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Nyoongar families in Western Australia: Changes of identity and values and its impact on identity

To my nephew Aaron, who passed away suddenly this year.
This is for you, a strong Nyoongar man.

By

Cheryl Davis

Submitted as part of course requirements for
Honours Degree
Yooroang Garang: School of Indigenous Health Sciences
Faculty of Health Sciences
The University of Sydney

Supervisor’s Signature:.................................................................

December 2003
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Most of all I would like to thank my participants who without their participation and immense knowledge made this research possible. I truly believe that we do share the same hopes and dreams for our children, and that we will all do our best to ensure that our Nyoongar identity and heritage will live on in our children and grandchildren. I hope that I am honouring the participant’s wisdom and spirituality, which is evident within this research project. I also hope I have maintained my ethical considerations outlined herein and that they meet with the participant's satisfaction.

A special thanks to all my family, especially my father, brothers, sister-in-law and sisters, who have throughout my studies provided me with their immense support, encouragement and sanity in relation to my studies and for keeping me in my place. This research is my contribution to them. I must also acknowledge my nephew Aaron, who passed away earlier this year. He was a very special young man, who had dreams and goals of his own but, unfortunately will never be realised. He was fun, loving, always respectful and had a strong Nyoongar identity that he carried with pride. It was his strength and courage that I took on after he passed away. This has enabled me to continue my studies and complete this thesis. I especially dedicate my honours to him.

I sincerely thank my tutor, Gwen Ismail, for her patience, guidance, support, immense encouragement and academic knowledge. Thank you for your expertise.

Finally, I would like to thank Yooroong Garang administrative staff, lecturers and especially, Freidoon Khavarpour, and Kathy Clapham. To all the students that I have met throughout the course, a special mention for their support, friendship, encouragement and great sense of humour. We are all here to strive towards our goals and to work for our families, people and communities and to hopefully make a difference.
CHAPTER ONE

FORWARD

This is my story of my family, my identity and the changes that have impacted on us. This is about where we have been in the past, where we are today and where we are going in the future.

I grew up in a contemporary urban area of Perth, Western Australia. I grew up with my mother, father, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles in a typical Aboriginal matrilineal family. I was taught values, beliefs, where I came from and who my relatives were. However, today that has changed. I have since realised that the family I had grown up with was no longer there. My aunts and uncles have since passed away. I can no longer relate to some of my cousins I grew up with. They all lead different lives and have different values, different dreams and different goals. My family is now my father, brothers, their wives, sisters, niece and nephews. We all share each other's lives and the same values. We all have the same dreams and same goals. Yet, we once all shared the same families, same belonging, same connections, same values, dreams and goals.

My Family

I grew up belonging to a large Aboriginal family. I grew up with my father, mother, brothers and sisters, but also, with my many aunties, uncles, grandparents and cousins. I can always remember growing up with relatives living with us. This is the way we were brought up. They would either be my uncle, aunt, their children or my grandparents. More often, they would be my mother's parents, brothers or sisters. My mother had three brothers and two sisters all married with children of their own. Growing up, I had 19 first cousins from my mother's side. We often lived one side of town and my aunties and uncles on the other side of town. We also lived in rural towns in the earlier years and often, my cousins would visit us for holidays so there would always be relatives living with us. At home we were always told we were Nyoongar.
My mother's sisters were like my own mother. They would discipline me when they thought it was necessary, they would feed me when I was hungry, they would comfort me when I was sleepy and teach me what they thought I needed to know. They would treat me as one of their own children. I have fond memories of growing up with my aunties and their children, also my brothers and sisters. I also remember at different times, when one or two of my cousins would live with us for a period and my mum would send them to school with us. This would happen when their mother and father had separated for a period. Otherwise, a cousin would come and live with us for better work opportunities. This was the way we lived, it's was the normal practice for our family.

Throughout our school days, my mother was always the parent responsible for our education. She would often attend school if we were having problems with teachers. She would always attend our school sports carnivals. She would always attend our parent/teacher meetings. She was always the one who would get up in the morning, prepare our breakfast, our lunches and push us out the door to go to school. My aunties were also doing similar things in their homes and for their children.

I along with my brothers and sisters attended the local primary school and high school in the area. I can remember these incidents in the classroom vividly. Sitting in a classroom filled with non-Aboriginal kids. Whenever the word, 'Aboriginal', was said by the teacher, or a film was shown with Aboriginal people in it, the class would all stop and stare at me. I felt unique. I must have been the first Aboriginal they had ever seen. Whenever the teacher showed films about Australian history, I remember listening to the narrator on the film, he would often describe some of the characteristics of Aboriginal people. He described them as hunters of kangaroos, emus and goannas. They lived in humpies and they would move around regularly. The concept of the stereotype has its foundation in the theory of prejudice. According to Sargent (1994, 198) the stereotype emerges from and is connected to racism. In addition, racism, prejudice and the development of a stereotype is related to

"...a psychological theory which holds that racism is a matter of the prejudice of individuals. The presence of prejudice in a person is thought to be due to a psychological need to feel superior to others.
As a result of this prejudice, discriminatory behaviours occur towards minority groups.

Further to this Sargent (1994, 199) suggests that "Prejudice leads to the development of stereotypes". Racist attitudes and the development of stereotypes have been exemplified in language such as the terms "half-caste, 'abo' and 'nigger', etc. The stereotypes that are common for Aboriginal people is that we are 'lazy, drunks, don't work, and live on welfare, dirty, etc". Whilst at school, the name-calling was all too familiar. As an adult it still exists but, it is more subtle. I have learnt that I am different. The only difference is that I am black. I was called these names, 'abo', 'nigger' and 'boong'. Yet, today my family and I, as do many Aboriginal people, work and have worked for a number of years. Many Aboriginal people also choose not to drink alcohol. Despite all this, I grew up and am an Aboriginal, a Nyoongar.

My father, like my uncles and grandfather was the breadwinner of the family. He was responsible for bringing home the pay packet. I remember that he worked throughout most of my childhood. Unfortunately, it was during this time that many of my family, my father, uncles and aunties were experiencing alcohol and domestic violence problems. As a result, I experienced all the consequences of these problems. However, I now know and understand that this was a very difficult time, for many Aboriginal people and their families throughout the country.

I was 17 years of age when I commenced my first job. Both my parents were very proud, as they were for all my siblings. Both my brothers obtained tradesman apprenticeships, one a carpenter and the other a boilermaker/welder. I commenced work with a private legal firm as a trainee secretary/receptionist. With us earning our own money, we were able to assist the family household financially, which meant that we paid board, bills, food and other necessities. This enabled us to have some luxuries in the home, such as a new television, video, our own bedroom furniture and other items which improved our home comforts.

Not long after this my father became ill and on the doctor's advice had to stop drinking alcohol. He was able to do this instantly, which enabled him to
care for my mother who also became very ill with kidney failure. She was required to undertake renal dialysis treatment. My father had to obtain his driver's licence and my brother bought a car, so that he could take my mum to the hospital three times a week for the dialysis treatment. My father was able to do this on an ongoing basis. All of these circumstances changed our home dramatically.

My mum passed away in 1987. This loss had a huge impact on me, my family and my extended family. This was my first experience of death. It was devastating to all of us. Like all mothers, she nurtured, loved, provided, and taught her children. She showed love and understanding, she listened to our woes and our joys, she shared her knowledge and strength, she taught us what was right and wrong. She was my family's strength and she held us together.

My aunties and uncles tried to be there for us and on many occasions, they were. My aunties would cook our favourite meals for us and would often share a yarn with us. They would also tell us what we needed to know, they took over from where our mum finished off. However, they too became ill, aged and tired. Unfortunately, they too passed away. I have therefore, lost my mother, aunties and uncles. I have lost my nurturers, my providers and my teachers.

I have always known who my family are and where I fit in within my Aboriginal family. Both my parents' families are Nyoongar and because I belong to this family I too am Nyoongar. I believe that knowing who my family are is one of the strongest factors within Aboriginal culture that will maintain my Aboriginal identity.

**My Identity**
I was born and brought up in Perth, Western Australia. I know this is where I belong, this is where I come from, I know who my family are, I know some of the Aboriginal language of this area, and I know where to go and where not to go within this country. Therefore, that makes me a Nyoongar.
I was born in Swan Districts Hospital in 1965. The hospital lies on the banks of the Swan River. My mother is a descendant of the Wajuk people and my father is a descendant of the Baladong people. They were married in a registry office in 1961. My mother's country is Perth and surrounding areas. It is estimated to be from the Swan River through to Moora, which is about 200 kilometres north of Perth. I belong to my mother country and she belonged to her mother’s country. My father belongs to the Baladong people. His country is some 200 kilometres east of Perth. He also belongs to his mother’s country and grandmother’s country.

Both my parents spoke the Nyoongar language that was taught to them and they in turn taught me and my siblings. Even though my parents did not speak the traditional language, what language they spoke, they had learnt and in turn taught us. Both parents are Nyoongar but, come from different language groups. I know how to pronounce my father’s language as opposed to my mother’s language. For example, the word for a non-Aboriginal person in Nyoongar, from my mother’s country is ‘wotj-ella’. My father’s country you pronounce it ‘wet-jella’. This is the way that I have been taught, and my Nyoongar language has been passed down to me by my mother and father. We grew up speaking this language that was taught to us by, parents, aunties, uncles and other relatives.

Both my mother and father taught us stories about their country. In particular, stories about the Wagyl, the rainbow serpent for the South-West of Western Australia. I know the stories are associated with specific places, such as the Swan River, Kings Park and other places in the Perth and surrounding areas. We were also taught about sacred sites and places, where we could go and could not go. I remember my mum and aunties would take us hunting for turtles, they showed us how to find them and how to catch them. My mother also taught us different plants that could be found in this area. I also know stories associated with my father’s country. I also know sacred sites and places, where we can and cannot go.

This knowledge about my country, my language, stories, sacred sites and places are very significant to my identity. I have been taught this knowledge from a young age and significantly, I will continue to learn this knowledge until the day I die. This is where I belong, this is my cultural heritage and all this knowledge makes me a Nyoongar.
How these have Changed

Today, I refer to my family as my father, my brothers, their wives, my sisters, my niece and my nephews.

My father is 64 years of age, he lives with his partner of 15 years. They live 15 minutes away, I would see him maybe once a week. After my mum passed away, my dad became my nurturer, provider and teacher. He is now telling us he loves us, he shared his possessions and he teaches us what he thinks we need to know. However, because of his age, we, his children, have now become his nurturers and providers. We take care of him and provide him with food, clothing and other necessities as required.

My oldest brother is 42 years of age and married with two children. I would see him on a regular basis approximately 2 or 3 times a week. He lives 20 minutes away. My second oldest brother is 39 years of age with three children, one recently passed away. Unfortunately, I don't get to see him as often as I would like. He works an odd roster which usually means most weekends. However, I would normally see him once a fortnight. Both my brothers' children are also my children. I love and care for them as I would my own children. I helped raise, discipline and teach them. I share a similar relationship with them, that I had shared with my mother's sisters.

I also have younger twin sisters aged 31. As yet they do not have any children however, when they do have children, like my brothers' children, their children will also be my children. I am 38 years of age, not yet married and with no children. To my family, I am a daughter, a sister, an aunty and, will hopefully one day be a mother and a grandmother.

However, because I am a member of an Aboriginal family, I also have obligations that come with this membership. I have social, cultural, economic and environmental obligations to my family members. My obligations are that I now live in the house that we shared with my parents. I live there with my two sisters and have done so for the most part of 18 years. I try to see my family at least once a week. When we do see each other, we share a meal, a yarn, play a game of sport or simply sit down share each other's company.
I don't get the chance to see my cousins and relatives as much as I would like. Even though many of them live within the urban metropolitan area, we no longer socialise in the same circles. Many of them have their own children and husbands or partners. Many of them have different interests or priorities. Many of them have their own family commitments. Some of them do not work and most of them do not study. In particular, many of them do not share the same values, interests, priorities or goals that I do. When we were young, I remember we often talked about these same things. Unfortunately, when we do see one another, it is more often at funerals.

However, I too have my own commitments. I work full time and also study. I am required to travel extensively for work on a regular basis. I have also had to travel to Sydney for my studies. So, I will often go without seeing my family and relatives for up to three weeks. This is a long time to be away from family but, this is my work, my goals and my priorities and unfortunately, I have had to get used to it.

Today, many of my family and relatives also have their own family, work, studies and or community commitments that keep them from seeing me. My eldest brother and my two sisters also study. They also work, have families and partners and have their priorities, goals and commitments.

However, until recently, we were all going along doing our own thing and living our own lives. Then, we suddenly lost one of my brother's son. During this time, family and relatives came from all over Western Australia to be with us. Unfortunately, the loss of one of our children has given us the opportunity to bring our family closer together. We have spoken to one another and realized that because the loss is a significant one, not felt since we lost our mother, that we need to come together as a family. We need to share our grief and our feelings. Hopefully, this will enable us to heal and to become strong again. We have even renewed our relationship with my brother's ex-wife. I believe it is important that we renew this relationship and our family's relationship with one another. This is essential if it is to benefit ourselves, our children and our relatives.

My family, my dad, brothers, sisters, sister-in-laws, niece and nephews are all my nurturers, providers and teachers. They have all given me their love,
respect, support and understanding. They have all shared their knowledge, their strength and identity with me to make me who I am.

All of this, my family, my identity and my experiences have made me who I was and who I am. Hopefully, all of this will also lead me to where I will go in the future. Yet, this is also the Aboriginal way and significantly, this is the way that I grew up. I have lived and experienced a contemporary Aboriginal upbringing. I believe that living and having the knowledge of your family, identity and accepting your experiences will enable you to maintain your culture, your heritage and connections to where you belong, but especially, your Aboriginality.
I am a Nyoongar woman and I live with my Nyoongar family and with my Nyoongar people. I have my Nyoongar values and beliefs, which were taught to me by my parents and grandparents. I have maintained my identity, my values and my beliefs as a Nyoongar person despite all the non-Aboriginal influences. These influences include living with different cultural values, education, religion, social expectations and different lifestyles. My grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews were all born into a Nyoongar heritage. I aspire to continue my cultural heritage, and endeavour to encourage Noongar children to learn of their culture and associated values. It is important to recognise that the past, that is Nyoongar history and cultural lifestyle, is interwoven with the present and can transcend to the future in terms of cultural maintenance.

This study was influenced by my personal life experiences as a Nyoongar woman living in a changing social, political and educational environment. In addition, I have observed reactions of family members to such changes, and seen the impact of these changes on family relationship, values and culture. Recent events such as the tragic death of my 17 year old nephew has further influenced the desire to explore Nyoongar values, identity and health issues. My nephew passed away earlier this year, in a tragic accident. He was only a young man, but he was proud of his Aboriginality and his Nyoongar heritage. He grew up with a non-Aboriginal mother and Nyoongar father. He was brought up on Nyoongar values and beliefs that were passed on to him by his father, grandfather, grandmother, uncle, aunts and extended families. However, I also have other nieces and nephews and they too have been my motivation to pursue this research. I want them all to be proud of who they are, where they come from, who their family are and where they belong. I also want them to be able to do what they want to do, to achieve their dreams and aspirations. I want them to know that they can be anything they want to be. I want them to know that they can do all these things, and still be strong in their Nyoongar identity.
This study therefore focuses on the values, cultural sustainability and health issues over 3 generations of Nyoongar people. It is anticipated, through the research, that there is a connection between these factors. From my personal perspective and life experiences over the past 38 years, I know how being different can influence one’s perception of self, and the impact of racism for example can effect one’s self-esteem.

I have grown up as an Aboriginal person, in particular, a Nyoongar. As a Nyoongar, I have specific values, beliefs, knowledge and experiences. However, throughout my life, I have experienced different things that may have affected my values, beliefs and what I know today. These experiences contribute to, or may have in some way changed who I am today and what I now know of my identity, of my Aboriginality.

The outcome of this study will be to address the following questions:-

1. What are the major contributing factors that affect the identity of Nyoongar families in Western Australia?

2. What are the consequences of change in Nyoongar families, identity on present and future generations.

My personal experiences
At primary school, I can remember all the name calling such as, 'boong', 'nigger' and 'blackie'. I remember the hurt and the tears that I shed. I remember the taunts and laughter that I endured because I was a Nyoongar. There was always at least one incident of torment every day. With the non-Aboriginal children at least it was overt and you can respond to it. However, with the teachers it was far more covert and discreet. Being a child, you don't know how to deal with this type of racism and on many occasions, I didn't have to. If I went home upset with what the teacher had said, my mum would always go to the school and meet with the teacher and principal to deal with it. I can always remember the good feeling I had the day after my mum had spoken to the teacher. I now recognise that feeling as pride, comfort and protection. Clark (2000,156) agreed stating that "I could share my experiences of racism, be understood, comforted, protected and guarded by my family against some of the effects of racism and some of the negative
discourses that circulated and still circulate everywhere about Aboriginal people”.

The purpose of this research is to discuss whether the Nyoongar identity and values that I have grown up with, have changed. My question and the focus of my study is to examine whether changes such as racism, environment, experiences and life changes have impacted on Nyoongar people’s identity and values. Hopefully, this paper will also endeavour to promote Aboriginal people’s cultural heritage and identity. Despite today’s ever changing society in which Aboriginal people live, we, our family, and our children can adapt with the changes and still maintain our cultural heritage.

It is anticipated that this study will explain how family influences the maintenance of cultural values and sustainability of identity on future Nyoongar generations. In addition, through data collection processes such as informal semi-structured interviews, it is hoped that health problems such as those associated with self-esteem, self-image, stress and anxiety will be identified.

The data collection processes involve information collected from 3 generations of Nyoongar people. These include elders (first generation), adults (second generation) and younger members of the same family (third generation). The information collected will enable the reader to see how family influence the continued transmission of cultural values, at the same time identify health issues that have emerged.

The Forward provides a narrative of Nyoongar cultural values, identity issues and the subsequent changes that have occurred since colonisation. It will discuss how these factors have impacted on Nyoongar identity as a result of colonisation and the changing social environment.

The methodology will explain how the research was undertaken. The approach or the framework for the study is founded on qualitative research and includes an ethnographic approach to data collection. Chapter three will also explain how data is collected and presented. The methodology also emphasises the Indigenous research paradigm, which focuses on an
Aboriginal perspective and giving the participants a voice. This will enable a culturally appropriate research with the intention of empowering the Aboriginal participants to tell their stories.

Chapter four is an overview of the literature on Aboriginal identity and how it was constructed within Australia. The literature discusses how Aboriginal people have been represented since colonisation and how these representations have remained within the wider Australian psyche. I argue that Aboriginal identity is constructed within the Aboriginal family and knowledge of cultural heritage is passed down which significantly enhances one's own Aboriginal identity.

Chapter five will outline the findings of the research. In particular, it will set out the participants' responses from the interviews. The participants' responses are written verbatim and remain true and correct. The participants highlight the importance of family, family roles and relationships, values, education, health, culture and identity and how these can be maintained by Nyoongar people.

