Adult community education as sites for the development of social capital in a culturally diverse society

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Abstract

This research investigates the roles that adult community education (ACE) providers and programs play in the development of social and cultural networks for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in a regional community context. Within the milieu of the Shire of Campaspe, a rural area in northern Victoria, there has emerged the issue of 'new' social diversity due to recent decades of internal population mobility and international migration to regional areas. Australian regional communities like Campaspe are growing and diversifying within a complex framework of ecological, economic, historical, social and human factors. This thesis explores the main themes emerging from this one regional context where adult education plays a role in facilitating social capital development for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It shows individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds utilise adult education as a space to explore their own social and cultural isolation. Migration experiences, gender, life-stage and length of residence in Australia, all influenced the ACE experiences of the individuals who participated in the research. ACE organisations were able, in limited ways to respond to the needs of local adult learners but the providers also experienced difficulty in adapting to the complex individual needs of local people.

Social interaction and social capital development were major motivations for individuals accessing ACE in Campaspe. Based on its stated philosophical and pedagogical background, ACE in Australia has an enhanced role to play in more actively fostering social interaction for diverse groups because there is evidence that this is where people from diverse backgrounds do 'search for' access to personal, social and economic network development. ACE as an education sector has a shared meaning and purpose that makes it distinct from other post-compulsory education in Australia however, an argument will be put, that current policy, funding and practice frameworks are not clearly facilitating links between ACE and individual and local community needs. Social inclusion, social capital development and diversity management are all current challenges in Australian regional and urban communities. A renewed policy framework could re-orientate ACE providers and practitioners to listen to and 'see' the individuals and sub-groups experiencing cultural and social inequity in communities, those who are still currently missing out on access to and participation in the range of personal, social and vocational education programs through ACE and other education and training sectors that could further facilitate their active participation in Australian society.

Declaration

I, **Robert Townsend**, declare that the PhD thesis entitled, *Adult community education as sites for the development of social capital in a culturally diverse society*, is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Signed:

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List of Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	Adult community education
ACFE	Adult, Community and Further Education
ACOSS	Australian Council of Social Services
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMEP	Adult Migrant English Program
AMES	Adult Multicultural Education Services
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ATSI	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
AUCEA	Australian Universities Community Engagement Association
BRECCI	Bendigo Regional Ethnic Communities Council Inc
BRIT	Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CCAE	Campaspe College of Adult Education
CGEA	Certificate of General Education
CRS	Commonwealth Rehabilitation Services
DET	Department of Education & Training
DEST	Department of Science & Training
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
DVC	Department of Victorian Communities
ENH	Echuca Neighbourhood House
ESL	English (as a) Second Language
HE	Higher Education
HREOC	Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
KCLC	Kyabram Community Learning Centre
LAEG	Local Aboriginal Education Group
MHS	Murray Human Services
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NIACE	National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NESB	Non-English Speaking Background
NSW	New South Wales
OTTE	Office of Training & Tertiary Education
OTEN	Open Training & Education Network
RDA	Racial Discrimination Act
RTO	Registered Training Organisation
TAFE	Technical & Further Education
UCA	Uniting Church of Australia
U3A	University of the Third Age
UN	United Nations
VET	Vocational Education & Training
WASP	White Anglo Saxon Protestant

Awards and Publications

The researcher was granted an Australian Postgraduate Award 2005–2007.

A conference presentation based on this research was awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award by the Secomb Fund at Victoria University in 2007.

A conference paper based on this research was nominated for the Ian Martin Award for Social Justice in Adult Education at the annual SCUTREA conference in Edinburgh, Scotland, July 2008.

The following publications have emanated from this research since 2006:

Refereed journal articles:

Townsend, R. 2008 Adult education, social inclusion and cultural diversity in regional communities, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning,* Vol 48, No. 1, April 2008.

Townsend, R. 2006 Adult, community and public education as primary sites for the development of social capital, *Australian Journal of Adult Learning,* Vol 46, No. 2, July 2006.

Two draft journal articles are currently being reviewed for inclusion into the following journals:

MAGIS - International Journal of Research in Education, edition 2 in 2009

Rural Society – a themed issue in 2009 – Sea Changes, Tree Changes and Bush Lessons: Post-compulsory Education and Rural Renewal.

Refereed conference papers:

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Townsend, R. 2007. *Through the looking-glass, down under & arse end about: adult community education as sites for the development of social capital in a culturally diverse society,* accepted for presentation at the CRLL International Conference, *The times they are a changin': researching transitions in lifelong learning,* University of Stirling, Scotland, 22nd – 24th July 2007. (withdrawn for personal reasons).

Townsend, R. 2006. *Moving from Place to Space: Adult, community and public education as resources for alleviating social isolation in regional communities,* UTAS Conference, Isolation: Disconnection, Solitude and Seclusion in a Connected World, 14 – 16 December 2006 , UTAS, Hobart.

Chapter I

Introduction

This thesis presents an investigation and analysis of how people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds access and participate in adult community education (ACE) programs as a form of social capital development in one regional community of Australia. For the past few decades ACE policies and funding frameworks have stressed the need for increased access to and participation in ACE programs by targeting people from CALD backgrounds as well as women, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples and the long-term unemployed. There has been a suggestion that adult education policies and programs that 'target' particular groups like CALD in Australian society assumes a stable, Anglo-Saxon, 'white' core to the policy framework (Shore in Sheared & Sissel: 2001).

This equity framework has been particularly evident in the dual purpose of the policy, that is, increasing access to ACE for these groups within rural and regional communities (ACFE: 2007). The specific assumption within this policy framework and the main theme of the research that this thesis will investigate is that ACE is actually still servicing the 'stable, core' of the policy. This core of adult education policy is that the main target groups are Anglo-Saxon, able bodied and urban populations, the so called mainstream of Australian society and that other groups have to be specially targeted because they are the 'fringe dwellers' of our society.

This adult education policy framework and the assertions are tested by asking: is ACE successfully targeting people from CALD backgrounds within a regional context? The broader perspective of this research is the emerging cultural diversity of Australian society since the 1950s and how localised communities are being shaped by individual and collective experiences of social, economic inclusion and exclusion based on cultural background. Migrants struggle to develop 'new' social capital within local contexts in Australian society unless they are able to connect to cohorts of previous migrants with similar cultural backgrounds living in specific communities. As such, migrants are then always searching for opportunities to develop new social capital so that they can explore what it means to live in their new community.

In an Australian regional context, social capital development is more problematic for migrants from a broad range of cultural backgrounds because of the Anglo-colonial history of most of these communities and due to the limited social and economic opportunities that exist in these smaller communities. The need to explore the experiences of individuals from CALD backgrounds stems from the increasing diversity of regional communities in Australia in recent decades, as they adapt to changing climatic and global geo-economic forces. Regional community development is also occurring within the context of federal and state government policies such as regional migration, industry restructuring and skills gaps. Demographic changes have seen people of many backgrounds move away from urban areas and into regional centres for financial and lifestyle reasons and international skilled migration is now linking individuals and families directly to specific regional communities. This emerging diversity is therefore worthy of research in relation to how the social relationships and mores of regional communities are adapting or not adapting to this diversity and how individuals and families are experiencing social and economic inclusion or exclusion within these regional and rural contexts.

Cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) as a term has replaced, to a large extent, alternative terminology like non-English speaking background (NESB) and Language other than English (LOTE). CALD goes beyond identifying people according to their use of languages other than English by incorporating 'culture' as a notion that can identify individuals and groups as belonging to a specific background and has having specific needs. It is a term more difficult to define and therefore to measure than the other terms but it does assist in encapsulating the diversity of Australian society, where some 20-30% of the population (depending on definition) identify with a culture other than Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking culture (ABS: 2007).

CALD as a term and as a way of describing a sub-set offers society and researchers with a postmodern conundrum: what is culture and how do we identify and group individuals and families according to culture, cultural background and social and cultural need? Culture is both an individual and collective concept and is a subjective notion of who we are and the experiences we share (Newton: 2008, Lowry: 2007). This presents a challenge to social policy frameworks that attempt to define CALD as 'one type' of equity group requiring access to services and

resources. Not all individuals, families and groups from non-Anglo cultures have similar experiences of, for example, migration, families, health, education and/or employment.

Given that people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds constitute a growing component of Australian society and of regional communities (ABS: 2006), research into their contribution to regional economic and social development is beginning to document their significant role in regional and rural community regeneration (ICEPA: 2006). Issues of cultural and social marginalization motivate many people, and especially newly-arrived migrants, to reside within the greater social diversity of urban areas. However, in recent years a number of regional municipalities around Australia have been actively welcoming more diverse groups into their communities for a range of economic and social reasons.

Social capital is a re-emerging theoretical and analytical means through which literature, measurements, data and analysis from sociology, political science, social anthropology and economics can be considered to conceptually and methodologically 'move forward' in exploring the development of social structures within communities and societies (Hulme & Toye: 2006). Social capital has been used in recent decades as a means of describing social relations in western community contexts. It is apparent that research regarding social capital development for migrants to Australia has concentrated on ethnic groups in large urban areas and regional centres, and on the existence of generational social and economic network development (Giorgas: 2000). However, people from culturally diverse backgrounds in the Shire of Campaspe have not been able to rely on such generational social development because of the lack of a historical and generational CALD presence in the region.

The original re-creation of the use of social capital as a way of describing and analysing social policies and processes by Putnam (2000) was first used in the context of community education and in Bowling Alone, he found that education is one of the clearest proxy measures for social capital formation (Putnam: 2000). There is an argument by Farr (2004) that the term social capital was in much wider use in the early part of the 20th century, particularly by Hanifan and by Dewey. Farr's exploration of the history of the concept of social capital adds significantly to the understanding of social benefit and economic language being utilised far earlier

than attributed by most theorists. It is significant for this thesis that the term can be seen to have gained currency within the early movements that were about community education and rural and regional community building. Dewey and Hanifan both investigated progressive education, service education as 'new civics' focussing on community life and active learning, individuals working in groups addressing local and social problems, using learning as doing and learning as connecting to each other (Farr: 2004). Clearly education has a role in the creation of networks and norms, the relationships formed at pre and post-compulsory forms of education are important for social support and for linking to community, social and institutional resources. Social capital has been recently seized on as a way of inserting different forms of education into the social capital debate.

At the centre of this research is the role that adult community education (ACE) providers and programs play in creating specific kinds of programs and spaces for CALD people to explore a range of personal, social and economic issues while interacting with informal and formal structures and the processes of adult learning. The specific context of this research, the Shire of Campaspe, in northern Victoria, Australia, is typical of many regions in Australia where the population is diversifying as more people move from large urban areas and migrants and refugees are 'diverted' into regional areas. Regional communities like Campaspe are growing and diversifying within a complex framework of ecological, economic, historical, social and human factors. However, there is political and conceptual disagreement over whether cultural diversity has a positive or negative impact on the development of social capital in Australian communities (Healy, E: 2007, Healy, K: 2007, Babacan: 2007).

The research presented in this thesis utilises a mixed methods research design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, Creswell: 2002) which explores via narrative, textual and statistical data, the extent to which participation in adult education and training in an ACE context impacts on processes and structures of social inclusion for individuals and the strengthening of social capability and the building of social capital for culturally diverse communities, regions and societies (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006, Bryson & Mowbray: 2005, Burnheim: 2004, Faris: 2004, Fattore, Turnbull & Wilson: 2003, Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman: 2003, McLoughlin & Oliver: 2000). It assumes that migrants who live in regional communities struggle to

develop social capital and that agencies such as ACE have a substantial role to play in facilitating adult education programs and processes that also assist in the development of personal and social networks. The particular cross-disciplinary approach (Hulme & Toye: 2006) to this research encompasses perspectives on social policy, adult education, cultural diversity, social capital and community development in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of cultural diversity on regional communities. It is a methodology particularly well-suited to researching the multifaceted issues that inform and impact on the social policies relating to Australian adult education.

The regional community context of Australian society is significant because recent census data has highlighted emerging trends in regional communities involving significant social change. The more recent redistribution of Australia's regional population via internal and international migration *reflects a highly mobile population responding to a range of triggers including employment opportunities, housing costs and lifestyle preferences. These trends ... suggest some major challenges for policy and service provision in regional education and employment* (Mission Australia: 2006: 11). Currently there are immigration programs targeting humanitarian entrants for resettlement in regional and rural Australia. Skilled migrants can fill skill shortages and there are opportunities for guest workers to come to Australia to fulfil specific employment contracts in regional and/or rural communities (Broadbent, Cacciattolo & Carpenter: 2006, ICEPA: 2006).

The experiences of social inclusion and exclusion by individuals residing in the range of Australian communities are influenced by a range of compounding factors including the migration experience, population demographics, the history of specific communities, government social and economic policies, the local, state and federal political environments, and so on. There is evidence in this research and others that Australian society 'sees' migrants as individuals from cultures irrevocably different from the dominant WASP culture of Australia.

Emanating from these experiences as migrants, most of the individuals in this research have been searching for a sense of 'place' and 'community', a sense of belonging to somewhere outside the realm of their pre-existing familial and cultural experiences. This search for something 'other than' also appears to be a function of age-related life transitions as much as CALD background and migration experiences.

No longer satisfied or dependent on the same social connections that have sustained them in the past, they have been seeking some meaning to their individual lives rather than solely financial gain or familial stability.

The ACE sector in Australia is characterised by the provision of general education courses such as literacy, numeracy and work preparation, basic level vocational education and training (VET) programs as well as recreation and lifestyle courses. The Victorian context of ACE is significantly different to other states in that there are more providers. It receives greater public funding and provides a greater share of student contact hours especially in VET provision where approximately 20% of VET programs are delivered by ACE providers. ACE is an integral part of VET provision in Victoria rather than being seeing solely as a separate sector of pre-accredited programs (ACFE: 2007). Recent developments in the ACE sector throughout Australia include the emergence of larger 'colleges' of adult education (CAEs) which seek to service large numbers of second-chance learners in populous, urbanised environments. This has resulted in the recent creation of Community Colleges Victoria (CCV) and Community Colleges Australia (CCA), which are new peak organisations seeking to influence government about their needs as ACE organisations separate from the more traditional, smaller, neighbourhood based ACE providers.

Another development has been the substantial increase in the delivery of VET programs by ACE providers in order to meet the needs of government policy and funding targets for so-called 'hard to get to' communities and groups that are not being serviced by TAFE institutes or private training organisations. ACE is an adult learning sector that is publicly-funded, community-managed and organised at a neighbourhood or localised community level. Traditionally, ACE organisations provide adult education services to individuals and sub-groups in communities who are characterised as second-chance learners, people who are seeking to re-enter adult education and training after experiencing social and economic dislocation because of migration, unemployment, ill health, relationship breakdowns or the realignment of family structures (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007).

An exploration of ACE as one agency of Australian society and government social policy can provide some insight into the development of social networks, social inclusion and social capital for people from a range of backgrounds. ACE funding

structures indirectly influence patterns of provision of adult education to specific groups in Victoria. Funding is allocated to providers based on targeted funding for specific sub-groups such as the long-term unemployed, women returning to work, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from CALD backgrounds among others (ACFE: 2006). This is encouraging significant levels of niche provision.

There appears to be a pivotal role for the ACE sector, as well as the VET and HE sectors, in social capital development for specific marginalised groups in Australian society. There is increasing recognition of the strong relationship between participation in adult education and civic efficacy and identity, levels of community trust, and social activity and inclusion. It is acknowledged in Australia and internationally that individuals access adult education and training for a range of personal, social and economic reasons, and that attending sites of education and participating in educational programs leads to a myriad of outcomes for individuals other than just the acquisition of credentials (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006, Bryson & Mowbray: 2005, Burnheim: 2004, Faris: 2004).

Social capital as a means of exploring how migrants develop new networks and relationships in a regional context supports the investigation of how ACE and other forms of adult education and training can facilitate and promote new ways of information sharing and knowledge and skills formation that relate to the personal, social *and* economic realms of individual lives. The use of the term social capital is one growing in currency as it describes features of social organisation such as networks and notions of trust and collective norms (Osborne, Sankey & Wilson: 2007, Baron, Field & Schuller: 2000). Social capital is being re-explored in many communities and societies by governments, researchers and peak human services organisations and can be seen as a way of improving efficiency and inclusion in communities. It needs to be acknowledged that for marginalised groups such as migrants, in the context of Australian society and specifically regionally communities, established community groups, clubs, associations and networks can also reinforce social and economic exclusion by not welcoming new members who don't fit Anglo-Saxon ways of connecting to and participating in these established structures.

Migration, ethnicity, race and culture as experiences and indicators of community life have been absent from the social capital debate in Australian and internationally and there is emerging evidence that social capital development via agencies of government policy, like ACE, can be a form of social control and social reproduction (Hero: 2007). Research and analyses that link social capital to processes of adult education and training are indeed still in their infancy. ACE does have a mandated role in Australian society to provide access to education and training, but this does not necessarily translate into the building of social capital specifically for the marginalised groups that it purports to sustain (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007).

The main question that guided this research is refined by four sub-questions that provide a more specific framework for data collection and analysis. The main research question asks: To what extent does participation in adult community education programs contribute to the development of localised social capital for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in a regional context?

The following four sub-questions provided a framework for data collection:

- What adult education programs have people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living in the Shire of Campaspe participated in, and what have been the social outcomes and benefits of participating in adult education programs for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds?

- What role(s) do local adult education programs and practices play in enhancing social inclusiveness in the Shire of Campaspe, and are these adult education programs and practices supporting the institutions, networks and norms necessary for the enhancement of social inclusion for people from culturally diverse backgrounds?

- In what way could ACE promote more social inclusion for people from CALD backgrounds and what are the social, educational and other barriers to achieving this and how could these be addressed?

- What is the ontology of recent Australian government adult learning policies targeting people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and do Australian government adult learning policy statements provide a coherent philosophical framework for the development of social outcomes through adult community education programs for people from culturally diverse backgrounds?

The research methodology encompassed in-depth multiple interviews with individuals from CALD backgrounds residing in Campaspe who accessed local adult education programs. These interviews resulted in narratives which are presented as two sets of vignettes describing and analysing the experiences of divergence from the cultural mainstream within this single regional community. There were policy and data analyses pertaining to the participation of people from CALD backgrounds in ACE funded and sponsored programs in Campaspe, as well as interviews with people employed as learning facilitators and managers in ACE providers within the region.

The first and third sub-questions were addressed via the collection of narratives which recorded the individual experiences of people from CALD backgrounds who participated in adult education and training programs in the Shire of Campaspe. The resulting vignettes of adult education experiences were developed from open-ended ethnographic interviews that engaged with the lives of individual people to provide a rich perspective, and a holistic and dynamic view, of personal adult learning experiences (Norum: 1998, Balatti & Falk: 2002).

The narrative data attempt to link individual adult education and training experiences and outcomes in the Shire of Campaspe with indicators of social and economic benefit as derived from recent research on social capital (Winter: 2000, OECD: 2003, Cox: 2004, ABS: 2006, Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006). These now commonly used social capital indicators were utilised to frame questions for the survey and interviews with people from CALD backgrounds in Campaspe.

The second sub-question guided the data collection from surveys and interviews with adult education staff to determine the philosophies and practices of adult learning programs implemented in this region for people from CALD backgrounds. Interviews with the staff within some of the ACE providers in the Shire of Campaspe explored their perceptions of the effect of adult education programs on participation rates and social outcomes for people from CALD backgrounds in this region. The fourth sub-question guided the analysis of Australian government adult education policies with a specific emphasis on claims that targeted adult learning equity programs and practices lead to increased access to education and training for people from CALD backgrounds.

Overview of Thesis

Chapter II provides an overview of the current literature concerning perspectives on adult education social policy, the experiences of adult learning, the links with social capital development, the impacts of adult education reform in Australia and the discourse around cultural diversity, social capital and adult education. Chapter III summarises the ethics of the research as approved by the Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development at Victoria University and the mixed methods research design, research methodology and processes.

Chapter IV analyses government data about participation in adult education and training across the Victoria and the Loddon Campaspe Mallee (LCM) region of Victoria, and presents data from interviews with individuals working with ACE providers in Campaspe. Chapter V presents and analyses six vignettes derived from the extensive interviews with individuals from CALD backgrounds residing in Campaspe who migrated to Australia from the 1950s through to the early 1970s. Chapter VI reveals and analyses a further six vignettes derived from interviews with individuals from CALD backgrounds who have recently migrated to Australia and who reside in Campaspe.

Chapter VII provides a cross-disciplinary analysis of the links that emerged from the research between ACE and cultural diversity and social inclusion in regional areas, highlighting issues such as social capital development and the role of adult education in the social fabric of regional communities. Chapter VIII concludes the thesis by outlining the main themes of the research and providing some conclusions about how the ACE sector in Victoria has responded to the needs of individuals, sub-groups and communities. Chapter IX provides a summary and some recommendations about ACE in Australia. The appendices then provide a visual and written discourse on ACE spaces in Campaspe and copies of the research tools utilised to collect data.

Chapter II

Cultural Diversity and Adult Community Education in Australian Society

Introduction

This chapter will introduce the main themes emerging from recent debate and research in Australia and internationally about the context of adult education and its links to social capital development for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Gender, life-stage, socio-economic background, length of time of residence in Australia, and urban and regional contexts all influence the adult education experiences of the individuals from CALD backgrounds. Based on its stated philosophical and pedagogical objectives, adult community education in Australia has a role to play in actively fostering and facilitating social interaction for diverse groups, because there is evidence that adult community education is where people from diverse backgrounds 'search for' access to personal, social and economic network development (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007, Kearns: 2006). The lack of a national Australian adult education philosophy and policy framework means there is a lack of shared meaning and purpose to ACE even though it is quite distinct from other sectors of post-compulsory education, and this has led to the development of policy and program confusion at local community levels.

International Perspectives on Adult Learning

The OECD offers a broad definition of adult learning that includes general, vocational, enterprise and higher education and training across all types of learning sites (OECD: 2003). In 2003, the OECD published comparative research on adult learning policies and practices in nine countries in Europe and Scandinavia which contends that, despite reform agendas reshaping adult learning policies and practices in most countries, there are persistent inequities in terms of the provision of, access to, and outcomes of adult education and training (OECD: 2003).

Similar research from Australia and overseas has evaluated adult education and training reforms against established policies and practices targeted at specific groups of individuals within society, including the unemployed, discouraged workers, early (forced) retirees, women returning to work, youth, Indigenous communities and people with disabilities (Noonan, Burke & White: 2004: Evans:

2003: Stevenson: 2003: James: 2001). Empirical research into education and training in most western democratic countries reveals persistently inequitable participation in education based on social class, gender (dis)ability and age, with correspondingly inequitable outcomes (Evans: 2003).

The 2003 OECD report provides a policy framework that it argues assists governments in addressing these issues, starting with recognition of a rights-based, rather than mutual obligation, framework that encourages individuals to engage with adult learning during the whole of their life via access and incentives that recognise the economic, social and personal development aspects of adult education and training (OECD: 2003). The OECD reinforces the notion of the *learner* and *learning* as priorities for adult education and training rather than any specific industrial or social engineering role. The OECD also outlines a policy agenda stating that learning must become a process that attracts people with pedagogical methods that are learner-centred, contextualised to all economic, social and personal circumstances, and reach out to individuals and organisations with information, advice and services. The Report concludes that learning needs to be where people are at, rather than people needing to be where learning is at (OECD: 2003).

Noonan et al. (2004) go further by stating that the development of learning environments where the acquisition of knowledge, experience and skills is valued must occur within a framework of major social change. This means that regional and community capability need to be central to adult education and training instead of centralised government policy and program planning. Noonan et al. and others regard community development, community engagement and innovative communities as government policy areas that have yet to intersect with public adult education and training policy and program development (Noonan, Burke & White: 2004: Finger & Asun: 2001).

A cursory examination of adult education systems in other countries reveals that there are a variety of different philosophies about the provision of adult learning in a community context, although most have embraced to a certain extent the merging of adult learning with vocational training. Germany has a history stretching back centuries in which adult education has a philosophical and pragmatic framework of education as political emancipation and intellectual enlightenment. Adult education is seen as action and reflection in non-traditional settings, outside

of institutional frameworks, where learning is merged into life, leisure, family, politics and the workplace (Nuissl & Pehl: 2004). In the UK, recent evaluations of adult education and training have revealed that women, people from minority communities, migrants and people on income support are not being served by modern UK post-compulsory education and training systems and processes (NIACE: 2003). The UK National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) has advocated a range of reforms designed to realign adult education to reflect diverse public benefits, including all purpose adult learning, study circles, and recognition of the role of adult learning in creating trust, respect, well-being and participatory democracy. These will require a rebalancing of public funding and, more importantly, a resourcing of the adult education rhetoric (NIACE: 2003). NIACE has concluded that adult community education as both a philosophy and an educational practice is in a state of flux in most developed nations around the globe and there appears to be disagreement not only around philosophy but also the frameworks of practice that actually impact on individuals and communities (NIACE: 2003).

Australian Adult Education Systems

Adult learning in Australia refers to the processes by which adults learn and build on their existing knowledge and skills. Public adult education refers to publicly funded education and training programs designed for adults, often incorporating approaches to education which draw on the learner's life or work experiences, involve learners in planning the learning activities, encourage learning in groups and facilitate self-directed learning. The elements of public adult education and training in Australia are three distinct sectors: Adult community education (ACE), Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE).

The ACE sector is characterised by the provision of general education courses, some vocational education and training programs and recreation/lifestyle courses. Adult community education sites tend to be public, community-based and at a neighbourhood level. A recent development, however, is that some larger 'colleges' of adult education are emerging and increasingly delivering VET programs to meet the needs of so-called 'hard to get to' communities and groups. ACE participants are significantly older than students in other post-secondary education, and over 80% of all participants are enrolled with community providers (Clemans, Hartley & Macrae: 2003). For women, the social aspects of attending ACE include group

activity and improving personal well being. Older people are motivated almost solely by social and personal development (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007, Walstab & Teese: 2005). Recent reports on ACE (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007, Walstab & Teese: 2005) reveal that in Victoria, *regional participation rates, which are higher than their metropolitan counterparts, reveal the importance of ACE in rural areas, and particularly for country women* (Walstab & Teese: 2005: 5). The ACE sector is also characterised by a lack of comprehensive research about the activities and outcomes of less formal adult education programs including activities offered by universities of the third age (U3As), public and private recreation, leisure and personal enrichment activities (Clemans, Hartley & Macrae: 2003).

The VET sector in Australia is a national framework of training packages and qualifications linked specifically to industry needs. Programs are managed and delivered mostly by large multi-campus TAFE providers or a plethora of small to medium-sized private companies and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), which train an in-house workforce or deliver programs to niche client groups. Harris, Rainey and Sumner (2006), in their study of pathways between and within VET and HE, evoke the image of 'crazy paving' in adult education and training: *While policy emphasises 'seamless pathways' the learners … do not generally perceive their educational journeys as pathways, but rather as stepping stones, zigzags and lurches* (Harris, Rainey & Sumner: 2006: 7). The VET sector is nevertheless characterised by the notion of 'training pathways', with individuals encouraged via skills certificates to use lower level programs like rungs on a ladder to move through education and training systems to gain the credentials they require.

Higher Education sector programs and qualifications have become increasingly vocational-ised in recent decades, with the most popular courses linked to industries such as information technology, business management and marketing, or to professional training in areas such as medicine, law, nursing, teaching and social work. Data on participation in HE undergraduate and postgraduate courses reveals a focus on economic outcomes, with the most popular courses being Management and Commerce, while external and multi-modal courses now make up over 20% of all courses (DEST: 2004). There has been less funding for humanities, arts and culture courses, and the influx of fee-paying and overseas students is broadening

and complicating the marketplace for this sector. There have been recent curriculum and program reviews in this sector, mostly as a reaction to the so-called radical shift of the University of Melbourne to what is now known as 'the Melbourne Model' of generalised undergraduate courses linked to specialised, professional training at a Masters level.

One main critique of all three systems of public adult education and training in Australia is the market-driven philosophy that places the individual as a consumer of education services (Latham: 2002). This can be seen in the case work approach to linking people who are unemployed or underemployed into VET programs, and the use of individual ranking scores as the entry into higher education. This consumer and market-driven framework clearly indicates that the policy framework in Australia for all sectors of education and training is about human capital development leading to employment. Table 1 shows a comparison of participation in each sector of adult education and training in Victoria by different social groups. The ACE data is from two years preceding the other data because there is no other up-to-date national data after 2002 to be used for comparison.

Table 1: Participation rates in Victorian adult education sectors (ACFE: 2003, DEST: 2004, NCVER: 2005)

	ACE '02	VET '04	HE '04
Women	74%	45%	46%
Men	26%	55%	54%
Indigenous	5%	1%	1%
NESB	8%	24%	22%
Non-citizens	-	1%	28%
Employment related	43%	76%	-
Personal development	57%	17%	-

These data reflect the differences between the sectors in terms of gender, English-speaking background, and economic and social purpose. Women make up a clear majority of ACE participants but are still a minority compared to men in VET and HE sectors. In terms of cultural diversity, even though Indigenous people are over-represented in ACE, the under-representation of people from non-English speaking backgrounds in the sector is stark and concerning. With only 8% of people

participating in ACE coming from NESB, compared with this group being nearly 22% of the total population, it can be inferred that ACE providers in Victoria are not targeting this group. Alternatively, are these groups excluding themselves from ACE for some reason?

The Impact of Adult Education Reform

The main plank of VET reform in the 1990s was the introduction of a competency-based framework for the planning, delivery and assessment of training. The Hawke and Keating Federal Labor Governments, in partnership with the union movement, saw national competency-based training as not only necessary for the reform of vocational training and work in Australia but as an integral part of their social justice strategy.

The unions believed that a national training system, underpinned by acknowledging worker skills and knowledge in a more flexible and user friendly training environment, would have the ability to attract a wider range of participants. Women, disadvantaged young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and regional or isolated communities could be encouraged, it was believed, to participate in this new vocational training system. More importantly, their skills and knowledge and the subsequent qualifications gained would be recognised throughout Australia (ANTA: 1994). It was believed that training reform could deliver employment flexibility, greater participation in training by a wide range of groups, and future growth and wealth in Australia (ANTA: 1994). This has arguably been the main structural reform activity within the three sectors of adult education and training in Australia over the past decade.

Higher education reforms over the past ten to fifteen years have included the introduction of HECS and fee-for-service places as funding mechanisms for all major courses of education. The reforms have also led to an expansion in the number of higher education institutions to service populations living within so-called 'rust belt' areas of major cities and urban sprawl suburbs, along with the growth of multi-sector adult education institutions and the expansion of Australian HE programs and services into most Asian countries. The new Rudd Labor Government has received the Bradley Report on Higher Education Reforms (2008) which has recommended a package of reforms regarding new national targets for educational attainment, more comprehensive student support, higher quality accreditation and systems

management within institutions and specifically, greater funding in regional and rural areas. Minister Gillard has also signalled that the VET sector will be expanded in both size and types of programs on offer

Historically, the ACE sector in Australia has found itself outside such structural or national policy reform. In recent years, as an indirect response to VET reforms, most ACE organisations have shifted their program delivery and emphasis. Government imposed funding frameworks have led them to the planning and delivery of VET programs, especially in situations where there are no other VET providers in the vicinity or where funding is offered for programs not provided by local TAFE organisations—for example, programs for rural and remote groups and communities. The specific lack of attention to and reform of, the ACE sector however, means that little research has been conducted into the same issues and factors that have affected the VET and HE sectors of adult learning.

Moreover, the ACE sector is different from the VET and HE sectors in Australia since the States and Territories each have different philosophical and funding arrangements for ACE, and it has only been since the mid 1990s that education and training activity, participation and outcomes in this sector have been measured by State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments. Despite a scarcity of robust data, the existing research into VET programs has suggested that there is a substantial amount of 'other' education and training activity that occurs in all adult education and training sectors which goes unreported (Golding, Davies & Volkoff: 2001).

ACE is seen by governments and communities as a site of learning that makes it a 'second chance' education sector, concerned with empowering and transforming learners via community-embedded learning, and learning as a social contribution by means of engaging and embedding adult learning into community life (Golding, Davies & Volkoff: 2001). However, planning for and delivering this kind of adult education and training in communities requires physical, human and social capital, the components of social capital being community norms, community networks and the trust processes in place (Falk: 2000). Planning for a regional focus on adult learning also requires a specific geographic and demographic delivery framework in order to aid the implementation of effective education and training programs.

Regional adult education clearly requires the development of processes that promote local planning for local needs and outcomes, which means securing a considerable commitment by local people and organisations to produce long-term and successful education and training outcomes for individuals and communities (Falk & Kilpatrick: 1999). In addition, evaluating the policy and planning of public adult education and training requires acknowledgement of the presence of a social diversity amongst learners. Education organisations can then provide for the range of individuals and sub-groups within communities, rather than catering for generic equity groups of people defined in a national (urban) context as 'NESB', 'unemployed', 'youth at risk', 'women' or the like.

Extrapolating from various scenarios of adult education and training in regional contexts, Falk and Kilpatrick (1999) discuss two main policy issues to be considered, including the competing interests of national, regional and individual needs, and the 'walls' between policy spheres such as adult education and training, regional development and population policies (Falk & Kilpatrick: 1999: 10). Evidence exists that ACE organisations deliver a range of community benefits other than economic and employment outcomes, including benefits such as community participation, well being, and enhanced quality of life though programs that are aimed at the enrichment of individuals, families and communities. *The accumulation of social capital through broad participation in ACE is seen as a source of regional regeneration, neighbourhood, town or community development* (Golding, Davies & Volkoff: 2001).

There is, however, ongoing confusion at policy, provider and program levels between the philosophies, purpose and delivery of economic, social and personal programs. Economic factors—that is, funding for human capital development via vocational training—dominate ACE provider program profiles except at the neighbourhood house level. Access to adult education is now seen as a pathway to VET programs especially via large college-type ACE providers, while the neighbourhood house ACE providers are expected to deliver valuable social, cultural and civic outcomes that need to be recognised and expanded (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007).

Volkoff and Walstab (2007) conclude that more importantly, at this time, there is a need for further comprehensive research and development of the ACE sector that could include topics such as: the interface between ACE and other education and training sectors, the implementation of new conceptions of adult learning such as 'learning in many ways at many sites' and the planning and implementation of learning communities in a regional community context. A reinforcement of the social outcomes of ACE, as one example, could mean the sharing of program aims and funding for public adult education and public health portfolios that could combine adult education and training programs with public health education, self-help groups and so on, to further satisfy the need for social programs.

Social Capital and Adult Education

The reality of Australian adult education, and the rhetoric which accompanies it, reveal that 'community' is an important site for adult learning. While a good deal of research and theorising continues into the 'institution' and the 'workplace' as sites of learning, adults continually operate within several constructs of community. Community can be a geographic community like the Shire of Campaspe or a link between individuals based on something like cultural and linguistic background. Various authors (ANTA: 2002, Cervero & Wilson: 2001, Falk: 2000) have found that local geographic communities and communities of interest need to be involved in the planning and provision of adult education and training programs for these services to have meaning. Regional, community and organisational capability as a measure of participation is reflected by local adult learning networks, forums and providers being able to facilitate learner-centred learning, being open to change and able to problem-solve by engaging localised community resources. These are key tenets of change management within communities and organisations which to some extent have been missing within adult education and training policy and reform in Australia (Malloch & Cairns: 1999). Cavaye (2001) points out that government needs to be accountable in new ways to communities for the programs they initiate. This includes being accountable for their contribution to community organisation, cooperation and attitudinal change, that is, accountability for the processes of interaction with communities and for community capability outcomes (Cavaye: 2001).

A growing interest in the varied 'returns' from public adult education and training means that research into the outcomes of education and training now includes employment, productivity, health and social inclusion. The use of the term social capital is one that refers to social structures in a community context—features such as trust, norms and processes within familial contact, social networks, civic participation and social, cultural and religious associations. Three branches of social capital have developed since the 1980's, Bourdieu (1984) stressed unequal access to resources and the relationships that influence this access, Coleman (1990) highlighted rational choices theory regarding how we decide to access resources whereas Putnam has been more interested in the political and collective nature of social relationships (2000).

Putnam's framework of social capital is relevant to this research despite being tagged as 'populist' because of his vision of social capital development as a process for the public good as well as for individual reformation. Putnam's earliest notions of social capital measurement within the neighbourhood and community context are relevant as a framework which requires re-contextualisation within 21st century globalised communities. Putnam's exploration of regions in his Italian studies is also relevant to this research because its clear exploration of bonding and bridging social capital development within the acknowledgement regions within a seemingly homogenous nation like Italy provides insight into significant community norms and processes. (Putnam: 2000; Edwards, Foley & Diani: 2001; Putnam: 2004). Putnam incorporated structures of family, community and regional life within his later studies of social capital which is distinctly different from Coleman or Bourdieu who both investigated individual agency and the transactions of this agency as primary whereas Putnam seemingly simplistic framework appears more relevant to discussions around civil society, social policy and grassroots community organisations.

There have of course been many developments in the debates around social capital development in a variety of contexts, specifically access to health services in the UK. Schaefes and McDaniel (2004) have stated that social capital needs to be assessed by considering all of the empirical evidence from diverse groups in disparate communities. Marmot and Wilkinson (2006) have critiqued the simple notion of social capital as sets resources and how individuals access these resources by

revealing that there can be three viewfinders through which social capital can scrutinised. Social capital can be viewed as resources that provide social support or it can be viewed as the deficiency in materials required for an acceptable standard of living or it can be viewed as an integral part of frameworks and processes that sustain or challenge inequities in societies (Marmot & Wilkinson: 2006).

This research positions itself, not within any specific view of social capital but as a away of utilising the frameworks that 'fit' the context. It takes a critical view of social capital as a concept that can be measured as Putnam had but without throwing out the framework in totality, Putnam's notions of norms, trust and social networks are relevant in any age and any context but the forms of measurement do require updating to incorporate the inequities and diversities of all groups and communities in all societies. Social capital as a concept and a measurement of social inclusivity needs to become inclusive in how, where and with who it is measured.

Schuller (2005) examines three forms of social capital, these being bonding, bridging and linking capital. Bonding social capital refers to the links within or between homogenous groups such as sporting groups and clubs, while bridging social capital refers to the links within and between heterogenous groups such as networks of voluntary groups. Linking social capital refers to the links between people and groups at different hierarchical levels such as political organisations or business networks. Schuller (2005) explains that bonding and bridging forms of social capital are context dependent and that bonding as a form of social capital is exclusionary in the sense that it aims to differentiate between groups, allowing people to connect to others who are 'the same' as themselves.

Bridging social capital, on the other hand, aims to bind different groups (who have bonded) together, to extend ideas, expertise and contacts within a community and/or society. Activities and frameworks which facilitate bridging social capital aim to acknowledge the validity of the norms, values and experiences of 'others' without having to share them. Bridging capital then contributes to what Schuller (2005) describes as 'knowledge economies', that is, the transactions which occur to build knowledge, experience and skills, and this is the obvious role that education organisations can play in a community context. Education organisations attempt to

infuse knowledge and skills in individuals but they also have a role in facilitating the knowledge and learning that occurs from the interaction between individuals.

Measuring social capital requires agreement on a list of social capital items that are empirically measurable. In their research of five communities in NSW, Onyx and Bullen (1998 in Winter: 2000) have distilled a range of factors associated with social capital, including participation in the local community, pro-activity in a social context, feelings of trust and safety, neighbourhood connections, family and friendship connections, tolerance of diversity, value of life and work connections. Community-based groups such as public adult education organisations provide a means for individuals to participate in social capital development, bridging the family and the state by facilitating opportunities, raising awareness, advocating and lobbying for change and taking action to strengthen communities. All of these activities at local levels can lead to the development of forms of trust and community-based public adult education and training can therefore be integral to developing social capital within local communities.

