating as individuals at the University research level of Western higher education. But what is really required is an understanding of the Tyikim community and Indigenous researchers must engage Tyikim communities
and their organisations in the research enterprise drawing on Tyikim ways of knowing, being and doing.

To engage Tyikim communities in higher education research, it is necessary to be culturally sensitive towards any dialogue addressing the research approaches that will involve Tyikim communities and their organisations in a Tyikim culturally inclusive and meaningful way (Tuhiwai, 2002, p. 110-111). This initial strategy is an important negotiated process to ensure that the Tyikim researchers and Tyikim research ‘participants’ operate within a dynamic and culturally safe research context. Tyikim cultural safety strategies can be developed by following Tyikim relational protocols for the exchange of Tyikim knowledge through “reciprocity, obligation, shared experiences, coexistence, cooperation and social memory” (Moreton-Robinson, 1998, p. 16 cited by Booran Mirraboopa, 2001, p. 6). This approach, once again, emphasises the centrality of our shared relational ontologies as Tyikim peoples working in universities. This way of thinking has influenced the debates over the IRRA, debates which can be tracked back over thirty years to when it surfaced into the public domain in 1977 with the establishment of groups such as the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action in Brisbane. The debate can be followed in the literature through to the present (for example, Langton 1981, Langford 1983, Liddle & Shaw 1983, Bourke 1995, Houston, 1987, Irabinna-Rigney 1999, Dodson, 2000, Humphery, 2001, Henry, Dunbar, Arnott, Scrimgeour, Matthews, Murakami-Gold, & Chamberlain, 2002a, 2000b, 2000c and Henry, Dunbar, Arnott, Scrimgeour, & Murakami-Gold, 2002). These IRRA debates were energised by National workshops. For example, in the 1980’s the following conferences and workshops were held by the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress 1983, National Conference on Research Priorities in Aboriginal Health 1986, Camden Workshop 1987, and the National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party 1989.

The IRRA debates have continued through to the present time with Tyikim research protocols developed by the various Indigenous Centres at Australia’s universities. These are strategic policy documents that draw on the themes arising from the IRRA
debates in an attempt to influence the management of research into Tyikim matters by university academics (see Atkinson, Brabham, Henry & James 1994 as an example).

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health Research Report Working Towards Change In Indigenous Health Research (2003) and its accompanying monographs provide a succinct account of the IRRA and the developments associated with it. This report identified the key reform proponents included a commitment to:

- rejecting institutionalized research approaches which have historically marginalized the knowledge, perspectives and values of Indigenous peoples;
- adopting research approaches which represent a capacity for sustainable community development;
- adopting research approaches which are more respectful of Indigenous values and inclusive of Indigenous knowledge and world views;
- supporting the development of Indigenous research capacity and the development of systems to ensure that the management of research is under Indigenous community control (p. 16).

The report, through reference to the work of Humphery (2000), also identified a number of unresolved issues which are critical to the advancement of the IRRA. These issues included:

- involvement by Aboriginal communities in the design, execution and evaluation of research;
- co-ordinating roles of Aboriginal community controlled organisations;
- consultation and negotiation is ongoing and open to scrutiny;
- mechanisms for Indigenous control and transformation of research;
- mechanisms for ongoing surveillance of research projects;
- questions of research priorities and benefit;
- what ethical processes in terms of consultation and negotiation might actually be in practice;
- evidence of transformation of research practices from 'investigator-driven' to a re-assertion of control by Indigenous community controlled organisations over the research project;
- linkage between research and community development and social change;
- development of mechanisms to support the successful transfer and dissemination of research findings;
- adoption of a needs-based approach to research; and
- the training of Indigenous researchers (p. 17).
These issues can only be resolved through processes of organisational change; that is, by a significant shift in the institutional culture or paradigm governing Tyikim research at universities, highlighting the real depth of the ideological struggle facing Tyikim peoples attempting a counter-hegemonic shift in research. Resistance to these changes is already apparent in areas where the IRRA debate has been most prominent.

An example of this situation is the 1991 interim ethical guidelines of the NHMRC for Indigenous health research were a partial acknowledgement of the IRRA focusing on consultation, community involvement and ownership and publication of data. These guidelines were never enforceable within the health research community and the harder-edged elements of the IRRA were not included. These omissions included Tyikim community control over the allocation of funding to research projects, the adoption of a needs-based approach to Tyikim health research and prioritising the training of Tyikim researchers. The NHMRC ethical guidelines were silent on those elements of the IRRA that shifted control over the research enterprise to Tyikim people themselves.

For Humphery (2001) the NHMRC Interim Research Guidelines “were a careful amalgam of assenting to Aboriginal - and non-Aboriginal - criticisms of research practice [while] retaining a highly Western sense of independent research” and not effectively challenging the “white institutional dominance over health and medical research funding” (p. 200).

It is from examples like this one that Tyikim people and their Padakoot colleagues now fully appreciate

that reform (will) require more than a reliance on procedural guidelines and superficial changes to the established institutional culture of research management and practice. Attention was now being directed towards effecting deeper level institutional change and the strategic management of this form of change (Henry et al 2002, p. 7).

Tuhiwai (2002), highlights the problem of non-Indigenous resistance to the institutional changes advocated by the IRRA
Clearly, there have been some shifts in the way non-Indigenous researchers and academics have positioned themselves and their work in relation to the people for whom the research still counts. It is also clear, however, that there are powerful groups of researchers who resent Indigenous people asking questions about their research and whose research paradigms constantly permit them to exploit Indigenous peoples and their knowledges (p. 17).

This insight brings me back to my research study and the direction I have taken. I needed to navigate my project through the ethical research protocols at both Deakin University and Charles Darwin University. This was not an issue for me. I was definitely not resisting the requirements of the IRRA as expressed in the ethical research protocols of these universities. I had moved beyond the IRRA requirements as I was wanting to embrace the IRA and have the ideas from the IRA embedded in my research study. I was interested to explore these ideas as a component of my overall research.

**Indigenous Access to Higher Education**

The insights developed above about the positioning of Tyikim Australians as the ‘primitive Others’ by the deep-seated ideological forces framing discourses and practices within Australia’s universities provide a lens through which to examine the provision of higher education courses of study to Australia’s Tyikim population. Access by Tyikim Australians to higher education as students is a recent phenomenon. Following the 1967 Australian Referendum when Tyikim Australians became recognised as citizens of the Australian nation-state and in the immediate post-Referendum period the Australian higher education sector began developing Access and Equity programs for Indigenous students. So from 1969, the Tyikim political struggle became evident within the provision of access to higher education for Tyikim students. This provision of higher education to Tyikim Australians evolved as a system under the name of Indigenous Access and Equity at a time when the Commonwealth government was entering, for the first time, the field of Tyikim education. This, coupled with the Commonwealth government’s funding responsibilities for universities, brought Indigenous Access and Equity under the Commonwealth’s policy agenda. In response more and more Australian universities
developed access programs for Tyikim people as a pathway into higher education courses.

The thirty-five year history of the Australian Indigenous higher education ‘system’ can be seen, in hindsight, as a symbolic acceptance by many of the Tyikim people involved as colonised beings and by the Padakoot people continuing as the colonisers. This positioning of participants in the provision of Tyikim higher education was, of course, mediated through the institutional ways of knowing, being and doing as determined by the dominant norms. The outcome for many has been that the universities have been able to ensure that their colonising position endured thereby positioning ‘their’ Tyikim students as subordinate and submissive constructions of the ‘primitive Other’, incapable of cultural representation in the knowledge content of the higher education curriculum.

Government funding to universities, based on Tyikim community advice through representatives of State and Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and of the universities themselves, resourced pathways for Tyikim adults into higher education courses. But this funding reflected the dominant thinking of universities and other tertiary institutions about ‘alternative’ pathways for tertiary entrance and admission to university degree courses. Here ‘alternative’ meant different to the normal pathway following a completed secondary school education with the necessary prerequisite school studies and a sufficient tertiary entrance score to gain entrance to specific degree courses on a competitive basis. This is the mainstream pathway. As the majority of Tyikim students do not present with a normal education profile as referenced to the European Australian ‘standard’, the Indigenous Access and Equity alternative pathways were in fact geared towards getting Tyikim students, as less-than-educated beings, skilled-up so that they could participate in selected degree courses alongside ‘normal’ Padakoot students with a heightened chance of success. Thus the Access and Equity programs for Tyikim students began with the premise that these students needed ‘special’ or bridging programs funded during the 1970s, 1980s and into the 1990s through Special Course Funding from the Commonwealth. In association with this development, universities were inclined to
succumb to the pressure to enrol, preferentially, those Tyikim students that most closely matched, in their formal school education profile; that is, young post-Year 12 secondary school entrants to degree courses. Brabham & Henry (1991a) argued this point as follows:

It is in the universities' best interests (although the argument is put in terms of the students' best interests) to mainstream Koorie (Indigenous) students having the best possible chance of being successful within the 'normal' teaching arrangements of the university. Accordingly, special admission procedures for Koories are, in reality, procedures for vetting prospective students against formal education criteria and standards drawn from the 'normal' entry requirements of the university. The aim here is to enrol Koories whose formal education profile (defined strictly according to European Australian standards) most closely match that of 'normal' university entrants. This aim of universities often does violence to the Higher Education aspirations of mature age Koories with a history of substantial community work, established community involvements and advanced Koorie cultural credentials (p. 17).

During the 1970s, special course funding became available to higher education institutions for the provision of bridging or access programs for Tyikim Australians into their award bearing programs. Universities were funded according to their submissions to the Commonwealth and the advice the Commonwealth received from the National Aboriginal Education Committee (NAEC) and the relevant State or Territory Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups. Tertiary institutions, under the special course funding provisions, were able to establish support Units for Tyikim students. These were called enclave programs. Each enclave was dedicated to the support of Tyikim students wishing to embark on a higher education course of study. Enclaves were staffed with administrative, welfare and general education staff. These staff developed bridging or tertiary orientation or tertiary enabling courses, as the special courses came to be known. Upon completion of these courses Tyikim students were deemed ready to enrol in the degree award bearing courses of the universities. Initially, the majority of Tyikim students were being ‘bridged’ into teacher education courses. During the 1980’s the course destinations of students broadened out to degree courses offered by Faculties other than Education.

In a study of enclave programs by Jordan in 1984, Indigenous enclaves at tertiary institutions were defined as having, essentially, the provision of academic support, counselling facilities, structures supporting the maintenance of an Aboriginal identity
and the availability of a separate space on-campus within which this provision could be accessed (Jordan 1985).

Additional government funding became available to Tyikim students when they moved onto their degree studies. This funding was available under the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS). Tyikim students could access their own tutors for additional support in their higher education studies, additional to what was normally provided by the universities to their mainstream students. Indigenous enclaves became the sites through which these additional tutoring arrangements were managed and implemented.

Universities set about implementing their Access and Equity policies premised on the assumption that Tyikim students had a deficit in their learning backgrounds. The Indigenous Higher Education Access model had to have an educational delivery tool and service that focused on the ‘special educational needs’ of Tyikim aspirants to degree courses of study. This approach to the provision of access pathways into higher education for Tyikim students did not challenge the essential nature of higher education as established by universities and in fact reinforced it by applying this way of established thinking to new circumstances. Access and Equity for Tyikim higher education students meant shifting the rules by which Tyikim students could enter higher education programs but not much else.

The enclave model came to symbolise the representation of an agreement between Indigenous Advisory Committees (the National Aboriginal Education Council, for example), the Commonwealth Government and the higher education sector for the ‘advancement’ of Tyikim Australians. The key stakeholders acting in the Tyikim interests at the time believed that the enclave model was their ideological ‘baby’ in the birthing of Tyikim higher education. But the imperialistic structures of the universities, as institutions of the West, encouraged, directed and shaped the enclave model in practice for Tyikim students while at the same time, Tyikim staff were being employed in these sites of Tyikim higher education participation. Thus the management of the enclaves established under this model was developed and
nurtured in a continued systemic way by Tyikim academics such as Bin- Sallik (1978 & 1982), Hughes (1988) and Bourke (2001).

The enclave model was heralded as the Access and Equity ‘model’ for Tyikim participation in higher education and gave rise to Indigenous Units, Task Forces or Centres within, in time, all Australian universities. On closer examination these Indigenous enclaves tended not to be located in the academic Faculties or Schools of these universities where the core academic business of higher education is conducted. The Indigenous enclaves were instead established in the ‘out-of-Faculty’ student support and welfare areas within the administration divisions of the universities. As appendages to the core academic business of universities, the Indigenous enclaves were heavily shaped by a welfare and pastoral care ideology which was compatible with the overarching colonising ideology of these institutions. These Indigenous spaces on the higher education landscape were created to provide Tyikim students with pastoral support, remedial education and additional tuition as an accompaniment to their academic higher education studies offered through the Faculties and Schools of the universities.

But under this model of Indigenous Access and Equity, Tyikim ontologies and epistemologies could not be readily included in the Tyikim students’ higher education studies. When included, the treatment of these Tyikim ontologies and epistemologies was superficial in regard to addressing the inclusion of authentic Tyikim knowledge content into the students’ study programs offered at the undergraduate level. Given that enclave academic staff, including ATAS tutors, were marginalised both organisationally and academically with respect to the Faculty academics responsible for the development, delivery and assessment of Units of study within degree courses, any inclusion of Tyikim content into Tyikim students’ studies could only be achieved through case-by-case negotiations usually structured around assignment requirements. Nakata (2004) warned that:

There is a danger that in the rush to engineer a quick resolution of the intersection of these different knowledge systems (Indigenous and Western) that we will bring in, for example, some impoverished and corrupted and misapplied version of something called Aboriginal pedagogy to some impoverished, corrupted or
misunderstood version of Indigenous knowledge, both of which are already circumscribed by Western understandings of them and by the Western knowledge that is also being conveyed (p.11).

Nakata (2004) goes on to observe that "It is evident in the literature that some problematic work is going on in this area" (p.11).

The outcomes in Indigenous higher education under the enclave model of Access and Equity have been Tyikim graduates produced over this period of time through the various Indigenous Higher Education Centres bridging students into degree courses and then supporting them in the Western knowledge content of these courses. But the Tyikim involvement in higher education decision-making has not seriously engaged the issue of inclusion of Tyikim knowledge systems within the higher education curriculum, although the potential for this exists even under the Commonwealth Government funding regimes of the past thirty five years as is shown by a small number of universities – Deakin University, for example. This issue is paramount to the successful development of Access and Equity programs for Tyikim students in higher education; that is, access and equity defined as more than changes to the rules of admission coupled with remedial support. In 1991 Brabham & Henry argued that:

While universities, as institutional symbols of the dominant cultural formations of society, are able to define equity programs for Koorie (Indigenous) students, essentially in their own terms, equity education for Koorie students will have been imposed upon the Koorie communities of Australia. While Koorie involvement is controlled by universities through the weaker genre of 'consultation' then this 'definition of equity for others' will continue. (Brabham & Henry 1991, p. 6).

In its submission to the 1988 Senate Inquiry into Higher Education the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI), the State Aboriginal Education Consultative Group included this statement:

Aboriginal communities, through their educational organisations, are in a relatively powerless position, relying on the goodwill of institutions to do the right thing by their students in situations where the institutions, having accepted equity grants, can, through routine and conventional institutional practices, manage the study experience of students often at odds with the expectations of both students and their communities (VAEAI 1989, pp. 45).
The VAEAI submission went on to stress the importance of establishing a social justice framework for negotiations between Tyikim communities and universities over inclusion of Tyikim knowledge in a meaningful way into degree courses studied by Tyikim Australians. Then according to VAEAI:

Negotiations ... would breach the hitherto sacred ground of institutional privilege; negotiations over the authority of institutions to devise and accredit curricula, to teach and to assess students and to promote particular constructions of knowledge in preference to others. These negotiations would press up against and bring into contention the essential nature of the Higher Education institutions themselves. ... This is the hard ground that lies ahead in the equity debate (VAEAI 1989, pp. 45).

The call here is for equity in terms of equal respect for Tyikim knowledge systems in universities for Tyikim students expressed in terms of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies – Tyikim ways of knowing, being and doing. But the enclave model and its evolution over the past thirty-five years appears to be flawed in terms of responding to this challenge as expressed by VAEAI in 1989. The enclave model is flawed because it is fundamentally a creature of the imperialistic and colonising ideologies of the higher education system.

Interestingly, Tyikim academics associated with enclaves began to expand their sites of participation into the ‘sacred ground’ of their universities during the late 1980s and 1990s. A number of universities allowed their Indigenous Centres to undergo an academic metamorphosis and become Faculties in their own right. At Charles Darwin University (and its predecessors, Darwin Institute of Technology and the Northern Territory University), for example, the Indigenous enclave was originally called the Aboriginal Task Force. This was transformed into the Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, then the Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education before becoming in 2004 the School of Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Essentially, by following this path onto the academic ‘sacred ground’ of their institution’s landscape, these sites of Tyikim participation in higher education became Faculties/Schools of Aboriginal Studies. These new academic entities developed degree courses in Aboriginal Studies in addition to continuing with their bridging and tutorial support programs for Tyikim students seeking to study or actually studying in the other Faculties of the universities.
These new entities, which grew out of the ideologically ‘safe’ (safe as in non-threatening to the core knowledge system of the universities) Indigenous Access and Equity initiatives of the 1970s and early 1980s were now in the mainstream of the universities as Faculties or Schools of Aboriginal Studies with academic appointments right up the hierarchy of positions available within the higher education academic career structure. Many of these appointments went to Tyikim academics as Deans and professors of Aboriginal Studies. But paradoxically, the Aboriginal Studies degrees were not what Tyikim students were necessarily interested in studying. Having completed their bridging, tertiary orientation or tertiary enabling access courses, many Tyikim students, if not most, went onto study in the undergraduate courses offered by the other Faculties of the universities as they pursued their professional interests in teacher education, law, science, commerce, arts and humanities, or sociology, for example. Faculties of Aboriginal Studies became sites of cross-cultural studies as these Faculties came to rely on the enrolment of Padakoot students in their courses in order to meet enrolment quotas set by the senior management bodies of their individual universities – enrolment quotas now needed to secure the financial resources to meet the operational costs of these new Faculties and Schools of Aboriginal Studies.

This is an ultimate irony. Entities established on the landscape of higher education as sites for Access and Equity for the encouragement and enhancement of Tyikim student participation in university-based studies a group identified as being grossly under-represented in the higher education student population of Australia (Anderson 2003, p. 6), have become primarily sites for compensatory education for Tyikim students at sub-degree level enabling courses while offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses to mainly Padakoot students under the banner of cross-cultural studies. The ideological framing of Indigenous participation in higher education under Commonwealth Government funding and university institutional thinking and practice has been principally mediated by the Western ontology resulting in a colonisation (or re-colonisation) of these enclaves and Faculties of Aboriginal Studies by representatives of the coloniser class – Padakoot students.
The learning needs of the Tyikim students, designed from their own cultural ideologies as represented in their own knowledge systems, have not been delivered in higher education programs in a comprehensive and authentic way.

Conclusion

This Chapter has enabled me to identify and bring to the surface the impacts of the deep ideological forces operating in the institutional lives of universities in the areas of research, teaching and learning. I am arguing that these forces profoundly shape the ontologies and epistemologies of higher education experiences. These experiences are the lived experiences of researchers, teachers and students in knowledge creation, and pedagogical and curriculum events encountered during their participation in higher education. These ideological forces carry forward the imperialistic and colonising agenda of the dominant Western nation-state of Australia. As such, the effect of these forces is particularly devastating to Tyikim cultural aspirations for sovereignty and self-determination. This is because these ideological forces, often implicitly expressed, emerge (or lunge out) in the higher education context to construct Tyikim people as ‘primitive Others’, as primarily objects of Western researchers and as deficit learners judged according to Western epistemological standards.

My research study is focused on navigating through these forces at work in one university – Charles Darwin University in the Northern Territory of Australia. I am interested in exploring the scope for Tyikim knowledge on the sacred ground of the Western-mediated higher education curriculum. In order to explore this research interest I need to open up a new space at my University for Tyikim student engagement with studies in their undergraduate degree program; a new space in the sense of not being captured by the existing enclave-derived Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, as the key Indigenous teaching and research site at the University was called when I began designing my research in 2002. I needed fresh ground on the landscape to begin my new narrative. This narrative is taken up
in detail in Chapter 5. The next Chapter explores the research methodology used in this research study and, importantly, I claim that this methodology is an expression of research-in-action under the Indigenous Research Agenda.

Yu! Waki tjani marri mum wa! (This part of the story is finished, but there is more to tell.)
Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Introductory Comment: Indigenous Research Reform Agendas

This research study took seriously the issues raised under the Indigenous Research Reform Agenda (Tuhiwai Smith, 2002, Dodson, 2000, Irabinna-Rigney, 1999 and Humphery, 2000, 2001) and the Indigenous Research Agenda (Irabinna-Rigney, 1999, Japanangka West, 2000 and Booran Mirrabooka, 2001). These Agendas challenge many of the approaches historically underpinning research into Indigenous affairs. Henry et al (2002a) in the first of a series of monographs on the Indigenous Research Reform Agenda commented that “an important focus of the Indigenous Research Reform Agenda is the formalisation of Indigenist research philosophies, principles and practices” (p. 3) and the identification of research methodologies aligned to “an overriding commitment to decolonize existing Western research traditions as expressed through mainstream institutions” (p. 3).

Tyikim researchers closely connected to their knowledge communities are the change agents in this reform process. Irabinna Rigney (1999) makes this point strongly.

Indigenous people now want research and its designs to contribute to the self-determination and liberation struggles as defined and controlled by their communities. To do this Indigenous people themselves must analyze and critique epistemologies that are commonplace in higher education (p. 110).

Tuhiwai Smith (2002), gives further support to Irabinna Rigney’s position. She argued that any attempts to reform Indigenous research relied on the direct participation of Indigenous people as key players in the research activity through which reform would be realised.

This is a position that I have adopted in my own research, as will become evident in the discussion of my research methodology in the following sections of this chapter. My research study is aligned to the aspirations of my Tyikim colleagues struggling to transform the dominant paradigm of research in universities and other research-
based institutions in order to bring about "a shift away from non-Indigenous individualistic, investigator-driven research to some "new way"" (Henry et al, 2002a, p. 3). This new way is, for me, aligned with the Indigenous Research Agenda, a direction I now want to expand upon in this Chapter.

**Introduction to the Research Methodology**

The research methodology of this study was based upon my **Mak Mak** family knowledge creation processes. These processes are associated with significant ceremonies that have a long heritage and tradition for my people. The ceremonies are those in which the metaphors of **Mirrwana** and **Wurrkama** have a central role. Throughout the research the **Tyikim** research methodology centred on these metaphors and the activities of people within the ceremonies was spoken of to **Padakoot** participants in the study as participatory action research. In this way the research methodology of the study mirrored the core research problem being researched; that is, how to integrate **Tyikim** knowledge with **Padakoot** knowledge in the higher education sector to produce new ways of knowing that are essentially **Tyikim** in their cultural positioning. Here, with the methodology of the study, this problem became one of accommodating participatory action research into a broader and more complex framework of knowledge creation based on the ceremonial life of **Mak Mak Marranunngu** and reciprocating in-law families but enacted out within the higher education landscape of Charles Darwin University.

**Mirrwana and Wurrkama Ceremony**

This ceremony occurs when people who are members of a broader **Tyikim** community come together to resolve matters over which they have shared obligations and responsibilities and for which new actions are required to be taken. These matters may be to do with land disputes, land management and resource use, funerals, birth and with marriage and initiation. Members of the in-law families meet together in a designated place hosted by one family. They meet for up to three weeks, the time it takes for the food of the **Mirrwana** to be prepared for the final stage of the negotiations and settlements.
The Mirrwana and Wurrkama ceremony highlights important Mak Mak cultural events that are inclusive as everybody has the right to be heard and requires all participants of the Mak Mak family, along with members of our in-law family, to contribute in ways specified by strict protocols.

The Mirrwana is the cycad that nourishes the landscape of Mak Mak knowledge creation, a nourishment that crystallises at ceremonial times. The Wurrkama is the work done in the preparation of the plant and its food source. Wurrkama involves caring for the landscape and preparing the fruits or pelangu of the Mirrwana for baking and consumption at the time of celebrating those special events were closure is required and an opening to move into the next phase of the learning journey.
The Mirrwana has adapted and shown great resilience to its environmental hazards since time immemorial. The Mirrwana is a fire-adapted ancient source of ceremonial food. As the whole plant is full of arsenic, its ceremonial food if eaten unprepared is poisonous.

The mulangi (leaf) is about 60 cm long and is green and prickly with the hardened and fern-like characteristic of ancient prehistoric plants. At the base of each leaf is a 40 cm stem along which are rows of prickles several millimetres apart.
Mirrwana plants are either male or female. This distinction between femaleness and maleness are the signs of fertility. The female plant, paigu, has a thick yellow and white covering in her crown that attracts insects to her. The pelangu that form from this central area of her crown are hard and round with a protective shield positioned around each pelangu from which a sharp spike grows. The paigu holds hundreds of pelangu in her spiny crown with this circle of spikes.

The male plant, kundu, has a large reddish brownish protrusive ornament covered in many thousands of hooked barbs. We refer to this ornament as the ngu-r, or male genitalia.

The preparation of the pelangu into an edible food is a long process. The landscape needs to be cared for by burning the wet season growth of the spear grass during the dry season. The preparation and organisation of the Mirrwana for the right time of
the year for the ceremony is important. Planning for the ceremony means adhering to a considerable body of protocol informed by a comprehensive framework of Tyikim knowledge carried by Senior Elders and, to a lesser extent, by others. All the right families, in the sense of having the necessary obligations and responsibilities for the matters at hand, need to be invited to attend to take part in the sharing of celebration and consumption of the ceremonial food.

The *lowa* (sweet bread) required to cater for the number of guests depends on who will be in attendance, plus the hosts. All the host *Mak Mak* family group members holding the ceremony have to ensure that the right amount of *pelangu* is collected for cracking.

The *pelangu* is harvested and the outer shell broken off. The *mimardi* (kernel) is broken into large chunks and crushed for leaching. The crushed *mimardi* is wrapped in large sheets of *thiel* (paperbark) now referred to as *wilan-bu*. This wrapped
package is placed in the **wuda-tad-di** (fresh gently flowing spring water soaks on the upside of the creek) for up to two to three weeks. The wrapped **wilan-bu** is regularly monitored to ensure wrapping has remained intact during the leaching process. If this is not checked on a regular basis the wrapping could easily deteriorate during the soaking period. The smell from the **wilan-bu** is very strong that it attracts thousands of blowflies. After the leaching of arsenic the remainder of the **wilan-bu** is dried in the sun and to let the excess water run off. Once dried the larger portions of the **wilan-bu** are crushed to make the dough for the **lowa**. We say “**wilan-bu kuman thuk wa. Kimina tjan miyi lowa.**” The **wilan-bu** is mixed with water from the spring fed creek to make large flat bread or pancake to bake. The flat **lowa** (sweet bread) is placed on large round hairy **Miyi mi-ngar-nard-a mulangi** (leaves). The leaves are placed on beds of hot coals to bake. These are cooked for a short time. Once flat breads are cooked they can be distributed to the guests, Senior Elders and the host **Mak Mak** family members who eat small portions. The ceremony signal of the feast is the closure of the celebration and the new understandings reached, and to move on to create anew.

**Paigu, Kundu dap kunin Wurrkama ngun! (Working Together!)**

The **Mak Mak Mirrwana** metaphor has been chosen to underpin and inform my research for its known characteristics and its special **Tyikim** knowledge place in our culture. The use of this metaphor gives me a **Tyikim** female narrative for the multiple cultural landscapes that I engaged in my research study. It is through the **paigu** voice (narrative) that I can speak in this thesis about how I introduced **Mak Mak** knowledge into the core curriculum of higher education.


The expression above is referring to the ‘company’ or ‘partnership’ arrangements I have produced from the firing within my own thinking about obtaining my Doctorate that would benefit **Tyikim** interests at Charles Darwin University. These
arrangements were central to my methodological approach to the research. What emerged from this was a new way of creating Wurrkamas (workers) in a collaborative project. The construction in higher education to regenerate new ideas about Tyikim knowledge introduced into the core curriculum needed a critical mass of Tyikim people in the Faculty and in particular in the School of Education. This critical mass was generated by the use of research reference groups.

