RELOCATION STORIES: EXPERIENCES OF INDIGENOUS FOOTBALLERS IN THE AFL

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#### ABSTRACT

Moving away from home to embark on a career at an elite level involves the individual within a broader social ecology where a range of factors influence the dynamic transition. In 2000, Indigenous and non-Indigenous past and present AFL footballers and AFL administrative staff suggested that relocation was one of the issues faced by Indigenous AFL footballers. The focus of the current study was to learn about relocation and settlement experiences from the perspectives of 10 Indigenous Australian AFL footballers, examining the social, cultural, organisational, and psychological challenges. Five participants were drafted to the AFL within 12 months, and five participants were drafted to the AFL prior to 2002. Participants were listed players from seven Victorian AFL clubs. Interviews were also conducted with eight representatives (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) from organisations associated with the AFL. Players were asked questions about their own relocation and settlement experiences. Secondary informants were asked questions about their involvement with Indigenous players relocating and their perception of the relocation process for Indigenous players in the AFL. Interviews were semi-structured and conversational in style and analysed for unique and recurring themes using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Each of the stories reflected subtle differences experienced during relocation, highlighting the importance and value of using a phenomenological and qualitative framework to understand each player's perspective and experiences of relocation. The findings demonstrated both facilitative and barrier factors influencing the relocation, settlement, and adaptation experiences. These included opportunity and social mobility, social support and kindredness, culture shock, and racism and homogeneity. Each player's story about relocation and subsequent settlement and adaptation, highlighted the importance of family, connection, and kindredness as an overarching theme. The findings emphasise the need for receiving environments, in this case the AFL, to treat every player on an individual basis rather than grouping them into a collective. It is essential that a player is understood in relation to his socio-cultural context. The AFL has implemented significant

changes to welcome cultural diversity, but as a mainstream organisation, it has been developed within mainstream values. Just as society in general needs to acknowledge Australian history and the overall discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous opportunities and living standards, the AFL has to continue to de-institutionalise stereotypes and increase the cultural awareness of all groups to continue being a forerunner of progressive race relations. The current study represents an important initial step in the identification and description of the relocation processes from the vantage point of Indigenous footballers.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	Page 2
LIST OF APPENDICES	Page 6
LIST OF TABLES	Page 7
LIST OF PHOTOS	Page 8
DECLARATION	Page 9
DEDICATION	Page 10
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Page 11
PREAMBLE	Page 12
A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY	Page 14
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	Page 16
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION Rationale for Thesis	Page 17 <i>22</i>
CHAPTER 2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW Brief Historical Overview Meaning and Role of Sport in Indigenous Communities	Page 26 <i>26</i> <i>31</i>
CHAPTER 3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE Transition, Identity and Culture Culture Research in Sport Psychology Relocation Culture Shock Adaptation and Settlement Social Mobility and Opportunity Racism and Homogeneity Social Supports and Social Networks	Page 39 39 41 42 48 49 52 53
CHAPTER 4 ETHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS Qualitative Research Methodological Framework Collaborative Research Cultural Competence Cultural Reflexivity Personal Reflexivity	Page 59 63 64 65 67 68 69

CHAPTER 5	
METHODS	Page 72
Design	72
Instruments and Process	73
Participant Recruitment	74
Participants	75 75
Procedure	73 77
Ethical Considerations	77 79
	80
Data Analysis	00
CHAPTER 6	
FINDINGS	Page 83
Relocation Stories	87
Adaptation and Settlement	99
Growth, Coping, Dreaming, and Aspiring	100
Social Support and Kindredness	105
Culture Shock and Lack of Indigenous Visibility in AFL Club	116
Racism and Homogeneity	120
CHAPTER 7	
DISCUSSION	Page 126
Summary of Findings	126
Opportunity and Social Mobility	128
Social Support and Kindredness	130
Culture Shock	135
Racism and Homogeneity	138
METHODOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS	141
Reflecting on the Evolution of the Research	141
A Change in Direction	141
Limitations	144
Future Directions for Research	145
Conclusion	145
REFERENCES	Page 152

# LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER	Page 173
APPENDIX B LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER	Page 174
APPENDIX C LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER	Page 175
APPENDIX D INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS	Page 176
APPENDIX E CONSENT FORM	Page 177
APPENDIX F LETTER OF DISCLOSURE APPENDIX G GUIDE QUESTIONS: RECENTLY DRAFTED RECRUITS	Page 178 Page 180
APPENDIX H GUIDE QUESTIONS: ESTABLISHED PLAYERS	Page 181
APPENDIX I GUIDE QUESTIONS: SECONDARY INFORMANTS	Page 182
APPENDIX J TABLE OUTLINING STEPS OF RESEARCH	Page 183
APPENDIX K S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS	Page 184
APPENDIX L EMAIL SENT FROM HWT TO CONFIRM USE OF HWT PHOTO	Page 185

# LIST OF TABLES

ble 1	Page 36
Number of Men of Known Aboriginal descent listed between the years	of 1904-2007
ble 2	Page 77
Introducing Recently Drafted Indigenous Australian Football Players	
ble 3	Page 77
Introducing Established Indigenous Australian Footballers	
ble 4	Page 183
Building Collaborative Research Processes	
ble 5	Page 184
S.W.O.T. Analysis	

# LIST OF PHOTOS

PhotoPag
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Nicky Winmar: Victoria Park

Indigenous Relocation in the AFL

9

## **DECLARATION**

I, Emma Elizabeth Campbell, declare that the Doctor of Psychology thesis entitled "Relocation Stories: Experiences of Indigenous Footballers in the AFL" is (45,911) words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, 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.

Signature: Date: 25th August, 2008

## **DEDICATION**

Challenge oppression.

Take a stand against it....Do not expect that people of colour should teach you how to behave non-oppressively....Work on racism for your sake, not 'their' sake.

Assume that you are needed and capable of being a good ally.

Know that you'll make mistakes and commit yourself to correcting them and continuing on as an ally, no matter what.

Don't give up".

Yamato, 1990

I dedicate this thesis to Rose, Michael, Ken, R.A. (Rest in Peace), and all of the participants, for their stories.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First, I acknowledge the sovereignty of the Wurundjeri people, the First Nations people, and traditional custodians upon whose land I live in Melbourne, Victoria.

I cannot adequately thank my parents, Frank and Rosemary Campbell, for their support, encouragement, love, and belief. The three of us know I could not have completed this study without them; I love them to bits and know how fortunate I am to have them in my life for 33 years. My love and appreciation of my partner Toby Lumsden is unexplainable, he is so patient and relaxed, a welcome relief when I have been operating at the other end of the continuum.

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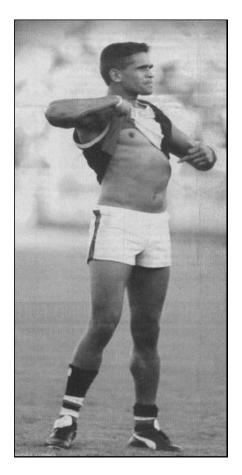
Critical to this thesis was the guidance and input from three wonderful cultural consultants;
Rose Gilby, Ken Knight, and Michael Gilby, thank you for vouching for me.

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### PREAMBLE: THE TICKET

On the 17th April 1993, I stood in the outer at Victoria Park and witnessed a pivotal moment of Indigenous involvement in the AFL. Nicky Winmar faced the Collingwood cheer squad, lifted his jumper, pointed to his skin declaring, "I'm black and I'm proud to be black". Winmar, best on ground, was the focus of atrocious verbal abuse regarding his colour and racial identity. Winmar later said, "It was one of the best things I did. It will always be there. I mean, it's history" (Ahmed, 2003, p.20).



Picture: Wayne Ludbey (Courtesy of the Herald & Weekly Times Ltd).

Two years later, after an AFL game, I celebrated in the Collingwood social club. The atmosphere in the bar was charged, almost electric; it usually is when my team wins. There was one exception and he stood next to me quietly sipping a soft drink. We began talking and before

long, he shared with me his story of sadness, homesickness, loneliness, racial vilification, isolation, fear of not making it in the AFL, and a need to get back home where he felt safe. I was fascinated by his story but also found it difficult to believe that he was unhappy playing with Collingwood. I had never heard of such a thing, it was almost blasphemous. Had I known he was served at the same bar that a former Indigenous AFL legend had been refused and racially excluded, I may have had a more informed understanding of his plight. That brief interlude (13 years passed) was the ticket for my journey and that young Indigenous man showed me to my seat.

### A NOTE ABOUT TERMINOLOGY

The terms 'Aboriginal' and 'Aborigines' were used and continue to be used, to refer to the diverse groups of people indigenous to the landmass of Australia. These linguistic stereotypes are problematic because they disregard diversity and promote homogeneity, classing all peoples as the same and discounting their unique cultural differences. In this thesis, the term "Indigenous" refers to two distinct groups; Mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. "An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as such and is accepted as such by the community in which they live" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998, p.60). For the purpose of this study, the term "Indigenous" will be used. Throughout the findings section the terms "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal" are used interchangeably depending on the language used by the participant.

Therein lies a problem; to use the term 'Indigenous', pigeonholes into one category the many different nations, cultures and places. Informed by Dudgeon, Garvey and Pickett (2000), it is preferable to use the names that reflect each participant and the region they belong such as "Murris, Kooris, Yolngu, Anangu, Palawas, and Noongars" but using these terms would compromise participants' anonymity. As the writer of this thesis, I recognise the diversity within the Indigenous Australian culture. I have chosen to use the term "Indigenous" and "Indigenous Australian" throughout this thesis to protect each participant and adhere to National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines (1992).

A number of terms exist to describe members of the dominant ethnic group; including Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Celtic, and White. To define the dominant group in the current research the term Anglo-Australian will be used. The term *Anglo* is derived from Anglia, the Latin name for England. It refers to any individual who descends from the United Kingdom.

It is also important for me to clarify my use of the word culture and my approach to understanding culture. The term culture can be as generalising as the term Aboriginal or Indigenous. Kluckhohn (cited in Geertz, 1983), defines culture as:

A total way of life of a people; the social legacy the individual acquires from his group; a way of thinking, feeling and believing; an abstraction from behaviour; a theory on the part of the Anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave; a stored house of pooled learning; a set of standardised orientations to recurrent problems; learned behaviour; a mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour; a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and to other people; and a precipitate of history (p. 4).

There are two main points to clarify regarding my use of the word culture. First, I acknowledge that the meaning of culture varies from one person to the next and from one group to the next and diversity exists within cultural groups. Second, I do not claim a privileged view of others but seek to establish a bridge between my own understanding and the understanding of others.

While it is important to acknowledge diversity, there is also a term to describe unity called kindredness. Kindredness is an Aboriginal term of reference used throughout this thesis and described in the following way by Dudgeon and Oxenham (1989),

Note that Kindredness is very hard to describe, it cannot be fully articulated through white words – it is largely an intuitive sense and manifests itself that way. Also, in general, Aboriginal people are aware of this feeling/spirituality but do not verbalise it. Aboriginal people do not usually analyse feelings as whites do, nor conceptualise and verbalise what is "known" intuitively. We believe that kindredness is an implicit depth of feeling/spirituality which transcends our cultural diversity and contributes to the continuing unification of other Aboriginal people (p. 37).

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

AFL Australian Football League

AFLPA Australian Football League Players' Association

AHREOC Australian Human Rights Equal Opportunity Commission

AIHW Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

ATR Aboriginal Terms of Reference

ATSIC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council

NHMRC National Health Medical Research Council

NISATSIC National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander Children

NMA National Museum Australia

PDM Player Development Manager

RCIADIC Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody

VACCHO Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

VAYSR Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation

VFL Victorian Football League

#### **CHAPTER 1**

#### INTRODUCTION

In the year 2000, Sydney, Australia, hosted the games of the 27th Olympiad. To promote the Australian culture in the lead up to the Olympics, Indigenous art in the form of dot paintings could be found adorning the staff uniforms and walls of Qantas aircraft and major Australian hotels, businesses, and tourist destinations. The opening ceremony, showcasing a brilliant 'Dreaming' extravaganza with hundreds of Indigenous dancers moving to the mesmerising sounds of clapsticks and didgeridoos was viewed by hundreds of millions of people around the world. The climax of the opening ceremony for the whole world to witness materialised as sprinter Catherine Freeman received the eternal flame and ran a lap of the Olympic Stadium acknowledging an adoring crowd before connecting the torch to the Olympic Cauldron. Six years later, Melbourne hosted the Commonwealth Games and again Indigenous culture was a centrepiece, focusing on the Wurundjeri lands of the Kulin nations. Wurundjeri people were the first people to occupy the Melbourne area prior to European settlement and they are the present day custodians of the heritage. Celebrations included Indigenous dancers and Indigenous music. It would be fair for a non-Australian to have made the assumption that all Australians, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, accept and celebrate "Indigenous culture" and that unity and racial harmony is an everyday occurrence (Brace, 2001).

If the opening ceremony of either of these events had promoted a more realistic account we may have seen a morbid presentation of Australia's Indigenous people, many living in so-called third world conditions whilst obscured by billboard advertisements such as the 2006 "Where the bloody hell are you?" tourism campaign. A more realistic account would highlight the dichotomy inherent in Australia; calling attention to the health, education, employment and income differences experienced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and provide a more accurate reflection

of how many inadequacies exist in the "Australian Culture" (AHREOC, 2007). This would not be a lucrative angle for Australian tourism.

Disadvantage is an everyday occurrence and has been normalised for Indigenous

Australians. This is reflected in different social, health, and economic indicators. Life expectancy for an Indigenous Australian is approximately 20 years less than their Anglo-Australian counterparts, however Indigenous healthcare and housing have not been adequately addressed (AHREOC, 2007). Indigenous Australians account for 2.4 percent of the Australian population and rates of incarceration, chronic ill health, high rates of unemployment and low levels of participation in education are active contributing factors to the disadvantage experienced by Indigenous

Australians. Notwithstanding the higher suicide rates, denial of land rights, housing deficiencies and the overall community social breakdown which occurs as a result of the aforementioned factors (Hallinan & Judd, 2007; Mellor, 2003; Tatz & Tatz, 1996).

As represented in the opening ceremonies for both the Sydney Olympics and Melbourne Commonwealth Games, sport occupies a distinctive position in Australian society and is often described as a revered activity, with only the outstanding and elite athletes participating (Boyd, 1997). A popular myth about Australians in general is their love for sport and the enduring perception of sport being devoid of any social or political issues that exist outside of sport (Hallinan, Bruce & Coram, 1999). Many sporting metaphors allude to a level playing field encapsulating equal opportunity, justice, and fairness. According to the Australian Sports Commission Act (1989), participation in all Australian sports require the adherence to four principles; fairness, respect, responsibility, and safety. These core principles and values provide an essence for all to strive for in their chosen sport. Sport is a powerful tool for investigating and understanding the complexities and interactions of race, class, religion, and ethnicity. Even though sport is considered a venerated activity in Australia, sport does not exist in a vacuum and to accept the stereotypes associated with

sport we risk perpetuating the racial inequities that result from discrimination and marginalisation (Godwell, 2000).

Sport provides an opportunity to view the mechanics of a society at work. So why don't instances of racism in sport in Australia prompt us to consider the possibility that Australian society is also racist? Much of the frustration of stories on racism in sport lies in the repetitious "he said/she said" nature of 'official' versions, and the transgressions tire at the inferences (Godwell, p. 12).

According to Godwell (2000), sport is one option for Indigenous Australians to gain social mobility and the opportunity to climb the ladder of social improvement. Sport has also provided an escape from the difficult social conditions and, on some occasions, has been a lucrative option. Many Indigenous Australians who have achieved success and excellence remarkably influence Australia's sporting heritage. Sports such as Boxing, AFL, and Rugby League have larger numbers of Indigenous Australians competing in proportion to other sports (Tatz, 1998). Compared with other sports, Indigenous Australians are overrepresented in the AFL suggesting that Indigenous Australians are drawn to Aussie Rules. One may consider the attraction to AFL unexpected considering the game has been rife with racism, both on the field and from the crowd. Sport, the world of "fair play" loved by many Australians, was and is not exempt from racism. Tatz (1998) suggested that Indigenous Australians were drawn to sports such as AFL, boxing, and Rugby League for a variety of reasons including; financial, easier access to stadium sports in comparison with sports conducted in private clubs such as cycling or tennis, lesser class requirements traditionally found in cricket and rowing clubs, and less requirements for expensive sporting equipment. Tatz went on to argue that Indigenous Australians may have also been attracted to AFL, boxing and Rugby, because exclusion based on colour was not as prevalent. Several other reasons include, attraction of money, easier access to "stadium" sports rather than private clubs in sports such as cycling, rowing, and tennis, the popularity of these sports in the community, and increasing number of Indigenous Australian sportspeople as role models (Tatz).