Baker (2006) asserts that social capital is the *modus operandi* for adult education and lifelong learning; that is, adult education is about the facilitation of knowledge and practice for individuals and groups. She creates a new term: *Social Learning Capital where certain social connections, networks and relationships act as a resource to help people to access knowledge and advance their learning through co-operation with others, over time* (Baker: 2006: 1). It is the 'conversations' that occur during knowledge acquisition and learning that create learning within all sites of adult education rather than the curriculum or specific programs that are on offer. Baker outlines two case studies as emerging examples of this, including a Leadership Lounge and a community-based Learning Café/Learning Conversations project in Queensland (Baker: 2006).

Other recent research in Australia has revealed that participation in accredited adult education courses does produce social capital outcomes for 80% of students, specifically by creating changes in the number and nature of attachments to existing and new social networks, and by creating changes in the way individuals participating in courses interacted with other people (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006). Students valued social capital outcomes highly because they contributed to socio-economic wellbeing, and social capital outcomes also resulted in positive effects on

students' social environments, education and learning, employment and quality of working life (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006).

Literacy and numeracy improvement (often) required social capital outcomes as a pre-requisite or co-requisite, since improved social networks provided the opportunity to learn and implement new learning. Social capital outcomes can be traced back to specific teaching and facilitation strategies, for example, interaction with peers, developing new networks and relationships that can be transferred to other activities in a community context. Balatti et al. (2006) conclude that there is a need to recognise and report social capital outcomes of adult education and training in Australia and that more detailed research needs to be conducted.

There is a need then for further exploration of how adult education contributes to the development of localised social capital, addressing issues such as: How does adult education ensure that people have the knowledge, experience and skills to participate in social, economic and civic organisations? What values does it promote? Does it provide a forum for community networks and social, civic activity? What are these networks and activities? A substantial re-visiting of adult education pedagogy, philosophies and processes could explore how education can serve social ends as well as human capital and economic outcomes. There are links between the work of Bourdieu and Dewey which requires further investigation, theories of adult and experiential learning clearly link to community and group processes and notions of norms, networks and social relationships. Continuing, adult, informal and vocational education policy frameworks in Australia through the ACE, VET and HE sectors are, in 2009, being re-visited by a new Labor Federal government. The 'crisis' in Higher Education is currently being debated with social inclusion and regional and local community contexts up-front in government and institutional considerations for reform.

At a community level there is a need to explore how much localised management of adult education programs can contribute to the development of the community institutions, networks and norms necessary for the creation and enhancement of social capital. What is the evidence from adult education providers, programs, facilitators and from the experiences of individual adult learners that social capital development is possible?

Individual Transformation via Adult Education

The recent popular use of terms such as 'lifelong learning' and 'learning for life' have attempted to make the link between learning and the various stages of adult development. These terms have little meaning if they are not grounded in transformative models of adult education. Experiential learning is one example of an adult education process that links the contexts of education, work and personal development: *there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education* (Kolb: 1984: 5).

Lewin (1951) stresses the importance of group dynamics in working and learning, thus leading to an action research methodology as a planned approach to intervention in small groups, large organisations and community systems. He believes that the design of training programs needs to emphasise group discussion and decision-making in an atmosphere where trainers and participants treat one another as peers. Learning is about stimulating and challenging thoughts, ideas, perceptions and ways of doing. A central dynamic to adult and experiential learning is the conflict between experience and theoretical models.

Radical educators such as Freire (1973, 1993) and Illich (1976) have argued that contemporary adult education and training systems are primarily agencies of social control which are oppressive and conservative and aim to maintain a capitalist class system. Transformational education and training frameworks can and must acknowledge the familial, community and cultural experiences of individuals. Education and training can instil a critical consciousness which is the active exploration of the personal and experiential meaning of ideas and concepts through dialogue amongst equals.

All adult education programs and processes contain explicit or implicit dimensions of personal change. Programs of learning reflect notions of self, the self in self-esteem, the self in contributing to social stability and the economic self. Foucault (1988) labelled these as 'technologies of change' where individuals interact with systems of production (work), sign systems (power in society) using our body, soul, thoughts and behaviours to attain a certain state of being, happiness, wisdom, acceptance and so on.

Boud (1989) described four pedagogical traditions in adult education, these being: training and efficiency (scientific tradition), self-directed learning (adragogy), learner centred programs (humanistic) and education for social action (critical theory). These pedagogical traditions have a common notion that we are 'self participants in our own subjugation and domination' (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant & Yates: 2003) and all accept the dualism of 'individual' and 'society' as foundations pulling in opposite directions.

A post-modern critique of Boud's traditions rejects this notion of self as a unitary, coherent, rational subject and proclaims the 'multi-self', the notion that subjectivity is multiple. The post-modern way forward examines the self and society as concurrently produced via discursive practices (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant & Yates: 2003). Self as subjectivity is multiple, a discourse embedded in the everyday, the multi-contextual, multi-cultural, multi-familial self, a collection of experiences, beliefs, interactions, communities, workplaces, partners, children and personal journeys. It is this multiplicity that challenges adult education and training systems in the twenty-first century.

Taylor et al. (2000) examined the notion of connecting transformative learning in the varied contexts that we participate in to reveal commonalities. That is, by linking rather than separating our learning experiences from varied contexts we can begin to locate the 'truer' self that has a coherent identity, an integrated self rather than the 'worker', 'parent', 'partner' or 'citizen'. Gergen and Kaye (1992) support this by suggesting that the practices of the adult educator as a facilitator of learning need to encourage interested inquiry that opens exploration of the related self.

Adult education and training practices therefore need to embrace the politics of self location, taking into account the wholeness of our nationality, culture, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality and/or occupation. The goal for policy makers is to match this version of the 'self' with adult education program development, and to tackle the question: How can public adult education and training systems be adapted to accommodate the matrix of policies, providers and programs?

A Discourse of Access, Equity and Cultural Background in Adult Education

Underpinning modern Australian society is a commitment to cultural diversity. Australia accepts and respects the right of all Australians to express and share their individual cultural heritage (DFAT: 2005).

Shared patterns of cultural meaning are important to all societies and these patterns reflect the development of norms, values, skills, understandings, attributes and characteristics that are resources for individual, communal and social action. The existence of these elements in any society underpins all social exchanges and the development of trust and cooperation within communities and societies.

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity supports cultural diversity, cultural rights and the role of culture in development as reaffirmed in Article 5. Culture is seen as the systems of beliefs, assumptions, sentiments and perspectives which members of a group have in common, embodied in customs, routines, roles and rituals. Cultural diversity relates to all cultures participating equally in a society to define and shape national identity and citizenship, deriving from the understanding and sharing between different cultures and the positive value of this sharing to society as a whole (UNESCO: 2004).

Recognition of the evolving population and social diversity in Australian society came about via the signing of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in 1966, the passing of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) in 1975 and, later, the Human Rights Commission Acts of 1981 and 1986. There was also the implementation of Equal Opportunity Acts, Boards and Commissions at all State and Territory levels in Australia, governing discrimination based on race, gender and age during the 1970s and 1980s.

...within our diversity there are values that many of us share. One of these values is that racism and discrimination have no place in our communities. It is essential for all Australians to understand that equality before the law is not something that we should take for granted (HREOC: 2007). Terms and values such as 'diversity', 'multiculturalism', 'equality', and 'discrimination' have been under challenge in recent times within Australian society mostly because of political contestation rather than public or academic debate (Moses & Chang: 2006).

Australian 'values' such as social inclusion, diversity and social justice have become terms to be ridiculed over the past decade; terms used by the 'chattering elites' of a pre-September 11 world (Adams: 2006). Social policy development at a federal government level before the recent election had been driven by a neo-conservative economic and political framework, with fee-for-service education and training, welfare-to-work and targeted immigration being a few policy examples. Australian values were being touted by the Coalition Federal Government as including the teaching of 'important' parts of our (recent) history in schools, immigrants being able to speak English fluently and passing citizenship tests soon after arrival and living in a 'secure' society. This ideology-based policy framework was being advocated to such an extent that many federal policies suggested a subtle but substantial return to a 1950s White Australia.

This policy switch clearly targeted cultural and religious groups which were already resident in Australia for not 'assimilating enough'. As one source observed, although *a post-Cronulla poll revealed overwhelming support for multiculturalism and current levels of immigration, the Federal Government appear*[ed] *determined to swim against the tide... [T]he de facto minister for multiculturalism, parliamentary secretary Andrew Robb, favour*[ed] *scrapping the word "multiculturalism" from the Government's revamped ethnic policy* (Szego: 2006, Robb: 2006). Australia has always been a multicultural society and so-called threats to the social and political 'stability' of the democracy are as old as Anglo-colonialism itself. In the 1860s, for instance, it was the Irish who were perceived as the greatest threat to Australian society, with a projected armed Fenian movement being described as a *terrorist menace* (Adams: 2006).

During the post-World War II period, many groups from Europe were viewed with suspicion and the White Australia policy reigned. Even in the 1980s after this policy had been rescinded, many Asian migrants were subjected to harassment within workplaces and communities, with immigration policies of the day criticised by some for creating an 'Asian invasion' of Australia. The current climate of hostility around Middle Eastern and African (read, Muslim) immigrants is no more than a repeat of Australian (WASP) society's suspicion of anyone who is 'other than'.

There is clear empirical evidence on unequal outcomes for CALD people in areas such as employment, unemployment, under-employment, non-recognition of qualifications and over-qualification in employment, over-representation in low skill jobs and greater risk of exploitation within lower paid jobs (DIC: 2008, Bertone: 2004). Current data reveal that the labour outcomes for more recently arrived migrants (2004-2005) support earlier analysis that the ability of migrants to find work hinged on four main factors; their level of skill match to specific industries, English language proficiency, their age and the period of residence in Australia (DIC: 2008).

Racial slurs and abuse, more recently against Muslims, are still common place in Australian communities (HREOC: 2008) reflecting the difficulties experienced by more recently arrived CALD people in particular. Issues such as ethnic stereotyping, difficulties with English language, poor social networks and lack of familiarity with Australian institutions, customs, job search practices, lower access to training on the job, trauma and isolation (especially for refugees), media attacks by radio shock-jocks on women wearing the hijab, are all evidence of an Australian society that is struggling with cultural and religious diversity (HREOC: 2008).

People from CALD backgrounds experience these issues to greater and lesser degrees depending on where they live and the networks they are connected to. It must also be acknowledged that there is great ethnic, educational, and religious diversity amongst people from CALD backgrounds, which presents the challenge for communities in Australia. How do we acknowledge this growing diversity and how do we respond to the fact that people who migrate to this country still face structural and personal barriers and abuse. Gender, social class, language and skin colour are all issues which overlap cultural and religious diversity and which influence how individuals cope with Australian economic and social frameworks and processes.

Diversity and Society

The notion of plurality and diversity has a strong intellectual and philosophical history dating back to Greek philosophers. Aristotle viewed plurality as a useful tool for political discussion where various and conflicting views and experiences were inevitable. He believed that mediated conflict between groups strengthens

democracy (Moses & Chang: 2006). In the 1800s, J. S. Mill, in his exploration of a 'marketplace of ideas', contended that the existence of diverse religious and class perspectives had value for public, political and educational discourse. In the 1900s, Dewey's ideas on pluralism and social diversity made clear links to educational philosophy and practice.

As an experimentalist and experientialist, Dewey challenged the view that educational systems were able to meet the diverse needs of individual learners. Dewey believed in education for citizenship, with learners as inquirers within the broader environment of diverse societies. The main aim of educational practices was to facilitate interactions between learners, to enhance communication between learners and to further the development of learning about diverse attitudes and experiences in society (Moses & Chang: 2006, Kolb: 1984).

In a contemporary, postmodern and global context, Nussbaum (1997) argues for diversity as a concept and reality to be incorporated into liberal education frameworks for the development of global citizens. Adult education needs to be a forum where individuals can engage in critical self-examination, develop a narrative imagination and learn how to participate as citizens. *We do not fully respect the humanity of our fellow citizens—or cultivate our own—if we do not wish to learn about them, to understand their history, to appreciate the differences between their lives and ours* (Nussbaum 1997:295). The linking of forms of education to notions of citizenship within a specific nation or globally in the twenty-first century requires an exploration of what it means to be a citizen in a culturally and socially diverse sense.

The philosophical and intellectual tradition of diversity has led us to a point where *the ideal of diversity is worth wanting because it enriches a democratic society and cultivates adults who can function more effectively as citizens of a complex and connected world* (Moses & Chang: 2006:9). For Australian society in recent times, this has meant questioning what we as a nation mean by 'diversity.' Multiculturalism is now very much a contested term and notion in Australian society, with immigration and population diversity being debated from various ideological and philosophical meanings: *since its policy debut in the 1970s, the M-word has been subject to hotly competing definitions. Put broadly, the fight is between two groups: the proponents of cultural pluralism, who are more likely to find common*

ground with integrationists, versus the ethnic rights advocates. The former celebrate cultural diversity while stressing that newcomers adhere to the core values of Australian democracy (Szego: 2006).

Dunn and McDonald's (2004) exploration of the construction of racism in Australia reveals that the new racisms of cultural intolerance, denial of Anglo-privilege and narrow constructions of 'nation' presently have a much stronger hold on popular and political discourse than is generally acknowledged. These new racisms *are in tension with equally widely held liberal dispositions towards cultural diversity and dynamism* (Dunn & McDonald: 2004: 409). However, despite the political ideology and rhetoric around the lack of assimilation and 'ghetoism' of migrants in urban communities, Australia is a society still growing in cultural and linguistic diversity (ABS: 2007, Gopalkrishnan: 2005).

Neo-conservative political, economic and social ideology has been promoting population growth and immigration in Australia as a purely economic imperative, and social relations in Australian society are consequently being macro-managed by a specific values driven agenda. Society is defined within this agenda as unapologetically Judeo-Christian, Anglo-Celtic, English-speaking, economic-rationalist and neo-colonialist. Dunn and McDonald (2004) argue that there is unresolved tension in public attitudes towards cultural diversity in Australian society. They suggest that the 'new racism' is based on cultural differences in society.

For Dunn and McDonald (2004), the contradiction is that while *85 percent of respondents were of the view that it is a good thing for a society to be culturally diverse, forty-five percent of respondents gave quite strong support for the proposition that cultural diversity was a threat to nationhood in Australia* (Dunn & McDonald: 2004: 409). The tension between simultaneously held views is apparent. Ethnic groups are viewed not as inferior but as threats to social cohesion and national identity. Australian individuals, communities and institutions adhere to stereotypes of the cultural traits of 'Muslims', 'Asians' and 'Aborigines.' This reflects a clear notion of the 'other' in Australian society, with 'them' conceived as a threat.

In 2007, the then Coalition Federal Government commenced a politicised, administrative campaign to expunge the term 'multicultural' from use. The previously known Department of Immigration, Multiculturalism and Indigenous

Affairs (DIMIA), was re-branded as the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. In the process, however, there has been little public policy discussion or debate in relation to this notion of diversity and the debate and discussion which has occurred is quite rhetorical and potentially endless in its arguments over the use and meaning of 'diversity', 'national identity', 'values', 'civics', 'citizenship' from a variety of political, ideological and pragmatic viewpoints. *The dilemma of diversity lurks in the background without a full public consideration of the implications of cultural pluralism for exclusion* (Babacan: 2007: 7).

Social and population diversity in Australian society is a statistical fact with the ABS (2007) revealing that over 200 languages are spoken in Australian communities in addition to more than 60 different Indigenous languages spoken by ATSI Australians. In 2004-05 more than 36,000 people were participating in English language programs via the Australian Migrant English Program (AMEP). Religions other than Christianity have had the greatest proportional increases since 1996. For example, persons practising Buddhism increased by 79%, Hinduism by 42%, Islam by 40% and Judaism by 5%.

Over six million people from many nations have migrated to Australia since World War II. Australia is undeniably a nation of immigrants with issues of ethnicity, race and cultural diversity ever-present and with individuals from many generations constantly exploring their cultural identities. Events and politics of the past decade, specifically the events in America on 11th September 2001, have meant that religion, culture and identity are now central to public discourse and debate globally.

For Australian society it is important for the public, political and academic discourses to continue to explore the links between cultural and linguistic background and social exclusion as currently experienced by generations of migrants in a range of Australian communities. Participation in community life can be linked to positive feelings and behaviours such as experiencing a sense of belonging, cultivating growth, doing good deeds and appreciating a healthy environment and beauty. Social cohesion then leads to trust, active debate and community development. In recent comprehensive research on social and economic disadvantage in local communities throughout Australia, Vinson attempted to identify factors promoting social cohesion and, in the course of doing so, highlighted the complexities involved in measuring social cohesion in Australian society. *This generic concept* [of social

cohesion] *has frequently been given operational meaning by reference to three qualities: identification with the local community, sociability among residents and reciprocal support between individuals and households* (Vinson: 2007: 87).

This more complex attempt to measure social cohesion in a quantitative sense led Vinson (2007) to make various conclusions about social cohesion in Australian society and communities. His research found that rural local government areas in Victoria had approximately two-thirds of the high cohesion postcode areas, while metropolitan Melbourne had eight times fewer higher cohesion postcodes. This outcome is supported by Department for Victorian Communities' research that rural localities have higher levels of community strength than metropolitan localities (DVC: 2005).

Despite these recent research findings about community cohesion and strength, many individuals and sub-groups in rural and regional communities find themselves outside established local experiences. Stone and Hughes draw attention to *the overall extent to which rural/remote centres are homogenous relative to metropolitan regions and capital cities in particular. Even where rural/remote residents are active in groups, these groups are likely to be made of members 'like themselves', and to be concerned with local affairs* (Stone & Hughes: 2001: 10). This context would be difficult enough for a new resident to a rural or regional community, but being a migrant to this country as well would affect a form of double exclusion. People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds do experience being outside mainstream Australian society and experience, too, exclusion from 'bonded' groups, networks and associations within a regional community context, effectively barring them from the social and economic life of a community.

Diversity and Social Policy

Access and equity strategies have been crucial elements of Commonwealth, State and Territory government policies and programs in Australia since the early 1970s. Access and equity have usually taken the form of policies and programs targeting specific groups in society and have also resulted in specific legislation and regulating structures such as Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Disability Discrimination (DDA). Historically, the link between access and equity as concepts

and government policies and programs supporting cultural diversity can be seen in affirmative action programs, mutual agreements with other (mainly European) nations, citizenship programs and cultural festivals.

However, these policies have also been reactions to the waves of immigration to Australia over the past fifty years. Australian immigration policy has been intrinsically linked to economic growth with recent skilled population expansion continuing to emphasise cultural diversity as an economic imperative rather than building on Australia's diversity as social or population policies. As a result, migrant populations continue to be represented as the 'other', in deficit to the extent that they diverge from a prescribed norm. Hattam and Smyth (1998) explore access and equity within a historical framework of terminology used in Australian society, such as 'a fair chance for all', 'social justice', 'equal opportunity', 'equal outcomes' and 'equality', and on this basis they argue that social justice policy in Australia has tended to reflect a 'victim construction' approach where policies *present an a-causal view of 'disadvantage' that collapses to 'in-school' strategies rather than take the struggle into the community: 'construct the oppressed as disadvantaged victims' which translates into policies that are 'essentially charitable in orientation'* (Hattam & Smyth: 1998: 138-39).

Commonwealth Governments have contended that access and equity programs are commonplace within adult learning systems in Australia in the form of the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) program, Basic IT Skills for Older Workers program (BITES), New Apprenticeship Access Program and core curriculum such as Certificates of General Education for Adults and Certificates in Work Education (DEST: 2003). For over a decade, Australian adult education and training policies have stressed the need for increased access and participation by 'targeting' women, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, the disabled, Indigenous peoples and people living in regional and regional communities (DEST: 2003: DEST: 2004). *At a practical level social inclusion and engagement of minorities can occur with deliberate policies and actions* (Babacan: 2007: 13).

Shore suggests that adult education policies and programs which target particular groups in society assume there is a stable centre in these policies (Shore: 2001). The categories of access and equity in Australian adult education and training policies assume that the stable centre or dominant discourse in Australian adult

education and training is white, male, able, urban and employed. Hattam and Smyth (1998) indicate that an understanding of access and equity requires a sociological reading which is largely absent from policy, acknowledging the contested nature of the social aims of adult education and training. They suggest that there is, that is, a competition between the needs of the economic marketplace, the values of a western liberal education system and the needs of each individual to 'educate themselves'. Therefore, any evaluation and analysis of Australian adult education and training must acknowledge and, indeed, confront *the discourse, practices and institutional structures of society* (Hattam & Smyth: 1998: 142).

The discourses of nationality, culture, disadvantage, marginality, poverty, worker, citizen, individual, community and industry need to be explored in the context of current access and equity programs within Australia public adult education and training. Using culture and language as definers of equity groups within public adult education and training policies consigns these groups to a state of being 'other than' the dominant, privileged Anglo, Christian, English-speaking centre of these policies.

Shore (2001) describes this as the invisible binary of adult education and training policy, whereby certain outcomes are considered in terms of categories and not in terms of the diversity of overall participation. This contrasts with the fact that adult learning principles are framed in most western democratic societies as part of a liberal education philosophy and practice that is *trying* to overcome the very barriers and structures that deny 'others' access to services and resources. Shore (2001) argues that adult learning theorists, policy makers and practitioners need to recognise the lack of critique in our own use of language, discourse and practice.

Globally, adult education and training systems are still struggling with social and political issues that have been with us for some decades, including social segregation versus integration, and linguistic and cultural assimilation (Putnam: 2004). There has been a suggestion in Australia that the future of access and equity in public adult education and training is the structuring of access and equity to meet the needs of individuals rather than sub-groups or local communities (Bowman: 2004).

Kearns (2006) in a 'Three Councils' project in Melbourne explores how a 'phases of life' approach promotes equity and social justice (generally) and encourages appropriate responses to the needs of disadvantaged individuals and groups in key phases of life. Kearns (2006: 32) summarises that *there are a number of trends that will tend to drive the development of an embedded third phase of equity policy*, including an integrated approach to adult learning, local community frameworks, a focus on the needs of the individual learner, information and communication technology, information and life and career guidance, learning organisations and a learning approach to equity. Kearns concludes that equity policy in VET and ACE *needs to be seen in this broader context with whole-of-government perspectives that build connections to related fields involving families, communities, health, and welfare* (Kearns: 2006: 32, 33).

The reality of the lives of people from CALD backgrounds is however, more complex than the binaries of an equity versus life cycle approach, an either/or approach to policy frameworks. The challenges of being CALD and issues of gender and social class within a lifecycle approach all need to be integrated into any analysis and adult education and training. All these factors intersect to make up the social reality for individuals of CALD background.

An evaluation of diversity in adult education and training systems must also include an exploration of cultural bias in curricula and learning materials, a response to heterogenous language and literacy needs, an acknowledgement of barriers to learning such as prior experiences, and some negotiation of cross-cultural issues within individual programs and workplaces. For example, the experiences which Indigenous Australians have of mainstream sites of adult learning, of adult education curriculum and adult learning processes are very different to the experiences of non-Indigenous Australians (NCVER: 2004).

Putnam (2004) in his discussion paper for the OECD Education Ministers contends that increased cultural and ethnic diversity from global immigration and differential fertility will continue. This diversity, he proposes, is an important economic and social asset for any country and that *to increase social capital and social cohesion, the educational process is the single most important and effective policy lever* (Putnam: 2004: 6). The features of adult education and training that can foster the development of social capital, civic participation and social cohesion include:

appropriate pedagogy and curricula, facilitated service learning, the construction of education as a site of social and civic activities, and the resourcing of different-sized sites of learning that foster trust, engagement, networks and outcomes (Putnam: 2004).

Measuring Social Capital Development

Since Putnam's seminal publication, *Bowling Alone* (2000), there has been substantial and ongoing discussion about the measurement and assessment of social capital. *Current interest focuses on the development of a consistent, comprehensive measurement tool that can be used to study change in social capital and how social capital relates to other outcomes of policy interest such as economic development, education, health and crime* (Hudson & Chapman: 2002: 2). Putnam (2006) himself has been working with the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement at Harvard University in an attempt to further 'diagnose' social capital development in American society. This project has been testing the hypothesis that, since Putnam's original study, social capital and civic society has seriously declined in American society. He argues that corporatism, consumerism and political apathy have all contributed to the erosion of the social connections and structures of communities (Putnam: 2006).

The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey (SCCBS) is a one hundred item telephone survey conducted in the year 2000 with a national US sample of three thousand respondents in forty-one communities. The survey was based on eleven key dimensions of social capital identified within five domains: trust (social trust, inter-racial trust), informal networks (diversity of friendship networks, informal socialising), formal networks (civics, associations, volunteering & faith), political involvement (conventional voting, protest politics) and the quality of civic engagement across the community, comparing race, income and education levels. In the wake of this survey, Putnam has been working with the American Census Bureau to identify twenty items to be added to their Current Population Survey (CPS) in an attempt to broaden the sample and 'capture' social capital development across the USA.

The measurement of social capital will only have value and integrity if it can be replicated across various societies and, in Australia, the ABS has developed similar categories of data that can contribute to the development of a 'social capital profile' of Australian society. These categories include: geographic distribution, living arrangements, cultural diversity, residential mobility, trust (feelings of safety), reciprocity (access to and provision of support), reciprocity (giving), cooperation (conservation practice), social participation (social activities and attendance at cultural venues), sport and physical recreation, community support (voluntary work and caring), economic participation and network structures (frequency, intensity & mode of contact) (ABS: 2006).

Developing a sound evidence base through data collection and analysis activities is important for ensuring that any policies and programs designed to foster social capital within particular communities in Australia actually adhere to the aim of improving people's lives. (ABS: 2006: vi). The current 'Social Capital Profile of Australia' (ABS: 2006) as developed by the ABS provides some interesting data that is particularly relevant to the present study. Issues such as geographic location, cultural diversity, residential mobility, reciprocity and social and economic participation can provide a broader, sociological framework within which to locate the themes emerging from this research project.

The context of social capital development can be crucial for understanding experiences of urban versus rural life, employment versus unemployment, and male versus female, meaning that issues of gender, employment and geography have an impact on social network development. Healy et al. (2003) studied four diverse geographical locations in Australia and found variations in social capital development: intra-community networks were an important factor in the quality of life for rural and regional communities. For example, bridging activities were at higher levels for rural and regional respondents, and social networks were more resilient in rural and regional communities compared to urban ones.

Stone and Hughes (2001) in their comparative research of social capital in Australian urban, regional and rural communities expose evidence *that suggests rural and remote Australia is characterised by bonding rather than cross-cutting ties, and is inward looking* (Stone & Hughes: 2001: 16). Belief systems and attitudes developed in consequence within regional and rural communities regarding race,

ethnicity, culture, multiculturalism and diversity influence how governments, communities and organisations perceive the experiences of residents and citizens of a region or a community.

Data that is relevant to this research includes ABS data which reveals that 34% of Australians live in regional/rural areas, 25% live in lone person households, 23% were born overseas and 16% speak a language other than English at home. With regard to cultural diversity in Australian society, 42% of Australians had a direct or recent familial connection with an overseas country (23% born overseas, 25% with at least one parent born overseas) and 2.4% are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. Twenty-two percent of people who live in cities spoke a language other than English, 5% of people living in other areas spoke a language other than English and 27% of people living in 'very remote' Australia spoke a language other than English (a figure influenced by the high proportion of indigenous people in these areas who speak their native language).

Sixty-seven percent of people living in cities identify as Christians and 71% of people in regional and rural areas identify as Christians. Overall, these data reveal a significant divide between urban and regional, rural and remote populations in Australia. The Shire of Campaspe as the context for this research is typical of the makeup of other regional areas. The difference between regional and metropolitan areas must be emphasised. *Although people living in regional and remote areas may have strong networks despite their relative geographic isolation, these links may differ from those that exist in other areas of Australia* (ABS: 2006: 1).

The importance of the geographic and community context is borne out in this ABS data with 31% of all Australians now residing in 'inner and outer regional areas'. Of these, 21% reside in 'inner regional areas' and this regional population growth is a growing trend (ABS: 2006). *Changing homes affects community connections. The length of time spent living in a community is considered to influence the number of ties with others in that community and the strength of those ties. The propensity to move is strongly related to life transitions with the patterns being similar for both males and females* (ABS: 2006: pp 16, 17).

Residential mobility in Australia peaks at ages 20–30 and declines gradually through to age 54 and then remains steady. People throughout Australia move residential location for many reasons including housing issues such as upgrading of a home or location, a home purchase, rent/mortgage too expensive, moved to cheaper dwelling, evicted. Relocation for employment or study and personal transition issues such as a relationship change, wanting to be closer to family/friends or moving back with parents also influence relocation (ABS: 2006).

Social capital analysts' measurements of network structure pertain to 'recent contact with family and friends' and 'time spent with others'. Spending time with relatives and friends who 'live elsewhere' is declining in Australian society mostly due to changes in work and leisure activities. The use of communication technologies is also reducing face-to-face interaction with time spent alone being age dependent: 33% of people aged 65+ spent most of their time alone, 20% of those aged 35–64, with 15% of people aged 15–34 years spending time alone. There are higher levels of social isolation as age increases due mainly to relationship separations and partners' deaths.

Participation in social activities and attendance at cultural events is considered another key indicator of the development of social capital. *Social participation includes attendance, even if attending alone, at any variety of cultural events or events provided by governments, businesses and interest groups in order to bring people together. Public meeting spaces for activities, events or ongoing cultural or scientific displays provide important contexts for people to meet and share in the life of the wider community* (ABS: 2006: 50). Australian data illustrates slightly higher social participation in cities compared to other areas of the nation and that these social activities diminish with age.

Poor health, disability and lower income characteristics are associated with lower levels of social participation. Relevant to this thesis are the *higher* rates of social participation for people born in Australia rather than overseas and also the higher rates for people from English-speaking countries rather than non-English speaking countries. Venues for social participation (in descending order of frequency) include: restaurants, cafes and bars, movies, theatre and concerts, sporting activities, parks and gardens, zoos, libraries, museums and art galleries, church and

religious activities, recreational or cultural groups, and community or special interest groups (ABS: 2006).

Economic participation is a further significant indicator of social capital development and links between employment and social capital are overt. Relevant to this thesis are data that reveal that women aged 35–44 who are employed part-time had relatively high participation in voluntary work, mostly with education, youth, community, and/or welfare organisations. In 2005, 22% of people who started their job in the previous twelve months had contacted friends or relatives as one of their approaches to finding work. The increase in women's employment participation over the past 20 years reflects, in part, their increasing educational attainment (and participation). *Social networks are drawn upon in looking for work. Stone, Gray and Hughes (2003) have suggested that family and friends may be relied on as sources of job search information by people who have limited involvement in or access to paid work ... [U]nemployment, in particular long-term unemployment, can lead to a decline of the social networks an individual has, and may lead in some cases to social exclusion* (ABS: 2006: 79).

Noticeable by its absence in this ABS framework for data collection for social capital development in Australian society is any significant reference to adult education or training. Education organisations are, however, an integral part of communities and regions throughout Australia. Historically, issues such as employment and education are intrinsically linked within government policy frameworks and these both warrant detailed attention in data collection around social capital themes.

Historical Perspective on Australian Adult Education Policy Frameworks

Over the past seventy five years, the many and varied institutions of society ... have increasingly turned to adult education to fashion a society in terms of their own interests and values (Cervero & Wilson: 2001: 1). In the 1970s, the Kangan Committee's recommendations for Commonwealth Government involvement in post-secondary education highlighted the different philosophies of governments regarding adult education and training in Australia. Essentially there were, and still are, two positions regarding access and equity in adult education and training: the 'management of diversity' and the 'social justice' approaches. It has always been stated by governments of all persuasions that the longer term purposes of adult

education and training include both the economic outcomes of skilled labour and the social outcomes of community development and social inclusion.

Considine et al. in their 2005 report to the NCVER explore the gains that have been achieved in access and equity strategies in VET and that the notion of 'disadvantage' used in adult education and training policies and programs needs to be reconceptualised. They conclude that people face multiple disadvantages in accessing adult education and training and the social outcomes of adult education and training need to be recognised as the first step to achieving economic outcomes. Community-based initiatives are one way of improving access and equity for groups currently excluded from adult education and training in Australia (Considine, Watson & Hall: 2005, Townsend: 2004).

With regard to equity in adult education and training there have also been two positions: the 'structural barriers' philosophy (Victoria mainly) where systemic and structural barriers prevent participation and the 'individual characteristics' philosophy of how individuals fail to fit into broader systems and structures. In the 1990s, five equity groups were identified by the Commonwealth Government: ATSI people, women, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with disabilities and people in rural and remote communities, reflecting an 'individual characteristics' philosophy.

However, *this framework ignores the diversity that exists among individuals within each client group because it assumes a certain homogeneity among the client group* (Considine, Watson & Hall: 2005: 11). The 1980s saw the dominance of economic outcomes of adult education and training, with governments believing that increased economic competitive advantage comes via a highly skilled labour force. In the 1990s, policies and programs were then linked to adult education and training to service the needs of industries, businesses and enterprises. The rhetoric of social goals remained in policy frameworks but was entrenched within economic goals and a welfare-to-work type philosophy and framework which can still be seen in the current Commonwealth Government's policy and legislative developments.

This policy timeline mirrors the development of immigration and cultural diversity policy in Australia. In the 1970s, the term 'multiculturalism' was first used as a policy term that encouraged the maintenance of culture, languages and heritage within mainstream Australia. During the 1980s and 1990s there were various government reviews of immigration and policies of multiculturalism, and the term 'cultural diversity' gained currency.

The previous Howard Federal Government endorsed policy agendas around racial tolerance and cultural diversity being *a unifying force for Australia* (DIMIA: 2005: 3). However, the policy framework of immigration, humanitarian refugees and cultural diversity has been altered to ensure that Australia's immigration intake and management of cultural diversity is clearly linked to economic outcomes via skilled migration rather than any social or national outcomes.

The next phase of access and equity policy and program development needs to include greater community involvement in planning with social connectedness and shorter term 'steps' used to achieve the longer term economic outcomes (Considine, Watson & Hall: 2005). Targeted programs for most equity groups may actually stifle opportunity because of cumulative disadvantages faced by individuals, families and communities. *Despite 25 years of policy and program initiatives aimed to improve access and equity in VET, gender discrimination, social and educational disadvantage, and cultural and linguistic differences still present significant barriers to entry* (Considine, Watson & Hall: 2005: 13). This is not to say how much worse the outcomes might have been if there had been no policy action, only that it is time to move beyond *just* an equity type framework.

There is case study evidence that pilot programs of a community group approach are being used to some success in Indigenous communities and rural and remote communities (Townsend: 2004) for people with disabilities and people in correctional institutions (Considine, Watson & Hall: 2005: 15). Some of the ATSI programs include non-accredited preparatory courses, cultural instruction, cultural awareness and language programs, a clear indication that current competency-based frameworks are not serving the needs of these communities.

However, there is no systematic identification of which community groups could benefit from this approach. It is innovative communities and/or key stakeholders in

some communities that initiate these types of programs (Townsend: 2004). A more holistic approach is required to identify the individual, labour market and household characteristics that affect diversity in communities and which therefore highlight the obstructions to participation in adult education and training that persist in Australian society (Considine, Watson & Hall: 2005).

Considine et al. advocate that a twenty-first-century Australia requires new evaluation and research agendas because of the limited success of the past twenty years of access and equity frameworks, where *disadvantaged social groups face multiple and cumulative disadvantages* (Considine, Watson & Hall: 2005: 12). As an example, the ATSI equity category ignores the cultural and linguistic diversity and varied living conditions experienced by hundreds of Indigenous groups and communities in Australia.

There is always a danger of only analysing the broad terms about disadvantage, a more concrete discussion within Australian society of the specific disadvantages and challenges faced by people in the CALD category is required to provide some insight into the complexities of individual, family and community life. There is a point to be made about needing a new approach to human and social policy frameworks but being careful not to imply that little or no gains have been made at all in targeting disadvantaged groups. This binary, either/or juxtaposition does not recognise the imperfection of systems and the importance of ongoing, incremental change. There is no guarantee that a new community-based approach will be sufficient either, perhaps a mix of approaches (macro/national/community) is what is now required to reflect the complexities of diverse communities.

Moreover, if there is no institutional or systemic recognition of common groupings of problems within segments of society, for example; women, CALD, regional, rural and so on then the community based solutions will be difficult to fund, measure and evaluate. The main argument is that these existing categories are appearing to be too broad for complex cultural and social diversity and those categories don't always fit all situations and communities. Policy frameworks can outline broad categories but the actual implementation of strategies for access and equity requires acknowledgement that some sub-groups and individuals will not neatly fit the category of for example, 'disadvantaged CALD woman', and this appears especially so within adult education policy frameworks.

Australian Adult Education Policy Contexts

Commonwealth adult education policy reveals that adult learning *serves personal, civic and social purposes as well as vocational ones—it enriches our culture, promotes intellectual life and helps people to achieve their potential as citizens* (DEST: 2003: 1). Current policy outlines the future challenges for increasing participation in this sector for people over 45 who do not have the skills for 'the modern world', regional communities struggling in the face of significant change to rural industries and all communities taking responsibility for change (DEST: 2003).

This is also highlighted in the 2002 Ministerial Declaration of Adult Community Education *which emphasises the importance of learning in building community capacity.* (DEST: 2003: 11). The Commonwealth Government ACE policy discussion identifies the need for a *coordinated approach to adult learning* to *ensure better opportunities for people to engage in learning in the workplace, encourage higher levels of community participation and social engagement* (DEST: 2003: 13).

The Victorian Government policy document, Future Directions for Adult Community Education in Victoria (DET: 2004) states that individuals need to be able to *respond to the social, economic, technological and environmental forces* and that some of these individuals *who experience past and ongoing disadvantage, need support and mentoring to undertake adult education* (DET: 2002). This policy framework emphasises improving participation, providing better links, building cohesive communities, strengthening communities, reconciliation, respecting diversity and improving democratic decision-making (DET: 2004). The policy also outlines the need for people from different cultural backgrounds to have access to ESL programs which are tailored to their requirements. (DET: 2004: 6). However, this is the only section of the DET policy document that mentions culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and there is no definition of this term, nor is there a description of this equity group.

The policy therefore assumes this is a heterogenous group and does not acknowledge the instance of arrival in Australia, prior learning experiences and qualifications, language diversity or the impact of various cultures on access to adult education and training in Australia. The philosophical intent of both the Commonwealth and Victorian adult community education policies is to increase

participation in community-based adult learning but through different programs and priorities and with little coherent thought as to why and how participation can be enhanced.

The philosophies and intent of Australian adult education and training policies directly refer to participation being a cornerstone. The terms 'culture' and 'cultural background' lack meaning in the context of these policies unless linked to Indigenous people and communities. There is no mention of any other culture or cultural background as having any relevance to adult education and training policies in Australia. The term 'linguistic background' does have more meaning where English is not a person's first language. The aim in this instance, however, is for adult education and training programs to assimilate people into English proficiency, this being a priority for all citizens of Australia as a consequence of immigration and cultural diversity policies (DFAT: 2005).