I was related to the Tyikim participants directly or through our neighbouring families or had family connections through our extended family networks. The Padakoot participants were from the University sector and were work colleagues and senior management in the Faculty of SITE at Charles Darwin University and my supervisors from Deakin University. The Wurrkama through these partnerships needed to take place before I could complete my doctoral study so that I can continue my Wurrkama to ensure the sustainability of Tyikim knowledge introduced into the University.

Based upon the metaphors of Mirrwana and Wurrkama, the partnership relationships between Mak Mak and University knowledge holders was integral to the new way that I thought about, talked about and wrote about improving Tyikim knowledge access into higher education core curriculum. These arrangements framed in this Tyikim way became integral to my methodology. With this methodology participants in the research became constructed, in my mind and that of my key Mak Mak advisers, as ‘family’, as a broad community of reciprocating ‘in-laws’.

**Firing the pelangu**

Yu-u! Wah-di duk tjan! Ngindi nging pu-p tjang-gi! Ma! Ngunpipwa kan! The translation is to say: “Yes, there is a lot of long dead grass, enough laying there to burn! Give it the firestick! Burn this country to clear it! This is our Mak Mak way of looking after our spiritual relationship to our country and in return the Pindi Pindi will look after us” (Daiyi, 2003).
In Tyikim education, the landscape of Tyikim terrains is laying full of long grass. “Wah-di duk tjaj niddin university! Ma! Wadi kan ngunpipwa wadi kan. Tjang-gi wuddi! Ma-a!” (Daiyi, 2003). The manditj (knowledgeable custodians) need to clear the wah-di duk (long dead grass) and the landscape with tjang-gi (fire) to give it warmth so the landscape can be created again. Otherwise the mulangi ngulbu (leaf litter) will continue to lie in several generations of various stages of decomposition. The wuwa ngung kaya ngunggu cultural ways of nurturing and caring for the nourishment of our spiritual beings in the landscape must continue to sustain our Tyikim ways of knowing unencumbered by non-productive elements or barriers. The use of fire in the landscape by manditj of country is an essential practice in the cleansing of the landscape from which renewal of resources occurs along with opening up of access to significant spiritual and narrative sites.

The heat from the fire also generates new rapid growth within the Mirrwana. The intensity of the fire blackens the thick trunk of the Mirrwana’s hardy exterior of bark. The bark has square shapes which have a slightly protruding thickened layer of cork-like bark on their outer surface. These protrusions in the bark create different levels of thickness causing distinct square shapes which spiral indicating each growth spur of the Mirrwana. These are also the Mirrwana’s vulnerable spots and are a light creamy brown colour. Importantly, the firing of Mirrwana increases the production of pelangu in the coming season.

Wadi kan ngun pip wa! I’m going to burn it (this landscape)! Firing the landscape is a further metaphor, associated with Mirrwana and Wurrkama, informing the research methodology used in this study. In my methodology I needed to get the ‘firing’ of the thinking and actioning that gave substance to the research study over time to occur in a way that generated data that was meaningful to my quest to introduce Tyikim knowledge onto the higher education landscape. Mak Mak knowledge is about our identity with an orientation to landscapes and their embedded narratives. The dominant knowledge landscape of Australia’s universities is based on a different construction of identity, one that in contemporary times has a pervading orientation towards the nation’s economy. The firings of the knowledge landscape of
universities since the advent of Tyikim access to the higher education sector in the 1970s have not happened often enough, nor on a regular basis and, in a metaphorical sense, the seasonal conditions appeared to me and my Mak Mak community to be right for a new cleansing fire.

From a perspective based in Mak Mak philosophy, the prior requirement to ensuring that Tyikim knowledge business will proceed in an appropriate or favourable manner is a cleansing fire of the landscape, wadi ngun pipwa wadi kan. This literally means ready to burn to clear the landscape. The place is thus cleaned and we can now camp there and begin the business. In further preparation, cooking in a roasting pit is started up. Firing of country, smoking and roasting all play important roles in the renewal and preparation of landscapes and places for the creation of new narratives linked to our Mak Mak knowledge traditions.

I took these deep concepts into my research methodology. The epistemological basis for my research can be summarised as follows. Through the metaphors within the Mak Mak knowledge system, Tyikim participants worked within the research project from their own knowledge base. These metaphors brought into play actions understood by Tyikim participants as compatible with long standing ceremonial rituals used to resolve conflicts amongst broad family groupings with reciprocal rights. These are actions that generate new understandings, new ways of knowing, or, in the terminology of higher education research, new data. These ‘data’ arose in the study through negotiation amongst all participants in collaborative groups focused on shared social issues in the same way that in-law families reach agreement at ceremonial places. These negotiations were ongoing in nature, with periodic reviews amongst knowledge stakeholders and with new action plans agreed upon. Conflicts arising due to the interplay between different interest groups, including knowledge interest groups, needed to be resolved in the process. As is normal with the planning for ceremonies, not all participants in the research had access to the complete understandings brought to the project by all other participants. Senior Tyikim Elders do not necessarily disclose the deep nature of their knowledge system. Similarly, Padakoot senior figures do not, as a matter of course, disclose fully on the deep
institutional knowledge of the university. Actions, in the form of changes to established practices and testing new ways of being, linked practice to new thinking, new theorising within the Mak Mak knowledge system.

This research methodology values the subjectivities of the participants recognising the centrality of identity, emotionality, relationships and context in the knowledge creation process grounded in authentic work defined somewhat differently for each participant group. The methodology also values the evolving nature of the knowledge generation process whereby new ways of understanding and doing are built up over time from past understandings such that new ways of knowing become embedded in new practices; new ways of being, of acting on the world. This knowledge generation research methodology has a strong affinity with the creation narrative of Pae-Karrimalla – the calling into existence of the new landscapes making up the Mak Mak country of Kurrindju. The promise of the methodology is that, over time through the interactions framed by the Mirrwana and Wurrkama metaphors, a new landscape and new ways of being would be called into existence at Charles Darwin University.

I now return to the research methodological problem introduced in the introduction to this chapter, that of “accommodating participatory action research into a broader and more complex framework of knowledge creation based on the ceremonial life of Mak Mak Marranunggu and reciprocating in-law families but enacted out within the higher education landscape of Charles Darwin University”. I saw correspondences between participatory action research and the developed arguments in the literature supporting this approach to researching social and educational issues and the Mak Mak knowledge creation methodology encapsulated in the above discussion. I saw possibilities for using participatory action research as a vehicle to explore, in the higher education landscape, the scope for Tyikim ways of knowledge generation and, in the process, bringing more to the fore my Mak Mak philosophy. I will now discuss participatory action research as a ‘positioning’ methodology at the interface between the Tyikim and the Western knowledge systems.
Participatory Action Research

By establishing my Mak Mak family’s position in the research and accommodating in-law relationships with each stakeholder group, it was possible for participants to play out active roles in a Mirrwana and Wurrkama process. This process determined who and which groups had the appropriate titles and ngirrwats to get jobs done in preparation for the ‘ceremony’ being unfolded through the research project. By overseeing the Wurrkama process at Charles Darwin University I became my Koonie Koonie worker in the Mak Mak knowledge landscape of the University. Koonie Koonie is my ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi cultural status title. My ah-la is the Mak Mak Senior Elder who is the primary custodian of all Mak Mak cultural knowledge. As I am her yarra ngathi (Daughter), it is her cultural right to delegate Mak Mak knowledge to me. This authority by the Koonie Koonie entitles me as a Mak Mak Elder to use my title as Delyek. The title signifies my cultural rights to ensure that the responsibilities of overseeing the Mirrwana and Wurrkama preparations for the ceremonial process are adhered to in the university’s landscape. This positions me in the Wurrkama and ceremonial landscape to oversee the order and protocol of the planning and preparation for the ceremony. My Mak Mak community saw my University academic role as an opportunity to extend my Delyek knowledgable position. As a doctoral Tyikim student and a lecturer in the university landscape, my Delyek Mak Mak knowledge status allowed me to construct the Tyikim knowledge system as a priority for undertaking the research. This enhanced the Tyikim ideological position to oversee and coordinate the order and protocol of the planning, preparation and implementation of my action research project as a form of Participatory Action Research.

The Mak Mak knowledge accommodation of the Participatory Action Research drew on discourse-related events in the cross-cultural space created by the interfacing knowledge communities associated with the research project. These events included:

- groups of people coming together regularly to help each other learn from their experiences within the project, experiences of curriculum development,
course delivery (pedagogy), assessment, partnership arrangements, academic management processes, community consultations in higher education;

- people working together over time in a systematic way to examine critical incidents arising from changes to consultative, management, teaching and learning practices;

- self-reflective enquiries undertaken by the groups of people working in selected social situations within the project in order to improve the social justice of their own practices in terms of *Tyniwm* student outcomes;

- using deliberate change as a strategy to come to an improved understanding of group participants’ own practice and the powerful ideas that they draw upon to give meaning to their practice; and

- sharing action ‘stories’ and ideas about these stories collaboratively within each group to promote critical reflection of participants and the development of critical understandings of themselves as professional practitioners and of the social and institutional situations in which they were working.

These discourse-related events by which the research project evolved can be understood as events within participation action research projects generally.

Action research was defined in 1970 by Rapoport as research aimed at contributing

> both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework (1970, p. 499).

Kemmis and McTaggart (1982) described the process of action research in terms of four ‘moments’ in a dynamic evolving (spiralling) process of enquiry. These ‘moments’ were those associated with planning, acting, observing and reflecting; moments as stages of an action research project typically represented by diagrams like that below.
Figure 1: The Action Research ‘Moments’ and Spiral (Diagram from McTaggart (1991, p. 32))

During the early 1980s, different forms of action research were identified by action research theorists (Carr and Kemmis 1983, Grundy and Kemmis 1981, Tripp 1984) from this field of research activity. These forms were technical, practical and emancipatory action research.

Technical action “was portrayed as a form of (practitioner) co-option into projects by facilitators where the eidos for the research work was that of the facilitator” (Henry, 1990, p. 266). This was seen as a diminished form of action research by the theorists.

Practical action research was defined by Tripp (1984) as:

Self-directed (that is, directed by practitioners), individual or group, aimed as much at new practices as at improving existing ones, within consciousness and values.
In this form of action research criteria for improvement are defined by the action research participants but rarely pushing the boundaries of established institutionalised norms, though the action research project may well be a prelude to this next step.

Emancipatory action research has been defined as this next step by Tripp (1984) and others. For Tripp, emancipatory action research involves a:

Self-leading group, aimed at developing new practices and/or changing the constraints, with a shared radical consciousness and problematised values (p. 12).

The claims for emancipatory action research are that practitioners through the critique possible within their collaborative enquiry grounded in practice (practice critique) come to understand their social and political conditions differently, understand at a deeper level how these cause injustices in their professional work, and become empowered, based on this new knowledge, to undertake radical change.

In the late 1980s the conceptualisations of action research listed above became integrated into the notion of participatory action research (PAR). The emancipatory dimension of action research survived in descriptions of PAR. Taking Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) as an example of this shift, the definition they provided of PAR was as follows: a “collective, self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social practices” (p. 5).

Hughes and Seymour-Rolls (2000) saw PAR as comprising research methods that expose practitioners to research in a “collegial collaborative environment (emphasising) both naturalistic and humanistic scientific methods” (p. 6). They argue that PAR can be justified as an approach to research because its principles are compatible with those normally associated with emancipatory education concepts of collaboration and empowerment (2000, p. 6). Further, Hughes and Seymour-Rolls (2000) concluded their paper by linking participatory action research to Tyikim community development.
Connecting PAR to Tyikim community empowerment in this way is highly relevant to my selection of PAR within the overall research methodology of my research study.

Henry (1990) sounded a cautionary note on the potential for PAR to deliver on the emancipatory agenda some authors claim for it (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988). He saw that for action research projects to build towards emancipation and empowerment the higher education researchers facilitating PAR projects for others must themselves be just as exposed to the risks of changed practices and organisational re-arrangements as their fellow collaborators in the projects. Any separation of roles into facilitators and practitioners within a PAR project opens up the work of the project into a ‘them-and-us’ dichotomy thereby lessening the potential for emancipatory change.

This point is taken up by McTaggart (1997) when, with reference to Borda (1997), he observed that “little action research will occur unless the social relations that are necessary for close collaborative work are established and sustained” (p. 112). He exhorted academics to learn about the social settings within which the action research projects were embedded “by barking their shins on the realities of life outside the academy” (p. 113). For McTaggart, these challenges are most pronounced “in cross-cultural situations, especially those where Western researchers work among Indigenous people” (1997, p. 111).

Goff (2001) reinforces these concerns about perhaps too readily claiming that PAR can deliver on an emancipatory and empowerment agenda within a social action project. She argued that until researchers, working in Tyikim environments, see themselves as the others in the research project see them, only then can they “work with the depth of self-critical analysis necessary to make oppression visible and to manage the consequences (in personal, structural, systematic, paradigmatic and
ecological dimensions) of so doing” (pp. 12-13). Goff went onto observe, as a Padakoot action researcher that she could not “facilitate PAR with others” but only with herself to change her internal environment thereby making reflective “space for the ignorance and fear that sustains exhaustion, inequity, self interest and denial” in her life making it visible to herself in the company of Indigenous people known to her” (pp. 13-14). For Goff, PAR opens up a new way of learning that

can be used not only in emancipatory environments that address participant oppression by ‘others’, but also in those in which we are knowingly and unknowingly the dominant force (p. 14).

This observation is particularly relevant to my study given that my research explored the interface between two knowledge systems while recognising that, at the outset, the dominant knowledge landscape of Australia’s universities was based on a Western knowledge paradigm.

Newman (2000) introduced a link between action research and narrative inquiry as a way of addressing the personal dimension of critical and emancipatory action research highlighted by Goff (2002). For Newman, action research, no matter what variant is undertaken, requires “a laying out of our personal understanding, our sense of the political realities which support or constrain our work with students” (2000, p. 3). This laying out of personal understandings is an interpretive act that can be expressed as an “ongoing narrative of our professional activity” (Newman, 2000, p. 3). By creating these narratives, participants in PAR projects are able to distance themselves somewhat from their judgements (informed by tacit theories and culturally determined values and beliefs not typically articulated explicitly) captured within the narrative account and therefore probe more deeply into their own ideological positions. These personal narratives can be a key to forms of ideological critique amongst participants within a PAR project. In my project, I anticipated that these narratives may also lead to a questioning of the dominant narratives shaping the landscape of higher education.

Colombo (2003) makes a useful distinction between the act of producing a narrative as an interpretation of events in a PAR project, for example, and the act of analysing
and critiquing a narrative. The narrative approach in action research is identified as “the generative processes of narration and the ways in which experience is discursively constructed by means of consensual linguistic practices” (2003, p. 2). However, “the analysis of narrative as text with its constituent elements and structures” (2000, p. 2) is referred to as narratology. For Colombo, like Newman, narratives are a tool to access the interpretive frameworks that practitioners use to construct accounts of critical events and to give meaning to their actions in the world.

This link between action research and narrative provided me with a way of thinking about the connecting relationships between research and reflexivity amongst action researchers and, importantly, between the PAR and the narrative-based metaphors of my Mak Mak Marranunggu knowledge creation methodology.

**Research Procedures**

From the perspective of PAR, I used in the unfolding of my research project a combination of practitioner research methods informed by action research, case study, reflective journaling and narrative research approaches. The research project was driven for all participants through an action research process involving cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning. This action research sequence of cycles began with reference groups in semester 1 of 2003 and then continued to the end of semester 2 of 2003. The action research sequence of cycles for the students and their lecturers ran across Semester 2. As the principal researcher, I was involved in all participant groups and undertook case study research on the pilot teaching program central to the research drawing on the layered contexts of the School, the Faculty and the University as a whole.

The research project was located at the Charles Darwin University: Faculty of SITE in the School of Education. The research was undertaken in 2003. The research project created curriculum space in the School of Education for Tyikim knowledge in the Bachelor of Education undergraduate degree course. Specifically, this curriculum space was opened up within the Unit Language and Culture in
Educational Settings (coded ETU323). A pilot version of ETU323, in which Tyikim knowledge was included in the Unit content or curriculum, was offered to Tyikim students enrolled in the B.Ed. course in 2003. The pilot ETU323 was offered concurrently with the mainstream delivery of the same Unit across Semester 2, 2003. Tyikim undergraduate education students volunteered to study ETU323 in the pilot mode. Seven students enrolled in the pilot version of the Unit.

The research project also involved other participants. These were the members of three stakeholder groups in addition to the student group. Thus the full complement of participants in the research were grouped into the following PAR Reference Groups:

1. Indigenous Community Reference Group;
2. Indigenous Students Reference Group;
3. Indigenous Academic Teaching Group; and
4. Faculty Reference Group.

A concise statement of the research project was lodged with Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC) in early April 2003. The project received ethics approval from DUHREC in June 2003. At the same time an application was lodged with the relevant Charles Darwin University Ethics Committee (then the Northern Territory University [NTU] Human Research Ethics Committee [NTUHREC]. Approval from NTUHREC came at the end of June 2003.

Basing the outward face of the research project to Padakoot stakeholders on the research methodological principles of PAR enabled the project to be understood and accepted by the Dean of the Faculty of SITE and the Head of the School of Education as both organisationally and educational feasible and appropriate. These same methodological principles however were embedded, for the Tyikim stakeholders, within a Mak Mak knowledge generation framework focused on the inclusion of Tyikim knowledge into the higher education core curriculum of Charles
The Landscapes of the Research Project in Symbolic Form

The research project can be depicted in Tyikim visual symbolic form. I have been given permission by Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi to yidin kit kany (paint). The representation is that of a Tyikim ma-wadi (painting) art form drawing on my deep knowledge of the genre as a Delyek of the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu clan. But by way of introduction to my ma-wadi and my interpretation of it, I refer briefly to contemporary debates about Tyikim art amongst anthropologists. This discussion is included here to alert the Padakoot reader to concerns I have about the possibility of a misunderstanding of the significance of new and contemporary Tyikim art within the context of Tyikim knowledge systems.

The science of anthropology has a fascination of the ‘primitive’ cultural life. I have discussed in Chapter 3 the influence of Freudian theories as a core in the Western science of anthropology. Anthropology was also used as a vehicle by Sigmund Freud to elaborate his theories of psychoanalysis and his pre-occupation of constructing ‘others’, especially racial and religious ‘others’, as less civilized if at all, therefore ‘less than human’ subjects that can be researched. From this tradition, anthropological science has theorised about Tyikim rituals, ceremonies and paintings as ‘primitive’ art forms.

There is a view expressed by some anthropologists that Tyikim art and ceremonies are, like physical artefacts, fixed in form and reproduced with reference to archaic, unchanging and prior representations. This is referred to by Barnard & Spencer (1996), as the Durkheimian fallacy whereby it is assumed that each performance of a ritual or each new representation of a painting is identical to previous ones and are only open to a single level of interpretation. However, other anthropologists have recognised that the ceremonies and art of Tyikim Australians are firmly connected to Tyikim knowledge systems of the family groups and Nations. Barnard & Spencer
(1996) identified Munn (1973) and Morphy (1991) as anthropologists who recognised the Tyikim artistic tradition as providing "a grammar as well as a vocabulary of visual signs, allowing artists opportunities to create new works rather than simply to reproduce totemic emblems whose form is fixed by tradition" (p.3). Further to this realisation by anthropologists of the semiological dimension of Indigenous art and ceremonies, which moves the science beyond the more Freudian readings of rituals and art, there is the matter of the roles of Tyikim women in both the knowledge systems of their families and in the ceremonial and artistic expression of these. Women are significant bearers of knowledge and have their own rituals including the representation of their knowledge through paintings. Barnard & Spencer (1996) note that these roles have been under-represented in the anthropological literature simply because male anthropologists had been unaware of their existence (p. 3).

It may seem contradictory within the argument being developed in this thesis for me, as a Tyikim woman of standing within my Mak Mak knowledge system, to be appearing to be seeking to secure the legitimacy of my painting with reference to the anthropological literature. I do this as an academic device to alert Padakoot readers that even amongst the anthropological fraternity there is an appreciation of Tyikim art as a voice and a text capable of capturing new ways of thinking emerging within contemporary Tyikim knowledge systems.

My ma-wadi is a Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu way of recording the methodology of my doctoral study and, as such, uses the culturally appropriate and meaningful symbols and structure.

Here is my representation of the dynamics of a Tyikim woman’s research project in Tyikim higher education.
Ma-wadi Title: “Mirrwana and Wurrkama Model for Accessing Tyikim Knowledge Systems on the Landscapes of Universities”

Description of the Ma-wadi

Tyikim people have been on this country for tens of thousands of generations, possibly over 60,000 years. Tyikim people (past/present/future) are represented by the tiny dots in the upper and lower borders of the left side panel of the ma-wadi, in the rock strata. The landscape underlies the ma-wadi and has deep layers of meaning. The landscape is depicted by the right and left sides of the ma-wadi with lines running parallel that represent the layers of rock for 60,000 years. The small diamonds in the rectangles are the people travelling across the country.
The Padakoot people have been on this country for 5 to 6 generations, a little over 200 years, a time span represented in the ma-wadi by the two strokes in the borders above and below right side panel of the ma-wadi representing the Padakoot people (past/present/future).

The main part of the ma-wadi consists of three rectangular panels. On the left side panel of the ma-wadi are the Tyikim people represented by small squares coloured in dark colours. On the right side panel of the ma-wadi are the small light coloured squares representing the Padakoot people. The centre panel represents the new generation of people working together in partnership in a new era towards a future that is unknown, but one that has improved outcomes for Tyikim knowledge interests.

In this way, the left side of the ma-wadi represents the domain of the Tyikim communities that provides the origins for Tyikim knowledge and, through this knowledge, Tyikim people’s identity, languages and country. The Tyikim community domain provides the basis for the research. The right side of the painting represents the western community domain that provides the ideological frameworks for domination, rationalism, religion and mono-lingualism, for example, where the emphasis is on individualism and the society is busy controlling and managing the environment in non-sustainable ways. The research examined the western systems of higher education teaching and learning and ways in which these could accommodate Tyikim knowledge thereby creating linkages to an existing western higher education institution. The central rectangle of the ma-wadi represents the interface domain where theorising and practising can establish new relationships between cultures (Tyikim and Padakoot), which lead to a new synthesis of ideas beyond the limitations of biculturalism, cross-culturalism, bilingualism, bothways and two-ways schooling, old ideas that have previously occupied and colonised this central space.
Colours
The *yidin kit kany ma-wadi* overall colours are calling into existence new ways of being in Indigenous higher education landscape:

- Nguda (black charcoal),
- Kugada (red ochre),
- Kumbal (yellow ochre) and
- Wunambuk (white ochre) (Daiyi 2000).

All these colours depict the emotions and feelings people experience as they enter *Tyikim* education at the University (and in the PAR project). The central rectangle depicts the *Mirrwana* from top to bottom where the:

- Green is the foliage;
- Cream is the pollen;
- Brown is the stamen of the *Mirrwana* (cycad);
- **Nguda**/Dark brown is the *pelangu* (seeds);
- Pink/Dark pink is the upper bark;
- **Kugada**/Dark *kugada* is the mid bark; and
- **Nguda**/Dark brown is the burnt lower trunk showing scaring signs from the fires.

The *tjiang-gi* (firing the *pelangu* landscape) metaphor provides the academic support necessary to *Tyikim* students. The ‘*tjiang-gi*’ metaphor ensures that we are able to celebrate on a seasonal basis the fruition of the *Wurrkama* that has occurred to get *Tyikim* students through their higher education Bachelor of Education program by fulfilling the Unit requirements and attaining completion of their four year course. Its cultural significance is so important. The *tjiang-gi* practice has philosophical principles and is a powerful metaphor for describing components of the action research. This is about the historical knowledge of management and the operational levels that exist in caring for country/ places on the University landscape.

The lines are the philosophical underpinnings of *Tyikim* and *Padakoot* knowledge movements. The visual representation of the practice seen at work is by the *kumbal* lines moving from left to right towards the centre of the painting. The visual
representation of the practice seen at work is by the white lines moving from right to left towards the centre of the painting. The kumbal lines integrate into the centre. The symbolic hands on either side of the central rectangle is a part of the ‘ngungin im’ partnership metaphor which is being offered as a ‘handshake’ agreement between the two cultures to conduct business. The middle of the ma-wadi is where the two knowledge systems integrate which represents the Mirrwana. The small coloured square within the central rectangle creates the new spiritual mirr place. The Tyikim knowledge has accommodated the Padakoot cultural philosophy to create a new understanding within the higher education cultural space. The philosophical movement creates the action necessary to thurr-upu mirr and is the equivalent of explaining the western educational concept. Padakoot nul is giving ownership to the Padakoot. Tyangi wedi kany kinin is expressing our understanding and that we’ve learnt!

Shapes
The overall shapes are lines, tiny dots, rectangles and diamonds. The lines are straight and all link. The following description highlights the knowledge process in its various forms and stages of bonding. That is the:

- Large left rectangle or panel represents the Homeland, Tyikim community and is painted nguda;
- Large central rectangle or panel represents the University Workshop room 23:43 in Building 23 where the School of Education is located and is painted light brown;
- Smaller rectangles running down each side of the central panel represent the Court yard (BBQ area) in centre of Building 23 and are painted light pink;
- Large right rectangle or panel represents the Padakoot community and is painted wunambuk;
- The 4 black horizontal lines depict the cultural boundaries and their position on the rectangles and their size illustrate their significance to the PAR project.
The five rectangles on the **ma-wadi** (the three large panels plus the two narrow panels between them) are significant. These are:

1. **Tyikim** people on the left hand side of the **ma-wadi**;
2. **Tyikim** people's five phalanges of their fingers. This symbolises the hand; the **kumbal** lines represent the **Tyikim** people's flow of knowledge;
3. **Tyikim** and **Padakoot** people that agreed to work together in the interface sector. The middle rectangle is full of negotiation and action research in the centre of the **ma-wadi**.
4. **Padakoot** people's five phalanges of their fingers; This symbolises the hand; the **kumbal** lines represents the **Padakoot** people's flow of knowledge; and
5. **Padakoot** people on the right hand side of the **ma-wadi**.

In each of the large rectangles are diamond shapes that make up the people within these countries described as: **nidin; wuwa**; spaces; or places. Each coloured diamond represents the cultural knowledge systems of **Tyikim** and **Padakoot** people.

**Interpretative Summary of the Ma-wadi**

The **kumbal** lines represent the flow of knowledge. The rectangles represent the landscapes where the knowledge is located and where it travels and links to other ways of understanding. The knowledge flows from one person to another, the diamonds are the people (islands of knowledge) and the **kumbal** lines connect them to other people. The people of this shared country must negotiate and share the responsibilities and demonstrate in:

1. their listening abilities,
2. how they speak of their experiences and wisdom and
3. their actions.
These negotiated ways are integrated in the centre panel of the ma-wadi that represents new ways of being and working together in meaningful ways: Tyangi wedi tjan kinin. Tyangi wedi tjan kinin is a mirr place for new ways of understanding for all the participants in our new nation-state of shared cultural experiences. The space below and above this central panel is empty which symbolises the Wurrkama that needs to be done to have Tyikim people’s history represented in that lineal space of learning.

Kan ngumbina – co PAR reference groups coming together is depicted in the middle of the landscape surrounding the place of learning represented by the Mirrwana plant in its dormant state (leafless). These are the participatory groups working collaboratively with a focus on a shared social issue. The Mirrwana’s external bark has square and rectangular shaped patterns which have a range of colours. The colours depict the diversity of the people acting as participants in the Wurrkama undertaken in the action research - their spirituality, ideas and emotions. All this in combination constructs the Mirrwana in the University landscape.

The knowledge creation process involves the potential for conflict where different interests need to be resolved. The subjectivity of individuals such as their personal identity issues, emotionality and authenticity, and the context-related issues, all contribute to enrich the colours of the Mirrwana. Learning and teaching is an adventure so long as all of the participants understand that the landscape they are walking on has not been burnt before. The dangers of negotiating in the PAR journey are unpredictable. The four phases of action research are represented by the spiralling lines around the trunk of the Mirrwana. These activities are ongoing and reviewed to inform new action plans. The products of the Wurrkama happening in the PAR in the School of Education are the narratives of the students and lecturer’s teaching and learning journeys and of the research. The new action introduces changes to practices, testing new ways that link and engage the practice of thinking and theorising in Tyikim higher education. The kumbal lines in the ma-wadi that are on the Mirrwana are the flow of knowledge that travels within and by each participant and links each participant in an equal and collaborative way. As the knowledge flows
around the individual participants (diamonds) the action research spiral phases are engaged again and again. The practice is evolving over time and building on past understandings that create new ways of knowing embedded in new practices.