An organisation that has been described as a vanguard of progressive race relations is the AFL according to Godwell (2000). The alleged benefits of the Racial and Religious Vilification Policy implemented in 1995, however, are often exaggerated. Australian Rules football was first played in 1858. The Victorian Football League (VFL), comprising eight clubs, was formed as a breakaway from the Victorian Football Association in 1897. By 1925, the VFL had 12 clubs playing at grounds located in their suburbs. Until the latter part of the 20th century, a vast majority of players came from Melbourne and indeed many from within walking distance of the grounds on which they played, building a very parochial following.

South Melbourne, who had not won a premiership since 1933 and was practically insolvent, was sent in 1982 by the VFL to play home games in Sydney. In 1987, teams from Brisbane and Perth were added to form a 14-team competition. The league expanded slowly over the next decade and by 1997, the league was a 16-team competition with at least one team in every mainland state capital. In acknowledgment of this, the VFL had been renamed the Australian Football League in 1990. The AFL boasts that their "Aussie Rules" is Australia's most popular sport (Sweeney Sports Report, 2007) and dominates in four states and the Northern Territory.

Between 1906 and 1980 the VFL/AFL (hereafter referred to as 'AFL') records mention that only 21 Indigenous Australians played in the VFL. Researchers such as Blake (1998), Gardiner, (2003), and Tatz, (1998) suggested that racist processes, such as racial abuse, "whitening" (for example, "Introducing Lionel Rose, A great Australian!" and State government especially Queensland policies banning Indigenous Australians from playing sport, contributed to the exclusion of talented Indigenous footballers. These authors also suggested that some Indigenous Australian footballers may have chosen not to identify as Indigenous because of racism. African American scholar, W.E. du Bois coined the term "double consciousness" referring to "the very uncomfortable sense in which one is *forever* aware one is black and *forever* aware that the white man is aware that one is black" (Tatz, p. 125). Syd Jackson, a past VFL player with 136 games

with Carlton over eight years recalls; the West Australian racism was not any different to the Queensland variety, he was rejected by a West Australian Football team based on his skin colour. When he moved to Victoria to play with Carlton Football Club, he was constantly aware of his blackness (Tatz). During the 1970 VFL Grand final, he was racially abused by Collingwood spectators and later refused a beverage from the Collingwood bar.

In addition, the inaccessibility of clubs for those footballers in rural remote areas and reluctance to relocate to Victoria represented possible hurdles that have kept Indigenous men from becoming elite footballers. Stephen Michael, regarded as one of the best Indigenous Australian football players, chose to play with South Fremantle in Western Australia because he was not prepared to leave his family (Mulcahy & MacGregor, 1996). Michael McLean, a young Indigenous VFL footballer chose to relocate away from his family and experienced loneliness and isolation, owing to the distance from home and having few Indigenous supports to draw on (Gardiner, 1998). He was subjected to racist taunts on a weekly basis and encouraged by club officials to ignore it. Stories similar to McLean's were common prior to the 1990's.

One story that did not escape media attention was that of Ezra Bray. Drafted in 2000 by a Victorian football club at pick number 17, he was considered a speedy and skilled midfielder. He left the AFL system in 2002 and although he has been quoted as determined to resurrect his football career, has ended up in and out of jail. A lifestyle laden with alcohol and substance abuse, he has spoken of football in the following way; "Footy's done heaps for me personally but I've still got to learn how to use it. I just need to find a place I can call home" (Wilson, 2007, p.5). Paul Briggs, President of the Rumbalara Football Club said, "he [Bray] was fragile physically and his decision-making skills could never cope with the world he was put into. It's just so sad. If he can't get it together, he will be dead before he reaches 40" (Wilson). AFLPA CEO Brendon Gale believed Bray is one who slipped through the net. "There's still a lot of blaming and a lot of finger-pointing going on here. There's a lot of 'He did this and you should have done that'. But having said

that, there comes a point where an individual has to take responsibility for his own actions" (Wilson, p. 7). It seems that Bray's exit from the AFL could have been very different had the systems he was embedded in, had greater communication and input with his wellbeing.

The Krakouer brothers, Jim and Phill, represent the flipside. Gorman (2004) provides an account of the life experiences of both Jim and Phillip Krakouer in his biography titled "Moorditj Magic: The story of Jim and Phillip Krakouer". Jim Krakouer reflects on his relocation experience, "We were pretty lucky really. I think the hardest move was when we left Mt Barker to come to Perth. Then when we went over there [Melbourne] it wasn't as hard and we adjusted pretty well straight away" (Gorman, 2004, p. 246).

When Jim and Phil Krakouer relocated and joined the VFL in the early 80's, the number of Indigenous players totalled five (Gorman, 2004). In 2006, for the first time in AFL history, the number of Indigenous Australian players exceeded 50, with 55 Indigenous footballers on team lists. In 2007, the numbers increased to 71 (Lovett, 2007). The swift escalation of Indigenous player numbers in the AFL, after many years of limited participation, suggests that the AFL is fertile ground for Indigenous opportunity (Hallinan, Bruce & Burke, 2005). Gardiner (1997, 1999) believes that the huge increase in numbers may be partly attributed to the competition becoming national and the inclusion of new teams in the competition. Gardiner believes the West Australian clubs (Fremantle and West Coast Eagles) and South Australian clubs (Adelaide Crows and Port Adelaide) have a higher proportion of Indigenous players on their lists suggesting that Indigenous players who were reluctant to move interstate have the opportunity to play elite football in their home state or a state that is closer to home. The draft may dictate that they move elsewhere, therefore choice, or lack thereof, may affect participation.

#### Rationale for the Thesis

In 2000, an important meeting was held in Yuroke, a small town 70 kilometres from Melbourne. Past and present AFL players from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds

attended this meeting with the primary goal of addressing issues faced by Indigenous AFL footballers. Subsequently, Dr. Robert Kerr, Executive Officer of the AFLPA Players' Association (AFLPA) at that time, addressed the press about the current issues affecting Indigenous footballers in AFL clubs. These issues included; isolation, lack of family support, racial abuse, inadequate financial management, the need to promote education and training, attention to issues of numeracy and literacy and relocation (Australian Associated Press, 2000). Kerr highlighted that almost all of the AFL clubs had insufficiently provided for new Indigenous recruits giving little recognition overall to the aforementioned issues. Leaving family or community ties can make relocation a difficult experience for any athlete and it is accentuated when an individual's identity and culture are tied to a specific area or region. Since that first meeting in Yuroke, the AFL produced an initiative in 2002 and named it the AFL Indigenous Australia Foundation. Working in conjunction with bodies including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council (ATSIC), the AFLPA and traineeship sports programme 'Sports Ready', the Foundation acted as an advocate for Indigenous player issues.

In July 2002, Michael Long was appointed the Chairman of the foundation. As well as being recognised for his talent as a footballer, playing 190 AFL games, Long is recognised for his strength to challenge active racism entrenched in the football culture. Long challenged the AFL clubs and their practices in working with Indigenous footballers. The foundation's primary aim was to assist Indigenous footballers with education, traineeships, and the relocation process (AAP, 2000). Long stated:

The issues they face are, homesickness, being away from family, living a different lifestyle, basically being in a different culture, being in a city like Melbourne or Perth and you come from such a remote community you've got to embrace it and vice versa they learn a lot about you, the club (Roberts, 2005).

Since the foundation's inception in 2002 and Michael Long's retirement from football in 2004, the foundation no longer exists and few records about cessation are available. The formation and introduction of the Indigenous Australia Foundation originally inspired the motivation for the

current research into the relocation issues faced by Indigenous Australian football players. The current study has continued to explore the relocation experiences of Indigenous Australian footballers and examine perceptions held by secondary informants who hold knowledge based on their involvement in the overall relocation process.

To date there has been inadequate consideration of the relocation experiences of Indigenous Australians in the AFL. The current study aims to examine relocation and adaptation experiences and specifically sets out to 1) describe and clarify the challenges faced by Indigenous footballers joining interstate AFL clubs, 2) identify the social, cultural, organisational, and psychological challenges that require Indigenous players to adapt to new environments that are away from their homes 3) identify the social, cultural and psychological resources that facilitate transition and adaptation.

As part of the process of addressing these questions, chapter two will present a brief historical account about Indigenous Australian culture in pre-colonial times. The oppressive acts inherent in the colonisation, assimilation, and stolen generations periods that have been endured by Indigenous Australians since 1788 will also be discussed with the primary aim of developing an historical context. In addition, this chapter will look at the role and meaning of sport for Indigenous Australian communities and how the AFL has affected Indigenous Australian participation in sport. Chapter three will focus on relocation and adaptation and review the international and local transition literature. The facilitating and hindering aspects that may arise for Indigenous players associated with moving away from place of origin into a mainstream society will also be investigated in this chapter. In chapter four I will introduce the ethical and methodological implications offering a detailed summary of how the research was formulated, paying particular attention to the following; method of inquiry, collaboration, cultural competence and cultural reflexivity, strategic planning, ethical clearance and recruitment. In chapter five I will outline the methods used to conduct the study with reference to the following sections; design, instruments,

participants, procedure, ethical considerations and data analysis. In Chapter six I will present the findings and chapter seven will offer a discussion and concluding remarks.

#### **CHAPTER 2**

#### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

"It's the colour of your jumper, not the colour of your skin," sang Archie Roach about his days as an Essendon supporter at Windy Hill (Garrett, 2006, p.8). Roach's lyrics promote football as an opportunity for people of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures to bond and have a common goal. These words suggest racial unity; but the prevailing reality is that Indigenous Australians do not share equal living standards or opportunities within the broader social context. Indigenous Australians have been fighting for equality and fair treatment since colonisation began in 1788. Roach's lyrics generate the question of whether Australian Rules has contributed to positive race relations.

Indigenous footballers in the present study identify and belong to a culture oppressed in a variety of ways by the dominant society. Becoming an AFL footballer requires adapting to an environment that has evolved from the western perspective and has only as recently as 1995 introduced a policy to guarantee equality and acceptance (AFL, 1995a). A brief history of race relations that is vital to understanding the participation of Indigenous Australians in sport and exploring the meaning of sport and the role it plays in current Indigenous communities will be presented in this chapter.

#### Brief Historical Overview

Oral tradition has been used in Indigenous Australian history to communicate the recordings of historical events and manifested through various art forms such as song, dance, and stories. It has only been in the last 25 years that this oral form has been acknowledged by Western society as a legitimate form of historical recollection (Collard, 2000). Through artistic forms, Indigenous Australians have shared their spiritual knowledge of the Dreaming and passed it on from one generation to the next. The Dreaming, a mythical, timeless dimension existing in parallel with the present world, provides an historical account of creation. It is the story of how the Great

Spirit ancestors wandered the planet and inhabited the sky, water, and earth at the end of their journey. Their earthly existence is demonstrated in the geographical form of caves, hills, rocks and rivers (Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett, 2000). The wellbeing of the land and its connections with the Dreaming were then, and still today, celebrated through cultural practice (Collard).

The Dreaming explains the mutual relationship Indigenous Australians share with country. Indigenous culture is intertwined with the land and, according to Graham (1999), based on two axioms; the land is the law and an individual is not alone in the world. This Indigenous ethic and belief in connection places the individual within a larger context that requires recognition and submission to the law of the living world. The importance of land is based on the ecological balance between the land and its people and specific practices of ceremonial rituals to uphold the equilibrium. In the words of the Indigenous poet Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal (1970) (formerly Kath Walker) "all living things, be they mammals, birds, reptiles, insects, or trees are our sisters and brothers and therefore we must protect them. We are their custodians. We not only share with them, we also guard them" (Martin, 2003, p.12).

The spiritual connection between Indigenous Australians and the land is undeniable in the historical accounts and yet Indigenous Australians, through the process of colonisation, have been denied that reciprocal relationship with country. Although histories are rarely complete, it is known that the Indigenous Australian culture has survived between 40,000 and 70,000 years (Collard, 2000). There were approximately 500 clan groups and between 500,000 and 1 million Indigenous Australians living in Australia prior to 1788 (Collard). Colonisation had a devastating effect on the physical, spiritual, social, and cultural wellbeing of Indigenous Australians (Collard). The legal doctrine *terra nullius* (a land belonging to no one) infers that the inhabitants of the land do not require acknowledgement if they have no customary laws (Ralph, 2000). Subsequent expansion by the British colonisers ensued because the Indigenous Australian cultural and spiritual belief of belonging to the land was interpreted as 'superstitious' and their law, lore, survival skills, music, art,

civility and civilisation was considered 'barbaric' in comparison to the society of the invaders from Britain (Collard). Colonial settlement of the land required clearing the natural landscape for sheep and cattle to roam and with this the elimination of many of the Indigenous Australian inhabitants.

Colonisation dramatically reduced the Indigenous Australian population through massacres, poisonings, and diseases such as measles, smallpox and sexually transmitted diseases (Collard, 2000). The psychological ramifications for Indigenous Australians forcibly removed from their traditional lands were and remain, shocking. Colonising practices perpetuated the development and implementation of assimilation policies resulting in the forced removal of thousands of Indigenous Australian children from their homes between the years of 1910 to mid 1970's (Ralph, 2000). These exploitative policies and processes refer to the 'Stolen Generations'. These oppressive practices were fraught with abuse and continue to haunt Indigenous Australians. In 1995, The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their families investigated four main issues. Its terms of reference included, examining past and continuing effects of separation of individuals, families, and communities, identifying how to respond, finding compensation or justification for those affected by the separation and investigating current laws and policies affecting the placement of Indigenous children (AHREOC, 1995). The inquiry received 777 submissions, written and oral, from Indigenous individuals and group submissions as well as church and government submissions. Public hearings took place in capital cities and various regional centres in Australia. The hearings resulted in the Bringing them Home report (AHREOC, 1997).

Through the media and this report, the Australian public were informed about the forced removal of Indigenous Australian children. Many families are still struggling with the trauma of forced removal and trying to locate missing family members, rebuilding missing histories, and stolen identities. The severing of ties with traditional lands, communities, and spiritual beliefs has had a damaging effect on the development of cohesiveness and strength of Indigenous

communities and knowledge systems (Ralph, 2000). According to Coram (2005), "shame" is inexplicably linked with some of the witnesses' accounts of their Indigenous identity and often the result of the internalisation of mainstream cultural values. "How can you be proud of being Aboriginal after all the humiliation and anger and the hatred you have? It's unbelievable how much you can hold inside" (anonymous submission, AHREOC, 1997, p.15).

One hundred and seventy nine years after the first settlers arrived in Australia, the passing of the 1967 referendum meant Indigenous Australians were counted in the national census rather than 'Flora and Fauna'. The 1967 referendum represented the most important step towards the acknowledgement of Indigenous Australians as 'people'. The referendum saw 90.7% of Australians vote 'yes' to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws specifically to benefit Indigenous Australians (NMA, 2007; Synott, 2003).

The domineering practice of colonisation procedures and assimilation policies represents the deliberate and violent oppression toward Indigenous Australians (Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett, 2000). More recently, Indigenous Australians have been the recipients of implicit oppression evidenced by their deplorable and disadvantaged living standards (Dudgeon et al.). Until it is acknowledged that oppression is deeply embedded in Australian history and that the development of an improved relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians prevails, reconciliation is a long way off (Sanson & Dudgeon, 2000).

Reconciliation is defined as "a united Australia, which respects this land of ours; values the Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander heritage, and provides social justice for all" (Council for Reconciliation, 1995, p.23). Reconciliation entails an understanding and recognition of the history of Indigenous Australians and embracing a shared ownership of that history (Dudgeon & Pickett, 2000, Green & Sonn, 2006). Oodgeroo's poem 'Son of mine' is an expression of her choice to acknowledge the atrocities of colonisation and looking to the future of positive black and white

relations in Australia. Oodgeroo illustrates a need for acknowledgement of the past to be able to move forward.

#### Son of Mine

What can I tell you son of mine?
I could tell you of heartbreak, hatred blind,
I could tell you of crimes that shame mankind,
Of brutal wrong and deeds malign,
Of rape and murder, son of mine;
But I'll tell you instead of brave and fine
When lives of black and white entwine,
And men in brotherhood combineThis I would tell you, son of mine.

Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonuccal

There is an enormous disparity between the opportunities and living standards of Indigenous and Anglo-Australian people. Indigenous Australians are living fewer years than their Anglo-Australian counterparts, they have no representative voice and their spiritual and cultural custodial role with the land is disregarded (ABS, 2003). When viewed in the context of successive harmful policies of protection (1840's-1950), assimilation (1950's-1970), and integration (1967-1970's) is it any wonder that social problems such as alcoholism, welfare dependence, domestic violence, drug misuse and unemployment are overrepresented in the Indigenous communities? Dodson (2005) stated:

It is not acceptable for Indigenous people to have to tell their children, that despite the wealth and resources available in this shared land, their lives will be shorter than their non-Aboriginal friends, their health and education will be that of a third world country. It is not acceptable this act of political exclusion guarantees that Aboriginal people will remain at the bottom rung of every possible indicator into the future (p.21).

The Australian history has a black history; a history of inequality, racism and oppression (Dudgeon, et al., 2000). It also encapsulates many stories of resistance to oppression and colonising procedures in the ways that Indigenous Australians have negotiated their own identities (Dodson, 2005). According to Dodson, promoting positive Indigenous identities will help to

invalidate the homogenising belief that Indigenous Australians have "fixed unchangeable characteristics" (p.39). By refuting the confining beliefs that disregard any kind of change or variation, non-Indigenous Australians may begin to understand Indigenous Australian knowledge systems from Indigenous Australian epistemological frameworks. Vital to understanding the experiences of Indigenous Australians and their communities is the broader historical context in which they live. The sporting context is an example of one sphere where race relations can be explored.

### Meaning and Role of Sport in Indigenous Communities

Sport can define and shape people's lives and has the potential to improve quality of life (Beneforti & Cunningham, 2002). The meaning and role of sport may vary from one setting to the next and the durable benefits can change attitudes by way of promoting community involvement and participation, common goals and membership. In Indigenous Australian communities, sport has been used for the purpose of crime prevention, social mobility and even sometimes as a way out of a disadvantaged standard of living (Beneforti & Cunningham). The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC, 1989) remarked the best antidote for boredom and a key preventative measure for juvenile crime in Indigenous communities are sport and physical activity (Johnston, 1991).

The centrality of sport and major sporting events can provide an opportunity for resisting oppression and promoting the rights of Indigenous communities (Gardiner, 1997). Sport and physical activity have also been noted by other researchers to have a positive effect in reducing substance abuse and misuse and common physical diseases in the Indigenous communities such as heart disease and diabetes (Cairnduff, 2001; Cameron & McDougall, 2001; Walker & Oxenham, 2001). Sport has also been noted as a positive activity for Indigenous communities when it plays a role in maintaining good physical and mental health and improves social cohesion within the community (Cameron & McDougall). A sense of belonging, loyalty, and support are three things

that sport can provide participants and "acts as a catalyst for social and traditional cohesion" (Cameron & MacDougall, 2000, p.1). Oliver (2006) stated that sport is a vital pathway for improving social and economic well-being. Michael Long, AFL Ambassador, describes the role of sport in Indigenous communities;

Sport plays an important part in Indigenous culture, politics is an important part, sport's important, and it brings the community together. On some communities it is a matter of life and death. It's what our programs bring, being part, participating in football, community being involved, raising awareness on alcohol and drugs, health issues, very important part in how we can make an impact on Australia. Football is such a powerful tool, it's one thing Indigenous people love, that's football, not saying it's going to change our world, but geez we've got something there that can attract the kids, families and can change an ecosystem, make an impact on all different levels. We've got players, Indigenous players that are powerful tools; they are seen as heroes, role models. They can have an impact through a leather ball (Roberts, 2005).

Long believes sport is an activity that can affect different levels of an ecosystem and especially for Indigenous Australians and Indigenous communities in Australia. By ecosystem, Long describes the various layers of a society, from the individual through to organisational layers such as government. He believes football plays a central role in building the Indigenous communities. Walker and Oxenham (2001) found that when the AFL Kickstart program was introduced in the Kimberley there was a subsequent decrease in alcohol consumption for both the youth and their families involved. There was agreement amongst community members that sport assisted with building community spirit and helped reduce family violence. Kickstart, an AFL initiative introduced to engage rural remote regions by taking football out to the communities and engaging children and adolescents is one of many programs aimed towards building Indigenous Australian involvement in the AFL. Other programs include AFL Racial and Religious Vilification Policy, AFL Sports Ready Indigenous Employment Program, The Clontarf Foundation, The Flying Boomerangs, AFL Ambassadors for Life, and The AFL Club Fostership Programme (AFL, 2006). Indigenous footballer and twice Brownlow medallist, Adam Goodes states,

Don't underestimate the impact of these programs which, more than anything, bring role models into communities. Yet for every kid we can produce as evidence of them having an

impact, there are a couple more still falling through the cracks. Football can't just solve these problems, but it can be a major vehicle to assist (2008, p. 22).

Ernie Dingo, in his narration of the film "Marn Grook" (Mulcahy, 1996) talks about the meaning of football for Indigenous Australians and how it has been and continues to be an avenue and opportunity for Indigenous Australians to compete on an equal footing with white Australia. Syd Jackson stated, "football was more important to me than it is to a lot of players because I saw it as a way of getting along life's paths" (Harris, 1989, p.71). Football Greats such as Graham "Polly" Farmer and Doug Nicholls, like Syd Jackson were victims of the Stolen Generations (Coram, 2005; Hawke, 1994; Mulcahy & McGregor, 1996). These footballers used sport, and specifically Aussie Rules, to escape the difficulties of mission life (Mulcahy & McGregor). A mission refers to the spaces of allotted land Indigenous Australians were relocated to after being forcibly removed from their traditional lands (Collard, 2000). Missions were created as part of the Royal Commission's 1905 Act. W.E. Roth, the man responsible for introducing the Apartheid policy into South Africa, headed the 1905 Act, and justified the oppressive, assimilationist Act as being implemented for the "better care and protection for the Aboriginals" (Collard, p.24). Football symbolised one of the few past-times Indigenous Australians were permitted to engage in on the mission (Coram, 1999).

Sport has the ability to bring people together and enhance social cohesion within a community but it is still firmly embedded in social hierarchies in mainstream Australian culture (Kell, 2000). Godwell (2000) believes Indigenous Australians excel in the sporting arena because they are not given the opportunity to excel at anything else. He expressed the opinion that Indigenous success in sport is about personal application, skill acquisition, self-belief and confidence, reaffirming the formation of the Indigenous identity rather than the inherent physical ability attributed to Indigenous Australian athletes (Godwell). He declared that the "meritocracy" of Australian sport and racial stereotypes that link Indigenous sporting triumphs to inherent physical ability perpetuate ethnocentric and racist views entrenched in mainstream society. It may also

result in young Indigenous Australians believing that sport is the only option for positive life experiences, rather than exploring other avenues.

Rigney (2003) believes the sporting environment is a site where power relations can be exercised through a set of social, cultural, and economic structures. In answering the question of whether the sporting domain is a place of cultural oppression and cultural hegemony or a site for cultural regeneration, expression and survival, questions relating to power relations need to be answered. Rigney (1997) focused on a heritage assessment at the Adelaide Oval and found that there was no acknowledgement of Indigenous history or presence in the form of a named gate, grandstand, or monument. He relates this to the development of Australian sporting institutions mirroring Britain and consequently disregards the shameful historical oppression of colonialism. He remarked that all too often aspects of the Indigenous culture that represent harmony and future are exhibited to represent positive race relations (Bruce & Hallinan, 2001, Nauright, 1997). Rigney suggests that sporting places similar to Adelaide Oval need to acknowledge the political and racial realities as well as the heroic stories of Australia's past and present whilst moving away from the "gimmicky" representations of "paintin' and dancin'" (Godwell, 1999, p.5). Rigney believes "the struggle against racism must also include the fight to de-racialise micro and macro social formations left to us by colonisation which continue to affect and shape the lives of my people" (p.5).

Institutional racism is manifested historically and culturally, and until it is understood at a deeper societal and pathological level, steps cannot be implemented to improve the situation (Godwell, 2000; Rigney, 2003). Another problem with institutional racism is its invisibility. The Adelaide Oval for instance represents the dominant group as "standard" and perpetuates the message that minority groups are inferior owing to a lack of accurate representation (Sanson et al., 1998). Racism in the past was more commonly expressed in straightforward rejection of and hostility toward others from a minority group, but has changed dramatically in recent times (Sanson

et al). It has become "un PC" to believe in or support racial superiority and although it appears to be less obvious, racism continues to exist. According to Sanson et al. "From the point of view of oppressed people, even though the goal posts may have been moved, the game is still the same" (p. 164). These findings evoke many questions about the opportunities available for Indigenous Australians.

Cameron and MacDougall (2000) stated, "sport and physical activity have the potential to improve quality of life...and allows one to escape from day-to-day reality of family conflict, homelessness, or the temptation to use alcohol, drugs or inhale petrol" (p.2). It has been proposed that the AFL is a noted site for Indigenous Australians to experience opportunity, equality, and positive race relations. The increase in numbers of Indigenous footballers at elite level has been used to validate this proposal (Hallinan, Bruce & Coram, 1999). The growth in numbers of Indigenous footballers in the AFL may also be indicative of an increase in opportunities because of the expansion of the AFL and teams located in more accessible and convenient places (Gardiner, 1997, 1999). Although the draft dictates where a player will end up, the inclusion of teams from South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia, and New South Wales since 1982 may provide additional options for Indigenous footballers who were reluctant to relocate when there was only one option, Victoria. The inclusion of new teams increases the options and a team that is closer to home may draft a player.

The following table outlines the increase in numbers of Indigenous footballers playing in the AFL since it became a national competition and the bold numbers refer to the competition when it was the VFL. The years shown in Table 1 have been chosen randomly to show the increase in numbers of Indigenous Australians entering the AFL. Players listed refer to the players that have identified as Indigenous (specifically Aboriginal) and have been named as senior players with the VFL/AFL club and played a senior game.

Table 1

Number of Men of known Aboriginal\* descent listed between the years of 1904-2007

			Year				
1949	1975	1990	1997	2000	2005	2006	2007
			Numbe	er			
2	4	16	Number 35	er 36	48	52	71

<sup>\*</sup>Aboriginal used in place of Indigenous based on the use of terminology in AFL statistical source

Table one show different periods in the VFL and AFL history and the numbers of Indigenous footballers listed during those specific years (AFL, 2007). Indigenous Australians make up 2.4% of the Australian population and 12% of the AFL playing lists in 2007 (Lovett, 2007). The overrepresentation of Indigenous footballers in the AFL has sparked many discussions about why and how and the meaning of football for Indigenous communities.

According to Hallinan, et al. (1999), the overrepresentation may be "illusory" in two ways. First, the increase in numbers may suggest that successful integration of Indigenous Australians has occurred and subsequently dissuade further analysis of opportunities for Indigenous Australians in all areas within society. Second, racist ideas about sports performance may prevail in that Indigenous Australia athletes are naturally talented and do not need to work hard (Godwell, 2000). Coram (1999) believed that the rise of Indigenous footballers was attributed to the closure and lack of access to the mainstream labour market (see also Miller, 1987; Sully, 1997, Taylor, 1995; Williams, 1992). The paucity of labour market options may propel Indigenous Australians toward sport as a career option, because they are faced with limited options (Godwell).

Hallinan and Judd (2007) conducted research with Indigenous basketballers and found that, like other sports, basketball can be an avenue for "social escapism". For many Indigenous peoples who are oppressed by social disadvantage, sport can provide a sense of empowerment

and control (Boyd, 1997; Mandle & Mandle, 1994). At the same time, engaging in sport can reify the social disadvantage when structural racism is evident. Only recently, in the last seven years, has the AFL seen the introduction of Indigenous footballers involved in the executive level of the AFLPA, in assistant coaching roles at the club level, and more recently as Player Development Managers.

The professionalisation of Australian Rules football has seen the game evolve by integrating new policies and guidelines in the hope of making it a better game for the participant and spectator. Some of the policies include; The Racial and Religious Vilification Code (1995a), Anti-doping Code (1995b) and Respect and Responsibility Code (2005). These codes are intended to ensure that AFL players are treated on equal terms, irrespective of race, gender, or ethnicity and aims to protect athletes from illicit and performance enhancing drug use.

Despite implementing policies to protect everyone involved in the AFL (player, spectator, staff member), the question of whether the AFL has made the football environment a safer and more welcoming environment for Indigenous footballers remains. Have the cultural awareness programs at the clubs and induction camps sent out a message to Indigenous communities that their sons will be looked after when they are 4000 kilometres away from their communities, their social and support systems? Is football the only career option for Indigenous Australian men? Is a career in the AFL perceived by the Indigenous footballer as a form of social mobility? These questions require answering and further investigation to determine whether there is enough support and assistance for an Indigenous footballer leaving home to settle interstate in a new home and new career in a completely different environment.

The following chapter will provide a review of literature focussing on relocation, settlement, and adaptation. Chapter three will offer research from both international and local sources on relocation in a variety of fields such as tertiary education, international armed forces, and sporting

organisations. It will consider risk and protective factors that affect relocation and subsequent settlement.

# CHAPTER THREE

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A large amount of sport literature on transition has been dedicated to the examination of the movement of athletes out of sport whether that is forced or voluntary retirement. It has been suggested that research needs to focus on the experiences of other types of transitions in sport such as relocation from place of origin and entry into the professional sporting environment (Lavallee, 2000; Wylleman, DeKnop, Ewing & Cumming, 2000). The current research has undertaken this challenge and is concerned with understanding the complex experiences of relocation and settlement from the perspectives of Indigenous footballers. Relocation (moving from one environment to another) makes up one facet of the transition process. Relocation, adaptation, identity, and culture will be defined in this chapter. In addition, it will discuss how these concepts interact and influence each other. It will also review relevant international and local literature pertaining to relocation and settlement. Given the focus on community, this section will include reviewing some models developed to understand more generally, the challenges that arise for members of cultural and ethnic minority communities following contact with a mainstream group. Following this will be a discussion of the different individual, social, and cultural factors that have been identified in the literature that may hinder or facilitate the relocation and settlement processes.

Transition, Identity and Culture

Schlossberg (1981) defines transition as "an event or non-event which results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behaviour and relationships" (p.5). Changes in career, advancing from one level of education to the next or the chronological shift from adolescence to adulthood represent examples of transitions. When transitions require life changes they have the potential to evoke fundamental questions relating to identity such as "who am I?" and "who will I become?" reifying the function of identity

resynthesis. Identity typically describes an individual's sense of self. The perception of self, held by an individual will influence his/her actions, thoughts, behaviours, and interactions with others (Erikson, 1968, 1980). For this reason, identity is rooted within the individual and yet inseparable from the communal culture in which the individual belongs. According to Erikson (1968) communal culture is the context of relationships with significant others (family, peers and community).

If we take a step back, we can see why identity formation is clearly associated with adolescence as it is during this time that rapid physical and cognitive changes take place. For example, physical and sexual development cannot be separated from the sociocultural matrix in which these changes are taking place. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework provides a vehicle to understand how an individual is influenced by the systems in which he is embedded and how they assist in shaping identity.

Identity and culture are interconnected and will, in turn, influence how an individual copes with a transition. In the same vein, the transition will have an effect on the individual's identity and the systems in which he is a member. Culture is dynamic and changeable. "Individuals acquire a culture when they live as members of a society or group" (Dudgeon, Garvey, & Pickett, 2000, p.6). From one generation to the next, culture is transmitted through socialisation and enculturation. Socialisation is the formal practice of education and child rearing that teaches an individual the culturally based values, norms and behaviours (Sonn & Fisher, 2005). Enculturation is a process that occurs inadvertently when an individual internalises the social regularities and norms required to attain membership of the culture of origin (Hughes, Seidman, & Williams, 1993; Kontos & Breland Noble, 2002).

Who we are, how we define ourselves and our world, what our cultural ways are, and what are our cultural differences are all questions that are fundamental in any discussion about Indigenous identity (Dudgeon, 2000, p.43).