Chapter six will provide a discussion of the findings and the literature. It will set out the questions and give a brief review of the literature. In particular, it will also give the researcher's opinion. This will enable the discussion to concur or validate the research. Finally, the chapter will conclude and recommend future objectives for the research.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This research was designed using the qualitative research method. There are two main types of research methods used in the social sciences, quantitative and qualitative research. "Quantitative research consists of those studies in which the data concerned can be analysed in terms of numbers". (Baxter & Hughes et al, 1989). On the otherhand, "Qualitative research is based more directly on its original plans and its results are more readily analysed and interpreted". (Blaxter & Hughes et al, 1989).

According to Bryman (2001, 276) "quantitative research is profoundly influenced by a natural science approach of what should count as acceptable knowledge". However, quantitative research enables the researcher to direct the research according to their concerns. Also a quantitative researcher’s involvement is minimal because they feel that their objectivity might be compromised. Bryman (2001, 277) found that "a key difference is that the object of analysis of the natural sciences (atoms, molecules, gases, chemicals, metals and so on) cannot attribute meaning to events and to their environment".

Qualitative research is the methodology that is used in this research project. According to Bryman (2001, 277) "many qualitative researchers express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people that they study". In this particular research project, I made a commitment that ensured all of the participants gave their individual perspectives of their life. The participants were asked questions through an interview process. This process enabled them to tell their story specifically. It is an extremely important process that has allowed the research and the literature to form a relationship.

The participants in this study will be asked to describe their identity in relation to the family, their values and their Nyoongar identity. In particular, they are asked to advise whether their families have changed since growing up and whether this change has impacted on their identity as Nyoongar people. This extensive description of their lives will require a
comprehensive research study, and therefore, a qualitative research method is one of the best, for this type of study. According to Creswell (1994) qualitative research is “descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning and understanding gained through words or pictures”. As a result, the research will allow the participants to give a picture of the participant's lives, which will in turn, provide the researcher with an explanation and a better understanding.

However, another new research paradigm is now emerging, which will assist this research project, an Indigenous Research paradigm. This distinct Indigenous approach to research will enable Aboriginal voices be heard, is culturally appropriate and will endeavour to empower Aboriginal participants to tell their stories. Scougall (2002, 1) believed that this new research paradigm emerged as a result of Indigenous community dissatisfaction with past research and historic processes by which Indigenous knowledge, experiences and understanding have been ignored and/or devalued by mainstream academia. This new approach also provides a culturally safe and inclusive research method, which means that Aboriginal protocols, rights and ethics will be secured and protected at all times. This will enable the researcher to interpret exactly what the participants are saying, and know what is cultural and sensitive to the participants.

Scougall (2002, 2) explained that the characteristics of the Indigenous research paradigm is that it liberates Indigenous people from all forms of colonisation; is practical because it aims to directly benefit the Aboriginal community in some way; it privileges Aboriginal voices and removes the barriers that prevent Aboriginal people from speaking for themselves; it focuses on Aboriginal aspirations, strengths, hopes and stories of success; and it is culturally safe eg: ‘yarning’ in nature contexts, remaining true to the oral story telling tradition.

For too long, Aboriginal people have been oppressed and dispossessed in relation to Indigenous research issues. So too, their cultural knowledge was often devalued and misinterpreted. Aboriginal people were not able to voice their concerns and if they did, it was taken away from them and owned by someone else, the non-Indigenous researcher. Many non-Indigenous researchers that worked with Indigenous communities were mainly preoccupied with the problems of those communities. They would try to find
solutions to these problems by applying their values and beliefs to the research projects. Often these projects failed because of the culturally inappropriate values and beliefs. (Oxenham in Hoffman (2003) and Scougall (2002)).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH
This research will also be open and responsive to the participants and is directly concerned with the experiences that they have lived, felt or undergone. Those experiences are being both lived and felt experiences. Lived experience is one that, a person, has personally experienced. A felt experience is an emotional experience. The participants will have the opportunity to explain their own experiences through the interview process. Significantly, qualitative research focuses on highlighting the experiences, "lived", "felt" or "undergone" of the participants.

An important advantage of a qualitative research method is that it allows the participants to give voice to their life story, experiences and their place in the world. This method enables the research to describe their life, events and their world. (Creswell, 1994). In particular, it allows the participants being studied to put their point of view across to the researcher. As pointed out by Bryman (2001, 284) "the perspective of those being studied - what they see as important and significant - provides the point of orientation". The most appropriate research method for this particular study is the qualitative research method.

Minichiello, Fulton & Sullivan (1999, 39) stated that "in qualitative research, the informant is placed in the role of 'teacher', guiding the researcher to ground his or her understanding on the basis of what the informant says and what the researcher observes". It is important in this research that the participants are able to guide the researcher. The participants will have the opportunity to educate the researcher on their values, experiences and stories. This will give the researcher a better understanding of their Nyoongar identity.

DATA COLLECTION
Participants in the Study
The participants in this research project are Nyoongar people. They are descendents of the Balladong and Wajuk tribes who belong to the south-west
and wheatbelt regions of Western Australia. This area covers Perth to Moora in the north and east through to Merredin. This region covers some 400 square kilometres. There will be eight (8) participants involved in the study. Two of the participants are third generation, one male aged 64 and one female aged 59. Four participants are fourth generation two males and two females aged between 43 to 29 years of age. The remaining two participants are 24 and 25 years of age. The male is fourth generation aged 24 years and the female is fifth generation and 25 years of age. The researcher has arranged individual interviews to take place. The researcher has explained to the participants the processes involved in the research and that their involvement is only on the basis of their consent which can be withdrawn at any time. The researcher has also allowed the participants to choose a location for the interview and for them to consider the issue of safety, comfort and appropriateness. The researcher is also aware of the ethical considerations outlined in this research study.

Creswell (1994, 148) found that "data collection steps involve (a) setting the boundaries for the study, (b) collecting information through observations, interviews, documents, and visual materials, and (c) establishing the protocol for recording information". This form of data collection has been selected because it permits various sources of information to be collected and to be cross-tabulated in order to get rich descriptive accounts. For the benefit of this research primary data sources will include the following:-
- Legislation and policy; and
- Oral stories/narratives.

Secondary data sources will include review of literature. In this research project, data will be collected from multiple sources. This process is known as 'triangulation', (Cuba & Lincoln) where data is collected from several sources and cross-tabulated with one another in order to find a common ground. This then leads to a rich source of information. Triangulation of data permits in confirming the authenticity and reliability of data sources and therefore the consistency of the data is reinforced.

**THEORY FORMATION**

For this particular research, the researcher will use an ethnographic method. Minichello, Sullivan, Greenwood & Axford (1999, 124) stated that
ethnography is the study of a group of people whose beliefs, material aspects, actions and artefacts are influenced by their culture's implicit or explicit ways of being. This research will study Nyoongar people's attitudes in relation to their identity. Identity and its construction will discuss further in the literature review found in chapter four. In particular, the researcher will endeavour to understand how the construct of identity impacts upon Nyoongar culture. Included of this ethnographic method, is also the use of oral stories approach. The use of oral stories are fundamental to Indigenous culture and history, and have been recognised as bona fide sources of information (Stephenson & Suri, 1993). Minichello et al (1999, 134) also stated that "Life stories focus on personal experiences within people's lives and are documented either by themselves or others". In this research, the life stories of participants will enable the participants to tell how their lives formed their identity. The main purpose is to reveal how their life events have affected and/or influenced their concept of identity and who they are today. All of the participants are Nyoongar people and have a common cultural background, in relation to where they were born, who their family are and how change has affected their cultural identity as Nyoongar people.

The research will aim to develop a theory relating to changes to the concept of identity amongst Nyoongar people. In addition it is anticipated that the researcher will show how Nyoongar people's values have changed, and whether this has impacted on their identity. The values, attitudes and beliefs of Nyoongar people will be examined through the application of a semi-structured questionnaire, which permits dialogue and descriptive accounts of life experiences, changes to culture, values and lifestyle of two generations of Nyoongar people.
It is important to recognise that these changes have had a long term affect on Nyoongar people, in terms of the future generations. In recent years, transgenerational stress disorder has emerged as a psychological impairment which impacts on some Indigenous people. This will be discussed further in the literature review in chapter four.

**Triangulation**

Minichello, Fulton & Sullivan (1999, 45) described triangulation as “the process by which the same issue is investigated in a variety of ways so that different types of evidence are produced to support a particular finding”. There are many forms of triangulation. For example, with triangulation it can involve mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods. Otherwise, you can also mix different types of qualitative research methods such as, interviews with ethnography or consider data from different groups in different locations. However, this research project will use methodological triangulation, since there are three different methods of data collection.

**Cross Tabulation**

Gay (1985) found that using cross tabulation of the data permits verification of data sources with one another. This will enable all sources of materials to be cross checked.

**Literature**

Data sources from literature such as those dealing with the following:

- Construct of identity; (Dodson, 1994, Langton, Oxenham, et al)
- Identity and mental health (O'Shea, 1997; ;
- Impact of colonisation (Smallgood, 1996; Hunter, )
- Indigenous Value System (Fertz & Stafford, 1994; )
- Impact on Nyoongar people (Segall, 1979; Hunter, 1993; )

**Interviews**

According to Gay (1987, 203) interviews when well conducted, “can produce in-depth...and...is most appropriate for asking questions of a personal nature and is flexible and the interviewer can adapt the situation to each subject...and by establishing rapport and a trust relationship”. Semi-
structured interviews were undertaken to obtain relevant information from
the participants. The semi-structured interviews will permit dialogue with
the participants which will also allow their voices to be heard. The
interviews were tape recorded and the participants were advised that if
they did not want any information recorded then they were to advise the
researcher. The questions formulated are loose open-ended questions which
will also allow the participants to give details information and probing. A
questionnaire was developed which is attached hereto marked appendix 1.

Life Stories

According to Minichello, Sullivan & Greenwood (1999, 134) "Life stories
focus on personal experiences within people's lives and are documented
either by themselves or others...the major purpose is to reveal how life
events affect people and how people give meaning to these events". Despite
the participants common cultural background, all of them will have different
life experiences. Their different experiences will also have had some
influence on their Nyoongar identity. Denzin cited in Minichiello Sullivan &
Greenwood identified two approaches to be used for gathering life stories
within the biographical tradition: 'objective' and 'interpretive'.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to the National Health & Medical Research Council (1991,2) "The
Medical Research Ethics Committee believes that research programmes
involving Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander communities require particularly sensitive attention to
ethical issues". It is imperative that this research project be culturally,
sensitively and ethnically appropriate throughout the whole research process.
This research will involve cultural, sensitive and personal knowledge of a
group of Aboriginal people, Nyoongar people of south-west of Western
Australia.

Scougall (2002, 1) stated that "Indigenous research paradigm values and
privileges the emic perspective that Indigenous researchers working in their
own local contexts are able to bring to their work". This research project
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Structured or semi.
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Scougall (2002, 1) stated that "Indigenous research paradigm values and privileges the emic perspective that Indigenous researchers working in their own local contexts are able to bring to their work". This research project will hopefully emphasize an Indigenous research paradigm. In particular,
how the researcher will accentuate the values and rights of the participants. The ethical considerations that must be adhered to will highlight the cultural obligations, cultural safety, privacy, ownership and the use of knowledge. It is also imperative that these ethical considerations discussed herein will empower the participants knowledge, values, experiences, understandings and protocols.

An important focus in this research is also the role of the researcher. Scougall (2002, 3) pointed out that when working in an Indigenous context, the researcher needs:

- To ensure that Aboriginal voices are heard ie the researcher is a facilitator rather than the expert.
- To ensure that the research is focussed on the needs of the Aboriginal participants, not those of the researcher ie to ensure that Aboriginal people guide the direction of the research.
- To build and maintain a trusting relationship with the Aboriginal participants (preferably extending beyond the realms of the research).
- To create opportunities for Aboriginal participants to be actively involved in the research process.

The researcher will maintain her cultural obligations to the participants. First and foremost, the researcher will ensure her cultural obligations are not compromised at any time within the research process and ensure that the process is culturally appropriate for the participants. The researcher will also ensure that the participants knowledge, experiences and values are also not compromised and that with an Indigenous researcher, their story is not misinterpreted, misappropriated and given the sensitivity that it is deserved. As stated by Oxenham in Hoffman (2003, 12) "In the past, many of our people have engaged in research that has actually been disempowering, because they've given their knowledge, which has then been taken away and owned by someone else".

In order to ensure the participants involvement in the research project, the researcher belongs to the Aboriginal community in which this research is taking place. The researcher will ensure all participants are culturally safe by apply the following principles and processes. Scougall (2002, 3) believes
that these basic principles and processes will guide the behaviour of the researcher whilst working within an Indigenous context:

- Honouring and reaffirming Aboriginal culture and identity.
- Validating Aboriginal knowledge, wisdom and ways of doing things (ie: not assuming that western academic thinking is better, more intellectual or some form of 'higher order' thinking because it is seen as scholarly and purports to be detached and unbiased).
- Privileging Aboriginal voices at every stage of the research process (rather than only giving primacy to academic voices).
- Respecting Aboriginal diversity (ie not generalising research findings to other Aboriginal peoples and places).
- Enabling Aboriginal participation to own and control the research process as much as possible.
- Encouraging Aboriginal involvement in the research process, while also allowing Aboriginal people to determine their own level of participation.
- Demystifying the research process for Aboriginal people ie: ‘talking straight’.

The researcher also believes that if the above principles and processes are applied, it will encourage participation of the participants. As an Indigenous person, the researcher is able to work within these principles because it is applying her own Aboriginal terms of reference.

DATA STORAGE

Data will be kept on my private computer file with limited access. Tape recording of interviews will be kept in a secured location with access only available to the participants at their request. A pre-agreement with the participants as co-owners of the research provides these participants with access to their information as and when required. This is a question of trust with the participants that the researcher has arranged as part of the ethical consideration.
DATA PRESENTATION

Creswell (1994, 153) found that "in qualitative analysis several simultaneous activities engage the attention of the researcher: collecting information from the field, sorting the information into categories, formatting the information into a story or picture, and actually writing the qualitative text". This research will be presented in a story format. The story will therefore be more culturally appropriate.
CHAPTER FOUR

LITERATURE REVIEW

I have lived with, was taught and have experienced many things in relation to me as an Aboriginal person in my 38 years. I was born in 1965 and I and other Aboriginal people were not citizens of this country. Since I was a child, I have always known that I was an Aboriginal person, that I belong to the south-west of Western Australia, and that I am a Nyoongar. I have lived with my Nyoongar family, I was taught my Nyoongar values and beliefs. My whole existence was and is Nyoongar. According to Hunter (1993, 201) "individual identity formation is contingent on the way the group(s) to which the individual belongs constructs and articulates its defining characteristics. It is also influenced by the occurrence and understanding of a constellation of personal, family, community and social events experienced during the course of life, particularly childhood".

Throughout my life, because of my experiences I have always been conscious of my Aboriginality. I have had to always defend it from non-Aboriginal people and sometimes maintain it to Aboriginal people. At times, I have felt ashamed because of it and have not always appreciated it. When you are being ridiculed and tormented because of it, you wish you were anything but Aboriginal. Bourke cited in Bourke, Bourke & Edwards (1998, 44) stated that "Few Aborigines are completely comfortable with their Aboriginality. There is a large vacuum of unfulfilled Aboriginal needs. It is these unsatisfied desires - to be able to see oneself as a person of value, to be proud to be an Aborigine, to be able to work at one's own identity and heritage in a positive light which negate all the programs derived for Aboriginal advancement".

However, with the continued support, comfort and protection of family and relatives I have learnt to accept and acknowledge my Aboriginality. Throughout my life, my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and extended families have instilled this in me. It is who I am and today, I have the confidence and respect to appreciate my cultural knowledge and heritage. This acknowledgment also allows me to build pride and integrity in my own identity. As Clark cited in the Australian Psychological Society (2000, 156)
confirmed "I could share my experiences of racism, be understood, comforted, protected, and guarded by my family against some of the effects of racism...my family is my link to my Aboriginality in various ways: biological, cultural, educational and emotional".

Identity

According to the American Psychiatric Association cited in Hunter (1993, 201-202) "identity is defined as 'the sense of self, providing a unity of personality overtime'; personality being 'Deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour, which include the way one relates to, perceives, and thinks about the environment and oneself". This Western understanding is based on the individual. This understanding is also based on the scientific knowledge of conception, gestation and birth. It is also believed that individuals then develop their own character and personality. Yet others believe that individuals are born blank and that self-identity grows from a person's experiences. This is known as the "nature-nurture" debate.

In contrast, Aboriginal people believe conception and birth relate to events in the spiritual world. Grimshaw, Lake, McGrath & Quartly (1994, 12) found that "a spiritual and land-related explanation for conception [and placed] little emphasis on sexual intercourse except in creating a path by which the baby spirit could enter a woman's body". After birth, the child would be given a totemic name and a kinship classification which would identify the child in terms of its relationship to other humans as well as animals, plants and the land. An Aboriginal child lives according to their relationships to people and the environment. Therefore, the Aboriginal child would construct their own identity.

CONSTRUCTIONS OF ABORIGINALITY

This is how Aboriginal people would have normally constructed their own identity. However, this normal process has changed drastically since colonisation. According to Roberts cited in Oxenham et al (1999, 49) "unfortunately, others have historically decided to classify Indigenous people without our consent and by their categories - whether it be by colour, location, language, to what degree we practise traditional way, etc". These classifications have been represented throughout Australia's history. Some
of these include the 'noble savage', inferior, however well-built, heroic, loin-clothed, one foot up, vigilant and later, these became distorted, overweight, lazy and inebriated, with bottle in hand. Pearson (2000, 63) agreed that "There is now a tendency for Aboriginal people to be told what their identity should be. There are a lot of prescriptions about what behaviour, work, interests, endeavours, writing, art, poetry, ambitions, dreams, aspirations - are essentially Aboriginal and those that are not...the autonomy, individuality and creativity of our children should not be stifled by nonsense concepts of 'true identity'."

For too long, Aboriginal identity was previously discussed among non-Aboriginal academics, especially among anthropologists and within the media. Marcia Langton argued for the need for Indigenous identity to be formed by interactions within Indigenous communities and also by representations constructed by non-Indigenous people. Langton requested (1993, 35) that "Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in actual dialogue, be it in a supermarket check-out or in a film co-production. In these exchanges, as in any social interaction, the individuals involved will test imagined models of the other, repeatedly adjusting the models as the responses are processed, to find some satisfactory way of comprehending the other. It is in these dialogues...that working model of Aboriginality are constructed as ways of seeing Aboriginal people, but both the Aboriginal subject and the non-Aboriginal subject are participating".