The spiral of the action research cycle is the Wurrkama efforts in progress and at the centre is the Unit ETU323: Language and Culture in Educational Settings where the awa mirr ga knowledge creation in the university landscape of Building 23. The core of where the knowledge is being created travels upwards. The core is a brown colour. The tjang-g! The culmination of the Wurrkama in the firing of the landscape is finalised. The end result of the knowledge created at Charles Darwin University are the fertilization process where the ‘buzz’ of enthusiasm grew each week in the ritual area of Building 23 court yard. This is where the action research participants met to discuss issues and to welcome visitors as their guests, visitors who want to be part of the weekly event. In the spiritual place of shared knowledge surrounded by mim-ur-al, the carpentaria palms in Building 23 court yard, the new ideas where talked into existence through the shared stories of our action research experiences. We were able to celebrate the growth of our new understanding of our new ways of knowing and understanding in Tyikim higher education at Charles Darwin University in practice.

The BBQ area is the shared space for everyone and the fertilisation in this learning space is created by the Action Research. The green and kumbal diamonds represent both the spiritual affiliations of those Wurrkamas understandings and, metaphorically, the Mirrwana’s green leaves and readiness of producing new knowledge. The final critical phase in the Action Research spiral is when the partnerships fully engage resulting in the abundance of pelangu appearing in the crown of the Mirrwana. The pelangu are metaphors for the future fertilisation of new paradigms that have emerged in Tyikim higher education. Hence, the case study arising from the PAR is represented by the Mirrwana plant. The spiralling line is the Action Research itself covering the four phases: reflection, plan, action and observation. The Action Research is in the Mirrwana bark having a polarized effect that blends the isolated shapes to give a collage effect of the collaboration and
inclusivity of Action Research ‘educators’ working hard to create the ideas and move these into an appropriate Tyikim paradigm within the higher education context.

The paradigm shift blends the colours and shapes to become an accepted paradigm with real aims and objectives that move towards shared outcomes that are retaining Tyikim students in their course of study. This also includes my own learning journey.

*Marrung Pilu ni-nni (My story in the ma-wadi)*

As I sat and conferenced my thesis with my supervisors, the ma-wadi held many interpretive layers of narrative specific to the PAR site. For me, this ma-wadi captures the historical portrayal of people’s intellectual property and their rights. For example, the far left black diamonds represent my Tyubutjs (Grandfathers) generation, and the second row of black diamonds closest to the centre panel is my Ah-la’s (Mother’s) generation. My generation is represented by the squares coloured in grey. The far right white diamonds represent my supervisor’s Unnga (Grandfather) generation, and the second row of white diamonds closest to the centre panel is his thi-tha’s (Father’s) generation. Nganggu-ng (his) generation is represented by the diamonds coloured in grey.

The central panel is where the Action Research has become the mirr (totem) place where the spiritual creation of knowledge took place and where new knowledge emerged from the work undertaken within higher education space. It is about our Tyikim identity, and our capacity to create a place of belonging within our courses of study at university. This is where we fit into the overall schema of university culture, predominantly an intellectual space of high English usage in academia at the interface between Tyikim and Padakoot knowledge interests.

Each participant in the OAR project played an important role in maintaining continuity, transparency and accountability to each other. The personal and professional relationships strengthened on account of creating new ways of operating
in academia. It was fun – learning was fun and the people were happy and relaxed in each other’s company. This is one way of explaining the laughter in the corridor and why the central panel of the ma-wadi is so bold and colourful. We were a bold and colourful bunch working together to make a better place to meet our aspirations of being Tyikim teachers.

The grey diamonds are the people focused on sharing social issues coming into the Action Research space where the Mirrwana is growing. The colours vary in this central panel with each of the diamonds representing the learners coming together from each of the other two panels on the left and the right of the ma-wadi. In the centre of the middle panel is a whole row of small diamonds straight up the centre. This brown row represents the core curriculum being taught as part of the research project. This is ETU323: Language and Culture in Educational Settings being delivered in the PAR project. It joins the light brown boundaries of the central panel which is the University: Workshop room 23:43, painted in light brown. The symbolism ensures the Mirrwana and Wurrkama action occurs regularly within the Action Research producing positive augmentation of the diversified philosophies. This is the common thread that brings Tyikim and Padakoot knowledge together to communicate our cultural theories, to philosophise about our experiences and to make meaning from the actions within particular events occurring within the PAR. These are the views expressed throughout the research. This is why we want to become teachers. This is why we need more Tyikim teachers so that they can teach our children of today and tomorrow the meaning of the ngirrwat and the mirr places of today in contemporary Tyikim Australian society.

Concluding overview the ma-wadi

Through our actions and the efforts of our work, everyone in the research were participating towards the creation of the ‘new’ practices in higher education. We made the Tyikim knowledge work for the participants in the higher education context of CDU. The new practice and knowledge happened because of this work. The new practice created a means to engage Tyikim knowledge and the Tyikim
participants in higher education in through the Action Research. The PAR project demonstrated that this engagement of Tyikim knowledge can happen in a way that can be sustained. We are now able to name the objects and talk about these in the way that we have come to experience them, and we know and understand them. The named objects have been created by us through the PAR project. Their existence is dependent on us continuing to conceptualise further uses in higher education practices. We need to consider our actions, think about ways to sustain them and to continue to be our reality into the future of our ngirrwats of higher education. The miya lowa (baked bread from the pelangu) has been consumed once at our ceremonial place of higher education. Miya ngutla! Dijamu! We are anxious and in waiting for the seasonal preparation of the Mirrwana again. To harvest the golden brown palengu (cycad nuts) for the preparation of our higher education ceremonial place once more. The Pilu (ancestral beings) have created a way for us to see and practice new ways of being at CDU.

Conclusion

The Indigenous Research Reform Agenda is addressing the research realities for Tyikim ways of knowing in the higher education sector. But further, Tyikim research philosophies, principles and practices are able to locate Tyikim researchers in powerful positions to construct the Indigenous Research Agenda as discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. Tyikim researchers will become ‘leaders’ in the field of Tyikim research as they draw from their Tyikim knowledge base within research projects that are truly communitarian and reflective of Tyikim knowledge systems.

The methodology of this doctoral study represents a shift in the paradigm within which much of the research in higher education is conducted under the name of Tyikim research. What has emerged here, and demonstrated in the next Chapter, is as a pattern and procedure for Mirrwana and Wurrkama ceremony in Tyikim research in higher education. The research project constructed in this new way has allowed the project to produce its own fruit of Tyikim researchers (myself, my
students and my Tyikim colleagues), with an understanding of what is required to sustain and nourish our Black heritage into the future of this, up until now, alien landscape. I call upon my ancestors like Pae-Karrimalla.

The next Chapter is the narrative of the PAR. This is presented as a case study of the research project.
Chapter 5: Case Study: Wurrkama - getting to the sweet bread in Mirrwana

Introduction: the Indigenous Metaphorical Underpinning to the Case Study

This is the case study of my research project that attempted to introduce Tyikim knowledge into the curriculum of a Unit of study in a higher education institution. The Unit of study was ETU323: Language and Culture in Educational Settings for Pre-service Teachers – a Unit in the Bachelor of Education degree at Charles Darwin University.

The project and this case study drew on Tyikim metaphors to provide a theoretical base to the research study as outlined in Chapter 2 and again in Chapter 4 of this thesis. These are metaphors important to the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu philosophy, the philosophy that is of central importance to me, as the researcher, and my family. This research project therefore explored the potential for Tyikim knowledge to inform the practices of higher education institutions (universities) at least two levels; firstly, through the theoretical framing of research and secondly, through the curriculum, in terms of knowledge to be learnt and assessed, of accredited courses.

The key metaphors underpinning this research are those associated with Tyikim understandings of narrative and landscape. I have been involved with long and detailed negotiations with the custodians of this metaphorical knowledge. There are levels of this knowledge that I have drawn upon to inform and strengthen my own thinking and conceptualisations throughout this project, but I am only enabled to
write about this knowledge at a more surface, non-sacred level. Even so the framework I have used can still be glimpsed through the accounts I can provide.

As discussed in Chapter 2 the full metaphorical knowledge basis of my research is contained in the ancestral beings spiritual creation stories of the with Mirrwana and Wurrkama, and the spiritual creation of Mak Mak country, Kurrindju, as told through the narrative of the ancestral being Pilu Pae-Karrimala (the Old Man Goose).

The research, as recorded in this case study, drew on these metaphorical ideas, strong in Mak Mak philosophy, epistemology and ontology, to embark on a project that sought to call into existence a Tyikim spiritual place in the landscape of Charles Darwin University. In this sense the case study is a contemporary Mak Mak narrative.

The first phase of the project was focused on talking or negotiating the idea of valuing Tyikim knowledge within the institutional context of Padakoot high knowledge production and transmission without assimilating the knowledge into a Padakoot Western form or genre, as has been the case in anthropology, for example.

The second phase of the project was focused on living with the unfolding ‘object’ – the Unit of study within which Tyikim knowledge was to be negotiated into place through dialogue amongst the participants (students, lecturers and Tyikim community members). It was through this negotiation of the curriculum (Boomer, 1992) that the narrative of the course, as a lived curriculum (Stenhouse, 1975), began to change the institutional landscape within the School of Education at CDU. This dynamic process was informed by another set of metaphorical narratives drawing on the knowledge traditions of the Tyikim lecturers, students and community members. This fore-grounded the vexed issue of Tyikim identity in a constructive way early in the life of the second phase of the project. In this phase of the project Tyikim ways of knowing and being, informed from each participants’ own life experiences and
cultural backgrounds, shaped the research-in-action and the emerging curriculum as a ‘way of doing’ teaching and learning pedagogical practice.

At this point in the project I introduced the Tyikim students and lecturers participating in the research to the Mak Mak Marranunggu navigator Pilu Purrtyu Purrtyu who lives on Kurrrindju at a place called Patj Patj.

Purrtyu Purrtyu travels in a dugout canoe called a larrwurr. To direct his course, Purrtyu Purrtyu uses a long pole made from mowingy (ironwood). .... Anyway, Purrtyu Purrtyu travels like this: he pushes once, he pushes twice, and with a third push with his long pole Purrtyu Purrtyu will be wherever Purrtyu Purrtyu wanted to be (Rose et al 1995, p. 19).

In the third phase of the project the focus was on making the outcomes of the research sustainable within the continuing life of the University. In essence, the work at this stage was sustaining the ideas about importing Tyikim knowledge in an authentic form into the higher education environment of CDU beyond the project itself. The project had produced an ‘object’ or a new reality in the institutional landscape of CDU through its research and pedagogical ‘action’ – a reality within which Tyikim knowledge flowed into the teaching and learning of the University through the interactions of the Tyikim lecturers, students and community members.

This was to be a particularly contentious aspect of the research as now there was the problem of academic colleagues peripheral to the project thinking they now knew what I and other Tyikim participants in the project were on about or now understood from a Tyikim theoretical and practical perspective. The danger here was that an emerging Tyikim praxis, through which ‘object’ and ‘action’ were integrated and supported by underpinning Tyikim metaphorical knowledge and ontologies, was about to be appropriated into an alternative praxis. This alternative praxis to the emerging Tyikim praxis was, however, informed by an unchanged Padakoot Western academic mind-set of catering for cultural difference within the established mainstream curriculum; a curriculum mediated into existence through imperialistic and colonising ideological forces.
However, once again my Mak Mak knowledge traditions cause me to hope that the newly spoken-into-existence landscape within CDU may be sustained. Once negotiated (talked) into existence and understood by myself and Tyikim colleagues and community members, we will return to this model of opening up universities to Tyikim knowledge according to our own knowledge traditions and ways of creating meaning and of being Tyikim peoples. Rose (2002), drawing on knowledge shared by my Ah-la, the Senior Custodian of Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu, puts the general position thus:

The necessity of the return pervades Mak Mak culture, and the moral force of the return sustains the kinship and totemic systems, the use and care of place, and the lives and deaths of the people (p. 158).

By changing the institutional landscape of CDU through Mak Mak Marranunggu and other clans’ (or families’) narratives, this moral force of the return to this new Tyikim place in higher education has been set loose.

**Phase 1: Talking the idea into existence**

There has been a lot of discussion about Tyikim teachers and the Teacher Education Training programs in Northern Territory and in other states in Australia over the past three decades. These programs have stemmed from various innovative concepts that have proven to be successful in some instances and unsuccessful in other areas. My research developed from this background.

**1998: Beginning with my Mak Mak Marranunggu Family**

The initial negotiations began in 1998 with the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu community group in the Northern Territory, the group to which I belong. These negotiations took place to determine what Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu knowledge could be used in a public way in my research. The public documents relevant to this research study were, firstly, a colloquium dissertation delivered to a panel of
academics within the Faculty of Education at Deakin University as a culmination of the preparatory stage of my doctoral studies, and secondly, this thesis.

At this stage in my study the key issue of concern was how to introduce Tyikim knowledge into the new contexts within which the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu community group was now beginning to ‘do business’ – established Western institutional contexts organised according to Western cultural knowledge norms. In time, the context for my research was narrowed down to my own workplace after I was appointed to an academic position at CDU in 2001.

These negotiations prepared the conceptual base for my research, while at the same time, building the project within my family group in a shared way. Ownership of the project became shared with my ah-las (mothers) and wungalas (sisters) and other Senior Custodians of the family through these detailed discussions over several years.

Initially the responsibility of this learning journey was mine in 1998 because of the level at which I was learning within a Western academic institution. My family wanted to be involved, other than attending my graduation ceremonies and seeing the photos of the celebrations and the certificate. This was an obvious need to them and myself because we discussed the educational issues and the lack of involvement of Tyikim people in these education institutions.

For example, we would go hunting and gathering out bush on our country and talk about the progress of our children’s academic aspirations, or our own learning journey’s and talk about how these could be improved to achieve better outcomes. Follow up discussions would be around at my wungal’s place under the mango tree talking about what we could do to improve the relevant Western institution if we had the power to do so.

It is from these family discussions that I began to think about what I could do with my doctoral study to make it a worthwhile research project for my community and
where I could start the ball rolling about developing a framework that integrates Tyikim knowledge into Western academic institutions including schools and universities. The difficulty for me was not the Western academic institutional form as such, as this already existed; the difficulty for me was positioning the Mak Mak knowledge and integrating Tyikim knowledge into the Western institutional setting of education.

I realised that I needed to have several supportive structures in place to make this research happen. These included:

- Supportive husband and children
- Supportive family
- Supportive supervisors for my Ph.D. studies
- Supportive institution in higher education for the candidature of my Ph.D, and
- Supportive institution in higher education for the research ‘field work’ – the PAR site.

Kundu ngany ga Pilu Tyitapit-Mark Ford, Nga-thi mayading – Ngelebe-Chloe Ford, eh, Tyaemaen-Emily Ford are my husband and two children who are very supportive and wonderfully understanding about our family unit’s shared journey in the doctoral research and the significance this has on their own lives, in the short and the long term as a Tyikim family belonging to an extended family. In July 1998 when I commenced my Ph.D. candidature, I had two infants, a 12-week-old baby and a 27-month-old child. The commitment from my family and friends showed a lot of support for my decision making to continue with another post-graduate degree.

The Mak Mak family are key stakeholders in the research. My ah-la’s, wungala’s, and other Senior Custodians of the Mak Mak family have provided their continued support to ensure that a strong Tyikim presence from the Tyikim community was sustained and maintained according to our established practice as a Tyikim family within the kinship system of Tyikim society. This practice is not newly developed, as it is an ongoing strategy in our struggle to survive. The level of commitment did
not decline throughout my candidature. However, there were times when there was tension about disclosing the appropriate levels of Mak Mak knowledge in the written text. This matter was debated until there was an agreed approach to write about Mak Mak philosophy that was acceptable to my family. The strategies of my ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and wungalas were to ensure that I communicated the ‘philosophical stories’ at an appropriate level. There were strict conditions to which we all agreed upon about using our knowledge from our country. I had to frame the cultural metaphors in a way that did not disclose any sacred knowledge and to transfer the Mak Mak knowledge into a written research proposal for higher education was a challenge.

The Mak Mak family method of maintaining ownership over the cultural knowledge is a collaborative and consultative model. Managing the discourse was a joint responsibility, although Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, as Senior Custodian of the knowledge, would have the final say. On some of these occasions the nganmadi nga-this (three daughters) could present a case for the family to consider. For example, in my negotiations as the researcher I had to present many cases for the family to consider where I wished to use metaphors and associated narratives for the research.

By the September 2001 I was almost at the end of writing my colloquium paper containing my draft research proposal, a document of approximately 20,000 words. At this time my ah-la, wungalas and I were in Canberra to give lectures and attend a conference at ANU. I presented the draft colloquium paper to my ah-la and wungalas. There was a pause and my ah-la said that I could not disclose the Mak Mak knowledge as I had made the information too explicit. Ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi (2001) said “That story (philosophy) is from me to you and to your children, nobody else!” There was nothing else said on the matter. I contacted my supervisors to say that I could not go ahead with the research at this point and that I wanted to defer from my studies. My supervisors suggested that I think about an alternative way of positioning the research that may be more acceptable to my ah-la. I went into avoidance with my supervisors for about seven to eight months. While
still thinking about my study I did not discuss my research proposal with my family until they were ready to talk to me.

Then on the Easter weekend in April 2002 we had a family hunting and gathering trip out on our country. One of my wungalas and I was sitting on the bank of the Finniss River at Pulanjurruputj fishing for a-muyi (short neck turtles) and ar-kardi (black bream) and she looked at me and said, “How come you’re not studying?” This was said within earshot of my ah-la. Well, you could have knocked me down with a feather! I reminded her of our discussions in Canberra last September. Then my wungala Wanjamul-Margaret Daiyi says: “I’m sure that you can write that information without telling the whole story!” Daiyi (2002). My wungala, Wanjamul-Margaret, was voicing what my ah-la and the family had agreed upon – that I could resume my studies.

The story about what happened here demonstrates the supervisory strategies used by the Mak Mak research participants to monitor and evaluate my research from within our Tyikim family and knowledge system. This is important to examine at the cross-cultural interface where I found myself as a Tyikim student undertaking a doctoral study in a Western higher education institution.

The analysis of my journey demonstrates what my family had to endure to support me. The Mak Mak family took on a very proactive role in their commitment to my potential research. Their interest lay in directing as much as possible my Tyikim cultural actions across the interface – Mak Mak on one side and the sphere of higher education on the other. My actions were monitored and discussed within the family to ensure that the Tyikim knowledge and our associated practices would be transmitted into the higher education sphere through my research proposal in ways that were deemed appropriate. In this way over time, the Mak Mak family members came to value their access and involvement in the developing research project.

By working through this process of developing ownership of my research within my Mak Mak family, together with my supervisors, I was able to improve my planning
and incorporate comprehensive steps towards developing a fuller conceptualisation of the project itself. These tentative planning outcomes, developed within the higher education sphere, were then discussed with my Mak Mak supervisory group before being taken up in the evolving project. Hence, we moved through the research journey together as a family.

For example, after Easter 2002, the Mak Mak family had been invited to present at conferences focusing on Environmental and Indigenous Land Management issues. We all discussed what the Mak Mak family should include in these public presentations. I was able to draw on the Mak Mak family to look, listen and discuss the presentations they had asked me to plan for these conferences. Here I drew on Mak Mak knowledge and the metaphors to describe the Mak Mak community development ideas that were used as our methodology to look after our own country and to work with Padakoot people and government agencies in restoring our country to its former biodiversity.

This process of developing and then delivering these conference presentations was a vehicle through which my family and I were able to test the use of Mak Mak philosophies in a Western institutional domain through the delivery of National and International conference papers. From this we developed what appeared to be a useful ‘Indigenous knowledge flow’ model that everyone was comfortable with and approved of. On the basis of these negotiations the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu reached an agreed understanding for developing a strategy for incorporating Tyikim knowledge into higher education. We agreed that the strategy could be utilised to embody the strategy further to enhance the conceptualising my doctoral project.

**1998: Beginning with the Higher Education System**

To engage my family in these negotiations about my research was difficult because I was uncertain of the boundaries placed on Ph.D. student candidature with the higher education system of knowledge production. The question for me at this time was ‘how far could I push the individualistic ethos of a Ph.D. study to incorporate the
Tyikim knowledge holders who are the Senior Custodians of the Mak Mak family?'. This question was an ongoing issue for me as I continued to work at the cross-cultural interface. In practice, the issues here have been worked through jointly with my Mak Mak family, my supervisors and my Colloquium Panel at Deakin University.

In the further conceptualising of my Ph.D. research project, the membership of my family in my research was to be formally structured in the form of an Indigenous Community Reference Group to the project. Other reference groups were established in time, but I will get to these shortly. The Indigenous Community Reference Group proved to be important in terms of the support that its members offered me as the conceptualisation of the project took firmer shape.

I began my doctoral study journey by looking to undertake my Ph.D. candidature with Charles Darwin University (CDU) in 1998 after completing my Masters in Education. I had meetings with CDU’s Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management (CINCRM), Faculty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (FATSIS) and Faculty of Science, Information Technology and Education (SITE). Senior Indigenous academics at CINCRM and FATSIS were unsupportive and unhelpful of my requests to enrol as a doctoral student through their entities at CDU. Over the course of 1998 and 1999 I spoke to a range of people at NTU before being accepted as a Ph.D. candidate at CDU through SITE. I was accepted by SITE with Dr. Allan Arnott as my supervisor. Associate Professor John Henry, from Deakin University, who had been my Masters research paper supervisor, was named as my co-supervisor.

In 1999 I submitted my research proposal for approval to the Higher Education Research Branch Ethics Committee at CDU. After five months without the Ethics Committee approving my proposal, indeed without any formal responses from the Committee, I became very uncertain whether my research proposal would be acceptable to the Ethics Committee. I felt that I was being blocked somewhere within the University. I undertook to make informal enquires about the state of play with
respect to my application for ethics approval. I was informed that the Indigenous member of the Ethics Committee, who was then a Ph.D. student at CINCRM, had rejected my research proposal on grounds that were not revealed to me. Perhaps the grounds made no clear sense to the other members of the Committee either, but they felt that they could not over-ride a Tyikim member of the Committee on a Tyikim research project advanced by a Tyikim doctoral student. Perhaps they had judged that this was ‘Indigenous business’ and backed off. I was informed that this Tyikim Committee member had since resigned and that the Committee was seeking a replacement.

In 2000, I withdrew my Ph.D candidature from CDU and transferred to Deakin University as a Ph.D student.

When I transferred to Deakin University, my co-supervisor became my principal supervisor and another Deakin Padakoot academic staff member who had been my Masters in Education assistant supervisor became my associate supervisor. My principal supervisor from CDU became the critical friend to my research.

In 2001, I was appointed as an Indigenous Academic Support Lecturer to SITE at CDU. My Ph.D. candidature at another university while employed at CDU with Padakoot supervisors was seen by some of my Senior Tyikim colleagues at CDU as anomalous. From within the higher education sphere, questions were being raised about the nature of my proposed research by Senior Tyikim colleagues based on the grounds that I was under the influence of ‘White male academics’.

Two important prior developments were now to come to my support. The first was the Mak Mak family support group. My ah-la and wungalas gave me wise council at this stage to hold firm. The second development grew out of discussions the Dean of the Faculty of SITE, had in September 1999 at this Garma Festival at Gulkulu in North East Arnhem Land. The theme of this Garma Festival was acknowledging Indigenous knowledge in Australia’s universities. The Dean had attended the Festival
as the representative of the Vice Chancellor of CDU. On return he began to explore alternative ways to engage Indigenous students in his Faculty’s courses.

In 2001 the Dean began to employ staff as Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers within his Faculty. This development allowed the SITE Faculty to explore new practices to increase the enrolments and retention of Tyikim students in its degree courses independently of FATSIS, the enclave-derived Indigenous Faculty of Aboriginal Studies at CDU. As one of these staff, I was in a position to explore the possibility of advancing my research within a higher education institution through my own academic teaching and research. The Dean had created the context that enabled me, with the support of my Mak Mak family group as an emerging Indigenous Community Reference Group, to further refine my Ph.D. research project as a concept.

During 2001 and 2002 I developed the conceptualisation of my research to the stage where I had developed an argument to support my thinking about researching the potential for Tyikim knowledge to flow, authentically, into the knowledge contexts of Western institutions. One proposed site was CDU. As this conceptualisation took firmer shape through the writing of my Deakin University colloquium paper, I approached Deakin University for a change of associate supervisor. It was agreed that Wendy Brabham, a Senior Tyikim woman from the Wamba Wamba Nation of south eastern Australia and Director of the Deakin Institute for Koorie Education, become my associate supervisor, as she had been advising me on my doctoral studies since 1999.

In December 2002 I presented my initial research proposal as a colloquium paper to an expanded doctoral supervisory panel at Deakin University in Geelong, Victoria, the Colloquium Panel. My research proposal was accepted by the Panel with the recommendation that I focus on only one Western institutional context – that of a higher education institution. The other significant recommendation of the Panel was that my ah-la, Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, should become, formally,
the Indigenous Community Supervisor of my research. This recommendation was enacted through the Deakin University Research Office.

Therefore, from the beginning of 2003, I had two Senior Tyikim female supervisors and one male Padakoot supervisor working with me on the research. As I have explained to my non-Indigenous supervisor, that had it not been for him and his immediate family ‘connections’ with my Mak Mak family from Kurrindju, Nayu Nambiu, Belyuen and Victorian Koorie communities, this doctoral study would not have been considered in the form it has now taken. His ‘introduction’ into our Marrawalguat Ngirrwat Nation had taken place almost twenty years ago and he established key relationships with key knowledge holders over this period and continues to do so. Thus, through these developments the knowledge base for my research had been identified and flowed much easier from where I stood.

On reflection, the selection of supervisors and their capacity to provide advice on all the issues that I wanted to examine for my research proved significant. Each supervisor had a specialized skill and expertise in their own areas of knowledge that they shared with me for the purpose of the research. In this way barriers were overcome during the journey through the higher education system while maintaining rigour in both the Mak Mak and higher education domains.

What does this mean for Deakin University and its flexibility to accommodate Tyikim students cultural needs as well as studying at the higher education level? The fact that Deakin recognises Koori knowledge within its award bearing courses, as expressed in its Indigenous Higher Education Agreement with Koori communities negotiated with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated as a policy statement, reinforces what Tyikim community members, academic staff, students can do at this university. I don’t know of other Australian institutions delivering higher education courses that have a statement that clearly addresses Tyikim philosophies, epistemologies and ontologies in the same way.
In the immediate post-colloquium period, January – June 2003, I returned to Darwin and to my Mak Mak family to report on the recommendations of the Colloquium Panel. This was the new beginning! The Mak Mak group agreed to my ah-la Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi being my community supervisor and recognised by Deakin as such. They also accepted the single Western institutional focus for my case study field work.

The challenge now was to ‘talk the project into existence’ at my preferred Western institution PAR site – CDU. My critical friend at CDU, Dr. Allan Arnott, assisted me in negotiations with my Head of School, and my Dean to undertake my research within the School of Education at SITE.

2003: The Project Proposal

The challenge was to translate the general research methodological principles of the colloquium paper into a project that was seen by the Dean of the Faculty of SITE and the Head of the School of Education at CDU as organisationally feasible. These methodological principles were informed by PAR and drew on the context of discourse-related events in the space created by interfacing knowledge communities associated with the Bachelor of Teaching at CDU. This translation was expected to:

- involve groups of people coming together regularly to help each other learn from their experiences in the fields of discursive practice associated with higher education;
- involve people working together over time in a systematic way to examine aspects of their practice as they introduce manageable change;
- facilitate self-reflective enquiry undertaken by groups of people working the selected social situations of the CDU higher education Indigenous Student Support in the Faculty of SITE in order to improve the social justice of their own practices;
- use deliberate change as a strategy to come to an improved understanding of group participants’ own practice and the powerful ideas that they draw upon to give meaning to their practice;
• share action ‘stories’ and ideas about these stories, collaboratively within each group to promote critical reflection of participants and the development of understandings of themselves as professional practitioners and of the social and institutional situations in which they are working.

The project proposal put to my Dean and Head of School at CDU took shape through the process of writing my application for ethics approval of a research project to the Deakin University Human Research Ethics Committee (DUHREC).