The level of knowledge about the culture one is born into and socialised, will determine how an individual interprets the world and how things operate in it (Sonn & Fisher, 2005). If an

individual has an extensive knowledge of his/her own culture, the individual will know the rules and norms he/she is expected to live by. These norms and rules vary from one culture to the next. If an individual migrating or relocating to a new culture believes that the blueprint one has lived by will be suitable for the new environment, he/she may be faced with challenges and may not be well equipped to deal with them if the new environment is in stark contrast.

Culture Research in Sport Psychology

In 2005, culture in sport was the feature in a special edition of *Athletic Insight: The Online Journal of Sport Psychology*. It is encouraging that sport psychology is showing further interest in culture as a salient factor that can affect performance and the therapeutic relationship. More recent, an entire book devoted to the topic of cultural sport psychology has been collated and awaiting publication by Human Kinetics. Some sport psychology literature has written about how individuals from minority groups negotiate transition in sport including Schinke et al (2006), Parham (2005), Gutierrez (1999), and Sellers (1993), contributing valuable information to transition literature by investigating athlete's from minority groups and their experiences with transition. However the existing paucity of literature examining how a person's culture and experiences of his/her culture can affect relocation exemplifies the necessity for further research.

Sport psychology has only recently incorporated the wider social, economic, and cultural effects on individuals in sport. As a profession, it has not necessarily been guided by social justice values such as equity, diversity, social change, empowerment, and participation, explaining why sport has traditionally been marketed to the majority. Feminist psychologists such as Gill (2002) stated that sport in general has been developed and viewed from the dominant Western perspective (male, white, heterosexual) and overlooks other social identities such as race, gender, and class. Duda and Allison (1990) recognised and acknowledged the void existing in sport psychology resulting from minimal attention to race, ethnicity, and culture. Martens, Mobley, and Zizzi (2000) believed the void continued to exist 10 years later. Kontos and Arguello (2005) five

years on, called for further research and an increase in culturally knowledgeable and sensitive sport psychologists, based on the work of Butryn (2002). They investigated sport psychology consulting with Latino American athletes and found that in contrast to counselling and mental health research, the concept of worldview receives minimal attention in sport psychology. They recommended sport psychologists first develop an awareness and understanding of their own cultural group and surrounds before embarking on a journey of understanding other cultural groups. They also cautioned against universalities and "cultural stereotyping" supporting the comments of other sport psychologists such as Andersen (1993) who cautioned against "sensitive stereotyping" (p. 1).

Sport psychologists have attempted to investigate "multiculturalism" in sport but tend to be focussed on outcomes and recommendations, and too often represent the interpretations of the researcher and fail to present the voice of the participant. Hanrahan (2004) provided an anecdotal overview of working with a group of Indigenous Australian performing arts students. Her synopsis was based on her interactions with each of the students in a teaching capacity. Hanrahan conducted her classes in groups, based on the following; "With the collectivism of their culture, working in groups was a natural extension from their communities" (Paniagua, 1994, cited in Hanrahan, 2004, p.65). It is evident Hanrahan is driven to combat the assumptions of universality, but her language sometimes contradicts her recommendations to acknowledge the differences between people of a specific culture.

#### Relocation

Relocation refers to the process of moving from one physical location to another involving three stages; moving out, moving through and moving in (Schlossberg, Waters & Goodman, 1995). Understanding relocation as a transactional process broadens the definition to include the ecological interplay between individual, environment, and society. According to Cronson and Mitchell (1997), moving to a new city is a major life event. Therefore being drafted to play AFL may

involve two major life events; relocation (leaving familiar surrounds such as family and community and moving into a new and unfamiliar environment) and major career shift (progressing from one level of football to the highest echelon). These two major transitions require a level of adaptation.

Adaptation refers to how people from a given culture "understand their surroundings [and within these learn to] function competently (Fiske, 2004, p. 25). If there is a degree of consistency in norms and expectations between the existing and new cultures, adaptation may materialise quickly (Marks & Jones, 2004). "Humans are adapted to fit into face-to-face groups; groups are important to survival. People are not adapted to survive as isolated individuals (Fiske, p.12, See Schinke, Battachio, et al, 2008, for a more complete review). Adjusting to the new environment may depend on other considerations including; an individual's ability to deal with expectations of the receiving environment; establishing whether the individual is familiar with the future destination; ensuring the individual has the opportunity to access family and social supports; and investigating how an individual perceives the new move. The parallel processes of identity formation or resynthesis may also challenge adaptation to the new environment. Juggling the move, new career, settlement and answering the coinciding identity questions such as "Who am I?" illustrate some of the complexities of relocation.

Hanks (1999) investigated the relocation experiences of eight non-Indigenous AFL footballers in their first year using a stress and coping model and found nine sources of stress were associated with relocation. These included; experiences of the draft process, emotional adjustment to relocation, adaptation to domestic routine, constraints associated with part-time work, traffic, cognitive overload, demands of training, illness and injury and anxiety relating to new experience. Hanks found that four coping strategies were implemented to cope with the stress including family and friends support, club-based support, cognitive coping techniques and the reduction of daily hassles.

Hanks (1999) did not examine the differences between playing populations, specifically differences in relocation experiences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous footballers in the AFL. According to Michael Long, there is a difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous footballers in general and describes it in the following way;

I think there is a stronger commitment to community, all Aboriginal players are connected or related in some way, it's not as if you can take off your uniform at the end of the day because they are all related and they will be recognised. It's an important thing to carry and it's a pressure you've got to deal with. It's also a cultural thing you have to deal with. But they're still human, still very young at the end of the day. Sometimes you don't even realise the impact you have on a small community. Syd Jackson, Pastor Doug Nicholls, these guys paved the way.

I think because we have survived 40,000, 50,000 years is because of our culture, our Elders, that wisdom has been passed down generation to generation, sometimes that's a bit lost because of western society, but also what plays an important part in identity, is who you are, where you're from, what language, what dance, what song, the traditions, I think that is important make-up of a person, sometimes you've got to understand where you've come from to understand who you are.

Michael Long (Roberts, 2005)

Long's quotation represents the importance of identity and culture and how these two are based on values of commitment to family and community, kindredness, survival, intergenerational wisdom, and respect for Elders. Kindredness, referring to a tacit shared experience, speaks of indigeneity and appears integral in the process of maintaining cultural identity. It is an implicit feeling and provides answers to existential questions of identity such as, "Who am I?" and "Where did I come from?" Kindredness connects a person to both country and other Indigenous

Australians. Goodes (2008) describes kindredness and Indigenous identity in the following way;

It's not about a map, not a town or a community you can stick a pin into and say "that's home" because it's not about a place. We all come from different places and different experiences, yet we come from the same place inside. What we have is a knowledge. A culture. And an understanding borne of being different in skin colour, which in Australia means far more off the football field, but that's where people like my teammate Micky O'Laughlin and I get to express our Aboriginality (p.19).

Sansom (1982) believed kindredness was a form of Aboriginal commonality. Sansom described kindredness in the following way;

.....to explain how and why Aborigines of town and country, of mission settlement and pastoral station, of fringe camps, Bagot and Palm Island share widely and generally in sets of understandings that make them feel at home together (p.118).

Questions about identity and culture can be magnified when an individual finds himself in a foreign environment without the usual communal supports. The issue of timing is essential for the present study because relocation for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous AFL footballers usually occurs in late adolescence, between 18 and 22 years (Lovett, 2007).

Although African American people are not indigenous to the US, it is reasonable to compare the demographic data listed by Parham with the ABS and AlHW (2003) national statistics because they too have been the recipients of oppressive practices. Disparities include lower income, less employment, and fewer educational opportunities. Parham (1993, 2005) reported on African American athletes in the intercollegiate settings and described the risk and protective factors affecting their identity formation process. Parham reported that the identity formation process for African American college athletes differed significantly compared with their white counterparts, and this has also been reported in other literature (Sellers, 1993; Spigner, 1993). The differing experiences for the African American athletes were explained by various factors including lower income household, inadequate academic preparation in high school, racial isolation in the collegiate setting, and having different value systems. The different value systems referred to strong emphasis on family, children, kinship bonds, cooperation, interdependence and collective survival, respect for Elders, multiple parentages, strong achievement orientation, and strong religious orientation (Mitchell, 1996). These value systems are also considered important in the Indigenous Australian culture (Dudgeon, 2000).

These findings suggest that relocating away from home and the affects on identity formation may be more challenging for an individual from a minority group. The social and cultural disparities and differences between dominant, ethnic, and racial minority groups suggest inadequate preparation and disadvantage. The way an individual from a minority group

experiences relocation and identity formation processes may be directly influenced by the degree of incongruence between his/her and the dominant group's value systems.

Theoretical models have been developed to capture the experiences, processes, and outcomes related to relocation and adaptation. Some of these models include; the degrees of acculturation and enculturation (Kontos & Breland Noble, 2002), acculturation and adaptation (Berry, 1997), transition (Schlossberg, 1981) and social identity (Tajfel, 1981). Berry's (1999) research with ethnic minority groups explored an individual's subsequent adaptation and adjustment after the occurrence of intercultural contact. Acculturation refers to the process involving contact between two or more cultural groups resulting in cultural changes for both groups (Berry). Although both groups experienced cultural changes, the intergroup contact tended to have a prevailing effect over the non-dominant.

The acculturation and adaptation framework proposed a bi-dimensional model that included identification to the in-group (non-dominant) and out-group (dominant) as independent characteristics (Berry, 1997, 2003). Berry's framework is based on four stratagem; identification with both groups (integration), to neither group (marginalisation), exclusively to the out-group (assimilation) and exclusively to the in-group (separation). Berry believed that better psychological adaptation and settlement is the result of a positive attitude toward integration. Psychological adaptation also relied on an individual's psychological and physical wellbeing and predicted by personality variables, life change events, and social support. Berry believed that psychological problems were more prevalent soon after contact with the new environment, and declined over time. Socio-cultural adaptation referred to how well an individual managed daily life in the new environment and predicted by cultural knowledge, degree of contact, receiving group's attitudes, and minimal cultural distance. Socio-cultural adaptation, Berry believed had a linear improvement over time.

The bulk of research on relocation and settlement focuses on the effects and experiences of ethnic minorities. People moving within their own country are not shielded from challenging experiences when moving into a new environment (Bhugra & Ayonrinde, 2004). In the current study, each of the Indigenous Australian footballers is moving within their own country, into someone else's nation that is dominated by Western society. Berry was stimulated while working with Indigenous Australians during the 1967 referendum. He enhanced his existing theory, including Indigenous Australians and the way in which they negotiated intergroup contact in their own country. He conducted a series of studies with Indigenous, immigrant and ethnocultural groups in Australia, Canada, and India (Berry, 1999). Two key ideas from the study were cultural maintenance and contact-participation. Cultural maintenance refers to the extent to which people maintained their cultural identity and behaviours such as continuing to wear traditional dress, attending social venues or clubs for people of the same culture, or celebrating cultural days or religious holidays such as Ramadan or St Patrick's Day. Contact-participation refers to the extent to which people valued and sought out contact with others outside their own group and their wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society. A combination of cultural maintenance and contact-participation enhanced the likelihood of integration.

Integration does not focus solely on the minority group or individual making choices toward integration but integration also relies on the dominant group being open and inclusive in its orientation toward cultural diversity. McCubbin, Futrell, Thompson and Thompson (1998) stated that for an ethnic or racial minority to adapt and adjust to a new environment they must be able to "maintain, affirm and assert their ethnic heritage and identity, respond to conditions as they are and work to change the environment to be more supportive and respectful of diverse cultures" (p.346). The main tenet therefore is that successful relocation and adaptation will be more likely if the hosting community welcomes diversity and has an openness to learn about the culture of another in order to understand and facilitate trust and belonging (Fiske, 2004). McCubbin et al. also placed

importance and responsibility on the racial minority to facilitate changes in the dominant society by establishing practices that promoted cultural competence, respect, and openness to diversity.

Culture Shock

Relocation is considered a major life transition because it involves a complex array of factors that hinder and facilitate adaptation to the new environment. Add new culture, climate, and norms to the equation and it is reasonable to expect that there will be challenges and new experiences.

Some researchers have focused on culture shock to illustrate the challenges of moving from one culture to another (Furham & Bochner, 1986; Sonn & Fisher, 2005; Zapf, 1993). Oberg defines culture shock as "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (1960, p.177). A feeling of impotence may prevail when all of the familiar signs and symbols of social interaction an individual has taken for granted in one's own culture have no place in the new culture he/she is moving into (Haskins, 1999). Resulting from losing familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse, adaptation may be hindered (Furnham, 1990). Circumstances leading to cultural shock depend upon previous experiences with other cultures and cross-cultural adaptation, the degree of difference in one's own and the host culture, the degree of preparation, social support networks, and individual psychological characteristics (Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

For example, Sonn, Bishop, and Humphries (2000) investigated the relocation and settlement experiences of Aboriginal students at a higher education institution in Western Australia. They found Indigenous students had to negotiate ways to deal with the cross-cultural relocation process and challenges associated with settlement and as a result experienced culture shock (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). One student in the Sonn et al., study explained her experience of moving away from a small Indigenous community to study in a predominantly white institution in the following way:

I came from a really remote community. It was predominantly Aboriginal and I was brought up in an Aboriginal reserve and we had very little interaction with white people and it was very racist, so it was black and white. So I spent most of my education life in welfare, hostel like institution, so when I came down it was the first time for me to mix and mingle with white people. Non-Aboriginal people were literally separated for most of my life. So that was really a shock for me. I was very conscious of my Aboriginality, being an Aboriginal person. For the first time it really hit me when I came to C.U.T. Coming from the country to the metro was a real shock (p.9).

For the student moving away from a segregated context to a main city resulted in a heightened awareness of her racial and cultural identity because of the experience of culture shock. The experience of mixing with 'white' people who she was previously separated from resulted in challenges for settlement and intergroup relations (Sonn et al., 2000). The differences in social and community structures owing to the disparities between metropolitan and rural remote areas may also challenge relocation and settlement. As one Indigenous student remarked, "We have all those barriers to overcome which are probably similar to overseas students, but it is different in a way because we are in our own country" (Sonn et al., p.9).

Ethnocentric practices have lead to the construction of "us" and 'them", a powerful dichotomy based on racism. These binaries perpetuate feelings of inferiority in many marginalised groups as diversity remains to be embraced or accepted (Dudgeon et al, 2000; Oxenham, 1999). At Curtin University, a guiding philosophy built on Aboriginal Terms of Reference (ATR) provides a welcoming message of openness and respect for cultural diversity for every new student. It indicates that the student's worldview (including history, culture, and ways of being) is represented at some level (Sonn et al).

### Settlement and Adaptation

The way an individual negotiates settlement in a new sociocultural environment requires the ability to manage daily life and the difficulties associated with the new environment (Berry, 2003). To adapt or adjust psychologically to the new environment depends on an individual's psychological and physical wellbeing. At an intrapersonal level, this is enhanced by personality

characteristics such as a strong identity and self worth (Berry, 1997). At an interpersonal level, social support is believed to enhance adaptation, and at an organisational level, adaptation is facilitated by cultural awareness from both the receiving environment and the individual making the relocation and the intergroup attitudes.

The findings of Sonn, et al's study on settlement and intergroup contact (2000) were supported by Kutieleh, Egege and Morgan (2002) and Zepke, Leach and Prebble (2003) who found Indigenous student settlement in a new environment and culture was facilitated by a receiving environment fostering a sense of belonging. Both studies found that 'fit', also referred to as coherence, were key contributors to retention rates and academic achievement. Farrington, Page, and DiGregorio (2001) found Indigenous Australian students who had relocated for study were more likely to request support from Indigenous teaching staff and the Indigenous support centre. They found the 'open door' policy was crucial for settlement and adaptation as was the University holding the view that equity is not about "treating unequals equally" (Sartour, 1992, p.52). One student described how the student centre should feel in the following way; "a place that feels like home, relaxed, approachable staff, an environment where they can be 'Aboriginal' and feel accepted" (Farrington et al, p.49).

More recently, there have been suggestions of the effectiveness of working therapeutically with Indigenous clients by involving their families (McKelvie & Mallard, 2000). These recommendations are based on the differences between Western and Indigenous concepts of "family". The typical western description of the nuclear family has advanced by taking into consideration same-sex couples and blended families. Gray, Trompf and Houston (1991) caution against attempting to define the Indigenous Australian family;

A discussion of what an Aboriginal family was, and has now become, should be based in the first instance on how related people carry out social functions for each other. In this way, we cannot be led to wrong conclusions by an imposed concept of what a family is or should be (p. 80) The Aboriginal family system has a beneficial role in that it cultivates community and kinship ties that provide psychological, economical, and physical support, while sharing its resources such as childcare. Sometimes the children are considered the responsibility of the community.