If cultural background is considered to be something that affects access, equity and participation in adult education and training, then different cultural norms, roles, customs, beliefs and rituals need to be explored in terms of their intersection with adult education policies and programs. This appears to be the case for Indigenous people and communities and is overtly expressed in specific Commonwealth and Victorian adult education policy documents (ANTA: 2001, OTTE: 2000). There is policy coherence with regard to educating people for literacy in both verbal and written English language. However, there is a lack of clarity and meaning as to why cultural background is mentioned in adult education and training policies at all. It can be assumed here that the intent of the policy reaches back to the 1950s when cultural assimilation via the White Australia policy was overarching, and that cultural background was something that required consideration in terms of targeting groups for economic and social assimilation (Shore: 2001).

Conclusions

People who are vulnerable in society, who lack social power, tend to have lower levels of social trust, and in Australian society this includes people who are unemployed, in poor health, elderly, young or who are recent immigrants. The pivotal role of public adult education and training can be seen in the strong relationship between measures of educational attainment and civic efficacy, civic

identity, levels of trust and political knowledge and activity (Putnam: 2004: Winter: 2000). Furthermore, education levels can be linked to a desire to understand others, being ready to offer informal personal help and being involved in a voluntary capacity, ultimately promoting higher levels of trust in others (Winter: 2000).

The role of public adult community education as a philosophy and practice leads to adult education sites being prominent in future public interaction, adult community education, public libraries, University of the Third Age, community learning circles and other forums which can be *places where people can practise the habits of social trust* (Latham: 2000). The development of public policy needs to emerge from conversations between political actors engaging in a dialogue with individuals, groups and communities about their values and needs. Nadarajah (2004) shows that successful community conversations by adult education planners and providers involve connectivity, and the creation of new spaces within marginal positions that explore how individuals and groups engage with government education policies, strategies and systems. Diversity in communities and regions is this nation's quality of life and the organisations who service these regions must diversify to accommodate regional needs and changing demography.

Conversations between political actors, policy makers and researchers must be about genuine partnerships and not just about outreach service provision. This means acknowledging and exploring how national and localised social and cultural structures and processes contribute to a discourse on identity, history and sustainability via the exploration of local power relations and processes of exclusion and marginalization. *The subversive logic of social capital demands public policy responses that are place and people specific and deeply grounded in local needs and circumstances* (Winter: 2000: 291).

The philosophical intent of both the Commonwealth and Victorian adult community education policies is to increase participation in community-based adult learning. These policy frameworks emphasise the rhetoric of improving participation by providing better links, better coordination, understanding the needs of individuals, building cohesive communities, strengthening communities, reconciliation, respecting diversity and improving democratic decision-making (DET: 2004). It has been revealed here that the notions and intent of terms like 'culture', 'cultural

diversity' and 'cultural background' lack meaning and purpose in the context of most government policies except those referring to Indigenous cultures and communities.

There is no mention in policy or research documents of other cultures or cultural backgrounds as having any relevance to adult education and training policies in Australia other than the fact that many people come from different cultural backgrounds. The term 'linguistic background' has more meaning where English is not a person's first language and where the aim of adult education and training programs is to assimilate people through greater English proficiency using English language training and support. However, these programs are separate from mainstream adult education programs and are considered preparatory rather than integrated.

Race and culture as experiences and indicators have been absent from the social capital 'thesis' (Hero: 2007) and this research will explore evidence that social capital development can be a form of social control and social reproduction in regional communities. Nevertheless, it does have the potential to act as an agent of social networking and therefore social cohesion (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006).

Further research and evidence about social capital development is required within diverse communities throughout Australian society including both urban and regional settings. Social capital measurement has been limited to date, drawn mainly from WASP, middle class communities, and conducted using traditional measures such as church going, volunteering, networking via clubs and associations as social capital indicators. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds or marginal groups, on the other hand, tend to utilise public services, community services and sport as their main social networking environments (Hero: 2007).

Essentially, the intent of the term 'cultural and linguistic background' in adult education and training policies reaches back to the 1950s when cultural background was something that required consideration in terms of targeting groups for economic and social assimilation. Since the mid 1990s there have been attempts to develop separate policy frameworks and strategies for the role of culture and community for Indigenous Australians, thereby acknowledging or reinforcing their 'difference' from mainstream communities. There is, however, little evidence of stakeholders from a range of different cultural backgrounds and cultural

communities other than Indigenous Australians participating in the evaluation and formation of adult education and training policies and programs. Further research and evaluation may be able to demonstrate that cultural diversity does in fact impact on participation in adult education processes and outcomes, and that some programs need to take into account and explore the cultural backgrounds of participants.

It is important to state here that most recent research in Australia and internationally on education and social capital is still tentative and speculative, and that much more quantitative and qualitative data is required before definitive claims can be made about the links between adult education and training and the development of localised social capital. These emerging links between adult education and the development of social capital are complex because the interactions between individuals and their utilisation of adult education providers and programs are multifarious. There are many individual, sub-group and locational factors that influence participation in ACE and the outcomes that this participation manifests. This current limitation of the use of social capital highlights the possible role of public services at all levels of government in accessing social capital growth and development for marginal groups. Governments have the resources to explore the complexities of diverse communities and the links between groups and sub-groups to agencies of government policies.

The context of ACE and social capital development is important and significant: not all locations are the same and, therefore, social, economic and cultural connections can vary. Population diversity and social change at national, Victorian and regional levels is occurring (DOTARS: 2006, Broadbent, Cacciattolo & Carpenter: 2006, BRECCI: 2005, Moira Shire: 2005) with internal population mobility and international migration as factors impacting on regional communities in particular. People from CALD backgrounds are increasingly settling in and relocating to regional communities throughout the country, and this resettlement needs to be resourced with brokerage and advocacy for services, and change management in regional and local community contexts (Mission Australia: 2006, Broadbent, Cacciattolo & Carpenter: 2006).

Social capital development for many specific sub-groups (e.g. migrants, refugees, Indigenous people, etc.) is complex and ever-changing within Australian society.

However, *the better the stock of social capital in a region or a community, the greater the capacity for mutual learning and improvements in the quality of human capital* (Field: 2005: 4). People from CALD backgrounds face many barriers in their interaction with community and government including communication barriers, the complexity of institutional systems, mistrust and fear of authority, the lack of consultation and engagement, as well as a plain lack of information which people with English as a second language can read and understand (Gopalkrishnan: 2005: 4).

This review concludes with a call for further exploration of the role of adult education in Australian society, of the collective versus individual need for education and the meaning of terms such as 'human development' and 'social development' as the basis of adult education. Adult education in all its forms (HE, VET and ACE) as a social and economic intervention for key equity groups is about the personal *and* the social *and* economic development (Field: 2005, Burnheim: 2004). But, as researchers, we need to keep inquiring about the philosophical, funding and program frameworks that guide adult education for the so-called 'equity groups'.

There is research work in Australia that is beginning to reconceptualise 'equity' as a useful notion not only within formal education systems but also in terms of adult learning, lifelong learning, informal learning, and as a factor impacting on individuals and communities (Kearns: 2006, Bowman: 2005, Falk: 2005). However, the research does not appear to be flowing through to any policy reviews in the area of adult education in Australia and so further research work needs to be done to consolidate the data and conclusions which have emerged to date in order to pressure government(s) to review adult learning policy and program frameworks.

For people from CALD backgrounds future ACE strategies and partnerships need to include key principles of inclusiveness, reaching out, mutual respect and integrity, and offer an affirmation of diversity rather than ad hoc approaches based on targeting certain individuals or groups (Gopalkrishnan: 2005: 9). It must also be acknowledged that those with CALD backgrounds are not a homogenous 'group' that can be targeted within adult education policy and program parameters. Issues such as length of time in Australia, culture of origin, gender, education, occupation and locational context all need consideration.

The ACE sector in Australia is expanding and changing. There are many smaller, community-based providers as well as larger college-based providers, and it is time to explore what this sector should or could be like in terms of its philosophical and practical approaches. An ecological view of adult learning is going to be more helpful than a sectoral view, by facilitating the collection of more data about ACE activities, and ensuring that further consultation and discussion occurs about the purpose of ACE, along with facilitating the identification and analysis of new policies, strategies, links and partnerships (Choy, Haukka & Hayes: 2006, Baker: 2006).

The election of the Rudd Labor government in late 2007 has led to a policy shift in relation to the issue of 'social inclusion' with an Office of Social Inclusion being set up within the Deputy Prime Minister's portfolio, and a Board of Social Inclusion being recruited and selected in mid 2008. The role and purpose of this government initiative will remain to be seen but it does signal a policy shift that may encompass responses to some of the issues discussed here.

This discussion on research themes in adult education and training in Australia concludes with the point that adult community education for people from CALD backgrounds can be one site of social capital development, and that social connection and social inclusion in regional contexts are linked to the many forms of adult education and training, employment and all kinds of community-based services and resources (Baker: 2006, Field: 2005). Adult learning for people from CALD backgrounds who live in a regional context is complex, multiple, and needs-driven, with formal and informal education, employment, family, social and personal issues and priorities all influencing the actions of individuals.

Providers of community-based services in all these realms have a role in social capital development and future research needs to determine their roles. Research needs to further explore which specific organisations in a regional community context can coordinate, facilitate, resource and broker the contacts, relationships and networks that generate social capital.

As a society, there is a need in Australia to examine the ACE sector in all its capacities and locate what it is about ACE that fosters social cohesion, social production or social control. However, it is difficult to imagine an ACE sector that can act as a unifying force when, as a sector of adult education, it is itself fractured with different philosophies and practices in each State and Territory, between regions within States and Territories, and between providers within specific regions. While one of the strengths of ACE is its ability to service and resource local communities, its weakness as a sector is the lack of a unifying philosophy about its role in Australian society (Kearns: 2005).

The significance of the research outlined in this thesis is that it adds to the evidence that social capital development does in fact occur within diverse Australian community structures and processes and can be linked to forms and processes of adult community education within specific contexts. The value of adult education to people from CALD backgrounds in undeniable, however, the value of ACE and other forms of adult education and training as a means to develop new links and networks within a community setting for this group and others is yet to be fully explored and tested. This research further extends recent reports that ACE can play a role in fostering social inclusion, social diversity and harmony (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007, Kearns: 2006).

The remainder of the thesis outlines research conducted in the Shire of Campaspe in northern Victoria which will add to the weight of evidence indicating that the interactions between individuals from diverse backgrounds and adult education are highly complex. This complexity needs to be able to inform policy and program reform. This one local community context reveals the myriad of factors that need to be taken into account when reforming adult education policies and planning new adult education programs relevant to contemporary, culturally diverse communities.

Chapter III

Research Design and Methodology

The research outlined in this thesis is a social policy analysis, utilising a mixed methods research design (Creswell: 2002, Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) to consider access to and participation in ACE programs for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in regional Australia. This exploration of participation in adult education and training in Australia will analyse the impacts of ACE philosophies, practices and structures on processes of social inclusion and social capital development for people from culturally diverse backgrounds living in one regional community in Victoria. Numerical, textual and narrative based data are used within a continuum of unstructured to structured methods.

Mixed methods research has evolved as an attempt to utilise the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research design to examine the social and behavioural aspects of individuals, communities and societies. The triangulation of data from several sources and methodologies, first utilised in psychology, is now commonplace in areas such as program evaluation. Mixed methods research design acknowledges that values in the production and interpretation of texts, statistics and narratives are inescapable and need to be stated and discussed. The credibility of mixed methods research design stems from a search for the most plausible answer(s) to complex human interactions, issues and problems (Tashakkori & Teddlie: 2003).

The subjective values and underpinnings of this research project are acknowledged in the main hypothesis of the research, which posits that policies and practices of adult education and training in Australia have a responsibility to incorporate, at all levels, notions and experiences of social inclusion for all people, given that Australian society is one of the most culturally diverse societies. The main data of this research explore narratives of individual adult education and training experiences of people from CALD backgrounds living in the Shire of Campaspe in northern Victoria. These narratives provide a rich source of information about the processes and outcomes of adult education and training in a regional context (see appendix 2).

The mixed methods research design (Creswell: 2002) consisted of three different data collection and analysis processes, one being a qualitative profile of adult

education providers and programs in the Shire of Campaspe during 2006 and 2007, specifically exploring the programs offered to people from culturally diverse backgrounds. The main focus of data collection was the development of a qualitative profile of individual adult education experiences for people from diverse cultural backgrounds in the Shire of Campaspe during 2006 and 2007. The third data collection process combined evidence of quantitative population data and statistics on participation in adult education and training with discussions and analyses of Australian population diversity and adult learning policies and programs. The data were then linked and woven together to explore how all these findings could contribute to the literature on how adult education impacts on social inclusion for people from culturally diverse backgrounds in local communities.

This research is essentially an evaluation of Federal and Victorian policies about the participation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in adult community education in regional communities. Government policies are underpinned by complex processes and policy documents that seek to facilitate access to and participation in the provision of specific resources and services. Any evaluation has to attempt to review all available data. The mixed methods design (Creswell: 2002) of this research involved document review, statistical review and analysis, surveys and interviews with ACE staff, and surveys and interviews with ACE learners. This design utilises discourse analysis of policy documents, analysis of government statistics and narrative analysis to evaluate the connection between policies on ACE, ACE participation, ACE provision and experiences of ACE learning as it occurs in a regional context. This broad approach allows a rare insight into the link between policies, access, participation and outcomes of ACE provision for people from CALD backgrounds.

The ethnographic responsive analysis (Stake: 1980) incorporated the following structured process: development of a framework of issues via a literature review; development of an introductory survey instrument to act as an 'ice breaker' for the research; checking issues with stakeholders via a scan of Campaspe adult education and training providers and community stakeholders; systematic observations; and a survey and interviews with individual adult learners and adult education program coordinators. The research then involved recording the emerging issues as a response to the survey, observations and interviews in the

form of draft summaries, checking the accuracy and relevance of the summaries of information with individuals through further observations, conversations and a written summary, and then editing the research summaries in response to the feedback from each individual.

Individual Learners Participating in Adult Education

The research connected adult education and training policy, providers and programs to individuals and sub groups of people by examining the social and economic impacts of participation in adult education and training for individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds living in the Shire of Campaspe. A survey instrument was developed for the individual learners as a way of introducing the research project to them and to limit the specific topics of interest to this research.

The instrument was developed by consulting current literature on indicators of social capital (Putnam: 2004, Balatti & Falk: 2002, ABS: 2000, Winter: 2000, Cox in Putnam: 2000) and was also based on the prior experience of the researcher working in the Shire of Campaspe region. The indicators chosen for the survey instrument and for further exploration in individual interviews included: gender of the learner, their cultural background, language(s) spoken, religion(s), length of time they had lived in the Shire of Campaspe, the reason(s) why they lived in Campaspe, their membership of any local groups and/or associations, other adult education and training programs they had participated in while living in Campaspe, adult education and training courses they had participated in, reasons why they accessed these particular programs, types of learning experiences, what they perceived they derived from participating in these courses, and the perceived outcomes and impact of participating in these courses on their individual lives.

The research was promoted using information fliers (see appendix 5) distributed to ACE organisations in the Shire of Campaspe and using adult learning networks known to the researcher who had lived and worked in the region for some five years. Individual learners then self-referred or were referred to the researcher by adult education program coordinators, by other narrative subjects or members of the community who were aware of the research project. Each individual was sent a package of information including: a letter of introduction, a consent form, a project flier and a copy of the survey for individual learners (see appendices 3-7). Individual learners were asked to complete the survey as an introduction to the

research project and the survey was collected and utilised to formulate the initial individualised schedules of questions for interview. Once each individual learner had indicated they were willing to be interviewed, a date and time was negotiated for an initial interview. These interviews aimed to clarify some of the detail recorded in the survey and to allow each individual to tell their own 'story' of participating in adult education and training in Campaspe. Most individual learners were interviewed twice and some were interviewed three or more times. The decision to do more than one interview was the choice of the particular individual and was determined by their wish to add more information or detail to their story or to clarify some aspect of the research and the process.

Every learner uses multiple pathways and many tasks to enhance their learning, knowledge and skills. The task in responsive analysis is to observe and record the multi-learning from multiple and contradictory sources (Owen & Rogers: 1999, Stake: 1980, 1975). The objectives of a responsive analysis include outcomes analysis focussed on assessing the 'whole' of people's needs and a broad systems evaluation that incorporates multi-programs and multi-providers. Narratives are one method of ascertaining the social knowledge of individuals as well as their understanding of their membership of and identity in a group or community. Narratives can also be useful in a community or institutional setting to identify practices, the use of resources, how groups work together, communication and decision-making processes.

The narrative has its origins in oral stories and oral histories, stories that are a bridge between tacit and explicit knowledge (Linde: 2001). Narratives recount past events and an individual's moral attitudes to these events, not as an evaluation of behaviour but as a group, participatory process whereby individuals communicate about events. This is a group process because the listener is not passive, they are actively recording the words and then often analysing the words and events for social and cultural meaning. Narratives are also about learning; learning to tell stories, learning to listen to stories, learning to record stories. This research focussed on what could be termed a 'habitual narrative' (Linde: 2001), that is, the telling of an individual story about recurring participation in adult education and training. Table 2 outlines some of the individual characteristics of the adult learners surveyed and interviewed during the research.

Table 2: Sample of individual learners from CALD backgrounds

Id	Marital Status	Cultural Background	Age	Female	Male	Decade arrived in Australia	Length of residence in Echuca
						Early Wave Migrants	
Connie	Single	Italian	43	F		1960s	12 years
George	Single	Chinese	50		M	1970s	13 years
Hanna	Separated	Ukrainian	42	F		-	15 years
Reba	Widow	Filippino	38	F		1990s	10 years
Liz	Divorced	Maltese	52	F		1950s	6 years
Kon	Single	Greek	58		M	1970s	8 years
Marie	Divorced	Dutch	46	F		1960s	9 years
						Recently Arrived Migrants 65	
Minh	Married	Taiwanese	35	F		1990s	8 years
Phuong	Married	Vietnamese	26	F		2000s	2 years
Arosha	Married	Sri Lankan	36	F		2000s	2 years
Ollie	Married	Russian	24	F		2000s	3 years
Lena	Married	Balinese	28	F		2000s	2 years
						Other Individuals from Culturally Diverse Backgrounds	
Alva	Separated	Wamba Wamba	38	F		Born in Australia	12 years
Vera	Separated	Yorta Yorta	42	F		Born in Australia	10 years
Anonymous	Single	Anglo-German	24	F		Born in Australia	17 years
		Totals	**15**	**13**	**2**		

The initial self-selection process was monitored to ensure a mix of adult learning experiences. The self-selection was based on a matrix of initially identified issues and themes including; general adult education and training experiences in Campaspe, cultural background, language spoken at home and residency. There are limitations and dangers in utilising volunteer samples in this manner. For instance, there was no control over the balance of gender or cultural background and there was no control over how the narratives would be useful to the research (Mertens: 2003). This less structured way of collecting data about individuals, firstly allows individuals more choice and power in how they interact with research thereby aiming for richer data about how individuals interact with community based agencies.

Following each interview, the individual learner was sent a copy of the draft written vignette and was asked to edit, add to and/or change anything they wished. The term *vignette* is more relevant as a term to describe these texts by reference to the following definitions: *narrative*, an account of connected events, a story. *Vignette – a brief evocative description, account or episode* (RDAL: 2006).

The resultant vignettes were based on these open-ended ethnographic interviews (Balatti & Falk: 2002, Norum: 1998). The interviews engaged with the lives of the individual learners to provide a rich perspective and a holistic and dynamic view of individual adult learning experiences. The data gleaned from these interviews were then summarised, linking the similarities and differences of multiple experiences of adult education and training of people from CALD backgrounds with the impact of specific government policies and programs on all (Feldman, Skoldberg, Brown & Horner: 2003).

Responsive analysis of this type can input into social construction, developing new visions for individual learners and ACE organisations, and facilitating adult education practitioners to become more reflective and develop new interpretive skills in response to data generated by multiple methods (Owen & Rogers: 1999, Stake: 1980, 1975). Certainly, the process of this research facilitated a level of communication between adult education providers, education bureaucrats, adult learners and other stakeholders which created new discussion about ACE in the Shire of Campaspe.

The vignettes presented in this research are indeed brief and evocative, and relate specific experiences at specific times in each individual life, of participation in particular adult education and training programs in Campaspe. The researcher was aware that the story-telling process could become open-ended and give individuals the permission to relate accounts of all sorts of events regarding migration, culture, language, education. However, the survey and the interviews were limited to adult education and training experiences in the Shire of Campaspe. Each individual who was interviewed for the research was given the choice of anonymity of presenting their vignette; some chose to use their real names while others wanted to use other names. The individuals who chose anonymity were then given the opportunity to choose a name that would identify their vignette. This ensured that all individuals had control over the vignette and also allowed for individuals to choose culturally appropriate names to identify their vignette.

Connecting Narratives

While researching the narrative process and form for this thesis, I reflected on why I had chosen 'narrative' as a way of evaluating individual adult education and training experiences. I connected this to my own narrative, which is two fold. I read fictional stories voraciously as a child and watched movies, wide-eyed, of stories from distant lands and cultures. From the age of five I wrote short stories for no-one other than myself.

A deep sense of social injustice in Australian society gradually welled inside me during childhood and adolescence which meant that at the age of twenty I commenced a Bachelor of Social Work and again, reflecting back, I excelled in subject areas steeped in narrative, child psychology, group work, counselling and community development. For many years I worked as a case worker with children and the elderly as well as a community educator on human rights issues and processes. I now realise that all this work was about narratives, people's stories of injustice and how I, as a listener and educator, could 'do' something with these stories. As I now connect this past to an academic career, I continue to facilitate projects and processes that tell a story.

My Masters of Education thesis was an ethnographic study of a group of people, including myself, who managed a three-year project in an Indigenous community, setting up a culturally relevant adult education and training centre. This was followed by spending two years as an academic advisor to an Indigenous elder who told her story as a Masters in Environment Science thesis; her story of a life lived in connection to the ecological and spiritual environment of her culture.

Rather than complete an evaluation of adult education and training in Campaspe simply as a policy and program analysis, this research includes the stories of learners as a way of including people in the research *as* learners not just as statistics of participation or credentialed outcomes. Stories can illuminate the issues which bring individual experiences to light and hopefully allow us all to realise the individual impact of public policies and programs.

Adult Education Providers and Programs

The second part of the responsive analysis provides a profile of the 'place' that is the Shire of Campaspe, securing the research into an historical and contextual framework which describes 'where Campaspe is at' in terms of the demographic, social, economic, cultural trends and issues of Australian society in the 21st century.

This contextual framework is *a commitment to the investigation of situated cultural productions and to the exploration of how the coherent and the inchoate, the authentic and the inauthentic, and the centred and the marginal are social achievements* (Hufford: 1995). All human interactions occur within a locality, a 'place-ness' that has both a medium and an outcome. These interactions are complex and refer to material practices (what do people do in this place?), representation and imagining (how do people understand what they do?) and the construction and experiential qualities of space, that is, how doing and understanding is embedded in place (Wilson: 2001). 'Place' is a physical and geographic description and also a context for human action, a combination of space and experience (Wilson: 2001). The 'place' for this research is the Shire of Campaspe in northern Victoria and the 'space and experience' is adult education and training providers, specifically those providers funded to coordinate ACE programs.

This part of the research also provides a comparative illustration and analysis of the level of participation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in adult education and training in the Campaspe Shire. The comparative analysis illustrates the contextual background by identifying and describing the key policy and program stakeholders in the Shire of Campaspe, with data derived from DEST, NCVER, Victorian ACFE, Shire of Campaspe and local adult education and training providers. It also seeks to understand and analyse the level of participation in ACE in Campaspe compared to other regions within Victoria.

The comparative profiles of nominal data collected by Australian government agencies like ABS, DEST, OTTE, ACFE, etc, illustrate the claims raised by adult education and training policies in the policy analysis that access and equity strategies are, firstly, increasing participation and outcomes for people from diverse cultural backgrounds and, secondly, developing regional communities. This aspect of the research reaches a statistical conclusion by comparing descriptive and illustrative profiles and data (Owen & Rogers: 1999, Stake: 1980, 1975) of the participation and outcomes of adult education and training programs for people from CALD backgrounds in Campaspe, with other regions in Victoria and for the whole of Victoria.

Adult Education Staff Sample

The other responsive aspect of this analysis (Owen & Rogers: 1999, Stake: 1980, 1975) involved open-ended ethnographic interviews with program coordinators of adult education programs in Campaspe. Interviews with individual program coordinators provide a portrait of access and equity strategies for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in this regional community. There were a total of twelve interviews with staff whose roles included managing and/or coordinating adult and public education programs in Campaspe. The ACE providers who participated in this research are identified in Table 3.

Table 3: Adult education & training providers

Adult Education & Training Providers	ACE Programs	VET Programs
Echuca Neighbourhood House	√	-
Campaspe College of Adult Education	√	√
Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE	√	√
Murray Human Services	√	√
Kyabram Community Learning Centre	√	√
Mirrimbeena Aboriginal Education Group	√	√
Adult Multicultural Education Services	√	-
Victoria University	-	√

Mirrimbeena Aboriginal Education Group (MAEG), an ACE provider within the Shire of Campaspe, chose not to participate in the research because of time and relevance issues. This is a privately owned and operated Indigenous ACE provider and the manager believed that their client group, young Indigenous men, would not fit the target group for this research.

A sample of twelve adult education staff was selected on the basis that individual staff members were employed to manage or coordinate adult education and training programs, and were likely to come into contact with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The sample included full-time and part-time staff and the data was collected during January and September 2006. Essentially, staff also self-selected in terms of agreeing to be interviewed on the basis of the research topic, meaning they were interested in exploring the issues as they relate to providing education services to the local communities in Campaspe. This data provided an opportunity to compare data about adult learners with the frameworks of facilitating adult education programs.

Table 4 on the following page links these individuals to specific adult education and training providers in Campaspe as of 2006.

Table 4: ACE staff sample

Place	Male	Female	Totals	Roles
Echuca Neighbourhood House	-	2	2	Coordination, facilitation & teaching
Campaspe College of Adult Education	1	1	2	Management, coordination & teaching
Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE	-	2	2	Coordination & teaching
Murray Human Services	-	2	2	Management & coordination
Adult Multicultural Education Services, Flagstaff	-	1	1	Coordination
Kyabram Community Learning Centre	-	2	2	Coordination Teaching
Victoria University	1	-	1	Lecturer
Totals	**2**	**10**	**12**	

A survey instrument was developed as a way of introducing the research project to individual ACE staff and to limit the specific topics of interest to this research. The instrument was developed by consulting current literature on indicators of social capital (Putnam: 2004, Balatti & Falk: 2002, ABS: 2000, Winter: 2000, Cox in Putnam: 2000) and was also based on the prior experience of the researcher working in Campaspe and the region.

The indicators chosen for the survey instrument and for further exploration in interviews were: the gender of staff members, their cultural background, language(s) spoken, religion(s) and their perceptions of cultural diversity in Campaspe and the adult education and training programs they had implemented in the past five years. In addition they were asked about the participation of people from culturally diverse backgrounds in these programs, the reasons why people accessed these programs, the outcomes of these programs for people from culturally diverse backgrounds, the contribution of adult education and training to the Campaspe community, the role of adult education and training providers in the Campaspe community, and what they would do differently to engage people from different cultures in adult education and training programs in the Shire of Campaspe.

Once each staff member had completed the survey and indicated they were willing to be interviewed, an interview date and time were negotiated. Each adult education and training staff member was interviewed at least once during the period from February through June 2006. Some individual ACE staff then engaged the researcher in more informal conversations about the issues raised during interviews throughout the life of the project, providing more contextual information. It is the nature of regional communities that those who work in specific sectors, in this case, adult education, do attend the same forums and events and therefore are able to discuss issues more frequently than their urban counterparts.

The process of interviewing adult education and training staff raised discomforting questions about Australian adult education and training systems and programs. Subjectivity in these issues was reduced by replication, researching multiple providers, programs and individuals and the operational defining of ambiguous terms such as adult education, training, learning, community, cultural background and cultural diversity. Analysis of education programs is traditionally instrumental, examining student performance, mastery, ability and attitude. However, educational outcomes are diffuse and long-delayed as well as having an intrinsic value to individuals and communities. Those people working for ACE providers in Campaspe were best placed to discuss the past, present and future aspects of ACE and the impacts of ACE programs on the community and the region.

Each staff member chose the specific information they wanted to contribute and sometimes information was given 'off the record' to allow the individual to vent concerns. This information was not recorded for the purposes of this research but it often provided leads to other program and funding stakeholders such as local Shires, Local Learning and Employment Networks and other regional organisations.

Brief excerpts of summaries from this section of the research were then sent to each ACE staff member to ensure it reflected their input. Their comments and edits were accepted and discussions ensued about the specific information to be presented. To ensure their contributions were accurately reflected, ACE staff were also given an outline of some of the issues to be presented in the thesis so they could see how their input and the research outcomes were going to contribute to a meaningful discussion and analysis of adult education and training policies, program development and outcomes.

During the process of interviewing ACE staff and learners during 2006, it became apparent to a number of stakeholders that ESL programs were absent from Campaspe and that there was a need for a small, funded program. Representatives from AMES and Campaspe College of Adult Education met and it was agreed that a program would be funded in 2007 for individuals requiring English language tutoring. As of mid 2007 there were eight people participating in this new program at CCAE, mostly women from Asian backgrounds and mostly people who had arrived in recent years. The researcher conducted a focus group meeting with some of these adult learners to outline some of the findings of the research, to test if these findings concurred with their experiences.

This new program, in turn, resulted in a comprehensive review of general education programs at CCAE and with the appointment of a new manager for this provider in 2007, there has been a further commitment to expand the ESL program, develop a new Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning program for young people and re-orient the Certificate in General Education for Adults program for adults over 20 years of age. This is a major development for this program area in Campaspe because, prior to this, all these target groups (CALD, young people, adults in need of literacy/numeracy) were clustered together in one general education program. This targeting of people into distinct program areas matched to specific curriculum and adult education practice will almost certainly result in more people participating in these new programs.

The other development relevant to this research was the establishment in 2006—07 of a new community group calling itself 'Echuca Enriched: Promoting Cultural Diversity'. The formation of this group was facilitated by a small group of professionals from CALD backgrounds who meet to discuss their experiences of social isolation in Campaspe. The group received some funding from the Victorian Government's Regional Migration Program office based in Shepparton to facilitate a number of social functions in an attempt to bring together people from diverse cultural backgrounds in Campaspe. To date this group has held a small number of social functions and there is now an attempt to develop regular, informal get togethers to foster further interaction. The researcher attended these social functions, again in an attempt to gauge reaction to the research findings and to recruit new interviewees. Two people did volunteer.

Adult Education Policies

The research attempts to reconnect the data to a broader policy analysis of the purpose and meaning of the category *people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds* in Australian adult education and training policies. This analysis is linked to historical and current developments of policies around population expansion and migration in Australian society. The issue of access to, and participation in, Australian adult education cannot be explored without linking the development of all policies that relate to, and impact on, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Policy document analysis (Ling: 2005, Marks, McMillan & Ainley: 2004, Marston & Watts: 2003, Bacchi: 2000, Hoppe: 2000, Gale: 1999, Dunn: 1994) utilises text-based data including: current Commonwealth and Victorian government policy documents, government and academic research reports, and analyses of government policy processes and outcomes provided by other researchers and commentators.

The investigation and analysis of public policy has a tradition as long as democratic government but, more recently, policy analysis has concerned itself with [participating in] the investigation of the public problems that policy attempts to solve (Ling: 2005, Marston & Watts: 2003, Bacchi: 2000, Hoppe: 2000). The use of discourse analysis (in the tradition of Derrida, Foucault, Kristeva, Jameson and Dewey) occurs in the attempt to deconstruct the philosophies and ideologies that underpin access and equity for people from CALD backgrounds in adult education and other Commonwealth policies (Hoppe: 2000, Bizzell & Herzberg: 1990, Dickens & Fontana: 1990).

Ethics

A human research ethics application for this research was lodged with the Victoria University Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development Human Research Ethics Committee in October 2005, and approval was granted for the processes outlined in this Chapter in December 2005. As outlined in the approved ethics application, each subject whether individual learner or ACE staff member, was provided with the opportunity to remain anonymous.

All ACE staff and some of the individual learners chose anonymity due to concerns about being identified in the research and this impacting on their employment and other activities in the Campaspe region. Those individual learners who wanted anonymity chose their own pseudonyms as a way of identifying their contributions throughout the research.

There were also ethical issues associated with facilitating a research project in a small regional area where, as in many regional communities like Campaspe, people know each other. ACE providers are aware of each others program profiles and most providers knew me prior to the research with some wanting to offer employment to me in various capacities. Utmost in my mind was the integrity of the research, and so whenever any of these issues were raised they were discussed and dealt with in a timely manner. This resulted in my decision not to accept employment as a program coordinator or consultant if there was a perceived conflict of interest between employment and the research.

As the thesis has been prepared, some information has been checked back with ACE staff and individual learners, and to date there have been no concerns that the research has been in any way compromised by the closeness of networks in the Shire of Campaspe. A final ethics report was submitted to the relevant Faculty ethics committee at Victoria University in March 2008.

Chapter IV

Diverse Adult Learning in Campaspe

Introduction

This chapter explores the nature and extent of the provision of, and participation in, adult education in Victoria and the Shire of Campaspe. It is informed by data derived from a scan of current Victorian ACE policy and funding guidelines for the Loddon Campaspe Mallee (LCM) region of Victoria. Statistical data about ACE participation in Victoria and in the LCM region assist in profiling the activities of the sector in the region. This chapter also reports on themes that emerged from profiling adult education providers by means of unstructured interviews with individuals working in the ACE sector in Campaspe. It then introduces some of the themes that emerge from the ethnographic research activities with adult learners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds which are presented as vignettes in Chapters V and VI.

The themes emerging from the research link a multiplicity of experiences of learning and life in a regional community. This chapter introduces specific issues of diversity, adult learning, social inclusion and ACE in this one rural shire of Victoria, but these issues could also be extrapolated to other rural, regional and urban communities in a manner that contributes to a new strand of research on adult education in Australia.

Campaspe: A Regional Context for Adult Education

The Shire of Campaspe has a population of over 37,000 people, a population that is growing in number and diversity (ABS: 2007, Shire of Campaspe: 2007). There is significant economic development and change in this region due to the changing nature of agricultural industries, the drought, and the growth of tourism as a major industry. Skilled migration is an emerging part of this economic agenda which is going to impact on social and community structures and processes throughout the region (City of Greater Shepparton: 2005, Shire of Campaspe: 2001).

The place that is Campaspe is representative of many regions in Australia where the population is diversifying as more people move from large urban areas, and as migrants and refugees are 'diverted' into regional areas by Federal and State Government policies. Within regional Victoria there are specific patterns of age-

related migration, with different age groups moving out of and into these areas. Older adolescents, for example, show a pattern of movement toward urban centres, mostly for education. These patterns tend to reverse for 25-29 year olds in regional areas such as Campaspe, reflecting the attraction of regional areas for young families and the return mobility of some who have completed their tertiary education (DVC: 2006).

Agricultural production based on intensive irrigation is the largest industry in the Shire of Campaspe in terms of net worth and revenue. Dairy farming and dry land farming involving cattle, sheep and grain are the main agricultural industries. However, employment occurs mostly in the service sectors of retail, finance, hospitality and tourism. In recent years the Shire has been significantly affected by drought, which has had an impact on all economic, social and personal circumstances.

Communities in regional Victoria with 16% of the population born overseas are significantly less diverse than Melbourne, where 36% of the population is born overseas (DVC: 2006). Issues of cultural and social marginalization motivate many people, and especially newly-arrived migrants, to choose to reside within the greater social diversity of urban areas. However, in recent years a number of regional municipalities in Victoria, and around Australia, have actively welcomed more diverse groups into their communities for a range of economic and social reasons. Currently there are immigration programs targeting humanitarian entrants to resettle in regional and rural Australia. Skilled migrants can fill skill shortages and there are now opportunities for temporary visa workers to come to Australia to fulfil specific employment contracts in regional and/or rural communities.

The Goulburn Murray Regional Migration program has recently been extended as a joint initiative of the Shires of Campaspe and Moira (Shepparton) under the Victorian Government's Regional Migration Fund, and provides an emerging context to the research (City of Greater Shepparton: 2005). The skilled migration program in these local government areas (LGA) acknowledges that there are up to 40 different nationalities in the region and that both Shires require further strategies to attract and retain skilled migrants to the area to combat labour and skills shortages. Figure 1 illustrates the geographical position of the Shire of Campaspe within the State of Victoria.

Figure 1: Shire of Campaspe
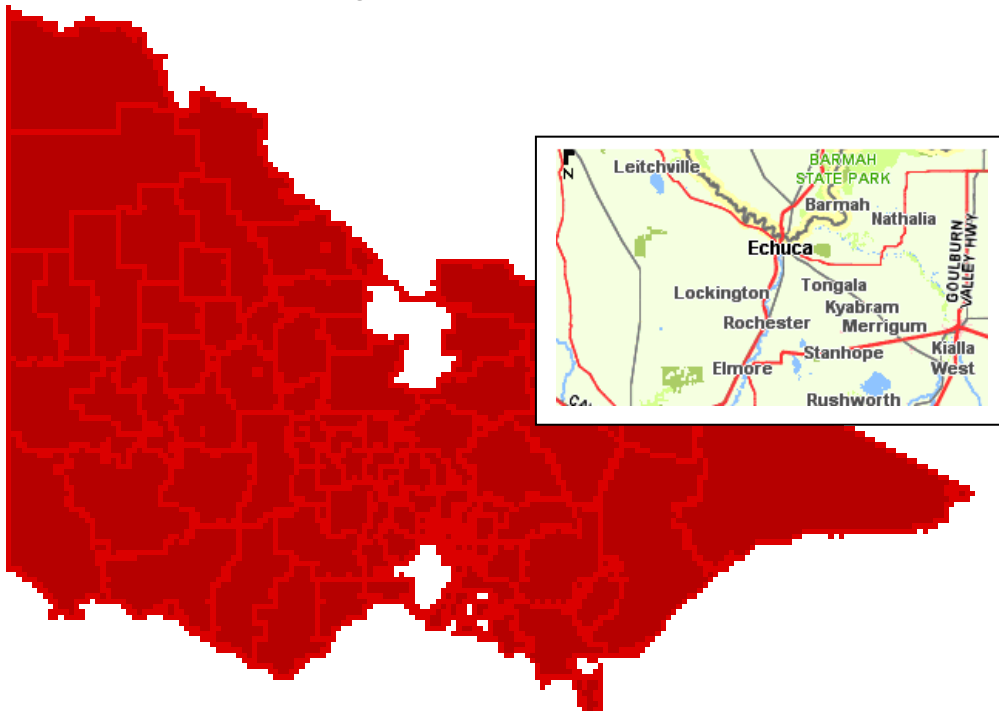
ABS Census data from 2001 and 2006 outlined in Table 5 reveal that the largest town in the Shire, Echuca, is growing at a greater rate than the Shire as a whole and Australia as a nation. This expansion is occurring in the context of population growth in neighbouring regions of Victoria, like the City of Greater Bendigo which is some 80 kilometres south of Echuca. Bendigo experienced *strong growth between 2001-2006* (ABS: 2007), figuring in the top five of the fastest growing regions in Australia. The Shire of Campaspe then is part of a wider trend of regional 'provincial' growth in Victoria which is indeed stronger than most regional areas in the nation (ABS: 2007).