Dodson (1994, 5) agreed with Langton (1993) and stated that "The right to control one's own identity is part of the broader right to self-determination; that is, the right of a people to determine its political status and to pursue its own economic, social and cultural development". Since this political thrust, Aboriginal people across all spheres, academics, politicians and grassroots have joined the discussion in relation to Aboriginal identity. The issue of identity has become increasingly significant to all Aboriginal people. Dudgeon (2000, 43) agreed and pointed out that "complex dialogue and debate about Indigenous identity is an ongoing process at a political level, and also within the academic sphere with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders participating in this dialogue..."

Dodson (1994, 9) believed that "They are Aboriginalities that arise from our experience of ourselves and our communities. They draw creatively from..."
the past, including experience of colonisation and false representation. But they are embedded in our entire history, a history which goes back a long time before colonisation was even an issue. This definition is inclusive of our history and our experiences. He believes that Aboriginality is based on an individual's experiences. As Aboriginal people, we all have different experiences, these include some of us have lived on reserves, some of us were citizens and others were not, some of us lived with our people and some of us were removed as children and denied our Aboriginality. All of these different experiences make us Aboriginal people. It is these experiences that Dodson acknowledges and that this is significant in relation to our identity as Aboriginal people.

The authors of "A Dialogue on Indigenous Identity: Warts 'n' All" (Oxenham, Cameron, Collard, Dudgeon, Garvey, Kickett, Kickett, Roberts & Whiteway 1999) highlighted some of their experiences as Aboriginal people. Kickett (1999, 44) stated that "the first ten years of my life were spent living on the Aboriginal reserve in York...we had our grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins all living around us". Whereas Roberts (1999, 48) a Nykina woman from the West Kimberley region of Western Australia was raised and educated in Melbourne, Victoria and at 26 years of age found out where she came from. Another author, Whiteway (1999, 50) from Tasmania who has a Palawa mother and a Koori father, has said that her "cultural identity and connectedness has been nurtured and supported by my diverse kin relations and community members". Significantly, all these people have had different life experiences but, are all Aboriginal.

Oxenham in Oxenham, Cameron, Collard, Dudgeon, Garvey, Kickett, Kickett, Roberts & Whiteway (1999, 120) asked the question "What are the reasons for people not identifying? Maybe part of it is because they're ashamed of being Aboriginal". As a child, I lived with shame, ashamed of colour, of being poor, not having the 'proper' things at school, ashamed of my drunken father, ashamed of domestic violence, ashamed of where we lived. Oxenham in Oxenham et al (1999, 120) further stated that "to be Aboriginal or not has to come from some of those feelings. If people chose not to identify, it may be because they're ashamed of it, which might have something to do with their experiences...some of these experiences might be having to 'wear' all the stereotypes about Aboriginal people being lazy and drunk, etc., and all of that. All of us had to wear that negative side". Yet, Aboriginal people have
also lived with pride, strength, love, nurturing, education, spirituality, kindness, sharing, hard work, determination, togetherness and family. I have experienced many of these feelings and behaviours discussed herein throughout my lifetime thus far. No doubt, I will continue to experience many more. However, these experiences are dealt with by many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike. The differences being, is whether or not the individual accepts and acknowledges those experiences. I believe that if individuals choose not to accept them, then unfortunately they more often have a negative impact on that individual's life, whether they are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.

O'Shane (1995, 26) in her article in the Aboriginal & Islander Health Worker Journal agreed that "The impact of that experiences is difficult to comprehend...the psychological impact of these experiences of dispossession, racism, exclusion, extermination, denigration and degradation are beyond description". Many Aboriginal people are unable to cope with the experiences of dislocation from family and land, prejudice, racism, poverty, substance abuse and violence. As a result Aboriginal people will suffer ill health and in particular mental health such as stress, hopelessness, anxiety, low self-esteem and depression. Hunter (1998, 14) agreed that "Traumatisation in an Australian Indigenous context thus demands consideration of: the universality of experience, with the entire population exposed to the collective traumatisation of colonisation and its aftermath...".

1. Discuss colonisation and its impact on Indigenous people and in particular health and wellbeing

According to Smallwood (1996, 2) "the effects of the last 200 years of Australia's history, and its impact of very recent policies, continue to influence the mental health of Australia's indigenous peoples". The impact of the policies were that Aboriginal people were taken away from their families, they were not allowed to attend school, they were restricted entry into towns after a certain time, they were not given the opportunities for employment. The effects of these past policies continue to have a significant impact today. Australia's past history and its policies continues to affect Aboriginal people's health, mental health, social, cultural, economic and environmental factors today. In particular, all of these factors have had a significant impact on Aboriginal people's mental health.
mumps, scarlet fever, diphtheria, tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, granuloma
venereum (another form of venereal disease) and syphilis were mainly
introduced by European colonists". These diseases were of epidemic
proportions, especially smallpox, influenza and other childhood diseases.
They proved to be disastrous within Aboriginal communities, all becoming
equally susceptible, the elderly, parents and children. As stated by Burden
(1994, 193) "Disease spread ahead of European settlement, so that Sturt, on
his riverine journeying in 1828, commented on the piles of bones seen and
the evidence of pox marked faces as testament to the fearful toll taken on
Aboriginal communities". Aboriginal people had no form of immunity against
these diseases and as a result, the death toll was considerable.

20th Century Illness/Health Problems

Haebich (1992, 242) explained that "resemble patterns of living of
dispossessed people throughout the world...like such people, the Aborigines
also experienced considerable stresses and strains". Aboriginal people
throughout the country were forced to move onto reserves set up under the
1905 Act. Nyoongar families throughout the south-west of Western
Australia were forced to live on these reserves set up on the fringes of
townships. The reserves were established to restrict Aboriginal people’s
movement. The facilities on the reserves were often inadequate and food
was scarce which resulted in many families frequently suffered poor health.

According to Hunter (1998, 12) "the encounter between Australia's
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations and European colonisers
has thus been, in essence, an asymmetrical collision of cultures with the
burden of trauma almost exclusively confined to Indigenous individuals,
families and communities". The consequences of the trauma is commonly
associated with social welfare, the criminal justice systems, premature
mortality and excessive morbidity. Aboriginal people’s life expectancy is
some 20 years less than non-Aboriginal people; Aboriginal people are
massively over-represented in the criminal justice system; Aboriginal
children are less likely to complete year 12 high school and therefore, are
more likely to be unemployed. The Commonwealth Grants Commission Report
(2002, 23) found that "the health status of Indigenous Australians is much
poorer than that of other Australians; with high rates of Indigenous infant
mortality; Indigenous morbidity and mortality has shifted from acute
infections and communicable diseases to chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease". Other consequences include high rates of substance abuse, injury, violence and self-harm. The report concluded that whilst there have been significant improvements in Indigenous health, there is still a long way to go.

Moreover, the stress and trauma that Aboriginal people have experienced in the past, is now being felt across the generations and, significantly, this trauma has now been passed on to their children and their grandchildren. This is commonly known as 'transgenerational stress disorder'. This has also been identified as another symptom of dispossession and colonisation confronting Indigenous people.

Reser cited in Reid & Trompf (1991, 249) discussed the impact of stress on Aboriginal people and communities were the pressures and demands of transition - from a traditional lifestyle to a European lifestyle with new values, beliefs and practices were forced upon Aboriginal people; the experience and impact of discrimination and prejudice - because Aboriginal people were different, their difference was inferior to that of Europeans; the marginal social and economic status of most Aboriginal communities - third world living conditions, overcrowding housing, high rates of unemployment, low incomes and low retention rates at high school, and; the condition of the physical environment in which people live, and poor health - many Aboriginal people have shifted into urban areas, where there is easy access to fast food outlets which results in chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. O'Shea (1997, 9) also agreed and stated that mental health of Aboriginal people is an impact of colonisation in that it: "is caused by such things as cultural and social differences, pressures of adjustment of two cultures and lack of identity due to removal from family, land or community. Removal from land, cultural and spiritual places has split Indigenous culture from its roots and caused generations of mental disturbance shown in feelings of loss, alienation and non-acceptance".

As the frontier moved across the country, Aboriginal people were being forced off their traditional country to make way for the introduction of farming, sheep and cattle. As Franklin & White cited in Reid & Trompf (1991, 8) "Colonists regarded the land as an economic asset to be developed
for economic gain”. However, this was in contrast to Aboriginal people, who believed that the land was sacred and that it was a part of them.

Effects of Policies

According to Gray, Trompf & Houston (1991, 93) the "Aborigines Protection Act 1909 resulted in the removal of people from ancestral lands and the settlement of unrelated people in permanent areas such as missions and reserves, which led to familial, social and cultural disruption". As outlined above, large numbers of Aboriginal people were forced off their traditional lands and restricted to reserves and Aboriginal children were removed from their families and communities. As a result, today, many Aboriginal families were fragmented and many were not able to maintain their social and cultural ties to their families under their kinship obligations.

Segregation

Reserves and settlements were set up out of town, usually about 10-12 miles out of the township. Aboriginal people were not allowed in towns after a certain times. Also, those Aboriginal children who were not removed, were not allowed to attend schools. Haebich (1992, 102) found that the policy was based "on a belief in the value of the enforced social isolation of Aborigines, for their own 'better protection and care' and, more importantly, in the interests of the wider community". The policy basically restricted physical movement and also other things, such as employment, access to hotels and other local entertainment.

Assimilation

After the protection policy it was thought that it was time for Aboriginal people to be assimilated into white society. In the 1930s as explained by Gray, Trompf & Houston (1991, 93) the Assimilation policy "was a dual policy involving the acculturation of the mixed race fringe and urban dwellers, and the segregation of traditionally oriented Aborigines". Under assimilation, it was believed that the Aboriginal race could be bred out through 'biological absorption'. They thought that they could control the breeding out of colour in Aboriginal people. This was done by ensuring that quadroons and half-castes would marry each other but were not allowed to marry those darker than themselves. Haebich (1992, 351) that "restrictions on miscenegenation
outside marriage could also act to prevent the continued injection of a darker strain into the community...”.

Self-Determination
According to Eckermann, Dowd, Martin, Nixon, Gray and Chong (1992, 51) “self-determination literally meaning that Aboriginal people should have the right to choose their own destiny, with Government help in an enabling role, providing finance, technical skills, and social and economic support”. During the 1970s, the Aboriginal Medical Services throughout the country were established together with the Aboriginal Legal Services. These services were governed by Aboriginal people who addressed the needs and delivered services that were designed to be culturally appropriate and what the community needed.

2. **Discuss impact of colonisation on identity crisis**

Throughout history Aboriginal people in Australia have been regarded as less than human. As stated by O'Shane (1995, 26) “The racist ideologies that informed the authorities of the day had it that Aborigines were a subhuman species and therefore were not capable of the sensibilities that “civilised” people such as themselves had”. Many of the new colonisers that created these images felt that Aboriginal people weren’t seen to be fit for the new found ‘British’ society. Saggers & Gray (1991, 19) explained that “William Dampier, who sailed along the Kimberley coast, in 1688 judged the Aborigines the ‘miserablest people in the world'”. Other images included nasty, brutish, short, noble savage or the prehistoric beast. Aboriginal people were considered to be the most wretched people on earth and blood thirsty, cunning, ferocious and treacherous, and the lowest type of human creature about. These were just some of the comments that the first colonisers described Aboriginal people of Australia.

Post colonisation, when colonies were formed and laws were made, the laws in place at the time also defined Aboriginal people according to proportions of black blood. The various definitions included 'an Aboriginal native of Australia or any of the islands adjacent or belonging thereto', 'any person of Aboriginal descent whose moral intellectual and physical welfare the board was to promote with a view to their assimilation into the general community'. Then these definitions extended to those children born to Aboriginal women.
whose fathers were non-Aboriginal. These were 'half-caste child whose age does not apparently exceed eighteen years', 'a half-caste male child whose age does not apparently exceed 21 years' and 'every half-caste aged 34 habitually associating and living with an Aboriginal, excluding a person less than quadroon blood who was born prior to the thirty first day of December 1936' (Dodson, 1994, 2). The terminology used for Aboriginal people since colonisation has varied considerably. It is little wonder that Aboriginal people have had and continue to have identity issues today. In a parliamentary debate in New South Wales recently, David Oldfield (2003, 2) said that "Their history is a simple matter. The same thing happened day after day for thousands of years. The only thing unique about the Aboriginal people is that they never got out of the Stone Age, and without intervention never would have...". Unfortunately, these racist comments and view are still alive and kicking today.

**Cultural Differences**

Colonisation, as in 1788, continues to have an impact on Aboriginal people in Australia today. Aboriginal people were considered inferior to Europeans, were not citizens of their own country, were removed from the traditional lands, and were denied their cultural heritage. So too their children, they were removed from their parents, were unable to speak their language, were taught to be white, were denied their identity, their culture and their heritage. According to Wanganeen (2001, 12) cited in the Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal she said that "loss of an entire culture or part therefore for many groups included many spoken languages; deaths, massacres, and/or diseases; land; traditional medicines; traditional foods; religious rites and practices...". Aboriginal people throughout Australia's history have been dispossessed, institutionalised and separated from their families. Today, Aboriginal people have a mental disturbance and have feelings and behaviours that restrict their culture, their job opportunities and their social life. This in turn increases their physical ill-health and mental distress in relation to their identity.
3. Discuss changing places in Indigenous community and its impact on value system

According to Stafford cited in Furze and Stafford (1994, 289) Aboriginal people since colonisation have been "alienated from their land by the colonising forces, attempts have since been made to exterminate, control, protect, segregate, assimilate and integrate Aborigines". Aboriginal families in Australia have been undergoing change since European settlement. These changes have had a detrimental impact on family, parent's roles, Aboriginal kinship rules, regulations and obligations and the unique social structure of Aboriginal society. Significantly, these changes have taken place over the past 200 years. As Hunter (1993, 209) stated "Aboriginal cultures, resilient in the face of pre-contact ecological transformations, have had to adapt to unprecedented social and ecological changes brought about the recent intrusion of Europeans".

This social structure within Aboriginal society is interrelated with their traditional kinship system. This system has specific rules and regulations by which each person must relate. These values are taught from a young age and passed on by elders within their kinship group. These values relate to how a person behaves, how a person relates to another person, what a person's obligations are to their family and extended families. Hunter (1998, 11) found that "centralisation and dislocation invariably challenged the traditional equilibrium...the roles of adult Aborigines as parents and providers, and as the transmitters and teachers of culture, were systematically undermined".

Family

Bourke & Edwards cited in Bourke, Bourke & Edwards (1994, 100) found that "Aboriginal family life has been irreversibly changed in most of Australia. Many of the changes have come about merely by the presence of Europeans in this country...many others are attributable to the direct actions of the colonisers, actions which were deliberately aimed at destroying family life as it existed in Aboriginal society". These changes primarily relate to Aboriginal people's kinship and family structures. These have become fragmented because of colonisation and government policies. Both kinship and family structures were significant to Aboriginal society. It enabled
individuals to know their place, and how they relate to other people within that society. Bourke & Edwards (1994, 100) stated that "Aboriginal kinship and family structures are still cohesive forces which bind Aboriginal people together in all parts of Australia...they provide psychological and emotional support". However, these values and traditional structure changed dramatically since colonisation and the pressure of mainstream society and their values.

The removal of Aboriginal children from their families and communities took place throughout Australia from the period 1860 in Victoria through to 1911 in South Australia and the Northern Territory (HREOC, 1997, 10-11). In Western Australia it was the 1905 Aborigines Act (WA) that appointed a Chief Protector of Aboriginal people within the Aborigines Department. Local protectors were then appointed, which consisted of police and those within the public service. Haebich (1992, 91) explained that "local protectors were called on to enforce the provisions of the 1905 Act, attend to the welfare of local Aborigines, represent Aborigines in court, provide the Department with statistical information and reports on individual Aborigines, and exercise a general supervision over all matters relating to Aborigines in their area".

According to Dudgeon (2000, 44) "the taking away of Aboriginal children and placing them into institutions to train them for living in White society, has had a widespread and profound impacts on the Indigenous people of this country". The reasoning behind the policy was to implant Christian qualities of obedience, punctuality and religious training. The removed children were also trained as domestics and farmhands.

Bourke & Edwards (1994, 102) found that "These people have been institutionalised, fostered, or adopted, loved, hated or ignored. They all share the mental torment of not belonging in the society into which European Australia had decided to put them. Australian society accepted the young Aboriginal children into its institutions but rejected them when they became adults". This is where many of those that were removed had difficulty adjusting to normal life once they left these institutions. Many of them did not know how to relate to family when they did return, others were not accepted and some did not return at all. Even today, some are still seeking to find their families, wanting to know their Aboriginal ancestry.
Those children that were taken away are now referred to as the 'Stolen Generation'. These children now adults are wanting to know their belonging, their family, and their Aboriginal identity.

Bourke & Edwards (1994, 102) discussed “the psychological scars and damage to self-concepts are immeasurable for those removed from their families”. They suffer the effects of being deprived of parental care and affection. Many of the children were abused, both physically and sexually. The children, now adults have suffered loss of heritage, language, culture and a sense of belonging and their sense of identity. When those children were removed, they left behind their mothers who themselves have suffered a personal loss, helplessness, and low self-esteem. Many of them felt inadequate as mothers and as women. Some of them never got to see their children again. Many of them died, not ever knowing what happened to their children. Bourke & Edwards (1994, 103) agreed and stated the Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families found that “there has been a great loss of heritage, language and culture and many people have been left with nowhere to belong and no sense of identity”.

As a result, there are now many Aboriginal people who suffer mental health problems of depression, anxiety, insecurity and feelings of worthlessness with lack of trust and intimacy. However, as pointed out by Dudgeon (2000, 44) “A counsellor is unlikely to see many Indigenous clients presenting with specific identity related problems, although there will be problems that inevitably derive from identity issues”. Some of the problems that Aboriginal people are experiencing relate to alcohol abuse, anger, violence, suicide, substance abuse, anxiety and depression. Many of these psychological affects are still being felt in Aboriginal society today.

**Kinship**

The term kinships as defined by Bourke & Edwards (1994, 104) refers to “people who are of the same sex and belong to the same sibling line are viewed as essentially the same”. An Aboriginal family household can sometimes include a father, mother, their children, the mother's sister or brother, and his/her child/ren or the mother's parent/s. There can be a number of people in one household. It is not uncommon for there to be 10
people in one Aboriginal family household. Therefore, all the children in the household would be brothers and sisters and they refer to the mother's sister as mother also, so they have two mothers. Both mothers have equal responsibility for cooking, caring, teaching and disciplining each other's children.

Dodson (2003, 10) cited in ATSIC News said that "the kinship system in Aboriginal communities is a pervasive and powerful force. Family ties and extended relationships underpin how people interact, including which individuals have obligations toward each other, and individuals they should avoid". This is the way many Aboriginal families were regulated and in many traditional remote communities today this is how they are. However, those Aboriginal families that moved to urban and rural communities have had to adapt because of the social pressures and unacceptance of living in overcrowded conditions among non-Aboriginal people. Bourke & Edwards (1994, 104) "Aboriginal society places greater emphasis on social identity, membership of a group and the obligations and responsibilities of individuals to confirm to the expectations of others".