My family includes my mothers (two mothers- my biological mother and my aunty), my father, eight siblings, many uncles and aunts, their children- my cousins- and my cousin's children. They are all related to me. I have one grandparent still living. All of those people are my family. My uncles, aunts and their children are also significant to me. When I think of family, I think not only of my immediate family (parents, siblings, nieces, and nephews), but also my uncles and aunts and cousins and their kids (Aboriginal woman's concept of family, cited in McKelvie & Mallard, 2000, p.273).

Psychological wellbeing, quality of life, and strong sense of identity are promoted and nurtured when an individual experiences what Sarason called sense of community (cited by Sonn, Bishop & Drew, 1999). For this reason, an individual may choose to relocate with family for additional support to help with the unfamiliarity of a new environment. Sharing the logistical tasks such as finding a new home, packing and unpacking belongings, and the security of having a familiar face may help with settlement. Sonn et al (2000) found that some of the Indigenous Australian students chose to relocate with their immediate families and felt their presence in the new environment provided support. The downside of this was the additional stress associated with worrying about the family and hoping they too will settle and adjust to their new environment. Choosing to relocate with immediate family is a decision that has an effect on both the student and the family unit. As one student described it, "If you have to move, your family is going to suffer from their being away from their own family" (Sonn et al, 2000, p.9).

McCubbin (1998) investigated the resiliency of African-American families relocating to Europe for one member to pursue a career in the army. He found that the family's ability to change itself in order to adapt was critical to resilience and positive adaptation. These adaptations were dependent upon the partner (spouse) being employed and self-reliant and the family having quality time together after the relocation. McCubbin also investigated the fit between the family and the

new environment; "African-American families appear to have a stronger sense of coherence, or fit, if they feel they belong, have some say about their future, have some degree of predictability and feel their families will be cared for should a crisis emerge" (1998, p. 345). Coherence, that is family-environment fit, relied upon the American army policies and the efforts and commitment from the community in order to promote support and a sense of community for African American families relocating for the army.

A lot of research on relocation and adaptation focuses on the individual or family making the move and forget to explore the responses of the family and communities left behind. Their reactions and adjustment to the relocation may also affect how an individual settles in their new environment. In the Sonn, et al., (2000) study some participants acknowledged feeling torn between the demands of study and opportunity to be with family during difficult times such as death and illness. In times when it was culturally expected to be with community, it was difficult for the community to understand the university commitments and expectations.

Participating in mainstream institutions may be difficult for the family and community. For example, Indigenous students in Sonn et al., study (2000) felt there was a degree of scepticism evident in their community relating to the belief that education was only worthwhile if it leads to employment. In response to this scepticism, they felt they needed to justify their decision to study. Communities may appear sceptical about education based on their own experiences with mainstream society, but are trying to protect their own from oppressive acts such as assimilation or racism which are connected to the past and their own families.

# Social Mobility and Opportunity

Motivation for and interpretation of the relocation is important because it may provide information about how an individual feels about relocation and how it subsequently affects adaptation. For Indigenous Australians sport has been referred to as a prominent avenue for social mobility (Coram, 2005; Godwell, 2000). Social mobility refers to the process of individuals or

groups moving upwards or downwards from one status to another within a social hierarchy (Godwell). If an AFL career represents a form of social mobility for an Indigenous footballer one might expect relocation to be positively facilitated because he wants to make the move. Conversely, if an Indigenous footballer feels pressured or as if he has no other choice, his relocation, and adaptation experiences may be tainted.

Being drafted at the AFL level signifies the first step of an AFL career. Even though it has been proposed that the AFL is a prominent site for Indigenous Australians to experience opportunity, equality, and positive race relations, an Indigenous footballer is still expected to perform at a particular level to maintain his spot on the team. Indigenous footballers are often portrayed in the media as "magic" and "naturally gifted", but these descriptions insinuate that an Indigenous footballer does not need to work as hard, develop skills, or put in as much effort as a non-Indigenous player (The Age, 1993, p.40). "Stereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential, characteristics, which are represented as fixed by nature" (Hall, 1997, p.257). These comments reify the social disadvantage by disregarding the strength and drive crucial at this elite level of sport. These racist descriptions perpetuate a view of Indigenous Australians as lazy and disorganised (Godwell, 2000; Hallinan, Bruce, & Bennie, 2004; Moreton-Robinson, 2005). Through the media, stereotypes are recognised by mainstream society as accurate and informative, serving as an additional "othering" mechanism (Hallinan et al').

### Racism and Homogeneity

A substantial amount of literature concerning racism in sport exists but usually focuses on predictors of racism and it is rarely written from the viewpoint of the persecuted. Most of the literature shows that racism and other experiences of exclusion may undermine successful relocation and settlement (Gardiner, 1999; Godwell, 2000; Hallinan, Bruce & Coram, 1999; Schinke et al, 2006).

Racism refers to pervasive and systemic assumptions of the inherent superiority of certain group, and inferiority of others, based on cultural differences in values, norms, and

behaviours. Those who are assumed to be inferior are treated differently and less favourably in multiple ways. Racism reflects and is perpetuated by deeply rooted historical, social, cultural and power inequalities in society. Racism is oppressive, because it involves the systematic use of power or authority to treat others unjustly. It creates an atmosphere in which a group finds itself in a devalued position (Sanson et al, 1997, p. 164).

Wright (1999) believed that racist remarks illustrate the extent to which internalisation of assumptions about the history and position of Indigenous persons in it are evidenced in current everyday discourse and commentary. Racism operates at multiple levels, including institutional and cultural levels and more recently has taken on a more subtle and complex form (Jones, 1997). Racist acts and comments are odious and have been aggressively voiced toward Indigenous Australians, the recipients of dispossession, displacement and in the past brutally hunted as a sport by the British intruders (Dudgeon, Garvey, & Pickett, 2000). "Racism isn't something you're born with, it's something you're taught" (Michael Long, cited in Gardiner, 1997, p.3). Racism based on biological superiority has been replaced with cultural racism, otherwise referred to as cultural incompatibility (Calma, 2007, p.3).

The culture of Indigenous people, rather than the constitution of our blood, is now seen more than ever as the main hindrance to our social inclusion and improvement. For instance, commonly included in the public debate on child abuse and violence in Indigenous communities is the question of culture Indigenous people are continually called on to defend their culture against an underlying assumption that it is inherently violent and open to abusive practices.

Globally, the culture and religion of people from a Muslim background are seen as incompatible with a Western way of life and its values. Yet while culture forms the new axis for differentiating 'Us' from 'Them', it maintains in the same way as racism based on biology, the dominance of one group over another and the dehumanising that this entails.

Oliver (2006) states that although there has been a development of strong social norms against overt racist views in many parts of society, research suggests racist attitudes remain strong and especially in the sporting arena. Oliver reports on the incidents of racial abuse from spectators, media commentators, and sportspeople in his AHREOC report, "What's the score? A survey of

*cultural diversity and racism in Australian sport"*, informing us that racism is very much alive in Australian Sport. He says, "Don't believe the spin doctors – racism still exists in sport (p. 9).

Based on the growth in numbers of Indigenous Australians playing at the elite level, it has been intimated that the AFL's Racial and Religious vilification policy may be saluted as a positive contributing factor that sends a message that the AFL is a safe environment for all (Hallinan, Bruce & Coram, 1999). Settlement and adaptation for many past Indigenous AFL footballers meant ignoring the on and off-field racist taunts and prejudices requiring great courage and resilience in an environment that was deficient in cultural awareness. Phil Egan shares some of his story and comments on the overt racism he experienced.

I told him I was devastated and that my mum was in tears when I told her what some of them called me, so there was a team meeting and it was decided I would be known as "Jacky". They said, "How do you feel about being called Jacky?" I said, "I love it". It gave me a stronger link to my Aboriginal identity. I didn't take it as derogatory and my mum was happy (Anderson, 2006, p.100).

Although changes were made at a club level for Egan, it did not necessarily mean that he was exempt from racism outside the club. Godwell (2000) investigated racism in sport, focussing on professional rugby league in Australia. He found that racism was a common experience for all Indigenous participants, which affected their participation and performance in the sport. Godwell's opinion is that sport can provide opportunities for Indigenous Australians and may be a way out of difficult social living situations but racism in sport prevails and is a reflection of the inequality inherent in mainstream society. Racism has been modernised, in that it has become subtler and more complex -- it is covert.

Schinke et al. (2006) investigated elite Canadian Aboriginal athletes' adaptation to the mainstream in elite sport. The participants identified challenges including "loneliness, a difference in customs regarding how and when to be addressed in front of others and cultural stereotyping" (p.446). Cultural stereotyping is a form of modern racism and so ingrained that these stereotypes are automatically and spontaneously activated (Augoustinos, Tuffin & Sale, 1999). The main

recommendation from this study was that coaches build on cultural competence and awareness of the Canadian Aboriginal culture and expect that there may be a settling in period for the minority athlete.

The professionalisation of the AFL has seen the game evolve by integrating new policies and guidelines in the hope of making it a better game for the participant and spectator (AFL, 1995). These codes have been implemented to ensure that all people involved with the AFL are treated as equals irrespective of race, gender, or ethnicity. Cultural awareness programmes have also been implemented at a club level and offered yearly at induction camps for all new draftees. These organisational policies and programmes aim to increase knowledge and acceptance of diversity. They attenuate problems with the relocation process by sending a message of zero tolerance of racism and prejudice to the new draftee, informing him he is worthy of receiving and executing fairness, respect, responsibility and safety.

According to Bruce and Hallinan (2001), Indigenous AFL players have historically been defined by coaches, media, and recruiting staff, as "unreliable, lacking discipline, unable to handle success and unsuitable for positions of responsibility (cited in Hallinan, Bruce & Burke, p.273). They go on to argue that these stereotypes have evolved from a lack of cultural awareness and the permeation of taken for granted understandings of racial difference. Often Indigenous players are described as mystical and magical freaks because of their talent and skills (Tatz, 1995). These kinds of pervading descriptions fail to give credit to the hard work and discipline required to be an elite athlete and the determination required to maintain a spot on the team. Hallinan, Bruce, and Burke (2004) found that structural racism was apparent at the club level. In their interviews and informal observations it was found that Indigenous footballers were in the team to "kick the freak goal", "do their magical stuff", and to perform the "exotic sideshow". These comments are in line with what Jhally and Lewis (1992) and McKay (1995) referred to as enlightened racism.

Enlightened racism constructs positive images of Indigenous athletes while disregarding the

cultural and economic inequalities. It perpetuates the assumption that the playing field is level, while ignoring the historical legacy. While it has been suggested by participants in the current study that overt racism has been banished, the structural, modern, and enlightened forms of racism are firmly embedded in everyday Australian lifestyle and stereotypes normalised as a result (Augoustinos et al, 1999).

On 5th March 2008, Adam Goodes told the Herald-Sun he had been racially abused as recently as 2002. Goodes believes "there is still much work to do in and out of football" and that there are players in the AFL who have experienced racial vilification and decided not to report the incidents (Sheahan, 2008). On a positive note, Goodes regarded the private mediation process as successful. Fitzsimons (2005) encouraged those who are racially vilified to raise the issue of racist sledging rather than justifying it as a part of the game, referring specifically to three Indigenous athletes in Rugby League who believed "What happens on the field stays on the field". Fitzsimons stated:

Gentlemen, with respect, it's not just about you. The point of nailing those who utter such sledges is not just to ensure that Aboriginal players are protected from racist nastiness – it is to make sure that all Australians understand they are in a culture where this is no longer acceptable (Cited in HREOC, 2006, p. 10).

Journalist Rohan Connolly reported on particular AFL clubs and their change in views regarding recruitment of Indigenous players. He spoke about Hawthorn's reluctance in the past to draft Indigenous players because they were viewed as "talented but erratic", "difficult to handle", "vulnerable under pressure", and "unreliable on the big occasion" (2008, p.1). Connolly believes that it is an exciting prospect that the racist culture in AFL clubs is changing. These reports inform us that racism is not obsolete, it comes in many forms, and is a difficult phenomenon to break down and eradicate, in both society and the AFL.

Social Supports and Social Networks

It has been documented in the press that relocation is especially hard for Indigenous

Australian footballers in the AFL and one of the reasons suggested is isolation from family and

community social support systems (Gullan, 2000; Petch, 2006; Robinson, 2005). Social supports play an important role in settlement and adaptation post-relocation (Berry, 1997; Trickett & Buchannan, 2001). Social supports refer to the set of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural processes that occur in personal relationships that promote adaptive coping skills (Sarason & Duck, 2001). Social support encapsulates three fundamentals; emotional support (someone to talk to about feelings), guidance (information about career, available resources and services) and material aid (housing, transport). Social support transactions require psychological congruence. The person providing the social support needs to be empathic and have a detailed understanding of the person who has relocated because this type of support always has emotional consequences for the recipient (Cutrona, 1990).

Research by Sonn and Fisher (2005) suggests that sufficient social support lends to an efficient relocation experience and to the level of satisfaction, a transiting individual has with the amount of social support received. Social supports may act as protective and buffering roles against a hindering issue such as racism and provide a context in which identities can be defined and skills developed (Sonn & Fisher). Social networks refer to organisations such as sporting clubs, church groups, and cultural associations. These networks assist relocation by providing opportunities for participation and identity formation by way of renegotiating cultural identities and nourishing a sense of collective well being (Sonn & Fisher). Although social supports and social networks may have a facilitative role in relocation, they may also have a hindering effect on adaptation. If an individual restricts himself to a specific group, such as culture of origin, he may miss opportunities to engage with broader society. It is important that these social supports and networks act as mediating structures that promote adaptation rather than an insular escape mechanism segregating the individual from society (Sonn & Fisher).

It is common for people to seek out others who are similar to them when they first arrive in a new environment. There is a sense of safety in learning from someone who is similarly minded or

from a similar environment or cultural group. It may provide valuable information about the environment and past experiences of settlement. For example Daniel Wells, an Indigenous AFL footballer, explained the importance of having Indigenous social support from two of his Indigenous teammates, Daniel and Shannon Motlop, "If I didn't have Daniel and Shannon, it would have been a lot harder and I might not have been so happy and probably would not have played as good footy as I have. That is how important it is" (Lyon, 2004, p.4).

McCubbin's (1998) resiliency research with marginalised groups in the US, such as African Americans, native Hawaiians, and Mexicans, focussed on the importance of social supports and understanding the meaning of family from an Indigenous perspective rather than from a Westernized view. "In its broadest sense, family is more than just those we live with. It is the person next door, the person upstairs, the teacher, the local beat cop. It is, in short, community" (Kotlowitz, 1995, p.340). McCubbin et al (1998) stated that social support is fostered both formally and informally at the community level and healing forces are defined as "factors contributing to the physical, mental, or spiritual health of the individual or family" (p. 341). They found that an individual or family will normally search within their Indigenous support systems including family, church, black organisations and businesses when any problems arise.

In order to cope with the demands and challenges of a new environment, individuals from a minority group will utilise supports within their families (Genero, 1998). In her research with minority families in the United States, Genero found that an individual would also look for validation of his/her own identity and sense of self from family members when faced with the pressures of a new environment, racism, and acculturation. Interactions with family members can operate as "reality checks" for an individual when they are feeling lost in their new environment. David Wirrpanda, an Indigenous footballer with the West Coast Eagles had difficulties settling into his new environment when he relocated to Western Australia to play football. Not knowing anyone in Perth, Wirrpanda felt isolated from his family who were on the other side of Australia.

I was ringing my mum and brother and they just said, "Come home". I'm like "Mum, I don't want to hear that, you're supposed to say keep your head down and stuff". It was worst because I didn't know anyone here. I didn't have anyone here to talk to. You've got all these big-shot people like sport psychologists, but they can never replace something like family and friends (Gullan, 2000).

Wirrpanda did not have his communal ties close by in a physical sense to depend upon during his frustrating spate of injuries and felt he could not use the services provided by the club. In McCubbin's terms Wirrpanda gained social support from his own Indigenous support system, i.e. his family.

Sonn et al., (2000) found that lack of social supports for Indigenous students and their families was a major difficulty. Feelings of isolation and lack of support for child rearing and babysitting hindered adjustment. Similarly, Farrington, Page and DiGregorio (2001) listed social support in the form of family support and staff encouragement, meeting other Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and orientation programs that promote familiarity with study and campus layout as key facilitators for settlement, adaptation and retention rates.