The research project that was to become the ‘entity’ through which my Ph.D. field work would be progressed was described at this stage in my journey as a doctoral student as follows:

**Objectives of Proposed Research:**

The proposed project was expected to enable the researcher to:

• to understand the holistic issues associated with my workplace in terms of introducing Indigenous knowledge systems into the higher education curriculum at CDU by making explicit the teaching and learning journey in this cross-cultural context.
• to understand the specific issues associated with introducing Indigenous knowledge systems into an undergraduate teacher education Unit in the Bachelor of Education degree of the School of Education at CDU by making explicit the modes of knowledge utilized from the Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge domains.
• to improve the Indigenous student, lecturer and community engagement with the academic programs of the School of Education at CDU by exploring participatory/collaborative arrangements involving the researcher, selected Indigenous community representatives, Indigenous and non-Indigenous academic staff of the School and Indigenous higher education students.
• to evaluate the developmental pilot program for wider application with CDU.
• to critically examine the cultural implications of revealing oral Indigenous knowledge within higher education curriculum.

*Description of Proposed Project*

The research project was to take place at the Charles Darwin University: Faculty of SITE in the School of Education in Semester Two, 2003. The research project was expected to create curriculum space in the School of Education for Indigenous knowledge in the Bachelor of Education undergraduate degree course. This curriculum space was to be created within the Unit *Language and Culture in Educational Settings* (coded ETU323). A pilot version of ETU323 in which Indigenous knowledge has been included in the Unit content (curriculum) will be offered to Indigenous students enrolled in the Bachelor of Teaching course. The pilot ETU323 will be offered concurrently with the mainstream delivery of the same Unit across Semester 2, 2003. Indigenous undergraduate education students will be asked to volunteer to study ETU323 in the pilot mode. It is anticipated that up to 10 students will enrol in the pilot version of the Unit.

The project will involve other participants. These are the members of three groups:

• a Indigenous Community Reference Group (11 members)
• a Faculty of SITE Reference Group (6 members); and
• an Indigenous Academic Teaching Group (4 members).

Thus the timeframe for the research will be from May to November 2003. From May to the beginning of Semester 2 in July the research will be focused on the planning of the pilot, the development of the curriculum of the pilot, the specification of the teaching arrangements in the pilot and the selection of students for the pilot.

The researcher will use a combination of practitioner research techniques informed by participatory action research and critical social science methodologies. Case study, reflective journaling and narrative research approaches will be used. The
research project will be driven for all participants through an action research process involving cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and replanning. The action research sequence of cycles will begin for the reference groups and the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group in May and then run through to the end of November. The action research sequence of cycles for the students and their lecturers will run across Semester 2. The researcher will be involved in all participant groups and will undertake case study research on the pilot program within the context of the School, the Faculty and the University as a whole. The researcher will anonymise this case study and only include in the final version information cleared by all participants for publication.

**Expected Outcomes from the research:**

It was expected that the research would have outcomes across several levels. These are:

- at the level of a course Unit within the Bachelor of Education at CDU: a detailed case study of the experimental program in which Indigenous knowledge has been progressively negotiated into the core curriculum of the Unit.
- at the level of the Faculty at CDU: a research-based proposal addressing specific curriculum, pedagogical and administrative issues associated with introducing Indigenous knowledge systems into the Bachelor of Education degree of the School of Education at CDU.
- at the level of the University (CDU) and the higher education system: a critique of the current equity provisions for Indigenous Australians with a research-based argument for a radical shift in equity theorising and practice.
- at the level of Indigenous communities and their peak education organisations: a well documented alternative approach whereby Indigenous Australians can access higher education degrees based on a legitimation of the knowledge systems of their own communities.
This concise statement of the research project was lodged with DUHREC in early April 2003. The project received ethics approval from DUHREC in June 2003 without modification. At the same time (April 2003) an application was lodged with the NTUHREC out of courtesy given that the Dean of SITE and the Head of the School of Education had already granted permission for the research to proceed. Approval from NTUHREC came at the end of June 2003, but once again after the Tyikim member of the Committee, located in CINCRM as a Research Fellow but residing in FATSIS, had attempted to stall the approval process by questioning the action research methodology on the grounds that he could not understand it. Minor modifications were ultimately required by the NTUHREC, none related to methodology, before approval was granted.

However, since December 2002 negotiations had been underway within the Faculty of SITE when I met with my Indigenous Academic Support Lecturer colleagues to discuss my research proposal and seek their support. Four colleagues gave their support although the project details were still to be refined into the form as described in detail above. These were Tanyah Nasir, Vicki Pascoe, Ruth Wallace, and Geoff Freeman. Of this group, Tanyah and Vicki were Tyikim Australians. These colleagues, along with myself, became the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group to the project.

From February 2003, planning meetings were held with Faculty academic staff who had agreed to be members of the project’s Faculty of SITE Reference Group. These were the Dean of the Faculty of SITE, the Head of the School of Education, Faculty of SITE Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning, Professor of Rural and Remote Education at CDU, a Senior Lecturer in Adult Education in the School of Education and myself. The Dean of FATSIS was invited to be a member of this Reference Group but she did not reply to the request and so was not involved. Consequently, I was the only Tyikim Australian on the Project’s Faculty of SITE Reference Group.

My Principal Supervisor from Deakin University met with my Dean and Head of School in February 2003 to support my presentation of the detailed research project.
Agreement was given to proceed. My Principal Supervisor also meet with the Project Faculty Reference Group, this time in April 2003. The details of the Project were discussed and support was given.

In April 2003, the Mak Mak family group was formally established as the Project’s Indigenous Community Reference Group. The members of this reference group at this stage were ah-la Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, Kathy Deveraux, Margy Daiyi, April Bright, Pava Henwood, Helen Cubillo, Rosetta Smith-Cubillo, Anne Marjar, Wungala from Belyuen (now deceased) and myself. This group was to expand in Semester 2, 2003 with the addition Barbara Nasir, the mother of Tanyak (member of the Indigenous teaching group). This Reference Group became a sub-committee of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TLDC).

Recruitment of the Indigenous students also began in March and April 2003, but in earnest in June 2003. Students were approached by me individually first of all followed by an open meeting in June. After the June meeting there were seven students who agreed in principle to participate in the project.

These seven students signed the research project’s consent form at the first teaching session of the project in July 2003. The Plain Language Statement for the students explaining the project is included in this thesis as Appendix 1.

Members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group, the Faculty Reference Group and the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group also signed consent forms after reading Plain Language Statements explaining the research project and customised to their roles.

The Project had been ‘talked into existence’ over a period of five and a half years. The Project as an idea had now taken on a form that was more-or-less understood in theory by the Indigenous Community Reference Group, the Faculty Reference Group, the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group and the students. But the idea,
now built into the Project design, had still to be shaped by the research-in-action over the course of Semester 2, 2003.

Phase 2, ‘Doing It’, was about to start!

**Phase 2: “Doing It”**

Phase 2 describes ‘the Action Research Project’ where I was able to combine the ‘thinking’ about the research project in terms of introducing **Tyikim** knowledge into the institutional context of a university with taking ‘action’ to explore the possibilities for doing this. The Action Research Project became the research and pedagogical structure for combining this thinking or theorising with action to bring into place within CDU a Unit of study within which **Tyikim** knowledge became embedded. Applying the interactive metaphors of **Mirrwana** and **Wurrkama**, the Unit ETU323 *Language and Culture in Educational Settings* was to be transformed from an ‘unpalatable food’ for **Tyikim** students into a form of food that was nourishing of their learning. The appropriate actions to bring about this transformation were within the ceremonial traditions of **Mirrwana** and **Wurrkama**.

**Mirrwana** is the cycad tree with **pelangu**, the nuts that contain the unpalatable food. This food cannot be eaten without the actions of **Wurrkama** to make it into **lawa** – a sweet bread. Without the necessary actions of **Wurrkama** the food in **pelangu** will make you ill and even cause you to die. Using these metaphors, ETU323 as **pelangu** had to be, metaphorically, cracked open, wrapped in paperbark, placed in the spring fed water soaks of slow flowing water for a certain period of time, watched carefully by knowledgeable people, dried and ground into flour, before being prepared and cooked into **lawa**. **Lowa**, here, means a version of ETU323 within which **Tyikim** knowledge has flowed into the Unit’s curriculum in a form that is able to nourish and expand the learning and deep understandings of **Tyikim** higher education students.
In this account of Phase 2 of the research project, I will be describing the actions that transformed ETU323 as *pelangu* to ETU323 as *lowa*. These actions were at the level of both teaching methods and research methods. These two levels were held together by an action research methodology. Teaching and research were intertwined in this ‘doing it’ phase of the research project.

**The Action Research Project (ARP)**

The Reference Groups and the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group drove the teaching and research activities at this Phase of the overall research project. After the ARP got underway the students enrolled in the pilot version of ETU323 to be delivered through the ARP formed an Indigenous Student Reference Group. The students therefore had an active role in the development of the Unit as they studied it.

The narrative of this Case Study will now focus on the activities of the reference and teaching groups and on the unfolding of the Unit of study at the centre of the action research. The time frame for this narrative is semester 2, 2003.

I contacted all the Reference Group members in the week before the official start of the teaching period for Semester 2 and gave each a brief background on the ARP, as we now understood it. Once this was done I felt a sense of relief that I had spoken to the reference group members before the first teaching and learning session with the seven *Tyikim* students.

The ‘research story’ that I told the *Tyikim* participants in the ARP (members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group and the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group) was one that would bring together all the ARP participants throughout Semester 2 to share stories and to support the *Tyikim* students with their studies. This research story was short but powerful in convincing the *Tyikim* people that this was going to be worthwhile for them and other *Tyikim* people as the research could make a considerable contribution by showing how *Tyikim* knowledge may flow, authentically, into the higher education system. These *Tyikim* participants, through
their actions, would be the paperbark to be wrapped around the higher education Unit of study.

**Week 1: Teaching and Learning Session**

The teaching and learning sessions for the Unit of study were one 3 hour session on a Wednesday morning of each week. This was, for us, equivalent to a 1 two hour lecture and a 1 one hour tutorial in the normal delivery of the Unit. After the first week, this three hour teaching and learning session was extended to include a lunch time BBQ, at which the students met with members of the Reference Groups and the Teaching Group. But more of these matters later.

At this first session I introduced the ARP information to the students. Dr. Allan Arnott was also available to say what his role was as a member of the Faculty Academic Reference Group, plus to share his knowledge about Action Research. Allan talked to the students about the ARP and how he saw its importance for the University.

Tanyah Nasir introduced herself to the group. Most of the students had known Tanyah from her previous employment in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tertiary Aspiration Program with Northern Territory Education Department- a program managed by Tanyah to support Indigenous high school students. The Indigenous Academic Teaching Group members introduced themselves. Ruth Wallace and Vicki Pascoe explained that they would be involved in taking some of the sessions and were available to support the students with their studies in the Faculty. Geoff Freeman explained that if any of the students required academic or information technology support to contact him.

Through Tanyah, Vicki, Ruth, Geoff and Allan explaining their position and roles in the Faculty the students were able to see how we all connected through the ARP. After the first 60 minutes the students began to understand how different their engagement with this Unit of study would be from what they had done previously.
They also began to see how important this ARP was in bringing Tyikim people and their ‘supporters’ together through the weekly 3 hour sessions.

It was through these discussions that the students came to see the possibilities for Tyikim knowledge being studied by them in ETU323. I provided the students with an example of Tyikim knowledge being introduced into the higher education sphere – in this case a power point presentation drawn from conference presentations I had done on Tyikim knowledge related to land management. This presentation demonstrated to the students a way to privilege Tyikim knowledge contained in oral traditions, story telling and living on country within their teaching – bringing Tyikim realities as understood and experienced by us into our teaching.

I discussed with the students why this method of teaching was important to me as a Tyikim educator. Their attention was shifted to how they could apply the strategy to themselves as developing Tyikim teachers.

From this practical example of one way to draw from our Tyikim knowledge in a powerful way to emphasise and privilege our ways of knowing into our teaching and learning, I discussed with the students the implications of this ARP approach to their study of ETU323 and for their assessment in the Unit. The assessment methods needed to be compatible with the Tyikim students’ learning. The students came up with the idea of using power point presentations as an assessment approach for their studies in the Unit but with a focus on the Tyikim education issues. The assessment was negotiated and agreed to by the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group and Indigenous Community Reference Group participants.

Next, I explained to the students the reasons and background behind the membership of the Indigenous Community Reference Group. I also explained that it wasn’t limited to the membership as it existed and that if the students wanted to recommend any Tyikim people to the Indigenous Community Reference Group that they could do so. The students inquired about their family members becoming involved. Over
time, members of the students’ families attended ARP activities thereby expanding the influence of the ‘paperbark wrapping’ around the Unit of study.

It was at this stage the students and the other Teaching Group members talked about how to best involve these other Tyikim people in the ARP. This was when the idea of holding a lunchtime BBQ immediately after each 3 hour teaching and learning session was thought of as an appropriate ‘place’ for getting Reference Group members to meet with the students and their teachers. The other idea was that the members of the Reference Groups could attend the Wednesday morning sessions to share their expertise and knowledge about their views and experiences on Language, Culture and Education.

The BBQs were held in the central palm-treed courtyard of the Faculty’s main building at CDU, while the teaching and learning sessions were held in a room off a corridor, Room 37, in the same building. Of a Wednesday during semester 2, 2003, these places became Tyikim places on the landscape of Building 23.

We finished this first session with the students sharing their stories about their backgrounds and how they saw the ARP contributing to their studies and to support my research as a doctoral student. The students were excited about the initiative of bringing together a core group of Tyikim people into the Unit being offered. They asked if they could go over some of the points raised during the session about action research. This was a good indication of how the ARP was taking a foothold already.

Also, the shift in pedagogy, evident through these discussions, encouraged the Tyikim students to express their views and supported them when they did so. Already, the group was beginning to claim ownership of the Unit and influence its direction. This early stage of the ARP was clearly reflective as the curriculum of the Unit, in terms of what was to be focused on and studied in depth, was beginning to be negotiated. Rather than adopting the traditional lecturing role that Tanyah and I use when delivering Units elsewhere in the Faculty, we adopted a role where an
Tyikim pedagogy style of teaching was expressed through a collaborative and consultative conversation that fits the role of a facilitator – we all ‘talked it up’.

Post-session Reflections
Tanyah, Ruth, Vicki, Geoff and I got together to reflect on the content of the session. From the session, we discussed what further information the students required to get a further grasp on the issues regarding research. Both Ruth and Vicki had experiences to draw on from their own research that they volunteered to share with the students.

The response from Ruth and Vicki was a good indicator that the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group members were going to be very supportive and active in the ARP. The earlier connections of this core group in our roles as Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers allowed us to operate comfortably with each other as a team. The information from our debriefing was to direct the way in which the next teaching and learning session would take shape.

I took this information to my critical friend at CDU, Dr. Allan Arnott, and to my principal supervisor at Deakin University, Associate Professor John Henry, in our debriefing teleconference.

Other academic staff, including the Dean of the Faculty and the Head of School, were informed of the proceedings of the first session of the ARP. The idea of having follow-up ‘de-briefings’ after each teaching and learning sessions and then incorporating ideas from these collaborative reflective ‘moments’ into our teaching in subsequent weeks, was to become the pattern over the Semester.

I notified the members of the other Reference Groups and of the Teaching Group that Ruth would be taking 30 – 40 minutes with the students on her action research experiences. I would use the rest of the time to revise last week session and to work out a plan about what the students wanted to follow up during the rest of the three
hour sessions for the semester. I obtained e-mail and phone numbers from all the Reference Group members so that any information that arose could be passed on.

So the pattern for the Wurrkama of the ARP was becoming established from this first session.

Week 2

Early in Week 2, I contacted as many of the Indigenous Reference Group members to see if they could attend the BBQ on Wednesday 6th August in the Building 23 Court Yard at 12pm – 1pm for a gathering and to get to see and know each other. This BBQ activity was to be the component of the ARP whereby the Indigenous Community Reference Group members could mingle with students and academic staff participating in the Project. The BBQ was set for the introduction of Indigenous Community Reference Group members to the CDU ‘place’ and the other ARP participants.

On Wednesday we started the second teaching and learning session with a little uncertainty as the proceedings for the day included the BBQ straight after the session. The students and staff had contributed towards the BBQ and all these shopping items were against the wall of Room 37. Vicki, Ruth and Geoff started moving the goods to the staffroom, while I talked to the students about how they could see the BBQ activity contributing to their study of ETU323.

The students outlined the advantage of having a group of senior Tyikim people, custodians of Tyikim knowledge, getting together in the middle of the University where they actually studied. They thought this was going to change their own limited sense of connectedness to the University as the University would not now be a completely Padakoot place, but a place where Tyikim people could teach, learn and socialise together, even though only in a relatively small part at this point.

We then moved the discussions onto revisit points raised in the first session, such as the discussion about Tyikim knowledge, power, language and politics. After
discussing aspects of these powerful ideas and their impact on Tyikim issues further, together we drew out the concept of empowerment. In relation to this, we discussed with the students the action required by the members of the ARP to engage with new ways as we participated together in the Unit ETU323 and how the dialogue in our sessions would create a new way to position their roles as Tyikim students and that of Tyikim knowledge in higher education.

Our discussion produced an unfolding of information that created a focus on research. From a position of anxiety not uncommon amongst Tyikim people, the students were asking the question “what is research?” ‘research’ and ‘Indigenous research’ practice were concepts that Ruth explored in the last hour of the session. She was able to draw from her own experiences to demystify the ideas around ‘research’ and ‘Indigenous research’ for the students.

In subsequent sessions, I utilized the research ‘stories’ of other academic members of the Project. This strategy worked well for the Tyikim students as they ‘heard’ the lived case studies on research and how they could begin to frame their own roles in the Tyikim research processes of the ARP. Here the students, through their new forms of study activities, were becoming Tyikim student-researchers within the action research structure of the Project.

The delivery of the Unit using this teaching/researching method of delivery appeared to be culturally appropriate and suited the learning needs of the Tyikim students.

The student’s still appeared uncertain of the direction of the Unit, as it wasn’t following the usual traditional ‘lecture and tutorial’ approach to the delivery of higher education Units by one or two lecturers co-ordinating the Unit to a pre-planned content syllabus. The open-endedness of the unfolding study program of ETU323 within the ARP approach was still unsettling for some students.

Towards the end of the session, my ah-la (mother), two wungalas (sisters) and my yarra (son) came into the tutorial room and briefly spoke to the students.
The BBQ session in Week 2 started with the ARP participants gathering in the courtyard around the BBQ where two tables were set-up with the food and drinks. What an amazing sense of achievement we all felt in bringing together a significant Tyikim group and the other Reference Group participants involved in the ARP in a higher education institution! There was a buzz in the atmosphere surrounding the participants as they got together to share their stories in a less formal setting within this place in the University.

The ARP participants had also been informed in the first session that if they wanted to invite their families and friends they were welcome to attend and to become involved. This was actually taking place as there were family members, friends and other Tyikim students studying in our Faculty, plus other Faculties, sharing their stories. What an amazing episode to see this event unfolding. The one hour affair, created access for the Tyikim community to become involved in the ARP, but now on the University’s campus – in mainstream, as opposed to out in the community, out ‘bush’.

Students and members of the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group, plus members of the Faculty Reference Group interacted with the Indigenous Community Reference Group members and other Tyikim visitors to the BBQ in a convivial environment of eating and talking. Several developments began to take place from this first BBQ session that were to continue throughout the semester for the ARP. Firstly, the Tyikim students, particularly those for whom Tyikim ‘identity’ was an unresolved and vexed issue at a personal level, found the opportunity at these BBQs to talk with the older Tyikim people present about their knowledge of country and family, and about their first hand experiences of the ‘stolen generation’ policies as enacted in the Northern Territory. In time, other issues were talked about over food at these BBQs, matters that were highly relevant to the students’ studies in ETU323 and to their developing understanding of Tyikim ways of knowing and being.
Secondly, the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group members used these BBQs as a time to explore with the students and the Indigenous Community Reference Group members the next ‘topics’ as action plans for the following teaching and learning sessions. In this way the post-session reflections, an essential aspect of the ARP, became integrated into the business of the BBQ sessions. From these reflective discussions, individuals from the Teaching Group, and in some cases, members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group, would be asked to introduce a topic in the subsequent 3 hour teaching and learning session.

Returning to the metaphor of making the fruits of the Mirrwana more nourishing for the Tyikim students, the BBQ sessions were now moving from simply being the paperbark wrapping around ETU323 to becoming part of the process whereby the ground up, but still unpalatable, pelangu flour was slowly being transformed. The BBQ sessions were now akin to the water leaching the toxins from the pelangu, a process that was reinforced and intensified in the 3 hour teaching and learning sessions.

However, during this time other developments at CDU were impacting upon my project.

The Vice Chancellor had allocated funds in early 2003 to SITE to establish a new position - Associate Professor in Indigenous Education. This position was advertised early in the year and filled in June. I had hoped that the successful applicant would be someone that could take on a powerful Tyikim role in the Faculty and to talk up the ARP model and position this in the School of Education as an ongoing viable concern. This did not happen as the person who was appointed remained in the position for approximately six months before resigning.

However, on appointment new Associate Professor in Indigenous Education quickly sought to become my supervisor. As mentioned earlier, Senior Tyikim colleagues at CDU were oppositional to my research project and my Ph.D. candidature at Deakin University on the grounds that I was under the influence of Padakoot supervisors.
The incoming Associate Professor put pressure on me to transfer my Ph.D. candidature back to CDU with a Tyikim Professor at CDU as my principal supervisor and himself as my associate supervisor. It was also at this time that I found out that the Tyikim Professor, proposed as a possible CDU principal supervisor for my project, had made a presentation to the University’s Committee monitoring and coordinating the overall academic program of the University at the level of courses and Units within courses. The presentation to this Committee was that my adaptation of ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Settings for my research project was a plagiarised version of an existing Unit in the Aboriginal Studies degree at FATSIS. Fortunately, the Committee did not accept this argument.

During Week 2, and again in Week 3, the newly appointed Associate Professor of Indigenous Education presented himself at my PAR teaching and learning sessions with my students and other members of my projects Indigenous Teaching Group. I invited the Associate Professor to the Week 2 teaching and learning session as, at this early stage of his appointment, the Dean of the Faculty of SITE and the Head of School of Education were keen that I and other academic staff would make him welcome. But after his move to take over my Project I declined to invite him to future teaching and learning sessions.

**Weeks 3 to 6**

During these four weeks the students together with members of the Indigenous Teaching Group and Indigenous Community Reference Group identified and refined their own projects for intensive research. For example, Tanyah lead a session on social critical literacy; John Henry spoke on the topics of Aboriginal pedagogy and Indigenous research in another session; and Ruth and Geoff lead a session on power point presentations. Land management issues were also taken up with the student group with one of my wungalas, Wanjamul-Margaret.

These sessions were ‘divergent’ in the sense that the conversations started by the facilitators briefly covering a wide range of issues of interest to the students. But these were held together by the underlying theme of ‘Indigenous Education’. The Indigenous Academic Teaching Group challenged the students to think about
Tyikim education from a Tyikim perspective and not as they had experienced education through their own schooling or tertiary education to date.

In Week 3 the students talked about Tyikim education topics in terms of policies, programs and reviews. They touched on the following:

- National Aboriginal Education Policy;
- Access and Equity Programs;
- Aboriginal Student and Support and Parent Awareness Program;
- Aboriginal Tutorial Assistant Scheme;
- Abstudy;
- Higher Education Indigenous Support Program;
- The Northern Territory’s ‘Learning Lessons Review’; and
- The Northern Territory Secondary Review.

These policies and programs were critiqued together as a starting point for more critical positions on the possible meanings that could by applied to the concept of Tyikim education.

During this Week 3 session I drew the students’ attention to the concept of Tyikim education as defined by Indigenous Access and Equity practices at CDU, their current place of study. I took stock with the students and the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group of the developments that had begun within the Faculty around the ARP initiative.

The Faculty had, for example, formally recognised the Indigenous Community Reference Group as a sub-committee of the Teaching and Learning Development Committee (TLDC). I informed the students and my teaching colleagues that the TLDC was now working on draft terms of reference for the new sub-committee that was intended to address ‘Indigenous knowledge’ in the University through greater Tyikim community participation in the delivery of aspects of courses.
In this session, we discussed what further actions the Faculty needed to consider if it was to value of Tyikim participation. The actions discussed were:

- Investigating access pathways to higher education courses for Tyikim students in the Northern Territory;
- Developing a more explicit Tyikim identity within the higher education system – its administration, curriculum and assessment practices;
- Maintaining and sustaining Tyikim knowledge at the higher education level in the Faculty;
- Recognising the coverage of Tyikim identity issues, and the potential for change and reform in Tyikim higher education through the ARP.
- Redefining ‘Support’ and ‘Networking’ for Tyikim higher education students while studying at CDU so that these concepts are lived out more in line with the ARP experience;
- Providing space for Tyikim students, while studying at CDU, to explore their Tyikim identity through open discussion in teaching and learning sessions, thereby providing a platform for fuller participation in higher education studies. This point related to the students understanding of the importance of being involved in sensitive ‘black-on-black’ explorations of the cultural aspects of students’ family and community environments, and the significance of these explorations to the way we defined our own Tyikim identity ourselves. The students felt that the way some Padakoot students and lecturers gauged or classified them as Tyikim people would act as a barrier to this necessary process in a more mainstream lecture and tutorial format of Unit delivery; and
- Changing communication methods used in the delivery of Units in higher education courses to include dialogue, narrative, and conversation as more constructive ways for Tyikim students to create meaning and understanding.

The dialogue engaged by the ARP participants in the first 3 weeks of the semester had evolved through the intense conversations and the narratives shared. Topics relevant to a developing understanding of Tyikim education were unfolding over the
three sessions. The subjects raised over these three sessions provide the scope for the Tyikim students to consider their research topics and assessment for the Unit ETU323.

The topics the students selected for their research and final power point presentations were:

- Transition for Indigenous students from secondary school Year 12 to tertiary studies at CDU (2 students)
- Transition for Indigenous students from Tertiary Enabling Programs to higher education at CDU (3 students)
- Indigenous families as Communities of Learners (2 students)

It was agreed that for each student their assessment for the Unit would be a power point presentation, the written materials containing their research notes and journals, and their oral participation in the teaching and learning and BBQ sessions. Students were also assessed on their participation in extra curricula activities associated with the Unit of study. These extra curricula activities occurred in Weeks 2 and 8. The activities were a Faculty function that included talking to the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of CDU, presentations to Year 11 and 12 Tyikim students from Darwin secondary schools visiting CDU, and presentations to a Malaysian delegation to CDU.

**Weeks 7 to 11**

During these 5 week the students worked on their research projects in groups. The Wednesday teaching and learning sessions became the times when the students worked in the Faculty’s computer laboratory and also in Room 37 to shape up their projects. The students’ study at this time was research focused with the Teaching Group members being available as facilitators.
The BBQ sessions continued as before with students now talking to Indigenous Community Reference Group members about a range of issues arising from their own research.

**Weeks 12 to 15**

Over the course of these final 4 weeks of the students’ study of ETU323, a series of ARP related presentations occurred. These included presentations by the students, by the Indigenous Community Reference Group, the Faculty Reference Group, the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group and then myself.

After each presentation session the students returned to Room 37 with Tanyah and myself to discuss each presentation and relate what was said to the issues they had been studying in ETU323. These discussions continued in the following BBQ sessions.

**Student Presentations: Week 12**

Each student presented to an audience on their research project. These presentations were group presentations with each student in a group presenting individually for at least 10 minutes with 5 minutes set aside for questions. These presentations were supported by power point slides developed by the students. I introduced each student presentation and Tanyah managed the post-presentation questions. The venue for these presentations was the Faculty Lecture Theatre.

These presentations were open to all. Members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group and the Faculty Reference Group attended sessions, as did other academic staff of the Faculty. Other people attending presentation sessions included students’ family members, Tyikim students studying elsewhere in the University, a Senior bureaucrat from the NT Department of Education, the CDU ATAS coordinator and a Senior Tyikim academic from the Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education.
The Indigenous Community Reference Group Presentation: Week 13

Two members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group, Kathy Deveraux and Rosetta Smith-Cubillo, presented in the Lecturer Theatre. Students, Teaching Group and Faculty Reference Group members were present. Both spoke about community issues and support for Tyikim students in higher education. The approach to Tyikim education taken through the ARP involving ETU323 was strongly supported.