Urban kinship and families

Today, many Aboriginal families for different reasons, have moved into urban cities and rural towns. Some of these reasons relate to education, health, employment and housing. However, these families have retained much of their traditional kinship system as was taught to them by their ancestors. Many of these families have also retained their values, beliefs, identity and some language. Bourke & Edwards (1994, 119) supported this "Aboriginal kinship ties, values, beliefs, identity and language are maintained by the family. The continuance of Aboriginal society is dependent on keeping Aboriginal families strong and healthy both physically and culturally".

Today, a lot of Aboriginal families are of mixed descent, with many Aboriginal people marrying into non-Aboriginal groups. However, they still identify as Aboriginal people because they have knowledge of their family and their belonging. Bourke & Edwards (1994, 113) also point out that "Aboriginal families in urban and rural areas have developed a culture of their own through family, community and organisational structures. These structures give them psychological and physical support and provide
security”. Aboriginal people that live in these areas also come from different regions and may not belong to the one language group or even country. So, they draw on each other for support and form their own cultural group and come together with growing pride in their Aboriginality.

Dodson cited in ATSIC News (2003, 10) declared that “There is a strong sense of reciprocity between Aboriginal people. Adults have ongoing commitments to one another, and to other younger and older members of the community. All disputes are resolved by kinship structures of reciprocity...senior lawmen or elders receive great respect”. This may have been the case a long time ago, but given the immense socio-economic problems and its consequences of alcohol and substance abuse, reciprocity and respect among Aboriginal people is not as strong as it once was. As Bourke & Edwards (1994, 114) found that “Aboriginal families are subjected to enormous acculturation pressures, as well as psychological, social and economic stresses”. These stresses have destroyed the values of reciprocity and respect within Aboriginal families.

Overall, despite these irreversible changes, Aboriginal families are still considered to be the strength of Aboriginal communities and its culture. The knowledge of one’s Aboriginal family, culture and heritage will emphasize an Aboriginal person’s identity. Loss of cultural values, family and heritage will affect an individual’s Aboriginal identity. To maintain a strong Aboriginal identity, an individual must keep their Aboriginal values, family and cultural heritage. Bourke & Edwards (1994, 119) agreed stating that “Aboriginal kinship ties, values, beliefs, identity and language are maintained by the family. The continuance of Aboriginal society is dependent upon keeping Aboriginal families strong and healthy both physically and culturally”.

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CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

This chapter will outline the findings that have emerged from the interviews conducted with the participants involved in the research project. The interviews were a result of in-depth questions (see Appendix A). The main issues that have resulted from this research include education, family, roles and relationships, Nyoongar values, identity and how these can be maintained by Nyoongar people. These issues will be discussed in more detail throughout the Chapter.

NYOONGAR FAMILY

Most of the participants agreed that their families included everyone within both their immediate family and extended family. They have indicated that there was no distinction between the two.

"My own family, my brothers and sisters, mother and father, grandparents, aunties and uncles from both sides, cousins they are all my mob" and "mum, dad, brothers and sisters, cousins, aunties, uncles...all one".

Of the sample, only one participant made the distinction between immediate family and extended family stating that

"my family is my immediate family, my brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews. My other family is my extended family so that's my uncles, aunties and cousins".

When Aboriginal people refer to their family, they include everyone that is related to them. This will be their parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins. They include everyone within their kinship group. I believe that Aboriginal families today have changed significantly. A lot of families, especially within urban and rural areas live in a household that consist of a father, mother and their children. The parents are more concerned with their own children. I think this has happened because of various reasons.
Some of these are outlined below. Many Aboriginal families live in the wider community and they have had to adapt and are pressured into living a more nuclear family households. A lot of Aboriginal families choose not to live in overcrowded conditions on a daily basis. Some Aboriginal families However, when there is a death in the family and funerals to attend they have obligations to fulfil.

'The closeness has gone'
Some of the changes within the family that the participants identified related to closeness of relationships between the family such as:

"...the closeness has gone" and "this family not as close as we was before maybe once or twice every three months or something like that it all depends on what's happening...to me, its not close like we was before".

Another participant further stated that families today, are

"not as close as they used to be, not looking after one another, when we were growing up we were always together and looked after one another".

Closeness within family relationships seems to have had the biggest impact in relation to Nyoongar family breakdown. I believe this has happened because families don't live together anymore. For various reasons many family members move away from where they have grown up because of education, employment, health, sporting and housing opportunities. For instance, my father grew up in the south-east wheatbelt region of Western Australia but, because of his football abilities he moved to Perth to play in the WA football league. As a result, my family have lived most of our lives in the Perth urban area where we have gained an education and employment. These opportunities may not have been available in rural regions.

Physical distance
Three participants also stated that distance affects families relationships stating that
"a lot of my family live in the country areas, whereas I live in Perth and only some of my family, immediate family live close to me in Perth"

and

"family that don’t live in Northam, I probably see them once a month maybe once a year depending on the situation yeh"

also, that

"five of them live in Bunbury, so I hardly see them. I've only got one up here with me, four girls down there and one boy...I hardly see them cause I don’t go anywhere".

However, one participant stated that the family has changed significantly, in that

"everybody sort of like being independent and want to be on their own, and before families always used to be together you know".

Distance may also attribute to lack of family closeness because of the factors mentioned above. Another reason why families have changed is that a lot of Aboriginal people are marrying outside their own language groups and therefore move away to their partner’s country which could be the other end of the State. Unfortunately, because of the distance and finances, many families would only get the chance to see one another at funerals or other special occasions.

Pressures of other roles
One participant stated that today’s families have too many roles, responsibilities and pressures in their communities, work and studies. Therefore, they are unable to meet their own family commitments, stating that

"the roles that we do the responsibilities that we have plus with our own children, nieces and nephews all the extended family, that there are so many pressures".
Three of the participants work and study full time and have community interests for example, one is an ATSIC councillor, another is a youth leader with the local church group and another is the town local football coach. These outside roles and responsibilities also affects their relationships with their own families, their wives and children but also how often they see other family members, ie: brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews.

Many Aboriginal people today take on other roles and responsibilities outside of their families. These commitments either relate to personal, professional or their community development. A lot of Aboriginal people volunteer their time to community organisations as committee members. In my own personal experience, I work fulltime, study fulltime and my job requires me to travel extensively throughout the year. I am away from home for up to three or four weeks at a time every eight weeks. Unfortunately, depending on these personal, professional and community commitments, the family can sometimes be given the least priority.

Need to rebuild family relations
Participants also recognised the need to rebuild family relationships stating that:

"I would like to see my brother and my sisters and the extended family still have that closeness and I think maybe because our age a bit older then and I think in 20 years it will be good that its sort of like that visa versa that we go back into our parents' role that when we was young we be the elders and yarn around to our great grannies or grannies"

Also,

"Probably close together, maybe more family involvement as well not just special occasions maybe all the family get together say once a month keep track of each other and see how things are going not just at funerals and special occasions...hopefully family will be strong enough to meet each other once a month and see how things are".
If families today are given least priority, then there is a definite need to rebuild family relationships. I think because of the social, political and economic reasons outlined above, families have become less significant. However, if Aboriginal people want to retain their cultural values, they must give their families the time and energy that they deserve. They must maintain their family relationships and not take on too many roles and responsibilities. Nyoongar people need to look within their families and address these issues and prioritise what is important to them.

Health and wellbeing

Another participant stated that

"I would like to see them around you know with their health, health is very important issue with Aboriginal people".

However, another participant stated that

"I always say to my kids I'm going home to stay and they know where home is, Shackleton cos I want to go back home all the time...down here its harming all the kids nowadays".

Given the health status of many Aboriginal people today, it is important that Nyoongar people be aware of health issues that can affect them. Aboriginal people have become susceptible to diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and kidney failure. In my family, both parents have diabetes, my mother died of a heart attack when living with diabetes for 17 years and suffered kidney failure. Today, my father is a chronic asthmatic and recently diagnosed with diabetes. He tries to maintain a healthy diet and exercises regularly with 30 minute walks around his local park everyday. However, because he is a pensioner, he is not always able to afford fresh nutritional foods. Moreover, these diseases discussed herein are lifestyle diseases and can be controlled if managed appropriately and with the necessary resources. In addition to these chronic diseases, Aboriginal people have also had to deal with stress and trauma since colonisation and as a consequence, today suffer anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, suicide and other mental health disorders.
NYOONGAR VALUES

Respect

Most of the participants explained the importance of respect in Nyoongar families stating that

"Respect is number one... work, education, when you start your own family you got something there for them, and when your family grow up you expect the same" and "Respect your elders that's a big value for Aboriginal people and Nyoongars"

Also

"Respect and to respect one another, our kids respect their aunties and uncles and to teach them about culture and about their own identity, who they are, Nyoongar, Yamatji or Wongi but, to respect each culture in the Aboriginal culture as well".

The participants explained the importance of respect but, that in many families today it no longer exists, especially among young people. They have no respect for their parents, grandparents, siblings and for themselves. Whilst I was growing up, my parents taught me to never back answer adults. I was always told to respect my parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles. If I was caught being disrespectful, I would get a belting. I believe that parents today are not able to teach children respect, discipline and values because the State through the education system is teaching our children something different. They are taught to know their rights and this with other factors such as past policies and practices have taken away the parents roles in teaching values and culture to their children.

Looking after each other

Another important value amongst participants was looking after one another and support such as

"helping people out when they need it and just being there for family no matter what they do or what happens"

and
"looking after each other, supporting each other's roles, looking after family when sick, sharing is massive, be it knowledge, food, resources and general, money, yeah"

also

"they used to say love your family and all stick together and you know you will be right then"

also

"love and support of my family, to see all my grannies grow up with love".

Growing up in large families, Aboriginal people have been taught from childhood to always look after each other, and through their childhood socialisation processes, Aboriginal children learn more from their older siblings. I have grown up in a large family and with older brothers and cousins who would often look after me when we went places without our parents. Today, this is a strength that we have within our own family. We have worked most of our lives and are today able to provide each other with the support and resources as and when required. We all look after one another, especially our father and ensure that he is cared for. I think that Nyoongar families are looking after one another but may not have the resources to do so.

Role as parents in passing values to children
Many of the participants had said passing the values that they knew onto their children is significant. These values were taught to them by their parents, grandparents and aunties and uncles. They are now teaching their own children and grandchildren these same values.

"My mum and dad, grandparents when they were alive, gone on through the family, both sides of the family"

and

"my parents, aunties, uncles, brothers, grandparents, elders within the community".
Passing on values that were taught to them by their family is very important to Nyoongar people. In order for identity, knowledge, values and culture be maintained, parents must pass on these to their children. From my own personal experience, I pass on the knowledge of Nyoongar culture that I know to my nieces and nephews. Everything that was taught to me by my parents, I will pass on to my nieces and nephews. This is the way it was has been done for generations and we need to maintain that practice in order for our Nyoongar culture to live.

**Education**

Two other participants said that within their families, the change has occurred towards gaining further education. They stated that

"Everyone is starting to get an education, a degree that I have noticed" and "I see it in my family, tertiary qualifications and studies are more prominent".

Another participant stated that education is important value passed on by his father

"to go to school get a good education so that you get a job when you leave school and set yourself up for the rest of your life, I don't know any different".

Many of the participants emphasised the importance of family gaining an education for the future and made the following comments:

"I would like to see the whole family get a bit more education I suppose never too old to learn, new skills, new studies practical or knowledge but all broaden their horizons and grow within themselves";

"I think that education is important and it's setting a role model for the younger generations". And;

"I'd like to see most of them finish school, get a good education and get themselves a life...I'd like to see them all working and have good jobs".

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"Education it gives you the knowledge, it helps with your lifestyle with your health in a holistic way".

"Hopefully, with high paying jobs, more like role models for other Indigenous people".

Most of the participants identified the importance of education for Aboriginal people and their families. My parents encouraged us to go to school regularly and told us the importance of an education. My experience at school was similar to that of other Aboriginal people, prejudices and racism was a regular occurrence. I basically just did what I was asked to do, there was no incentives at school for Aboriginal students do well, we were all advised to do manual and secretarial options. I then went on to a secretarial college obtained a diploma and started my first job when I was 17 years of age. Due to the limited career opportunities, I decided to return to mature age education completing a university bridging course and enrolling in a few degrees before choosing my current studies of a Bachelor of Health Science degree.

NYOONGAR IDENTITY
Most of the participants felt a strong sense of pride when asked how they felt about their Nyoongar identity. They agreed that it was also about your family, your people and your country it gives them a sense of belonging.

"my kids are half castes and the main value that I need to install in them is that they never lose their Aboriginality which is a big key for them and not to lose the fact that they have Aboriginal and to respect all Aboriginal because they are one and even though things have changed and we are not together they need to realise that the Aboriginal that is in them that they need to respect all those things. That is a value that I will tell my kids never lose sight of the fact that your Aboriginal because you always will be".

"My Nyoongar identity is important to me because it is who I am, who my people are my family are and which area I am from which country, so yeah its very important to me. I feel proud, I know who I
am, and nobody can take that away from me and I will let people know, those that don't know me, let them know who I am and where I come from. I am proud of who I am”.

I am proud to be Nyoongar and being an Aboriginal’. “I feel proud, my family ties into four south-west regions of WA...so we cover a fairly large area in the south-west...very proud”.

I believe that knowing your identity is very important for Aboriginal people. If you know where you belong and who your family are, it builds a strong sense of identity, a sense of pride in who you are. I also believe that this pride also enables Aboriginal people to deal with self-esteem and confidence issues. All of which may impact on Aboriginal people’s health and wellbeing.

Teaching children their Nyoongar identity
The participants acknowledged the importance of teaching their children about their Nyoongar identity. It enables the children to acknowledge their family, their country and where they belong.

“I would just hand it on pass it on, those taught from the old people, keep old way, I mean its time to change, but its best that they know where they come from and keep that traditional path going”.

“Its just yarning to them about who their family are, their kinship and the names and where the families come from the town or the country and whereabouts they maybe born so its all of that and its really the family names, towns where they were born and grandparents and everything like that”.

“Just continue to be proud of being a Nyoongar and passing information on to whoever you talk about, about your identity as a Nyoongar...when I have children and grandchildren I will pass that on yes, so the individual will have to pass it on whenever they have the chance”.

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"Talking to them finding out what they want more important instead of telling them left them have a talk as well, let them know the real life".

"Well, for a start, I am teaching my great grandson Nyoongar talk and he wants to know all about it, he asks me to teach him words because they learn Nyoongar language at school but, he's too young so he comes home to me and asks me, so I teach him...so he can carry it on".

The reasons as outlined above, in teaching children and passing down their cultural heritage is very important, as is their Nyoongar identity. They grow up with a sense of belonging to country, to family and people. Nyoongar people must yarn with their children, tell them stories about their grandparents and family. Language is also very important. As a child, I grew up as a Nyoongar not until I started school that I learnt that I was also an Aboriginal. My whole existence during childhood was Nyoongar, that was all I knew. As I got older I, I was labled the generic term 'Aboriginal'. However, I think it is important for Aboriginal people to keep their language/local group identity because it can minimise its significance and people's identity.

**Maintaining Nyoongar identity**

"Through sharing their knowledge, their language, ways of doing things, specific Nyoongar way, keeping it within he region of Nyoongar people...probably for Nyoongar elders of the family and members".

"I think it's owned by the family group, entire family groups altogether as far as being relayed on orally, verbally and physically. I suppose...usually other family members, elders of each group, family groups, grandparents, aunties and uncles mother and father".

"I reckon just to learn Nyoongar language and because of us Nyoongars don't know the language, but to yarn to people that know it and to teach about the language. Some of us talk some of the language like 'mardong', but its not ongoing we need to talk it consistently".
As with all Aboriginal people, maintaining their culture is imperative. Nyoongar people were the first Aboriginal people colonised in Western Australia and have therefore have experienced the most significant loss of culture. Nyoongar language is only spoken by a few, and must be retrieved before it is lost forever. I believe, that despite being first colonised here in Western Australia, Nyoongar people have maintained their culture. I know my family, my country, my values and my beliefs. I have my culture and knowledge that identifies me as a Nyoongar person.

These are some of the issues that the participants have identified in this research project. The following chapter will discuss these in relation to the literature review.
CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The research was conducted in 2003, with semi-structured interviews being administered in July to October 2003. The interview schedules were designed to allow participants to address questions in a dialogue format. The interviews were taped in order to permit flow in the discourse. The main focus of the questions however focused on participant perspective of issues raised in the questions.

All taped interviews were transcribed in its original context and can be found in Appendix 2. Analysis of the transcribed accounts indicated

The findings from the interviews are presented in the following way:
- Question headings;
- Responses; and
- Literature.

Questions:

Family
1) Who are your family?
2) How often do you see your family?
3) Do you feel your family have changed during the past 10/20 years?
4) Where would you like to see your family in 20 year?

Responses
Most of the participants have identified their family to include everyone related to them, their parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles and cousins. Only one participant made the distinction between family and extended family. Some of the changes identified by the participants in relation to the family are closeness of relationships; physical distance between families; pressures of personal, professional and community roles; the need to rebuild family relationships; and, health and wellbeing of relatives.
Literature

Bourke & Edwards (1994) found that these changes have come about by the presence of Europeans which deliberately set out to destroy family life as it existed in Aboriginal society. The removal of Aboriginal children from their families as discussed by Dudgeon (2000) and Bourke & Edwards (1994) has had a huge impact on Nyoongar families and their kinship system and social relationships as with the rest of the Aboriginal population throughout the country. However, the literature also said that if Aboriginal culture across Australia is to survive, then the families must retain their strength both culturally and physically.

Nyoongar Values

5) What are important Nyoongar values?
6) Who taught you these values?
7) Is it important to pass these values on?

Nyoongar Values

Responses

The Nyoongar values that were identified by the participants were respect; looking after one another; education; and passing on values to their children. The participants advised that respect among families is very important. However, some of them had stated that it no longer exists among the younger generation. Most of the participants explained the role of parents, aunts, uncles and elders to teach their children the values that were taught to them as children. The participants also highlighted the value of education within Aboriginal families.

Literature

Clark (2000) stated that family provide understanding, comfort, protection and guard when there are issues to be dealt with. Dodson (2003) also confirmed that the kinship system within Aboriginal families is a pervasive and powerful force which underpin family ties, relationships and obligations. Bourke & Edwards (1994) also confirmed that the family in Aboriginal society provides psychological and emotional support. Bourke & Edwards (1994) also agreed that kinship, values, beliefs identity and language are maintained by the family. Therefore, if Nyoongar people are to maintain their strong family and kinship systems then, they will be able to maintain their culture and importantly, their values. Haebich (1992) pointed out that
many Nyoongar children who were not removed onto missions were not allowed to attend schools. This may be one of the reasons why education today is a value for these participants.