Social supports in the form of role models have been found to be effective in helping individuals from a marginalised group cope with racism, cultural stereotypes, and possible language barriers after relocating (Farrington, et al., 2001; Gutierrez, 1999; Schinke et al, 2006). Gutierrez investigated the experiences of young Latino men relocating from home to play in major baseball leagues in America for Sports Illustrated. Gutierrez reported that teams employing staff of Latino backgrounds in mentoring roles was an effective measure in combating racial and cultural stereotypes and difficulties associated with leaving familial and community social support networks. Surrounding the players with someone from a comparable background and social support from similar others may prevent some of the isolation and loneliness and help with the adaptation phase (Haskins, 1999). Schinke et al. conducted collaborative research that investigating elite Canadian Aboriginal athlete's adaptation to mainstream sport. They identified how easy it could be for athletes originating from marginalised cultures to experience a sense of isolation simply because of

cultural difference and the pressure to adapt to the dominant community. In line with Gutierrez, they also recommended additional social support in the form of role models to provide insight and potential adaptation strategies for Canadian Aboriginal athletes. In an Australian tertiary education context some found that, Indigenous students were more likely to adjust and remain at university if they were with other Indigenous students, specifically senior Indigenous students that could provide a mentoring role (Farrington et al., 2001).

Although there is a paucity of data concerning transitions into sport, and specifically relocation, existing local and international literature has found a series of facilitative and hindering factors that affect settlement and adaptation. The facilitative factors included social support and social networks, coherence (individual/new environment fit), social mobility and opportunity, and sense of community. Racism and homogeneity, isolation from family and home, and culture shock were considered barrier factors in the relocation process. In view of this, the current study has undertaken the challenge of exploring the relocation and settlement experiences from the points of view of Indigenous Australian AFL footballers. In the following chapter, the research methodology and preliminary methods will be presented. A discussion of cultural competence in relation to researching across cultural boundaries will also be included.

# CHAPTER 4

#### ETHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Despite an abundance of research conducted with most Indigenous nations in Australia, there is a paucity of data regarding the relocation experiences of Indigenous Australian football players in the AFL. The current study seeks to identify and describe the relocation processes from the vantage point of a group of Indigenous footballers. Specific models and methods are required to achieve the following aims 1) describe and clarify the challenges faced by Indigenous footballers who join AFL clubs in different states, 2) identify the social, cultural, organisational and psychological challenges that influence adaptation to football clubs away from home and 3) identify the social, cultural and psychological resources that facilitate relocation and adaptation.

From the vantage point of the colonised, a position from which I write and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many Indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful (Smith, 1999, p.1)

Smith's (1999) quotation suggests to prospective researchers the link between traditional research methods and colonialism and imperialism. As the most researched people in the world, previous research conducted by non-Indigenous people "on" Indigenous Australians was considered harmful because of the culturally insensitive methodologies and practices implemented (Cruse, 2001; Foley 2002; Taylor & Ward, 2001; Yalmambirra, 2002). For this reason, it is essential to outline sequentially the steps chosen in the current research to ensure that these mistakes are not repeated. By mistakes, I am referring to the lack of sovereignty, reciprocity, collaboration, and the overall homogenising effects of producing "us" and "them" in reports.

Research of Indigenous Australians has been widely criticised (Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett, 2000; Riggs, 2002; Yalmambirra, 2002). The criticism is diverse and includes issues relating to the basic assumptions underlying mainstream psychology as well as the practices of academic colonisation. In response to these criticisms, I have implemented a series of steps to

ensure that this research is conducted in a culturally sensitive manner. The aspects of this research that enhance the possibility of cultural competence will also be described.

#### Qualitative Research

According to Patton (2002), qualitative research provides a framework for people to respond in ways that accurately represent their own perspective and experiences of a particular phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative research as:

A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p.4).

The current study employed a qualitative research design, used unstructured interviews with two participant groups, and aspired to produce a report that gave voice to the participants.

Qualitative research recognises the intrinsic complexities in a dynamic social world and provides an opportunity for the participant to see himself or herself as part of that world in the final analysis (Tindall, 2001). Where quantitative methods of analysis replace participants' voices with a statistic, qualitative methods have invited and welcomed heterogeneity with a focus on the relationship between researcher and participant. Understanding the cultural context to which the individual belongs enhances understanding how an individual perceives or thinks about a particular phenomenon.

I began to wonder, when so many culturally insensitive pieces of research have been undertaken "on" rather than "with" Indigenous Australians, whether I should conduct research with the most researched group in the world. In hindsight, I can see that my reluctance evolved from the cautionary warnings from Indigenous researchers, Indigenous friends, and an uninformed understanding on my part about race relations in Australia. Having a critical understanding of my underlying assumptions, motivations, and values and how these inform the research process

assists in breaking down the prospect of engaging in colonialist and imperialistic research (Smith, 1999). The importance of wondering and questioning whether I am equipped to participate in this study and drive it has motivated the continual review and development of the research process. Each stage of process review provided a clearer understanding of the course to be followed and the people involved in each of the processes. Yalmambirra (2002) stated:

I want to see the voices of my peoples and other Indigenous peoples in the final product. I want to remember how I laughed at a certain question, cried when asked about "sorry business" and shook my head when the issue of secret and sacred business arose during the questioning period. This gives substance to Yalmambirra, puts meat on the bones of contention, and respects my right to openness but also respects my right to privacy. I believe this is applicable to all Indigenous peoples (p.3).

Yalmambirra warns against the perils of homogenisation and appeals for research to produce reports that places an individual in his/her own sociocultural context. This will enable the reader to hear the individual's voice, see the individual's tears, and empathise with the emotional content provided by the individual. Yalmambirra admonishes research that perpetuates homogenisation, such as the findings from East stating Indigenous Australians "are a completely uniform group" (East, 1889, cited in Lawrence, 1969, p.2) and Elkin's statement, "Aboriginals are one people" (Elkin, 1938, p.279).

Andersen (1993) admonished researchers (in general) for their inability to acknowledge and understand the variance within groups. His commentary on a study conducted by Lee and Rotella (1991) highlighted homogenising suggestions made by the authors. Andersen queried their list of recommendations, believing that in their quest to become more sensitive toward black athletes, they were encouraging "sensitive stereotypers" (p. 1). For the field of sport psychology, this commentary was candid and desperately needed.

### Methodological Framework

Where epistemology refers to the philosophy of knowledge, methodology refers to the practice of knowledge; the "how" we put into practice the things we know. Three key processes that can help ensure proficient research and recommended by the National Health and Medical

Research Council (NHMRC), are collaborative research, cultural competence, and cultural reflexivity. The NHMRC have developed national guidelines for research conducted with humans, animals, and environment and in addition, a complementary set of guidelines for research with Indigenous Australians. These complementary guidelines evolved from feedback about research from Indigenous communities. These guidelines are put in place to protect the participant from harmful positivist constructs such as assumptions of universality and objectivism.

### Collaborative Research

The NHMRC (2003) proposed six guidelines for conducting research with Indigenous Australians; reciprocity, respect, equality, responsibility, survival and protection, and spirit and integrity. Adopting these core principles ensure that "every stage of research is founded on a process of consequential engagement and reciprocity" (Daes, 1993, p.1). In the course of collaborative research and methodological review research can be shared and implemented at a community level. Reciprocity is required to ensure outcomes are "given back" to those that have participated in the study. Daes explains:

Heritage can never be alienated, surrendered, or sold, except for conditional use. Sharing therefore creates a relationship between the givers and receivers of knowledge. The givers retain the authority to ensure that knowledge is used properly and the receivers continue to recognise and repay the gift (p.1).

The NHMRC protocols have informed the decisions I have made when negotiating and positioning structures, processes and principles for working alongside Indigenous people in a culturally competent way. The current study was based on the initial stages of setting up an advisory group. To develop relationships within the Indigenous community, to learn more about the Indigenous culture and to ensure cultural competence it was important to engage the assistance of an advisory group (Dudgeon, Garvey & Pickett, 2000). Establishing an advisory group allowed for the crossing over of two cultures, referred to as a "bridge role" (Brodsky, O'Campo & Aronson, 1999; Kim, Kim & Kelly, 2006; Sue, 2006). Another role of the advisory group that emerged was a

supportive role that assuaged some of my initial anxieties about addressing unfamiliar issues or topics and accountability for the research process.

The advisory group was formed in 2001, comprising three Indigenous Australians from the following nations, Wiradjuri, Wemba Wemba, and Barkindji. The role of the advisory group was to ensure that the present study was conducted collaboratively with participants and supports were constantly available for the participants throughout and following its completion. I believe strong bonds were formed among the advisory group through the research process and through friendship. The study began to take shape through collaborative practice and continual negotiation of methodology. To take advice and respect and enact that advice required that I remain prepared to engage with both the Indigenous participant and Indigenous community as a novice in cultural matters (Dudgeon & Pickett, 2000).

It was with the advisory group that I was taught about culturally competent engagement with Indigenous people, shedding light on many of the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures. Members of the advisory group played a mentoring role by sharing their cultural experiences with me, in a timeframe they decided upon. It usually required waiting for me to arrive at a point where I was able to understand and cope with the meaning of the information. I have been fortunate that during times when I have not quite comprehended the information they never turned their backs, but waited for me to arrive. They also taught me about the legitimacy of their hesitation, tentativeness and the importance of protecting one's own by preserving their rights and culture and guarding them from another oppressive researcher. Upon reflection this shows the development of a relationship and of qualities such as trust and respect. My advisory group were the owners of their own stories and shared it when they believed it needed to be shared. The relationship was reciprocal.

As part of the collaborative process, each advisory group member wrote a letter of endorsement for the proposed study (see Appendices A, B, & C). These letters contained a

statement of support, a brief background of each member's employment status, nation ancestry, and affiliations with other nations. Endorsement is also referred to as 'vouching'. Vouching occurs when members of the Indigenous community convey positive information about a non-Indigenous person (Westerman, 2004). In a study conducted by Vicary (2002), 92% of Indigenous people stated they would not see a non-Indigenous practitioner unless another Indigenous person (cultural consultant) had vouched for them as appropriate.

I was also encouraged to write a self-disclosure letter about myself pertaining to my genealogy, my ancestry, and my position as psychologist and student researcher (See Appendix D). The main purpose for this letter was to locate myself as a non-Indigenous person and then as a psychologist and researcher. Doing this provides the future participant with an opportunity to locate me and determine the kinds of relations that may ensue (Martin, 2003).

The early stages of the research formation required several steps of negotiation.

Negotiating the current research required gaining approval and acceptance of the research from representatives of the Indigenous community and University. Negotiating best practice for gaining access and recruitment of participants, as well as providing supports (external counselling and Advisory group member support) and safe-interviewing environments (maintaining confidentiality), was an integral part of the research process. The main aim of implementing these processes is to ensure that the participants are willing to take part in the study and that supports are available for the participant should the need arise. These processes are part of the negotiation of research that continues throughout the duration of the study and beyond (See Appendix J).

# Cultural Competence

Since colonisation and immigration has changed the Australian society to become even more culturally and linguistically diverse there is a need for research to operate effectively in a multicultural context (Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria, 2006). One framework that is noted for improving research with Indigenous communities is the cultural competence framework by

Cross, Bazron, Dennis and Isaacs (1989), conducted in the US. Cultural competence is "a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations" (Cross et al, p.13). Cultural competence is founded on the assumption that knowledge and skills related to a particular culture are requisite for working with members of that culture (Sue, 2006). The purpose of this framework is to foster constructive interactions between people of different cultures. It is now generally recognised that cultural competence for one population may not translate to another (Kim, Kim & Kelly, 2006; Sue, 1999, 2003). Therefore, precautions need to be made before generalising findings from one minority group to the next. It is also important to acknowledge there will be differences within minority groups to avoid sensitive stereotyping.

# Cultural Reflexivity

Cultural reflexivity refers to the reflective practice of one's views of culture, race, professional discipline and practice (Sodowsky et al, 1997). The National Centre for Cultural Competence (NCCC) identified five fundamental criteria necessary for organisations to operate in a culturally competent manner. For the current research to be undertaken in a culturally competent manner I began by committing myself to a journey of growth, challenging my attitudes, perceptions and behaviours and how these have been shaped by the culture of which I am a member. Also referred to as critical reflexivity, which is a key component for culturally safe practice. With the guidance and mentoring from my advisory group and supervisor, I was able to identify and challenge some of my cultural assumptions, such as learning there are many legitimate ways of knowing. It was through conversations with my advisory group and supervisor that I became aware of my assumptions regarding culture and specific use of language that had the potential to perpetuate "othering" research. As a novice in cultural matters, I gained an appreciation and respect for diversity and developed a willingness to learn about different peoples' cultures. Through

these processes, I am able to communicate more effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds because I am more aware of the limited value of stereotyping individuals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Cross et al., 2006).

# Personal Reflexivity

It is fundamental to critical reflexivity that I explore my own social positioning in relation to this study (Parker, 1999). I identify as white, heterosexual, middle class, first generation Australian female and I have had access to many privileges such as education that has afforded me the opportunity to write this thesis. These roles make up some of my social identity and impinge on all aspects of my life. I have generally taken privileges such as attending university, completion of an undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral qualification and becoming a practicing psychologist for granted.

For research to be culturally competent a researcher must assess their own awareness of cultural self, striving to understand their own values, beliefs and behaviours as a reflection of their culture, this is often referred to as situatedness (Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, & Loya, 1997).

Traditional psychological frameworks have privileged the voices of the dominant ethnic group (Riggs, 2004). One of the privileges I have taken for granted is that I have never had to ask myself what it means to be white. Haggis, Schech, and Fitzgerald (1999) wrote that:

"Whiteness is nothing and everything; it colonises the definition of normal and also the definition of other norms. By contrast, those placed outside or who place themselves out of 'whiteness' usually can describe whiteness, reflect on it and recount experiences of it" (p.169)

Learning about my own history and my place in Anglo-Australian culture, with the support of my advisory group and supervisor, opened my eyes to my own assumptions. Reviewing my own history and upbringing was the easy part. The exploration into how being white affects my life, however, was difficult to understand because of the taken for granted nature of white privilege. I have never considered the power and privilege associated with being white. Previously I had little concept of what an Indigenous Australian might experience being consciously framed and

negatively judged because of their skin colour (Gorman, 2004). In the words of Dyer (2000), someone like me, a white person, needs to learn about the meaning of being white for me, it needs to be made strange and out of the norm for me to understand its true meaning. I think had it not been for this research process, I may not have pondered this question. Had I been placed outside of whiteness, I am convinced I would have much less difficulty describing whiteness (Moreton-Robinson, 1999). Critical analysis of whiteness, making it more visible, will assist in weakening its hegemony (Hage & Couch, 1999). My responsibility was to become aware of my whiteness and dominant position and how this may affect Indigenous peoples, an essential part required for researching across cultural boundaries (Sonn & Green, 2006).

Psychology is a profession grounded in western culture and claims to be an objective and apolitical profession. Psychology is a value-laden practice that has focused primarily on the individual rather than the interactions between individuals. It has ignored the cultural and historical contexts of both individual and group (Dudgeon & Garvey, 2000). Initially I found it difficult to locate myself within this contested field even though I shared similarities with it. Critical and personal reflexivity is a core principle of critical research and required that I reflect on my own practice and challenge any homogenizing assumptions related to a "one size fits all" thought pattern. I included myself within the framework, acknowledging my own location, and began to make my whiteness more visible. Taking a step back from the position of "objective expert", I recognised the ways my own subjectivity is embedded within mainstream cultural frameworks that have arisen from a racist society (Dudgeon & Pickett, 2000; Green & Sonn, 2006; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Sodowsky, Kuo-Jackson, & Loya, 1997; Sonn & Green, 2006; Sonn, 2004; Westerman, 2004).

The following chapter will outline the methods put in place to ensure collaborative, culturally competent, reflexive research. Chapter five will explain the study design and processes of participant recruitment. Participants will be introduced by the provision of non-identifying demographical data. The interview format and topic selection will also be explained to provide the

reader with an account of the how and why particular questions and methods of interviewing were chosen. Chapter five will provide an account of how the data was analysed and offer detail about the ethical issues negotiated to ensure confidentiality and participant access to additional supports.