Table 5: Population profiles of Australia, Shire of Campaspe & Echuca 2001 and 2006
(ABS 2007 & ABS 2001 Census of Population & Housing)

	Total Population	% change between 2001-2006	% Indigenous Persons	% change between 2001-2006	% Born Overseas	% change between 2001-2006	% Speak other language (NESB)	% change between 2001-2006
Australia 2006	19,855,288	+5.8	2.3	+ 0.1	22.2	+0.3	21.5	+1.5
Campaspe 2006	37,209	+2.3	1.8	+0.5	7.5	+1.2	5.5	+2.2
Echuca 2006	12,358	+11.5	3.1	-0.3	6.8	+1.0	2.5	+0.7
Australia 2001	*18,769,249*		*2.2*		*21.9*		*20.0*	
Campaspe 2001	*36,349*		*1.3*		*6.3*		*3.3*	
Echuca 2001	*11,087*		*3.4*		*5.8*		*1.8*	

This table of census data shows that cultural diversity in the Shire of Campaspe is very limited compared to the Australian average. There are lower percentages of Indigenous Australians and significantly lower percentages of people born overseas and speaking languages other than English. Examination of the data on people speaking languages other than English reveals an Australian national average of 21.5% compared to 5.5% in Campaspe and 2.5% in Echuca. Even though there has been some growth in Campaspe in terms of both the numbers of people born overseas and a greater than national average growth in people speaking a LOTE, this is occurring from a very low figure signifying a regional community permeated by an Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking population.

The ABS (2007) data illustrates specifically that the total population of Echuca is growing at a much greater rate than the nation as a whole, but the lower rate of growth in Campaspe probably reflects slower or negative growth in the smaller rural-based communities of the Shire, compared to Echuca as a regional urban town. However, the Shire as a whole is diversifying at a rate greater than Echuca with a 2.2% increase in people who speak a language other than English, a 1.2% increase in people born overseas and a 0.5% increase in Indigenous people.

Diversity in any community can include ethnicity, country of birth, socio-economic status, age, lifestyles and attitudes, with issues of cultural, social and personal marginalisation driving some people to choose to reside in urban areas. However, a number of regional municipalities in Victoria and around Australia are actively welcoming more diverse groups into their communities for a range of economic and social reasons (Broadbent, Cacciattolo & Carpenter: 2006, DVC: 2005, DSE: 2003).

Programs encouraging migrant and refugee families to relocate from urban to regional communities provide an opportunity for those migrants who may want to consider alternatives to living in the large cities. Some migrants arriving in Australia have resided in rural and regional areas in their countries of birth and prefer this to urban environments. There is no doubt that these important policy initiatives can make an economic difference at local levels by providing labour. However, the challenges for each host community are to locate funding for the community development processes, and coordinate case management and service brokerage

processes required to assist in the transition of newly-arrived migrants and refugees into rural and regional communities (Broadbent, Cacciattolo & Carpenter: 2006).

The individuals from CALD backgrounds, represented in the vignettes in the next two chapters, had varied but specific reasons for living in the Shire of Campaspe, with most of them moving to the region in the past fifteen years. Internal migration was the most common factor shared by the six individuals discussed in Chapter V. In other words, they came to live in Campaspe from somewhere else in Australia. For some, the relocation to Campaspe occurred many years after migrating to Australia.

In relocating to Campaspe, some of these individuals had moved away from family, concentrated cultural groupings and support systems that exist in large urban areas like Melbourne. The six individuals outlined in Chapter VI, on the other hand, had migrated to Australia and moved directly to Campaspe or had done so shortly after migrating from their country of origin, reflecting changes in Federal and Victorian government policies regarding regional and rural population and economic development strategies.

All twelve individuals moved to Campaspe for reasons that included: work, financial considerations such as cheaper living (five respondents), a better lifestyle (four respondents), family and/or personal relationships (four respondents) or for a sense of community (three respondents). For most, there were significant benefits in changing residence to a regional location, mainly leading to an improvement in individual or family economic circumstances. However, a common experience amongst the interviewees, regardless of their age, backgrounds and qualifications was that for the first few years of living in Campaspe they spent the majority of their social time engaged in solitary activities, that is, their localised personal and social networks did not expand significantly. The most common theme emerging from the experiences of all these individuals in Campaspe was their belief that their cultural backgrounds made them social outsiders within this regional community. They had all experienced social exclusion and difficulty in developing localised, supportive social networks. Australian regional and rural communities have distinct localised cultures in themselves, mostly of WASP character and rooted in the colonial history of a specific region.

Newly-arrived residents to these communities are required, as newcomers, to adjust to the mores and codes of local life, with *greater homogeneity of group memberships in regional centres, coupled with lower levels of 'tolerance of diversity' reported on average in these communities* [being] *indicative of fewer bridging ties, and of less propensity to forge cooperative relations with outsiders* (Stone & Hughes: 2001: 16). The closer an individual is to the Australian WASP colonial tradition of a regional or rural community, the quicker and more easily they will develop new social networks, often resulting from participation in existing local networks around activities such as sport, business and church (Babacan: 2003). Migrants tend to form closer ties with each other in response to the reactions they receive from attempting to connect to localised networks and closed groups. As Giorgas has observed, *ethnic community formation has served as a positive strategy for immigrants in overcoming social isolation and economic difficulties by providing employment opportunities and a sense of familial surroundings* (Giorgas: 2000: 1).

Employment emerged from the research as one way individuals could connect to localised networks in Campaspe but individuals also reported that employment was characterised [by some of the newly-arrived migrants] by a lack of tolerance towards low levels of English language proficiency. These individuals could only access low-skilled, low paid jobs no matter what their skill level was, because their English language proficiency was low. In fact, it was assumed by some ACE providers that most new arrivals would be seeking or accessing employment and would have neither the time nor inclination for participation or involvement in adult education. There was no local data available about patterns of employment or unemployment in Campaspe specifically; most labour market data is based on larger regional areas such as Loddon Campaspe Mallee which encompasses most of central and the north west of Victoria.

However, most of the individuals interviewed for the research were not employed, either because they were full-time carers for partners and/or children, or because they were unemployed due to a lack of skills in industries and areas they were wishing to work in. A cruel social and economic trap was exposed. Employment as a way of connecting to economic and social capital was an exclusionary experience for some of the people from CALD backgrounds in Campaspe because their English was poor, and ACE providers were not regarding this group as a potential client

group because they erroneously believed that individuals of CALD background were all working. Most of the interviewees were not working and there was a lack of readily available English language tutoring. This mix of experiences will clearly lead to individuals retreating into their domestic sphere and 'giving up' attempts to access the social and economic resources available within the community.

A recent overview of ACE in Victoria revealed that only 30.5% of people with a language background other than English participating in ACE were employed; 25.8% were unemployed and 43.8% were not searching for employment (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007: 67). This raises a number of questions regarding involvement in adult education on the part of people from CALD backgrounds. Their unemployment or underemployment can, as in the case of the interviewees in this research, relate to life transitions and, as such, the connectedness they might expect from ACE is limited by assumptions of the 'working migrant' or an overall perception that all people accessing ACE are doing so to assist in employment pathways rather than personal or social transitions.

The complexity of this dynamic between ACE and employment is underscored by the fact that unemployment across Australia is higher amongst groups such as newly-arrived migrant women, middle-aged men and women returning to work (ABS: 2007) who are some of the main target groups of ACE programs in Victoria and in Campaspe. These patterns of social and economic inclusion and exclusion are not specific to the communities in the Shire of Campaspe but are relevant to the whole of Australian society, as social exclusion linked to diversity is duplicated throughout regional, rural and many urban communities (Bullen & Onyx: 1998).

Many individuals and cultural sub-groups can be perceived as being alien to the familiar experiences of local communities and are often 'pegged' by locals as people who 'won't fit' (Healy: 2007). All of the individuals from CALD backgrounds interviewed for this research experienced social exclusion and isolation for many years in Campaspe because they were outsiders, although their experiences varied due to individual factors. This concurs with other research into the experience of immigrants to Australia undertaken since the 1940s (Giorgas: 2000).

All the individuals who participated in this research identified social connections either as a primary or secondary reason for accessing ACE in Campaspe. The vignettes highlighted in Chapters V and VI reveal that some individuals had been able to use ACE in the development of new social networks but others found ACE programs and practices excluding, disappointing and unhelpful in this endeavour.

Adult Education in Campaspe

Adult community education in the Shire of Campaspe occurs in the context of state-wide adult education policy frameworks and funding programs. The Victorian Adult Community and Further Education board has developed clearly stated policies for targeting particular groups for ACE participation in urban and regional areas including: young people under 25 years of age, people with a disability, people aged 45 and over, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007, ACFE: 2006).

Each year ACFE releases commentary on ACE participation for both urban and regional areas in Victoria. In 2005 the commentary for the LCM region of Victoria showed that *young people and Koories received a share of ACE delivery greater than their share of population in the region. Conversely, people aged 55+, men aged 45+, and to a lesser extent, people with a disability and CALD persons received a share of delivery which is less than their share of the population. Therefore, learners with less than year 12 educational attainment, people aged 55+, men aged 45+, people with a disability and CALD persons may require more effective targeting or different delivery modes to attract them to the ACE sector* (ACFE: 2006: 7).

The government and statistical data in this chapter were derived from three sources. Firstly, a request to Victorian ACFE in 2006 for state-wide data on ACE participation and outcomes yielded some comparative data for the period 1999 to 2005. Secondly, regional data released in 2003 were accessed from the ACFE website and, finally, the Victorian Office of Training and Tertiary Education (OTTE) provided data regarding all training and education activity in the LCM region (2006). Table 6 contrasts the total student contact hours of the different education and training sectors nationally.

Table 6: Australian adult education provider profile 2002-2006

Type of provider	2002	2006	%	% change
TAFE & other government providers	303,328,500	318,411,500	85.6	2.8
Community education providers	14,277,500	14,829,300	4.0	1.2
Other registered providers	31,423,600	38,859,400	10.4	3.0
Total annual hours	**349,029,600**	**372,100,200**	**100.0**	**2.8**

These data clearly disclosed the ACE sector as the third wheel in the Australian adult education and training sector with the smallest number of student contact hours but also significantly smaller growth in student contact hours over the period (NCVER: 2007). NCVER also reveals a decrease of 17% in funding to the community education sector from 2002 to 2006 (NCVER: 2007). This appears to be caused by a decrease in the number of students participating in this sector, but without further national data specific to this sector it is difficult to extrapolate further about the trends and reasons for this downturn in ACE activity. Table 7 outlines the specific ACE student contact hours in Victoria for the period 1999-2005, giving a context to ACE participation in Campaspe:

Table 7: Victorian ACE student contact hours by age groups 1999–2005

Age group	1999	2005	% change 99–05
14 & below	49, 438	64,833	31.1 %
15 – 19	974,116	1,769,526	81.7 %
20 – 24	883, 962	954,520	8.0 %
25 – 29	867,330	730,891	- 15.7 %
30 – 34	904,462	826,527	- 8.6 %
35 – 39	1,047,993	912,126	- 13.0 %
40 – 44	960,012	978,828	2.0 %
45 – 49	827,319	982,167	18.7 %
50 – 54	554,396	776,710	40.1 %
55 – 59	485,673	679,469	39.9 %
60 – 64	472,620	460,881	- 2.5 %
65 & over	1,051,749	782,272	- 25.6 %
Not stated	1,293,914	389,994	- 69.9 %
Total	**10,372,984**	**10,308,744**	**- 0.6 %**

Overall there has been a slight decline in participation in ACE programs in Victoria from 1999 to 2005, which is concerning given that ACE is the sector that aims to re-connect people to adult education. The present research data suggest that another theme requiring attention is the age of the groups mostly actively participating in ACE. The ACFE data show increases in participation in Victorian ACE programs by 14-24 year-olds and 40-59 year-olds, two groups who tend to experience higher levels of unemployment during specific kinds of aged-based life transitions. This reflects the narrative data from Campaspe which will show that young people dominate some program areas in ACE while the experiences of middle-aged people accessing ACE occurs during specific life transitions. Table 8 provides more specific comparative data about the participation of learners from specific language groups in ACE in Victoria for the period 1999 to 2005. This data largely uncovers what is occurring in urban areas of Victoria where CALD populations are concentrated, but does provide insight into the trends of use of ACE by people who speak a language other than English, the CALD equity group.

Table 8: Victorian ACE CALD learners 1999–2005

CALD group	1999	2005	% change 1999–2005
Aust Indigenous languages	1,965	1,215	- 15 %
Eastern Asian languages	423,450	477,289	13 %
Eastern European languages	346,348	249,724	- 28%
Northern European languages	39,267	37,945	- 3 %
Other languages	63,710	117,154	84 %
South Asian languages	64,860	104,493	61 %
South-East Asian languages	319,541	359,779	13 %
Southern European languages	395,493	372,463	- 6 %
South-West Asian & North African languages	239,168	363,868	52 %
Total	**1,896,802**	**2,086,930**	**10 %**

These data introduce another theme which emerges, too, within Campaspe, namely an increase in participation by newly-arrived migrants from Asian countries. In Victoria as a whole, there have been declines in participation in ACE by Indigenous, Northern European and Southern European language groups, with significant increases in ACE participation by Eastern Asian, Eastern European, South Asian,

South-West Asian and 'Other' language groups. This clearly indicates that migrants most recently arrived are indeed accessing ACE programs in Victoria. Table 9 then outlines comparative data for all education and training activity by learners from CALD backgrounds in the LCM region of Victoria as sourced by OTTE (2007). This provides a regional context for ACE in Campaspe:

Table 9: Loddon Campaspe Mallee CALD learners Student Contact Hours 1999–2005

CALD group	1999	2005
Aust Indigenous languages	1,619	224
Eastern Asian languages	70	1,025
Eastern European languages	775	710
Northern European languages	0	273
Other languages	0	2,688
South Asian languages	3	22
South-East Asian languages	329	534
Southern European languages	1,825	1,576
South-West Asian & North African languages	335	390
Total	**4,956**	**7,442**

These data reveal total education and training activity in the Loddon Campaspe Mallee region for CALD learners significantly increased over the period 1999 to 2005. Again, it is the Asian language groups and 'Other' language groups representing the most significant increases in adult education and training activity, reflecting the state-wide trend. Comparison between different adult education and training sectors at this regional level is difficult because of the lack of specific data on ACE participation in the LCM region. ACFE has only been able to divulge that for *the main groups of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) learners in the region ... delivery to this cohort is of low percentage of total activity in student contact hours* (ACFE: 2006: 7).

The government data presented in these tables sets a broader context of a static ACE sector nationally, but one that is growing in Victoria specifically for the adolescent and middle age groups and people from Asian language groups. The regional context is more difficult to analyse. ACFE reports that there is strong overall participation in ACE programs in the Loddon Campaspe Mallee region, with the Shire of Campaspe attracting more funding than its percentage of population

within the region (ACFE: 2006). However, evidence from the ACFE data and from interviews with ACE staff in Campaspe revealed that CALD participation in ACE in Campaspe appears to be 'patchy'. The lack of specific data inhibits the comparison and analysis of CALD participation at this or any regional level.

The lack of availability of government data on access to and participation in ACE programs is an issue of national importance, making it difficult for researchers to form judgements and conclusions about ACE programs and participation. *Without the availability of current and complete national data on ACE activities and outcomes, it is impossible to measures ACE's success in helping to address national issues and priorities at the local community level. Certainly, some of the benefits of ACE programs are difficult to measure in quantitative terms as they are not fully captured in existing datasets* (Choy, Haukka & Keyes: 2006).

The National Centre for Vocational Education Research was sounded out by the researcher regarding the availability of recent national data for participation in ACE. The most current reportable data was from the year 2000 (NCVER: 2001), with no comparable data published since this time. NCVER offered up-to-date national ACE data available for the price of approximately $2000, because the data needed to be compiled from the national data base of education and training activity. This seems to reflect a lack of interest by Australian government and research agencies in developing a contextualised understanding about ACE programs and non-vocational education and training activity within all adult education and training providers.

Adult Education Responding to Diverse Needs

Table 10 outlines the types of adult education and training programs that the interviewees from CALD backgrounds indicated they had participated in over the past few years in Campaspe. These data indicate that there were a range of programs available at any of the ACE providers in Campaspe. Some VET programs were being delivered by non-education providers such as the YMCA and the Shire of Campaspe and some individuals had participated in work-based training.

Table 10: ACE programs in which CALD Learners have participated

Programs	Numbers	Type of Program	
Aged Care	1		VET
Community Welfare Work	3	ACE	VET
Liberal Arts	3	ACE	
Art (painting)	3	ACE	
Yoga Reiki	1	ACE	
Court Network training	1		VET
Computers	2		VET
General Adult Education (literacy & numeracy)	3	ACE	
Food Handling	2		VET
Volunteer training	2	ACE	
Small business management	1		VET
English language individual tutoring	2	ACE	
Koorie Art and Design	2	ACE	VET
Parenting	1	ACE	
Group fitness	1	ACE	
Creative writing	2	ACE	

This blend of short courses and general education programs in areas such as art, parenting, creative writing and the liberal arts reflect a strong tradition of ACE in general adult education (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007). However, only three individuals had participated in adult literacy and numeracy programs and only two in ESL or English language tutoring, reflecting either the low numbers of newly-arrived migrants in the sample or the lack of participation of newly-arrived migrants in these ACE programs in Campaspe. A focus group meeting in 2007 with participants in a new ESL program at Campaspe College of Adult Education revealed that of the eight participants, four had arrived in the past few years and four had been in Australia for over a decade.

This reflects, as supported by the vignettes in the next two chapters, that the take-up rate of ESL tutoring or adult literacy and numeracy education for migrants in Campaspe is quite haphazard. Significantly, a few individuals had accessed vocational education and training programs with ACE providers, for example, aged care, welfare work and volunteer training. This evidence of participation in ACE in Campaspe raises the possibility that people are 'chunking' their adult education and training choices, based on what each individual wants or needs at any given time.

There is no evidence that individuals are adhering to Federal and Victorian policy aims of 'pathways' of adult education and training. These individuals from CALD backgrounds tended to participate in ACE on a 'needs' basis; needing to connect, to get out of the house, to expand their knowledge of art, parenting or local community, needing new skills or contacts to help find a job and so on. Participation in adult education and training was not enduring amongst this CALD group but was quite sporadic. Use of adult education and vocational training was in fact opportunistic, with the immediacy and accessibility of ACE and workplace training facilitating usage.

Interviews with twelve people employed by a range of Campaspe-based adult education providers enabled the collection of anecdotal evidence about the level of engagement with ACE by CALD groups in this region. The varied and specific comments from ACE staff in response to a question about cultural diversity in Campaspe included: *it's mostly Indigenous people here; they are out there; they're spread about the region; they work in business, adult education is not their focus; some try and come but work gets in the way; many of them prefer rural communities and properties not town settings.* Some ACE staff believed the CALD population in this region to be insignificant in number and therefore irrelevant to ACE programs. Some emphasised that most from CALD backgrounds were already employed or involved in running small businesses and were, therefore, too busy to access ACE or, more likely, to be interested in vocational education and training programs through TAFE providers.

This reveals quite strong perceptions amongst ACE staff that although people from culturally diverse backgrounds do reside in the region, their 'place' and their needs are not connected to ACE. In undertaking a survey on ACE and its role, applied to both staff and students in this study, the ACE staff responded differently to questions about the social and economic purposes of ACE. Even though most responses about motivations for learning at ACE were similar, staff and learners have very different relationships with knowledge and power.

It could also be surmised from the variety of programs that the fluidity of ACE programming in Campaspe enables individuals from CALD backgrounds to develop and meander along their own education 'laneways' at their own pace. The following data reflect a range of issues about the relationship between the personal, social

and economic impact of participation in ACE programs. These data reveal the personal and social context within which individuals from CALD backgrounds participate in ACE and the factors that drive access to, and the outcomes of, this participation.

As outlined in Table 11, the individual learners from CALD backgrounds clearly indicated social reasons for accessing ACE programs, including a need for new networks or contacts, being more informed about personal and local issues, and new friends. All of these factors received more attention from the learners in their accounts of the reasons for accessing ACE than a need for new skills and qualifications. These individuals had accessed adult education and training in Campaspe because they wanted to connect back to community or were suffering depression, or were lonely, isolated, disempowered, needing encouragement, needing friendships or sought somewhere where there was no pressure to perform.

Table 11: Reasons why people from CALD backgrounds access ACE in Campaspe

Reasons for accessing adult education & training	Category of reason	No. of responses (15 learners)	No. of responses (12 ACE staff)
expand **network of contacts** in the community	Community (social)	13	11
be able to make **more informed** decisions about personal, parental, financial issues	Personal (social)	12	10
be **more informed** about local issues	Community (social)	12	4
to make **new friends**	Personal (social)	10	8
learn new skills to help get a new job	Vocational (economic)	9	8
New or updated **qualifications**	Vocational (economic)	7	6
learn new skills about current job	Vocational (economic)	6	9

The main difference here between staff and learners was in relation to being informed about local issues, which individual learners saw as much more important while staff believed there was a greater emphasis on learning new skills for current employment. This may be due to the fact that ACE providers assume that individuals have a current job of some kind whereas learners were accessing education and training in order to look for a new job. Individuals were exploring

new skill sets, searching for something new in new industries and service sectors rather than upgrading skills. This highlights a conflict between ACE staff and learners over the value of local social connections compared to economic needs. Learners believed ACE programs had the potential to inform them about local issues and they saw ACE as being a crucial connection to the local community. Table 12 illustrates the hope for social outcomes of, as compared to the motivations for, adult education indicated by these individuals, including: volunteering, friends, networks in the community, connecting to the community, connecting to local culture (as in art, craft and local people). The personal outcomes of adult education and training identified by these individuals were about reducing social isolation, feeling safe, conversation and feeling needed by others. The economic outcomes of adult education were about qualifications and changes in career or work roles.

Table 12: Outcomes for people from CALD backgrounds participating in ACE in Campaspe

Reasons for accessing adult education & training	Category of reason	No. of responses (15 learners)	No. of responses (12 ACE staff)
*have more **contacts** in the community*	Community (social)	14	9
*know more about **education and learning** providers & programs*	Community (social & economic)	13	6
*more **employment opportunities** in the local area*	Vocational (economic)	11	9
*know more about **goods & services** in the local area*	Community (social & economic)	10	6
*improved **working life***	Vocational (economic)	7	5
*improved **health***	Personal (social)	7	3
*have more **time & leisure** because they earn more & work less*	Personal (social)	4	4

These data provide evidence of clear agreement about the range of personal, social and economic outcomes for individuals from CALD backgrounds participating in ACE. The participation of these specific learners in ACE did increase their contacts within the local community for most who participated. These contacts became personal friendships or contacts that provided information about other resources in the community with some of these contacts enduring enough to be called 'networks'.

Although the adult learners divulged that participation in ACE does have personal and social outcomes as well as economic outcomes, how enduring these outcomes are is unknown. The range of adult education and training courses from this sample of CALD individuals in Campaspe also shows that participation in ACE does provide access to skills and qualifications. There are many vocational courses, pathways and outcomes in ACE in Victoria leading to employment, or at least employability, if this is what individuals are searching for (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007; ACFE: 2006). ACE organisations deliver many kinds of vocational programs and in a manner that is more customised than other providers. Learning groups in ACE tend to be smaller, the majority of learners are women and there is an expectation among learners that participation will lead to the creation of personal and social networks as well as knowledge and skills (Kearns: 2006, Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006). *ACE plays a complex role delivering entry-level training and further study, employment and social outcomes to learners with a diverse range of characteristics* (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007: vi).

In contrast, a narrowing of the types of general adult education programs offered by ACE providers can inevitably contract access and participation by leaving some individuals to wonder what adult education is all about. Marie said that *in the main I have found adult education informative, some however is so simplified that you don't need a brain to pass the course.* Hanna said *we need more options of where you can go; you end up doing 'what's the next best course' rather than what you want to do. Education and courses need to be where we're at, life stage.*

Utilising ACE to target education and training programs for the 'hard to get to' groups such as youth and Indigenous people means there is a propensity for these groups to be 'parked' in ACE programs. For example, young people seemed to dominate the adult literacy and numeracy (general education) programs in Campaspe as a response to young people 'dropping out' of secondary school programs. The needs of this younger age group in an adult education setting then affect the experiences of other groups, particularly older adults, who cannot or do not want to mix with younger people in a learning space or context.

Conclusions

This chapter has explored data that emerged from a range of research activities exploring the participation in, and experiences of, adult education in the Shire of Campaspe for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Despite cooperation from Victorian ACFE and OTTE and the potential of further data from NCVER, there is clearly a lack of data regarding ACE activity across Australian society. Compared with the range of data collected, analysed and published about vocational education and training and higher education activity in Australia, this could mean that government, research and community stakeholders have yet to come to grips with the contribution of the sector. Dymock (2007) explains that this might be explained by the Australian education and training sectors being fractured with more value being given to TAFE and university courses.

The statistical data from ACFE, OTTE and NCVER clearly show the ACE sector as the third wheel in the Australian adult education and training sector with not only the smallest number of student contact hours but also significantly smaller growth in student contact hours (NCVER: 2007). Without further data specific to the ACE sector in Victoria and Australia wide, it is difficult to extrapolate further about what the trends and the reasons are for an apparent downturn in ACE activity in recent years. ACE data reporting needs to be urgently upgraded to be given the same attention and importance as data about VET and HE activity.

The Shire of Campaspe has significantly lower numbers of CALD residents compared to larger regional and urban areas and so ACE participation by theses groups in Campaspe can be expected to be lower. However, the diversity of the population is growing and so localised data about population diversity, labour market and educational participation would assist regional and local agencies to better plan their service delivery. Diversity is a term that can encompass ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, lifestyle, attitudes and so on. The individuals from CALD backgrounds who were surveyed and interviewed for this research relocated to Campaspe for financial, lifestyle and personal relationship reasons, as well as a search for a sense of community. A common experience amongst the individuals, in some cases regardless of age, backgrounds and qualifications was that of social isolation in a new community.

Participation in local networks can be difficult for people from CALD backgrounds because existing networks often revolve around sport, business and churches which are not always in the realm of experience or interest for new migrants and residents to regional communities (Giorgas: 2000). Employment is one way of establishing networks and most of the individuals in this research recognised this. But due to individual reasons around their stages of life transitions, many in this research sample were not able to be employed and so this form of network development wasn't an option.

Victorian ACFE reports that there is strong overall participation in ACE programs in the Loddon Campaspe Mallee region with the Shire of Campaspe attracting more funding than its percentage of population within the region (ACFE: 2006). However, in can be anticipated that CALD participation in ACE in Campaspe is 'patchy' with ACE staff sensing that newly-arrived migrants and people who have been migrants and who have relocated to the smaller communities of the Shire of Campaspe are accessing ACE in very limited numbers.

The vignettes in Chapters V and VI will disclose that participation in ACE programs is as diverse as the individuals from CALD backgrounds, and reflect a range of personal, social and economic needs. ACE programming in Campaspe has clearly enabled some individuals from CALD backgrounds to access ACE and choose programs in which to participate in. However the next two chapters will reveal some dissatisfaction with this participation and the outcomes it produced.

The complexities of individual differences and needs illustrated in the vignettes in the following chapters will reflect both the positive and negative experiences of ACE with feelings of being included and/or excluded attributed to specific ACE providers, particular courses or program groups or certain tutors. The variety and complexity of these experiences of adult education and training in Campaspe raises the issue of how ACE providers, programs and facilitators manage an emerging cultural and social diversity in a regional context.

Data presented in this chapter have led to the questions: how can ACE providers and tutors anticipate the needs and motivations of people from CALD backgrounds in this region? How can they see beyond their own perceptions about people from different cultural backgrounds to plan programs and activities that facilitate the personal, social and economic connections that these small but growing numbers of people from CALD backgrounds need in this community context?

The role of ACE in the development of social inclusion and personal, social and economic networks for this group of individuals was spasmodic and complex with a range of policy, funding, educational practices, attitudinal and individual factors influencing the potential development of social capital. The next two chapters will explore the actual, specific and unique experiences of twelve individuals who accessed and participated in ACE programs in the Shire of Campaspe during 2004-2007. Six vignettes of early wave migrants are presented in Chapter V and six vignettes of newly-arrived migrants are presented in Chapter VI.

Chapter V

Early Wave Migrants as Adult Learners in Campaspe

Introduction

This chapter illustrates and analyses six individual vignettes collected via surveys and extensive interviews with mature-aged adult learners from CALD backgrounds residing in the Shire of Campaspe. Liz, Hanna, Marie, Connie, Kon and George are people from CALD groups who migrated to Australia in the 1950s through to the early 1970s during what is commonly referred to as the early waves of post-War migration to Australia. The experiences of these individuals as migrants were in the first instance as children or adolescents within the context of family migration, during times of economic hardship in Europe and economic prosperity in Australia.

The Australian society that these individuals experienced during the first decades of their residence was one of emergent multiculturalism, high levels of employment, small business development opportunities, urban growth, and free primary and secondary education, and offered access to skills training via industry-based apprenticeships and cadetships. Australian society during the 1960s and 1970s was also characterised by people having smaller families, more time for recreation and leisure pursuits, and new-found rights and responsibilities under family law, leading to increased divorce rates and the emergence of 'blended' families. It was a society which was developing new directions in economic, social and cultural realms and contrasted sharply with the European societies and cultures that most migrants came from (Carrington, McIntosh & Walsmley: 2007).

For the six individuals referred to in this chapter, experiences of Australian society since their migration have been substantial and varied. This group of individuals reflects the experiences of many of their generation who did not complete formal secondary education and did not participate in tertiary education, having taken on apprenticeships or readily available employment during their mid teens. This led to experiences of casual and/or unstable employment throughout adulthood, although some were able to seize on their own initiative stemming from trade training to manage their own small businesses.

We should not forget that this is also the generation of the emerging Australian *laisse-faire* attitude to life; 'the laid back Australian' and that, for some, a search for 'something' in life. These factors underpinning a new society with new rights and new lifestyles have led to increased mid-life mobility, multiple relationships, child-less couples and singles at a rate never seen before in this society (ABS: 2006).

Increased mobility has led to more individuals adjusting to new communities and led to the nuances, networks and surroundings that present challenges when moving to a new community. Adult education has presented itself as one access point in a new community, as access to providers and programs offers personal and skill development and social contacts (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007). ACE providers can offer connections to others with similar experiences of life. These might not necessarily be with people from similar cultural, social or economic backgrounds but they will share similar attitudes or experiences of disconnection and isolation in a new community locale. The following six vignettes outline the experiences of Liz, Hanna, Marie, Connie, Kon and George, their migration to Australia, their adolescence in urban environments and their experiences of moving to the Shire of Campaspe in recent times.

Vignette # 1 - Liz

Liz is 52 and Maltese. Liz and her parents were born in Malta. Maltese is her first language and English her main language. Her religion is Roman Catholic. Liz has never been back to Malta. She lives in Echuca, *to be closer to my family, but not with them, so I can be stronger when they're gone. I lived in Queensland.* She grew up in Melbourne and her family came to Australia in 1953 when she was three years old. She lived in Queensland for six years prior to moving to Echuca in about 2000 because she wanted to be closer to her elderly parents who live still in Melbourne. A defining event in her life occurred when she was about 12 years old and she started suffering from clinical depression. *There was no reason, I came from a secure and loving family, it just happened.* Liz experienced six or more electric shock therapy treatments at this time because the medication didn't work. She was attending a Catholic school and was a very good student. *I was offered scholarships to stay but just couldn't.* She left school aged 14 and worked in several jobs as a secretary but couldn't *stick at it because depression is a day to day thing; sometimes I would last a week, sometimes just a day, I couldn't take the structure.*

Liz is a general member of the Echuca Neighbourhood House and started going there about 6 months after moving to Echuca. *I was told by doctors not to sit at home. I had to learn to live with OCD* (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) *and the depression so that's what I've done.* She has taken on a volunteer position at ENH, *cooking, because they know what I'm like, here it's a challenge, I learn by watching others, I can't see the big picture, just to keep going is an achievement. Needy people need to see each other, to feel they are not alone. These friends help me in my crises and I help them.*

Liz believes that Echuca Neighbourhood House is about *the need for people to belong, a place to go with no pressure, friendship, self-help and understanding. I can get very sick if I sit at home all the time.* She completed two days of training for committee members of Echuca Neighbourhood House, funded by the House, and a two-day Food Handling Course in March.

She is doing these programs *to help better my voluntary work, cooking, health and safety. I'm worried about it, but will give it a good try. I am accepted for myself here, not for who they want me to be. I don't think about the future, I enjoy the days as they come, I have an old house in Echuca, I've done the garden and am very good at craft work, I have a lot of interests really, I've always been good with my hands. Being a volunteer at ENH helps me because there are a lot of people, needy people, just like me. And with their help, love and understanding, life need not be so hard. I cannot work and they know this. So they know when I need to take time off because of depressive illness.*

Liz agreed to start facilitating a knitting group in 2006: *I agreed to give it a go, I don't know how it will go but we will see. The last year or so I have been getting better, I need to be stronger, to be independent, I need to be prepared. My mother is dying of cancer, I have to get ready, it's hard, but that's life. They were the parents and I was the child and now I am the parent, it's their turn to go and then it will be mine, that is life, isn't it.*

She thinks that places like the Echuca Neighbourhood House exist *because there needs to be more money, for looking after people who need it and people, professionals who really do care about the whole you. I love helping people in need. I always had my parents and a loving family, so this is my way to help those who don't have a lot of support, with my natural skills in a controlled environment.*

Liz presents a typical narrative of European migration to Australia, migrating in the 1950s as part of a family who settled directly in a major urban area, carving out a life of work, family and education. However, Liz reveals an often untold story of mental illness that originated in early adolescence and then impacted on and informed her story of family, education and work. In many ways, Liz's story of work, marriage and raising a family during the 1960s, 70s and 80s is an archetypal one for many women in Australian society. Her moving of residence to Queensland and then Echuca is less characteristic and appears to have exacerbated her illness(es) and set her adrift from the familial and cultural connections she had while residing in Melbourne. Liz's educational background is limited, characterised by 'failed' secondary education because of the onset of her illness and by circumscribed opportunities for further adult education or training because she married and had children during the decades that followed.

Liz was not looking for educational opportunities when she approached Echuca Neighbourhood House. Essentially her contact with Echuca Neighbourhood House as an ACE provider was inadvertent and fortuitous. She accessed ENH because it was in her neighbourhood and because her doctor suggested that it would be advantageous for her health if she participated in some activities outside her home. She participated in community lunches as a volunteer and reports that she sees ENH as an emotional resource rather than as an education provider. Her participation has extended her networks and is providing the opportunity for her to develop skills via active involvement and informal learning rather than formal education and training.

She finds the environment, the 'place' and the people of ENH, to be supportive of her needs, giving her the space and time to explore new social connections as a therapeutic tool for her mental and emotional well-being. Liz's experiences clearly link to the well-documented 'pedagogies of ACE' (Sanguinetti, Waterhouse & Maunders: 2004). The five principles of ACE are *described as: a focus on learners and their needs: continuous learning for work and life: building learning on and within real life contexts: sharing power – empowering people and communities: and many roads to learning* (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007: 31). It is this type of educational framework that encourages Liz to continue her involvement with ENH,

as well as fostering what Bowman (2006) sees as the promotion of citizenship and adults being active in community activities. Liz sees ENH as her link to community and she has become active in her local community. This involvement keeps her in 'touch' with her local community while she continues to struggle with events in her life, such as her elderly mother's physical illness and her own mental illnesses.

Vignette # 2 - Hanna

Hanna is female, aged 42, and of Ukrainian ancestry. Her parents came from the Ukraine and she was born in Geelong. Ukrainian is her first language and English her main language. She lives in Echuca because her family was looking for a new lifestyle, a slower pace and they had family living in the region but not in Echuca. She is a general member of the Echuca Neighbourhood House and was an active volunteer with the local Court Network until being employed as a Support Worker. Hanna has attended adult education and training programs at the local College of Adult Education, the Neighbourhood House and Victoria University, and completed some specific workplace training programs.

She has completed the Certificate 3 in Community Care (Aged Care) at Kyabram Community Learning Centre, Liberal Arts, Return to Study at the CCAE, Art, Oil Painting at the Neighbourhood House, Yoga at the Neighbourhood House, a Bachelor of Arts at Victoria University, Court Network training at the Shire offices coordinated by state-wide Court Network, and Reservation Management System (RMS) Computer Program via the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service. *I did these courses for a number of reasons, to learn new skills for entering the workforce, to make more informed decisions about issues in the mainstream.*

I went through the normal transition that occurs in midlife when their children are grown up, getting on with their own life. I didn't know what I wanted so the journey to find who I was began with various adult education courses. 'Back to study – Learning' was fantastic and gave me tools to discover 'how I learned'. Discover what the world in 2000 was like. I used some courses as a diving board, Uni was probably the best course because of the topics (psychology, education processes); the exploration of current issues and learning about how people interact kept my interest. Also discovering sectors of our community which would otherwise have been stigmatised opened my eyes to undercurrent issues existing in our midst. I find personal development seminars helpful to keep informed.

Life goes on sometimes, not so smoothly as it ought to and the original path you outlined has unexpected turns. Hanna described Echuca Neighbourhood House as a place she used *to connect back to the community after two years of depression, family deaths, a marriage break up and to top it off, a slipped disc in my lower back. My world had all of a sudden changed and I felt hopeless and absolutely useless. Alas, my doctor suggested I contact CRS (Commonwealth Rehab Services). It opened a new perspective and more options; I worked through my possibilities, faced my limitations and prioritised my values in life. Number one change, I would have to manage my back condition and put boundaries down if I was to enter the workforce.*

Coming to this realisation wasn't easy at first but once I started work as a Support Worker, the available flexible hours enabled me to set achievable goals bringing back a little confidence each time. Three years down the track, I love my work and have opportunities to attend work training sessions. My learning continues. We need more options of where you can go, otherwise you end up doing 'what's the next best course' rather than what you want to do. Education and other courses need to be where we're at, life stage and free from being locked into one person's perception. The outside world is revolving and people think, act and change according to influences of family upbringing, culture, socio-influence, life experiences and what their belief system accepts or rejects. This in turn creates many different types of people. All people do not learn the same way.

Hanna was born in Geelong to parents who had recently migrated from part of the former USSR to Australia. Hanna's life as a child, adolescent and adult has centred on family. Her childhood experiences were of a migrant, non-English speaking family living in Melbourne in the 1960s and 1970s. Hanna left secondary school at a young age to work for a few years, then marry and raise her children. Hanna moved to Campaspe with her own family, living in a small rural community in Campaspe until recently, when her marriage ended and she moved to Echuca.

This event in her life precipitated Hanna wanting and needing to access both community-based resources and formal adult education and training, and she brought a complex set of needs to her quest for formal and informal adult education. This helps us make sense of her very eclectic recent education history where she had accessed three different ACE providers searching for quite different activities. Hanna participated in lifestyle and recreation programs at Echuca Neighbourhood House as a way of exploring non-vocational skills, to assist in getting her out of the house, recovering from a back injury and extending her

social networks. She accessed a course in Liberal Arts at Campaspe College as a way of entering formal adult education in a general way, using it as a way of learning to learn and extending her contacts with education providers in the region. She participated in a certificate course in Aged Care at Kyabram Learning Centre as a way of developing new skills which has led to a new work life.

Hanna had identified different needs in her life and the various roles that ACE providers played in Campaspe. She had the motivation and skills to be able to 'shop around', choosing the providers and programs that suited her personal, social and economic needs. While Hanna obviously found ACE useful for meeting her needs, ACE also had limitations for her in that there were restricted opportunities for tertiary education in Campaspe that would enable her to move beyond certificate courses and into 'higher' levels of formal learning. ACE has fulfilled its mission in this case in providing a bridge for Hanna, from being a full-time mother and wife to someone needing to expand her economic and social networks to facilitate employment and new community and social participation. She has questioned, however, whether this 'bridge' links to all the possibilities it should in this regional community when programs and courses are only delivered to a certain level in Campaspe.