Faculty Academic Reference Group Presentation: Week 13

The Head of School (HOS), the Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning and the Senior Lecturer in Adult Education presented after Kathy Deveraux and Rosetta-Cubillo. The HOS spoke about opening up ETU323 for the ARP after she had read my initial research proposal, referred to by Deakin University as my colloquium paper. She was particularly interested to follow how the ideas in the colloquium paper were being implemented in the ARP. The HOS commented on the progress she noted in the Tyikim students and the 100% retention of these students in the Unit by the end of the semester. The HOS commented on the mentoring possibilities in the future involving Tyikim teacher graduates working with Tyikim student teachers in the Faculty.

The Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning spoke about the role of the TLDC in the ARP with reference to the Indigenous Community Reference Group becoming a sub-committee of the TLDC. She talked about the development of policy for valuing Tyikim knowledge in the Faculty.

The Senior Lecturer spoke about the ARP and his involvement in this project. He commented on his observations of the teaching and of the interactions occurring between the Tyikim students, academic teaching staff and community members. He was very positive about this new development in the Faculty and the ARP process for introducing Tyikim knowledge into the higher education studies of the Faculty.
Indigenous Academic Teaching Group Presentation: Week 14

The presentation was given by Vicki, Ruth, Geoff and Tanyah.

Vicki spoke about the Indigenous Academic Support Lecturer initiative set up in 2001 and the team approach that had developed from this. She spoke of her involvement in the Tertiary Enabling Program and now seeing some of her students studying ETU323 through the ARP. She commented on how rewarding she had found her involvement in the ARP.

Ruth spoke of the community of learners that had been established through involvement with the ARP and how the corridor outside Room 37 became filled with bikes, prams and laughter. She noted the fact that the Tyikim lecturers had become a strong team and that the students had experienced higher education study through a Tyikim way. Ruth was concerned that this experience should not become a one-off wonder.

Geoff talked about the team and bringing Tyikim TAFE and higher education students together through the activities around the ARP. This was important for getting the TAFE students to begin to think about moving onto higher education. Geoff noted that the ARP approach had already had this effect with his Tyikim TAFE students applying for higher education courses in 2004. Geoff spoke about ‘strength in unity’ for Tyikim participants in higher education.

Tanyah talked about the connections to family that had been made possible through the ARP and the importance of this, not only for the students, but also for her. Tanyah talked about the way Tyikim knowledge had been introduced in such a strong way into ETU323 and that this was a completely new way for her to think about doing this. She talked about the ‘team work’ and the friendships she had been able to make with colleagues. Tanyah commented on her developing understanding of research and its application for Tyikim communities. The ARP provided a good model for her to think about organising research involving Tyikim people. This point led to quite a discussion with the students in the audience.
Linda Ford's Presentation: Week 15

This was the final presentation of the ARP. I gave a summary of the ARP as it had unfolded across the semester to this point in time using a power point presentation. My presentation began by re-visiting the research aims and objectives.

I explained that the approach adopted by the ARP was intended to investigate the scope for Tyikim knowledge uptake and use in the construction of contemporary higher education learning experiences of Tyikim Australians for the advancement of Tyikim interests, recognising that this was to occur within a ‘bureaucratic’ context within which Padakoot knowledge systems had been privileged historically.

I explained how the research aims were integral to my understanding of my own teaching and learning journey through personal and professional growth. The challenge for me was to complete a self-analysis, as a person that operates within the constructions of cultural values, beliefs and languages that ‘appear’ to resist each other on all levels.

I commented that resistance is constructed in a variety of ways. Examples I referred to were the choices of life style people make, people’s attitudes to the Australian constitution that governs the wider community and the business of administering educational programs to Tyikim and Padakoot people though the adoption of guiding theoretical concepts such as ‘cross-cultural education’, ‘both ways education’ or ‘two way schooling’, amongst others.

Resistance to opening up educational experiences to Tyikim knowledge from within the bureaucratic and historically positioned status quo is familiar to us. This resistance is experienced by Tyikim people (students, academics and community members) in our struggle to get our cultural values, beliefs and languages embedded in the discourse of learning in higher education. WE also experience this resistance from Padakoot colleagues in the relative degree to which these values, beliefs and languages can be utilised, acknowledged and respected.
To operate in a cultural context within a specific place, the language of analysis, synthesis and action is shared and normalising with a sense of predictability in terms of outcomes – predictability derived from tacit acceptance of the underpinning dominant knowledge system. However, for those constructed as ‘other’, as in not of the specific culturally-determined and privileged knowledge community, ‘otherness’ brings with it powerful feelings of displacement. Venturing into the cultural space of a specialized group from the position of ‘otherness’ can be confronting at the deep level of personal cultural identity and at the level of the status of the knowledge that imbues that person’s identity with meaning and respect.

I noted that the outcomes from the research would enable other educators to glimpse the new ‘reality’ for Tyikim education in the context of higher education. This reality was constructed and framed from each Tyikim person’s construction of place. Each ‘place’ has its associated cultural knowledge references but to engage with ‘otherness’ students and teachers (and administrators) needed to participate in a process of displacement towards the ‘other’ – a process that needs to occur from an initial position within either a Tyikim or a Padakoot knowledge community.

Meaningful discourse, an essential component of the displacement process, is an exception to the rule where knowledge communities attempt to combine their intellectual resources to provide concepts that meet the needs of Tyikim communities. Often planning meetings and the subsequent teaching events are regulated and predetermined either subconsciously or consciously with outcomes in terms of knowledge to be valued and recognised conforming to one knowledge community and their system to the detriment of the other. In the bureaucratic setting of higher education, it is the Padakoot knowledge community and their system of teaching and learning, including curriculum development and assessment, that tends to have the dominating influence in these meetings and events.

For meaningful discourse to occur in the ARP, the participants in the project workshops and seminars series underwent a process that was akin to a post-structural
process. The discourse expressed by the participants was one of taking ownership over the teaching and learning construction they had created and will now continue to develop as learners and teachers. The ARP developed guidelines to assist in the implementation of this post-structural process providing Tyikim and Padakoot participants with the capacity to enhance the project’s development in terms that expressed their knowledge interests. As development occurred within the ARP the Tyikim and Padakoot knowledge communities and knowledge systems were exposed in the sense of being made more explicit and therefore open to critique and re-balancing.

The impact of the construction of a Tyikim privileged knowledge community within the ARP, a Tyikim cultural context within a specific place with its own language of analysis, synthesis and action, was to create an exploratory area for ‘trial and error’ operating concurrently within the broader discourses of the Faculty and the University.

I commented that the cultural context brought into being within the place afforded by the ARP was, from an institutional and bureaucratic perspective, an ‘artificial’ context where the language used to describe the actions taking place are integrated into the knowledge community and their system most meaningful to the Tyikim participants at the ARP meetings and events. But is this knowledge community and its system of teaching and learning meaningful beyond the context of the ARP to the wider community of the University and, if so, in what way? The ARP allowed its Tyikim participants a place within which to develop meanings and new awarenesses informed by Tyikim understandings, concepts and experiences for the purposes of their higher education studies in one Unit.

The research chartered the course of this development within one higher education institution – a knowledge-generating development undertaken by a group of people operating within framework created by the ARP. But can this form of knowledge production be sustained beyond the ARP within a broader institutional knowledge production framework? To this point in the broader ‘place’. the Padakoot culture has
been over represented in the learning experiences of Tyikim students and academics. This cultural domination alone constructs the significant discourses of learning in this place, discourses that inevitably tend to determine acceptable teaching and curriculum practice while confining and compartmentalizing Tyikim culturally-referenced learning to the status of ‘otherness’. I then asked, “Given this culturally-specific and dominant agenda of higher education, can the research outcomes of projects like the ARP find fertile ground for institutional expansion”?

I concluded my session by wryly commenting that people who step into the realm of Tyikim education find it appealing, frustrating and challenging. For many of these people the teaching and learning journey continues as part of lifelong learning.

The audience then adjourned to the Faculty Building courtyard. The courtyard had been transformed into a Tyikim ‘ceremonial’ place with food, materials in Tyikim colours, bundles of kuri (spears used by Mak Mak for hunting smaller game such as water fowl) and certificates. The place was crowded with all of the participants in the ARP, other Tyikim and Padakoot students, and student and lecturers family members, including children. The Dean of the Faculty gave an address. He acknowledged the work of the ARP Teaching Group, the incorporation of community inputs and the engagement of the students as part of the learning support that proved a real success story. The Dean was confident that the Faculty was heading in the right direction with the ARP approach together with the Indigenous Academic Support Lecturer initiative.

After the Dean’s address, I called each student in turn to accept their certificate of appreciation for their participation in the ARP and a spear. I then presented certificates and spears to members of the Teaching Group, the Faculty Reference Group and members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group. My Principal and Associate Supervisors also received certificates and spears in absentia.

The Dean was presented lastly with a certificate, a spear and clap sticks. The Dean’s spear was a tyendi tjurrlut (spears used by Mak Mak for killing their enemies)
which is a ceremonial spear of high status. The clap sticks were special ngunga ngunga made from cured ironwood, mowying. I was instructed by my ah-la to sing from the Wongga ceremonial knowledge before I presented the Dean with his ngunga ngunga – the higher order ceremony of which the Mirrwana and Wurrkama ceremony is a part.

I informed the Dean, in English, that in accepting the tyendi tjurrlut and the ngunga ngunga, these would hold him to his words as expressed in his address. He accepted, pleasing my ah-la immensely as this was the first time she had opened up Mak Mak knowledge in this public way.

My ah-la Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi had made a journey of her own through the course of my doctoral studies. She had been formally recognised by Deakin University as the Indigenous community supervisor for her daughter’s Ph.D, candidature. The Indigenous Community Reference Group of the ARP in the second Phase of my research had grown from my ah-la’s Mak Mak family group, the group that had shared ownership over my doctoral studies and the group within which she was the Senior Custodian of the Mak Mak knowledge. With the establishment of the Mak Mak family group as the Indigenous Community Reference Group with Sub-Committee status to the Faculty’s Teaching and Learning Development Committee, my ah-la Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi understood that her status as a respected Mak Mak knowledge custodian had now been recognised formally by both Deakin University and CDU.

It was from this position that Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi took over the arrangements for the ceremony that had just been enacted, a ceremony within which significant and powerful symbols of Mak Mak knowledge had been both displayed and given.
**Done It!**

The ARP had now come to an end in November 2003 with this ceremonious conclusion. The symbolic gifts given and received however, were to ensure the continuation of the flow of Tyikim knowledge into the study experiences of Tyikim students at CDU, as had been the case in the ARP delivery of ETU323. Tyikim knowledge had flowed into the higher education institutional context through the workings of Wurrkama. The transforming waters where in essence the pedagogical and research practices of the teachers, students and community members supported by Padakoot colleagues. These Tyikim pedagogical and research practices allowed for the flow of Tyikim knowledge through the Tyikim participants as active knowing beings in the process of knowledge exchange and creation.

To return to the metaphorical underpinnings of the research – the flow of Tyikim knowledge into and through the ETU323 study group became the water that transformed the pelangu into edible flour ready for baking into lowa. The presentations in the final weeks of the ARP were symbolic of final stages in the making the sweet bread. The final end-of-semester ceremony was formal recognition by the Tyikim knowledge custodians of the quality of the lowa produced.

The ARP showed that Tyikim knowledge can flow, authentically, into a higher education Unit and be assessed as equivalent to the same Unit informed by Padakoot knowledge. Lowa can be made in a higher education context.

**Phase 3: ‘A Success or What?’**

*Beyond the ARP-based ETU323 Pilot of 2003*

Coming out of Phase 2 of my research project I had, by the end of Semester 2, 2003, brought into existence through the experiences of participants in the ARP a ‘model’ for enabling Tyikim knowledge to flow into and inform a Unit of study in a higher education degree course. This model was more fully understood by the members of the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group, the Tyikim students, my CDU-based
critical friend, Allan Arnott, and my three Ph.D. supervisors, Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi, Wendy Brabham and John Henry. These people understood the reality of the model from ‘inside’. The other participants of the ARP, while highly supportive of the project and its objectives, still had only a partial understanding of the model. The Indigenous Community Reference Group members appreciated the project from their Indigenous cultural and knowledge perspective. The Faculty Reference Group members, aside from Allan, understood the project in terms of their Western higher education norms.

These partial understandings of the ‘model’ as it unfolded throughout semester 2, 2003 became apparent as the School of Education attempted to accommodate the learnings from the ARP-based ETU323 pilot of 2003 into its Bachelor of Education course in Semester 1, 2004.

The Indigenous Academic Teaching Group members no longer met in 2004. ETU323 was delivered in 2004 only through the lecture/tutorial option in the ‘mainstream’.

However, the Tyikim students who completed the ARP-based ETU323 pilot in 2003 were offered an action research project Unit, ETU431 Action Learning in Semester 1, 2004. Six of the seven Tyikim students from the ARP in 2003 took up this offer. These students studied with me in this Unit. The teaching and learning format was similar to that of the ARP model. We met each week for a 3 hour session followed by a BBQ in Faculty courtyard. The Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers attended these BBQs but I taught in ETU431 by myself.

The action research projects of the six Tyikim students in ETU431 studying with me were all projects in which the mentoring of Tyikim students in their first year at CDU was the focus. The first year ‘mentees’ attended the BBQs with their more senior student mentors.
So in the semester following the ARP the paperbark surrounding the **pelangu** was rapidly losing its strength. Tyikim knowledge continued to flow through the conversations within the weekly 3 hour teaching and learning sessions involving the Tyikim student action researchers studying ETU431 and myself, and at the BBQ sessions. But the absence of Tyikim community members at these sessions meant that the connections beyond the University into the Tyikim community were weakening at the level of its core business – teaching and related research. The absence of an Indigenous Academic Teaching Group further weakened the quality of the purifying water of the **Wurrkama**.

The Faculty has been struggling in 2004 to build, in a strategic way, a sustainable process for enabling Tyikim knowledge to continue to flow into the studies of Tyikim students at CDU. There were no plans to extend the ARP model of 2003 into Semester 2, 2004 in any form whatsoever. Within 6 months the vibrant **Wurrkama** actions carried out through the ARP-based ETU323 pilot in Semester 2, 2003 ceased to have any Units of higher education study within which to flourish. We were back to **pelangu** in its raw form, a form unpalatable to many Tyikim students entering higher education.

Key members of the Faculty Reference Group, the Head of the School of Education and the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Development Committee, understood the success of the ARP-based ETU323 pilot of Semester 2, 2003 in terms of a concept that was meaningful to their **Padakoot** worldview of higher education teaching. The essence of the **Wurrkama** actions for these two senior Faculty academics was ‘mentoring’. The richness of the Tyikim pedagogical and research practices implemented by the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group in this pilot was not understood and therefore not valued or strategically planned for in 2004 and resourced accordingly.

Mentoring, as a strategy to improve the retention of Tyikim students in higher education studies, is a greatly diminished concept that sits outside the core teaching and research business of the University. This is quite different to the relationship of
the ARP-based ETU323 pilot to the core business of the University. This pilot was within and not external to the University’s core business. It was this internal positioning of the pilot project that allowed Tyikim knowledge to flow, authentically, into the students’ study of the Unit. As mentoring is external to the core teaching and research business of the University, it can only function to better connect and support the Tyikim students to the unpalatable pelangu of strictly Padakoot knowledge without changing it in a fundamental way.

This mentoring strategy is like saying to a child “Eat this, it may taste bad but it’s good for you!” According to the Mirrwana and Wurrkama traditions of the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu, unless the bad tasting food is transformed, it may well kill you.

Mentoring at its best could be, from a Mak Mak perspective, analogous to the initial leaching phase of the pelangu in still water where:

“you roll them up in paperbark and you put the bundle in water for one or two weeks. Billabong water. It attracts the blowflies because it smells like shit”
(Deveraux in Rose et al 2002 p.34).

Without taking the full process of Wurrkama to completion, metaphorically, CDU could well end up ‘on-the-nose’ with the Tyikim communities it is trying, in good faith, to serve. “K-ngmmm, palgarnginy waki ni-nni”, as we say.

CDU is rightly concerned about the poor retention rates of its Tyikim students. The ARP-based ETU323 pilot of 2003 attracted much attention in the Faculty and Chancellory of CDU because there was a 100% retention of the Tyikim students who enrolled in the Unit. This was a first for CDU. In addition, the messages sent by the Tyikim participants in the pilot contributed to a 200% increase in Tyikim student enrolments at CDU in Semester 1, 2004.

The 100% retention rate showed that Tyikim students can ‘survive’ in a higher education environment when they are fed iowa.
When fed *pelangu* or *pelangu* partially treated through the actions of mentoring, ATAS tutors and Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers operating outside the core business of the University, *Tyikim* students are unlikely to ‘survive’, to be retained in their enrolled course.

**Concluding Comment**

The narrative, as recorded in the first two Phases of this case study, provided the energy to transform the institutional landscape of CDU. This transforming energy brought into existence a ‘model’ that allowed *Tyikim* knowledge communities to connect, authentically, with the core business of the University. This model was culturally alien to the normal practices of higher education but could be maintained while its sustaining energy was being provided by the *Tyikim* students, teachers and community representatives. This energy maintained the new ‘shape’ within the landscape of CDU. But once the flow of the energy was weakened and diminished in its intensity, the previous form of the institutional landscape at CDU quickly started to re-establish itself.

*Mirrwana* (cycads) also require energy in the form of fire to produce a large harvest of food as a staple for feeding large numbers of people gathered for a ceremony.

> “The planning involved was extensive, and included organising the ceremony; ‘firing’ the cycads; sending messengers with invitations; and harvesting large amounts of cycad nuts, processing them and cooking them for the guests” (Rose 2002, p. 31).

**Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi**, together with the **Mak Mak** family group, had applied this *Mirrwana* and *Wurrkama* knowledge tradition to CDU through my research project. I had managed the institutional landscape with the Reference Groups and the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group to prepare the ground for:

- the firing;
• sending invitations to Tyikim students and their families and friends to participate either in the study of ETU323 through the ARP or in the BBQ sessions as Indigenous Community Reference Group members;
• harvesting significant study topics and processing (analysing) these using Tyikim knowledge, perspectives and experiences;
• leading to high quality understandings that were presented to ‘guests’ followed by a ceremonial acknowledgement of success.

It looks as though it is now time to light the fire again to clear the CDU landscape of the encroaching long grass!
Chapter 6: Analysis on the Case

Urra ngung ngi~ing yangi marri!

“Give me your story!”

Introduction

As identified in the earlier Chapters of this thesis, this research study is about identifying the prospects and possibilities for an authentic place for Tyikim knowledge within the educational systems of Australia. This issue is explored within the landscape of the higher education sector. Thus, the core of this study is an investigation of the scope for Tyikim knowledge uptake and use in the construction of educational experiences of Tyikim students in contemporary Australian universities for the advancement of Indigenous interests. Charles Darwin University became the primary site within which this issue was researched.

In the exploration of the research question – what are the prospects and possibilities for an authentic place for Tyikim knowledge within the higher education educational systems of Australia? – the study has enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of Tyikim epistemology and its application in the area of higher education. The study therefore introduced processes whereby Tyikim knowledge creation could be undertaken within a higher education Unit of study informed by Tyikim epistemological principles and metaphors. The Unit of study, ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Settings, became the ‘knowledge community’ for the research; that is, a group of Tyikim people with a shared cultural heritage whose discursive practices were informed by a common and accepted way of being, a shared ontology. As stated earlier, the principal knowledge community for myself is the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu of the Marrawalgut Nation, Kurrindju ni-nni, Northern Territory.
In Chapter 3 of this thesis I discussed at length four areas that I consider contribute to an emergent conceptualisation of Tyikim knowledge systems within the higher education context. These four areas, I claimed, impact on this emerging conceptualisation and the prospects and possibilities for Tyikim knowledge being introduced authentically within the educational systems of Australia.

The four areas are:

1. Non-Indigenous (White) Constructions of Indigenous (Black) peoples as Others;
2. Indigenous Knowledge Systems in higher education: the Contemporary Debate;
3. Indigenous Research Agenda and Indigenous Research Reform Agenda; and
4. Indigenous Access to higher education.

In this Chapter I will analyse the Case Study: *Wurrkama - getting to the sweet bread in Mirrwana* drawing on my discussion of these four areas in Chapter 3. This Case Study provides the researched evidence through which I will address the key research question of my study in the context of CDU. The research question becomes in this Chapter - what are the prospects and possibilities for an authentic place for Tyikim knowledge within Units of study at CDU?

**My Project and Organisational Changes at CDU 2000 - 2004**

The Case Study is a narrative of my research-in-action as I intervened in the institutional life of CDU and the individual lives of the participants in my project – Tyikim students, academic staff and community members in addition to Padakoot colleagues. But my project unfolded as a PAR project against a backdrop of organisational change for Tyikim education at CDU. These wider organisational changes occurred in a number of stages over the five year period from 2000 to 2004. This was a particularly contentious period for the senior Tyikim academics
responsible for the management and delivery of Tyikim education at CDU (and for others also) through the established enclave-derived model.

The 1999 review of the University recommended that each of the Faculties should bear responsibility for the academic support of Tyikim students enrolled in their courses. This was a shift in the established practice of FATSIS having this responsibility for all Tyikim students studying across the University. The change was instituted in January 2001 with each faculty, including FATSIS, having 2.5 staff positions designated as Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers (IASLs). As stated earlier, I was appointed at this time as one of the first IASLs to be located in a faculty other than FATSIS. My teaching duties were to be 0.5 Indigenous Academic Support in the School of Education in the Faculty of SITE and 0.5 lecturing in first and third year Units of the School’s pre-service teacher education and adult education courses. My focus in Indigenous Academic Support was to work with students on their assessments as required for their Units of study in their degree programs. During the course of 2001 the number of IASLs in the Faculty of SITE increased to four. In 2002 the IASL team in the SITE increased to seven with additional funds allocated from within the Faculty. A similar development of employing IASLs occurred in the other faculties of CDU during 2001. In addition, the Faculty of SITE appointed an Associate Professor in Indigenous Education in mid-2003, an appointment that lasted only several months.

FATSIS, having lost its Indigenous support tutoring responsibilities associated with other faculty courses, was left with its bridging or enabling courses, its Aboriginal Studies courses and its support tutors for Tyikim students enrolled in its Aboriginal Studies courses. This fragmentation of the enclave model across the faculties of the University was a fragmentation in organisational structure only. The basic philosophy of enclave model remained unquestioned at this time and in the contestation that followed.

In 2003, FATSIS was renamed the Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education (FIRE) with the Dean of FATSIS, newly appointed in 2002, now the Dean of FIRE.
Further organisational re-organisation occurred in 2004 with FIRE becoming a School of Aboriginal and Islander Knowledge Systems (SAIKS) within the Faculty of Law, Business and Arts (LBA) with a new Head of School. The Dean of FIRE was appointed to a position in the Chancellery of the University as the Dean of Indigenous Research. With the creation of SAIKS the University reversed its experiment with the fragmentation of the enclave model returning all responsibilities for the academic support of Tyikim students to SAIKS. Thus in 2004, what had been the teaching responsibilities of FATSIS up to 2000 were now re-established in SAIKS.

As well as these organisational changes at the University there were related changes in senior personnel associated with Tyikim education. In summary, the senior Tyikim academics involved in these organisational changes were the Dean of FATSIS (up to mid-2002) who retired but was re-appointed as a senior Adjunct Research Fellow, the new Dean of FATSIS who then became Dean of FIRE (mid-2002 to 2003) and then Dean of Indigenous Research (2004), and the new Head of SAIKS (2004) who was previously the Associate Dean of FIRE. In 2005 a new appointment was made to the Head of SAIKS position with the previous Head of School returning to a senior Lecturing position in SAIKS.

The organization changes described above are represented in Figure 2 below.

My research project, as described in the Case Study, took place across this period of upheaval in Tyikim education at CDU. I was attempting to introduce an alternative model of Tyikim education to the long established enclave model. In hindsight I can see that I was taking up the opportunity presented by these organisational changes, specifically the opportunity created by the shift of Tyikim student academic support across all faculties of the University and the creation of IASL positions in these faculties including the Faculty of SITE. By being located in a Faculty other than FATSIS as an academic member of staff of that Faculty I was able to negotiate an alternative approach to Tyikim education as an entry point to my research. I could do this relatively unencumbered by the existing and historically entrenched approach to
Indigenous Access and Equity delivered through FATSIS. I was able to extend my IASL role within the Faculty of SITE by integrating this role into a direct teaching role with a group of **Tyikim** teacher education students for one Unit of their degree course. By being a member of the academic staff of SITE within the School of Education I was able to centre my research project on one of the Units in the Bachelor of Teaching degree course – a Unit that I and an Indigenous colleague, Tanyah Nasir, were teaching already. By being located in the core business of the Faculty and the School, I was able to advance a form of **Tyikim** education that was not peripheral to the sacred ground of university education, the higher education curriculum, but securely within this domain. The image of **Tyikim** education I was researching was one that was located within the curriculum of a Unit of study within a degree course. More than this, it was an image in which the curriculum content of degree Units of study was opened to **Tyikim** knowledge systems from the outset and not as a negotiated add-on or an after-thought for some students only.
Figure 2: Mapping the Changes in Indigenous Education at NTU/CDU

1999 - 2000
FATSIS
- Bridging Courses
- Support tutoring
- Aboriginal Studies (AS)

All Other Faculties at NTU

2001 - 2002
FATSIS
- Bridging Courses
- Support tutoring (AS only)
- Aboriginal Studies

Other Faculties
- Support Tutoring for Faculties' Disciplines

2003
SITE
- Support Tutoring for Science, IT & Education

Other Faculties
- Support Tutoring for Faculties' Disciplines

2004
EHS
- Support Tutors mainstreamed in Faculty of Education, Health & Science (formerly SITE)

Other Faculties at CDU

FIRE
- Bridging Courses
- Support Tutoring (AS only)
- Aboriginal Studies

LBA
- Bridging Courses
- Support Tutoring
- Aboriginal Studies Courses

SAIKS
My relationship, as an academic within the Faculty of SITE, to my teaching in the Bachelor of Teaching course was a direct one on a par with my colleagues in the Faculty. As such, I was able to intervene directly in decisions over content, pedagogy and assessment as these related to Units for which I was responsible, with advice and support from the Bachelor of Teaching course coordinator, Head of School and Faculty Dean. As ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Settings was my academic responsibility, along with Tanyah, I was able to divide my teaching of the Unit across two groups of students; one group taking the normal mainstream version of the Unit and the other group taking the Unit in its Tyikim knowledge-based form. The Tyikim knowledge-based form of the Unit came into being through an action research process guided towards the students achieving the overall objectives of the Unit as specified in the University Handbook. This approach to Tyikim education for Tyikim students would not be possible within the paradigm of the enclave model where the Tyikim knowledge, if acceptable to the responsible other faculty and discipline based academics, can only ever be an add-on to the existing Western knowledge-based content.

My project was outside the paradigm of the enclave model. It was not premised on notions of enabling, bridging, study skills and knowledge deficits, academic support tutoring as assignment assistance and remediation. It was premised on notions of valuing Tyikim students’ ways of knowing, being and doing drawing on the epistemological and ontological energies of the students themselves along with those of Tyikim teachers and community members. Given this premise I decided that I could not develop such a project with a mixed Tyikim and Padakoot group of students. I was concerned that the Padakoot students in a mixed group would, over time, re-assert their voices and knowledge interests as members of the advantaged and privileged majority in the higher education sector and in the Australian nation-state. This outcome, which I wanted to avoid, would drive Tyikim knowledge interests to the margins of the negotiated curriculum and create tensions within the student cohort. A signifier of the oppression Tyikim people embody is their relative
silence with respect to their own knowledge interests when in competition with the knowledge interests of members of the oppressor class.

A diagrammatic representation of the ARP, as an organisational entity supporting Tyikim knowledge interests in Tyikim higher education, is included below as Figure 3. This diagram is a representation of an emerging model of Tyikim higher education in which Tyikim students are engaging with Tyikim knowledge systems within the discipline of a Faculty, a discipline other than Aboriginal or Indigenous Studies. I am calling this model the Mirrwana/Wurkama model.