**Nyoongar Identity**

9) How do you feel about your Nyoongar identity?
10) How do you know that you are Nyoongar?
11) How do you teach your children their Nyoongar identity?
12) How do Nyoongar people maintain their identity?

**Responses**

All the participants acknowledged the importance of their Nyoongar identity. They stated that their acknowledgment gives them a sense of pride in country, belonging and family. The participants confirmed their Nyoongar identity with knowledge of family and their belonging. They also advised that Nyoongar identity should be taught to children by way of yarns and stories of their family, places and language. The participants advised that Nyoongar identity can be maintained if parents, relatives and elders take responsibility and teach their children, grandchildren about their Nyoongar culture and identity on an ongoing basis.

**Literature**

Dodson (1994) and Oxenham et al (1999) confirmed that Aboriginal identity is based on Aboriginal people's experiences of themselves and their community. As diverse as Aboriginal people are throughout the country, so too are their experiences. Some Aboriginal people are positive experiences of their identity which in turn shows pride. Yet others have negative experiences of their identity, which in turn brings shame. Oxenham et al (1999) stated that if there are experiences of shame, then it more likely is as a result of those experiences. Clark (2000) said that her family provided support, comfort and protection when facing those negative issues of racism. Some of those experiences that Aboriginal people and Nyoongar people in particular have had can have devastating psychological affects O'Shane (1995) and Hunter (1998). Through these experiences of dispossession, racism, exclusion, extermination, denigration and degradation, many Aboriginal people are unable to cope and suffer stress, hopelessness, anxiety and depression. This contributes to ill-health and mental health. All of which prior to 1788 according to Saggers & Gray (1991) was non-existent.
CONCLUSION
This research has found that the family is an important component of the maintenance of Aboriginal culture, values and identity. I believe Nyoongar people in Western Australia have maintained their Aboriginal culture, values and identity despite being the first group of Aboriginal people colonised in this Western Australia. They have been able to do this through their families. Nyoongar families are very diverse and have had different experiences but, they have maintained their Aboriginal culture.

The participants who took part in the study identified several changes that have resulted because of colonisation and the influences of non-Aboriginal ways. These changes relate specifically to family, Nyoongar values and Nyoongar identity. In relation to the family, the closeness of family relationships, the physical distance of families, the pressures of other roles within their personal, professional and community life; need to rebuild family relationships, health and wellbeing. The changes relating to Nyoongar values that were identified are respect, looking after each other, education and passing on values to their children. Finally, in relation to Nyoongar identity, they have said that they have pride in their identity, that they know their family, country and belonging which strengthens their identity. They have also stated that Nyoongar identity can be maintained if families, parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles all teach the children about Nyoongar culture by yarning, stories and talking to the children. The literature reviewed in this research project concurs with the various findings which validates the research undertaken.

LIMITATIONS
The research has identified some limitations in relation to the sample. This research project mainly involved participants from two Nyoongar families. However, Nyoongar country is very large and diverse. It is inclusive of some 12 tribal groups according to Tindale (1940). Therefore it is the intention that the comments emerged from this particular research does not necessarily reflect those of other Nyoongar families in Western Australia. Of the eight participants involved in the research, four participants are currently studying or have completed a tertiary qualification. Two of the participants work within the education system in teaching and learning roles, which may indicate why education is important for these people.
This research project only had eight participants involved in the research. This population size did not enhance the validity and reliability of comments and findings. The larger the sample, a better the validity and reliability. With this research project, access to the participants was made possible because of the proximity of the group. However, with a larger sample, access may be problematic because again, the Nyoongar region is a large area of the south-west of Western Australia. Nyoongar politics, values and protocols are very diverse within this region. Also, had this project been given a funded grant, this could have enabled the research to gain a more comprehensive sample group and travel throughout the large Nyoongar region. The time constraints for the honours program is very limited to complete the study, given more time, the research could have been developed to include greater review of literature and a larger sample groups.

FUTURE RESEARCH

If further research is undertaken, it is recommended that the following issues need to be addressed:-

- a larger sample population to take into account the diversity of Nyoongar people; and
- more time be permitted to undertake the research to enable travel throughout the large Nyoongar country.
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APPENDICES
INTRODUCTION

My name is Cheryl Davis, I am a fourth year student at Yooroang Garang, School of Indigenous Health Sciences, University of Sydney. I am currently undertaking an Honors research project entitled "Nyoongar families in Western Australia: Changes of identity and how values have changed and how they impact on identity". I will ask you a set of questions, about 15 in total. I would like to record our interview however, it is up to you and you can request to stop record at any time.

PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Could you give me your age and date of birth?
2. Are you male or female?
3. Are you working at the moment?
4. Could you give me a brief history on your schooling?

QUESTIONS

FAMILY

1. When were you born?
2. Who brought you up?
3. Who are your family?
4. Who are your extended family?
5. How often do you see your family/extended family?
6. Do you feel your family/extended has changed during the past 20 or 30 years?
7. Where would you like to see your family in 20 years?
   - relationships
   - elders - roles; teaching; traditional
   - younger generation - relationship with older people; respect
   - parents relationships
   - maintaining family contact: culture/kinship/values and traditions

VALUES

1. What do you feel are important Nyoongar values, that were taught to you by your parents?
2. Who taught you these values?
3. Has there been anything in your life experiences that has changed the values that you were brought up by?
4. How important do you think it is to pass your values on to your children and grandchildren?
5. Do you think that it is right to pass those values on to your family?
6. Why is that important?
   - respect/sharing/education/work/etc
   - experiences
   - changes
   - maintaining

Identity
1. What do you feel about your identity as a Nyoongar person?
2. Have you had any problems with your Nyoongar identity?
3. How do you know that you are Nyoongar?
4. How do you teach your children about their Nyoongar identity?
5. How do you maintain your Nyoongar identity when issues/problems come up in the media about Aboriginal/Nyoongar people?
6. How does you and your family cope/feel about your Nyoongar identity?
7. Does your Nyoongar identity affect your health?
   - where they come from;
   - who they are;
   - know their country;
   - coping/dealing with racism/prejudices etc;
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PARTICIPANT NO. 1

Q: Where and when were you born?
A: I was born in Wagin, 25th November, 1939.

Q: Where were you brought up and who brought you up?
A: My mum and dad brought me up at Kwolyin, Bruce Rock.

Q: How many brothers and sisters do you have?
A: 16 brothers and sisters.

Q: So you lived in a house?
A: Lived in a tent

Q: So you lived in a tent with 16 brothers and sisters?
A: Yeh, it was a tent a big army tent.

Q: Okay when did you go to school, at what age?
A: When I was six.

Q: Okay, and what was school like?
A: Very hard to explain because I didn't know too much about it them days, we were just stuck in a class and expected to get on with it like, you had one teacher for about 25 kids in a country school.

Q: And what were you taught, reading, writing, maths and that sort of stuff.
A: Yeh, yes we did, I was hit with a book from the teacher the first day, I was dozing off so he threw the book at me, literally, I got up and went home, and never went back for a few days.

Q: And what did your parents say to that?

A: Well dad was away, and I had mum beat, she just went along with it, until dad come home on the weekend and she told him, but yeah I got back to school.

Q: Okay, so can you tell me who you know as your family? Your family and extended family, so who you were brought up with.

A: Garletts, Bennells, my other uncle and aunties on the Davis’ and brothers and sisters and Aunty Dot and Uncle John Collard’s family, yeah.

Q: Okay, when you say you grew up with your family, did this include all your aunties, uncles and cousins.

A: No.

Q: No, was just your own family, your mother, father, brothers and sisters

A: Yes, and the Garletts.

Q: And the Garletts are they on your mother’s side or your fathers.

A: My mum’s side of family.

Q: So, when you lived in Kwolyin was it a reserve, an Aboriginal reserve or what was it?

A: It was just a camp, at the back of the township of Kwolyin.

Q: Do you feel or have you felt that your family, the family that you describe here has changed during the past 20 or 30 years?
A: We have all grown up, got married and got families of our own and moved away from one another I think, but still very strong with our relationships.

Q: Okay, so you see them very often?

A: Yes, often enough I think.

Q: What about your extended family? When you say family, does that include extended family?

A: Yeh, I'd say so, it's the same.

Q: Just for the record, like extended family come from watjella term hey, but when we say family, we include our?

A: Cousins, inlaws, second cousins, the lot.

Q: So everyone that we are related to?

A: Yep.

Q: So how often do you see your cousins and second cousins?

A: See some of them we don't see for one or two years but others we see every week, second week or whatever.

Q: Why is that, is that because you live in different areas or don't mix in the same circles, why is that?

A: A lot of my family live in the country areas, whereas I live in Perth and only some of my family, immediate family live close to me in Perth.

Q: Okay, what do you think are important values to Nyoongar people, that you were taught, what values were you brought up on, you know that you have taught your kids?
A: To go to school, get a good education so that you get a job when you leave school and set yourself up for the rest of your life, I don't know any different.

Q: Okay, what about the values that were taught to by your mum and dad?

A: My dad said to us I want all you kids to get a good education, white people got this land now so we got to what's name with them and he said we got to live and work with them and I want you kids to get a good education and you get out and work and look after your kids when you grow up too and that was when old grandmother, my mum sent for her mum, to get over here old Tom is getting right away from blackfellas, right, bringing her kids up. She came and built her thing, right in front of our doorway and said I'm not shifting my mia mia from here until I can have the kids for two hours a night. That's right. Dad said all right then, she shifted her thing away, and as soon as we had tea we used to go there and have two hours with her every night, and that went on for four or five years.

Q: True, and what did she do in that two or three hours?

A: She told us yarns, about how she was brought up with her family, and all these things, well she was in her eighties when she told us these things and she lived a long life, she brought up 12 or 13 kids of her own.

Q: And this is your mum's mum?

A: Yes, dad agreed to let her do that see, she said that otherwise my grannies going to grow up without knowing their Aboriginality.

Q: So your dad gave into that?

A: Yeh, he did.

Q: Yeh, and do you see that as a good thing?
A: Oh yeh, I'll never forget that.

Q: And so she did that to all the kids.

A: Yeh, to all of us, she was there all that time, well she died with us see, Mark, Kerry and Wendy were only little fellows, Wendy might not remember her.

Q: So she taught you yarns, what about language, did she teach you language.

A: Oh yeh, see when we grew up a bit bigger and we started work, Aunty Stella shifted just outside of Kwolyin/Shackleton, we lived at ????, they shifted before town so grandmother shifted there and as we were going to school she would get all us kids, from their camps, I had left school, but Sue and they would all have yarn with them at their camp, there was about 14 or 15 kids there.

Q: So she used to take you around the bush and stuff?

A: Yeh, and about bardies, and

Q: So she would teach you traditional foods?

A: Oh yeh, that was very important, oh yeh.

Q: Hunting and um

A: How to cook kangaroo differently to other blackfellas, that just stuck it in the pot and pan.

Q: So you learnt the Nyoongar values or Nyoongar ways from your grandmother?

A: Yes and now, see she always let us know that she, she never ever said Kings Park, she had a name for what it was.

Q: Did she have a Nyoongar name for it?
A: Yeh, and she said she was born. But, now my big sister, what's her name, Janet, she saying that she was never born there, that was a man's place, Kings Park. But where did they walk from when they had baby; to chuck the what's name in the river, see. I will have to have a yarn with my sister; a row or whatever, but she said, that's what she used to say.

Q: Okay, you are saying that your father had different ways and he accepted that watjellas were now coming in, they were taking over the land, they were farming the land so he wanted his kids, to get a good education, get a good job and work along side watjellas.

A: Yes.

Q: But your mum she wanted you to do that too but, also learn your Aboriginal ways, so she got her mother to teach you those things?

A: Yes.

Q: So you come from that childhood, what was your life experiences that maybe changed those values that you grew up with to the values that you now hold today, what was important out of them, back then. What values did your dad?

A: Work, good education, be able to support our own families when we grow up, to live and work with white people, that was very important.

Q: Okay, and what values did your mum teach you?

A: Our Aboriginal history, heritage, um

Q: What do you think that was?

A: To go back to the land and to hunt, all those things, hunt for food and to show your kids the same thing, know where you come from, see how I used to take yous fellas up and down Busselton, every weekend, that sort of stuff, and when yous grow up, well you know, could rub off on
you, like Ron, language, old stories, she told us where we could go in our country.

Q: Okay, now with those values, that your mum and dad taught you, what life experiences from then until now, has changed your values, what do you think are important values today, for you?

A: Love and support of my family, to see all my grannies grow up with love and my grannies.

Q: Okay, so how important do you think it is to pass your values on to your children and to your grandchildren.

A: I think it has been very important for me to pass mine down to my kids but see my kids pass it on to their kids.

Q: Okay, do you think that it is right for those values that we talked about for family to pass them on to their family.

A: Very much so,

Q: Why do you think that is, what's important about that?

A: I feel that they are going to get a lot more influence from white people now than we ever did, so I would like to still see them pass some Aboriginal values down to their kids and grannies too.

Q: Why is it important for that to happen?

A: As I said, everyone is going to have more input from white people, around nowadays,

Q: So, there's too many watjella influences, and it could over shadow Nyoongar influences.

A: Yes, by far.

Q: Is that good or bad.
A: It's good but we've still got to have that blackfella input for hundreds of years to come, it's going to be more difficult as time goes by.

Q: Okay, I'm just going to ask you questions about identity, now when I'm talking about identity I'm talking about our Aboriginalness of who we are in relation to our Aboriginalness, I want you to tell me what do you feel about your Aboriginality, your identity?

A: One of my sons married a white lady and now I have two half caste grannies and now one day when they grow up I would like to see them be proud to work and live with their friends, white or black and be proud of themselves as they are.

Q: So you want them to be proud in their Aboriginality, so how can they be proud, what do you think they need to have to be proud of their Aboriginality, how do they know that they are Aboriginal?

A: Their father, me and their nanna, when they were little fellas they spent a lot of time with me and their nanna, so they would know alright, they know, that they have Aboriginal blood in them, they were, and that time I went to Jason's school. He came over and sat next to me, and I was talking about Aboriginality to white kids and they never knew anything about it, and by the end of the lesson, they were all right around us like this, but I said, didn't your mum and dad tell you anything about Aboriginals, and they said no, so I said the next time I come up to your school, you can bring your mums and dads, they loved it, they clapped and shouted.

Q: So, have you had any problems or issues with your own Aboriginality.

A: Only in sport.

Q: Okay, what issues or problems come from sport, what issue was there?
A: The white man always thought that he was a better sportsman than blackfella but we proved them wrong, over and over again, and they are still proving it.

Q: What sport was this in?

A: Football.

Q: So that was the only issues, what do you think was the issue with that? Was there name calling etc?

A: Oh yeh, name calling,

Q: Was it prejudice, was it racism, just part of the game, or what?

A: It was racism them days, Im talking about 50s and 60s, probably still there today, but they got fines and everything now for them haven't they.

Q: Okay, so how do you identify as being Nyoongar, what makes you a Nyoongar, what makes you Aboriginal?

A: I know that I am, I can identify myself as a Nyoongar, from Yamitji, Wongis, anybody or from white people.

Q: Okay, but what makes you different from them?

A: Its that I know I can get out and talk with white people, I can talk with any race or creed, and I'm proud of myself that I can talk about Nyoongar things, and know what I'm talking about.

Q: So, its your knowledge of Nyoongar,

A: My knowledge of Nyoongar.

Q: So what is this knowledge, is it about you know, country, language, family, what's so important about this knowledge?
Well I can get out there and I can talk about white issues with white people I can talk Nyoongar things with other Nyoongars, like go hunting, I know how to go hunting, I know how to catch rabbits, possums, kangaroos, with other black people, but I know that I am Nyoongar and I can do those things. I learnt them from my nanna and all that.

And what other things did you learn from your nanna?

Nanna always told me that she never had a map, but she would say that she came from that hill way over there to that land right up there and over here and over there, that was where she lived, camped and hunted around, those things, she said white man will come along one day and draw or mark on paper where Nyoongar country is, but she said that's not it, its where I lived, camped and roamed.

So she was able to say that that hill over there was her country, and she points to another hill in another country

Yep, she could do that and that was like a boundary, and they never went passed there or things like that.

So she was about to tell you from different sites, different landscapes as to what her country was?

See up at Kwolyin there was two big rocks, she would take us up there and point and you could see 50 or 60 miles around, she'd tell me, my brothers, sisters and cousins, Garletts all of them, we knew that.

So, have you taught your own children about where you and they come from?

I take them back and showed them, we went to Kwolyin Rock that time, we could see for miles around.

Do you think you taught your children about their identity, their being Nyoongar about who they are and where they come from, have you done that for your children?
A: I have, but I think their mother has done it more so than I have because my kids spent more time with their mother because I was at work or away and because a lot of their mother's family are down in Perth their mother would have showed them a lot more because her sisters was doing the same thing with their kids.

Q: So it was more the mother's role to teach them

A: Yes, since living in Perth.

Q: So do you think that they know who they are and where they come from?

A: Yes, definitely.

Q: Their mother was from where?

A: From Perth, Guildford, Bassendean, Midland that area.

Q: And what's that Nyoongar area?

A: Swan River settlement.

Q: Okay, so how do you think Nyoongar people can maintain their Nyoongar identity when Nyoongar people are confronted with racism, name-calling, boong etc.

A: When I was at school we had a bank down the street, down town, we would take the boys down there and fight them. When we grew up a bit and started playing footy that where we struck it again, but we would scruff them up again on the footy field cause you weren't allowed to punch them around, so we did a fair bit of fighting growing up.

Q: But on the football field you said that Aboriginal players were better footballers than watjellas, so do you think that was another way too?
A: By being better than them yes, that was one of the best ways, but they still called you names because they knew they couldn't beat you anyway.

Q: Okay, and what about today, when there are always issues, incidents that happen that we always see on the news with regards to Aboriginal people being in the news, how do Nyoongar people have to deal with these sorts of issues?

A: I don't know, I think it is very hard now, but one very good program is where us elders go into schools and speak to their children now so in the future, its going to be a big help to cut it out.

Q: So education, educating the young kids?

A: Yes, very important.

Q: So how do you think you, your family, how do they deal and cope with issues of Aboriginality and where they are today?

A: I think you got other things to do, you are busy doing other things, and you haven't got a lot of time on your hands to sit around to think about that.

Q: Okay, so what are those other things?

A: Well, mixing in wrong company.

Q: So what are your family doing differently from those that are mixing in the wrong company?

A: Working or education and going to TAFE and universities, and work is very important.

Q: So most of your family are doing things different, are working, are going to school getting an education and that's important to you.
A: Yes, they are and that's very important yep, and for my grannys to be brought up the same way, because there are a lot of years ahead of us yet.

So, some of the things that we have picked up on family, values, identity are all linked in relation to how Aboriginal people maintain their culture, so do you think that those three factors are important.

Very important to know who you are, where you come from and forever do something about it.

How do you think that family, values and identity affect a Nyoongar person's health?

A: I feel that it is got to be good for them, to be busy doing these things through their lifetime.