Hanna has made extensive use of ACE for her social, vocational and educational needs. ACE consequently fulfilled its mission for this middle-aged woman who has consequently successfully 'recovered' from a marriage breakdown in order to be able to resettle within Campaspe, access programs of personal interest, re-enter adult education as a life-long learner and access vocational training to create new employment opportunities. Hannah also used ACE as a ladder into higher education, ultimately leading to her job as a support worker. This does show how ACE can act as an educational and employment pathway, providing economic opportunities to women migrants especially those who are motivated and articulate.

Vignette # 3 - Marie

Marie is female and born in the Netherlands. She is 46, speaks English (*Australian*) and Dutch (*very badly*) and describes herself as a *lapsed Catholic. My adventure started in May 1960, in the Netherlands. I am the fourth of six children. My working class parents thought we would have a better life in Australia. I certainly agree. We came to Australia in 1968; the children settled in very quickly. The language wasn't a problem for us kids, for my parents it was another story. My mother is still fighting for control of the language. My father found work without too much trouble; he was a textile mechanic at Holeproof in Brunswick for many years. We bought a house in Coburg and resided there for the next six years.*

My youngest brother was born when I was eleven; his birth was a tad controversial. My mother had an affair with a rather handsome Arabian gentleman. My father was not very impressed. It was common knowledge between us kids but we never spoke about it. Our family life deteriorated after that, we were never the same again. My mother told my younger brother about this only last year; it had been swept under the carpet for over thirty years. After my brother was born, my father decided to move us all back to Holland; my older sister had gone back twelve months before the immaculate conception. We spent eleven months there before we came back to Australia. Holland was too small for us.

I left school at 15 as my parents needed financial support. I didn't mind too much. My first job was as a general dogsbody in a factory. I have worked in menial positions all my life as I never had any ambition or encouragement to do anything else. My parents moved from the city to Hamilton in the western district. My second younger brother was killed in a motorbike accident when I was twenty; nothing prepares you for a loss so great and my parents in particular have never recovered from their loss.

I lived in Hamilton for many years. I married and had a son. My husband was a useless shit; he was a petty thief, used and sold drugs in a small way. In the end he came undone and was convicted of the aggravated rape of an elderly woman. He was sentenced to 12 years and served six. He was soon on the loose again, with a BA in Photography. Thankfully he has not been a problem to me. My son has some contact with his father but I see very little of him.

In the meantime, I met a man and surprise, surprise! We married, and had three children together. We had two girls, 19 months apart, four and a half years later we had a little boy. Around the time I was pregnant with my last child; my husband began to suffer from panic attacks and serious depressive episodes.

He has had some major attacks over the last ten years or so, he has been medicated for the last five years continuously. Marie and her family moved to Echuca in 1998; *my family moved here so my husband could find employment.*

Marie completed adult education programs in First Aid at Campaspe College of Adult Education, Computers at Echuca Neighbourhood House, Reiki, Adult language and literacy at Campaspe College and in 2007 completed a Diploma in Community Welfare Work at Campaspe College. She dropped out of the Community Welfare Work course for a while because she believed it wasn't going anywhere but rejoined the course after a new tutor was appointed. She participated in these courses to gain new qualifications, to be able to make more informed decisions about issues and because she wanted to make new friends. She has participated in learning in classrooms, learning in workplaces, learning over the internet and learns things as she goes along.

Marie believes she has gained a lot from participation in these courses including new qualifications, new skills, new contacts in the local community, new friends and being more informed about local issues and other education courses. *In the main I have found adult education informative, some however is so simplified that you don't need a brain to pass the course. My oldest son was diagnosed last year with bi-polar disorder; he had a major episode and came to the attention of Community Mental Health who were wonderful. He had been seeing a counsellor at Echuca but had done a runner to stay with friends in Melbourne. He was hoping to outrun his problems: he stayed for a few months. A good friend of his was killed in a motorbike accident: he thought he would come home after that. He is having trouble coming to terms with his condition.*

Around the same time (last year), my husband informed me that he was sorry, he no longer loved me, in fact, he had no feelings for me whatsoever. I was informed of his feelings or lack thereof last June; in November (2005) I finally asked him to leave. One person cannot save a relationship. The stress of trying to make it work was putting a strain on the entire family. So here I am six months on, coping better than I had hoped, but a long way from happy. Most of my life I have coped with whatever has come my way, with optimism. I've had a very fortunate life. So let the adventure continue, bring it on.

Marie is uncertain about her future in Echuca; she is waiting for her adolescent children to complete high school before deciding what to do. She may even move back to the Netherlands as she often still feels disconnected from something in Australia. She feels something is missing, culturally, from her life in Australia. Her younger brother now lives in the Netherlands.

Marie and her family represent migration to Australia following the post war boom in immigration, having migrated in the late 1960s, in between the post war period and before the humanitarian and family reunion programs of the 1970s. They were in search of a better life but, once here, encountered personal issues and returned to their country of origin for a short time before concluding that the decision to migrate had been the right one. Marie left school at a young age, worked, married and had a child. She lived in a regional community as a young adult and even though the first marriage didn't work out she quickly remarried and had more children. Her family moved to Campaspe for economic reasons, so her husband could find employment but, this was soon complicated by his mental health.

Marie has accessed two ACE providers in Campaspe and has followed the 'typical' adult education pathway of completing some short courses (First Aid and Computers) before embarking on certificate and diploma level courses. Family issues dominate Marie's life and are central to influencing her needs. Her experiences have predominantly focussed on husbands, children, and menial and casual employment. She has accessed ACE because she wanted to improve her basic skills in information technology and literacy, and although she found adult education not particularly challenging, she lacked confidence in searching further for other education and training opportunities.

Marie appears to be drifting: waiting for something, for her children to leave home so that she can decide what to do next. Culturally she feels like an outsider, not just in Campaspe, but in Australia. She is longing for something she believes is back in the Netherlands. This distinguishes her from the other individuals in the research in that she wants to explore her cultural origins. Often the importance of ACE for women is its intrinsic value, to allow them to explore what is possible (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007). ACE provides a second chance and compensatory opportunities for people, most often women who did not complete secondary school and have not had any other formal education or training. Even so, Marie highlights the limitations of ACE, mentioning its failure to challenge her and the restrictions in further education pathways because of the regional context.

Vignette # 4 - Connie

I'm Italian and 44 years old and born in Italy; came to Australia when I was really young. The choice was to migrate to Australia or America. We chose Australia because an uncle already lived here. Italian is our main language and we speak English. We always speak Italian when together as a family. We are Catholic, but I am not practising. I moved to Echuca in 1995; I moved here to get a different kind of job and because I wanted to live in a regional town rather than Melbourne. Me and my family had lived in Melbourne since arriving in Australia. I left school when I was 16; I trained to be a hairdresser and ran my own business for fifteen years until 1995 when I moved here. Not now but when I first moved to Echuca, I was a volunteer with St Vinnies doing Meals on Wheels and visiting the oldies in hospital. I did this for a couple of years as a way of giving to the community. I was interested in community work as a job.

The courses I have done since being in Echuca were cooking at TAFE; I did these courses because I knew there was lots of this kind of work in Echuca and so I got part-time and casual work, mainly in Italian restaurants. Maybe this was because I was Italian and maybe because I had done the courses or maybe both. In 2000 I did a Certificate in Liberal Arts at Campaspe College so I could learn more about learning and youth and community that was what this course was about. Doing Liberal Arts did lead to me doing Youth and Community at the Uni course in Echuca. My experiences at the College and Uni were both good and bad. As I did each year of these courses, I knew I was improving: my writing and study skills were getting better.

Through Liberal Arts I started using people who were good with writing to help me: I used the people around me as a resource. My family and friends could see the improvement. Once, I sent an email to my sister about something and she rang me straight away and said, "Who wrote that message?" and I was able to say, "I did". I was really proud of myself. I was gaining a lot of confidence but then I had some very bad experiences which turned me off. I was sent to Campaspe College (in 2003 by the Uni) for writing support. I only lasted three days because I wasn't asked about my needs and was just put into a class. It was simple reading, basic, really basic.

I needed lessons on writing, grammar, using technology, but no-one at the College gave me the support I needed. It's certain teachers who make a difference. Some pointed out that I was reading and writing too fast, had to slow down. Some were really good support, others didn't care but I also learnt that I could use other people and dictionaries to help me write and learn, you know, friends, people I know, a little dictionary, I used them all.

Even though I'm not working in youth and community, I do know more about education and I do know more about Echuca and I did meet people who are now friends. Getting employment in Echuca is about who you know; your own contacts so now I get an income from doing things from all my experiences; I still cut hair on a casual basis and now I run my own cleaning business. My writing and computer skills help me with my business and people I now know are helping me in my business, as clients or by referring people to me. I am disappointed not getting work in youth and community but there aren't many opportunities here and the Uni is still stuffing me about, not giving me a Diploma which I think I should get. I am following this up now. I should have done it before but my experience was so bad I just gave up. It's not fair to be treated like that; it probably wouldn't happen in Melbourne. Courses aren't managed properly here, people just come in, teach us some stuff then leave. We don't get the full service.

I do mix with people from different cultures: have hooked up with half a dozen or so people and families who are Italian, and others who have had similar experiences to me as a migrant to this country. Even though we all arrived many years ago, we have something in common, we were migrants, we know what that's like. It's important in a place like Echuca where there are lots of Aussie rednecks. So if I do a course or start a new job I do notice any others who are from different backgrounds. I suppose I feel I can talk to them easier. In the future, working in youth and community is still something I want to do. I will probably have to study again somewhere else like Bendigo or Shepparton. Not now though, I want to earn money now. It takes time and money to study if you have to travel. I also want to go overseas again, I have been to Italy to see relatives and to America (my sister lives in Seattle). I want to go back to Italy again and to Egypt.

Connie migrated to Melbourne as a young child, from Europe. Her childhood and adolescence were characterised by family and strong cultural connections. She left secondary school at a young age to train as a hairdresser, spending her twenties and thirties building a small suburban hairdressing business in Brunswick, a culturally diverse suburb of Melbourne. In her early thirties she married an Italian man but this marriage ended after a couple of years and he subsequently died. With no children, she continued to concentrate on her business.

In her mid thirties, Connie chose to close her business and move to Echuca in Campaspe, searching for her own sense of community, separate from the familial and cultural connectedness that she had in Melbourne. There is a sense of a search for independence, not in an economic sense, because she had achieved this in becoming separate from her parents and a husband; but something more personal. Connie utilised her one experience of ACE as a social encounter, and as an extension of her need to connect to community: her kind of community.

This experience of ACE was a positive experience for her, exploring diversity and adult learning in the supportive context of a Liberal Arts course. However, her experience of education pathways was something altogether different. On completing the Liberal Arts course, she gained access to a Diploma/Bachelor program in Echuca but found the content and style to be at a different level and accompanied by a lack of support in literacy and a more distant style of tutoring she floundered and eventually withdrew from the course after one year. She felt let down by 'the Uni' which contrasted with the learning and contacts she experienced at ACE.

Her experience of the local Echuca community contrasts with her experiences of community in Melbourne, with the sense of being an outsider deriving from her cultural background and experience of the urban environment. A subsequent experience of formal adult learning with a higher education institution was not a positive experience and so Connie viewed her experience of Liberal Arts at Campaspe College as a unique one, specific to that group, that program and that tutor. Her overall experience of formal learning through secondary school and more recently the university course in Campaspe were both quite negative.

Connie excelled in the environment of workplace learning during her hairdressing apprenticeship and enjoyed undertaking her subsequent small business development and of the one Liberal Arts course at ACE. Overall, she seemed reluctant to want to participate in the formal aspects of adult education and training, opting for a 'wait and see' attitude toward her education and employment prospects and opportunities. Connie is an individual for whom space, diversity and process in adult learning are an important combination that need to be present in order to motivate her to participate.

Connie's experience is also representative of many CALD learners. She has struggled with the demands of academic English and the sensitivities about that still rankle. While she can take pride in what she has learned, in the improvements in her performance and in her resourcefulness in amassing learning resources, there are still the slights of being sent off to Campaspe College to do English support while at university and getting inappropriate help. The language support classes did not deliver the results she might have hoped for, the academic confidence, the desired job, even the diploma. She makes a number of references to her outsider status and sees jobs she wants as closed to her because she doesn't 'know' the right people.

She is engaged in what seems to be a fruitless dispute with the university because she is unsure why she doesn't have the skills or there aren't the right supports for her to complete those studies. Because of this separation from the mainstream community she actually singles out people from 'different' backgrounds and regards courses and new jobs as fertile sites for this networking. Education means many things in this context, in some ways fitting the narrative of triumph and transformation, but in other ways it has been a setting for shame, frustration and disappointment. Connie is only able to build imperfectly on her experiences or to convert them into employment and social capital. She recognises this but still hankers for more and in the end hints that she may have to look further to places like Shepparton or even back in Italy for more fulfilling experiences.

Vignette # 5 – Kon

Kon is 58 and was born in Greece, speaks Greek and English and is a Greek Orthodox Catholic. He doesn't attend church in Echuca because *no churches in Echuca, Greek, there's one in Shepparton, Bendigo, Swan Hill, Mildura, but not here.* Kon went to primary school in Greece, *nine years primary school, then other school then the army. It's not like here, you go in for a few months then they pay you, in Greece everyone has to go, 24 months.* Kon went into the army aged 18 until he was 20 and then he migrated to Australia.

I came to Swan Hill, my sister lived there, but I only there for few months then to Melbourne. Kon worked for 30 years in Melbourne in factories, spray painting furniture. *My hip, bad, arthritis in joint, very bad.* He then worked at the National Mutual building in Collins Street for five years parking cars but *had to stop, too bad for hip, in and out of cars all the time. Had to be on pension.* Kon has been on the Disability Support Pension since 1998.

I had operation, here in Echuca, nine months ago, much better, can walk now, not limping so much, very good. Kon moved to Echuca in 1998, *my sister here, owned the Pastoral Hotel, did little bit of work there. She has holiday house here now, visits on weekends and other times. Only for little while then she went to Melbourne.* Kon has never married or had children, *no I was working and with bad hip, too much.*

Kon rented an apartment privately in Echuca for a while and was *going to St Luke's, you know for the drop in, coffee, chatting on Tuesdays. A woman there at St Luke's put me on top of commission list, man rang me and said they building new flats. I had to wait until they ready. When they finished, he rang me and told me to pick one, I picked number one; it is separate from the others. I lived there now for five and half years in same place, it's good.* Kon lives by himself; his sister comes to visit Echuca sometimes and he visits Melbourne for the holidays, *Christmas time, Easter, Greek Easter festival, I go and see people I know, five days I stay.*

Kon has used St Luke's drop-in days on Tuesdays to catch up with people up until this year. The days at the course changed this year so he can't go at this time. Kon lives in Echuca because it's *easier, cheaper now, you know, sold house in Melbourne, Thomastown, have some money but not much. It's hard on the pension, rent, power, gas, telephone, shopping, Melbourne too expensive.* He has some friends in Echuca. One friend died last New Year's Eve of cancer. Kon is still very sad about this.

Kon completed Level 1 of the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) from 2002 to 2004, and in 2005 and 2006 was doing Level 2. Kon is doing this program *for the English, to speak it, to read books, to write, very good now. In Melbourne, many Greeks, in factories too, no need to speak English much.* Kon has never participated in any other adult education in his life. *No need, I work, I work, that's it. No education or training programs since leaving the army.*

Kon likes learning in the classroom. For the first two years it was three days a week, now it is four days a week. *There are other older people, a man he in his fifties and a big woman a bit younger, there was a Chinese woman, she left and there were others. People come and go, I stay. No Greeks. There are many younger ones, they do other things, they come and go too. We do maths in the morning 9–11 and then English 11–1 now, very good.* Kon keeps attending because of the social aspects, meeting people, getting out and about. He feels more confident, *for sure, yes, communicate better, have friends who Australian, can speak better, maybe get little job in clubs, serving beer, mixing drinks, some cleaning maybe.*

> Kon shook his head when asked what other education and training he might want to do: *No. No need, do little bit of work, that's all, keep looking. Little bit of work. There's a man with two fish and chip shops close to me, I go speak with him, leave name and phone number, he doesn't call, nothing, maybe clubs, somewhere, hotel, maybe.*

Kon migrated to Australia as a young man, initially to go and live with his sister in Swan Hill, a regional community. He quickly moved to Melbourne for work opportunities but without marriage or children has led a more solitary life than many of his generation. Work, his sister, church and friends were his social systems when living in Melbourne for some 35 years. Kon's English language skills became an issue later in his life when a disability meant that he couldn't work full-time. On moving to Campaspe he approached ACE to access better English language skills, both formally and informally. He was also searching for friendships because there are not many Greek people in Echuca and no Greek church. He has used other contacts and more mainstream welfare organisations to fulfil this need to connect to other people.

ACE offered Kon both the formal and informal aspects of adult education: the English language skills and strategies he sought to gain casual employment, skills he needed to be able to communicate with more people in his new community, and the social connections of getting out four days a week and mixing with people of many ages and cultural backgrounds. In some ways, this ACE experience has prepared and supported Kon for life in Campaspe by facilitating his contact with non-Greeks with whom he had less contact while living in Melbourne.

Like many men of his age and generation who have been disabled by work, he is looking for casual work and friendships to maintain his lifestyle into semi-retirement. His lifestyle is restricted because of his age, disability and lack of language skills but he has no wish to return to Melbourne: the affordability of life in Campaspe and the intermittent contact with his sister who still has a holiday home in the area are sufficient for him. His lengthy commitment to the Campaspe College CGEA program to improve his language skills reveals Kon to be highly motivated, and he continues with practising his English language skills. He sees improvement in his language and social skills, and hopes that in the future there will be improvement in terms of access to casual employment opportunities as a

consequence of this persistence. It appears that the regional lifestyle with its affordability and easily accessible, 'laid back' adult education courses quite suit Kon. There is no pressure for him to perform, just to develop his skills and use the ACE provider as he needs.

Vignette # 6 - George

I was born in Shanghai in 1948. My father and Chinese grandfather, although born in China and returning as adults, grew up and were educated in Glasgow, home to my Scottish grandmother. My mother was born in Shanghai of Spanish and German/Russian parents, lived only in Asia until migrating to Australia. Myself, my parents and two younger sisters migrated to Australia from Hong Kong in 1973. I describe my background as Hong Kong British Colonial and I describe myself as a HK International Australian. The British colonial influence was strong; myself and my family spoke English, this was considered the international language. My father was a commercial pilot. Everyone in HK wanted to speak English, so even though I could understand spoken Cantonese, I could not speak it very well. Chinese school mates used me to refine and practise their English. Religion was not a rigid factor in my life. My mother was baptised a Catholic but her mother was of a Lutheran/Russian Orthodox background. My father, and me and my sisters, grew up with the Presbyterian influence.

Migrating to Australia meant things like, through the looking-glass, down under and arse end about, also the tall poppy syndrome was evident. People migrating give up what they own because they don't want it anymore or they don't give it up because they want to share what they love. People from Hong Kong are interested in other cultures. In Australia it was, and still is, the opposite: we had to learn to be Aussie.

The quickest and easiest way to absorb and learn is through sharing, a better understanding and enjoying picking up relevant offerings of being local, i.e. Australian. Education across the board needs to start by being diplomatic, welcoming, like being a gracious host, to inspire newcomers to be forthcoming and merge, 'join the party'. This way talents and knowledge are easily shared as opposed to neglect causing deterioration and dereliction (if you don't use, you lose it). Education is about information, clarification through audio-visual, experience through exposure, the theory that a picture's worth a thousand words. Newcomers are always reserved and tentative.

George spent twenty or so years living in Melbourne and working as a hairdresser. In 1993 he moved to Tongala (about 20 kilometres to the east of Echuca) to *work on a horse stud*. George was searching for a *healthier lifestyle, more physical work, greater fitness*. This job lasted five months. George was injured on the job and considered the idea of starting his own business. George was unemployed at this stage and decided to contact the NEIS office in Melbourne and *attended an interview, the business idea didn't qualify but I was contacted by the man who sat in on the interview who encouraged me to pursue the idea*. George was referred to the Small Business Development Corporation in Echuca, who *weren't very helpful*.

George was then referred to a Skillshare program that offered an 8 week course on *how to start up a new business, write a business plan*. George found this course *interesting and at the beginning helpful in shaping ideas*. However, the trainer and other Skillshare employees seemed constantly *distracted, worried about their funding, their jobs, etc. They were right to worry, Skillshare closed soon after this time*. There was not much support or enthusiasm for George's business idea so he changed his focus to the marketing and promotion of Echuca as a tourist destination, believing that Echuca had much to offer. The outcome of this Skillshare experience was a plan to develop a service but nothing happened.

George says that Echuca *looked like a modern and quite trendy town but it was all looks, the attitudes and behaviour of 'locals' about people from different cultures and other differences was rooted in an Anglo rural redneck culture. Echuca is now becoming something else, with the ignorance changing as the population changes and new businesses and ideas come into the town*. This has been typical of George's experiences: since being in Australia, George said he has always been made to feel like an outsider and although he feels *at home in this country*, he often feels even more alien than ever.

Since living in Echuca and surrounds, George has participated in courses like *'starting your own business course', a first aid/health and safety program for work, a hygiene course at Skillshare as a pre-employment program for working at a local food processing plant and a Certificate in Liberal Arts at Campaspe College. I thought these courses would offer opportunities, new qualifications, new skills to gain employment or start a business. I wanted to be more informed about my rights*.

Although a lot of my learning experiences have come from being in a classroom, most of them have come from 'the University of Life', experiences and ideas resourced from my environment and daily life. George was feeling *disempowered and isolated* living in Echuca and thinks that *the learning environment is one that is filled with people with open minds*.

The Liberal Arts course was a *lucky experience* because he felt he could express himself. *The course drew people in, it was like a soup, there was encouragement and 'everyone had to give'. There was an acknowledgement of everyone, different kinds of individuals.* George believed he made more contacts in the local community through his participation in adult education and felt he knew *more people he could catch up with, a fraternity of class mates, not necessarily friends as in buddies but you had something in common with them. These can be more intense than friendships because it can mean so much to have someone you bump into and say hello, might organise to have a coffee and a chat.*

The Liberal Arts course was like a *garden, with Chinese seeds and English seeds, various seeds, they all need different considerations and conditions to grow in and as the tutor considered us individually, as would a good gardener, we were 'encouraged' and growth was facilitated. I feel that in my life's experience, it has been about how good the teachers are and their passion for their subjects and their consideration for their students. This has benefited me and 'turned me on' to learning more than anything else!*

George and his family migrated to Australia in between the 'waves' of migration to Australia in the 1950s, 1960s and of the 1980s. Even though he is of Chinese heritage and cultural background, George clearly expresses the Anglo-Celtic influences on his family and on Hong Kong which, being an English-speaking British colony, makes for an unusual and complex cultural background. George was a young adult when he migrated to Melbourne with his family and was able to immediately train for a career in hairdressing, working for many proprietors over the years. When George, by then in his mid forties, left Melbourne for the Shire of Campaspe, he left behind the familial, social and economic networks he had created over two decades.

His diversity of employment and lack of employment while residing in Campaspe is indicative of a search for something. George has 'shopped around', trying a variety of vocational training, small business development and adult education programs over the period of fifteen years that he has been residing in Campaspe. Without familial contact in the region and without employment-based contacts, George appears to be quite socially isolated, but like Kon he has no desire to move back to Melbourne or go anywhere else.

George has quite concrete views about his experiences as a migrant in Australia and as an outsider in WASP(ish) Campaspe. His experience of the Liberal Arts course at Campaspe College was, in common with Connie's experience, important because of the diversity of the participants and the learning aspects of that program. He equates adult education, and in fact all education, to the growing of a garden: welcoming, with diverse plants requiring care and tendering and nurturing to make it all grow and work together. He clearly sees education philosophically and regards his experience primarily as a social learning experience. This is quite a sophisticated view of learning, George is able to see that different education programs and providers had different spaces and outcomes to offer.

Conclusions

Central to this research are the questions of whether people from CALD backgrounds utilise ACE as an identifiable equity group and, if so, for what purposes? Considering the six vignettes illustrated here, can Liz, Hanna, Marie, Connie, Kon and George be seen as part of a 'general' CALD group participating in ACE?

Liz, Hanna and Connie were all children of migrants from Europe in the post-war period. Four of the interviewees migrated to and resided in Melbourne, including Liz and Hanna who married and raised their own families, while Connie and George worked as hairdressers. Significantly, four chose well into middle age to leave the city and its familial, economic, social and cultural connections to come to reside in a semi-rural regional area of northern Victoria. Although Kon initially migrated to a regional area, he spent many years in Melbourne, and Marie likewise had experiences of regional community early life in her adulthood, giving both these individuals some experiences of both urban and regional living. For Liz and Connie, their move occurred following a marriage breakdown, but for Hanna and George the relocation accompanied a more general search for something, this something being difficult to define. It was a feeling or a sense that life could be, had to be, different. For Marie and Kon, the move was influenced by financial reasons, including a search for work and the need for a cheaper lifestyle on a limited income base. Liz, Connie, Kon and George made the move as single individuals whereas Hanna and Marie brought their husbands and children.

Connie and Kon were the only two individuals who experienced ongoing issues with English language. Connie's difficulties were about using English in a formal, written manner. She was very articulate verbally but struggled with spelling, grammar and other English language rules. She felt that both the university and the ACE 'systems' had let her down by not providing the support she needed while doing other courses such as Liberal Arts and Community Services. When Kon's disability prevented him from working full-time and he moved to Echuca, he recognised that his overall English language skills were a barrier to finding part-time or casual employment in this local community. This motivated him to persist with attending the CGEA course over a number of years as a way of developing his skills in written and spoken English.

These complex experiences reflect very individual lives and speak to a post-modern examination of the self and society as concurrently produced via discursive practices (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant & Yates: 2003). Self as subjectivity is multiple: a discourse embedded in the everyday, the multi-contextual, multi-cultural, multi-familial; a collection of experiences, beliefs, interactions, communities, workplaces, partners, children and personal journeys.

The six individuals presented in this chapter uncover these complexities, each having issues of migration and age in common, while the influences of marriage, children, employment, education and training, health and lifestyle, were all very individual factors specific to their individual life circumstances. Hanna, Marie and George participated in ACE in the course of 'shopping around', attempting to match their social, physical, personal and economic needs with specific sub-sectors of adult education and training in Campaspe.

ACE providers were evidently being used by all six individuals for social needs, social interaction, informal learning, friendships and network development. Liz used ACE for emotional and mental health, Kon for English language development and Connie for developing a sense of connection to her community via participation in an adult education program. What set this group apart from other groups who accessed ACE was that their age and stage of life meant they were searching for social development as well as skills development. Being from a CALD background was one part of their primary status or identity as an equity group within ACE, their life stage or life transitions was another motivation for accessing general adult

education. Gender was also an issue, with the women seeking independence and personal development after a long period of caring for family. It should also be noted also that the two men–Kon and George–both sustained work related injuries that made their subsequent employment tracks difficult. This is a common issue with CALD people, who exhibit a higher incidence of work-related injuries due to their concentration in hazardous manual jobs. The fact of unemployment/under-employment, led to them going into ACE education and still motivating one at least to find a stepping stone into casual employment. It is also noteworthy that all these interviewees did either manual (low skill) or trade jobs e.g. hairdressing, even though one–George–had a professional (international pilot) father. This again is typical of the kinds of occupations the older CALD migrants did after the war, and which later limited their opportunities once economic restructuring took place and eliminated many traditional blue collar jobs. Workplace injuries further exacerbated their difficulties and made it hard for them to gain new employment, as did the higher demands for English communication skills on the job.

All six were able to communicate their ACE experiences as positive because of the resulting friendships and connections that provided social, personal and emotional outcomes. However, Hanna, Marie, Connie and George also described some of their experiences of ACE, vocational training, small business support programs and higher education as being less positive and not contributing to their social and economic well-being. Kon was able to integrate his participation in one program into his lifestyle. Marie persisted and eventually found some sense of having achieved something via ACE. Hanna kept shopping around but Connie and George appeared to have stopped participating in any adult education programs, waiting for the 'right' potential experience to come their way. Liz is content with the neighbourhood-based provider that she accesses and will consider anything that is on offer. Overall, the ACE experiences of this group were both positive and negative depending on situational factors such as the match between what was wanted and the programs on offer.

Liz and Kon were the ones who appeared attracted to the 'places' and 'spaces' of ACE, attaching themselves to specific providers, programs and people that supported their needs. Their needs and preferences were different from each other: Liz liked the relaxed neighbourhood house environment while Kon preferred

the college campus environment. However, Hanna, Connie and George were less concerned with place and space than with the ACE people and processes that supported their needs for social networking. There does seem to be a dividing line between forms of education and training and providers in Campaspe. These individuals were utilising different ACE providers for general adult education, lifestyle programs and vocational training. Neighbourhood-based ACE providers (Liz and Hanna) offer lifestyle, recreation and social programs, college-based ACE providers (Hanna, Marie, Connie, Kon and George) offer education programs, and TAFE, workplaces and employment agencies (Hanna and George) offer vocational training and small business development.

Despite some commonalities in terms of their ages and choice of residence in Campaspe, there are more differences between these individuals in terms of their cultural backgrounds, education, employment, health and so on, meaning that they cannot be only considered a CALD group in the sense of targeting and funding mechanisms for adult education. Although they all identified as 'CALD' in response to a request for CALD subjects for the research project, for all six of these individuals CALD was an identity factor in terms of their specific cultural background and where cultural identity had persisted into middle age as well as a connection to family or place (Melbourne). So their sense of being CALD was personalised and intensified by their sense of social isolation.

Marie expressed a longing to connect back to something in her cultural background, wanting to go back to her country of origin, in her case the Netherlands. The other five individuals seemed content with their cultural identities and with Australia as their 'home', but they all seemed to be searching for 'something' within a regional Australian context and they certainly all shared the experiences of being marginalised from Anglo-Australian culture and employment in Campaspe even though they were long term residents and citizens of Australia.

The three most common experiences of being from a CALD background and living in Campaspe were English language difficulties, social isolation and the shame associated with their various disadvantages. These commonalities of experience relate strongly to how individuals experience social exclusion and build social capital. Isolation from networks of family and friends was often compounded by issues of mental or physical illness or unemployment, meaning that many of the essential

ingredients of network development were absent. These mature aged individuals were all looking to build their social capital via ACE, and through other means, and saw opportunities inherent in ACE that the ACE providers themselves may not have seen. They did build social connections and networks through their participation in ACE, but mostly as a result of their own efforts rather than network development being inherent in ACE programs. Their common experiences as outsiders in Campaspe drew them to similar places and activities but also left them with shared feelings of being 'let down' by ACE at times.

These experiences appear to reflect a social support view of social capital (Marmot & Wilkinson: 2006) with the individuals represented in this chapter seeking to utilise ACE providers as a means of placating their current personal, social and economic circumstances and provide a 'leg up' to new opportunities. However, a more critical review of these experiences of ACE services as a resource reveals ACE as contributing to inequities and inequalities for people who are perceived (by others or by themselves) as outsiders in a community context (Marmot & Wilkinson: 2006). Participation in ACE in fact reflected the inequalities these six individuals experienced in Campaspe, reinforcing a sense of social exclusion. Rather than building new networks that could lead to new personal, social and economic experiences, most of these individuals felt they were building new networks only with those in similar positions to themselves, these ACE experiences did not provide the bridge to the rest of the community they were seeking.

It is the complexities and multiplicities of individual experiences and circumstances within sub-groups that challenge adult education systems, providers and programs in contemporary Australian society. Taylor et al. (2000) have examined the notion of connecting learning to the varied contexts that we participate in to reveal commonalities. This means that by linking rather than separating our learning experiences from varied contexts we can begin to locate the 'truer' self that has a coherent identity; the integrated person rather than the roles we play as 'community citizen', 'worker', 'partner' or 'friend'. It appears that all of these individuals were struggling to connect their multiplicity as individuals, workers, friends, etc., to adult education and training in Campaspe. They were successful to a certain extent with some places, spaces and programs within ACE; however, they

suggested that ACE could be friendlier and more open with a greater range of programs to meet their diverse needs in this regional context.

This group seems unique in that they don't fit the archetype for this age group in Australian society. A recent ANU study (Berry, Butterworth, Caldwell & Rodger: 2008) located several 'contemporary Australian archetypes' as a way of attempting to provide a framework for planning for the needs of the Australian population. The group outlined in this chapter fit the 'marginalised Australians' category even though most would not see themselves as such. They align with characteristics of being marginalised which the authors of the ANU study identified: aged 26-55, 70% women, home duties, students, not in paid employment, disabilities, low job and financial satisfaction, extremely low education, high levels of socio-economic hardship, one-third separated or divorced, extremely poor physical health, extremely poor mental health and lowest levels of social participation of all types (Berry, Butterworth, Caldwell & Rodger: 2008: 73 & 74).

Yet, the commonalities connecting these individuals as a 'marginalised' sub-group is their migration to Australia during the period 1950–1980, the cultural connections and isolation that they continue to experience and their experience of work, manual occupations or self-employment, the negative effects of workplace change and workplace injury. The implication for ACE is that as a sector it needs to be providing access to education and training for a range of people from different cultural backgrounds who are similar in socio-economic characteristics but who might have differing wants, needs and abilities. The vignettes have divulged that access to ACE for this sub-group precipitated other issues in relation to adult education such as: the lack of a variety of programs, the low level of challenge that ACE programs presented and the lack of pathways ACE offered to Higher Education rather than TAFE.

Despite their 'marginalised' status, this group was yearning for something more than the basic and the vocational. They were looking for lifelong learning, general education in the tradition of, say, a Bachelor of Liberal Arts that allows for explorations of the humanities, social science, life sciences and other broad subject areas. This is a group that has been burned by life's experiences of employment, family and relationships, and they want something for themselves.

This raises several questions about the purpose of ACE for mature aged individuals from CALD backgrounds. Does ACE need to do more than just encourage participation in basic programs and instead facilitate students' connectivity with each other and their community? Opening doors and offering programs within a specific community context for specific disenfranchised groups may be one of the pedagogies of ACE (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007, Sanguinetti, Waterhouse & Maunders: 2004), but ACE also needs to reclaim its connection to all other forms of education, not just vocational skill development for human capital development. The mechanisms of space, place and people in ACE that encourage or block social capital development in regional contexts like Campaspe, have to be addressed as part of the mission for ACE in culturally diverse regional and urban communities.

ACE as an adult education sector has the distinct advantage of being community-based and managed, and being able to offer programs that bridge all education and training sectors within a regional area. All of the vignettes offered in this chapter reveal ACE as being accessible, with all individuals feeling comfortable in visiting these agencies and asking for assistance. This means that ACE is the right place for social capital development for this type of group of middle-aged individuals and for many other groups in the community. ACE has the philosophical foundation, the infrastructure and dedicated staff, to complement their current work by fostering even greater social and cultural connectedness for this marginalised group.

Chapter VI

Recently Arrived Migrants as Adult Learners in Campaspe

Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses a further six individual vignettes collected via surveys and extensive interviews. These six individuals are recently arrived migrants who are mature-aged adult learners from CALD backgrounds residing in the Shire of Campaspe. Reba, Minh, Phuong, Arosha, Ollie and Lena represent people from CALD backgrounds that have migrated to Australia since the early 1990s. These individual and family experiences, as compared to the six in Chapter V, have been centred on skilled or relationship-based migration from Asian countries or, in one case, from Russia.

These six individuals, all women, have come from countries and cultures where the role of women is predominantly as wives and mothers, and where the norm is not for women to develop careers via education and work outside of the family. The Australian society that these women have experienced since the mid 1990s is one of a settled social democracy, economic prosperity and also of growing social conservatism and a questioning of the value of fifty years of immigration and multiculturalism. For these women the contrast is also about the roles for women in Australian society being much broader, with opportunities for education, training, career development, small business ownership and motherhood.

Although these six individuals represent a very limited sample of migrants from the last decade or so, this group does reflect the new waves of migration from the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Russia and Indonesia. These countries, amongst many, are economically indigent within the new global sphere, with many of these countries also politically unstable. These individuals and families have migrated in search of economic and/or familial stability to an apparently prosperous and open democracy. However, most were unaware of the social conservatism and isolation that confronts many migrants, particularly women, in the first years of residence in Australia (Misztal: 1991).

Most of these women also migrated directly to a regional community which either contrasts or aligns with their homeland experiences. For some, residence in a regional or rural area was not considered a negative issue, with there being an

assumption that regional and rural Australia may be like regional and rural communities in their countries of origin.

These individuals utilised adult education as a way of specifically looking for English language courses, leisure programs and activities that would quickly connect them in some way to their new community in a new country. Despite their different cultural and migration experiences, Reba, Minh, Phuong, Arosha, Ollie and Lena had remarkably similar experiences of ACE in Campaspe, which provide yet another set of insights into the role of ACE in a regional context.

Vignette # 7
Reba

Reba is a woman, aged 38 and was born in a southern province of the Philippines. Her father was born in Spain and her mother was born in the Philippines. Reba has three older sisters and two younger brothers. Filipino is her first language, English her main language and she knows some Spanish. Reba is a Christian and her church is the Uniting Church of Australia (UCA). Reba has lived in Echuca for 10 years and moved there because she married an Australian man in 1996: *I was 28 years, we met at an international airport and I was his guide, we corresponded for two years before this. He was a gentleman and in Australia he worked as a truck driver. We lived in a caravan park and worked together. I travelled around Australia with him in his work before we set up house. He died in an accident in Queensland in 2000, it left my heart hurting. Life is like a dream. I close my eyes and I am in the Philippines, I open my eyes and I am in Australia. I pray to God but all I see is my husband. Life is like a dream and then I wake up and I'm lonely.* Reba owns her house in Echuca and says she stays here because it is more affordable than other places. Reba is a member of the UCA community and she does voluntary work with the chaplaincy program, a mixed group of people, fund raising, going on excursions and singing in the choir. She is a member of the Neighbourhood House, *for the committee, for the meetings.* She also attends from time to time the community lunch on Mondays.

Reba has attended one adult education and training program at the Neighbourhood House-introduction to computers. She comes back to the Neighbourhood House to *see what to do next and to practise on the computers. I am lonely at home but stay there because it is all I have.*

Reba completed a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education in Manilla in 1986. Reba did a computer course in the Neighbourhood House because she wanted to *expand her network of contacts in the community, wanted to make more informed decisions about certain issues and learn more about local issues.* Reba has preferences for *learning in the classroom and learning things as I go along.*

Reba believes that the outcomes of her adult education experiences in Echuca have *improved my health because of what I learnt, made more contacts in the community, know more about accessing services in the community. I don't know what else to do, I still feel my heart is hurting. I had my life in the Philippines and then I got married and then another life but now it's gone. I can't get out, I feel lonely but sad, I feel stuck. I need to look forward but it's hard. I come here to see what's going on.*

Reba migrated to Australia via marriage to an Australian man living in Echuca and, despite being tertiary educated and employed as a guide in the Philippines, her role in Australia was as a wife. Her economic and social contacts in Australia and Campaspe were via her husband; he was her life. His death in 2000 precipitated Reba's experience of economic and social isolation in a new community in a new country. It appears that Reba had no intention of using her childcare degree gained in the Philippines probably because it was gained a long time ago in a third world country and is not recognised in Australia—another common problem among CALD people.