2003: Semester 2

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3:** The Mirrwana/Wurkama Model of Indigenous Higher Education applied to one Unit of study in a Pre-service Teacher Education Degree Course at CDU
When comparing Figure 2 with Figure 3, my project in 2003 was clearly a different conceptualisation of Tyikim education in higher education to that being re-arranged through the broader faculty-level organisational changes underway in the University at the same time. My project was of a different paradigm. It was therefore foreign territory being established on the institutional landscape and at odds with the desires of those struggling to maintain the enclave paradigm as the status quo. It was also foreign territory for me also, in the sense that I did not fully appreciate, in advance, where the project might eventuate. The research was truly open-ended.

The Case Study records the open-endedness of the PAR as this was integrated with the negotiation of the curriculum based on Tyikim knowledge in the Unit ETU Language and Culture in Educational Settings. I now turn to an analysis of the Case Study. I do this through the lenses provided by each of the four areas discussed in Chapter 3.

Unit ETU323 as a cultural representation of the Indigenous Cultural Identity “Nginaba ngung?” “Who are you?”

The Unit’s cultural representation of Tyikim people and their knowledge systems challenged the prevailing construction of us as the ‘primitive’ Other incapable of such cultural representation. The Tyikim students, staff and community members participating in the project tested our commitment to our Tyikim ways of knowing, being and doing. The Unit is where the Tyikim people were able to turn and redefine the University’s paradigm for Tyikim education to be accommodated by Tyikim students, staff and community. This occurred as the Tyikim participants asserted the importance of our silenced and marginalised Tyikim knowledge systems as a priority for the Tyikim students’ study of the ETU323 Unit for their Bachelor of Teaching course. The project meant that we were honouring our Tyikim identities as both teacher-learners and learner-teachers within the University landscape that has powerful agents who apply pressure on us to conform to the Western cultural norms of the institution. This we were resisting while through research-in-action preparing a
space on the landscape of the curriculum of the Bachelor of Teaching course for the inclusion of Tyikim knowledge within the Unit itself.

The Padakoot construction of Tyikim peoples as Other was a process managed by the Tyikim participants in a highly sensitised way as we went about developing understandings relevant to the outcomes of the Unit as shared knowledge and life-based experiences of the past and present with a future orientation. Grounding these experiences conceptually really enabled us as a core Tyikim group to deconstruct the concepts and practices that Padakoot people apply in their cultural constructs of us as the ‘primitive’ Other. We discussed this process in terms our White colonial histories and the oppressive political events that had manifested in our shared experiences. Deconstruction of this history and these events by the group opened the way for alternative readings informed by our ways of knowing, being and doing. This then enabled us to understand and speak to our shared reality at a new level more embedded in our own knowledge systems. From this more secured epistemological position we, both students, teachers and community members, were able to respond to the additional topics and issues we (lecturers and students together) introduced into the content of the Unit as the semester of study unfolded. Tanyah and I, as the Tyikim lecturers, and the students, as Tyikim student teachers, were able to respond to these topics from a grounded theory of practice upon which to build our professional practice as teachers; a theory of practice grounded in our Tyikim knowledge with an accommodation of other ways of viewing the world of education.

The activities central to the development of the Unit’s lived curriculum (Stenhouse 1986), as this was negotiated into existence by the Tyikim academics, students and community members, were beginning to signify the characteristics of a Tyikim paradigm of higher education. The content of the Unit was settled upon by a series of steps enacted through out the semester. The pattern was to settle on a provisional list of topics within the first three weeks of the semester after deconstructing our shared histories as Tyikim learners across generations within colonising institutions.
(schools), and then to continue to explore each topic one week at a time with the next week’s topic was being ‘firmed-up’ after discussion within the study group.

The pedagogy that supported this more discursive approach to learning relied on building trusting and reciprocating relationships between all study group members. This pedagogy began with valuing Tyikim ontology with each participant identifying their family and country connections. This quickly established kin relationships throughout the group. We were able then to locate each other within a network of kin and country. This Tyikim way of being was immediately foregrounded and respected, and was an expression of Booran Mirraboopa’s claim (2002) that relationality and reciprocal connectivity are core aspects of our ontology. The pedagogy was also supportive of discursive discussion flowing around a topic. Within the group several conversations could be underway at the same time weaving together as key points emerged for sharing. Sharing was across the whole group. This then identified the next set of issues to be discussed. This conversational style of pedagogy was less linear and more circuitous in style, with issues being revisited from several points of view until the students were satisfied with their understandings of the issues under discussion. Through this approach students were able to understand the elaborated and generalised concepts with a clear reference back to themselves and their own life experiences or the life experiences of relatives. The pedagogy also allowed students to introduce material from their own experiences and also from their own families. Students with children, for example, brought to the sessions samples of their children’s schoolwork for critique. Indigenous education policies were discussed in the actuality of how these were being enacted in the schools drawing on the students’ knowledge of the children’s schools. Tanyah and I facilitated this pedagogy in our roles as lecturers while providing overall direction through my planning. My plans were always presented to the group before being taken up often in a modified form. Our pedagogy allowed for guest speakers. When we had guest speakers we were able to accommodate them according to the time they had available. The pedagogy was flexible with respect to time. Members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group were welcome to present or sit in on the workshops contributing to discussions as they wished.
The three hour weekly workshops provided the extended timeframe within which this ‘time-flexible’ pedagogy could be practised. We were not fixated by time!

The pedagogy included group-based projects extending from the weekly workshop discussions. Students identified shared topics in two groups of two students and one group of three. These groups were like breakout groups from the workshop whose work was being informed from the workshop discussions while at the same time each group added to the workshop conversations drawing on their specific project work. These were collective activities building towards a shared assessment in the form of power point presentations in the latter part of the Semester.

At the end of each week’s three hour workshop session we held a celebratory activity – the BBQ. This was more than a lunch. It was a continuation of the educational discourse brimming over from the immediately preceding three hour workshop, but now engaging Indigenous Community Reference Group members, members of the Faculty Reference Group. From time-to-time other Faculty academics and administration staff, other Tyikim students, Government officers involved in Tyikim education, health and housing, and members of the ETU323 Unit study group students’ families also attended. The Tyikim pedagogy continued but now with a wider group of participants as resources to the students’ study. Students were able to mingled with university staff and others at these BBQs. Once again these events were ‘time-flexible’ and often extended beyond two hours with smaller groups of students following up on issues beyond the actual BBQ event.

The BBQs became the public and most visible manifestation of the Project. For the students in the Project, and for other Tyikim students ‘visiting’ the BBQs on a regular basis, the BBQ quadrangle centred in the School of Education building, became their Tyikim place on the campus of CDU. For some students who had experienced difficulties asserting their Tyikim identity in the normalising practices of the University, the BBQs became a confirmation of who they were. They were part of a broader Tyikim group clearly identified by others as Tyikim people for all
to see. The Tyikim landscape nurtured in the curriculum of ETU323 was now spreading to a physical place beyond the lecturer room where the workshops were held to a central and more public location – the Building 23 quadrangle.

Our ‘time-flexible’ pedagogy also enabled us to respond to relevant educational opportunities as these came across our path. The student group met, for example, with a delegation of CDU Council members including the Vice-Chancellor and Faculty Deans on one occasion. Students were able to ‘talk-up’ their study experience in these forums thereby, potentially, expanding the impact of our growing Tyikim space on the landscape of CDU.

The pedagogy included a range of assessment methods. The media used were text, oral presentations within the study group and power point presentations to an open audience. These assessments followed a sequence throughout the semester. Each week students gave me a copy of their reflective journal. This I assessed. The journal contents alerted me to the next turn in the ‘study pathway’ ahead. Within-group oral presentations were spaced across the whole Semester from Week 2. These presentations were interactive with the directions taken in the curriculum negotiation process underpinning the Unit’s unfolding content. The power point presentations were the student’s final assessment in the Unit. These were delivered in the major lecturer theatre of Building 23 and were open to all Project participants, other invited guests and any interested members of the University community, including Marketing staff. These were powerful affirmative occasions for the students and ourselves and the students were able to publicly reclaim their Tyikim ways of knowing and understanding the world through their presentations. These presentations were assessed along with written papers prepared by the students supporting the points argued in the presentations.

In addition, our pedagogy involved academic staff providing presentations reflecting on their involvement in the Unit and in the research Project. These again were open presentations. Members of the Indigenous Academic Teaching Group, the Faculty Reference Group and the Indigenous Community Reference Group all gave
presentations in the last few weeks of the semester. These were educative events for us all as we shared in our learning and developing understanding about Tyikim education ‘beyond-the-enclave’ based on a valuing of Tyikim knowledge systems in the reality of the lived curriculum.

In summary the pedagogy driving the learning community of Unit ETU323 within my research project was:

- Based on relationality and connectivity
- Time-flexible and opportunistic
- Supportive of discursive discussion and a conversational style of gaining understandings and negotiation of study pathways to follow
- Supportive of group-based learning while valuing individual experiences and learning
- Referenced back to known life experiences as well as texts in the broadest sense of texts being discursive social practices; that is,

  ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles ... by specific groups of people, ... ways of being 'people like us', ... 'ways of being in the world' (Gee 1996, p.viii).

- Accommodating of a broader membership of learners of which the students were the core constituency: the Unit boundary, in terms of learning participants, was not fixed but was more-or-less indeterminate
- Expressed through more private and then more public domains dependent on the teaching and learning events (workshops, BBQs, presentations)
- Celebratory and confirming of Tyikim identities as represented by the heterogeneity of the Indigenous participants in the Unit and the Project
- Affirming of Tyikim knowledge expressed in the learning community of the Unit initially as utterances of knowledgeable Tyikim people to be reclaimed, reworked and reinforced by student voices in the study group and in their public presentations
• Holistic as each learning event supported a flow of knowledge across the Unit of study as a whole centred on the student-as-learner
• Supported by a range of assessment tasks that reinforced both collective and individual learning.

Tyikim knowledge was introduced to the students through this pedagogy and through the curriculum this pedagogy created. The concept of a negotiated and lived curriculum is important here. The process of curriculum creation or development was a dynamic process lived out by the lecturers and students across the semester. We were guided by the agreed outcomes for the Unit (same as for the normal mainstreamed version of the Unit) and by the initial provisional list of topics. We began with a period of deconstruction which allowed us to locate ourselves in a different and, importantly, Tyikim learning space. From there we gathered strength as we explored the possibilities for learning about issues to do with Language and Culture in Educational Settings drawing on our Tyikim epistemologies and ontologies. Discourse, in its broadest sense (Gee 1996), provided was the lived process by which Tyikim knowledge was accessed, reclaimed and restored, revitalised and reframed in the new circumstances of the Unit, named and renamed, negotiated, networked and shared, and celebrated (Booran Mirraboopa 2001, Tuhiiwai 2002). The Unit, through its Tyikim pedagogy, was re-created through the utterances of ourselves as Tyikim knowers acting as Tyikim knowledge workers (Henry & Andrews 2004).

It was through our Tyikim selves that Tyikim knowledge became extant on the curriculum landscape of CDU, albeit within one Unit of the Bachelor of Teaching course.

Unit ETU323 and the ARP Project as an example of Indigenous Research-in-Action

My research project was an example of Tyikim research within the domain of the Indigenous Research Agenda (IRA). It was research by Tyikim researchers working
collaboratively over the full course of the Project with representative Tyikim community members under the close control of key community Elders. The Case Study narrative describes the relationships and the working out of the research according to the ideas of Errol Japananka West (2000) and other contributors to the IRA.

Central to the IRA are the principles outlined by Irabinna-Rigney (1999), Japanangka West (2000) and Booran Mirraboopa (2001). In summary these are:

- resistance,
- political integrity,
- privileging Tyikim voices,
- recognition of Tyikim worldviews, knowledges and realities as distinctive,
- honouring Tyikim social mores as essential processes in knowledge production, and
- emphasising the historical, social contexts of Tyikim ontologies over time which shape our understandings about informed actions into the future.

I took advice from Japanangka West (2000) with his emphasis on “the action of research” (p. 11). I have rephrased this idea as research-in-action with connections to PAR and the Mirrwana and Wurrkama ceremony. Here I was able to (drawing on Japanangka West’s words) establish the fluctuations of intensity and the compelling orientations of my Tyikim research action, in the connection the IRA principles as a frame of reference, in the action of research.

The narrative of the Case Study describes my Tyikim research-in-action across the three phases of the Project. My research was always oppositional to both the normalizing and accepted academic traditions of higher education. My research was Indigenist as well as embedded in a ‘foreign’ proto-paradigm of Tyikim access to the curriculum of higher education. It was therefore doubly outside of the norm for higher education academic practice and theorizing about Tyikim research and education. Having said this, my Project was however closely aligned to
contemporary theorizing about Tyikim research by Tyikim colleagues under the IRA.

In Phase 1 of the research, ‘talking the idea into existence’, I embarked upon a long period of negotiation with the significant knowledge holder for my knowledge system, the Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi of the Mak Mak Marranunggu family. This period of negotiation and learning was an essential foundation for my research. Having ‘got this right’, the energy flow from the community members through the Indigenous Community Reference Group into the research-in-action was assured in an authentic way. Members of my community became members of the knowledge community for both the research and for the teaching and learning in Unit ETU323. In time in Phase 2 of the Project, through the participant Tyikim students in ETU323, members of their communities also became members of this knowledge community.

In these Phases I was living out the principles of the IRA in the context of my Project at CDU and within my immediate Tyikim knowledge community, my family. To use the Mak Mak metaphor, I was firing the country of my research principally within my Mak Mak community but then later in the landscapes of CDU and Deakin University. By framing these initial discussions over the design of my research according to the six IRA principles above I was able to shape, mould and form-up my research design in ways that were acceptable to the participants in the Mirrwana and Wurrkama ceremony that was about to be actioned on the fired ground of the CDU landscape. Metaphorically, my research Project had become a Mirrwana and Wurrkama ceremony with the correct protocols, obligations and reciprocity informed by Tyikim worldviews and social mores. Mak Mak members of my Indigenous Community Reference Group understood this as a matter of cultural practice; other members of the Indigenous Community Reference Group understood this intrinsically, as did my students and Tyikim academic colleagues. Members of the Faculty Reference Group understood this as PAR. In progressing my research through Phase 1 of the Project I had privileged Tyikim voices over those of the Padakoot participants by not opening up the metaphorical underpinning to the
Project as understood, either overtly or intrinsically, by the Tyikim participants. For us the Mirrwan and Wurrkama metaphor was a more powerfully confirming and binding epistemological foundation for Tyikim research than was action research. Action research was, for me, a weaker approximation to the framing Tyikim metaphor of my research, but it provided a pathway into my research-in-action for my Padakoot colleagues.

Phase 2 of the research, ‘Doing It’, was possible given the detailed attention given to bringing the various participants into the life of the Project through the collaborative and Indigenous knowledge-based ways of working across disparate interest groups. For me this was not unlike working within my Tyikim community negotiating into place community meetings and ceremonies reliant on the correct attention to the interests and knowledges of the different groups from the outset. I had observed my Elders engage in these prolonged negotiations ever respectful and accommodating in order to establish a platform from which to build successful ceremonial events. Phase 2 of the research carried this orientation to Tyikim voices, knowledge interests, world views and social mores through into the business of the research. Although present in the first phase, the principle of resistance was important in Phase 2 as I steered the project in a general direction that maintained its difference to both the mainstream curriculum and pedagogical practices of the Faculties of SITE and FATSIS with respect to supporting Tyikim students enrolled in degree courses. Resistance and political integrity also were evident in the starting point of the research within Unit ETU323 when I established the process of deconstruction of aspects of our shared historical social contexts and ontologies relevant to the Unit’s outcomes as the initial activity in the students’ study of the Unit.

Political integrity, as in being mindful of addressing Indigenous concerns over ownership in practices reflecting our knowledge systems and our broader social and political interests, was possible within my research design. This was possible in the field of Tyikim teacher education because of my autonomy as the responsible academic lecturer for the Unit together with my commitment to the IRA principles. The activities researched through the development of ETU323 as a vehicle for
Tyikim ways of knowing on the higher education landscape and the pedagogy through which these activities were experienced, consistently privileged Tyikim voices while engaging Padakoot people as resources as required. Research-in-action and teaching/learning-in-action in the Project were blurred during Phase 2 but the students and lecturers came to understand that this blurring of research and teaching/learning within a Unit of study was a new synthesis and was renamed as ‘our way of doing teaching and learning’. Research was being accommodated into the study of the Unit at several levels – we were at different moments students-as-researchers, teachers-as-researchers and, for me, researcher-as- Tyikim researcher. Our resources and partners in this new synthesis were our Indigenous Community Reference Group members and, to a lesser extent, the Faculty Reference Group members. Once again Tyikim voices were being privileged through the positive recognition of Tyikim worldviews, knowledges and realities as distinctive to those of my Padakoot colleagues. As the research evolved by honouring Tyikim social mores as essential processes in the knowledge creation within the Unit’s negotiated curriculum and within my research itself, it became increasingly difficult for my Padakoot colleagues to engage fully in the business of my Project. My research, at the level of its real business, was something of an ongoing mystery to them. This did not stop them reconstructing my research and the developing pedagogy, as these were visible to them, in terms that were compatible to their own worldviews and ontologies. I will discuss this phenomenon in more detail in the next section.

The public aspects of the Project (the student and staff presentations, the BBQ discussions and the dialogue between the students and others at other public occasions such as the meeting with the CDU Councillors) had a resonance with those circumstances where one’s the family representatives performed at a Mirrwana and Wurrrkama ceremony and where one’s higher Tyikim knowledge and facility with it is on display to a critical audience. Students felt this acutely and were concerned to express their learning confidently and with assurance and power. Here, within the research, the students were drawing on their historical contexts of Tyikim ways of being in ‘knowledge displays’ across the range of social contexts their families have experienced through to the present.
The knowledge gained through this research project, as illustrated above, was embodied knowledge gained as the students-as-researchers (and the teachers-as-researchers) engaged in new practices, reflected on these practices and then extended themselves into yet again new practices. The Tyikim knower became transformed into a more expanded and aware knower through the active processes associated with the research. We followed the fluctuations of intensity and the compelling orientations of research-in-action as a group of Tyikim learners reclaiming our Tyikim identities founded on new ways of understanding ourselves. This was a principal knowledge outcome of the research not readily transmitted to others through disembodied text-based forms.

Tyikim voices were strongly in evidence in the concluding stages of the research in Phase 2 of the Project. These were heard during the final presentations and during the Wali/Wongga ceremony at the final BBQ. Here the Tyikim researchers spoke powerfully about their learning through the research. This was a public affirmation of their new ways of knowing, being and doing as Tyikim higher education students and teachers. Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi was heard through me acting as Delyek in ceremony business and through the ceremonial artefacts we had prepared together. In terms of Indigenist research we were recognising distinctive Tyikim knowledges and realities, and honouring Tyikim ceremonial processes, not only in knowledge production, but in recognition of new knowledge gained. In Phase 3 of the research showed to me the power of the normalising ideological forces of the University as a Western institution to re-colonise the Tyikim space we had created on the landscape. Our Tyikim ‘beach head’ onto the sacred ground of the University based on Tyikim knowledge systems was in danger of being swept away. We as, Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi succinctly expressed, were about to observe our Padakoot colleagues and our senior Tyikim academics from FATSIS and FIRE act to let the new ground created by my research at CDU be lost.

Here the research outcomes had become public knowledge in the Faculty of SITE but redefined into a less radical practice for enhancing the success of Tyikim students in
their degree course studies than those researched through the Project. The redefined practice was more in line with the enclave model paradigm than with the alternative I had researched into place within ETU323. Mentoring was the proposed generalised and ongoing support strategy devoid of any commitment to introducing from the outset Tyikim knowledge into the Tyikim students’ higher education study. There are significant political issues to discuss associated with this outcome. I will take this up in the next section. But at this point, I have come to understand that Indigenist research must have a well developed uptake or ‘transfer into organisational life strategy’ in place in advance of the completion of the research. Indigenist research like mine without a thought-out and supported organisational change management strategy in place will have a high probability of diminishing into a one-off peak of exciting (and to the Padakoot others) exotic activity. As Tanyah remarked, “the research had been like a spectrum of light breaking through the clouds and we took the opportunity to show that it could be done”. We now know that Tyikim knowledge can be introduced to Tyikim students in the core business of a University. But for the time being the clouds have rolled in.

In summary, I recognise that although my research was Indigenist research I needed to be more mindful of locating this research within an organisational change management strategy.

The ARP Project and Indigenous Access to Higher Education

The Case Study arising from my research shows that the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model for engaging Tyikim students in higher education studies within their discipline, in this case the discipline of teacher education, can be successful while satisfying the rigorous standards of the University in that discipline. The Case Study also shows that it is possible to open up a Unit of study in one discipline to high level Tyikim knowledge, knowledge on a parity with other forms of knowledge valued in higher education courses. More than this, the Case Study shows that the success rate for Tyikim students when they are able to access Tyikim knowledge within their discipline studies is outstanding. Under normal circumstances where Tyikim
students study in the mainstream courses under the remediation regime of ATAS support, the retention rates and successful completion rates of Tyikim students in their University studies is below the average for Padakoot students. At CDU in 2003 the retention rate for Tyikim higher education students was 25%. My research-in-action drawing on powerful Tyikim metaphorical knowledge developed a Unit of study in teacher education in which the retention rate was 100% and the successful completion rate was 100%. This outcome, so contrary to CDU’s institutional experience under its existing enclave-derived model for opening access for Tyikim people to higher education disciplines-based study at the undergraduate level, attracted considerable attention within the University. The outcomes of my research in terms of Tyikim student success was widely publicised through CDU publications and media; for example, the Vice Chancellor’s magazine, the Faculty of SITE Newsletter and the CDU Website.

Given all this attention it is particularly puzzling that this Mirrwana/Wurrkama model with its processes for enabling Tyikim knowledges to flow into the curriculum of discipline Units of study was allowed to wither away and become dormant after the intense experience of its development on the landscape of CDU in Unit ETU323 in Semester 2, 2003. This outcome begs for an explanation.

I have argued that the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim education is an alien and foreign entity on the landscape of CDU. I think this is the way into a plausible explanation of its lack of further development at this time. My research project took place at a time of contestation over the organisational arrangements for managing Indigenous Access and Equity programs at CDU. This was outlined in the first section of this Chapter. In this earlier discussion I argued that the re-organisation was within the dominant paradigm for Indigenous higher education, the paradigm of the enclave. As such, the debates within CDU over this time were only about management and administration of Tyikim education and not about delivery in terms of changed pedagogy and curriculum. My project was researching an alternative model of Tyikim higher education based on an alternative philosophy of education.
foreshadowing an alternative paradigm for theorising and practising *Tyikim* education.

My researched *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model is inherently incompatible with the dominant philosophy within the University for addressing *Tyikim* students’ access to its undergraduate courses. In my model we were definitely not constructed as ‘primitive’ Others incapable of cultural representation. In my model *Tyikim* students were not positioned as being in need of remediation. In my model I and my *Tyikim* colleagues were not placed outside or at the periphery of higher education discipline-based curriculum development, Unit delivery and assessment of students’ achievements. In my model *Tyikim* community members were not denied access to the hallowed halls of academia-in-action; that is to the teaching spaces of the tutorial and the lecture theatre. We were active constructors of our own learning drawing on our various *Tyikim* epistemologies and ontologies. We were located within our own cultural knowledge systems and were powerful learners motivated from this meaningful (to us) source within which we have developed our worldviews. We were central to the knowledge production processes for the Unit of study with full autonomy over decisions about pedagogy, curriculum content and assessment tasks. We were connected to our community of cultural significance through a series of arrangements that brought our community members, as significant ‘presences’, into on-campus educational activities and events. All this is alien to the dominant enclave model of *Tyikim* higher education and at odds with the philosophy underpinning this model.

Importantly, the *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model was counter-hegemonic. It was challenging the Western imperialistic and colonising ideologies of universities as custodians of acceptable high knowledge in the contemporary Australian nation-state. Through my research project and through my analysis of the context of *Tyikim* education at CDU from 2000 to 2004 I can now see how these colonising ideological forces acted to thwart my ambitions for an expanded uptake of my *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model. I accept that I did not have a well developed transfer strategy at the end of my research and that I had placed faith in my senior academic
colleagues in the Faculty of SITE to carry the momentum beyond Semester 2, 2003. I thought the success of the Project and its emerging model of Tyikim student engagement with discipline-based studies would speak for itself. So did Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi!

Without a strong advocate or champion for the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model in those spaces on the CDU landscape to which I did not have ready access, for example, the University Executive and the Faculty of SITE Academic Board, the continued existence of the model was dependent on the informed and strong voices of others. As identified in the Case Study, it was probably the case that the people who could argue for the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model did not themselves understand at a deep paradigmatic and philosophical level the fundamental difference between this model and the enclave model already integrated within the organisational fabric of the University. The Mirrwana/Wurrkama model was collapsed in their minds to a mentoring approach involving small groups of students in intensive study support. In this way the distinctiveness of the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model was wiped away and replaced by a novel form of remediation support as an extension of my role and Tanyah’s role as IASLs. We were still being seen as support lecturers within the enclave paradigm! My senior colleagues, although very positive and supportive of my research and its outcomes, could only see what they could see, ideologically speaking. Thus, for my senior Padakoot colleagues, mentoring was an ideologically compatible concept; engagement with a higher education Unit of study through Tyikim knowledge was not.

With recognition and due respect to the Dean of SITE for his support for my research and for the opportunity he had created for me, I now understand that although he had accepted the Tyendi Tyulit and the Ngungga Ngungga from Koonie Koonie, for him it was a gift without the full understanding of the obligation and reciprocity as understood by his Tyikim colleagues in the research. According to my analysis I now see that due to his ideological allegiance to the enclave model of Tyikim education and, at depth, to the western construction of the ‘primitive’ Other, my
Dean was unable to champion the *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model as an alternative in higher level management forums of the University in opposition to discussions centred on the historical and established enclave paradigm. He could not do this as a *Padakoot* Other because he most probably found it difficult to embrace, at an ideological and philosophical level, the difference and therefore argue for this with certainty at senior managerial levels within CDU. Instead the *Tyendi Tyulit* was hung prominently on my Dean’s office wall and the *Ngungga Ngungga* took pride of place on his office table – symbolic of his dilemma in advocating for the *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model in managerial environments that would be likely to be antithetical to the idea of *Tyikim* knowledge as being on a par with Western knowledge. The gifts and the *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model were to be understood in terms other than those we as *Tyikim* understood them. The gifts become exotic artefacts devoid of their signature obligations and reciprocal responsibilities. The *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model became an exotic variant of the enclave paradigm.

This analysis of the Dean’s situation and responses is entirely conjectural and is made with huge respect for his struggles to establish new practices for *Tyikim* higher education within his faculty. I carry within myself a strong sense that my Dean was very much alone in his perceptions of what was best to do next and was therefore relatively alone and unsupported in the politically risky business of *Tyikim* higher education at CDU.

A parallel analysis to the above provides a further explanation as to why the Faculty of SITE and the School of Education senior academic managers were unable to transfer the learnings from my research more fully into the landscape of SITE. By 2003 CDU had its third Vice Chancellor in as many years. The incoming Vice Chancellor of 2003 had pronounced that *Tyikim* education was a priority for the University. She engaged closely with the Dean of FIRE in moving on this priority and took advice from her and a newly formed committee of external *Tyikim* people influential in Indigenous affairs across Australia. The outcomes of this consultation and advice were the establishment of SAIKS and the position of Dean of Indigenous Research in the Chancellery. While my research was coming to an end in Semester 2,
2003 it was becoming clear to me through communications from my Dean and Head of School that the locus of decision-making over the University’s Tyikim education priority had shifted well away from the faculties including the Faculty of SITE. There was to be a return of Indigenous education funds and academic support positions back to SAIKS. For my Dean and Head of School their intervention into Tyikim education supported by a previous Vice Chancellor had now been taken out of their hands under the new regime. Under these circumstances it would have been very difficult for my Dean to advocate strongly for my new Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim education even if he had a full understanding of its philosophy and practice. Further to this, I was not in a position to provide my Dean, Head of School and others with a well developed articulation of this Mirrwana/Wurrkama model. I was still completing my research and had not moved onto the much needed analysis and reflection required to present a compelling case on how to secure the presence of Tyikim knowledge systems on the landscape of CDU. As my research-in-action was still in progress while these high level internal political struggles were occurring at CDU over the positioning of Tyikim education, I was unable to strengthen my Dean’s arm to throw the appropriate spears.