Q: So maintaining their family, maintaining their values and identity, like you said in the previous answer, knowing where you come from and knowing who you are and talking about them and sharing them with other Nyoongars is good for your health.

A: Yes, very good yep. I think when a lot of people forget about their Aboriginality they try to live a white person's life, lifestyle and throws their body and mind out of thinking you know, thinking right anyway, about Aboriginal values. I think we have always got to keep that in mind.

Q: Just going back to talking about health, you just told me off tape, would you like to share that?

A: I gave up alcohol because my wife took very sick and she had to go into dialysis three times a week.

Q: How long ago was this?

A: 1980. So I gave up drink altogether so that I can drive her into Perth three times a week.
Q: Okay, so that was 24 years ago and you still don't drink?
A: Still don't.
Q: So looking back over those 24 years now, has that improved your health?
A: Out of sight, yep. I thought that while I was at it I may as well give up smoking too.
Q: And when did you do that?
A: Two years ago.
Q: So you gave up smoking two years ago?
A: Yep.
Q: Okay and how has that affected your health?
A: Unreal, I can walk at a fairly fast rate now, where I could never before.
Q: How old are you today?
A: 63, 64 in November.
Q: Okay, so giving up drink 20 years ago and smoking two years ago, do you think that has increased your life span?
A: By about 30 years, yeh for sure, really.
Q: And the whole reason you did this was because of what?
A: My family, around to see the rest of my grannies, kids grow up.
Q: That's good, that was last question. I will now transcribe this and type it all up and bring it back to you to read and check and we can go...
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
PARTICIPANT NO. 2

Q: Could you give me your age and date of birth?
A: 42 years of age, my date of birth is the 31st October, 1961.

Q: Are you working at the moment?
A: I am.

Q: Where abouts are you working?
A: I work for the Nyoongar Community in Gnangara which is an urban community in the metropolitan area of Perth.

Q: How long have you been there?
A: This is my sixth year, five and half years.

Q: What is your role at the community?
A: I am a Workplace Trainer, I teach the people from the community and I am also the community manager and administrator for the community.

Q: Could you give me a brief history of your schooling, when you left school and how far your education has gone?
A: I did year 11 at Scarborough High School, I enjoyed school, I did want to become a manual arts teacher or a phys ed teacher but I saw that there were probably at that school a few problems with teachers and Aboriginal students. I suppose and I was lucky enough to land an apprenticeship with the government with a four year apprenticeship of carpentry and joinery. I completed that starting in 1979. and have been in the building industry for 22 or 23 years.

Q: Are you undertaking any studies at the moment?
A: Yeah, I'm in my third year of a Bachelor of Social Sciences at Edith Cowan University, a bachelor of social sciences in Indigenous Services.

Q: Where were you born?
A: I was born in Swan Districts Hospital, Midland in Perth.

Q: Who brought you up?

A: My parents and my grandparents has influences, aunties and uncles they all had a share with holidays and things like that.

Q: Who are your family, who do you consider your family?

A: My own family, my brothers and sisters, mother and father, grandparents, aunties and uncles from both sides, cousins they are all my mob.

Q: What about your extended family?

A: That includes my extended family.

Q: How often do you see your family, this family you talk about?

A: On a daily basis with this family.

Q: Okay, and this family of yours, do you feel that they have changed during the past 10 or 20 years.

A: Yeah, I see it in my family, tertiary qualifications and studies are more prominent, our children are getting older, older nephews are becoming young men, out of their teenage years and my own children are growing up from primary school into high school and daughter into primary school from kindy and daycare.

Q: Okay and where would you like to see your family, this family you describe in 10 or 20 years.

A: Depends on how broader part of the family you talk about. I would like to see the whole family get a bit more education I suppose never too old to learn, new skills, new studies practical or knowledge but all broaden their horizons and grow within themselves.

Q: Okay, we will move on from family to values. What do you feel are important Nyoongar values that you were taught by your parents, grandparents and aunties and uncles.

A: The family values system so far as looking after each other, supporting each other’s roles, looking after family when sick, sharing is massive, be it knowledge, food, resources and general, money, yeah.

Q: Okay, and who taught you these values?
A: My parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles the elders of our families.

Q: Okay, now has there been anything in your life experiences that have changed these values that you were brought up on or are these the values that you now teach your own children, nieces and nephews?

A: I suppose education is a very important role now as far as developing your skills, primary and high school was favourable to me and I like to have a good impact on my kids and my kids, kids. I believe a sound education is always the right way to go.

Q: Okay, now do you think it is right to pass those values on to your family and why is that important?

A: I think you should influence your family, but it is your children's personal attribute if they believe in those values if its good enough to them, then so be it, but I would like to sure influence them, but I would still like them to be themselves more than anything.

Q: Okay, the last section now, what do you feel about your identity as a Nyoongar person?

A: I feel proud, my family ties into four south-west regions of WA, my mother is in the Yuet claim which is the Moora district, my father is Balladong on my grandmother's side, which is the eastern wheatbelt and my grandfather is in the south-west, Bridgetown, Pemberton that region and the metropolitan as far as that goes. So we cover a fairly large area in the south-west. Very proud.

Q: So what do you think makes up a Nyoongar identity for you, you talked about where you come from and where your grandparents come from so, is that what you are saying, knowing where you come from?

A: Place, country and people.

Q: And how do you know that you are Nyoongar?

A: My parents and my family and grandparents, aunties, uncles, and place of birth?

Q: And have you had any problems, or do you see there any problems with Nyoongar identity, maybe if not for you, your children may come across?
A: No, not really?

Q: So how do people maintain their identity in relation to whether they are Nyoongar, Yamitji or Wongi?

A: I think it's owned by the family group, entire family groups altogether as far as being relayed on orally, verbally and physically I suppose. Where you were born and who your families are and where you connect in whatever part of the country it may be.

Q: Yeah, and who does that, who passes that knowledge on to these children?

A: Usually other family members, elders of each group family groups, grandparents, aunts and uncles, mother and father.

Q: So it's for the family to teach their children and their grandchildren where they come from and who they are?

A: I think that it's our way and it's happened for generations and that our way and why change something that already works when it's been here since our existence. You don't change something that's working?

Q: Yep, so how do Nyoongar people maintain a strong identity like when there are issues whether it be in the media or within our community how do they maintain to be strong in who they are and what they are?

A: Just on the media, I don't see the media as they never pick up anything too positive it's always after negative vibes of Indigenous or Aboriginal issues as a family I think it is still within the family group to hold it together for themselves, that person, parents, aunty, uncle or grandparents it's still the role of the family group that keeps us strong.

Q: So how do you and your family cope or feel about your identity when these things arise, when you have racism or discrimination you know when things do happen, whether it be in the school or anything like that, how would you deal with it?

A: We would talk about it, and it's about growing within each family and group, growing to overcome those issues and utilising it in the best manner that helps us.

Q: The last question, do you think your Nyoongar identity affects in anyway your health?
A: Yeh, I believe strongly in the heritage and culture and stuff of our country, our bush medicines, our right tucker to each as far as turtle, kangaroo.

Q: So if a person knows where they come from, knows their family, know their Nyoongar values and know how to cope with racism and prejudices, that sort of stuff, do you think they have a strong identity and if not why?

A: If they claim to be one their family ties are strong within the community, if the community accepts them being one as well I don’t see a problem.

Q: Okay thankyou. Now what I will do is I’ll get this transcribed into a written document and you can check it for accuracy. Thank you for your participation.
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PARTICIPANT NO. 3

Q: What is your age and date of birth?
A: I am 25 and my date of birth is the 6/6/78.

Q: Do you work, where and what's your position?
A: Yes, I work at Nulsen Primary School as an AIEO.

Q: Okay, how long have you been there?
A: Just a year.

Q: Okay, and where is Nulsen?
A: It's in Esperance, Western Australia down south.

Q: Could you give me a brief history of schooling, where, how far and did you enjoy it?
A: I went to North Innaloo Primary School from year 1 to year 7, then I went to Scarborough High up until year 12 and yes I enjoyed it.

Q: So you did most of your schooling, and where was this in city or country?
A: In the city, along the coast.

Q: Okay and are you undertaking any studies at the moment, like TAFE, tertiary or other courses.
A: Yes, I'm enrolled at Deakin University in Geelong and I'm doing a Bachelor of Education in my 2nd Year.

Q: Okay, now tell me where you were born.
A: I was born in Port Hedland, Western Australia.

Q: Okay and tell me who brought you up, what it your parents other family, who brought you up.

A: I don’t know what age but I came to live with my pop and nan and they brought me up.

Q: Okay, you said that you were reared up by your grandparents, so who do you consider your family?

A: My family is my pop, his children and grandchildren and my mum and brothers and sisters and mum’s sisters and family.

Q: Okay, so would you say that that includes your extended family or they are your extended family?

A: Yeah, they are, or actually I would just say that they are my family.

Q: Okay and how often would you see this family?

A: Well I see my mother and them everyday and I see my pop and his family on my block when I travel for studies or on holidays couple of times a year.

Q: Okay, so you live with your mum and brothers and sisters?

A: I live in the same town as them but I don’t live with them.

Q: Now in relation to your family, what do you think have you noticed any changes in the last 10 to 15 years that have impacted on your family.

A: Everyone is starting to get an education a degree that I have noticed.

Q: What do you think about that?

A: I think that it’s a positive because I think that education is important and it’s setting a role model for the younger generations and I don’t see any negatives with education.
Q: What other positives would you like to see within the next 20 years in relation to your family, where would you like to see your family in 20 years?

A: Hopefully with high paying jobs, more like role models for other Indigenous people.

Q: What do you feel are important family values for you as a Nyoongar, that were taught to you by your grandparents and your mum?

A: Helping people out when they need it and just being there for family no matter what they do or what happens.

Q: So these values were taught to you by who?

A: My family.

Q: In relation to these family values has there been anything in your life experiences that has maybe changed these values, that you have discussed, has there been anything in your life that questions these values, whether your support your family?

A: No not really, I think you need to be there for family and that sort of stuff but no I still agree with those values.

Q: Would you pass these values that you were taught on to your own family?

A: Yep.

Q: Who do you identify as?

A: A Nyoongar.

Q: Okay, so what makes you Nyoongar?

A: Both my parents are Nyoongar, I was born up north, but brought up in Perth with all my Nyoongar family.
Q: So what do you think it is that makes you Nyoongar?

A: Where your family are from, your parents and grandparents and where you were brought up, yeah and I feel comfortable being identified as a Nyoongar.

Q: So how do you know that you are Nyoongar.

A: Because I was brought up here and my family and parents are.

Q: Do you think or feel that there are any problems with being able to identify as a Nyoongar?

A: What do you mean?

Q: Problems when you went to school, racism, discrimination did they stick out in your childhood?

A: Maybe once or twice in primary and high school but that was about it?

Q: So you say that your Nyoongar identity has been positive for you?

A: Yep.

Q: How would you as a Nyoongar person maintain or continue to make sure that your Nyoongar identity is carried on?

A: Just continue to be proud of being a Nyoongar and passing information on to whoever you talk about, about your identity as a Nyoongar.

Q: So talking about it and being it with family?

A: Yes, all that and living it.

Q: So when you say passing it on to family, who would do that, you, your mum who?
A: Okay well when I have my children and grandchildren will pass that on yes, so the individual will have to pass it on whenever they have the chance.

Q: Okay so its up to the individual Nyoongar person, their family to continue that pride?

A: Yes.

Q: What happens when there are things in the news that maybe brings out negative things for Nyoongar people, how would that impact on Nyoongar people?

A: It makes us angry because the media is always portraying bad stuff anyway about Aboriginal people, but it also makes us a bit angry with our people too because they need to change.

Q: So what needs to change with these Nyoongars?

A: They need to change their behaviour, their attitudes things like that the way they go about their business.

Q: As Aboriginal people we deal with racism and discrimination at all levels at school, work all those, so how do think Nyoongar people cope with racism?

A: I think everyone copes with it their own way, a lot of Nyoongar people get really angry and upset, but they cope with it individually.

Q: So how have you deal with those issues?

A: A lot of people get angry and that's what I did, and I fought my way through the racism.

Q: Okay so that's the way a lot of Aboriginal people deal with racism, we fight we stand up for ourselves but what about when you get home?

A: Well talk about it to family and maybe teach kids to deal with it differently ways of how to go about it.
Q: Now do you think that your Nyoongar identity affects in any way your health?

A: Yeh I think it does, I know who I am, where I come from and I'm comfortable with that?

Q: Does that make your healthy?

A: Yes, because if you don't know who you are where you come from, you're constantly wondering and it can cause damage to you.

Okay now what I will do is I will transcribe this recorded information and hopefully I will get that back to you when I can and you can check it for accuracy.

Thankyou.
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PARTICIPANT NO. 4

Q: Could you give me your age and date of birth?
A: My age is 32 and date of birth is 28/2/71.

Q: Are you working at the moment?
A: No, I'm a full time student.

Q: What are you studying?
A: I'm in my final year of a Bachelor of Applied Science in Aboriginal health degree.

Q: Could you give me a brief history of your schooling, including your primary, high school and any other education up to your degree course.
A: I did grade 1 to 7 primary school and then went on to high school from year 8 to 10 and got my achievement certificate then I went to a Edwards Business College for a secretarial course for 12 months.

Q: Where were you born and who reared you up?
A: I was born in Perth, Subiaco, King Edward Hospital and my parents, my mother and father brought me up.

Q: Who are your family and who do you consider your family members.
A: My family is my immediate family, my brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews. My other family is my extended family so that's my uncles, aunties and cousins.

Q: Okay and how often do you see your family and the extended family?
A: I see my family regularly every week. My extended family now and then no as often.

Q: Do you think that these families included extended family have changed over last 20 years?

A: Yes I think they have changed with growing up from children we used to see family once a week or during the week, but these days as an adult we barely see them only at funerals or other family outlines or special occasions.

Q: So how have they changed?

A: It's changed with our family through studies as a student, you have other priorities within your family with what you are wanting to achieve and also just other commitments to the family, other changes you rarely see your extended family not very often, special occasions or funerals.

Q: Where would you like to see your family and your extended family in 10 or 20 years?

A: Well I would like to see them around you know with their health, health is very important issue within Aboriginal people and also education it gives you the knowledge, it helps with your lifestyle with your health in a holistic.

Q: Okay so how does education help you with your lifestyle?

A: Well it gives you knowledge it helps you with your lifestyle, improve your lifestyle.

Q: So you want to see your family members educated, you want them to live healthy lifestyles that sort of stuff.

A: Yes I do, health is very important.

Q: Okay why is health important, what do you mean?

A: Health is one of the aspects, Aboriginal people need to improve their lifestyles, their eating habits, their living conditions,
especially those diseases that are common to Aboriginal people today, it helps them to be educated, be aware and even prevention programs to enhance Aboriginal people's lifestyle and health.

Q: So do you think that health is important to a Nyoongar person's identity?

A: Yes I think it is because you can improve your health within the family's awareness to health.

Q: Yeah, you said that, but what about in relation to a person's identity, their Aboriginality, how do you think a person's identity relates to their health?

A: Just knowledge of health conditions that are common to Aboriginal people you know.

Q: But how does that relate to a person's identity?

A: If they know who they are and where they come from and who their family are then they are healthy.

Q: What do you feel or think are important Nyoongar values that were taught to you by your parents in relation to values?

A: Respect your elders that a big value for Aboriginal people and Nyoongars.

Q: Yeah and what other values, can you list a few of them?

A: Probably the upbringing of children, manners and

Q: So when you say children how you bring your children up, what?

A: Teaching our children respect, manners and Nyoongar language.

Q: What other Nyoongar things you would teach your children, other cultural values do you know that you would pass on to your children, can you list a few of them?
A: Sharing money, food, yarns, Nyoongar stories about Wagyl, normal family things, where you come from who your people are, yeah normal Aboriginal or Nyoongar ways of doing things, even thinking like a Nyoongar.

Q: Okay so all these values that you now talk about, who taught you these?

A: My parents, aunties, uncles, brothers, grandparents, elders within the community.

Q: Has there been anything in your life experiences that have maybe changed those values either influenced or negative influences?

A: No not really, education has probably made me more aware and realise and determined to know my Nyoongar knowledge, heritage, culture and identity.

Q: Okay so you see education positive for your Nyoongar culture and identity, can you explain that?

A: Education is important for Aboriginal people because we are a minority within our own country so it does help you realise what Nyoongars in history went through with policies and that and education helps you to improve your lifestyle and knowledge.

Q: Okay do you think that these values that you have learnt from your family are they important and would you pass them onto your own children, nephew and nieces?

A: Yes, most definitely its important in our family, we have five family members who are studying at the moment and there are three in their final year.

Q: In relation to identity as a Nyoongar person, what does that mean to you?

A: My Nyoongar identity is important to me because it is who I am, who my people are my family are and which area I am from which country, so yeah its very important to me.
Q: Yeah and that’s important for Nyoongar people to know?

A: Yes it is its very significant.

Q: Okay you have talked about where you come from, who your family are and that sort of stuff, how do you know that you are Nyoongar?

A: Through my family, parents, grandparents, where I live, born, where I am from.

Q: Okay can you tell me if you have had any problems or issues that you have had to deal with in relation to your Nyoongar identity?

A: Yeah, I’ve actually had that when I was working, other Nyoongar people and other Aboriginal people ask me where I come from and when I would say Nyoongar and then they would say “Oh, you’re a Nyoongar”, and you would say “Yes, and name who your family are” and then they would say “Oh I thought you were from up north”, because the colour of our skin.

Q: So how do you feel about that?

A: Its annoying at times there are fair Nyoongar people but there are also dark coloured Nyoongars.

Q: Okay why do you think other Nyoongar people and other Aboriginal people think like that?

A: I think its from regions they associate that with colour, complexion, if you’re come from the city, then you fair fella because you should be a half caste or something and that’s not the case really.

Q: How do you think Nyoongar people in particular, how should they maintain their Nyoongar identity and how should they go about that?

A: Its very important and significant for Nyoongar people to maintain their Nyoongar culture and identity.
Q: Yes, it's important for them to do that, but how should they do that?

A: Through sharing their knowledge, their language, ways of doing things, specific Nyoongar ways, keeping it within the region of Nyoongar people.

Q: Okay but who should do that, who is responsible for that sharing.

A: That's probably for Nyoongar elders of the family and members.

Q: So it's important for elders and family to pass that knowledge, information, and cultural ways of doing things on to their children and grandchildren.

A: Yes most definitely on to their children, they are the new generation of Nyoongars, and that's how it's done with Aboriginal families pass information down from one generation to the next, so yeah.

Q: So how do Nyoongar people maintain a strong identity, like the way you have described, when maybe the media and other institutions around the place show that there has been instances where a Nyoongar community in urban area have portrayed a negative impact, how does that impact on Nyoongar people?

A: It has been negative and it breaks down Nyoongar knowledge and it's important for elders to stand up and voice their opinions and to improve the situation.