Reba represents many from around the world in terms of her formation of 'typical' social capital connections in that she utilises her church and neighbourhood resources, in this case, ENH as her main contacts in this community. Without her husband and with no children, she is bereft of close familial contacts and the vignette reveals Reba feeling trapped. She is economically better off staying in Echuca because she has her own house and an income via her husband's estate but she now pines for the social, familial and cultural contacts she would have if she was in the Philippines. Reba uses ENH to enable her to 'get out of the house', to try to see what she can do next to improve her life in this country. Despite it being six years since her husband's death, her life has not changed much, and it seems that her current social contacts via the church and ENH are not assisting her to progress socially or economically in the medium to long-term.

Vignette # 8

Minh

Minh is female, aged 35, and was born in Taiwan. Her father was born in mainland China and her mother was born in Taiwan. Minh has three older sisters who all live in Taiwan. Cantonese is her first and main language, English is her second language. Minh has lived in Echuca for eight years and moved here because she *married an Australian man in Taiwan in 1995. I was young and wanted to get out away from Taiwan. We met at a business convention where I was working as interpreter. He is a business man, good prospects. I spoke with my parents who said it would be good to go* [to Australia] *to settle down and have children.*

Minh's husband's family owns a food export business in Moama (NSW) across the border from Echuca, and Minh came to Echuca and started working in the business, in the office. *I didn't do too good, people not understand what I am saying, they complained and so I was asked to just do some cleaning and cooking for the family. It was OK but boring. I was used to working. It was good because I soon was pregnant with my little one, she was born healthy and happy child. It was OK then to stay at home, everyone was happy. Very soon I was pregnant again with my littlest one. I have two children now, one is six and one is four years old.* Minh has attended adult education and training programs at BRIT and CCAE and *I did some English at home with my own tutor, I then did a course in business, typing, computers. It was fun but I couldn't do too much with the baby coming so I stopped. I then started a course in children care; I thought I could do something different with children as a mother but I didn't like it. It was hard and everyone not like me too much. Study was very quick and people talk a lot about things I don't understand.* Minh has preferences for learning things as *I go along, classroom is hard when people don't speak with you. People think I dumb because English not too good. Many Australian people they want to know about Chinese food and other things but not me, not want to be friends but be polite.*

Minh believes that the outcomes of her adult education experiences in Echuca have *not been good, not many people Chinese here, some working in restaurants and I meet some when we go to business meetings and dinners. Some Philippine wives too. We have chat when we see each other but not lot. I am at home with my son, daughter now at school, so I am busy with home and children and husband. English getting better but nowhere to go to study. I got tapes and I play them at home. Tapes like for children, "I go to the shop and buy some cabbage, I go on the bus and travel to visit friends"... silly things like that but it is good to practise. I need people to help.*

> *I would like to do long course in business, my husband says would be good. I wait until son at school. I need to meet people in business. Maybe I have my own shop, you know, Chinese things, not much here is Echuca. It's lonely not seeing people and things that you love. I like the air and trees and water but I miss the colours and smells of Taiwan. I would like to go out one day in a week, sit with people, talk in the English, talk about life and children. I see some mothers at children's school but I maybe want more. We will see.*

Minh experienced migration to Australia as a result of marriage to a man with a family business in Moama, situated across the Murray River from Echuca. Minh migrated directly to this regional community and began working in a small business through her marriage, but her poor English language skills meant that her time in the business was not that productive. Minh's main role then became that of housewife and mother to two children born in recent years. It was at the time of rearing her first-born that Minh enquired about home-based English language tutoring and was able to access the funds via DIMIA to have a tutor come to her home and tutor her. This discloses a couple of things about Minh. Firstly, her ability to navigate government systems and, secondly, that she was clear that while she was rearing her children she wanted home-based tutoring rather than wanting to access programs outside of the home. She obviously didn't feel the need at this stage to connect to people outside of her new familial surroundings.

This changed as her children grew older and Minh started searching for new skills and participated in a computing course at TAFE, before starting a child care course at Campaspe College. She found the pace of this course too fast, meaning that her language skills were not sufficient for her to keep up, and this impeded her learning and her social interaction at ACE and she soon quit the course. Although Minh was feeling somewhat isolated both socially and culturally, she felt supported by her husband to continue searching for learning programs that she wanted. She continued to tutor herself in English at home using tapes but was aware that this was not sufficient. However, the formal programs on offer in Echuca were not suiting her circumstances being a mother of young children and someone who needs ongoing English language support. She wanted interaction within her community but was struggling to connect to the right group or organisation that could facilitate a more informal nature of learning.

Vignette # 9

Phuong

Phuong is female and was born in a poor province of Vietnam 26 years ago. Phuong speaks Vietnamese as her main language and is now learning English. She described her religion as Christian but said she doesn't go to any churches. Phuong came to Australia two years ago and migrated directly to Echuca because she was sponsored by an agricultural employer in the region who employed her friends. *I come to work, no good work in Vietnam, here the air is clean and I live with friends.* Phuong has a brother in Vietnam. Her parents died about 10 years ago and she was not happy living with her brother. She worked in a textile factory in Vietnam for many years and when her friends were moving to Australia she asked them to help her. After her friends had been in Echuca for a couple of years they had arranged a work visa for her. Phuong enrolled in the Certificate of General Education for Adults (CGEA) at CCAE in 2007 because she heard it was a place she could learn English. She has lived in a flat owned by her employer for two years and does nothing: *just work on the grapes, come home, eat, sleep and then work. Maybe we go in car with friends, to river, to parks, to Bendigo to see things, eat Chinese. Want to go Melbourne but was too far away.* Phuong is having problems with CGEA because *too many young people, lots of noise, some try and help me but too hard.* CCAE has recently allocated her a tutor for one-to-one English tutoring which she is enjoying.

Much better, we sit in quiet room and do work, I speak and then go out and try speak English when shopping and working, very good, very happy. Phuong wants to learn English so she can travel more, she feels there is too much to go and see. *I want to work everywhere, do lots not just be here.* Phuong is interested in being a teacher but thinks this might take too long for her to do this. Recently Campaspe College hosted a visit by a group of Vietnamese people from Melbourne who are studying English at AMES. Phuong attended and was excited, *to meet many more people, talk my language, hear different voices, many like me, come here to work. Melbourne very exciting, I have new friends now, can go and see them.* Phuong says that *me lonely, have few friends but they married and have babies, very busy, no Asian people here to go out to. Better life than Vietnam but lonely, want to travel.* Phuong said that she was worried that it would take too long to learn English and that she would be 'trapped' in Echuca. She knew she had to stay for a few years as part of her visa requirement but wasn't sure when that stopped and she could go. Phuong wasn't really interested in any other adult education and training in Echuca: *want University, much better, too small here, no big courses, maybe Bendigo, not here, not good.*

Phuong migrated to Australia and directly to this region via the skilled migration program, being referred to the Australian skilled migration program and the Campaspe region by friends who were already working in the area. She was sponsored by an agricultural employer looking for semi-skilled workers and so she was able to come to Campaspe and connect with friends and employment as soon as she arrived. These contacts and networks were established once she had arrived in Australia, making settlement more successful.

Accessing an ACE provider in search of being able to learn English, Phuong found the formal classroom delivery of the CGEA did not suit her needs or her learning style. There were too many young people and there was too much noise meaning that she needed a quiet environment with peers in order to learn and practise English language skills. Campaspe College was able to adapt its delivery using funding to allocate a tutor to Phuong to allow her one-to-one tutoring in English. She found this form of learning to be more suited to her needs.

Phuong has aspirations to travel within Australia. She doesn't see Echuca and Campaspe as a place she can reside permanently. Her main aim in learning English is to enable her to travel; her purpose for learning is social not economic. A visit to Campaspe College by other Vietnamese people from Melbourne confirmed for her that life and learning are about social contact. This experience of mixing with cultural peers reinforced for her that she needs to move away from Campaspe. She thought that it would take too long for her to gain the English language skills in Echuca and that the other education programs she was interested in were at University, not ACE or TAFE.

Phuong only had herself to be concerned about and so her ambitions were about travel and higher education. Once her work visa could be changed into a residency visa she could be more mobile within Australia. Phuong clearly wanted more contact with people from the same cultural background, making an urban environment like Melbourne a place in which she could see herself residing. Phuong is unsure or uninformed about her employment rights or even how long she needs to stay with her employer and when she can apply for permanent residence. These are typical CALD issues for recent temporary migrants under the 457 scheme, which colour her life opportunities and interactions with ACE.

Vignette # 10

Arosha

Arosha is a 36 year-old woman, born in South-East Asia. English is her second language and her religion is Buddhism. She lives in Echuca with her spouse and two children. *I moved because of my spouse's job.* Arosha's children are still toddlers and her family have lived in Echuca since January 2005. Before this they lived in Melbourne for nine months. The move to Echuca occurred because of better employment for her spouse: *we moved here because of more stable employment.* This is not a long term thing; they will probably eventually move back to Melbourne.

Arosha initially migrated to New Zealand in 1997. Her parents had also migrated there. Arosha has one sister who has lived in Melbourne for a long time. Her parents moved to Melbourne and then in 2004 Arosha and her spouse moved as well to be closer to her parents and sister. Arosha, her spouse and children visit family in Melbourne at least once a month. Her parents and sister are always encouraging them to move back to Melbourne to be closer to family. During 2005, Arosha participated in a creative writing class at the ENH and has participated in parenting workshops since 2005 until now. She does group fitness classes at Echuca YMCA now, did work training for a market research company and a Graduate Certificate in Environment and Planning at RMIT in Melbourne. Arosha is also an active member of the Echuca Toy Library and recently joined GVEP (Goulburn Valley Ethnic Professionals) in Echuca.

Arosha is interested in exploring further study and a career as a primary school teacher. This is something she always wanted to do, *a more interactive job with connections to humans*. The opportunity to undertake such study while living in Echuca only exists in Shepparton, so she is currently considering whether this is a possibility for her in the coming years. Creative writing class and fitness classes have helped to expand her network of contacts in the community. The creative writing and group fitness classes acted as a means of making new friends in Echuca. The parenting and fitness classes also enabled her to gain information to facilitate more informed decision-making about personal issues. In addition, the fitness classes were linked to *better health and fitness,* and the market research training was a vocational component of casual work in which she was engaged in. Working for the market research company helped her to find out more about the 'locals'. Arosha identified with various contexts of learning including the classroom, workplace, internet, learning at home and learning things as she goes along.

Arosha's experiences of adult education in Echuca were expressed in the following wide-ranging written narrative which she wrote. *Work and education has been very inflexible, it's hard to work around all my commitments. When people say "parenting classes" I think they think they are participated by 100% parents, whose prime duty is looking after children and they have enough time to spend on the class as the children/babies also can come to the classes with the mums. Realistically they cater very little for mums who are full time or part time study work commitments. They take a more relaxed, long time to set up the workshops. They are not catering for different needs. These experiences* [work and education] *have not been very positive, I have found it hard to find things to do with work and education because of no flexibility. There are cultural issues living in a regional place, such as food, protecting children, child care, this makes it expensive, not having people to support me, like family.*

I use child care institutions mainly because I know the children are safe there, I don't use other babysitters or people living close because I do not like to take any chances when thinking about the safety of my children. There are not many mums in Echuca working regularly part-time or full-time, there is a small town attitude that women who are mothers do certain things, stay at home, playgroup, shopping, not studying or working and juggling different things to do. This attitude is not helping, that is not a problem with my cultural background but I think it's the attitude to me as a mother, what I should and should not be doing that's not helping me. My husband is very supportive: he is happy that I spend time with the kids and at home but helps me in any way to study or work. I think all of this is much easier in Melbourne, in an urban environment, no-one really cares what you are doing, you just do it. Sometimes my parents also encourage me to wait until the children are much older to do fulltime work and study. I now think they see something like "primary school teaching" will help the work and family life, so they are encouraging me to think about myself, my family and the future, what is possible. Regional education providers should develop their programs to suit both a regional and urban context.

People move to places like Echuca for work often because of work commitments, rural towns are good if you have already developed your education and career: education here is not flexible enough for people living here. There is also a need for English tutoring for professionals, many migrants come to Echuca for a purpose, for work, they already know a basic amount of English, what is needed is assistance in advanced English to suit their expected profession, here there is nothing like that provided. Looking at migrant families who live in Echuca, almost all have come here because of one of the family members' job.

> *To make it work there has to be some way of catering to the rest of the family members. Most of the spouses are well educated. For someone who has other commitments, like children, work etc. and in a mature aged category, it is a very difficult process to get a university degree or a postgraduate while living in Echuca.*
>
> *Personally, I have tried to do that with the assistance of internet studies from home but ended up having severe back pain. Rather than getting more security and balance in work, family and self, it all went the other way around. Things to improve: Echuca being a country town with a less percentage of mature aged tertiary students, at least a regular, reliable transport system* [public] *will help locals to fulfil their tertiary goals by travelling to Bendigo or Shepparton. Currently, the buses on weekdays do not arrive in Bendigo until after 10 a.m. and do not return till 6 p.m. to Echuca. How can this help tertiary students in Echuca?*
>
> *Echuca does not have a single place where a student can study during the day. On weekends the library opens only 3–4 hours a day. A person who wants to study for exams, assignments, without having to be disturbed by children etc. at home, this is not enough. It is very important to have a space for study in library or in a TAFE in Echuca for tertiary students. Somewhere like the Campaspe College should have a room or space where people can just come and use the facilities, to study, to use a quiet space. This is crucial for people who have to come to live in Echuca recently without close family or friends. Towns in regions should have extra concessions to transport etc for students. When I had to travel to Melbourne once a week to attend face-to-face lectures, I could not get concessions on V-line bus service as I was not a full-time student. I feel regional situations should be thought of outside the square and there should be a system to provide concessions for part-time students.*

Arosha and her husband came to Australia via the skilled migration program and reside in Echuca because it was where he could find employment best suited to his career ambitions. They came from Sri Lanka via New Zealand simply because it was the best option. Arosha's parents and sister live in Melbourne and for family and education reasons she would prefer to be living in Melbourne, but she understands that Echuca provides the best opportunities for her husband. Her English language skills and educational level means that she is able to navigate community-based systems and so can articulate her frustrations and social isolation as arising from the local community not being suited to her needs.

She raises the issue of gender coupled with cultural background as being the main factor that impacted on her network development in the Shire of Campaspe. As a mother of young children, she experienced restricted participation in ACE programs because of child care issues. In fact, participation in any education and training was restricted because of this issue. She felt the pressure of local mores regarding women and mothers, and sensed the expectation that motherhood was the priority in their lives and not education, training or work. In addition to child care, Arosha raised transport, professional English tutoring, online studies and some cultural issues around food as other issues affecting her network development while residing in Campaspe. She felt isolated because of a lack of family and friends who could provide inexpensive and flexible child care options that might allow her to access the education and employment options available in the region.

Arosha can clearly articulate the multiple issues facing a woman married with children; wanting an education and her own career but being new to a community that doesn't appreciate her needs. The community of Campaspe seemed characterised by specific attitudes about the role of married women with children. She found ACE providers and all other education and training providers to be quite limited, either in terms of the range of programs on offer or the flexibility they offered a woman with children. Arosha was searching for organisations which could offer fitness, social and career-based training. She was content being a wife and mother but also wanted time and space for herself for leisure programs and to meet her medium to longer term ambitions of a new career.

Because she is educated and articulate, she quickly found ACE in Campaspe to be unsuited to her needs but she was able to see her frustration as part of a critique of life in a regional town. The attitudes, especially towards the role of women, the lack of flexibility and lack of transport meant she felt limited by this life. She could see that life in Melbourne would be improved for her, but she also knew she needed to be patient.

As a postscript to this vignette, in 2007 Arosha enrolled in a Diploma in Early Childhood Education at La Trobe University in Shepparton. So it appears that she decided to overcome some of the barriers presented to her and to embark on higher education leading to a new career as a primary school teacher. How she will continue to manage the issues of transport and child care will remain to be seen.

Arosha is married to a skilled migrant who was the principal migrant applicant, but like many wives of skilled migrants, she is highly educated herself, analytical and critical of society. The skilled migration program with its inbuilt gender biases overlooks the wealth of skills brought in by spouses and does not support or cater for their adjustment to the educational/work context in Australia. This is despite the economy having severe skill shortages in a number of professions and trades.

Vignette # 11

Ollie

Ollie is female, aged 28, and was born in Russia. Her father and her mother were born in Georgia. Ollie has two older sisters and a younger brother who all live in St Petersburg. Russian is her first and main language, English is her second language which she has begun learning in the past year. Ollie is Russian Orthodox Christian but doesn't go to church here because there isn't one. There is one in Shepparton. She would like to go but no-one will take her.

Ollie has lived in Echuca for three years and moved here because she *married an older man, he wrote to me, I wanted to leave Russia. I went to agency and they put me on website. He wrote to me and I write him back. He is 50 and drives own trucks, food trucks from Shepparton to everywhere, Sydney, Brisbane, where they send him. Echuca is good, very nice weather, not too cold. No friends here, very lonely, husband goes away for days and I stay home. I read Russian books I bring with me, I watch TV, very funny here, boring too. I clean house, do garden, love garden, had no garden in Russia.*

Ollie has attended adult education and training programs at CCAE and *I did some furniture course, covering old furniture, husband had old setee, I covered in lovely fabric, took long time. I asked about English and they put me in big classroom, lots of young people, too noisy, no-one talked to me for while. Older men they smiled at me.* This was the Certificate in General Education for Adults. Ollie went for about six weeks, a couple of mornings a week. There were no mature women in the class, mostly young men and women and a few older men.

Ollie has preferences for *learning things as I go along but people don't speak with you. People smile at me, I am young, people try to speak, 'how are you, where you from'. I try to speak back but sometimes feel funny and just go away, come home, it's easier to stay here and be quiet.*

Ollie stopped going to the general education course: *nothing happening, no-one help me, give me paper, write things, copy. Told to listen and would 'pick things up'. A lady from Philippines comes to house now, teaches me English, very good, we go to coffee and shops, I learn quickly this way and watching TV, reading magazines.*

We go out and see people when husband home, he say, sit and listen, learn how women do things here. So I sit. I want child, trying to be pregnant, soon I hope. This will give me things to do. I am lonely and sad sometimes, sit and wait for baby. Go to doctor, she says must wait, have tests, must wait.

When asked if she has looked for a job or wants to work, Ollie said, *I work in supermarket a while, they laughed, I clumsy, falling over boxes, things falling over. One man tried to touch me, I screamed and run. No go back, husband told them, no go back. I like making things, sewing, I make things for baby, garden now, that's all.*

Maybe we go away, live on farm, husband says. Sick of Echuca, people not like me with him, people stare. He has children from before, they not talk now, no visit, just men friends and wives, we have dinner. This is good. I like to learn to sew things better, go to coffee times with friends, sit, drink, talk, like Russia, we go out and talk, movies, read... I miss that.

Ollie migrated to Australia via marriage to a man residing in Campaspe. Ollie is very isolated in Campaspe having no connections to other people of her cultural background. Her experiences of ACE were very negative because the programs were not suited to people from non-English speaking backgrounds who had few skills in English. The CGEA program she enrolled in at Campaspe College was not suited to her needs at all and was made more difficult by the absence of other mature women in the class. She only lasted six weeks in this program because she felt she was being made to feel uncomfortable and vulnerable in the company of others in the ACE context. She now engages in more informal learning with a Filipino woman coming to her house to tutor her.

Her needs are centred around wanting to get pregnant which is taking longer than she anticipated, and learning English language skills so that she can function more effectively in her new community. Her foray into local employment was also a negative experience where she was harassed by men in the workplace and was therefore encouraged by her husband to stop working. She experiences some social

activity in Campaspe through her husband but she is considering moving with her husband because of the isolation she is experiencing.

She sees her learning as needing to be more informal, seeking social contacts with her peers, particularly other mature aged migrant women. The problems she experienced were because the formal experiences of ACE and the workplace could not accommodate her needs. There was a strong gender element in her negative experiences, with sexual harassment on the job and suggestions of sexual innuendo in the CGEA class. Sexual harassment is a major issue for CALD women given their social and economic powerlessness.

Vignette # 12

Lena

Lena is female, aged 28 years, and born in Bali. Her language is Indonesian and she learnt English in Bali, mostly from tourists as she was growing up. *I am very Buddhist, which I didn't think was anything much really until I came to Australia and then I realised what it is like to be around another religion. I see churches everywhere but no Buddha and so when I moved here and put up my altar in the front yard, people throw things at it. I had to move it to the back yard. I was very upset. People told me to watch the red necks, I laughed, I thought that's strange, I see some people with red faces and wonder if it's them I should worry about.*

Lena moved here with her husband who is from England in the early 1990s. He managed a water skiing business in Bali. They came to Echuca once for a holiday, to the Southern 80 river ski race and *really liked it here. After the* [Bali] *bombing, we were very scared: it was not far from our house. The children had nightmares and the business not going very good. We try to stay but it got harder so we sell our buildings and come here. Tom* [Lena's husband] *works for the ski business here and one day we have our own holiday resort, for skiing.*

Lena left school in Bali when she was 13; *everyone work in Bali, children, everyone, I worked with Auntie, selling flowers and then massage on the beaches, for long time and was OK. When I met Tom it was good. We married and he took me to England, very exciting but then we come back and he buy business. We like relaxed, slow life we call it.* Lena has two children, one is aged five years and the other is aged one. Lena and her family live on a rented property outside of town, about 10 kilometres away, on the river.

It's very different, no beaches, just one water, very pretty. We live near Aborigines which is nice, I like them, someone to talk to about the birds and bushes. Some are artists and I like that, many other people are not very friendly, might wave to something but don't stop and talk.

Lena attended a 'Ready for Work' program at Bendigo TAFE in Echuca in 2006, and as part of the program she learned to drive, did some *Aussie maths and learned to write better. I also did some cooking classes at the College which was great. I met some nice people, had fun. They help with childcare so that was easy to go to.*

I want to do more fun things. I don't want to work, I have the children but there's not much here, I want to learn French and I want to make things with wood. I used to watch the boys in Bali make things in wood and was angry that girls couldn't do it. Maybe have a craft shop when we buy our own place, but how do I learn things, where do I go?

I keep looking for new things to do but not much here, that's a shame because there are interesting people here, lots of families, they would get people to some new classes. But it's always the same, a bit boring really. Bendigo and Shepparton are too far away for me. With kids, I can't take all that time just driving around, I need to go somewhere for a couple of hours, have fun, chat to different people from different places and then come home for the children.

Lena migrated to Australia with her husband via the business skills program and they reside in Echuca because of a connection to water ski racing and the business opportunities it offers in Campaspe. She spoke English quite well when she migrated here and is experienced and articulate enough to be able to plan the development of some her own business ideas.

Lena experienced a cultural clash chiefly because of her Buddhist practice. She feels no connection to Buddhists in the region (even though Bendigo and surrounds has a very large Buddhist community and centre) and, because of local (racial/religious) abuse, she felt the need to be less visual in practising her religion at home. She moved her shrine from out the front of her home to the back yard, this is a not an uncommon backlash by conservative Australians to religious diversity in their midst. Often rural and regional communities don't mind the diversity as long as it is not obvious, something overtly different to Christian worshipping can be seen as a threat.

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Lena's main roles are as wife and mother, and she is very content in this life and she does feel connected to the rural nature of Campaspe, in terms of the river, bushland and presence of Indigenous culture. Her experience of ACE was of a cooking program she did at Campaspe College which she enjoyed and saw as a fun, social encounter. She is also searching for French language programs for her own development and would like to learn how to work with wood with the intent of perhaps developing a craft business. However she has not found an adult education 'place' or provider who offers what she wants. Her experiences of TAFE were nonetheless positive in that she was able to learn to drive and gain some literacy and numeracy skills.

Lena is searching for more informal learning experiences that will help her to adapt to a new community, to improve her English language and explore ideas around developing her own craft business. She wants her learning to be social and to be fun but thinks the Campaspe ACE providers are too limited in what they offer, and she doesn't have the time because of her small children, to drive further afield to find what she wants.

Conclusions

The most common experience shared by these six individuals is of migration following marriage to an Australian man living in Campaspe or the skilled migration of their husbands. Migration to this country was then at the behest of men, with circumstances largely determined by men's needs and the narrowly conceived needs of the skilled migration program, which could not 'see' that with married couples, both individuals are usually highly skilled. When something happened to the man in their life, as Reba had experienced, social and economic isolation occurred as a matter of course (Kelaher, Williams & Manderson: 2001, Woelz-Stirling, Manderson, Kelaher & Gordon: 2000).

All six were experiencing their roles as wives and mothers in a new country and a regional community. Reba, Minh, Phuong, Arosha, Ollie and Lena highlight the multiple and complex needs that newly-arrived migrant women face when moving to a new country and, in this case, to a regional community. Their needs contrast to those of the six individuals outlined in the previous chapter. The six women discussed in this chapter were definitely more interested in, and articulate about,

the social needs they had. They needed to connect to others in their new community and preferred to mix with people from different cultures and with different levels of English language proficiency so that they, as individuals, didn't stand out so much.

In terms of accessing ACE, most of them were also searching for informal learning and social networks, learning and interaction that were suitable for their levels of language and their needs. Most of them didn't find this when accessing ACE in Campaspe; they generally encountered classroom-type activities in very mixed groups that they found unwelcoming, unfriendly, noisy and not conducive to their learning needs and styles. These six individuals were also looking for a variety of educational and learning experiences in areas such as parenting, crafts, languages and fitness, as well as seeking groups for general discussion where they could improve their English language skills as well as their knowledge of their new community, region and country. Most of them found that, in nearly all cases, the courses and programs on offer in Campaspe fell short of what they were looking for, leaving them unable to connect to their community through ACE and, in fact, having their social isolation exacerbated by these experiences of ACE. The women in particular were also coping with gender barriers that limited or constrained their access to a range of education and employment opportunities.

Language and culture were also important issues for this group. However, compared with the early wave migrants discussed in the previous chapter the issues were magnified because they were newly-arrived migrants and because they were women, several of them looking for a career or vocation. Learning English was an important goal and tool for most of the individuals discussed in this chapter but the only way most of them were able to successfully engage in the English language skills they needed was via individual tutoring rather than the informal, 'learn as you go' type programming offered by ACE in Campaspe.

During the process of collecting data for this research, there were no formal English language programs on offer in Campaspe. Individuals seeking English language programs were referred to Campaspe College where they were enrolled in the CGEA—a literacy and numeracy program for adults over 18 and not an English language program. As such, the individuals in this group who enrolled in this program all dropped out after a short period of time because it was not

meeting their needs. Moreover, the group environment (comprising mostly young people and men) was leading them to feel excluded from these types of programs and learning processes.

In early 2007, Campaspe College was able to locate funds through AMEP to provide some small group and individual tutoring in English language development, which was proving quite successful with eight people enrolling immediately and some twelve people in this new program by the end of 2007. This group of individuals, as newly-arrived migrants, were all able to identify that improving their English language skills was vital for social, employment and business network development in their new community context.

The group of six women from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds were made acutely aware through their experiences of ACE, employment and small business that issues of gender were paramount in small rural and regional communities in Australia, and, as such, these issues were probably not so different for them from their countries of origin (Carrington, McIntosh & Walmsley: 2007). Unlike the group of six individuals referred to in the previous chapter, several of whom had migrated directly to Melbourne and all of whom had resided in Melbourne and then chosen to move to Campaspe, this group of newly-arrived women had migrated straight to this regional community and were aware that moving *to* Melbourne or larger urban regional communities would more likely provide access to education, employment, cultural and/or familial resources.

Mobility for this group of women meant thinking about moving from a regional community to an urban community. This concurs with research about the experiences of people migrating from non-English speaking countries and cultures to Australia, and to Victoria in particular, which has found that residing in the cultural diversity of Melbourne is far more attractive and lucrative than residing in regional communities.

This group can be more clearly labelled as a 'CALD' group or sub-group because of their need for English language tutoring, and they therefore fit more neatly into the equity category for this group for social policy purposes. In terms of cultural diversity, this group is no different to the group considered in the previous chapter; their cultural difference in relation to the WASP culture of Campaspe was a

commonality for all the interviewees in this research. They were all 'cultural outsiders' requiring someone or some organisation to assist them.

This group of individuals experienced ACE very much as an encounter with inequality in Australian society, their experiences of social capital development was where bonding social capital in the Campaspe community was excluding them from developing new networks. Campaspe ACE organisations were a resource that these newly arrived migrants wanted to utilise but their experiences attempting to access ACE services and within classroom situations, reflected to them that they were newcomers in Campaspe and could expect to be treated not as equals but as outsiders. This is a clear example of social capital development as bonded networks that exclude others from established groups, services and resources and where bridging social capital is blocked by current networks of individuals or services (Marmot & Wilkinson: 2006).

Many in this newly-arrived group can be differentiated from the previous group because they fit into the category of 'time pressured couple with children' as developed by Berry et al. (2008). They are middle-aged, married couples who have a stable income, children under 15 years of age, excellent physical health, fair mental health with low risk behaviours and average (attempts at) community participation (Berry, Butterworth, Caldwell & Rodgers: 2008). As such, they are marginalised culturally and socially but not economically and because of being married to an Australian or someone highly educated, they are not overly socially isolated within their family setting. Their needs then are very complex but specific.

The lack of diversity and recognition of their language and cultural needs as well as the lack of recognition of their educational status and career aspirations in Campaspe affected many aspects of their lives including their roles as wives and mothers. Their experiences and the societal attitudes/restrictions they encountered were directing them to stay at home to perform household and childcare duties, and not mix too much with the local community either directly or via organisations such as ACE. ACE for these women was part of the mainstream, part of a community that seemed to want to exclude them and reinforce gender stereotypes, rather than welcome them by offering the diverse learning opportunities they needed to adjust to their new life in Campaspe.

Chapter VII

Diversity, Social Inclusion and Social Capital

Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the main theme emerging from the research namely, the link between ACE philosophies and provision in Campaspe and the development of diversity, social inclusion and social capital in a community context. In recent decades, the Shire of Campaspe has seen the emergence of a 'new' social diversity resulting from internal population mobility and international migration to regional areas. The main issues to be addressed in this chapter relate to how this new diversity is shifting the population and social profile of regional communities and how localised networks such as those of ACE resist or adjust to this diversity. People from culturally diverse backgrounds find it challenging to develop social capital within the context of regional communities and so there is a need to explore why significant barriers to social development still exist for specific cultural groups in Australian society.

ACE in Australia has a mandate to provide access to education and training but this does not necessarily translate into the building of social capital (Volkoff & Walstab: 2007). This research suggests that ACE providers, programs and practice can actually contribute to social exclusion particularly for people more recently arrived in this country and in regional communities. Other research has suggested that ACE could be more effective in developing social capital amongst CALD groups in regional communities if more recognition is made of the need of the specific groups, families and individuals residing in communities (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006). This would mean ACE actively engaging with all manner of social and economic networks within communities to locate and encourage these groups who are often hidden from the mainstream (Nadarajah: 2004).

People from CALD backgrounds want and need a range of activities and resources in communities they have just arrived in; activities and resources which assist them to adapt to social, cultural and economic systems as revealed in this thesis. Adult education and training activities are an integral part of this process and social capital development is integral to adult community education in Australia. However, race and culture as experiences and indicators have been absent from the social

capital debate (Hero: 2007) and there is evidence in this research that social capital development via ACE can be a form of social control and social reproduction in regional communities.

Social capital measurement to date has been mainly from WASP, middle class communities and traditional in its focus, such as church going, volunteering and networking via clubs and associations as social capital indicators. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds, people from CALD backgrounds and other groups, on the other hand, tend to utilise public services, community services and sport as their main social networking environments and these connections are not being researched as completely as they could and should be (Hero: 2007). Nevertheless, ACE does have the potential to act as an agent of social networking and therefore facilitate social cohesion (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006).

Diversity(s) in Adult Education

Diversity for the individuals interviewed embraces culture, languages, social and economic participation, geographic location, age and gender. The cultural and linguistic mix of this research sample was broad as were the interviewees' socio-economic backgrounds and experiences of migration to Australia which dated from the 1950s through to recent arrival. The age range of this sample was similarly broad; all were aged over 30 years of age, with nearly half being over 40 years of age. The gender mix for the study was limited, with only two males compared to thirteen females. Overall, diversity within this sample of individuals incorporated many issues other than linguistic background or country of birth or ancestry.

Specific individual narratives of life, migration, relationships, sexuality, education, employment and location were similarly diverse: Kon and George, for example, are both males in their 50s. They have never married and both resided in Melbourne for significant periods of their adult lives. However, despite their social needs being alike, their adult education needs and experiences were not in any way similar.

Kon had been participating in English language tuition as a means of keeping up social contacts whereas George participated in a range of adult education programs for personal, social and economic reasons. Liz, also in her 50s and with a similar migration background to Kon, has had very different experiences again, with

mental illness shaping her life experience and her use of adult education. Ollie and Arosha are both women, who are relatively younger than the rest of the sample, being in their thirties; both married, recently arrived in Australia and have lived in Campaspe for only a few years. Again the distinctions are evident. Arosha is Sri Lankan, married to a Sri Lankan-born man, has two young children, speaks English very well, has post-graduate qualifications and is active in pursuing employment and adult education programs and activities. Ollie is Russian, recently married to an Australian, speaks little English, wants to have children, doesn't work and is quite isolated by her circumstances and experiences of adult education and employment. Both women reported feeling themselves defined and judged by their gender and their family relationships and believed that their status both as a citizen and mature aged learner from a CALD background was informed by the conflation of gender and migrant status.

Despite their very different backgrounds, Arosha and Ollie report social isolation and exclusion in describing their experiences as women in a regional area but the combination of being an outsider, being women and from a CALD background compound to produce a variety of alienating experiences, especially for many of the women highlighted in Chapter VI who were recent migrants. Diversity thus encompasses many forms of social and economic isolation that adult education and training providers need to consider in any program aimed at targeting particular groups in this region. Linking adult education, cultural diversity and social exclusion requires an exploration of social capital as a framework for exploring these issues.

Why Social Capital?

Social capital is a relatively modern term that has become more common in academic and political discourse since the 1980s. Social capital was seen by Coleman (1994) as the set of resources that are inherent in group relationships and community-based social organisations and these resources are then useful for the cognitive and/or social development of individuals. Porter (1998) explored 'strong' versus 'weak' social ties as integral to social capital and Putnam (1996) explored social capital indicators based on community networks, norms and trust.

Social capital then is the set of social and group relationships occurring in a community context that reinforce specific sets of networks and ties that result in community and social cohesion. In short, social capital opens up the way for different approaches to modelling social relations (Schuller, Baron & Field: 2000: 14). Schuller et al. (2000) describe social capital as an 'adolescent' notion, a term that is messy, immature and vulnerable to analytical and political abuse. Nevertheless, there is a belief that there are continuing merits in its use because it assists with an analysis of patterns of relations between agents, social units and institutions, rather than focussing on just individual behaviour (Schuller, Baron & Field: 2000).

Bourdieu (1984) explored the amount of social capital that any given individual can amass, regarding this as dependent on the network of connections s/he can mobilise in conjunction with the volume of other forms of capital possessed by the individual. Social capital, then, is dependent upon the size of these networks and the quality of the connections. Networks and connections must be continually created and recreated otherwise they become devalued and have little less positive influence.

Bott (1957) anticipated this focus, imparting that social networks have the value of connectedness, mediating between the personal and the structural, so that their strength and purpose is crucial to their effectiveness. More recently, Burt (1997) explored social capital in terms of the information and control that networks achieve; they are the broker between individuals and the social structures which people have become disconnected from, for instance, employment, education and systems of social services. Woolcock (2000) observed simultaneous benefits and disadvantages of social capital, creating a sense of belonging but any attempts to re-network within social structures can highlight the lack of network development of any individual.

This focus on network in social capital theory is significant. In attempting to connect to existing networks, new residents can be repelled so that any rebuff by existing networks can exacerbate and prolong social exclusion and isolation. *It is widely suggested that contact with others is important in providing individuals with identity, social roles and social support mechanisms* (ABS: 2006: 86). Network structure (frequency, intensity and mode of contact) is a crucial indicator in social

capital development that can be directly correlated to the research themes of this thesis. In very crude ways, the significance of such connections has been recognised in recent modelling aimed at constructing measures for social cohesion and health (Vinson: 2007, ABS: 2006).

Measurements of social capital are problematic in that governments in Australia, and internationally, do not have specific agencies to drive research around community life and social cohesion. Concepts, indicators and measurements are being derived from a variety of sources with tensions arising between researchers and government agencies because of cursory measurements. This means that it is still unclear whether social capital can be successfully measured in a way that satisfies policy development, evaluation and social research stakeholders.

If it can be agreed that social capital refers to the social relationships in a community context which result in collective networks, norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation and cohesion within groups and between different groups in communities, then the current challenge is about how to identify and measure social capital development in varied community contexts. Social capital as a concept can assist social research frameworks by acting as a link between the micro, meso and macro levels of inquiry. Social capital as a concept, and as a way of describing social relationships, can be utilised by governments at all levels as well as localised groups and agencies as a means of exploring community ties.

Integral to this link is a multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary approach to new research on social capital that synthesises dialogue: *on the one hand, we should avoid overblown claims for the concept as one which can override conflicts of perspective and address all social issues* [but] *we should* [also] *avoid premature dismissal of it as an empty vessel. Social capital perhaps matches the spirit of an uncertain, questing age* (Schuller, Baron & Field: 2000: 38). Increased use of the term social capital in recent years can be seen as heralding 'a return to social science', whereby issues such as 'community', 'trust', 'cohesion', 'connectedness' and so on, are being re-examined as a direct challenge to global capitalism and the neo-conservative obsession with the dollar value of everything. Social capital as a concept asks that researchers and analysts develop questions about values, morality and the way we debate issues in society. However, there is a need to move beyond

the policy rhetoric and to begin to research the true value of the term by researching the relationships between individuals, social units and institutions in diverse communities.

Linking Diversity, Regionality & Social Cohesion

Regional communities in Australia, like the Shire of Campaspe, have developed in a different manner and with a unique population profile compared to urban communities. Communities in regional Victoria have 16% of the population born overseas and are significantly less diverse than Melbourne, where well over a third of the population is overseas born (DVC: 2006). The Shire of Campaspe, although growing in diversity, had significantly less than the regional average of people born overseas. Issues of cultural and social marginalization motivate many people and especially newly-arrived migrants, to choose to reside in the greater diversity of urban areas. In recent years however, a number of regional municipalities in Victoria and indeed around Australia have been actively welcoming more diverse groups into their communities for a range of economic and social reasons.

Currently there are ranges of ways in which regional communities seek to source and attract more diverse populations. Immigration programs may target humanitarian entrants to resettle in regional and rural Australia. Skilled migrants are used to fill skill shortages, and there are opportunities for temporary visa workers to come to Australia to fulfil specific employment contracts in regional and/or rural communities. The extent to which new internal and international migrants can expect support in their resettlement and in adjusting to life in their new communities is the subject of emerging research in Australia (Broadbent, Cacciattolo & Carpenter: 2006). It is recognised however, that Australian regional and rural communities have distinct localised cultures, often described as WASP and rooted in the colonial history of a specific region, requiring newcomers to adjust to the mores and codes of local life rather than a culture that welcomes difference and 'newness' (Smyth: 2008).

The more an individual conforms to the WASP culture of regional/rural Australia, the more rapidly and easily they will develop new social and economic networks (Babacan: 2003). However, different cultural groups develop and utilise social and economic network development quite uniquely. Research is divulging that as a

society we cannot 'lump' all non-English speaking groups together under one label as 'migrants', expecting their experiences to be similar. Giorgas reveals that *cultures that place greater emphasis on the family and are collectivist in nature, such as Greek, Italian and Polish cultures, are more likely to utilise social capital. In contrast, cultures that have an individualistic focus, for example, those of Dutch, Germans and Hungarians, are more likely to under-invest in social capital* (Giorgas: 2000: 4).