In addition to, and related to this situation, I could not rely on advocacy for the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model from the senior Tyikim academics at CDU. These key individuals had long academic careers in the spaces on the higher education landscape provided by the enclave model and its embellishments and, in the re-organisation of Tyikim education at CDU, were focused on re-gaining, what was to them, lost ground. In fact they were successful in this endeavour as with SAIKS taking on board in 2004 all of the previous FATSIS-based Tyikim education programs as of 2000. What had been lost over this time was the Faculty status of FATSIS to that of a School within another Faculty, but the enclave paradigm remained intact.

My employment as a 0.5 IASL at the Faculty of SITE with 0.5 academic duties in the mainstream courses of the School of Education positioned me at the outset as a possible political concern to these senior Tyikim academic colleagues. By taking up
this appointment I was a Tyikim personification of the new organisational arrangements that diminished the Tyikim education business of FATSIS (later to be called FIRE). Tyikim academics wedded to FATSIS and its previous management of Tyikim education across the University saw me and my academic and research work in a less than positive light. For me, working in CDU from this position, it is understandable why I then had difficulties engaging the Dean of FATSIS and later the Dean of FIRE in my research Project. The Dean of FIRE saw my research and the emerging Mirrwana/Wurrkama model as a form of Aboriginal Studies (personal communication, 2003) and therefore further encroaching on the academic domain of FIRE.

From the outset, the outcomes of my research were unlikely to be taken up and promoted by the senior Tyikim academics with responsibilities for the management of Tyikim education at CDU. Within CDU, the Dean of FIRE in 2003 and later Dean of Indigenous Research in 2004 was recognised within the University Executive as being responsible for future developments in Tyikim education (Webb 2003). In the serious institutional politics of the University, I was small fry in the struggles over the organisational arrangements for Tyikim education into the immediate future. My Project, with its alternative ways of knowing, being and doing, was rendered irrelevant to the discussions associated with these struggles. Without support from the most senior Tyikim academic at CDU with her direct connections to the Chancellery, my research, which questioned the entrenched enclave philosophy of CDU’s approach to Tyikim education, was unlikely to have an impact on the debates going on at this time beyond my own limited area of influence.

As with my analysis above of my senior Padakoot colleagues’ tendency to construct my research outcomes and the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model as simply an exotic variant of the enclave way of doing things, I am of the view that my senior Tyikim colleagues were also trapped within the ideologies of the enclave paradigm. For my Tyikim colleagues viewing my research and the Indigenised Unit ETU323 from afar, my work was also constructed as an extension of my IASL role but this time an extension into the discipline of Aboriginal or Indigenous Studies.
For my senior Tyikim academic colleagues I was a personification of the University Vice Chancellor’s 2000 decision to weaken FATSIS by dispersing Tyikim student academic support to other faculties while leaving enabling programs and Aboriginal Studies as a discipline study with FATSIS. Through my research I was seen as encroaching on one of the two remaining academic domains of FATSIS – Aboriginal Studies. From this positioning of me and from this construction of my doctoral research, I was to be controlled, not encouraged. Control ultimately meant turning one’s face away from the positive outcomes of my research and rendering these, and the Mirrwan/Wurrkama model of Tyikim education that had produced them, invisible on the landscape of CDU from the end of Semester 2 onwards.

In summary, this analysis of the emergence of an alternative model of Indigenous education, the Mirrwan/Wurrkama model, has shown that it is possible to introduce Tyikim knowledge onto the curriculum landscape of a University in a discipline area other than Aboriginal Studies. My analysis has highlighted the unprecedented success of Tyikim students studying a Unit that has been developed through a pedagogy that enables Tyikim knowledge to be incorporated into its curriculum content. But my analysis has also shown the strength of the ideological forces operating in a University to maintain hegemonic control over the preferred paradigm under which Tyikim education is managed. I have claimed that this hegemony operates on the minds of both Tyikim and Padakoot senior academic managers.

**Conclusion**

My analysis of the Case Study, as set out in this Chapter, had raised for me and my Tyikim participants in my research both the hope and the despair over the possibilities and potential of introducing Tyikim knowledge onto the higher education landscape in a sustained way. The success of the Tyikim students’ experiences of Unit ETU323, as re-formed by Tyikim knowledge, raised our hopes that we could advance a new counter-hegemonic and counter-imperialistic paradigm
of Tyikim higher education at CDU. Our despair came from our new understanding of the normalising influence of the entrenched enclave-derived model of Tyikim education at the University and its intermeshing with its colonising ideologies of the University as a Western institution of privilege.

In a much more positive light, this analysis has shown that we as Tyikim Australians can claim space on the sacred ground of Universities with our knowledge systems shaping the study experiences of our own people. Further this analysis has identified clearly what an Indigenist research project can look like in action.

In the next Chapter I take up the issues identified through this analysis of the Case Study of my research-in-action at CDU informed through powerful Mak Mak Marranunggu metaphors and comment on the new learnings from this research more generally, bringing the full range of my research questions into sharper focus.

*Ku~nin tjirlyen Wurrkama nul!*
Chapter 7: Narratives and Landscapes in Indigenous Higher Education

Kar-na Marri gu nidin kan!

Introduction

In this Chapter I reflect on the research questions driving this study drawing on the analysis in the previous Chapter of the Case Study of my research-in-action. A layer of research questions beginning with the most general has framed my research. The most general research question was: how can the Australian education systems better address the educational needs of Tyikim people? Unfortunately, Tyikim knowledge, on its own merit, has not been included within the education systems of the Australian nation-state as establish post-1788. This observation led me to a more specific question: what are the prospects and possibilities for an authentic place for Indigenous knowledge within the higher education educational systems of Australia? Subsequent questions of interest to my research arise immediately from the above. What are the inhibitors in the Australian education systems that create barriers to Tyikim knowledge flow for Tyikim people in the higher education system of Australia? Secondly, what are the praxis-oriented interventions that facilitate the successful achievement of higher education outcomes for Tyikim students referenced back to the knowledge traditions of our Tyikim communities?

These layered questions framed my research study and set me out on a journey to investigate the scope for Tyikim knowledge use in the construction of contemporary ‘bureaucratic and institutionalised’ higher education teaching and learning experiences of Tyikim Australians for the advancement of Tyikim interests.

In this Chapter I expand my interpretations of the outcomes of my research informed by the new insights arising from the analysis contained in the previous Chapters of this thesis. I argue for a new paradigm for Tyikim higher education driven by the pedagogical principles embedded in my action research project and decribed in the
Case Study. These interpretations focus my thinking directly onto reaching informed answers to the full range of research questions listed above.

**An Authentic Place for Indigenous Knowledge within Higher Education Institutions**

The analysis of the Case Study of my research-in-action was informed by earlier discussions of *Tyikim* knowledge systems in higher education. Conducting the research-in-action engaged an authentic Indigenist research praxis focused on *Tyikim* access to higher education. Through this research-in-action, we (that is, the Indigenous Community Reference Group, Indigenous Teaching Group, Faculty Academic Reference Group and participating Indigenous students) were able to create the circumstances whereby *Tyikim* knowledge was able to be expressed in an authentic way by us on the landscape of one university, CDU.

We had appropriately fired the landscape and sung the fire so that the landscape could now serve our knowledge interests. We saw how, on this freshly prepared and cleansed landscape, our *Tyikim* knowledge narratives could be sung fuelling the spirits of the fire to claim our place on the bureaucratic and institutionalised landscape. Within in this newly burnt *Tyikim* place we were able to explore topics and issues from positions and perspectives given to us from our shared uptake of these sung *Tyikim* knowledge narratives. In this way of knowing, being and doing we were able to construct the educational experiences of the *Tyikim* students and ourselves. This is *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* philosophy. This is the beginning of a *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* approach or a model for *Tyikim* higher education.

As discussed in Chapter 6 this beginning was like a ‘spectrum of light’, a rainbow of hope for a change to the dominant enclave paradigm for engaging *Tyikim* higher education students. I now recognise the strength of the ideological forces working to maintain this dominating and hegemonic paradigm but I see, from the perspective of my *Mak Mak Marranunggu* knowledge system, my research-in-action as the first burning of the higher education landscape at CDU and, perhaps, elsewhere.
In the *Djulurrk* narrative, *Puley Puley*, the Rainbow Snake, stole the fire from the ceremony place and headed towards the sea to extinguish the fire. But *A-titit*, the Chicken Hawk, caught up with *Puley Puley*, and snatched the firestick back and flew to the ridge country. As *A-titit* flew over the country, he burnt the long grass in patches to attract other small animals. As *A-titit* had captured a small meal and began to eat, along came *A-karrk*, the Brown Falcon, who swooped down onto the unprotected firestick and took it further to burn more country so that she too could both generate and locate nourishment across her hunting terrains on the *Mak Mak* landscape. *A-pelele*, the whistling kite, flew in the smoke singing out with his whistling sound. “We get excited for the fire. That’s the fire whistle we make. And he whistles, he’s excited over the fire.” *(Kathy Deveraux*, cited in *Rose* 2002, p. 29). “And then the flames come more high. He’s the fire man” *(Nancy Daiyi*, cited in *Rose* 2002, p. 29).

Possession of this *Mak Mak* philosophy is important to me as I make my learning journey onto this new terrain to hunt for knowledge as nourishment in the University landscape as an unknown land with no authentic *Tyikim* philosophy. We have fired it, metaphorically, for the first time fuelled with authentic *Tyikim* knowledge narratives, singing, dancing and calling upon our spiritual beings to join us. As *A-pelele* whistled the flames higher, so we ‘whistled’ (sung or spoke) our knowledge narratives into the curriculum content of ETU323 *Language and Culture in Educational Setting* at CDU energising our *Tyikim* students in their higher education studies.

But the firing that introduced *Tyikim* knowledge into *ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Setting* at CDU has died down and is now smouldering waiting to be snatched back like *A-titit*, dropping sparks across the higher education landscape starting new fires preparing the way for the wider incorporation of *Tyikim* knowledge authentically in the curriculum of universities. This raises for me the question: what would the next patch of fired country look like at CDU building out from the knowledge gained from my research-in-action?
An Expanded Mirrwana/Wurrkama Model of Indigenous Higher Education

One answer to this question is to propose that the School of Education in the Faculty of SITE establish more than one Unit in the pre-service teacher education degree course to be delivered according to the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education. This can occur both in the normal delivery mode to a mixed Tyikim and Padakoot mainstream cohort of students and in the ARP delivery mode that is, Tyikim knowledge-based delivery to a Tyikim only student cohort.

This would be an expansion of the one Unit ‘pilot’ Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education researched into place for one semester and reported upon in this thesis to a more fully fledged Mirrwana/Wurrkama model, in this instance, in the discipline of pre-service teacher education. This expanded Mirrwana/Wurrkama a model of pre-service Tyikim teacher education can be represented as in Figure 4 below.
Figure 4: An Expanded Mirrwana/Wurrkama Model of Pre-service Indigenous Teacher Education

In this representation the number of Units in the Bachelor of Teaching that are delivered in the parallel mainstream/ Tyikim knowledge-based modes would need to be negotiated into place within the School, the Faculty and the University through the relevant course committees and academic boards. This strategy for expanding the presence of Tyikim knowledge within the curriculum of one degree program could, of course, be expanded to other faculties and other discipline-based degree courses across a university.

This expansion of the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education within a faculty of a university has clear implications for the distribution of resources within the universities concerned. This form of Tyikim higher education could not
be adequately resourced through Indigenous Special Course Funding nor through ATAS Funding, the two main sources of funding supporting Tyikim programs under the enclave model or paradigm. The expanded Mirrwana/Wurrkama model would require an allocation from each faculty’s ‘taught-load’ funding based on the number of Commonwealth Government funded student places directed to each faculty and degree course taught within each faculty by the university’s executive taking into account the advice received from the faculty on enrolment targets and anticipated growth in particular courses. The taught-load funding for a faculty is often expressed in terms of ‘effective full time student Units’ (eftsus) where each eftsu is given a dollar value depending on the discipline category of each course and the year level of the student enrolment. This eftsu-defined funding is the substantial resource base for the delivery of degree courses in the faculties of a university aside from funds received from full-fee-paying students.

In a faculty that decided to introduce the expanded Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim education, those Units designated for delivery through parallel mainstream/Tyikim knowledge-based modes would be allocated a proportion of the Faculty’s taught-load funding according to the eftsus for each Unit based on the total student enrolment in each Unit. Then, for each of these Units delivered in the parallel modes of the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model, the allocated taught-load funding would be proportioned to each mode of delivery according to the numbers of students enrolled in each version of the Unit, once again determined by the total number of eftsus for each version. The version of each Unit delivered through the Tyikim knowledge-based mode of delivery could expect, as an addition to its allocated taught-load funding, a proportion of the university’s ATAS funding relevant to the number of Tyikim students enrolled in this version of the Unit. This combined taught-load and ATAS funding would then be the basis for employing the appropriate teaching staff for the delivery of the Tyikim knowledge-based version of each Unit taken up within the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of higher education within a faculty. This combined funding is a much more substantial resource for Tyikim education within universities than the traditional reliance only on Special Course Funding and ATAS Funding for Tyikim student Access and Equity.
Through this model of Tyikim higher education not only is Tyikim knowledge brought into the mainstream of the life of a university in terms of decisions over curriculum and but also in terms of decisions over recurrent funding, the lifeblood of a modern university. For a university to adopt the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim education, commitments must be made to truly bring Tyikim education in from the margins with respect to both curriculum and resourcing. My proposed model requires a fundamental shift at the paradigmatic level – a paradigm that moves beyond the imperialism of the past and much of the present provision of higher education for Tyikim people.

I now turn to a consideration of the potential barriers and obstacles to the expansion of the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education within a paradigm that is counter-hegemonic to the colonising ideologies of universities as teaching/learning institutions.

**Potential Barriers and Obstacles to the Mirrwana/Wurrkama Model of Indigenous Education**

Access and Equity programs for adult Tyikim Australians began, as stated earlier in this thesis, in 1969, two years after the Federal Referendum of 1967 gave my people full citizenship in the Australian nation-state. This was also the period of the final years of the official Aboriginal assimilation policy of Australia’s state and territory governments.

Although first advanced at the Canberra Conference of Aboriginal Authorities in 1937 as the National Assimilation Policy, it was not until 1961 that this policy was fully developed and approved by all state and territory governments. This occurred in Canberra at the Native Welfare Conference of that year, and was confirmed by the 1963 Conference of State and Commonwealth Ministers responsible for Aboriginal Affairs. The policy stated:
The policy of assimilation means that all Aborigines and part-Aborigines are expected eventually 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, as other Australians (Rowley, 1971, pp. 399).

Importantly for my discussion at this point in my thesis, the assimilation policy was to be advanced through

provision of education to all levels, to the greatest extent possible, in the same educational institutions as are available to other Australians (Harker and McConochie 1985, p. 103).

With the passing of the 1967 referendum and with the Commonwealth Government of Australia now having an input into Indigenous affairs, changes to Indigenous post-secondary education through Commonwealth funding became available. In 1969 the Aboriginal Studies Grants Schemes (Abstudy) was introduced but, at this time, had little impact of access for Tyikim people into higher education. In 1973 the first tertiary education in Australia specifically for Tyikim Australians was established. This program was the Aboriginal Task Force (ATF) (Bin-Sallik 1990).

The ATF is a (N)ational program in that it is designed to accommodate Aboriginal students from all over Australia. It enables adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who do not have the academic prerequisites to enrol in courses at (the South Australian Institute of Technology). It was set up … with the purpose of training a task force of Aborigines to work in the area of social welfare (p. 21).

The ATF was officially referred to as an enclave (Jordan 1985).

The year of 1973 was a period of policy change in Australia. The Whitlam Government had been elected federally in 1972. But, although this government introduced the policy of self-determination for Tyikim communities, the legacy of the previously entrenched policy of assimilation lived on in practice. This was clearly evident in the field of Tyikim education. The tertiary education enclave programs from the outset in 1973 were children of this pervasive legacy. The Indigenous enclave on the landscape of a higher education institution can be understood, in terms of a coloniser ideology, from an appreciation of developments in Tyikim school education in the previous decade.
Assessment of Tyikim children’s educability in the 1960s emerged from the dominant Padakoot ideologies of the time. Tyikim children enrolled in Padakoot dominated schools of the main urban and rural population centres of Australia in the 1960’s were treated ambiguously by their Padakoot teachers and student peers. On the one hand they were 'Aboriginal' to be treated with racist expectations, but on the other hand they were not 'true Aborigines', only "gamin blacks" (Atkinson, 1991). As 'pretend Aborigines', these Tyikim Australians were denied their cultural integrity and identity. The ideology of race allowed Padakoot to confuse culture with their definitions of physical racial categorisation. From this perspective, most Tyikim children enrolling in the schools of Australia’s education system were seen by their teachers to have only a tenuous claim on Aboriginal status and, having 'lost their culture' during the early colonial period, did not have any valid claim for being Tyikim in a spiritual and cultural sense.

Denied the legitimacy of their own culture, Tyikim school students were therefore positioned within the Padakoot cultural hierarchy. Tyikim families became a subgroup of the colonial lower classes in the minds of middle-class Padakoot teachers and others involved in schooling and social welfare. The poor levels of school achievement of these children were simply attributed to the same causes of school failure thought to operate for other groups of failing children - children from rural, poor, working class and immigrant families. It followed from this definition of the 'Aboriginal problem' that Tyikim children belonged to a poverty culture and therefore needed to be 'uplifted' by Padakoot colonial educational institutions. Compensatory education programs were to be the uplifting means by which Padakoot schools would eradicate the deficiencies of Indigenous children, deficiencies associated with their poor quality home environments. (Brabham & Henry 1991c, p. 24).

This positioning of Tyikim children in the school education systems of Australia in the 1960s could be called 'ideological thinking of the late-assimilation period'. Tyikim Australians of the 1960s generation were being constructed by Padakoot
Australians in rather complex and confusing ways. They were still seen, as I have already argued, as members of a ‘primitive’ Other within the midst of the colonisers but also as beings without any significant Tyikim culture. As primitives in the minds of their teachers without a separate and clearly distinguishable cultural identity (and questionable claims to a distinctive physical racial identity) assimilative education programs were focused on remediation and compensation strategies. These strategies were defined in the humanitarian terms of the time implying that the children of this group of ‘disadvantaged people’ could, through the implementation of these strategies, access the fruits of a Western education as a pathway into the colonisers’ culture of Australia and become fully participating citizens.

With the Commonwealth Government funding adult education from the late 1960s, it is therefore not surprising that remediation and compensation became the key strategies of Indigenous Access and Equity programs. The enclaves from 1973 onwards carried forward into higher education the ideologies already shaping Tyikim school education. Tyikim adults wishing to enter universities were seen by these higher education institutions to be uneducated or less than sufficiently educated and without the necessary academic pre-requisites for admission into degree courses. Tyikim cultural education qualifications were never considered. These people needed to be enabled, to be bridged, to be academically oriented. In other words, these people needed to be uplifted, to be compensated for and to be remediated before accessing the sacred ground of the Western curriculum of higher education; that is, before joining the cultural knowledge elite of the coloniser class. The alternative of valuing the cultural knowledge of adult Tyikim Australians in the context of higher education and drawing upon this Tyikim knowledge resource embodied by each Tyikim applicant was unthinkable within the ideological framing of Access and Equity at this time.

Based on my research and on the reactions of many of my academic colleagues to my research-in-action, I claim that this essentially assimilative ideological positioning of Tyikim higher education continues to dominate into the twenty-first Century. This positioning of Tyikim higher education constructs it as an activity
‘from the margins’ in the sense of bringing Tyikim people into a Westernised educational space from the periphery of society and making them whole. “Those without a superego need, for their completion as human beings, to be bound to those who have such a superego” (Brickman 2003, p. 111). This positioning of Tyikim higher education on the bureaucratic and institutionalised landscapes of universities is a substantial barrier to the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education and to the flow of authentic Tyikim knowledge onto these landscapes.

As already stated, in 2001 I embarked on my duties as the Indigenous Academic Support Lecturer (IASL) to provide support to the Tyikim students’ needs and to understand their issues as they immersed themselves in the Bachelor of Teaching course. By observing and engaging in the disempowering modes of the enclavederived model of Tyikim higher education at CDU as a member of the ‘primitive’ Other, I became aware of my actions and their consequences in the lives of Tyikim students. As I moved forward I created pathways, leading to my doctoral research, into new ways of engaging Tyikim students in higher education. I did this in the face of resistance from a number of colleagues who saw me, in the first instance, as a resource to them on a whole range of Tyikim matters. It is not uncommon for Tyikim people new to a job, academic or otherwise, to be inundated with informal requests to work with Padakoot others on activities dressed up as contributing to the ‘Indigenous cause’. These requests are very often paternalistic in their ideology and form but seemingly directed towards a legitimate need. It is not easy to say, “No”!

Often, in my case, these requests from Padakoot colleagues regarded my role as an IASL wanting me to extend my academic support role for Tyikim students to that of developing Tyikim content to be taught by Padakoot lecturers in their Units, or for me to deliver the proposed lectures. When I declined, I would be ‘reported’ to my supervisor or ‘complained’ about in the staff room to other academic staff for not doing my job as redefined by them. Even when I did do my job as an IASL, academic colleagues continued to complain about giving Tyikim students special treatment or questioned why we weren’t together in FATSIS located with the other
Tyikim enclave-based providers to support Tyikim students with their remedial work. I was seen to be ‘out of my place’ on the higher education landscape.

With each skirmish my understanding of the politics of the place improved. This increased understanding informed my practice and rather than getting caught up in the expressions of conflict I tendered to my business including advancing my doctoral research. As I progressed with my research a new form of discourse was entered into by some of my Padakoot academic colleagues that, to my mind, was focused on diminishing the credibility of the Mirrwana/Wurrkama Tyikim higher education model from its beginnings. Here is a selection of comments made to me by Padakoot colleagues during the course of my research-in-action. “How’s the little research project going?” “What’s Indigenous knowledge?” “Are the students learning anything?” “There’s more needy people than Indigenous people in Australia?” “How come your students are using the staffroom for their BBQs?” “How come you are always out there at the BBQs?” “Why do you need to have an Indigenous-only group of students”? “Who are all these people around the place”? “Why are you worried about Indigenous students when you should be getting on with your lecturing?” “Are you the Dean’s pet Black”?

The re-construction of my IASL role through my research had literally unnerved these colleagues. I had stepped out of the role and its practices as defined for me by the institutional norms, norms that my colleagues were comfortable with. I, and my tyangi wedi kany (teaching partner), Tanyah Nasir, were now exposed on the new terrain created by my research. We were not Tyikim resources to be subordinate to the wishes of other Padakoot academics and we were not behaving as remedial tutors to their courses and set assignments. We were different to their expectations, expectations arising from their connectedness to the imperialism of higher education.

I dealt with this in my own way, thinking that this behaviour stemmed from people’s internalisation of their privileged position as Padakoot academics and their unreflective contribution to institutional racism. My research-in-action exposed me to a wide range of experiences that have shaped and formed the Tyikim higher
education reality as I have lived it. My engagement with these realities through the research has strengthened *tyangi wedi ngin* ways of knowing, being and doing. When Koonie Koonie Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi says: “Payi Wurrkama ma!” I now realise what those three words really mean. From my worldview, the ‘truth’ of the research-in-action has deconstructed for me the ‘primitive’ Other as projected by colonising others into my life, and in the process has reconstructed my ontology from this point onwards. It is through my actions in knowing more deeply the powerful constructions of my *Tyikim* identity and the spiritual importance of who I am as a *Mak Mak Marranunggu* person from *Kurrindju* that I am able to proclaim myself as a *manditj* on the landscape of higher education.

There is a further ideological obstacle to the expansion of the *Mirrwana/Wurrkama* model of *Tyikim* higher education and to a secure place for authentic *Tyikim* knowledge on the higher education landscape. This ideological obstacle that comes from *Tyikim* people themselves. Bin-Sallik (1990) referred to this obstacle as:

> an assumption, within some sections of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, that courses specifically designed for Aborigines are inferior, and are referred to as ‘Mickey Mouse’ courses (p. 156).

A further example of this thinking can be found in a report commissioned in 1989 by the Victorian Council of Adult Education in consultation with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. The report, *Towards Empowerment – A Review of Education Opportunities for Aboriginal Adults*, identified two major and distinct philosophies regarding the delivery of *Tyikim* programs amongst educators involved.

One side believes in the importance of mainstream delivery with the support of Aboriginal enclaves or support systems within the institution. This view stresses the importance of equivalent or comparable qualifications to those gained by non-Aboriginal students.

The other upholds the importance of separate, but occasionally parallel programmes specifically designed to be culturally appropriate, not only to those in traditionally-orientated communities, but also to those in ‘settled’ areas whose Aboriginality is often under question (Wilkinson 1990, p.8).
Wilkinson (1989) concluded that support for Tyikim adults in education, whether in higher, vocational or community education, “must be provided … through enclaves, counsellors and a ‘space’ within an institution that is available for Aboriginal students” (p. 31).

Bin-Sallik rightly identified this issue in 1989 in terms of the “myth of Aboriginal inferiority (luring) many Aboriginal students to compete against their white counterparts in mainstream universities” (p. 156). She went on to comment about the difficulties some Tyikim people have in addressing their identity, cultural worth and academic potential. Bin-Sallik was also very critical of a related point in the Jordan Report into enclave programs. Jordan (1985) had recommended that Tyikim academics employed by universities to work in their Indigenous enclaves complete higher degrees from white-oriented courses. For Bin-Sallik:

This is assimilationist thinking. The report proposed a generation of assimilated Aboriginal academics without concern for Aborigines who aspire to be experts in their own culture through courses designed for them and not about them (1989, p. 51).

Here Bin-Sallik was in general agreement with my position that Tyikim students in higher education should have access to degree courses in which Tyikim knowledge is not imposed as knowledge about us, as in Aboriginal Studies courses, but is knowledge drawing upon our shared “Indigenous intellectual heritage” (Bin-Sallik 1989, p. 46).

From this discussion, the main obstacles to the expansion of the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model and the flow of Tyikim knowledge from our shared intellectual heritage onto the curriculum landscapes of universities are the ideological forces born out of the imperialistic and colonial establishment of these institutions in the nineteenth Century. These forces are expressed today through the theorising and resulting practices of both Padakoot and Tyikim academics and senior managers of universities. This prime obstacle to the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model is further reinforced by the established presence of ‘the enclave’ on the landscape. ‘The enclave’, as an ideological entity or imprint on the landscape, works to continually
shape the discourse and the discursive practices of teachers, students and managers alike making any alternative ways of theorising and practising seem foreign and alien and beyond serious consideration. The power of these ideological forces was exposed to me with the re-establishment in 2004 of the intact ‘enclave’ at CDU, as represented in Figure 3 above, while rendering invisible my alternative way of theorising and practising through my research-in-action in 2003.

To free us from this imperialistic trap to our thinking and practising in Tyikim higher education we need a cleansing fire with a long slow burn. We need to re-capture the fire stick from Puley Puley and re-fire the higher education landscape following the instructions from the ‘spectrum of light’ Tanyah and I perceived from our research-in-action. We must break free.

The metaphorical knowledge at depth in the Mirrwana/Wurrkama ceremonial narratives can provide a lawful basis for moving forward to the new Tyikim education paradigm. These ceremonies involve, amongst other aspects, the reaching of consensus or alignments of agreement amongst in-laws over land obligations. Disputes are settled and future actions are decided upon with responsibilities, obligations and duties allocated across the two parties of reciprocating families with in-law relationships. Sometimes, depending on specific circumstances, more than two in-law families may be involved. These same ceremonies could provide a conceptual and lawful basis for formal negotiations and consultations with representatives from within universities and with representatives of Tyikim knowledge communities currently ‘outside’ or external to university knowledge business. These Mirrwana/Wurrkama ceremonies would determine who are to be the guardians of the fire. The selection of the guardians would be with agreed permission to burn the higher education landscape afresh at a level beyond my research project. In Mak Mak philosophy we call these people manditj. According to Koonic Koonic Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi the authentic power of these custodians and our rights to burn country, or to give permission to others to do so, is how the country cares for us and how we look after country. We need a similar process in the
reform of Tyikim higher education so that our knowledge heritage can be established authentically in this new cleansed landscape.

The negotiation processes at a high level in a university would establish the reciprocal responsibilities of the various stakeholders in the organization, management and delivery of Tyikim higher education and the obligations entered into by the various partners. The processes by which such agreements are reached are represented in my ma-wadi of my research introduced in Chapter 4. In the ma-wadi both Tyikim community representatives and Tyikim and Padakoot university people come together in the middle zone to negotiate agreed ways of working together at the interface between their knowledge worlds. This is the zone of intense negotiation, action research and new beginnings.