Q: Okay in relation to that, do you think that maybe the media has been negative in relation to the community its effects on identity?

A: Yes, I believe did have a negative impact on the community and it's made Nyoongar people more determined to improve the situation.

Q: When these things happen in the media and when there has been negative instances that have happened in relation to your identity, how do you and your family cope with negatives such as racism, discrimination those issues?
A: Well we would talk about it and share it what we feel and we try and make or say some, try and improve on why they think like that.

Q: Okay so you would talk about those issues and experiences with your family and what would you achieve?

A: Try and resolve things appropriately and ways of dealing with it.

Q: How do you think your Nyoongar identity affects your current health situation?

A: Nyoongar identity is a big factor in my health especially with heredity diseases and all that through families but Nyoongar identity is a big factor in Aboriginal people whether it be health, holistic health.

Q: What do you mean holistic health?

A: Holistic meaning, economic finances, low income, lifestyle, spiritual, you know all that it covers all that environmental, it covers all those aspects.

Thank you for your participation today. So what I will do is get all this recorded information transcribed into a typed document and bring it back to you. You can read and check it for accuracy, you have the right to change any information we have discussed today if you wish.
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

PARTICIPANT NO. 5

Q: Can you give me you age and date of birth?
A: My age is 29 6/8/74.

Q: Are you working at the moment.
A: Yes.

Q: Okay and where do you work?
A: Wheatbelt Aboriginal Corporation.

Q: What's your role there?

Q: Okay how long have you been doing this, and what is your other employment history?
A: I've been in this position for about 8 or 9 months. I am a builder by trade, carpenter/joiner been in that for the last 10 years.

Q: Can you also give me a brief history of your education, how far primary, high school and any other educational experience or qualifications?
A: Well yeah I went up until Year 12 and then pursued an apprenticeship, the opportunity was there so I took it.

Q: Did you have to do any schooling for that?
A: Yeah, I went to TAFE and stuff did assignments over a four year period.

Q: Yeah, have you undertaken any other studies?
A: Yeah, I was studying earlier this year at university, but I pulled out.

Q: Okay what course did you start and how long did you go through it?

A: I enrolled in the associate degree in Aboriginal health I completed a year and half.

Q: Okay I'm just going to ask you some questions about family, where were you born.

A: I was born in Northam, Western Australia a wheatbelt town east of Perth.

Q: Okay, who reared you or brought you up?

A: My mother and father.

Q: Okay who do you consider your family?

A: My mum, dad, brothers and sisters, cousins, aunties, uncles.

Q: Does this include your extended family?

A: Yep.

Q: Are they all one family?

A: All one.

Q: Okay, in relation to this family, do you feel that they have changed during the past 10 or 15 years.

A: Yep, respect is gone.

Q: Okay, explain that change in relation to your family?

A: Half are not disciplined anymore.

Q: What half are you talking about?
A: Younger people, younger generation, the cultural side has gone out of them.

Q: So what you're saying that they are not interested in culture?

A: Well yeah, it starts with disrespecting their parents.

Q: Yeah, and do you see a lot of that?

A: Yeah, all the time.

Q: Okay, where would you like to see your family, the family you describe here, in 15 or 20 years.

A: Well for a start I'd like to see most of them finish school, get a good education and get themselves a life. They still stay around their mum and dad and don't grow up to be anything. That's what I would like to see, them all working and have good jobs.

Q: So you want them to all working, have an education and good jobs get a life. Okay, in relation to your family can you maybe give me a list of values that have been taught to you by your parents when growing up, you mentioned one of them as respect, what other values do you think are important to you, that your parents taught you?

A: Respect is number one, work, education, when you start your own family you got something there for them, and when your family grow up you expect the same.

Q: Do you think that those values you talk of, that they are the things you want to pass on to your children?

A: Yes.

Q: In relation to family and values who taught you these values.

A: My mum and dad, grandparents when they were alive, from their gone on through the family, both sides of the family.

Q: Has anything happened in your life experiences that has maybe changed those values that you were brought up on that maybe you
have got your own set of values that you want to teach your children.

A: No, I don't see any difference. I was taught what I was taught and that is what I will teach my children.

Q: Okay so go with what you know and it works?

A: Yes.

Q: So, its important for you to pass on to your children?

A: Yes.

Q: How would you do that?

A: I would just hand it on pass it on, those taught from the old people, keep old ways, I mean its time to change, but its best that they know where they come from and keep that traditional path going.

Q: Yep, in relation to those values and your family, in relation to your identity as a Nyoongar man, what do you feel about that.

A: I feel proud, I know who I am, and nobody can take that away from me and I will let people know, those that don't know me, let them know who I am and where I come from. I am proud of who I am.

Q: So what else makes up your Nyoongar identity?

A: Family, cultural yeah.

Q: How do you know that you are Nyoongar?

A: My parents they tell stories, stories go through, they are both Nyoongar.

Q: Okay, so its about you knowing where you come from, who your family are, and that connects you to what area of Nyoongar country.

A: The Baladong people, Northam area in the wheatbelt.
Q: In relation to your Nyoongar identity, have you had or do you see any problems that you have maybe come across in relation to your Nyoongar identity?

A: No not really, not any major problems anyway.

Q: Okay how do you think that Nyoongar people can maintain their identity?

A: I suppose keep those traditional methods going, what they were taught, its slowing falling away, but we have to keep it going, be proud of who you are.

Q: And how do we do that, how do we pass on what we know about our identity to our kids, our grannies?

A: Talking to them, yarning about stories, so that they understand and make sure that that respect is there as well.

Q: So its important to talk amongst our families and talk to our children. Who else is responsible for that knowledge.

A: Grandparents, parents, aunties and uncles all the family.

Q: So its up to the family as a group to pass that on?

A: Yeah, its just something that happens, they are not going to be with you 24 hours a day, so they going to be told another story from someone else.

Q: So if we know that we are Nyoongar, what about issues that maybe put out a negative in relation to Nyoongar people, for instance we have had negative media in relation to a Nyoongar urban community closed down, how do you think that impacts on us as Nyoongar people?

A: It's a big impact, where I work at WAC (Wheatbelt Aboriginal Corp), its happening, its been one of the best Aboriginal organisations in Australia and its going down hill now, the community see it, we see it as a people and that is something that keeps the community going.
Q: So what do you think the community and the people need to do?

A: They need to start standing up and start putting their opinions across instead of talking behind closed doors, let them know to make changes that bring about a positive change.

Q: Okay, so we've talked about community, what about in relation to the family, how does your family cope with negative aspects, such as racism, discrimination at school and work.

A: Do what you got to do get what you need to get, so that well these days you need papers, you get an education get a piece of paper prove to the white man.

Q: So maybe we need to change the way we do things and get an education.

A: We need to do positive things.

Q: How do you think health affects your identity as a Nyoongar?

A: I think it does I means a lot of it goes back to when we were settled, history and memories that people have, when kids were taken away, old people and young people now remember what happens so it does affect their health.

Q: So how does it affect.

A: Emotional, a lot of people are stressed out about it, and when you're stressed out their health just deteriorates if they don't fix it. You see it mentally too.

Q: So what sort of problems come with that?

A: Violence, angry, racist, stuff like that.

Thank you for your participation this afternoon. I will no this transcript to you in a written document and you can check it for accuracy and then change any details that you may want to.
Q: Could you give me your age and date of birth?
A: My age is 44 and I was born 10/8/59.

Q: Are you working at the moment?
A: Yes, I am working as a case coordinator in the Indigenous Family Program.

Q: What's your role in that job?
A: My role in that job is to support and advocate with Aboriginal families and to work with them in a way they are to give that recognition of them to make a change in their lifestyle.

Q: How long have you been working in this position?
A: 13 months.

Q: Can you give me a brief history of your education?
A: My schooling done year 10, couple of years after that I got married, so young age for me. Then 10 years into the marriage I went to TAFE doing basic skills and then marriage split up then I thought I might as well get more of an education and I went back to TAFE then done a degree in Aboriginal health.

Q: What sort of degree is it?
A: The degree is an Aboriginal health, a bachelor of applied science in Aboriginal health.

Q: Are you doing any studies at the moment?
A: No studies.

Q: Where were you born?
A: I was born in Perth, King Edward Memorial Hospital, Subiaco.

Q: Can you tell me who reared you up, who brought you up?

A: My parents, mum and dad reared me up.

Q: So your parents brought you up and who would you consider your family and with that I mean explain to me your family or otherwise people known as your extended family?

A: My family is my mum's side of the family and that's on the Parfitts side. Just that we are a close net family. I remember like she sought of like, if the family wasn't at mum's they'd be at the aunties or uncles place so we sort of like we had that closeness of a family that every week there was a lot of people so there and I know that we've got a big family on the Parfitt lot that I'm sort of like just used of one side of family there.

Q: So that one side of the family was your mother's side and so who did that include?

A: On mum's side was mum's brothers' children, mum's sisters' children, mum's cousins' children and mum's first cousin, mum's uncle/aunties, there was heaps of them.

Q: So now all your mother's family, aunties, uncles, brothers, sisters, now would you consider them your family or extended family, explain if there is a difference?

A: Mum's family we were so close was like as a big family but the cousins and the uncles and aunties were I class them as extended family but, they were there for all of us as well and if we needed to yarn or talk to them they were there for us.

Q: Okay, so you grew up with this family you known as a child and teenager, how often would you see your family, this family your talking about today?

A: Today, I see this family um not as close as we was before, maybe once or twice every three months or something like that it all depends on what's happening I think. But to me, its not, it sort a
looks not close like we was before. When we were young and
because we were just like and I think maybe because of our
parents all died and its as if we went our own way. Most of us are
all married and going our own way, so that's sort of like separated
us but, we know that we are all family. Soon as we see one another
we glad to see one another and that we always say that we are
going to ring one another and do but its just that I think that we
get sometimes that busy that we need to probably relax and
whatever but we still have that closeness when we do see one
another.

Q: So you don't get to see them as often as you maybe would like,
because of what other influences such as what?

A: I think we don't see one another because of work and thinking back
to our mums, aunties and uncles we know that they had jobs but
they still made that effort to be close to one another and I think
like now because we sort of like work its like a lot of pressure with
the work that we do and sometimes all the pressure we get we just
rather just go and relax and we're really it the career sort of thing
so yeh its not much of like the family we grew up with and that
closeness is not there anymore.

Q: So what do you think that nowadays we have different pressures
and commitments that we have with our jobs and work so we not
involved with our own families as maybe we should be?

A: Yeah, I reckon the roles that we do the responsibilities that we
have plus with our own children, nieces and nephews all the
extended family, that there are so many pressures that just trying
to comprehend that we try to resolve it ourselves but we don't but,
we do if we don't we know we can ring up the family but there's no
closeness there not like it used to be.

Q: Okay so you feel that is one of the things that have changed of the
last 20 years or so?

A: Yeah a lot of things have changed and I think it's the society back
in our days there wasn't opportunities then there is now and there
are a lot more opportunities for our age and the younger ones and
for our children so its trying to work around them to be with families but it is hard with all the pressure.

Q: Okay, so where would you like to see your family, the family that you described in 20 years?

A: In 20 years I would like to see my brother and my sisters and the extended family still have that closeness and I think maybe because our age a bit older then and I think in 20 years it will be good that its sort of like visa versa that we go back into our parents' role that when we was young but we be the elders and then yarning around to our great grannies or grannies or the nieces and nephews. I want to vision that we have that role of elders in twenty years.

Q: So how can you see that happening?

A: I think it is up to ourselves to teach our children and our grannies to have respect for one another and still have that closeness and its really teaching our children, our grannies, nieces and nephews to still have that respect and to be close because lately there is a lot of young people that don't have that respect no more, they do their own thing because other things trigger them off like drugs and alcohol. Its turning them the wrong way so its up to ourselves to teach our children and grannies to have that respect and to be close for when we get older that we still can go back to the yarns an sitting around and teaching the kids, teaching them about our beliefs and values and our culture our traditions so its up to ourselves.

Q: Okay in relation to our culture and our values, what do you think are important Nyoongah values that you were brought up on, can you list a few of them?

A: Respect and to respect one another, our kids respect their aunties and uncles and to teach them about culture and about their own identity, who they are, Nyoongar, Yamatji or Wongi but, to respect each culture in the Aboriginal culture as well.

Q: So these values that you talk about, who were they taught to you by?
A: Well I remember mum and dad used to teach us when we were small at Alliwah Grove they used to take us hunting to a place called Munday swamp to catch turtles and I thought like when mum said come on now we are going to Munday swamp I thought there was a little swamp there like with water but when we got there it was dry, and I was thinking now where they gonna get these turtles from until we seen they were poking around with a stick they knew where the turtles were. So looking at them they were teaching us and poking around and showing us that's how we knew about hunting for turtles and bardies and all the bush tucker. Dad was teaching us and mum was teaching us and the aunties was teaching us how to survive. That was sort of like our culture but, we're forgetting about that ourselves we hardly go bush now because we are city slickers and we just like get up in the morning and go to work come back hybernate or whatever and its as if we have forgotten about it and not teaching our own kids and grannies.

Q: So your parents, aunties and uncles taught you those things? Do you think its important for you to maybe go back to that way and teach your own children about those things hunting?

A: Yeah I reckon its important for us to teach our children, nieces and nephews because if we don't teach them who else is going to teach them. Our age and our race is dying out so the watjellas would teach them and they don't know about our bush tucker and everything to its up to ourselves to teach our children.

Q: So you have been taught these values from your parents and you have passed them on to your children, has there been anything in your life experiences that maybe has changed or influenced other values?

A: There is some that when my kids were little we used to go out when I was married we used to go to a place called the pines near York in the country and used to take the kids out and get gums, jam gums bardies and even catch goannas so it was all of that when the kids were small. Now that they are grown up they still remember but we do still sit around and yarn and they remember going bush and so I still reckon they got it there but it just doing it like physically doing it and not thinking about it and I think that's the way for the
children is to go out and do it in the bush, we still need to do that
take the kids out bush and yarn with them.

Q: So you talk about doing these things because you don't necessarily
have the time so you think its about making time, making an effort
to go back to the bush and teach kids this?

A: Yes I reckon its about time and finding the time to do all this
taking the kids back to the bush and letting them run amok and
教 them how to look for jam gums and teaching the difference.

Q: So what do you think about your Nyoongah identity?

A: My Nyoongah identity is that I am proud to be Nyoongar and being
an Aboriginal I am not ashamed to be an Aboriginal. Sometimes
trying to teach the young ones about their identity because some
of the young ones are mixed into other Aboriginalities like Yamatji,
Wongi or Nyoongah it is different. Learning our beliefs and
traditions and it took me awhile to learn my own culture. I
remember in high school an incident when I was the only Nyoongah
picked to go on a trip to Perth with watjellas and mum carried my
case with everything from along way to the train station. When we
got to the train station I said to mum you might as well go now and
I think I was ashamed of her but I didn't know back then what I
know now about being an Aboriginal was. I regret that now and the
things I used to do to mum but now because I learnt about my own
identity it is different and I think back now I shouldn't have really
said that but she used to tease me and everything.

Q: Okay that's probably something we all probably did as kids to our
parents that we felt shame in those instances, why do you think we
did that?

A: I know our parents was surviving and that they tried every which
way to have bread and food on the table so it was like and then I
used to think well how come we used to take damper and jam to
school and yet those watjellas were having nice foods. I used to
think I was confused myself. When they used to invite us to their
house and you used to think how come they got nice house and we
living in an old tin shack on the reserve. It was really confusing and
also with being called names it was so confusing. I think that's why
were so confused with our own identity who are we and who
was we and I think and I can't recall mum and them talking bout
different tribes or whatever. I think back then I just thought all
the Aboriginal people was all the same but didn't known they were
different tribes.

Q: So how do you identify as a Nyoongah person, what is it that makes
you a Nyoongah person.

A: I think because both my mum and my dad were Nyoongah so that
makes me a Nyoongah person and that's how I see that I am
Nyoongah.

Q: So how do you teach your children about their identity, are they
Nyoongah and do they see themselves Nyoongah?

A: Yeh, I class my children as Nyoongah because me and their father
are both Nyoongah. I have four children and I class them as
Nyoongah. But my grannies, I don't know until I yarn with my
daughter-in-law and son-in-laws. I think one of them is Yamitji and
the other is a Nyoongah so I probably need to find out who they
are and the way you got to teach them is yarning to them and that's
the only way they are going to find out who they are.

Q: So what do you teach your children about their Nyoongar identity?

A: By teaching them its just yarning to them about who their family
are, their kinship and the names and where the families come from
the town or the country and whereabouts they maybe born so its all
of that and its really the family names, towns where they were
born and grandparents and everything like that.

Q: Okay, you say that a lot of Aboriginal people today come from
different parents such as Yamatji or Wongi or even watjellas. If
that's the case, how important is it to teach the children their
Nyoongar identity or connections?

A: To teach them is to still yawn with them so that they can't loose
their identity si to say that they might have a watjella parent but
they are still a Nyoongar or Aboriginal person because of their
blood and not if they are very fair or whatever not to say that
there one sided but they have different bloodlines in them and to still teach them about their culture, their identity and plus where their grandparents and mothers come from so its all about their just to registry in their little minds.

Q: So how do you think Nyoongah people need to maintain their Nyoongah identity, how do they go about it?

A: I reckon just to learn Nyoongah language and because most of us Nyoongars done know the language, but to yarn to people that know it and to teach about the language. Some of us talk some of the language like mardong, koondarn like that but its not ongoing we need to talk it consistently.

Q: How do you think Nyoongar people maintain a strong identity when we have issues or media issues in the community that has a negative impact on Nyoongar people like what has happened recently with a local community here in Perth.

A: Its for Nyoongar people to unite and become one because Nyoongah we've got rights and first we have know our rights as a Nyoongar or Aboriginal person and when the media use that discrimination against us I think we need to stick together as Nyoongar people and voice out because that is the only way to do it we need to stay strong and tackle the media when they use it against all Nyoongar people.

Q: Okay that's from a community perspective but, how would you or your family cope with kinds of problems or issues in relation to your identity, with racism and prejudices in the school?

A: At school when the watjella kids called us names like boong and nigger and all that I think I just walked away like our parents, they taught us to walk away and don't get into any violence or whatever to it was like we knew who we were but we didn't get into any fights or anything with the watjellas. When I was young I was a bit ashamed to go and tell the teachers but if I did go and tell them because they were white I thought they would just take it up for the white kids. So it was all the shame and we had no rights back then. But now in this generation, a lot of Nyoongah people and all
of us we have rights and we can voice out our opinion and yes we can say anything and say and do things in appropriate ways.

Q: Do you think Nyoongah identity can affect a person's health and if so how?

A: Yes, it can if a person knows that they are Nyoongah, Yamatji or Wongi, healthwise, is if you know Nyoongah and then you saying that your are Nyoongar but you might think that you are someone else is sort of like being confused and with the stress and whatever because there are Nyoongah people that were taken away, the stolen generation, so its trying to find their own identity and that really in that health concerns as well is really from those who were apart of the stolen generation. A lot of Nyoongah people were taken away when they were young and it has caused a lot of health conditions that leads to a lot of trauma, stress, depression and everything.