This raises the question of how international and internal migrants rebuild their social capital in a community context. What social capital do they 'carry' with them and what social capital already exists in regional communities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds to connect to? Is such social capital specific? Are individuals from CALD backgrounds in regional communities denied opportunities to amass social capital because they lack the critical mass that is evident in large cities? There are claims that social capital development for people from culturally diverse backgrounds is often dependent on the actions of previous generations as *social capital is increased when emphasis on linear ethnicity is greater and when social networks become dense* (Giorgas: 2000: 4).

Social capital development for new residents in regional communities occurs in the context of complex human, political and economic capital. The interaction of the ecological, economic, social and human provides for the specific production of identities through formal and informal networks, structures, shared experiences and a sense of history, purpose and being (Revill: 1993). These issues shaped data and information collected as part of this research in the Shire of Campaspe and should be acknowledged as an overarching 'presence' in the research. The context, the 'place' which is Campaspe, within which social capital formation occurs for residents from CALD backgrounds, is unique. Figure 2 on the following page adapts an ABS (2002) framework to outline the interactions and transactions in the social, political and economic spheres of the Shire of Campaspe.

Figure # 2: Social capital formation in the Shire of Campaspe

Ecological Environment
Murray, Campaspe, Goulburn Rivers, Victorian and NSW State forests, wetlands of national significance, flora and fauna, water, land and Indigenous cultural presence and history.

Social Capital = Community Cohesion & Diversity
Diverse community composition from internal mobility
Shared purpose
Growing population
Indigenous presence & history
Colonial History
Local programs and providers
Social resources and services

Individuals & Families

Economic Capital = Economic Growth
Economic and financial assets/ resources:
Evolving industries and institutions
Growth in people & households
Transport hub
Expanding public infrastructure
Expanding businesses
Tourism, recreation & leisure industries
Cultural industries

Human Capital = Individual & Group Functioning
Education & training
Employment
Health
Culture & religion
Skills
Income
Housing
Social networks
Time & leisure
Hospitality

The Shire of Campaspe has a wealth of distinct and diverse ecology which has influenced the development of economic capital via recreation and tourism and the emergence of new levels of human and social capital. The Murray River, with the world's largest red gum forests surrounded by broad open plains, has been a source of agricultural production for two centuries. However, recent decades of enduring drought and industry restructuring has seen Echuca, at the heart of the Shire, rework its economic focus, expanding into a popular tourist destination attracting people traversing the continent from south to north and from east to west, all year round.

Agricultural production based on intensive irrigation is still the largest industry in terms of net worth and revenue but employment now occurs mostly in the service sectors of retail, finance, hospitality and tourism. These expanding industries are attracting many new residents to the region, influencing the development of new human capital. However, as explored in the vignettes of early wave migrants in Chapters V and recently arrived migrants in Chapter VI, social capital development in this region is highlighted by existing, deep-rooted, separate, homogenous social and economic networks in the community that are either blind to or are purposefully excluding new residents and cultural diversity.

Social Capital Development for People from CALD Backgrounds

Relationships between culture and community, racial or ethnic diversity and social capital are complex, interrelated and in tension in Australian society. They are intertwined and can be negatively interrelated (Hero: 2007). Examining the two perspectives of diversity and social capital requires the juxtaposition of a number of social and political dimensions: civic and social equality, patterns of participation and policy outputs in a range of community contexts (Hero: 2007). It should be asked, for example, if there is lower social capital development for people from CALD backgrounds in communities where there are higher levels of social capital in the general community. Are social outcomes different when examined for specific cultural and ethnic groups, as per their arrival and longevity of residence in Australia and where they reside? Social capital is appealing because it emphasises community, consensus and connectedness, sociologically comforting in an era of economic rationalism and neo-conservative social values. It links social conditions and civic association with well-being, happiness and 'good' aspects of life in modern

societies. There is a longing for a romanticised past of community and connectedness. However, social capital debates, measurements and analyses appear to be culturally and racially 'blind', with a lack of acknowledgement of the importance of racial or cultural inequality in society as compared to economic inequality. At this point in the global academic debate, social capital has limited application to analyses of cultural diversity because of a lack of evidence of the links between the two (Healy: 2007).

High levels of social capital seem to be linked to low rates of diversity, small populations, low urbanisation and slow population growths (Vinson: 2007: Healy: 2007) and this therefore brings into question the principles and validity of current research around social capital development. *That social capital and political culture (especially the latter) have generally been inattentive to and have not fully incorporated racial diversity into their analyses is likewise notable. It is not clear what we should make of this, but it does not seem accidental* (Hero: 2007: 168).

This research has investigated social capital in a regional context where the literature suggests that social capital levels are comparatively high, but the experiences of the two groups of individuals from CALD backgrounds reveals that social capital is more complex than previously documented. Individuals like George, Connie, Kon and Liz who had all resided in Australia for some decades were all experiencing difficulty developing social networks and sustaining social capital because of their status as 'outsiders'.

Connie disclosed that it was important for her to socialise with other migrants and people from CALD backgrounds because *there are lots of Aussie rednecks.* George described this complexity as perplexing because Echuca *looked like a modern and quite trendy town but it was all looks, the attitudes and behaviour of 'locals' about people from different cultural and other differences was rooted in an Anglo rural redneck culture.* Lena thought it was a joke, with people telling her to *watch the rednecks, I laughed, I thought that's strange, I see some people with red faces and wonder it it's them I should worry about.* She then described having to move her Buddhist shrine into her back yard because people were abusive. These quotes from the research reveal a 'known' aspect to this specific community, a closed and racist element that is intent on making people other than the Echuca norm, feel unwelcome.

Barriers to Social Network Development

Migration to a country like Australia involves stages or periods of adjustment or settlement that allow for locating housing, an ongoing income and accessing goods and services required for daily living. This process of adjustment is dynamic, involving psychological, social and political dimensions, meaning that time taken for settlement and actual experiences are individual and manifold. Many variables influence the outcomes, including prior life experiences, migration experiences, social issues in specific societies, the welfare and support systems available, community and societal attitudes towards migrants and the economic status of the individual or family unit at their arrival.

Women tend to be more vulnerable during settlement with adjustment problems relating to English proficiency, being economic dependents with limited means, and being more likely to be constrained by family dynamics. Social isolation and exclusion can also be exacerbated by unfavourable employment and housing and a lack of social support and kin-based systems.

A DOTARS (2006) report identified a plethora of Australian and international research all of which concluded that while there *is broad acceptance of the principle that social cohesion can promote economic growth, evidence suggests that immigrants often experience difficulty integrating into Australian society... this problem is particularly acute in rural and regional communities* (ICEPA: 2006: 26). Gopalkrishnan (2005) suggests that issues such as access, equity, racism and citizenship impact on how government support and intervention programs are developed to facilitate processes of settlement, integration and cohesion in a society where immigration and cultural plurality is a centrepiece of population and economic growth. Public policy in Australia has a history and practice of targeted or ethno-specific services directed towards specific groups in society.

Despite the use of 'diversity' and 'CALD' as terms to describe this targeting, incidental, structural and policy limitations occur at government and organisational levels. Barriers and limitations in public policy and program initiatives designed to target people from CALD backgrounds often arise because of a failure to 'reach out' to groups to locate them and their needs. (Gopalkrishnan: 2005). The barriers experienced by people from CALD backgrounds in Australia can include a distrust of

government, the mono-lingualism of services and staff, inappropriate assessments of need, the location of services and a lack of knowledge about how Australian services operate. Government policy statements employ a range of assertions about access, equity and rights that may not flow through to implementation. Gopalkrishnan notes that there is *ample evidence to show that racism impacts on life chances and social inclusion outcomes. Life chances can be impacted in the areas of occupational status and earning, educational achievement and social integration* (Gopalkrishnan: 2005: 14). Thus the responsibility of all public policies and programs targeting CALD people is to consider the broader issues of the personal, social *and* economic experiences of migration, race, discrimination, social exclusion and isolation.

ACE and Social Capital Development

Settlement is a dynamic process and involves the interface of the social, psychological and political dimensions of the person/group entering Australia and the prevailing attitudes and social institutions in the society that receives them. Success or otherwise of settlement cannot be uni-dimensional and solely dependent upon the person/group immigrating (Babacan: 2007: 7). In Chapter IV, this research revealed that ACE staff in Campaspe tended to underestimate the numbers of people from diverse cultural backgrounds residing in their local region and communities. This raises two pertinent questions requiring broader discussion and analysis. Are individuals who work in ACE in Campaspe 'blind' to this new diversity in the regional population and the needs of new residents because they themselves are mostly established residents and from English-speaking backgrounds? Does there need to be a critical mass of CALD people in a community or region before dominant social and cultural groups begin to 'see' them, and act to engage them and provide the resources they require?

All of the individual learners interviewed for this research experienced social exclusion and isolation in the first years of their life in Campaspe. These experiences confirmed for them their status as outsiders. Some had developed social capital via employment-based networks and experiences, while some believed themselves to still be 'outsiders' in the Shire of Campaspe many years after moving there. They were searching for social connections either as a primary or secondary motivation when accessing ACE.

The research revealed that individuals experience the complex and multi-layered nature of various forms of social capital development in regional communities. ACE is one example of a community-based service and resource which can be shown to impact on the development of human and social capital, and which is accessed for that purpose. Other avenues such as employment or owning a small business can lead to new residents and migrants building new social networks in Campaspe, but most of the interviewees experienced difficulty in gaining access to employment or business development and so were unable to locate and 'join' any social networks based on these identities and roles.

Recent research measuring social inclusion and exclusion in Northern Adelaide divulged that *the extent and character of social inclusion and social exclusion in Northern Adelaide varied by age, gender and location, and by processes associated with the amount and quality of social and material capital available* (AISR: 2007: 12). The research concluded that networks developed benefits including new work and education opportunities and ageing well and that these benefits affected individuals, groups and organisations in a regional context. Regions are complex geographic and demographic 'places' with socio-economic sub-groups influencing social capital development. Emerging research is locating ethnicity, gender and age as issues that have yet to be measured and analysed as part of the social capital 'project' (AIRC: 2007, Stone & Hughes: 2001, Giorgas: 2000, Bullen & Onyx: 1998).

The development of social capital for residents of diverse backgrounds in Campaspe is occurring within the context of a regional community deeply rooted in the colonial history of Australia. All the communities along the river were taken from Indigenous clans and settled to assist in the expansion of Anglo-Saxon communities by claiming land and water for their own economic development. Cultural diversity of any kind during these times was limited to the goldfields where large numbers of Chinese and European immigrants had settled. This mono-cultural history of regions like Campaspe still lingers to this day in towns like Echuca, to the detriment of recognition for the emerging diversity within the town and region. There is an absence of any events that celebrate the cultural identities in the region with all mass events centring on Anglo-type sports which have dominated the region for centuries, events like fishing competitions, speed-boat racing and paddle-steamer parades. There is no recognition through community events of the history of

Indigenous residence or of the emergence of new diversity. The Shire as a local government organisation has in recent years recognised the Indigenous culture, inhabitants and history of the region by recognising NAIDOC week and flying the Aboriginal flag but these are small tokens for what could be a cultural centrepiece of the town and region.

Diversity in population and culture is only a very recent phenomenon for Campaspe, with the local population growing and diversifying mostly in the past couple of decades, unlike adjoining regions such as Moira Shire where towns like Shepparton and Cobram have a fifty-year history of encouraging migrants to settle in their communities. The cultural myopia noted above endures in current local government policies and processes. Campaspe has not, for example, been part of recent government programs aimed at encouraging migrants to settle in regional communities because skilled and unskilled labour shortages have only been a recent phenomenon in industries such as health care, local government planning and information technology. It is then not surprising that local service providers, including ACE organisations and the local people that work in these services, are not attuned to 'seeing' and managing population diversity. There has been a lack of leadership within the region of Campaspe and its local communities to acknowledge the emerging diversity.

All Australian adult education and training sectors- HE, VET and ACE reflect public policy being constructed and driven as a vehicle for individual and collective economic development. However, as explored in the vignettes and data in previous chapters, there is a lack of attention given to the personal and social experiences which can act as enablers and barriers to participation in adult community education. This thesis contends that there appears to be confusion at public policy, ACE provider and program facilitation levels about the philosophies, purpose and delivery of the economic, social and personal goals of ACE programs.

Economically driven education in the form of vocational skills training and ready-for-work programs, dominated ACE provider program profiles in the Shire of Campaspe in 2006 except at the neighbourhood level of ACE provision. This reflects broader ACE agendas throughout Victoria and Australia in recent years (ACFE: 2006, Choy, Haukka & Keyes: 2006). Access to ACE programs is now seen mostly as a pathway to vocational training or higher education courses and not as access to a community

resource that has broader social capacity building potential. However, this research has revealed that neighbourhood-based ACE providers are clearly delivering valuable social, cultural and civic services that need to be further recognised and expanded.

There is emerging research in Australia exploring adult education and training programs as potential partnership processes in regional and local community contexts, partnerships that have the potential of reviving what now appears to be flagging participation within all forms of adult education and training across Australian communities (Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006, Clemans, Hartley & Macrae: 2003, Golding, Davies & Volkoff: 2001). Partnership processes are one example of an attempt by governments and education agencies to forge links with individuals, groups and organisations in specific communities, with partnership projects 'reaching out' to rather than waiting for 'customers' to initiate interaction with adult education and training providers (Billet: 2004).

Australian public policy authorities have a tendency to consult with specific interest groups who have already made their voices heard, with most people in local communities not participating in government consultation and planning processes because they either get missed in the process, exclude themselves or are apathetic about these kind of processes, deeming them too political or bureaucratic (Marsh, Buckle & Smale: 2003). Engaging with individuals, groups and communities on any policy or problem solving process requires acknowledgement that community networks and issues of trust are paramount. Partnership projects or programs must be nurtured in a way that builds awareness around local issues, locates key support for the issue, allows the community to take responsibility for the issue and the problem solving, and resources the community connections that will build on the program implementation process (Billet: 2004).

There are several categories of people who engage with government in the processes of building resources and services. These include groups of people with shared interests, groups with a shared identity who have contacts and networks across communities, community organisations and professionals, and some individuals who are newly arrived in a community and become acutely aware of the gaps in resource and service provision. In relation to newly-arrived migrants and people from CALD backgrounds, this engagement with government tends to occur

through peak organisations like ethnic communities councils because, as mentioned previously, people new to a country, region or community, experience individual and social barriers to full participation in a range of community resources.

Garlick and Langworthy (2004) view engagement processes between Australian education providers and regional communities as currently being project specific, small in scale and still dominated by the higher education sector. They argue that improvement in community engagement processes in education can occur through evaluation frameworks that connect to communities rather than just engaging them in the collection and reporting of quantified indicators of education participation and outcomes.

The CALD 'target' group can be one of the most difficult groups to engage in public and policy discourse about their needs because of a mistrust of government or because the processes seem overly bureaucratic. An analysis of community engagement relevant to adult education is provided by Nadarajah (2004) who links engagement to notions of culture, where culture is seen as a dominant variable which influences the way we organise ourselves, the ways we think, problem solve, develop beliefs and value systems and relate to others as insiders or outsiders.

Nadarajah (2004) explains community engagement in terms of connectivity, of creating new spaces within marginal positions that explore how individuals and groups engage with government and organizational policies, strategies and systems. He believes that diverse regions provide Australia's quality of life and that the organisations who service these regions must diversify to encompass regional needs and patterns of life. Community engagement must be about genuine partnerships and not just about outreach service provision.

This means examining how social and cultural structures and processes contribute to a discourse on identity, history and local sustainability and an exploration of local power relations, the processes of exclusion and marginalization. This linking of the local to the global and the individual to the organisational provides a reminder that adult education as policy and practice needs to re-engage with the margins of society to create a space for the acknowledgement of multiple identities and multi-dimensional problems, and must be careful not to engage only with those who appear before us or who can speak the loudest.

Conclusions

It is apparent that research around social capital development for migrants to Australia has concentrated on how ethnic groups in urban and regional communities draw on generational, social and economic network development (Babacan: 2007, Giorgas: 2000). However, people from culturally diverse backgrounds in Campaspe cannot rely on such generational social development because of their lack of a historical and generational presence in the region.

There is then a need to explore social capital development for people from CALD backgrounds in comparable areas in ways which reflect realities of individual experience, that is, by considering their participation in social and civic life and in mainstream social and economic structures like education and employment. Participation in ACE is the central theme for this research and so provides one example of how education, training, employment and local government agencies foster social inclusion and social exclusion in localised communities. The data in the previous chapters and in this chapter reveal that there are questions that need further analysis in relation to the development of social capital for people from culturally diverse backgrounds in regional communities. For example, why isn't the measurement of social capital being correlated with demographic variables such as age, gender and ethnicity? Are current elements, measures and questions of social capital development culturally significant? Where are the studies that evaluate the contribution of social capital to specific public policy issues such as adult community education? What role does ACE play in a range of community contexts in the fostering of social inclusion and the development of social capital?

The linking of population and cultural diversity, processes of social inclusion, social capital development and adult education is a unique one and provides the opportunity to expand the social capital argument to ensure that it is more than rhetoric and policy terminology. Social capital has the potential to be a purposeful framework for the examination of complex, diverse twenty first century communities in Australia and the range of policies, organisations and practices that contribute to social inclusion and exclusion in a community context. Adult community education is but one example of a social policy framework and social purpose community service that has the potential to act as an agency that facilitates and manages social diversity and inclusion in localised settings.

Chapter VIII

Conclusions about Adult Education and Social Inclusion

Introduction

This chapter provides conclusions about the major contribution of this research to knowledge and understanding of ACE in Australian society through the experiences of individual ACE learners from CALD backgrounds residing in the Shire of Campaspe and the complex roles and practices that ACE plays in the development of social learning and social capital in newly diversifying communities and regions. These conclusions will link directly to the original questions of the research being: the ACE programs people from CALD backgrounds participate in; the roles ACE providers play in enhancing social inclusiveness; the ways that ACE can promote further social inclusion for people from CALD backgrounds and the ontology of ACE policies around targeting specific equity groups like CALD as a framework for adult education provision in Australian society.

The vignettes presented, explored and analysed in previous chapters in the thesis provides a micro view of ACE participants in such breadth and depth not seen in social research in Australia. Linking this micro view of individual experiences of ACE with macro data about participation in ACE in Victoria and the meso view of policies around ACE provision is unique and even though this research is limited to one Shire in Victoria, it illuminates ACE as attempting to be many things to quite disparate groups of people. ACE as a sector of adult education has been somewhat captured by broader government policies around human capital development through skills enhancement rather than being given the opportunity to enhance its role as an agency of social capital development; as a space for facilitating social inclusiveness within complex and diversifying communities.

ACE Learners

This part of the research enquired: what adult education programs have people from CALD backgrounds living in the Shire of Campaspe participated in? What have been the social outcomes and benefits of participating in adult education programs for people from CALD backgrounds? Here, the aim has been to utilise the micro view of the vignettes to confirm, that ACE is a place for social network and social capital development.

For people from CALD backgrounds it is often assumed by ACE policy and practice frameworks (ACFE: 2006) that they need English language tuition before being able to access and negotiate adult education and training systems. Connie and Kon were two individuals in the mature aged group of migrants who experienced ongoing issues with English language. Connie's difficulties were about using English in a formal, written manner and she was referred to CGEA as a mechanism for improving her 'academic' use of English. Kon recognised that his overall English language skills were a barrier to locating employment and so this motivated him to persist with attending the CGEA course over a number of years as a way of developing his skills in written and spoken English.

In contrast to Connie and Kon, learning English was an important tool for the newly arrived individuals however, the only way most of them were able to successfully engage in English language skill development in Campaspe was through individual tutoring. Astonishingly, this research found that there were no formal English language programs on offer in Campaspe in 2006 with individuals only being offered participation in the CGEA as a way of improving their English language skills. All of the individuals accessing the CGEA for English language tuition dropped out after a short period of time because it was not meeting their needs. Moreover, the group environment led them to feeling excluded from these types of ACE programs and learning processes. Funds were subsequently located through AMEP to provide some small group and individual tutoring in English language development, which was proving quite successful with eight people enrolling immediately and some twelve people in this new program by the end of 2007.

This aspect of the experiences of several individuals raises a range of issues regarding the interaction between people with a language other than English and Australian society. We appear not to value the 'first' language of some twenty plus percent of the population as a resource and then via ACE and AMEP there are gaps in the provision of localised, tailored and useful English language tuition. This snapshot from Campaspe reveals that ACE can have a role to play in meeting the needs of individuals, groups and communities by providing English language programs that assist individuals with the skills to further access social networks, education and training resources and employment opportunities at a local level.

ACE was being used by all twelve individuals for social needs, social interaction, informal learning, friendships and network development. Liz used ACE for emotional and mental health, Kon for English language development and Connie for developing a sense of connection to her community via participation in an adult education program. The newly arrived migrants were specifically searching for informal learning and social networks, learning and interaction that were suitable for their levels of language and their need to be able to interact with individuals and groups in their new community.

Being from a CALD background was one part of their primary status or identity as Australians and as an equity group within ACE. For some, it was their life stage or life transitions that were a motivation for wanting to connect to community and for accessing adult education, for others it was their role as women and/or wives and mothers. The group of newly arrived migrants can be more clearly labelled as a 'CALD' group or sub-group because of their need for English language tutoring, and they therefore fit more neatly into the equity category for this group for social policy purposes. However, they too overwhelmingly cited the need for social interaction as new residents to Campaspe and as adult learners, they saw the connection between learning and interaction; that social connectivity can provide them with the English language skills they needed but also the social and economic connections that are needed to become a functioning member of a community.

This need for social interaction reveals something about the nature of regional community in Australian society; where individuals who are new to a community are treated like 'outsiders' and find it difficult to link to existing networks to enhance their social capital development. One commonality disclosed by all individuals was their cultural difference in relation to the WASP culture of Campaspe; they were all 'cultural outsiders' no matter when they had migrated to Australia or when they had moved to Campaspe. Another commonality was the concern by some of the women to overcome gender barriers to their advancement in careers or vocations. Other things shared in common were unemployment, occupational injury and the challenges of changing jobs or finding a new job niche in a restructured economy. A further common feature was the low skill or blue collar occupational background of the earlier wave of migrants, whereas the more recent interviewees had more skills and some had higher occupational aspirations.

The powerful CALD influences within this research group were nevertheless strong, mostly as a heightened sense of being an outsider in an Anglo-Australian society and community, something that these individuals share with the nearly 25% of individuals who have migrated to this country. Migration and internal mobility have become social, cultural and economic phenomena within Australian society that need to be recognised by regional and rural communities and that are attempting to adapt to global, national and local economic and environmental conditions.

The most common experiences of being from a CALD background and living in Campaspe were English language difficulties, social isolation and the shame associated with various disadvantages such as gender, mental health and unemployment. These commonalities of experience relate strongly to how individuals experience social exclusion and build social capital in a community context. Isolation from networks of family and friends are compounded by these issues, meaning that many of the essential ingredients of network development have been absent for these individuals no matter how long they have resided in Campaspe. This reveals inherent tensions in our society and communities about how we respond to social issues such as gender roles, mental and physical health and employment frameworks. Australia is a society that is diversifying and ageing (ABS: 2007), these are issues that must be confronted by all communities otherwise social isolation because of age, gender, disability and so on will only be exacerbated.

All of these individuals wanted to build their social capital via ACE as one means and saw opportunities inherent in ACE because it is community based and not so institutional. ACE 'appeared' to be an accessible agency within the community of Campaspe, from the outside looking in, but once 'inside' some of these individuals experienced spaces and practices that in the end, discouraged them and ultimately distanced them from ACE. However, most of the individuals did build some social connections and networks through their participation in ACE, but mainly as a result of their own efforts rather than network development being inherent in ACE frameworks. Their common experiences as outsiders in Campaspe drew them to similar places and activities but also left them with shared feelings of being 'let down' by ACE, like they had been let down by governments or employers or other

organisations in the community. ACE became, for some, part of their Australian experience of them not fitting in.

The commonality connecting these individuals as a 'marginalised' 'CALD' sub-group is their migration to Australia, the cultural connections and isolation that they continue to experience and the various forms of economic marginalisation, unemployment and under-employment. The implication for ACE is that as a sector it needs to be providing access to education and training for a range of people from different cultural backgrounds who are similar in socio-economic characteristics but who might have differing wants, needs and abilities. The vignettes have revealed that access to ACE exposed learners to other issues in relation to adult education such as: the lack of a variety of programs, the low level of challenge that ACE programs presented and the lack of pathways ACE offered to Higher Education.

Most of the individuals were not totally satisfied with a sense of personal, social or civic engagement when accessing ACE in Campaspe, mostly because they generally encountered classroom-type activities in very mixed groups that they found unwelcoming, unfriendly, noisy and not conducive to their learning needs and styles or their social desires. They were also looking for a variety of social and learning experiences in diverse areas such as parenting, crafts, languages and fitness, as well as seeking groups for general social discussion. In nearly all the vignettes, the courses and programs on offer in Campaspe fell short of what these individuals were looking for, leaving them unable to further connect to their community through ACE and, for some, having their social isolation exacerbated by these experiences of ACE.

As summarised here, it is the complexities and multiplicities of individual experiences and circumstances within sub-groups that challenge adult education systems, providers and programs in contemporary Australian society. All of these individuals struggled to juggle their lives as individuals, mothers, workers, friends, etc., and then utilise adult education and training in Campaspe to maximum benefit. They suggested that ACE could be 'friendlier' and more open with a greater range of programs to meet their diverse needs in this regional context.

ACE in Campaspe

This part of the research explored the roles that adult education programs and practices play in enhancing social inclusiveness in the Shire of Campaspe. It asks the question; are these adult education programs and practices supporting the institutions, networks and norms necessary for the enhancement of social inclusion for people from CALD backgrounds?

The Shire of Campaspe is a regional community steeped in Anglo-Saxon colonial history. Recent census data reveal a regional community that is a collection of towns which are diversifying but not in any uniform manner. The notions- and realities- of cultural diversity and social inclusion in this one Shire are complex and changing. There is a documented history of the exclusion of Indigenous peoples from social and economic systems in this area even though, like most of Australia, their occupation of the lands in the Shire dates back tens of thousands of years.

Since settlement, migration to this region has largely been confined to English-speaking people, NESB migration has been a recent phenomenon. However, people from CALD backgrounds are moving to this region and choosing to reside in the small to medium-sized towns in the region. The cohort of ACE participants interviewed for this research included thirteen women and two men, who were drawn from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They had all come to reside in Campaspe for varied reasons, bringing with them generational and complex experiences of migration and of Australian society. The individual and shared issues of culture, language, migration, family, work and education, all influenced their interactions with ACE providers and programs in Campaspe.

ACE provision in the Shire of Campaspe is extensive and varied and, as such, provides a comprehensive case study of ACE in contemporary Australian society. The ACE providers participating in this research ranged from a neighbourhood house, community organisations servicing geographic communities, a service offering adult education to people with disabilities and a community college.

The evidence from this research imparted that CALD participation in ACE in Campaspe is inconsistently spread and that newly-arrived migrants in particular are not participating to any significant extent. The reasons for these low levels of participation were attributed to programs' inability to meet the needs of sub-groups

of people from CALD backgrounds, exacerbated by individual experiences of educational and social exclusion when their participation in mixed group programs failed to suit people's needs or learning styles. The individuals interviewed for this research revealed complex individual issues that need to be acknowledged but there were also commonalities that can act as themes for the future planning of ACE programs in Campaspe.

Participants interviewed, reported a need for a return to classic Liberal Arts programs and other humanities courses which provide general adult education in diverse studies such as social studies, cultural studies, communications, history and social research skills, genealogy, religious and philosophy studies and the like. Given that the mature age individuals in this research were seeking links to higher level programs there is also a clear need for specific preparation for tertiary study programs that allow people to develop the skills and confidence required to access diploma and degree programs, all of which are available in the neighbouring Loddon and Moira regions but not, at present, in Campaspe.

BRIT, Goulburn Ovens TAFE and La Trobe University have campuses throughout the region offering a wide array of diploma and degree programs, all targeting local residents. The opportunities for ACE providers to act as local and regional links to these VET and HE providers seems obvious but coordinated information and preparation for advanced training and education is not occurring in this region.

This research also revealed a significant need for discrete English language programs for newly-arrived migrants coupled with academic and professional English tutoring. At the commencement of this research there were no coordinated English language programs being offered in Campaspe as all. The view of ACE providers and practitioners was that this service was offered by others. In reality, provision was made only in limited forms in larger regional centres like Shepparton and Bendigo and mostly as individual tutoring through AMEP. Effectively, this severely limited access for Campaspe residents and confined the focus of delivery to individual tuition to those who sought it out.

Many of the newly-arrived migrants expressed the desire to participate in group programs that allowed the opportunity for them to practise their English language skills in both a formal and non-formal or conversational manner. Some of the individuals who had lived in Australia for decades attempted to meet this need by accessing general education literacy programs as a way of gaining skills in English language writing and preparation for other studies. What they really desired however, was tuition that was specifically tailored to their needs and within a group context of other individuals who shared and understood their needs. Minh wanted the opportunity to *go out one day in a week, sit with people, talk in English, talk about life and children.* A coordinated and flexible English language program could have encompassed the needs of some eight of the participants in this research alone revealing that a small group program focussing purely on a variety of English language skills was viable.

The third area articulated as a need is one of community connection that ACE has traditionally answered in most areas in Victoria. Participants expressed a desire for social and cultural programs such as 'welcome to the community' type events, classes in languages other than English, culturally-based cooking programs and cross-cultural exchanges via art, religious or food appreciation programs. ACE providers in Campaspe have offered these programs in the 1970s and 1980s, but in recent decades this delivery has been discouraged given the perception that these are 'lifestyle' programs and outside the educational or vocational missions of the sector.

This perception, when coupled with low levels of funding for these non-vocational and non-accredited programs, has resulted in most ACE providers in Campaspe abandoning efforts to even attempt to locate interest in these types of programs. The manager of one ACE provider stated that *it was too much work for very little monetary return, we are here to keep the budget going, we are told to keep up our cash flow, so it's not about what people would like but what brings in the dollars.* However, it is these so-called 'lifestyle' programs that have the potential of drawing people into ACE, providing an access point that is not threatening as well as providing the potential for vital social capital development through overt 'social' programming and networking. The absence of these social and cultural programs limits the access points for people who are unsure whether adult education is for

them, and also limits the opportunities in a somewhat historically 'closed' community to welcome and encourage 'others' or newcomers to participate in community events. The advent of the formation of a new group, 'Echuca Enriched' was attempts by a few local people from CALD backgrounds to make these types of events happen. This group had no funding and no official support from any level of government and was an example of bonding social capital at work; these were people who believed that no-one else was going to assist them to acknowledge and celebrate the growing diversity of Echuca and Campaspe.

Given that most of the interviewed individuals accessing ACE in Campaspe were motivated to use ACE as a gateway to other education and training programs, and to test their current interest or skill levels, there is a clear need for direct and regular links between ACE providers and VET and HE providers in the region. However, a scan of program offerings at the regional level suggested that there were no coordinated information evenings outlining forthcoming programs in the region. Each provider from all the sectors operated individually and 'did their own thing', thus encouraging people to 'shop around' but also fostering an attitude that individuals had to choose their preferred provider.

This suggests a need for a co-operative approach amongst the sectors and providers that presents local communities with clear options and the links and pathways between ACE, VET and HE programs and providers. This would realise the overt policy goal of people using education and training pathways, eliminate reproduction of programs and highlight the needs of distinct groups within the broader region. Adult education and training expo type events occur for secondary school students to encourage them to scan the region for opportunities and to realise the 'ladder of opportunity' that education and training provides, in ensuring sustained civic and economic connection. Similar events for mature age and CALD individuals at a regional level would provide the same opportunity for them to understand the adult education and training sectors and to begin to negotiate their way through the programs they might want to participate in.

These are just a few social, cultural and educational activities that ACE providers are clearly situated to deliver in Campaspe and, indeed, anywhere in Australia. However, a concentration on human capital development via vocational training has prevented these ideas- these community-based linkage processes from occurring to

any significant extent in Campaspe, and one suspects a similar situation exists in most regional communities where resources are limited. But the underpinnings are already in place. The ACE provider infrastructure of buildings, rooms, technology, practitioners, already exists in Campaspe and with the growing demographic diversity the human capital, teaching and training resources would also exist. A broadening of the role of ACE in regional areas such as Campaspe would require, rather, systemic change. The role would demand a new policy framework to acknowledge and fund diverse programs, ACE managers with the vision and community connections to encourage the facilitation of diverse programs, and ACE practitioners able to adapt and be flexible in their program management and delivery.

ACE as social control, social reproduction and social inclusion

This part of the research asked: in what way could ACE promote more social inclusion for people from CALD backgrounds and what are the social, education and other barriers to achieving this and how could these be addressed? ACE as an adult education sector has the distinct advantage of being community-based and managed, and being able to offer programs that bridge all education and training sectors within a regional area. All of the vignettes reveal ACE as being accessible, with all individuals feeling comfortable in visiting these agencies and asking for assistance. This means that ACE is the right place for social capital development for this type of group of middle-aged individuals and for many other groups in the community. ACE has the philosophical foundation, the infrastructure and dedicated staff, to complement their current work by fostering even greater social and cultural connectedness for this marginalised group.

The embryonic re-formation of education as social inclusion, as a plank of community rebuilding can be questioned in terms of the social capital in education also being associated with social, economic and institutional properties that can lead to social control. Education policies, structures and processes in Australia are fractured; there are private and public institutions within all sectors of education and individual institutions. Individual education and training institutions can be controlled by institutional religious organisations or by local parent controlled committees wanting specific philosophies applied to education or by private corporations seeking profit from educational program delivery. These institutional

forms of education and training reflect a closed or bonding form of social capital that creates networks that only serve specific purposes, communities and individuals.

Social capital is a concept of greater interest to policy makers and educationalists; it is being enthusiastically embraced by global organisations like UNESCO, the OECD and the World Bank. Education is again being seen as one of the few intervention points for the creation of social capital (Schuller: 2001). The social capital debate and exploration appears to be maturing beyond what Schuller et al (2000) described as adolescent and returning to its roots of advocating education, in all its forms and in all types of communities as a central aspect to social renewal.

This research explored the interaction between twelve individuals from diverse backgrounds and one form of adult education in a growing regional town in the second largest state in Australia. The need of all the individuals interviewed in the research, to develop new forms of social capital was obvious as was their use of ACE providers and programs as one agency for this development of social capital. However, the link between ACE and other forms of education and social capital development is a complex one because in the regional context of the Shire of Campaspe, each of the individuals had unique and varied experiences based on their motivations, prior experiences, skills and personal efforts. The link between the individual and the social aspects of education and of social renewal and social inclusion are complex and require substantially more exploration in order for a thorough understanding of how social capital is developed in diverse communities and the processes, agencies and outcomes that are produced by social interactions.

Individual and social renewal was reflected in data in this thesis that divulged that life-stage, life transitions, cultural practices, health for people from CALD backgrounds does perhaps have as great an influence on the experiences of individuals attempting to access government sanctioned services as some of these broader equity concepts. This research revealed that all of these issues influence access to and participation in ACE for people from CALD backgrounds and need to be considered by governments and ACE providers.

The question being posed by this research is therefore, how does ACE become more inclusive of diversity in local communities? Defining an equity group as 'CALD' or 'NESB' or 'migrant', is no longer sufficient to describe the experiences of individuals. It is too simplistic a view of status or need, as divulged by the twelve vignettes in this thesis. The data presented here has revealed a postmodern reality of individuals made up of complex, compound and shifting characteristics that are influenced by international migration and internal mobility throughout varied stages of the human lifespan (Usher, Bryant & Johnston: 1997).

Life transitions were something that all the individuals from CALD backgrounds interviewed for this research seized on as pivotal to an understanding of their experience and context. Some were embarking on new marriages while others were mourning the loss of a relationship or partner. Some had never married and saw no reason to include this factor in their exploration of life in Campaspe. For most, however, immediate personal relationships played a significant role in informing their decision to live in Campaspe. Some had moved to the region because their partner lived there, or because they wished to escape oppressive personal relationships, or because life in a regional centre was a financial necessity for a single person of limited means.

Women spoke particularly about transitions around motherhood. Some of the women from CALD backgrounds had young children, some wanted children or more children and some were suffering from the 'empty nest syndrome' of missing their nurturing role and purpose as mothers. These life stages around motherhood have a profound impact on women, shaping personal and social identities in ways that can be stressful and conflicting, particularly when women were seeking to define themselves in ways that transcended traditional stereotypes of female/maternal roles. Consequently, their interaction with ACE providers and programs was one that required careful consideration.

Issues of time, child care, flexibility, transport and relevance to current needs all figured prominently in the minds and decisions of many of the women in this research, and were particularly evident where women were seeking more than the traditional wife/mother role and juggling multiple identities as a woman. It affected their access to and participation in ACE, and most felt that these issues were not being considered by ACE providers and programs. Arosha was able to powerfully

account for her ACE experiences, where she felt excluded because of her role as a mother, of not being able to fit timetables of programs and not feeling connected to others in learning groups. Some of this group of newly arrived migrants definitely felt excluded by ACE not merely through CALD status but because of being mothers. They needed flexibility and they needed programs that suited their current life issues of child care and communication, and their desire to juggle the mothering role with other educational/employment aspirations.

Health issues were revealed as something that also affected a few of the individuals severely. For some of the older individuals, a physical or mental health disability (often caused by their previous work) jeopardised both their ability to work and also impacting on their motivation to attend work-related education and training programs. Here, ACE was shown to play a role in restoring meaning and focus for these individuals. Liz, Kon and George were all affected by health issues and were satisfied that ACE was a place and space for them to find connectedness and something to do to alleviate boredom and isolation.

Employment, unemployment and underemployment figure prominently as appropriate areas for engagement in ACFE policy and funding documents (ACFE: 2007, ACFE: 2006). It seems that ACE, in Victoria specifically, has become the sector for encouraging certain groups 'back to work' via vocational training and preparation for vocational training (ACFE: 2006, ACFE: 2003). Course and student contact hour statistics referred to in Chapter IV suggest that transition to work is a primary focus for ACE but is limited in a place like Campaspe, in its target market which currently comprises youth who have dropped out of secondary education, women (with school-aged children) returning to work and middle-aged men who were unemployed but did not have disabilities. This is a clear reflection of Federal Government targeting welfare-to-work initiatives that provide funding for ACE providers, meaning they are not embracing a broader policy of encouraging people of all life circumstances back into education. This was clearly evident in Campaspe where specialist ACE providers for people with disabilities and Indigenous people had formed and prospered because mainstream providers were failing to provide for these groups throughout their general education programs.

For some of the individuals in this research, their life transitions and experiences fell outside current government funding initiatives with the result being that they were unable to access appropriate education or training programs. Berry et al. (2008) have developed five contemporary Australian archetypes relevant to be considered for education and training service delivery which would require further exploration in terms of their relevance to the equity categories in ACE. These archetypes were: connected retirees, financially secure working couples, time-pressured couples with children, dissatisfied working age singles and marginalised Australians (Berry, Butterworth, Caldwell & Rodgers: 2008: 65).

It seems that this categorisation along with an acknowledgement of life transitions (and other constructs such as social class, gender and race/ethnicity) might be useful to consider in conjunction with current equity categories when examining the social purpose of ACE. People not searching for a new career or career change or a return to employment are requiring something else from education sectors and providers, namely, social purpose education. Retirees, people with disabilities, time-pressured women (and men) with children and other groups are wanting to access and participate in adult education for social reasons, to connect to others, to participate in informal learning without the pressure to perform and complete, in order to attain a human capital outcome.