I conclude this Chapter of my thesis by returning to the concept of a Tyikim pedagogy as the counter-hegemonic force to the prevailing imperialism of higher education. I discuss this idea in the context of my research questions relating to the scope for Tyikim knowledge use in the construction of contemporary ‘bureaucratic and institutionalised’ higher education teaching and learning experiences of Tyikim Australians for the advancement of Tyikim interests. Once again, in terms of my ma-wadi, this counter-hegemonic pedagogical work is occurring in the middle zone at the interface of two worlds intent on creating and sustaining a new Tyikim space on a landscape previously dominated by Padakoot Western ways of knowing, being and doing.

**Pedagogical Principles in Indigenous Higher Education**

The study has enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of Tyikim epistemology and its application in the area of higher education and to identify pedagogical principles that are compatible and interactive with Tyikim knowledge systems. We engaged the higher education sector in a Tyikim way as a critical core Tyikim group drawing from our own Tyikim knowledge systems. Through the research-in-action the Tyikim participants in the Project developed ways of teaching
and learning together that included a foundational set of pedagogical practices. I have identified five core Tyikim pedagogical principles that give meaning to these practices from the lived experiences of teaching and learning in the Project.

These core Tyikim pedagogical principles engaged by us as Tyikim educators were:

- Narrative as Pedagogy
- Relationality as Pedagogy
- Discursiveness as Pedagogy
- Political Integrity as Pedagogy
- Indigenist Research as Pedagogy

These Tyikim pedagogical principles provide new ways of addressing the needs of Tyikim learners who have a strong desire to understand our worldview through our Tyikim knowledge systems. These core pedagogical principles provide a set of reference points for Tyikim educators’ behaviours as learner-teachers and teacher-learners; behaviours that tap into the ontologies each of us bring to the learning environment and allow these to become explicitly known in the landscapes of higher education. Although these pedagogical principles are interrelated and present in my mind as a whole approach to teaching and learning, I will discuss each in turn below.

**Narrative as Pedagogy**

My research has shown that Tyikim narratives are central to the key pedagogical moments in teaching and learning in Tyikim higher education. My study introduced Tyikim narrative processes onto the landscape of higher education whereby Tyikim knowledge creation can be examined within a Unit of study. These narrative processes were informed by Tyikim ontologies and epistemologies drawing on deep metaphors with meanings shared across the teaching/learning group. In this way students and academic staff were able to introduce narratives from their own life experiences and from the life experiences of their extended family members with, where appropriate, reference to our own knowledgeable metaphors.
This is an organic process in the sense that it is a growth process into increasing awareness of Tyikim cultures and ways of constructing defensible understandings within these cultures. The organic nature of Tyikim narrative as a pedagogy is personalised as the ideas are discussed. Students develop confidence to talk about their experiences relevant to the topics and issues under discussion. The narratives carry students along at a personal level and encourage them to engage in the dialogue of the group around the topics and issues being addressed. Sharing the narratives arising from these processes builds the trust and communication levels amongst the members of the teaching/learning group and improves each participant’s contribution to the accumulation of knowledge within the group.

This accumulated narrative-based knowledge becomes a resource for a new way of being in higher education. Students are able to seek out further reference material relevant to their studies and are now able to apply their developing meanings and understandings to these texts as active knowers in the higher education world rather than passive recipients of the ‘word’. The accumulating understanding for each learner, operating within a Tyikim knowledge system, enables these learners to recognise and value other students’ descriptions of actions portrayed as ontological experiences reflecting deeper levels of understanding of the topics being discussed.

The authenticity of our lived narrative journey in higher education provided the validation of Tyikim knowledge system usage in a way that is right for Tyikim learners as members of a Tyikim knowledge community in higher education. The group validates the shared narratives of the Tyikim experiences creating a strong bond between members of the study group. This is when the Tyikim spiritual affiliations between each of us is linked to our awareness of our shared experiences and our ethos of collective democracy. Narrative as pedagogy in higher education permits the Tyikim participants to contribute in ways that are a confirmation of how Tyikim people make use of their knowledge systems in other situations and strengthens our cultural identity on the higher education landscape.

*Relationality as Pedagogy*
As argued earlier in this thesis, relationality is a core aspect of marring thit thit awangirrwat ga theory and practice; of Tyikim ways of being. Tyikim people actively seek kindredness and connectedness amongst members of groups they find themselves in. Once established, the relationships revealed form a network that can bind the group members into cooperative arrangements based on a shared collective memory of our related past. This can bring into the group dynamics and actions based on Tyikim understandings of reciprocity and obligation, respect and politeness, trust, and generosity and empathy (Moreton-Robinson 2000). Relationality as pedagogy builds from the positive relationships amongst participants in the group that nurture the organic growth of knowledge accessed through the narratives shared within the group. Critical debates develop and influence the ideas discussed in the cumina thit thit wa ‘knowledge community’; a community bound together by mutual obligation to resolve issues before moving on as a functioning group of learners. This relationality, as the cohort of Tyikim participants, is experienced through the shared Tyikim knowledge in the way students and lecturers spoke of each other and to each other in respectful and humorous ways.

With relationality as pedagogy the Tyikim students are able to identify within the higher education study group a Tyikim cultural dimension that resonates with the kindredness and connectedness they experience in their own immediate families, extended families and communities. Indigeneity permeates the higher education learning places through the acknowledged and valued presence of Tyikim relationality. Our narratives, spoken about through metaphors and ontologies, are experienced in this relational way of being, new for us in the higher education landscape. Knowledge work shaped by these two pedagogical principles, narrative and relationality, powerfully enrich the discussions within the study group.

**Discursiveness as Pedagogy**

Discursiveness as a pedagogical principle refers to the discursive discussions and conversational mode for testing and gaining new meanings and more elaborated understandings of topics and issues. Discursiveness allowed for negotiation amongst
all participants over what content was to be taken up by the group and also over how new meanings and understandings were to be interpreted. Discursiveness allowed for cyclical processes of learning as topics and issues can be readily returned to for further higher levels of exploration. Conversations bring students into the dialogue of learning in a supportive way. Listening is an essential part of conversations and therefore of conversational modes of learning. Listening is active; people follow the train of thought being developed through other’s speech acts, and enter into the dialogue as they feel ready without being directed to do so. Intervention into the conversational flow is a voluntary and active learning act premised on a trusting relationship and an expectation that the other group members would receive the newly offered narrative with generosity.

Speaking out in conventional Western classrooms, such as the lecture theatres and tutorial rooms of universities, is a risk-taking venture for many Tyikim academics, students and community members. The risks are deeply felt and are associated with one’s anticipation of the possibility of embarrassment and humiliation from the responses of Padakoot Others. Embarrassment and humiliation may result from the responses of Padakoot lecturers and students who have no common experiences as felt by Tyikim people or who may question the speaker’s authenticity as a Tyikim speaker, or who may compare the offered Tyikim narrative with, to their minds, the ‘same’ experiences in the Padakoot world.

These responses may actively undermine and diminish the significance of the Tyikim speaker’s ontology and the opportunity for expanded learning for both the Tyikim speaker and their audience. In the Tyikim-only student study group this risk-taking associated with speaking out is ameliorated firstly, by the sharing of experiences we have in common, secondly, by the nature of the relationships established within the group, and thirdly, by the conversational mode of discourse. There is an evenness in the power relationships across the group with students and teachers learning together in a more symmetrical manner than is the case in the majority of western learning contexts at undergraduate levels of higher education.
This more democratic way of learning is enabled by learning conversations that are inclusive of all group members’ study interests.

The people are able to communicate freely and openly and discuss the issues that affect us both personally and professionally. Discursiveness as pedagogy draws us all into the learning action at a personal and identity-determining level. Topics and issues are accessible for analysis, not as distanced abstracted ideas, but as ideas understood from ourselves outwards through careful and deliberate reflection. The salient experiences provide the Tyikim participants with opportunities for reflective conversations around the topics being studied, thereby building on our understanding of the issues. The openness of the Tyikim participants’ sharing of significant narratives connected to our common knowledge interests unites us as a study group in Tyikim higher education. Discursiveness as pedagogy allows the Tyikim students’ Units of study to became alive with shared narratives shaped by our Tyikim cultural heritage creating on the higher education landscape a common and accepted way of being, charting a shared Tyikim ontology on this previously alien place.

**Political Integrity as Pedagogy**

Political integrity as pedagogy refers to a commitment to developing in Tyikim students a deeper understanding of the Tyikim condition as colonised people within the modern western nation-state of Australia. It also addresses concerns over ownership of those practices that reflect our knowledge systems and broader social and political interests. Ownership is reflected in our scoping of the boundaries for Tyikim interpretations of the key areas of interest to be taken up for serious exploration within the Units of study of a higher education curriculum. Political integrity as pedagogy requires high levels of the Tyikim autonomy.

Teaching and learning actions informed by political integrity awaken within each person binding forces that can emancipate us from the oppressive discourses experienced elsewhere on the higher education landscape. Political integrity, as a
pedagogical principle, neutralises and reverses the power position of the traditional academic role of the teacher as guru or the font of all acceptable knowledge. Political integrity tends to equalise all the participants in the teaching and learning events and their roles in sharing knowledge. Political integrity liberates us from the social and knowledge constraints of the university. We are able to unite in ways that structure the Tyikim academic spaces within which it is possible for freedom to name events we have experienced in the foreign landscapes of the university and elsewhere in society. Tyikim students and academic staff can then discuss how these events have impacted on our engagement with these places and their impact on our knowing, being and doing. Political integrity as pedagogy, amongst other things, is about deconstruction of oppressive experiences.

Discussing these potentially oppressive events provides a knowledge base from which to engage with these events in a meaningful way for the Tyikim people. As a group we are able to deconstruct the social and political constraints on the expression of our Tyikim knowledge in higher education and elsewhere. We can share what behavioural strategies we draw upon to lessen the impact of colonial oppression on our ways of behaving in the colonising places we find ourselves in, higher education for example. The strategies outlined identify our own interpretations of these oppressive events leading to an analysis of our own responses. From these interpretations the study group is able to ascertain a deeper understanding of colonisation as a lived reality but with positive actions to confront it.

**Indigenist Research as Pedagogy**

Indigenist research provides a pedagogical framework for engaging Tyikim students in higher education studies. In my study the Tyikim students were active learner-researchers. Their learning and research was shaped by activities informed by the above pedagogical principles as well as those principles associated in the literature on Indigenist research (Irabinna-Rigney, 1999, Japanangka West, 2000 and Booran Mirraboopa, 2001). Included here, along with political integrity as mentioned above, were those research-related principles mentioned earlier in this thesis. These
principles are resistance as an emancipatory force, the privileging of Tyikim voices, a recognition of Tyikim worldviews, knowledges and realities as distinctive and worthy of self-study, honouring Tyikim social and cultural ways of interacting as essential processes in knowledge production, and emphasising the historical, social contexts of Tyikim ontologies over time which shape our understandings and inform our actions into the future.

Indigenist research as pedagogy adds to the other four pedagogical principles and recognises the open-endedness of each student’s learning journey. Students actively researched their way through their studies guided by the other pedagogical principles. In this form of study, the students were also participating in their own form of research-in-action. This research-in-action, like my own, was respectful of Tyikim voices, worldviews, social mores and histories. Students were able to connect their research-as-learners to Tyikim community members within the structure provided by my research Project. They were then able to extend these connections into their own families and communities. This pedagogical principle prepared Tyikim higher education students to become Indigenist researchers if they decide to follow this pathway in the future.

**Pedagogical Principles as a holistic approach to Indigenous Higher Education**

The five pedagogical principles discussed above weave together in theory and practice to form an integrated whole. It is beneficial to conceptualise these principles as interactive themes in a holistic approach to Tyikim higher education. This approach is a powerful process that produces the energy to mobilise embodied Tyikim knowledge present within us to be spoken and shared on the higher education landscape. It is this process that brings Tyikim narratives into existence authentically on the landscapes of universities. This idea is represented diagrammatically below in Figure 5.
Tyikim participants in higher education as discussed in this thesis include community members, students and academic staff. These people are embodiments of our epistemologies and ontologies. They belong to the realm of Indigenist knowledge. This knowledge is accessed by them and through them by the five energising pedagogical principles acting in concert as a holistic approach to teaching and learning in higher education. This holistic approach marks out the teaching and learning places on the landscapes of higher education for Indigenist praxis. This approach is counter-hegemonic in that it actively resists the imperialist ideologies of the bureaucratic and institutional theories and practices of universities. It does more than resist; it strives to create a cultural place within which Tyikim knowledges can be uttered, interrogated, created and allowed to prevail. The Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education is an example of such a nidin ga cultural place on the higher education landscape. It is where Narrative and Landscape come together to serve Tyikim knowledge interests. New ways of knowing developed in this model can become part of the expanding realm of Tyikim knowledge.
As noted at the introduction to this section, the Mirrwan/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education is created out of counter-hegemonic pedagogical work. With reference to my ma-wadi in Chapter 4, this work is occurring in the middle panel or zone at the interface of two worlds but intent on creating and sustaining a new cultural place on a landscape previously dominated by Padakoot Western ways of knowing, being and doing. The diagram above (Figure 5) sits across both the left and centre panels of the ma-wudi with the realm of Tyikim knowledge represented by the large panel on the left and the Tyikim participants represented by the narrow
rectangle before the large central panel. The large central panel represents the energising pedagogical principles at work creating an authentic nguwing mi thit thit teaching and learning place represented by the narrow horizontal rectangle above it. The Mirrwana/Wurrkama model, as a new paradigm for Tyikim higher education, is in the space immediately above this. This new paradigm is occupied by people who now share with each other in the realm of Tyikim knowledge.

Conclusion

In this Chapter I have exposed the deep nature of imperialistic and colonising thinking so dominant on the landscape of one university and, by a more general account of the enclave-derived paradigm of Tyikim higher education, I have argued that this oppressive form of thinking and practising is widespread in the higher education sector of Australia. But I have identified from my research an expanded model of Tyikim higher education, the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model, which is counter-hegemonic to the prevailing thinking about Tyikim higher education and, as such, must be thought of as belonging to a different paradigm. I have smoked out elements of this alternative paradigm in terms of shifts in organisational and educational arrangements within universities, shifts in funding allocations, academic staffing responsibilities, connectedness to the Tyikim communities and, through parallel delivery of a proportion of Units within discipline-based degree courses, the establishment of Tyikim-only places on the curriculum landscape to allow for the flow of authentic Tyikim knowledge into the teaching and learning of Tyikim student cohorts.

I have also identified and expanded upon five key pedagogical principles that energise and drive the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education. These pedagogical principles are the nourishment derived from the sweet bread of the miwurrpu, the flour of pelangu. These principles, and the teaching and learning practices informed by them, are the desired outcomes of the Mirrwana and Wurrkama ceremony whereby Mirrwana are given energy through fire to produce the necessary harvest of pelangu as the flour staple to nourish gatherings of the
Tyikim Clans coming together for the preparation of ceremonies. As miwurrpu nourishes the gathered Clans involved in the Tyikim knowledge business through ceremony, so the pedagogical principles nourish the gathered Tyikim students, teachers and community members coming together as connected learners; that is, as a family of learner-teachers and teacher-learners involved in higher education informed authentically by the Tyikim knowledge systems.

In the next and final Chapter of this thesis I specifically address each of the research questions of my doctoral study drawing to an open-ended ‘close’, tha-t nul thowurr Wurrkama gu wakt, for this part of my journey as a Delyek in my Mak Mak Marranunggu philosophy and in my understanding of Tyikim education.
Chapter 8: Conclusion to the Study

Marri gu Waki tjan!

Addressing My Research Questions

My research has shown that it is possible under the circumstances available to me in 2003 at Charles Darwin University for Tyikim knowledge to flow authentically onto the higher education landscape as an equally valued and rigorous contribution to an undergraduate degree course. I, along with my research-in-action partners, was able to establish for one semester in one Unit of an undergraduate teacher education degree course a Tyikim knowledge presence on the knowledge landscape of Charles Darwin University. In other words, my research project allowed the Tyikim knowledge to take its place alongside Western knowledge in a higher education discipline study area other than Aboriginal Studies. My research also showed that this can be done without resort to remedial forms of compensatory education and that the Tyikim students can reach the accepted high standards of higher education as defined by universities and their assessment procedures through an engagement with Tyikim knowledge systems.

My research has shown how universities can access high levels of Tyikim knowledge through the intimate and ongoing involvement of knowledge-holders in the Tyikim communities associated with the Tyikim lecturers and their students. My research has illustrated how universities can be open to significant Tyikim Elders, as knowledge bearers, adjudicators and advisers, through the community connectedness of their Tyikim academics.

My research has identified a model for Tyikim higher education that is an expansion on the pilot program developed and analysed through my research-in-action and in this thesis. This model, the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model, is a metaphorically rich model drawing, for me, on my Mak Mak Marranunggu knowledge system but understood equally through the deep narratives of the other Tyikim nations of
Australia. This model provides the basis for an alternative paradigm for Tyikim higher education; that is, an alternative to the assimilative enclave-derived paradigm of Tyikim higher education.

My research has located the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model of Tyikim higher education within the aspirations of the Indigenous Research Agenda. It is aligned with the principles of Indigenist research. The Mirrwana/Wurrkama model is also located within conceptions of the Tyikim knowledge systems that are embodied in Tyikim knowers informing their ways of knowing, being and doing. The ontological basis for Tyikim knowledge production connected to powerful and deeply located knowledgeable metaphors in our cultures, metaphors expressed through narratives, has been an important insight from my research.

My research has identified five key pedagogical principles by which the higher education teaching and learning experiences of Tyikim students and their teachers can be imbued with authentic Tyikim knowledge. These principles are interactive and come together in practice to form a holistic and comprehensive approach to Tyikim higher education within the Mirrwana/Wurrkama model. The pedagogical principles are:

- Narrative as Pedagogy
- Relationality as Pedagogy
- Discursiveness as Pedagogy
- Political Integrity as Pedagogy
- Indigenist Research as Pedagogy

My research has shown that the barriers and obstacles to the flow of authentic Tyikim knowledge onto the higher education landscape are the ideological forces arising from the imperialistic and colonising orientations of universities as institutional entities. These forces still function today mediated through the theorising and practising of academic colleagues, students and managers to construct Tyikim people as ‘primitive’ Others to be assimilated within the Padakoot colonial
cultural formation. These same ideological forces attempt to deny Tyikim people an authentic place in universities based on our knowledge systems by constructing us as a people incapable of cultural representation at the elite levels of knowledge production.

My research has shown that it is possible to hold back these imperialistic ideologies through counter-hegemonic Tyikim knowledge-based theorising and practising. My research has also shown that this counter-hegemonic work must engage the governance of the universities concerned before Mirrwana/Wurrkama models of Tyikim higher education to become securely established on the higher education landscapes of Australian universities. Engagement with the governance of universities must be at the highest level for both the universities concerned and for the relevant Tyikim communities. This is a serious matter for Tyikim Senior Elders, such as the Pilu, Koonic Koonie and for University Vice Chancellors and their senior academic colleagues.

Through my research I have investigated the scope for Tyikim knowledge use in the construction of contemporary ‘bureaucratic and institutionalised’ higher education teaching and learning experiences of Tyikim Australians for the advancement of Tyikim interests. Finally my investigation of this matter through my research-in-action now allows me to answer my research questions directly.

The Australian education systems can better address the educational needs of Tyikim people by establishing processes of governance and pedagogy that introduce the Pilu and Koonic Koonie cultural knowledge directly into the learning experiences of the Tyikim learners.

The prospects and possibilities for an authentic place for Tyikim knowledge within the higher education educational systems of Australia are limited by the unceasing dominance of Western imperialism born out of the colonial period of the development of the Australian nation-state. For Tyikim this colonial period has not
ceased and continues unabated through our day-to-day experiences within education institutions and elsewhere in Australia’s contemporary society.

The inhibitors that create barriers to the flow of Tyikim knowledge for Tyikim people in the higher education system of Australia are derived from the ideological forces mediated through the normalising behaviours of highly educated academics and senior managers. These academics and managers can be either Padakoot or Tyikim.

The praxis-oriented interventions that facilitate the successful achievement of higher education outcomes for Tyikim students are referenced back to the knowledge traditions of our Tyikim communities and are those based on:

- strong and ongoing links to significant members of the Tyikim knowledge communities associated with the Tyikim academic staff and students;
- the Tyikim academics connected to these community Elders and with the autonomy to design, develop, deliver and assess Units of study in their higher education discipline areas of expertise through the pedagogical principles of:
  - Narrative as pedagogy
  - Relationality as pedagogy
  - Discursiveness as pedagogy
  - Political Integrity as pedagogy
  - Indigenist Research as pedagogy;
- a valuing of the identification and creation of Tyikim knowledge with Tyikim-only cohorts of students in a proportion of Units studied in discipline-based degree courses; that is, the creation of Tyikim-only places on the curriculum landscape of higher education for Tyikim cultural representation unfettered by Padakoot knowledge interests.
Marri yigin ga kabalwa parrp wanthi nging wa

This thesis is like the development of a new ceremonial song koora dal dal. The thesis koora dal dal (sings out) as the kura kenbi and ngunga ngunga do in ceremony informing new Tyikim ways of knowing, being and doing. The practice of the ceremonial event allows ta dal (song), as a form of naming the significant actions or ways of doing, energises the Tyikim people who are producing new paradigms as educational practitioners in higher education. The energy from ta dal revitalises and heightens our senses in this landscape of higher education. Our actions and language movement continues to build on the knowledge base of the new practices of teaching and learning in Tyikim higher education. The way in which we describe the actions of Tyikim practitioners as we are undergoing changes to the way Tyikim teaching and learning in universities is constituted is important. Our descriptions must resonate with our cultural knowledge and our ontologies so that other Tyikim community Elders, researchers, teachers and students can contribute from their own Tyikim knowledge systems to this new way of theorising and practicing Tyikim education within Australia’s education systems. A new praxis will emerge from this koon dal dal wa (singing) as others listen carefully and undertake their own research-in-action.

The Tyikim participants in my research have given their ta dal to the landscape of Tyikim higher education. Thesis-as-song has a life in high knowledge production beyond itself. Marri yigin ga kabalwa parrp wanthi nging wa continues the practice of naming the Tyikim higher education landscape in ways that serve our Tyikim knowledge interests.

I conclude with my Mothers’ (Ngulilkang-Nancy Daiyi and Yilngi Atie) descriptions of me and my work for the doctorate and their claim as major Tyikim knowledge sponsors in the production of the Tyikim knowledge system that informed my Indigenist research. “Payi ngun-gu piyi kuti yarri yigin ngigin mi thit a!” (Daiyi 2005). “What a smart person; good mind …” (Atie 2005).
“Marri kati kan! This story is from awu mirr putj kimina murriya from a long time ago, mebella must keep going to the future to survive and keep telling our story. Marri kunkimba putj putj marrideyan!” (Daiyi 2005).
References


Homeland, Aboriginal Studies Press, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra, Australia.


December 2000, Melbourne, Australia, <View full report> (PDF – 176KB).
(accessed 1 October 2005).

_Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health_, vol. 25 no. 3 pp. 197 -
202.
http://www.phaa.net.au/anzjph/anzjph/2001%20edn/Volume25no3/abstracts.ht-
m. (accessed 1 October 2005).

-cultural critique of research methodologies: a guide to Indigenist research
methodology and its principles’, _Journal for ‘Native American Studies,
WICAZO sa Review_, vol. 14, no. 2, Fall edition, University of Minnesota Press.

rights in education and language_, Presented at the Commission on Human
Rights, United Nations, ‘Sub-Commission on the Promotion & Protection of
Human Rights, Working Group on Indigenous Populations to review’,
<http://www.fatsil.org/papers/research/rigney-1.htm.> (accessed 1 October
2005).

Irabinna-Rigney, L. 2002, _Bread verses freedom: treaty and stabilising_, Yunggorendi
First Nations Centre, Flinders University, National Treaty Conference, National
Convention Centre, Canberra, 29th August 2002,

Japanangka West, E. 2000, _The Japanangka teaching and research paradigm: an
Aboriginal framework_, paper presented at the Indigenous Research and
Postgraduate Forum, Aboriginal Research Institute, University of South

Jordon, D.F. 1984, _Support systems for Aboriginal students in higher education_,
Unpublished Report to Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission and
National Aboriginal Education Committee, vol. 1., Canberra, Australia.

Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R., 1982, _Action Research_, Deakin University, Geelong,
Australia.


Education, Sydney, Australia,

(accessed 1 October 2005).


(accessed 1 October 2005).


(accessed 1 October 2005).


(accessed 1 October 2005).


<http://www.qualitative.research.net/fqs-texte/1-00/1-00newman-e.htm>
(accessed 1 October 2005).


Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. 1989, ‘Submission from the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. to the Senate Inquiry into


Appendix 1

Ethic Application: Plain Language Statement for Student Teacher Participants

Dear Indigenous Student Teacher,

My name is Linda Ford. I am studying for a doctoral degree through Deakin University. My research study is called ‘Narratives and Landscapes: Their Capacity to Service Indigenous Interests.

I invite you to become involved in this research study in Indigenous education. My principal supervisor is Associate Professor John Henry from the Faculty of Education, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria. My associate supervisor is Wendy Brabham from the Institute of Koorie Education, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria. My community associate supervisor is Nancy Daiyi from the Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu Community, Wagait, Northern Territory.

A part of my study is a research project involving the introduction of Indigenous knowledge into a Unit of the Bachelor of Education at CDU. The Unit is ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Settings. I want to understand the issues associated with providing Indigenous students with a Unit in which Indigenous knowledge will be part of the content to be studied.

The research project will involve:

- an Indigenous community reference group made up of Senior members of the Wagait Community
- a CDU faculty reference group made up of Senior members of the Faculty of Education, Health and Science
- an Indigenous Academic Teaching Group made up of Indigenous Academic Support Lecturers from the School of Education in the Faculty of Education, Health and Science, and
- Indigenous student teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education.
I invite you to become a member of the Indigenous student group enrolled in a pilot version of ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Settings for this project. The pilot version of ETU323 will have Indigenous knowledge included as a central aspect of the Unit’s content.

Your involvement in the project will be from Week 1 to Week 15 of Semester 2, 2003 and will involve you in enrolling in the pilot version of ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Setting and then attending study workshops up to 3 hours per week, group discussion, reading, project work, reflection and note taking. These activities will be during the normal semester period. Your assessments for ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Setting will be based on the content covered in the study workshops.

There will be the same teaching team for both the pilot version and the mainstream version of ETU323 Language and Culture in Educational Setting. This arrangement will assist you if you want to withdraw from the pilot version during the semester. The arrangements for withdrawal and transfer to the mainstream Unit are as follows:

- students wishing to withdraw will be counselled by the teaching group with the study option of returning to the mainstream Unit detailed in terms of content covered to date in both versions of the Unit and transfer of content. Assignment requirements for the mainstream version of the Unit will be amended to accommodate returning students’ study program in both versions of the Unit.
- withdrawal from the pilot version of the Unit and transfer to the mainstream version will be offered as an option up until the end of the week 4 of the semester. After week 4, it will be expected that students staying in the pilot will complete their studies in the pilot version of the Unit.
- students will have access to the Head of School if they require additional counselling and advice beyond that offered by the teaching group.
- if you do leave the pilot version of the Unit any data collected by me from you will not be used and will be destroyed.

It would help me a lot if you would consent to be a participant in the research project. I am very happy to answer any questions that you might have about my research
before you decide to become involved with me. You will give informed consent to be involved after reading this Plain Language Statement and signing the attached Consent Form.

All information from the project will be kept secure in locked cabinets and there will be full confidentiality of records. Any notes or tape recordings I might make of discussions will be given code numbers and I will be the only person who knows the codes and who they relate to. I will not make these codes available to any other person without your consent. At the completion of the research all working materials generated by the research will be stored for six years and then destroyed.

When I have collected all the information, I will write a case study of the project, a research report and a journal article. I will show you a draft of the case study and clear any comments that relate to you with you before finalising the case study and report. I will make a copy of the final case study and research report available to you at the end of the project. You will not be identified in the case study or research report, but I must advise you that, due to the small number of people involved in the research project, there is a strong possibility that some readers of the case study and the report may be able to identify your input.

If you have any questions about my research project please contact me on 08 8946 6144 or fax me on 08 8946 6151.

If you have any questions about my work that you would like to ask my supervisor you can ring him in Australia on 03 5227 2073 or fax him on 03 5227 72014.