# **CHAPTER 5**

#### **METHODS**

Design

Qualitative research provides a means for understanding individual and cultural diversity and the role and nuance of social context according to Stein and Mankowski (2004). Sociologist John Lofland (1971) provided four principles to guide the qualitative research process (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2005). First, the researcher gets close enough to people to have an indepth understanding of the particular phenomenon being studied. Second, the researcher captures accurately what takes place and what the participant says. Third, considerable in-depth description is required. Fourth, qualitative data includes direct quotations either spoken or written.

Qualitative research has the ability to empower an individual when the researcher provides a space for the participants to voice their own subjective experiences. I was interested in hearing and understanding the stories of each participant and considered Smith's (1999b, 2004) interpretive phenomenological approach (IPA) was an appropriate choice to analyse the stories. Smith talks about social cultural context and subjective experiences and focuses on the uniqueness of an individual's thoughts and perceptions. To conduct IPA appropriately, one must become immersed in the private world of each participant while also allowing for methods of bias reduction.

Bronfenbrenner's (1995) ecological theory explains the complex interplay of environmental layers and subsequent effects on an individual's development. Central to the ecological system of psychological development is the individual who is nested within layers. At an intrapersonal level, the individual is the core of the ecosystem and surrounded by his/her immediate social and material setting, referred to as the interpersonal level. The interpersonal level of family and peers are linked to community, school, church, and employment, referred to as the organisational level (Cooper & Denner, 1998; Helfinger & Christens, 2006).

## Instruments and Process

The development of guide questions was based on discussions with advisory group members and their suspected issues that may be experienced by the participant. The guide questions were also informed by a review of studies (Sonn, Bishop & Humphries, 2000; Kutieleh, Egege & Morgan, 2002) conducted with Indigenous peoples relocating for study and career purposes. Some of the topics included role of social supports and networks (Who would you say supported you most during this time?), settlement experiences (What did you do to get through a season being away from home, partner, children?), and family and community reactions to participant leaving home (How did the family respond to the news of you being selected by a Victorian club?).

The use of unstructured interviews in the present study was based on my attempt to understand the complexity of relocation without limiting the data by proposing a priori categorisation (Fontana & Frey, 2000). Unstructured interviews invite a conversational format and provide a method conducive to building rapport with each participant (Patton, 2000). "Rapport is tantamount to trust, and trust is the foundation for acquiring the fullest, most accurate disclosure a respondent is able to make" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.79). I built rapport with each participant by being open and honest. I was clear in my invitations and discussions regarding the research topic and found that taking a casual yet friendly approach was a clear benefit throughout the interview processes. I was respectful of each participant's schedules and fitted in with their routines, always remaining flexible with changes of time and venue. I believe that having other Indigenous Australians with me during the time of inviting participants to be interviewed helped enormously, as they were able to vouch for me.

The other additional benefit of unstructured interviews is that they can be conducted in a variety of settings and allow for flexibility. The present study conducted interviews in a variety of settings such as a staircase, grandstand, participant's home and my private practice consulting

suite. The interview guide (see Appendices G-I) outlined the main topics I covered with each participant and kept the interview focused on the relocation topic, however the open-ended approach allowed me the flexibility to adopt a rapport-building, conversational style.

## Participant Recruitment

In collaboration with the advisory group, it was decided that recruitment for secondary informants would be through the AFLPA and advisory group to gain access to a cross section of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who are involved with Indigenous footballers during each stage of relocation (Fielder, Roberts & Abdullah, 2000). My advisory group informed me that the quality of relationships formed throughout the research process was of greatest importance because it would form the basis for how I was received by the participant. In advisory group meetings, we discussed the importance of competence, transparency, and partnership in the research process.

Originally, Indigenous AFL players (recent draftees and established players) were to be recruited through the AFL Indigenous Australia Foundation; two years into the study, the AFL Indigenous Australia Foundation became obsolete. After a detailed search for answers regarding the Foundation's cessation, I was left with unsubstantiated reasons for its demise and a search for new recruiting options. During this time I commenced work with several AFL teams as an Associate Psychologist with the AFLPA. I had several conversations with the General Manager, Education and Player Development Program, and was invited to attend the 2006 AFLPA Indigenous camp to recruit participants for my research. The advisory group and I agreed that this would be an opportune time and place to invite and recruit participants.

Being at the AFLPA Indigenous camp was a fantastic opportunity to explain the research topic to prospective participants. It is a fine line between being overzealous and intrusive, so in line with Fielder et al (2000), I worked alongside two trusted people who were already known to the footballers, the AFLPA Indigenous Programme Coordinator and AFL Sports Ready Project

Manager. They both included me in many conversations with players about their relocation experiences and this provided an opportunity for me to introduced the research and myself and enabling me to invite participants to be interviewed for the study. I did not speak with all of the players at the camp because it was their time to connect with other Indigenous AFL footballers. The camp provides an opportunity for players to celebrate their involvement in the AFL, Indigenous culture and their opportunity to bond. Out of the eleven Indigenous players contacted after the AFLPA Indigenous camp, seven accepted the invitation to meet and talk about their relocation experiences. The remaining players were recruited via the AFLPA and PDMs.

## **Participants**

The current study involved two different groups of participants. The first group comprised Indigenous Australian footballers currently playing in the AFL and the second group included secondary informants from a variety of organisations such as the AFL and organisations associated with the AFL such as the AFLPA.

*Players.* Group one comprised 10 Indigenous Australian football players representing seven Victorian AFL clubs, belonging to eight different Indigenous nations spanning four Australian states and territories. Five participants were interviewed within 12 months of relocating to Victoria and ages ranged from 18 to 22 years (new draftees) and five participants who had relocated prior to 2002 (established players) whose ages ranged from 23 to 27 years. Selection of participants required that they first identify as Indigenous Australian<sup>1</sup> and second, listed as an AFL player.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "Our Aboriginal reality acknowledges and recognises a great complexity and diversity within itself. Aboriginal is now specifically self-defined, i.e. as anyone who designates themselves Aboriginal and is accepted as such by the community; rather than historically when Aboriginality was a categorisation by government, based solely on biological heritage. Now one is free to identify culturally and is not limited by biological determination; that is "Aboriginality" is now increasingly a declaration of cultural identification and not limited to parentage. This allows then for recognition of the cultural diversity of Aboriginal people." (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1989, p.22)

Initially the choice to incorporate two separate groups was based on the examination of how each group viewed the services provided for relocation, exploring whether differences existed as a result of developing the AFL Indigenous Australia Foundation. As the research evolved, and I became more interested in learning about player's relocation stories, I decided to continue with two separate groups. I wanted to learn from recent draftees and how they had and were continuing to negotiate their relocation and adaptation in the new environment and explore retrospectively how the established playing group negotiated their relocation and settlement experiences.

Tables 2 and 3 provide basic demographic information about each player and time for when they relocated to join their club.

<u>Table 2.</u> Introducing Recently Drafted Indigenous Australian Football Players

Name	Age Drafted	Relocation Timing	Relocated	Referral Source
Paul	18	3 weeks post draft	Alone	AFLPA Indigenous camp
James	18	2 weeks post draft	With partner	AFLPA Indigenous camp
Max	18	3 weeks post draft	Alone	PDM
Campbell	17	2 weeks post draft	With Parent	AFLPA Indigenous camp
Chris	17	2-3 days post draft	Alone	AFLPA Indigenous camp

Table 3. Introducing Established Indigenous Australian Football Players

Name	Age Drafted	Relocation Timing	Relocated	Referral Source
Brad	20	4 weeks post draft	Alone	AFLPA Indigenous camp
William	18	3 weeks post draft	Alone	AFLPA Indigenous camp
Joseph	17	2 weeks post draft	Alone	PDM
Oliver	16	1 Year Prior draft	Family	PDM
Alexander	18	1 week post draft	Alone	PDM

Secondary informants. The secondary Informants included eight individuals associated with the AFL in different roles. There were two females and six males from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds. Participants were invited to participate in the study based on their role in AFL football. The roles were varied and included; AFLPA and AFL representatives, PDMs, player agents/managers, mentors and ex-footballers as well as one representative from an AFL initiative. All participants were based in Victoria at the time of the interviews and were over 18 years of age. Secondary informants offered their views on how they perceived relocation to be experienced by Indigenous footballers. It is important to note that secondary informants were originally invited to participate in the study for the purpose of reviewing services associated with Indigenous player relocation. As the research evolved the secondary informants' views did not represent the phenomenological experiences of the athletes, especially those outside the Indigenous culture.

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After the first stage of recruitment at the AFLPA Indigenous camp, participants were contacted by telephone and during each conversation the following five steps ensued. First, each participant was offered the option of having an advisory group member present during the interview and reminded about the role of the advisory group. Second, participants were offered the opportunity to view the letters of disclosure containing information regarding traditional tribal origins, family ties, and professional status from the advisory group. Similarly, letters of disclosure containing information pertaining to professional status, family background, education, and knowledge of Indigenous culture from the researcher was available for the prospective participant. Third, each participant was asked to nominate a venue suitable for the interviews to take place.

Fourth, during this phone call I checked in with participant that they had understood the content of the information for participants (See Appendix E) and consent form (See Appendix F), re-visiting both of the forms verbally. Fifth, during this phone call I also ascertained whether it was acceptable for interviews to be audio taped.

The participant and I met on the day and time we had agreed upon during the initial phone call. With the participants I had not met previously, I took the opportunity to introduce the research topic and myself and discussed the five steps mentioned above. With the participants I had met previously, there was more of a chance to have general discussion. I explained to the participant that once the tape had been transcribed, the participant and interviewer would have the opportunity to rectify or edit any aspects of the interview.

During each interview, I had a 'check-in' point where I would ask the participant how they were feeling about the process and ascertain they were comfortable to continue. At the completion of the interview, I asked the participant how they felt about the process, questions, and overall experience. Discussions at the end of an interview provided a debriefing opportunity for both parties involved. I informed each participant that once the audiotapes were transcribed, I would contact them via post, telephone, or email to let them know that the transcript had been completed and was ready for review. Each participant chose a method of contact (email or post) and agreed to review the transcript. Initially I hoped that the follow up would be face-to-face, but because of to time constraints and club expectations on participants, this was not always possible.

The aim of reviewing the transcript was to add any missing information the participant felt was relevant or necessary, and change any information in the transcript that was incorrect and represents an important phenomenological process. The follow-up provided the interviewer with the opportunity to ask any questions that may not have been asked initially and gave the participant the opportunity to highlight any information that might be identifying. Each participant was provided with the opportunity to verify his own stories (i.e., their lived experiences as depicted). Participants were also informed that if there were to be any publications they would be informed and their consent requested. One participant from the secondary informants group made amendments to the original transcript, in particular to grammatical errors rather than content.

# Ethical Considerations

To guide effective research, ethical choices need to be made prior and during the research process rather than as an afterthought. Interpretation of ethical guidelines can vary and are rarely concrete. They are based on an individual's cultural norms and values (Ivanitz, 1999). Considering I was embarking on a research process with Indigenous football players, my first ethical responsibility was to seek the advice from cultural advisors. Prior to submitting an ethics application to the University, discussions and negotiations had begun with my advisory group and supervisor.

A S.W.O.T analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in research, involving identification of the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable for individuals participating in the research. The S.W.O.T. analysis was recommended and driven by members of the Advisory group for the purpose of minimising harmful effects on participants and providing a basis for preventitive support measures for participants if required. The main threats were; topics of harm, misinterpretation of information by community, poorly communicated relaying of information to participants, and breach of confidentiality.

In a conversational style interview, there is no guarantee that topics that may cause distress will not surface. Although it is impossible to predict what a participant will discuss, it is possible to gauge how he is coping with the process. Prior to commencement, it was vital that I inform the participant about the support service available should there be any feelings of discomfort or unease. During every interview, a 'check-in' point provided an opportunity to assess how the participant was handling the interview.

When each interview was complete, the 'debrief' between each player and myself offered an opportunity to review some of the topics and to establish whether further support was required for the player. Debriefing is a crucial part of the interviewing process because it sheds light on how the participant experienced the process and whether any questions evoked feelings of discomfort or

stress (Tindall, 2001). Debriefing also gave me an opportunity to assess whether the participant required additional support (cultural counsellor, follow-up from advisory group member). With regard to the threat of misinterpretation of information by community members, my advisory group informed me that their role was to vouch for the research as well as clearing up any misunderstandings that may arise. It was my role to inform the advisory group immediately if I experienced any damaging feedback from the communities.

It was my responsibility to provide clear and concise information in a transparent manner to all participants. I was aware that unambiguous information would alleviate confusion and misinterpretation. I provided both verbal and written information. I also provided the contact details of my advisory group members had any of the participants wanted clarification or endorsement.

Each participant was reminded of the strict confidentiality of responses and there were no correct or incorrect responses. Participants were also reminded that participation in the research was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without the need for any reason or explanation and without penalty in any form. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions throughout the interview. Participants were debriefed after completion of the interview allowing the opportunity for additional conversation and questions. Although it was not expected that any participant would become distressed during an interview, I consistently explained to all participants prior to commencement of the interview the kind of issues to be addressed in the interview.

To maintain confidentiality for the secondary informants the advisory group members were not offered the opportunity to view the transcriptions of secondary informants as two participants in this group were recruited via the advisory group.

#### Data Analysis

Data analysis began commensurate with interviews by engaging in critical reflection and interpretation (Fielder et al, 2000). These interpretations helped guide the interview process and facilitated a conversation rather than a question/answer session. Although I did not want to assume

or propose a priori categories, it is near impossible not to have some ideas about what may come up in an interview owing to familiarity with existing transition literature and discussions regarding the issue of relocation at length with other people, such as advisory group members, non-Indigenous footballers, and past Indigenous AFL footballers. The conversations with Indigenous players changed from the first interview to the last, depending on the participant and the pertinent details they chose to share.

The analysis of data was guided by interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), a process that required learning about one person at a time and collating a story about how each participant had experienced relocation (Smith, 2004). As part of the process, I listened to each tape recording twice before I began the transcriptions. I made notes on my own recollections about the kind of questions I had asked, and how I felt about the interview overall. I also had my own notes to compare with their stories. Notes that had been taken when I first met the participant, what we had talked about, how we met, his or her reaction to being invited to participate in the study. It required "getting to know" the participant and the material provided in the interview.

I began to look for patterns to find ways in which the data was similar and different. As I read the first transcript, I highlighted sections of the text and wrote short descriptive headings (e.g. family's reaction to player leaving home) in the right hand margin. I wrote these headings on a separate sheet of paper as I went through the transcript. I was then able to look at the major themes and sub themes emerging from the transcript. The same process was implemented when I read each of the transcripts. New themes were added to the existing list of themes. As part of the analysis, the transcripts for each Indigenous footballer were emailed to advisory group members for their input and perspectives regarding emerging themes and content. Advisory group members did not provide any feedback at this stage.

I produced a table using Microsoft Excel on my computer with each of the themes, and cut and pasted the participants' corresponding statements. Each participant's information was colour

coded. I then added secondary informant's statements to the table. The table was long and exhaustive because at this first stage of thematic coding I did not reduce the statements from participants, with the aim of retaining the context of the comment.

The next step entailed looking at the following stages that emerged from the interviews: pre-relocation, relocation, post-relocation, and settlement phases and categorising the statements with each phase. During this stage, I also investigated the risk and protective factors recognising the different ecological levels. Data analysis was completed on large pieces of butcher paper in a more creative way to provide a fresh way of looking at the data and conducted after a 12-week break from the data. My thesis supervisor was also involved in the data analysis acting as a form of analyst triangulation. Analyst triangulation refers to a variety of sources viewing the data from different angles. Participants, advisory group, supervisor, and researcher review of the data completed investigator triangulation, providing a richer and potentially more valid analysis of the data. In the following chapter I present the stories of relocation from the perspectives of Indigenous AFL footballers with additional comments from secondary informants.

## **CHAPTER 6**

#### **FINDINGS**

The aim of this study was to explore the experiences of relocation from the points of view of ten Indigenous Australian AFL footballers. Specifically, the study sought to describe the challenges faced by a sample of Indigenous footballers who join interstate AFL clubs, identifying the social, cultural, organisational, and psychological factors that influence relocation and adaptation to football clubs. Interviews with players and secondary informants were analysed for recurring and unique themes. In this chapter, I present the stories of the footballers and particular secondary informants to illustrate the range challenges identified and the way these variables operate at different levels, working as risk and protective factors in the relocation process. The stories presented in this section do not aspire to speak for all Indigenous AFL footballers, but provide an account of the variety of relocation and settlement experiences from the participants' perspective.