There was a clear and measurable contribution made by ACE to the development of social capital for people from CALD backgrounds that were experiencing transitions as part of their life in the Shire of Campaspe. ACE does work as a social resource for people motivated to access and participate in ACE. This research revealed that participation in ACE in Campaspe improves the social capital and the benefits derived from participation for people from CALD backgrounds, who were making new friends, gaining links for employment and further education and generally attaining more contacts in the community.

However, data in this thesis divulged that people from CALD backgrounds are still being excluded from an ACE sector that has a mandate for inclusiveness. Rather than define people as an equity group, policies, programs and practices need to be able to define individuals in terms of adult experiential and learning transitions. These transitions could be characterised as: family transitions, physical or psychological transitions, migration (internal/external) transitions, employment

transitions, community and/or regional transitions, industry transitions and so on. This is complex because it takes an eclectic policy approach; it is not just about specific categories of people, or specific geographic locations or specific industries but the possibility that issues of class, race, age and/or gender might be relevant in any given region and that sub-groups exist within the broader equity categories of CALD, women, youth and long-term unemployed. This would require governments and ACE providers to work together with communities, industries and social and human service agencies to develop integrated plans for specific sub-groups and particular local communities. This means regular engagement and research at local levels into the prior educational experiences and how ACE can appropriately service demands at any given time. Currently ACE policy frameworks and funding as they filter down to regional areas and local communities like Campaspe appear to be all too encompassing and not resourceful or flexible enough to cater for local, diverse learning needs and styles.

ACE as social policy

The final part of the research then connects to the meso framework of ACE by exploring the ontology of recent Australian government adult learning policies targeting people from CALD backgrounds and if government adult learning policy statements provide a coherent philosophical framework for the development of social outcomes through ACE programs for people from CALD backgrounds? The ACE sector has been termed by researchers and lobbyists as the 'Cinderella' of Australian education (ALA: 2008: 13) because it has been neglected by all Federal Governments in recent decades, left out of the reform and development agendas. Where does ACE fit within the current national education review and reform cycle? There are documented challenges of policy credibility, client engagement, capacity building and connection to work and community (ALA: 2008).

A new Federal Social Inclusion Unit and Social Inclusion Board has been set up with the broad intention to address the policy implications of tackling social exclusion for individuals and communities, and to invest in the human and social capital of all people, especially those most disadvantaged (Gillard: 2007). This research contributes to the debate about ACE in this new policy environment by shining some light on the further education and social network needs and experiences of CALD individuals in one regional community, the Shire of Campaspe.

The 2002 Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education is one that clearly supports the COAG human capital agenda, with ACE clearly being seen as having a vital role in the 'skilling challenge' of our nation (ALA: 2007). However there is a poverty of data regarding all ACE activity in Australian society, in comparison to the range of data collected, analysed and published about VET and HE activity through agencies such as DEST and NCVER. Available statistical data from ACFE, OTTE and NCVER demonstrate that the ACE sector has the smallest number of student contact hours and lesser growth in student contact hours (NCVER: 2007). Without national comparative data about the ACE sector from the States and Territories and regions, it is difficult to extrapolate about the trends in access and participation and the reasons for an apparent downturn in ACE activity in recent years.

There is no national agenda for the ACE sector in Australia. There is a Federal policy framework that is rhetoric driven (DEST: 2003) but there is no national data collection, research agenda or program framework. There is little analysis except about pedagogical frameworks and the importance of vocational outcomes for this sector. *There are about 1,200 not for profit community based organisations that currently provide some form of Adult Learning program for the Australian community. Historically these providers have been categorised by program or sector type and used by governments in specific contexts to meet specific public needs* (DEST: 2006: 7). The ACE sector includes organisations such as: AMES, CAE, ACE organisations in Victoria and NSW, group training companies, community colleges, not-for-profit organisations, job networks, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), tele-centres, neighbourhood houses, community access centres and adult education centres.

Not for profit community based providers of adult learning programs are currently the unsung heroes of the VET sector. Much of this community learning infrastructure is cross subsidised by high levels of fee for service activities and other programs funded by different government departments. Better still these organisations reinvest any margin they make to manage their own risks and achieve wider community developmental goals they were established to achieve (DEST: 2006: 5). Despite this diversity in adult education organisations throughout the nation, there is little debate in Australia about the philosophies and practices of adult education that are needed by regions, communities or individuals. However,

in recent years there has been some emerging research which begins to question the systems, roles, links and outcomes of current adult education and training and its relevance to a diverse contemporary Australian society (Kearns: 2006, Balatti, Black & Falk: 2006). This research has resulted in recent government recognition of the roles played by community-based not-for-profit adult education organisations, but again this tends to be exclusively linked to vocational outcomes.

Participation in adult education and training can thus be tackled as a systemic problem stemming from a lack of engagement between education policies and providers and the individuals, groups and communities that are their 'targets'. Further systemic issues relate to the education reforms that have occurred in Australia over past decades and the notion that individual learners will follow the education and training pathways that the system has devised for them. *While policy emphasises 'seamless pathways', the learners ... do not generally perceive their educational journeys as pathways, but rather as stepping stones, zigzags and lurches. Barriers include: finance, transport, location of institution, juggling work, family and study: inflexible class schedules, inadequate or inaccurate information ... and personal issues, such as lack of confidence or finding academic work difficult* (Harris, Rainey & Sumner: 2006).

Government data examined as part of this research revealed, for instance, that participation by people from CALD backgrounds is very different for each adult education and training sector and depends on a range of issues such as: period of migration, age group, prior education experiences and qualifications. Participation in higher education is, for example, high amongst the children of migrants of the past twenty years while VET is popular for recent arrivals seeking entry into the workforce and ACE is pursued by some migrant groups mostly in inner urban areas of the large cities (NCVER: 2005, DEST: 2004, ACFE: 2003).

Australian society is only likely to become more diverse in the future with population and demographic issues continuing to drive substantial immigration. Already, 25% of the Australian population has been born overseas, and with issues like global warming and population expansion and the rise of middle classes in Asian countries, cultural diversity and ensuing social inclusion is going to be an ongoing theme for Australian society as well as Government's social and economic policies.

In 2008 the immigration program brought 190,000 migrants to Australia in the permanent residency stream and another 100,000 in the temporary (457 Visa) stream. These are the highest immigration intakes in Australian history (Department of Immigration & Citizenship: 2008). Many of these people are not going to access ACE immediately but, as this research has imparted, some may need to interact with ACE providers for English language programs and others will indeed want to access ACE some time in the future for general education and entry level vocational training programs. This makes ACE access and participation even more crucial as a national social and educational policy area.

There are many complex issues facing the ACE sector in Australian society and quite clearly there is a need for a national review of ACE policy. The 2002 Ministerial Declaration on Adult Community Education requires a complete policy overhaul. There is a need for a comprehensive review much like the current review of HE. This nation needs an ACE sector that takes concerted action to support all of the social and economic purposes of adult education. There is a need for the sector to be unified under one national policy with equity in funding for all States and Territories and regions. There is a need for a national ACE staff development program, much like Reframing the Future for VET and the Australia Learning and Teaching Council for HE, a program that encourages practitioner skill development via research, communities of practice and reflective experiential learning. Finally, there is a need for ongoing and sustained research into the social and economic outcomes arising from non-accredited and accredited learning, formal and informal learning, workplace, classroom and experiential learning, all which are facets of adult learning.

This research has offered a significant examination of the ACE experiences of some individuals from CALD backgrounds residing in one regional community, the Shire of Campaspe in northern Victoria. The research is noteworthy because of the breadth of data collected and analysed. Data included government ACE participation statistics, individual vignettes, ACE staff surveys and ACE provider profiles. The unique and significant contribution of the research emanates from an exploration of the links between ACE policies, programs and practices, the experiences of individual learners of the ACE sector in a regional context, and the development of social capital for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Chapter IX

Summation

This research has presented an impact analysis utilising mixed methods to gain insight into the complexities of evaluating government policies that relate to the participation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in adult community education in regional communities. The research methodology and analysis explored in this thesis, has charted the impacts of ACE philosophies, practices and structures on process of social inclusion and social capital development for people from CALD backgrounds. ACE has a mandate to provide access to broad-based entry level adult education and vocational training, and this thesis has explored the effectiveness and appropriateness of the way in which it does so for individuals from CALD backgrounds.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are one of the equity groups targeted by ACE policies and funding in urban, regional and rural communities. The notion and practice of targeting and funding programs for equity groups lumps people together based on certain assumptions. However, not all people from CALD backgrounds, or women, or people with disabilities, or young people, or Indigenous people require or need access to the same particular programs.

ACE providers operate in Victoria, and throughout the country, using diverse organisational structures. They can be small neighbourhood houses, they are local community resource centres, they are equity group specific community services and they are medium to large-sized community colleges. They are all community-managed and, as such, have the experience and the potential to react to the needs of local communities, and to the diverse sub-groups that exist in many Australian communities. However, ACE providers have been forced to adapt to funding structures rather than communities. This has meant providing programs that are funded based on the policy frameworks of Federal, State and Territory Governments which are often linked to human capital development.

ACE practices have traditionally focussed on small groups of individuals, often providing access and opportunities for second-chance adult learners to re-engage with the education system that may have failed them in adolescence. This traditional focus continues but this research has revealed that there is a need for ACE to move beyond practices that concentrate on homogenous equity-group based adult learning practices and instead develop experiential, humanist and interaction-ist approaches for planning and facilitating diverse types of adult education programs for varied groups of individuals and communities.

For the more established migrants, ACE did indeed assist them to build up their social networks, often helping them to expand existing ones by connecting them to new networks. However, this network development often involved other marginalised people (and some less marginalised) all of whom fitted into the 'hard to get to' category of ACE philosophies and programs. This represents a good start, a good re-entry point for these individuals and did lead to friendships and contacts that persisted beyond participation in ACE. Meaningful social capital was developed for this group via their participation in ACE, yet more longitudinal studies on this topic could establish that this social capital is enduring and reaps personal, social and economic benefits.

Today's adult learning practices need to encompass a mix of focussed and flexible learning processes and resources including classroom instruction, mentoring, social and cultural activities, community networking and workplace training. ACE providers and facilitators need to be given the chance to 'see' what their local communities need, to 'see' who their target groups are. An ACE practitioner then needs a national strategy of professional development that builds their skills in managing diverse adult learning in a range of community contexts and assists them to design, develop and facilitate experiential learning programs that honour curriculum frameworks and also acknowledge individual and sub-group adult education motivations, perceptions and needs.

Social inclusion is a complex concept in a culturally and linguistically diverse society such as Australia. It means having to engage with numerous sub-groups from many and varied cultural backgrounds which have had diverse and often traumatic migration experiences. The challenge for government-funded agencies and services is to be able to 'see' the changing diversities of their local communities and be able

to find the flexibility to 'mingle' and network with these sub-groups; to be able to 'know' what they need and then be able to negotiate a way to provide services and resources that meet their needs and also contribute to the building of community capacity and cohesion, and ultimately to the development of social and human capital.

ACE participation is not readily translating into the building of social capital in localised community contexts. Race and culture, as experiences of community and as indicators of community cohesion and social inclusion, have been absent from the social capital debate. ACE as the fount of government-based education and training can be experienced as a form of social control and social reproduction, but it does have the potential to act as an agent of social relationship building and social cohesion.

There is a need in Australian society to examine the ACE sector as part of a national social policy framework because through its varied provision of adult education and training it has the capacity to foster social relationships in diverse communities. In addition, a national funding framework could be orientated to groups based on transition experiences rather than a limited notion of equity. There is a need for a national ACE philosophy that creates shared meaning and purpose for a national network of ACE providers which can adapt and service local communities. A diverse Australian society needs a national ACE sector able to help people develop economic *and* social relationships in a community context.

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Appendices

1. *Adult Education Spaces & Places*
2. *Demographic data from Vignettes*
3. *Indigenous Vignettes*
4. *Survey for Adult Education Staff*
5. *Survey for Individual Learners*
6. *Research project flier*
7. *Information for participants*
8. *Consent form*

Appendix # 1

ACE spaces & places in Campaspe

Within the Shire of Campaspe, ACE providers and Neighbourhood Houses are known by many different names. These names include: community houses, living and learning centres, neighbourhood centres, learning centres and community cottages. Whatever the name, these places are local organisations that provide social, educational and recreational activities for their communities in a welcoming supportive environment. Neighbourhood houses are managed by volunteer committees and paid staff and they offer many opportunities for volunteer participation in all aspects of the house activities and management.

The original purpose of the Campaspe Shire funding to neighbourhood houses was to help meet the Department of Human Services shortfall in hours and to provide some equity of service to the Shire's various centres. At present, houses operate across the Shire in Echuca, Rochester, Rushworth, Tongala, Girgarre, Stanhope, Kyabram and Lockington. The Campaspe Shire partnership with these service providers is a successful one with good communication through the service provider networks, Recreation Services Coordinator, Community Development Officer, Rural Access Worker, Arts & Culture Coordinator and the Campaspe Safety Committee.

The purpose of funds to ACE as neighbourhood house is to provide an efficient and effective range of services and programs ensuring support and equality of access to the people of Campaspe Shire. These programs will maximise the health, educational, employment, leisure and recreational opportunities of residents. Strategies jointly identified by Council and the Neighbourhood Houses include:

- To identify service gaps in the Community and where appropriate trial projects and co-ordinate local programs.
- To maintain links with Campaspe Community Planning Members.
- Promote networking between key service providers, local and regional.
- Provide a referral and information service for residents in need.
- To participate Campaspe Shire wide activities, initiated by the Shire, in conjunction with other members of the Neighbourhood House Network.
- Be involved in Community Development.
- To promote volunteering.

There is general agreement that Community Houses are all unique because they respond to the needs of their own local area, most communities seeing themselves as having individual characteristics.   Each place has an environment where individuals can develop a strong sense of self worth. These individuals then make better family members and, hopefully, better participants at a community level. Community based ACE spaces are places of safety, places where people can strive for self actualisation, gain a warm sense of belonging, houses being small and personal, a place to learn English or further education and places that encourage people to thrive rather than just survive.

Some of the difficulties that ACE spaces face have been: **suitability of venue.** Venues can range from big to small: from country house to city flat: from purpose-built buildings to shop front: from old to modern. Some are located in churches, others in historic buildings, while others again, share their room with other Council or community organisations. Venue often determines growth, atmosphere and the types of programs that can be run.

Geographical: the age of the neighbourhood can strongly influence the attitudes and involvement of participants. The extent of support and degree of isolation can strongly affect the ability of a House and its Committee to rise out of "survival mode" and be pro-active and forward thinking. **Transport**: the proximity of a House to public transport can influence participation levels. The availability of private transport in some areas can also result in differences in who does or does not participate. **Mobility**: the stability of home occupancy and the mobility of residents can have a marked effect on the atmosphere at a House. This can require high energy to cope with management changes, but many Houses in transient areas can be very dynamic and maintain a very positive atmosphere.

 The concept of supportive networks has always played a pivotal part in the Neighbourhood House movement. Coordinators tend to look to their colleagues and the networks for personal support because they all work many more hours than they can be paid for. The struggles are often severely challenging, and there is constant need for "brain storming" and support. Networks can be a means of providing affirmation of endeavours and direction. Co-ordinators frequently find themselves in small organisations where they are isolated from peer support. Typically the main funding bodies in Victoria are the State Department of Human

Services (Health and Community Services), the Adult Community and Further Education Board (ACFEB), and local government. External funding supplements user-pays fees and charges, but there remains a typically strong emphasis on fund raising.

The research found that there were changes occurring locally in the ACE sector in the Shire of Campaspe with a re-positioning of the types of programs some providers were offering with some organisations having serious governance and management issues to contend with. There was a perception amongst ACE staff that these changes would take a couple of years to settle, however, in the short-term this sector was in danger of contracting with ACFE regional office in Bendigo questioning the total contact hours being funded and the types of programs being offered in Campaspe compared to the Loddon and Mallee regions of Victoria which are regions also expanding and diversifying.

Adult education institutions in regional areas have experienced mixed support and limited success over the past twenty years in Australia. Adult education and training has diversified to such an extent that many regional areas in Australia now host a university campus, a major TAFE Institute and a plethora of community based adult education providers and enterprise based vocational training organisations. The Loddon Campaspe region of Victoria is no different however this research revealed some recent and worrying changes to the adult education and training landscape.

In the Higher Education (HE) sector, the School of Education of Victoria University closed its Echuca campus in 2006 because of the expenses involved in hosting a small regional shopfront campus. La Trobe University has campuses at Bendigo and Shepparton and in 2006 announced a comprehensive review of all its Victorian regional campus operations because of the perception (and reality) that the main Melbourne operations of the university are subsidising regional programs. Therefore as of 2007, there will no HE programs within the Shire of Campaspe and no plans by any university or other institutions to offer any undergraduate programs in Echuca. It can then be readily concluded that the HE sector is contracting in this region.

The Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector is in a much stronger position with Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT) being the main regional provider with a new, small campus located in the centre of the retail district of Echuca. There are many smaller industry based vocational training providers in the region including numerous job network organisations. Most Adult community education (ACE) organisations are also Registered Training Organisations (RTO) delivering numerous industry specific VET programs such as community services, hospitality and small business operations. This sector is clearly expanding in the region and is the dominant adult education sector in terms of the volume of adult education and training resources, programs and student contact outcomes.

The ACE sector in Campaspe consists of one large provider and many smaller, community and neighbourhood type providers. VET programs are the main orientation for the funding and delivery of programs (ACFE: 2006) and there is increasing specialisation within this sector, with most ACE organisations targeting particular groups such as Indigenous, youth, 45+ group or women returning to work. Interestingly, no ACE provider is specifically targeting people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds despite this group being a 'target' of Victorian ACFE policy and funding (ACFE: 2006).

There is a lack of networking within ACE provision in Campaspe which has resulted in a lack of cooperation and partnerships between ACE organisations despite encouragement from Victorian Government policies and the Loddon Mallee ACFE regional board for more partnerships in adult education and training provision across all regions (ACFE: 2006). The research attempted to determine how adult education providers in Campaspe were meeting the needs of people from CALD backgrounds and discovered a diversity of targeted groups and program areas that were dependent on the place and space of each ACE provider.

Echuca Neighbourhood House (ENH) services people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, mostly women, people who have experienced physical or psychological trauma and people experiencing social isolation and specific life transitions. ENH operates a drop-in philosophy that aims to welcome people of all age groups, genders and abilities into an environment where information, education and support are readily available. It is situated in a house away from the main business district and in the south western area (lower socio-economic) of Echuca. It offers Monday community lunches and other activities that simply aim to bring people together to foster social interaction.

Campaspe College of Adult Education (CCAE) delivers programs mainly to women wanting to return to the workforce and mostly in hospitality and community services industry areas. It operates as a 'college' type organisation with formal structures and processes in an old school building which 'feels' institutional, with many rooms and long dark hallways. Interestingly, the general adult education, literacy and numeracy and ESL programs are coordinated and delivered in a portable building (looks like a shed) near the car park, out the back of the main CCAE brick building. In 2006 nearly 80% of all programs delivered at Campaspe College of Adult Education (CCAE) were VET orientated. CCAE developed and coordinated an after school hours child care program during 2006, responding to a perceived need and gap for this social service delivery in Echuca. A new AMEP funded English language tutoring service commenced in the second half of 2006.

Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT) delivers the majority of its VET programs aimed at the needs of local industries and businesses, the exceptions are the general education and Koori programs which offer a range of services to the local Indigenous community in consultation with the Local Aboriginal Education Group (LAEG). The Koorie programs commenced as general education (CGEA) a few years ago but are now very much focussed on vocational outcomes via art and design and business management. It is important to note here that both ENH and CCAE had no Indigenous participants in any of their programs at the time of this research.

BRIT is the main English language program provider in the region, however, all programs are delivered at Bendigo campus with intermittent access by people living in Echuca and surrounding towns. The profile of people accessing ESL at Bendigo BRIT includes people from China (including Hong Kong and Taiwan), Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Thailand and the Philippines being the majority of recent arrivals via skilled migration, sponsorship or long term residency.

There are smaller numbers of people from Korea, Poland, Russia and Polynesian countries. There are a couple of older people (Greek and Turkish) who access ESL in Bendigo and a few who travel up to 90 minutes to access the program. For most, this is their first English language program having either migrated directly to this region or relocating soon after arriving in Melbourne. The delivery of ESL programs in this region is complicated by the provider of ESL in Shepparton (Goulburn Ovens TAFE) being the partner with Adult Multicultural Education Services in the Victorian consortium to deliver ESL programs. Goulburn Ovens TAFE has coverage of the regional area which includes Echuca but doesn't offer any specific programs at this time. Individuals with DIMIA funding can also access OTEN and private tutoring in English with each person allocated 510 hours for tutoring and this can be used at any accredited provider.

AMES believes that many migrants in rural and regional Victoria are not having their needs met and perceive the need for research and development in many communities in Victoria to ascertain actual ESL needs and delivery options. The gaps in service identified by the ESL coordinator at BRIT include verbal and written English tuition for professional purposes, that is, people who have had overseas qualifications recognized and/or updated and are working in professional environments and require short-term or ongoing English language support.

Murray Human Services (MHS) is a provider of day care, residential care, respite, employment services and advocacy for people with disabilities. MHS delivers it services to people with physical, psychological and learning disabilities: these are very specific target groups requiring particular education programs delivered in a specific manner. This organisation is situated close to the hospital and health precinct of Echuca and in a building that resembles a house, an environment that encourages people to visit and participate in programs.

MHS is in the midst of expanding its ACE and VET program delivery to cover what is perceived as shortfalls in general education and vocational preparation for adults with disabilities and workplace training for people who work in the disabilities services sector. MHS is currently liaising with the Victorian Departments of Human Services, Victorian Communities and the Office of Training and Tertiary Education to research and develop the delivery of more adult education and training programs for the disability services sector in the Murray Mallee region. It delivered an expanded general education program, new vocational preparation programs and several industry VET programs in 2007.

Mirrimbeena Aboriginal Education Group (Winner 2007 Koorie Acheievement Award ACFE) Mirrimbeena Aboriginal Education Group is actively engaged in responding the need for Koorie people to be independent and offers participants the opportunity to actively participate in their choice of learning and employment. The group seeks out partnership opportunities to extend the range of services and options for the community. This has included partnering with Rushworth Community House to provide a mechanics and panel beating program in their facilities. Despite being over an hour away from Echuca the course has a waiting list of eager participants: helped by the fact that two former participants now run a small engine repair business from home. Mirrimbeena has also completed projects to develop and promote an understanding of Aboriginal Art and culture.

Kyabram Community Learning Centre (KCLC) underwent significant change in the late 1990s to become a multi-functional community based learning organisation and currently operates to consolidate its range of education and social program and activities. Kyabram Community Learning Centre is the facilitator of the regional ACE cluster and also participates regularly in state-wide research about ACE provision. KCLC targets people experiencing long term unemployment in numerous communities surrounding this rural township in Campaspe. Many of their programs are about readiness for work and mainly for women returning to work and men in the 45 + age group with many families in this region experiencing high unemployment due to the loss of manufacturing and agricultural industry. KCLC also acts as a general community centre, offering child care, counselling, financial aid and other general welfare services not usually offered by an ACE provider.

Appendix # 2: Demographic data from Vignettes

The following replicates the demographic details associated with the fifteen individuals interviewed for this research.

Id	Marital Status	Cultural Background	Age	Female	Male	Decade arrived in Australia	Length of residence in Echuca
Early Wave Migrants							
Connie	Single	Italian	43	F		1960s	12 years
George	Single	Chinese	50		M	1970s	13 years
Hanna	Separated	Ukrainian	42	F		-	15 years
Reba	Widow	Filippino	38	F		1990s	10 years
Liz	Divorced	Maltese	52	F		1950s	6 years
Kon	Single	Greek	58		M	1970s	8 years
Marie	Divorced	Dutch	46	F		1960s	9 years
Recently Arrived Migrants							
Minh	Married	Taiwanese	35	F		1990s	8 years
Phuong	Married	Vietnamese	26	F		2000s	2 years
Arosha	Married	Sri Lankan	36	F		2000s	2 years
Ollie	Married	Russian	24	F		2000s	3 years
Lena	Married	Balinese	28	F		2000s	2 years
Marie	Divorced	Dutch	46	F		1960s	9 years

Id	Marital Status	Cultural Background	Age	Female	Male	Decade arrived in Australia	Length of residence in Echuca
		Other Individuals from Culturally Diverse Backgrounds					
Alva	Separated	Wamba Wamba	38	F		-	12 years
Vera	Separated	Yorta Yorta	42	F		-	10 years
-	Single	Anglo-German	24	F		-	17 years
		Totals	**15**	**13**	**2**		

Appendix # 3: Indigenous Vignettes

The following two Vignettes were transcribed from interviews with two Indigenous women attending Koorie programs at BRIT in Echuca. It has been decided to reproduce these vignettes because of the commonalities in issues and experiences between Indigenous women and migrant women, that is, the experiences of women (and men) from 'culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds' living in Echuca. This diversity is something they have in common, as well as the experiences of being socially and economically isolated.

E06 - Alva

Alva completed the survey in March 2006 and then an interview was conducted in April to collect more data. The data was written up and sent to Alva for her comments.

Alva is female and of Indigenous (Wamba Wamba?) ancestry, Alva was *born and bred in Swan Hill.* Alva described her main language as broken English or *Koori English.* Alva has two children who are now aged 14 and 16.

Alva lives in Echuca because she has family members and close friends living there and because *there are better facilities (Koori) for self and children, more programs, better for the kids.* Alva has lived in Echuca since 1994, for 12 years.

Alva has been an active member of the local community being a member and volunteer for the Njernda Aboriginal Corporation, Alva has also been a past director and staff member. Alva currently works part time as an Aboriginal Educator at Echuca East Primary School.

Alva has worked in mental health and other programs with local Indigenous groups and this experience had led her to adult education and training.

Alva made a plan, *four years ago, to plan to own a Bed and Breakfast and art gallery in Echuca.*

I tried getting funding from Arts Victoria as an artist but there are too many barriers, you have to be an established artist and other barriers. Later when the kids move on, if they move on, you know, this is my plan for retiring, for doing something.

Alva has participated in many adult education and vocational programs, a Bar Course at Campaspe College of Adult Education and at the Koori Centre at BRIT in Echuca, Koori Art and Design *(since the beginning, about 8 years)*, Computers, Sewing, Hospitality and History. *I also tried pottery at Bendigo for 6 months but with the kids it was too much travel.*

Alva didn't complete the Bar Course at CCAE because *there was a death in the community, it hit me hard, I missed a few weeks and I thought I couldn't be able to continue, I didn't go back.*

It was easier and cheaper to access TAFE here, through Centrelink, on the parent's payment. There's no koori unit at the College, it was a big step going there but it was just easier to come here.

Here, I don't have to explain myself if something goes wrong or something happens, they know.

Alva has attended BRIT to gain new qualifications, learn new skills and expand her network of contacts in the community.

Here it's homely, our own area, a lot more acceptance. With our own mob, learning from each other, supporting each other.

When things get tough, people support you, Vicki and Paul understand about culture. His (Paul's) *personality means things are set, like curriculum, but he lets you go off on your own pathway, do your own activity.*

With drawing we are doing at the moment, he teaches us what he needs to teach us and then lets us go off and do what we want.

Alva is clear that the adult education and training programs she is doing is leading her toward her goal of opening a Bed and Breakfast, the courses are all linked to this goal,

I need to do a course in B & B and tourism like over the road (CCAE) *but want to do it here, I've spoken with Vix about it, I've done a bit of research about tourism, the numbers who come here and that, but there is no Indigenous place, B & B or gallery, there are galleries but not by us.*

Alva describes the outcomes of her adult education and training experiences has helping her to acquire new qualifications, learning news skills for work, knowing more about education and training providers and learning more about employment opportunities in the local area.

When asked about the future, Alva said, *the art course will help with a solo exhibition in Melbourne, and some locally, it would be good to do it locally but it all happens in Melbourne.*

I need to keep on about the courses I need to do, B & B and tourism, for me and the community.

Vix has plans for the old co-op building to be a restaurant and gallery, so that might be the next step for me, might be able to work there, as a way of getting more skills, cooking and that, the tourism part of it.

E07 - Vera

Vera completed the survey in March 2006 and then an interview was conducted in April to collect more data. The data was written up and sent to Vera for her comments.

Vera is female and of Indigenous (Yorta Yorta) ancestry, Vera was born in Mooroopna, raised in Barmah and had lived in Shepparton before moving to Echuca 10 years ago. Vera described her main languages as *Koorie and English*. Vera has two children who are now aged 15 and 11.

Vera lives in Echuca because she has family members and close friends living there, she wants to live in a regional town, enjoys the environment, wants to get a job or open a business and believes it is more affordable than other places. *It's closer to Barmah where I was raised.*

Vera is a member of the Njernda Aboriginal Corporation but not really involved in an active way. Vera has attended BRIT's Koorie education unit for 4 years part time and has completed courses in Koorie Art and Design (levels 1 – 4), a Certificate in Art and Design and is currently (2006) completing a Diploma in Art and Design. Vera has participated in these programs because she wants new qualifications, wants to learn new skills, wants to expand her network of community contacts, wants to make more informed decision about relevant issues, wants to be more informed and wants to make new friends. Also to *give back to the community and the Indigenous community.*

Vera sees her future with *an art and design business, a small business, selling, I am more into making art and use the course to advance my art, new techniques, my art has changed, it changes every year. There is a lot of interest in my art and design work, I enter design for things like book covers and get recognised that way.*

Vera learns in many ways, in a classroom, workplaces, at home, one to one tutoring and as she goes along.

I did drawing at home by myself before starting the courses but I have got a lot out of the course, finding my own style and techniques but the biggest hurdle is finding confidence.

Vera believe she has got what she wanted out these courses, new qualifications, new skills, new contacts, more informed to make decisions, made new friends and knows more about local issues, *community issues, it gives you the get up and go, you take the social issues into your art, if you feel strongly about something you put it into your art, I mould it, paint it* (the issue), *its inspiration.*

Building confidence is the biggest, really huge, I find in Aboriginal communities this is the biggest hurdle. Its about identity, who they are, it comes out in the art group. I have made friendships here, we sit down and have a laugh and communicate. It comes from meeting people, different personalities, if I am at home, I am not finding the personalities to have to cope with.

My style comes from my heritage, Yorta Yorta, the long neck turtle is the totem, I use it. Confidence comes from the art work, knowing that you can tell stories, they can learn from it, my biggest thing is that people learn about the land, the young people need to learn.

Vera is planning to participate in a (BRIT) class exhibition in Melbourne, *its about planning for something where people can see your art, you have to go to Melbourne not many people buy here in Echuca, you get your art put in windows but people don't buy. We get to plan where the space is and what we have to do to get people to see our art, its just Victoria, I suppose we should get out there more, move over the border but I am not sure if anyone is interested in our style of art.*

Not sure, but we have to plan for it (exhibitions) *with groups of people like here* (BRIT). *It gets us out there, learning about how to do it.*

Taking the courses has led me into a better direction, I know what directions are there, I know you're allowed to go there....

Appendix # 4

Survey for Adult Education Staff

Survey of Adult Education & Training Experiences
(ACE Staff)

* Name ....

* Contact Details ....

   * These details are optional and will not be used in the research. These details will
   only be used to talk to you further about the information you have contributed.

_____

1   Are you:

    ☐ Female   ☐ Male

2   What is your cultural background (were you or your parents born overseas, if yes, which country)?

    ....

3   What languages do you speak?

    ....

4   What is your religion?

    ....

    ....

5   Do you think that Echuca is made up of people from diverse cultures, if yes, what kinds of cultures are present?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

....
....
....
....

6   What adult education and training programs have you implemented in Echuca in the past 5 years?

....
....
....
....
....

7   Which of these programs have people from different cultures participating in them?

....
....
....
....

8   Why you do think people from different cultures accessed these adult education and training courses? Tick as many as apply,

☐ they wanted new or updated qualifications.

☐ they wanted to learn new skills about their current job.

☐ they wanted to learn new skills to help them get a new job.

☐ they wanted to expand their network of contacts in the community.

☐ they wanted to be able to make more informed decisions about certain issues (personal, parental, financial etc).

☐ they wanted to be more informed views about local issues.

☐ they wanted to make new friends.

☐ Other reasons, please state:

....

....

....

....

9   What do you think have been the outcomes of these adult education and training programs for the participants?

☐ they improved their health because of what they learnt.

☐ they know more about education and learning providers and programs in the local area.

☐ they have more employment opportunities in the local area because of new knowledge and skills.

☐ they have more contacts in the community.

☐ they have improved the quality of their working life.

☐ they have more time and leisure because they earn more and work less.

☐ they know more about buying goods and accessing services in the local area.

10   What do you think are the contributions of adult education and training programs to the Echuca community?

☐ economic outcomes like more employment, business etc.

☐ social outcomes like more contact between people.

☐ more cultural activities that help people to get to know each other.

☐ political activities like lobbying for change or new resources etc.

please state any specific outcomes that you might know about,

....

....

11 What role do you think adult education and training providers play in the Echuca community?

☐ they just provide education and training.

☐ they provide venues and resources for social & cultural activities.

☐ they provide venues and resources for political activities.

☐ they host volunteers and other non-paid activities.

please state any others specific activities that you might know about,

....

....

....

12 In an ideal world, what would you do differently to engage people from different cultures into adult education and training programs?

☐ new or different kinds of programs.

☐ more social and cultural events.

☐ more community events.

Please give some examples

....

....

Thank you

Rob Townsend (ph: 5487 1557)

Appendix # 5

Survey for Individual Learners

Survey of Adult Education & Training Experiences

(ACE Learners)

* Name ....

* Contact Details ....

  * These details are optional and will not be used in the research. These details will only be used to talk to you further about the information you have contributed.

_____

1   Are you:

☐ Female   ☐ Male

2   What is your cultural background (were you or your parents born overseas, if yes, which country)?

....

....

3   What languages do you speak?

....

....

4   What is your religion?

....

5   Why do you live in Echuca?

☐ I moved here to get a job.

☐ I moved here to open a business.

☐ I enjoy the environment (river, forests, weather etc).

☐ I wanted to live in a regional town rather than a large city.

☐ It is more affordable here than other places.

☐ I have family members living here.

☐ I have close friends living here.

☐ Other reasons, please state:

....

....

6   Are you an active member of any local groups or associations? If yes, which ones?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

....

7   Tick the types of adult education and training providers you have attended in the time you have lived in Echuca,

☐ TAFE Institute   ☐ College of Adult Education

☐ Neighbourhood House   ☐ Neighbourhood House

☐ Private training company ☐ University of the 3rd Age

☐ Other, please state

8   What adult education and training courses have you participated in while living in Echuca? Please include all courses whether they be for work, personal or recreation reasons,

   1 ....

   2 ....

   3 ....

   4 ....

   5 ....

   6 ....

9   Why did you do these adult education and training courses? Tick as many as apply to you.

   ☐ I wanted new qualifications (Certificate, Diploma, Degree etc).

   ☐ I wanted to learn new skills about my current job.

   ☐ I wanted to learn new skills to help get a new job.

   ☐ I wanted to expand my network of contacts in the community.

   ☐ I wanted to be able to make more informed decisions about certain issues (personal, parental, financial etc).

   ☐ I wanted more informed views about local issues.

   ☐ I wanted to make new friends.

   ☐ Other reasons, please state:

   ....

10 What types of learning experiences have you had while living in Echuca? Tick all the types of learning you have experienced,

☐ Learning in a classroom.

☐ Learning in a workplace.

☐ Learning over the internet (on-line or e-learning).

☐ Learning at home with materials sent to me (distance education).

☐ One-to-one tutoring.

☐ I just learn things as I go along.

11 What did you get out of each course? Tick every one that applies to your experiences,

☐ I acquired new qualifications (Certificate, Diploma, Degree etc).

☐ I decided to do more courses.

☐ I learnt new skills for my current job.

☐ I learnt new skills to help me get a new job.

☐ I made new contacts within the local community.

☐ I am able to make more informed decisions about certain issues (personal, parental, financial etc).

☐ I made new friends who I now see on a regular basis.

☐ I know more about cultural diversity and other local issues.
    What were the local issues you learned more about?

12   What have been the outcomes of your adult education and training experiences in Echuca?

☐ I have improved health because of what I learnt.

☐ I know more about education and learning providers and programs in my local area.

☐ I have more employment opportunities in my local area because of new knowledge and skills.

☐ I have more contacts in the community.

☐ I have improved the quality of my working life, I am happier at work.

☐ I have more time and leisure because I earn more and work less.

☐ I have more time and leisure because I have made different decisions about using my time.

☐ I know more about buying goods and accessing services in my local area.

☐ I feel like I have more friends that I can rely on.

13   Are there any other comments you want to make about your adult education and training experiences in Echuca?

....

....

....

Thank you

Rob Townsend (ph: 5487 1557)

Appendix # 6

Research project flier

Stories of Adult Education and Training experiences in Echuca

Would you like to be part of a study of people from different cultures and their experiences of adult education and training programs in Echuca?

The aim of the research is to understand the education and training experiences of people from diverse cultural backgrounds in rural and regional communities.

The project is collecting stories about education and training experiences using interviews and your own auto-biography to explore your experiences (good and bad) of any education and training programs.

All information you choose to contribute is <u>CONFIDENTIAL</u>

These programs could have been at a Neighbourhood House, Adult & Community Education (ACE) provider, a TAFE, a training company, at work or where ever.

*If you grew up in a family from a specific or diverse cultural background and/ or speak a language other than English as your main language and have participated in education and/ or training programs, **We Want Your Story.***

The research aims to explore the impact on communities and the effect on individuals of access and equity strategies in adult education and training in a rural context.

**If you want more information or would like to take part in this research project, call me,
Rob Townsend on 5487 1557.**

I live in Gunbower so it's only a local call!!

**or email me at
<u>Robert.Townsend@research.vu.edu.au</u>
School of Education, Victoria University**

Appendix # 7

Information for participants

Name

Address

Date

Your participation in this research project will involve being interviewed by me at least once, at a time and place that is convenient to you. ***Please note***, *you are able to withdraw from the research at any time, with any information you have disclosed, returned to you and/or destroyed.*

You can choose for your input to be confidential and private by being anonymous, for example we can use descriptors rather your real name and place of work. If you have any concerns about your identity being revealed by the content of the research, your input will only be included in a general manner and your information will not be utilised for specific portraits or narratives.

You will be given the opportunity to edit the summaries of information you provide to the research. These will be sent to you when they are ready sometime in 2006 and I will then negotiate to talk to you about your particular summary. If you feel unsure or uneasy about any aspects of the process, please contact me at any stage of the research process.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please call or email me so we can discuss your participation, my contact details are on the '*Information for Participants'* flier. Thanking you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Townsend
PhD Candidate
School of Education

Appendix # 8

Consent form

Consent Form for People Involved in Research

You are invited to be a part of a study into *education and training programs for access and equity groups in Echuca (see attached information sheet).*

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

I, *(name)*

of *(address)*

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study entitled: **Australian Adult Education and Training Policy and its Impact on Community Capability** being conducted at Victoria University of Technology by *Rob Townsend & Dr Merryn Davies*

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by *Rob Townsend* and that I freely consent to participate in the research.

Research processes = *Interviews.*

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way. I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed: **..**   **Date: ....**

Witness other than the researcher:

..   **Date: ....**

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to **Rob Townsend,   03 5487 1557** or the Principal Investigator, **Dr. Merryn Davies, 03 9919 5456**
If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Secretary, University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, PO Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9919 4710).