Okay, that's the last questions. Thank you for participating in this interview this evening. I will now type this up in a document and return it to you to check and you can change any information you want to. Thanks.
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
PARTICIPANT NO. 7

Q: Can you give me your age and date of birth?
A: 59 years of age 1st of May, 1944.

Q: Can you give me a brief history of your schooling?
A: I was brought up in a little town of Shackleton it was great there white people and blacks all enjoyed themselves together we never knew anything different, you know prejudices like and we enjoyed it all, well I did anyway.

Q: So what year did you go to in school?
A: Seven.

Q: Was that grade seven?
A: Yes.

Q: Okay and what happened when you left school?
A: Well I stayed around home for awhile helped mum look after the kids and then ended up getting married when I was 17.

Q: So you got married at 17 years of age. How many children do you have?
A: I had eight but I have got six now, two died.

Q: Where were you born?
A: In Brookton, Western Australia.

Q: Who brought you up?
A: Mum and dad.

Q: How many brothers and sisters in your family?
A: There were nine boys and eight girls, had 17 altogether.

Q: Okay, where are you in that 17.

A: I'm about the sixth eldest.

Q: Okay, so who were you brought up with?

A: With mum and dad and other relatives, we lived on a reserve.

Q: Whose side of the family was that?

A: Mum's side.

Q: Okay, so you lived with your parents, brothers and sisters and your mum's family, which family was that?

A: Her sisters on the Fords and Garletts, but there was a lot of them coming and going all the time Uncle George and them all they used to stay around there, they used to build their own camp.

Q: Okay so you were brought up with your mum's side of the family?

A: Yep.

Q: How would you describe your family today or who do you consider your family?

A: My brothers and sisters.

Q: Yeh, and what about your own children?

A: Yes their my family.

Q: So do you have grannies and great grannies.

A: Yes I got them.

Q: How often do you see your family?
A: Some of them, well five of them they live in Bunbury so I hardly see them. I’ve only got one up here with me, four girls down there and one boy down there.

Q: Yeh, okay and how often do you see your brothers and sisters?

A: Oh, I hardly see them cause I don’t go anywhere.

Q: But you live in the same town as a couple of them?

A: Yeh, three of them.

Q: How do you think your family has changed from when you were brought up with your parents, aunties and uncles.

A: Well it’s changed a lot, everybody sort of like being independent and want to be on their own, and before families always used to be together you know.

Q: Yeh and do you think that’s a good thing or bad thing?

A: Well I don’t know, I don’t think so, you know families should stick together don’t matter where they are or who they are.

Q: That’s right, so do you think that maybe affects the family?

A: Well yes it can.

Q: How has it changed?

A: Well they not as close as they used to be, not looking after one another when we were growing up we were always together and looked after one another. I was there all the time for my brothers and sisters and when I got married and moved they sort of all followed me too.

Q: So your younger brothers and sisters followed you did they?

A: Yeh.

Q: So you don’t think that happens now?
A: No not today, they all just go their separate ways nowadays and do what they want to do.

Q: So where would you like to see your family in say 10 or 15 years, what do you want for them?

A: Yeh well I always say to my kids I'm going home to stay and they know where home is, Shackleton cause I want to go back home all the time.

Q: Do you think that they will follow you.

A: No, they say to me you will be on your own you go back up there, and I say oh well I don't care.

Q: Okay, so you would like to go back to where you were brought up?

A: Yep cause down here its harming all the kids nowadays.

Q: Okay, so what's harming the kids, what's happening?

A: Well I have always told the police and everyone else that when we were growing up our mum and dad they had rights you know to do what they want to, but the government has taken these rights away from the mothers and fathers and that is why the kids are getting out of hand, they cannot handle them.

Q: Okay so you're saying that the parents don't have the rights that your parents had in your day?

A: Yes, I mean mother and father can slap them in their day but now if you touch the kid now we are going to get the police on to you and all that.

Q: Okay, so what do you think parents need to do today?

A: I don't know, what they could do for the kids I've told the government they need to give the rights back to the parents and put the kids in their place and they might listen to them.
Q: Okay so what have you taught your kids when it comes to these sorts of problems, how have you dealt with that?

A: Well I think we were all right because as parents we had rights and the kids used to listen to us, if they didn’t they used to get a slap and they knew they used to get it, so they did the right thing.

Q: Okay so what sort of influences are happening today, that are getting our kids into trouble?

A: They go around stealing and things, not going to school.

Q: So what values were important to you that your parents passed on to you?

A: Well they used to say love your family and all stick together and you know you will be right then.

Q: Okay and what values have you taught your own children.

A: Well I used to tell them they had to do the right thing and go to school when you finish try to get a job and do whatever you can.

Q: So those values were passed on to you by your parents and you passed them on to your own family.

A: Yeh.

Q: So has there been anything in your life that has maybe changed those values?

A: Now it has changed.

Q: So what has changed for Nyoongars today?

A: Parents today can’t talk to their kids, tell them to go to school and do the right thing, like before they used to listen.

Q: So why do you think that is, why aren’t kids listening to their parents?
A: I don't really know, some say that teachers are getting to them at school.

Q: So its because of a problem at school.

A: Yeh.

Q: What about respect, do you think kids have that today as you had it for your parents and elders?

A: Not now, but before it used to be.

Q: So you think that maybe the younger generation today don't have that respect for elders and parents.

A: No not like in our days.

Q: Do you think that your children are teaching their own children those values that you taught them?

A: Yes well I hope so.

Q: What values do you see today in your grandchildren?

A: They all went to school, high school and done the right thing.

Q: Okay so where would you like to see your great grannies.

A: I would like to see the same thing you know, settle down one of them gets out of hand and won't settle down.

Q: So what do you think he needs?

A: I think he needs his mother and father to sit down and have a good talk to him tell him the right and wrongs.

Q: So it that what you want your grandchildren to know what is right and wrong?

A: Yes, to do the right thing and all.
Q: What about identity, what do you think and feel about your identity as a Nyoongah woman and elder?

A: I think I'm respected and well liked.

Q: So your well known in the community and you have that respect from other community members.

A: Yes, I'm an elder and everyone knows that.

Q: So do you belong to any elder group or committee?

A: We did have and we are trying to form it again, we want a Wheatbelt committee of elders.

Q: What does that involve?

A: It involves all the elders in the wheatbelt region.

Q: Yeh, and what would your role be if that comes about?

A: We find out what happening in the region and take it to our meetings and talk about it and sort things out then.

Q: What do you think your role is as an elder in your community in your family?

A: I don't know.

Q: What would you like to do for your family and community as an elder?

A: I would like to change everything.

Q: What would you change?

A: Especially in Northam I would like to change things.

Q: Okay so what's happening here that you would change?

A: Feuding.
Q: Yeh and is that a big problem here in Northam?
A: It’s a big problem.
Q: So what would you do?
A: Well I don’t know, I think we should sit down, each side of the families and sit down and talk with the police and everyone and have a good talk and talk it all out and see where we go from them.
Q: So would that involve everyone in the community or just Nyoongahs, elders or everyone?
A: I think everyone should sit down.
Q: So you think its everyone’s responsibility, both black and white.
A: Yes.
Q: So if you are a Nyoongah what makes you are Nyoongah elder.
A: It’s the way am that’s the way I was brought up and all.
Q: Okay so it’s the way you were brought up. So are both parents Nyoongah?
A: Yes, I don’t know about dad’s side.
Q: What Nyoongah ways did your mother teach you?
A: She showed us how to do things, how to cook, how to look after kids, and do everything in our house.
Q: Okay what did she teach you about kids?
A: To know how to look after them and to see that they have the right food and to see if they are putting on weight and to check them out to see if anything is wrong with them.
Q: What other Nyoongah things are important to you.
A: Who your family are and where you were brought up there all important to us.

Q: How important is it for you that your children pass on their Nyoongah ways to their children?

A: Well I'd like them to pass it on to their children.

Q: How do you think they need to do this?

A: Well for a start I am teaching my great grandson Nyoongah talk and he wants to know all about it, he asks me to teach him words because they learn Nyoongah language at school, but he's too young so he comes home to me and asks me, so I teach him.

Q: That's good, so you're teaching your great grandson?

A: Yes.

Q: So that's important for you to teach language.

A: Yes, it is so he can carry it on.

Q: So do your grannies know who their relatives are?

A: Oh yes, they know who their nans and pops are.

Q: When you have feuding in town and Noongahs are fighting, how do you feel about that?

A: I don't know, I don't like it, I get upset thinking that they may come around here or something but the biggest problem is that when anything happens in town the white people they class us all the same.

Q: So what needs to be done?

A: Well as I said we need to all talk about it.

Q: How have you and your family have had to cope with those sorts of things?
A: We coped all right we just don't get into it, if they know you are related they may come around.

Q: What happens then.

A: I would just step out.

Q: Do you think knowing your Nyoongah identity in any ways affects your health.

A: No I don't think so.

Q: So you knowing who you are where you come from, you know your family and background, what would you say your health situation is today.

A: Well its not what you call good, because I have diabetes its comes from my mum and dad.

Q: So in relation to your diabetes, does that in any way stop you from teaching your grannies language?

A: No its good for me to do those things, and to get out and about.

Q: So you get out what exercise do you do?

A: I walk around everywhere, I walk my great grandson to school every day and that's good for my diabetes too.

Q: So do you look after your diabetes.

A: No not really but I have to take tablets.

Q: Is there any problems with it that you may need insulin or anything.

A: No I just need to take tablets.

Q: What other issues around Northam or in your family that affects you being a Nyoongah, like alcohol and drugs?
A: Yeh I think it affects a lot of Nyoongahs like that.

Q: What do you think needs to be done for those Nyoongahs.

A: I don't know we have tried as elders to do something but then it just stopped there.

Q: Do you think the younger people are interested in Nyoongah ways and their culture.

A: Well I don't know, some of them would be, those that want to know.

Q: So do you think that they are interested, do they want to learn language, where they come from, and where family used to camp.

A: Yes I think so some of them anyway.

So what I will do now is that I will type the interview up in a formal document and then I will bring it back next weekend for you to look at.
Can you give me your age and date of birth?
24 years of age 26/10/78.

Can you give me a brief history of your schooling?
I completed year 11 at Northam Senior High School then got a job in Sport & Recreational Department.

Where are you working at the moment?
Avon Primary School.

What is your role there?
Students At Education Risk and AIEO.

So what do you do in that role?
My role is to work with Aboriginal kids that are below the benchmark in all areas of maths, english and all learning areas and to get them above the benchmark or close to benchmark as possible.

Do you enjoy that job?
Yes I do its tricky but very challenging.

How long have you been working there?
Two years.

Now I am going to ask questions in relation to Nyoongah families, particular in relation to your family, values that were taught to you by your parents and grandparents and how all that impacts on your identity as a Nyoongah person. Where were you born?
A: Northam.

Q: Who brought you up?

A: Mother and father.

Q: When I talk about family, who do you consider your family?

A: Basically my immediate family, mum, dad, brother, sisters, aunties family all first cousins they are all my close immediate family.

Q: Is that the same as an extended family?

A: Yeh, similar but I suppose extended family there are some out there that are close as well so extended and immediate can be in the same category.

Q: Now often do you see this family you describe.

A: The immediate extended family here in Northam I see them basically every day. But family that don't live in Northam I probably see them once a month maybe once a year depending on the situation yeh.

Q: So you see your family in Northam every day and other extended family once a month or once a year, any other times?

A: On special occasions, funerals and things like that which is good.

Q: Do you feel your family has changed say in the last 10 or 15 years?

A: Yes and no, probably the last 20 years due to family moving away and the closeness has gone. The immediate family that live close together hasn't changed a lot its just the ones have changed households that have changed in the last 20 years I suppose.

Q: So the family that have lived in town, you don't see any changes with them?

A: No mainly depends on the situation I suppose, if there is a family argument that carries on a bit then it changes a bit but we are all
What do you think has changed with other family members?

As I said, think other family members that have changed is that as much as we would like to see them it is just too far to travel whereas on special occasions you need to go and you see them anyways.

Where would you like to see your family, whether its family in Northam or other family in 20 years.

Probably close together, maybe more family involvement as well not just special occasions maybe all the family get together say once a month keep track of each other and see how things are going not just at funerals and special occasions, in 20 years hopefully family will be strong enough to meet each other once a month and see how things are.

So you would like to see families close together and go back to how we used to live.

Yeah mainly I'm the younger generation coming through and the younger people are more distant than the older people whereas if we can start that at our age then its only going to get better for the ones that are younger than us.

So why is there a big gap there between the younger generation and the older generation?

I think the older generation have a bit more respect for the community and themselves, some of the younger generation don't have respect for themselves and don't have respect for their elders the more younger people out there don't respect themselves and don't respect anybody.

Why do you think that is, what influences are maybe changing those things?
A: I think the main influence is with young kids around here is drugs and alcohol and just probably the parents not drumming into them about families and respect or those kinds of things.

Q: So that a big issue and do you think the young people are not interested in cultural stuff or Nyoongah ways.

A: Some are and some just don't want to find out where their ancestors came from. Whereas I like to get out and try to see where dad and everyone else my uncles where and what they did when they were there and all those kinds of things. Others young Aboriginals just don't have the time I don't think.

Q: So you think that maybe some families are broken down and don't have what?

A: Yeah I suppose some families they don't have role models in their families.

Q: Can you give me a list of what Nyoongah values have been taught to you that have been passed on by your parents or grandparents.

A: I think the main one is respect for your elders, families, yourself, kids, wives, girlfriends, but I think the key is respect of elders more than anything.

Q: Okay and who taught you those values that you know?

A: Mum, dad, aunties, uncles, brothers and sisters.

Q: Has there been anything in your life experiences that have maybe changed those values or do you think other values that have influenced you through your sport, education that has changed the values that your parents taught you.

A: I think education wise speaking to dad he was never one to speak about education because it was a thing back then where his parents never drummed it into him that education was important so he didn't drum it into me. But I knew how important it was anyway that is why now I have a good job and it's the same for my sporting I learnt that respect for yourself and believe in yourself, if you
believe in yourself you will get there. A few things have changed but a lot of it is still the same.

Q: So you have children of your own, what values would you teach them?

A: My kids are half castes and the main value that I need to install in them is that they never lose their Aboriginality which is a big key for them and not to lose the fact that they have Aboriginal and to respect all Aboriginal because they are one and even though things have changed and we are not together they need to realise that the Aboriginal that is in them that they need to respect all those things. That is a value that I will tell my kids never lose sight of the fact that your Aboriginal because you always will be.

Q: How do you intend to do that?

A: Talking to them finding out what they want more important instead of telling them let them have their talk as well, Tanaya is old enough so she can talk about it but basically don't drum it into them but let them know the real life.

Q: So it's important for you that your kids know their identity, their family and who they are and that you will do that through yarning. So how is it that you know you are Nyoongah?

A: Through my family, mum and dad basically from day one you always know once you are Aboriginal you know you are Nyoongah and I suppose for other areas, whether you are Wongi, Yamatji you will always know. It's always been a part of me even though when I was playing sport you get people all telling you things, but you have to stand your ground and let them know that you are Aboriginal.

Q: What other things tell you that you are a Nyoongah person.

A: Cultural beliefs, food, getting out in the bush, hunting, camping all those kinds of things.

Q: Have you had any problems with your Nyoongah identity, whether it was at school and you being in sport, was your identity ever questioned?
A: Yes in a game of footy one day was racially abused in one game because I was too young to know what it was and it wasn't a problem but turn the clock to nowadays and it's a big thing but I think as I said earlier people say things to put you off its just a matter of how strong you are inside to know that you are Aboriginal and no-one is going to take that away from you and be proud of who you are.

Q: So if you have a strong identity then racial taunts don't both you?

A: No I think I'm strong enough inside and I've played at the top level to know that that is their way of putting you off your game and you just have to be tough inside and laugh it off and that hurts them more and you turn away and walk away from them and not say anything back cause they want that. So it's a matter of being strong inside and know the fact that you are always going to be Aboriginal.

Q: Okay so how do you think Nyoongah people can maintain their Nyoongah identity?

A: I think it's basically up to them at the end of the day, if they want to keep their identity its up to them some people say half castes may not choose to follow that way but it's up to them to if they choose to be that way.

Q: How do you think Nyoongah people deal with issues when things come up in their community, for instances feuding in the town how would that affect other Nyoongahs living in the town?

A: Yes it's happening in town at the moment and it affects the whole community pretty much because you got those kinds of people trying to rule the roost and you got the families that don't want nothing to do with it and they're brought in because of young kids arguing and involving adults. The adults should know better that it is just a kid thing and leave it like that but the community is very affected by it all families in general because we all gel together barr one family, so yeh it affects the community.

Q: So what do you think the community, especially the Nyoongah people what do you think they should do about it?
A: Basically get together and talk about how we can resolve this and if it can't be resolved then try and find another way to resolve this cause it is embarassing they fight in the main street during the day and it lets pretty much all other Nyoongahs down in Northam because the white people treat one Aboriginal all the same. A lot of my friends say that, so its something that the families that are not involved need to stamp it out.

Q: So those families that are feuding they're bringing shame on other Nyoongahs living in town?

A: Yeh because there is a place where they can do these things but they choose to do it in the main street in front of everybody which is very downgrading and as much anger they have, they don't need to do it in the main street where there is white people around because you basically walk the street and they will cross the road because they don't trust you.

Q: Okay so how do you as an individual and your family cope with these sorts of issues?

A: Me as I said, I basically stick to myself and my family we try and stay away from all those sorts of things because we are a pretty strong family and well respected I suppose and me as a well known Aboriginal person in the town I am well respected as it is so I basically keep to myself and my mates that I know I can trust.

Q: So in relation to your Nyoongah identity does that affect a person's health or your health?

A: Yep, stress related I suppose. I can speak on my aunty because she ended up in hospital because of all this, lots of things, stress can lead to heart attacks and things like that so its not a good thing for your health to try and maintain all these problems.

Q: So you feel you have a strong Nyoongah identity how do you relate that to your own health?

A: Basically as I said I don't drink, don't smoke and being a well known and have a lot of role models and they see me walk in the street...
Okay, that's the last of it. Thank you very much for your participation this afternoon. So what I will do now is type all this information into a document and I will get you to check it at some later stage. Thank you again.

Q: So you see yourself as a good role model for your young family and younger kids in the community.

A: Yes, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal kids come up and talk to me and want advice from me which is really good. But I will help Aboriginal kids more to say so, but knowing that I will still help non-Aboriginal kids as well, so all those things and everyone wants to be well known. I suppose it's just a matter of working hard and getting there at the end of the day.

Okay, that's the last of it. Thank you very much for your participation this afternoon. So what I will do now is type all this information into a document and I will get you to check it at some later stage. Thank you again.