Relocation for all AFL footballers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, will involve a level of disruption and one might suppose some of the themes emerging in the current study to be pertinent for Anglo-Australian footballers. Understanding the experiences of relocation from the points of view of Indigenous footballers requires comprehending the broader social cultural and historical context, in particular the history of race relations and the Indigenous ways of being (or worldview). There are major differences between the lifestyles of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as reflected in health, social and other statistics and living conditions (AHREOC, 2007). Considering these differences occur and represent a particularly bleak aspect of Australian society, it was not surprising that Indigenous footballers in the present study also believed differences between the two groups existed in relation to relocation as this has also been reported in anecdotal evidence (AAP, 2000; Gullan, 2000; Petch, 2006; Roberts, 2005; Robinson, 2005). Reasons for

these differences related to a stronger commitment to community, familial connection, culture, survival, and the importance of these aspects on an individual's identity (Roberts, 2005).

An overarching theme emerging is the sense of connection and belonging Indigenous players felt within their own families and communities and the importance of this connection for their identity. In many of the stories, players had difficulty explaining the connection to home, family, and country. Players also found it hard to explain the relationship Indigenous people have with other Indigenous people. Dudgeon and Oxenham (1989) cautioned against defining kindredness in 'white' language, as it is a felt experience between Indigenous people. As an Anglo-Australian, I am using the term kindredness based on the players' descriptions resembling Dudgeon and Oxenham's definition of kindredness, such as the shared sense of connection, intuition, feeling, attachment to country and the bond shared with other Indigenous people.

Moreton-Robinson (1999) referred to this kind of shared experience as ontological belonging, a way of learning about responsibilities and ways to relate to self and others;

One experiences the self as part of others and that others are part of the self; this is learnt through reciprocity, obligation, shared experiences, coexistence, cooperation and social harmony (p.16).

James described how the security and closeness with family and extended family could make relocation difficult for Indigenous footballers. James mentioned how frightening it can be for an Indigenous player to leave his family, and believed one of the major differences for Indigenous players is the kind of environment they are leaving behind -- often remote, sparsely populated, and much further away from the location of the AFL clubs.

With Indigenous people, there is a large percentage that comes from communities and not big towns like Perth. The boys that actually play in Perth probably come from communities outside. It's pretty hard because it is so far away. I think the family issue as well. Most Indigenous kids at the time when they get drafted they're pretty close to their relatives. They're a bit scared.

James (New draftee)

The reciprocal connection between Indigenous people and the land places an Indigenous person within a larger context, of family, community, and environment (Sonn, Bishop, & Humphries, 2000). Joseph described the connection between the land and its people and the "pulling" mechanism by which an individual is drawn back to his roots. When an Indigenous Australian moves away from their traditional land, he moves into another group's country as a stranger (Deyhle, 1995; Sonn et al; 2000).

I think it's mainly the attachment to the homeland, I think that's what makes it different to the normal stuff. I think Indigenous families are a whole lot closer as well, to their families, just because, there's something about family, everyone grows up close and you've got your extended family where you call everyone Uncle and Aunty, probably aren't even related to you, just seem to be, I don't know (Indigenous team mate) moving back to (City) because of his attachment to the land or his family. I think Indigenous boys tend to get homesick a lot more than the normal fellas; it's a combination of where you come from, the land, and your family as well. Just your people, there's always that obligation to go back to your family, it's hard to explain. It's a feeling, a connection, the connection to both makes it harder to leave, some find it easier than others, but they still have it in the back of their mind.

Joseph (Established player)

Alexander believed relocation was different for Indigenous footballers because of the difference in family structure and identity. An Indigenous family may include three or four different generations living under one roof; the Anglo-Australian households are characterised predominantly by the nuclear family (McKelvie & Mallard, 2000). He believed that having an extended family and being close to them is more common in the Indigenous culture and provides a sense of comfort and identity. Alexander struggled with his own sense of self and feeling comfortable enough to be himself in his new environment, away from family ties.

I think the family thing is the biggest aspect of it. I'll be walking down the street and I'll see a bloke and say that's my cousin and someone will say how close, and I'll say 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> cousin, but sort of related in a way that they are your first cousin, whereas on the other side, you speak to boys around the club and they don't see their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> cousins, or even cousins. When you speak to Indigenous players and they say they have a big family you can understand that withdrawal from family is probably the biggest aspect of relocation, and feeling more at home and comfortable and doing things they would do around family they wouldn't do around non-Indigenous people.

Alexander (Established player)

Initially Oliver found it difficult to pinpoint the reasons why he thought Indigenous players had more difficulties with relocation compared with their Anglo-Australian counterparts. He offered an alternate perspective, describing the added responsibility associated with relocating with partner and children. The statistics show that in comparison to Anglo-Australian footballers a higher proportion of Indigenous players have partners and children at a much younger age and relocate with them (AFL, 2007). Oliver believed that another difficulty experienced by Indigenous players was the likelihood of joining a group of non-Indigenous footballers who have never experienced playing football with or knowing an Indigenous person before. A lack of cultural awareness can add to the difficulties of relocation for an Indigenous footballer.

There's just something about Indigenous players we just find it harder, something about fitting in and settling in, I'm not sure what it is, that's a hard one. There's a lot of white players that may have never even played with an Aboriginal player before. Most of them don't have kids, they're out enjoying themselves. I had my partner and my own little family, I had to grow up, I had to be the one worrying about my new family and look after my own family.

Oliver (Established player)

Oliver's point about responsibility and relocating with children was also acknowledged by some of the secondary informants and previous research conducted by Sonn, et al. (2000). Relocating with a partner and children shifts the level of responsibility from the player only having himself to worry about to having to consider the issues that arise for those moving with him. A secondary informant further highlighted this point;

Most of our boys when they are drafted they have a permanent partner or kids whereas most of our non-Indigenous guys the same age don't. So the family pressure and relocation is harder. When the kids start with the partner and there's not another Aboriginal player or another family then that partner is isolated and finds it hard making friends. That puts a lot of pressure on the family.

Secondary informant

Although each of the Indigenous players interviewed for the current study believed that differences existed between Indigenous and Anglo-Australian football players and how they experienced relocation, they did not deny or refute that Anglo-Australian footballers also

experience difficulties with leaving home and settling into their new environment. Instead, they provided reasons such as the heightened importance and meaning of family and country, difference in value systems, family composition, and environmental differences such as population and cultural differences that affect relocation and settlement. Secondary informants also believed that relocation experiences were different for the two populations and not always negative. For instance, one secondary informant noted the difference in value systems;

Maybe these Indigenous boys have got it right, it's all about being with family and community, family above everything is number one. So when they're playing and have already made the decision to go back to their family and community, I think it's fantastic because they will return and maybe make peoples' lives richer back in their community.

Secondary informant

### Relocation Stories

Relocation is a dynamic transition involving various junctures; moving out, moving through and moving in (Schlossberg, 1981). These phases are important for the individual making the move and important for the family who are left behind or joining each participant in the relocation process. The data showed a sense of anticipation and realisation about the impending move and a variety of emotional responses from both the individual and his family. The actual move symbolises a reality of disruption, familiarity is no longer a certainty, and everyday things are not in the players' immediate space. This can evoke both excitement and trepidation. Questions such as; "Will I meet the expectations of the AFL club?' "Will I settle in the new environment?" "How will I cope being away from home?" arise out of uncertainty. The initial reactions for new recruits and established players were diverse, ranging from fear and worry about the impending move, to excitement about forthcoming opportunities. These opportunities included, making and achieving goals making a name for oneself, leaving an environment that would not be conducive to achieving particular goals and having an opportunity to experience moving to and living in a new place. These opportunities and goals were described in ways that were not exclusively tied with football achievement but a lifestyle that created additional opportunities in other areas, such as work, home, and education.

Each of the players described their drafting to an AFL club as an opportunity, admitting a degree of concern associated with the hardship of leaving family. At an individual level, almost all players described personal motivation and a burning desire to enhance the status of Indigenous people and make their family proud. Comments similar to these highlight the personal ambition motivating each player to first nominate for the draft and subsequently accept the offer to leave home for the purpose of a new career. Without an internal drive described by each of these participants, their survival in the AFL would be tested.

Asking players to recollect their experiences about relocation also gave them the opportunity to look back and decide whether they would do anything differently. Each player, even the players who had difficulties relocating and settling into their new environments, said they would not change their relocation process or experiences. William left home aged 18, much to the surprise of his parents who tried to dissuade him from moving, but William was determined to play football in the AFL.. He stated his family, irrespective of their initial reaction, had to accept his decision. William was drafted by a Victorian AFL club a year after leaving home and believed an AFL vocation symbolised an opportunity for a new career and living environment.

You learn a lot about yourself when you are thrown out to the wolves, but nah I wouldn't do anything differently. I have got a pretty good life at the moment, I can't complain too much. Melbourne's a great city, there's always something to do and I love it here.

William (Established player)

Although they were initially surprised by William's desire to leave his hometown, William recalled his family being excited when he was drafted.

They were just excited I got drafted; I mean they didn't really care where I went just as long as I got the opportunity. My family were very happy I got drafted to (AFL club). You already have to be interstate because (hometown) doesn't have a team. I think they (parents) were in a bit of shock that I wanted to get out of (hometown), my brothers and sisters pretty much stayed in (hometown) and I got sick of it and just wanted to leave and my family didn't have too much say in it. Just did it and haven't looked back.

William (Established player)

William stated that he had logistical assistance, but believed the only way to survive was to rely on himself.

Moving my stuff from home, the club has sponsors and they moved everything over. But um pretty much it was just me, you got thrown into the deep end and either sunk or swam. They (Club) do try and make it a bit easier nowadays, I think it is a lot easier for young fellas coming in now, because they (AFL) are so aware of Indigenous people and how they have struggled to come over and relocate. There are a lot of Indigenous players in the AFL now, so is there is no reason that they (new players) should feel so homesick or isolated now with at least one other Indigenous player at the club. Yeah I think the awareness through the Indigenous camp and that sort of stuff and the stuff that the players say have made things a lot easier for the players coming through nowadays. Like through the networking you do now you just know who the Aboriginal or Indigenous players are now at the AFL clubs and you see them out about town and you always say hello to them and it is so much easier having so many more people to talk to.

William (Established player)

Individual reactions to the logistics of relocation varied and a major theme emerging in the data was the risk taken to achieve their goals. Leaving the familiarity of family and community, moving to a new place and unfamiliar environment for some participants was a daunting task.

Taking a risk and not knowing whether it would pay off added to the pressure and responsibility of taking care of each family member making the move with the player. Oliver, aged 16, relocated alone, and attempted the draft system by playing for another league in the hope of being noticed. Oliver's story evokes an impression of persistence and determination at all costs. He decided to move again, and this time he tackled the draft in Victoria, with partner and child in tow. They spent every cent on relocating all of their belongings to Victoria, in the hope the risk would pay off. Oliver remembers the day he was drafted as a rookie, he experienced immense relief, because days prior he was ready to quit and go back home. He believes that being drafted as a rookie made him work harder. He knew the hard work was ongoing and he had to prove himself to gain a spot on the seniors list.

If I could change it (relocation) to make it much easier and cruise through it, much as I'd love to, I think I'd keep it the way it was, because it made me work harder.

Oliver (Established player)

Oliver described the perils of risk-taking and the reality and meaning for him and his family if the risk did not pay off. Oliver's story shows both a financial and emotional commitment to achieve success. Oliver also represents a small percentage of AFL Indigenous and non-Indigenous players who relocated with children as well as a partner. He talked about the rollercoaster relocation process in the following way.

I found it pretty tough relocating. We used all our money getting down here to follow my dream and there was all this talk I would get drafted and I didn't get drafted. It was my daughter's first birthday. I spoke to my manager and just said, "I have had enough, I've tried too hard and it has been a mistake, moved interstate that many times, back and forth... and nothing's happened". Yeah I was ready to throw it all away and I decided to give it one more crack. I was lucky enough to get rookied and it's going well so far.

Oliver (Established player)

Oliver remembered the mixed emotions his family expressed:

I think they were excited but at the same time sad as well. As much as we used to talk about me going, my mum and that were excited for me to go because we had talked about it so much, but when it was time for me to get on that plane she'd be the one all choked up. But the hardest part is always getting on that plane.

Oliver (Established player)

Listening to the stories of relocation told by each of the participants I noted an overarching sense of persistence and determination. James shared his determination to make a name for himself, and playing football in the AFL provided the opportunity.

For me, I just wanted to get away from home. Most of the people I hung around with went down the wrong path. I was the only one out of the group fortunate enough to actually follow my pathways and make my dreams come true. They thought there was nothing there for them so they turned to other avenues, which didn't really get them far. I think courage and just my willingness to be something and make a name for myself was the biggest thing I wanted to do.

James (New draftee)

I was initially struck by James' energy and motivation. At age 15 James realised he could pursue a career in football and began preparing early on realising relocation was imminent. James was 18 years of age, working full-time and living with his grandmother at the time he was drafted. He described his relationship with his grandmother as crucial to his success and attributed it to the

role modelling he received from her. James recalled his grandmother looking sad when she learned of his drafting; she was anticipating what it meant for him to be away from her.

As soon as they (family) found out about it (being drafted), a few of them were really happy and my Grandmother grew me up so she was the one that was upset. She didn't look very happy at all for me to be leaving. On the inside I am sure she was pretty happy.

James (New draftee)

James could not wait to leave his hometown and travelling more than 3000 kilometres to reach his AFL destination did not worry him in the least. James saw his AFL opportunity as a way of creating a better life for him and his partner. A life that he believed he could not have had if he stayed at home. James' determination, drive, and positive outlook, stood out in the interviews. He was excited about every part of his relocation experience and settled into his new environment immediately.

Campbell found the relocation experience easy. He knew he was going to be in Victoria for a short period and then be joined by his mother. He had high expectations of his new environment and both he and his mother were prepared and excited about living in Victoria. Campbell's only fear related to being so young in an environment dominated by adult men.

Pretty easy. I packed up at home. Not everything because mum was still there. Mum and all my cousins packed up the house, so I didn't have to worry about that. All I had to do was bring myself and all my clothes. I was probably most afraid of coming to the club and being with all these superstars, being so young and coming into a man's environment. I was scared that way because I had to grow up pretty quick.

Campbell (New draftee)

Campbell was surprised at being picked up in the draft as he thought he was too young.

Mixed in with excitement, Campbell spoke of feelings of nervousness attributed to his own uncertainty of the club's expectations of him.

I was only 17 and I didn't think I'd get drafted in that year, so it was even more exciting because I was younger than the rest of them. I couldn't wait to get over here. I was pretty nervous. Didn't know what to expect and what they expected of me. I was probably most afraid of coming to the club and being with all these superstars, being so young and coming into a man's environment. Trying to feel my way after just finishing year 11 at high school. I was scared that way 'cos I had to grow up pretty quick.

Campbell (New draftee)

Campbell described his life consisting of vicissitudes, "It hasn't always been easy, hasn't always been a smooth road". He believes in setting realistic goals and having the persistence and motivation to achieve them. Campbell also has family members at home that continually motivate him to keep striving for his goals, "My uncle is always telling me to keep at it and just because you've made it, doesn't mean you've made it. You're there now but you have to try and stay there". Campbell remembered the journey he and his family shared and the emotional response to achieving his goal of being drafted to the AFL.

My family were pretty excited 'cos they know how much I love my footy. They've been there through my whole journey and been through it all with me. They were happy because I actually got there. Pretty emotional.

Campbell (New draftee)

Brad was also surprised when he learned of his drafting. Brad thought he was too old. At 20 years of age, Brad was drafted to a Victorian AFL club. Brad described himself as a mature age rookie compared to the ages of rookies today and was surprised when he was drafted. At the time of drafting he was living with his parents and siblings, he was also employed full-time. Overall, Brad described his relocation experiences as a positive step to achieving his dream of playing AFL football.

I'd been through three or four drafts and not looked at. When I did get drafted it was a bit of a surprise, because I wasn't expecting anything. No one had spoken to me about it. I was excited about just playing football, realising your dreams partly come true with playing AFL football. You've got your foot in the door and basically making the most of your opportunities.

Brad (Established player)

Brad recalled having difficulty with relocation because he could see that leaving home meant leaving his younger brother and not being around to watch him grow up. Brad considered himself an integral part of his younger brother's life and leaving home meant relinquishing a lot of the older brother role.

Leaving family was one of the hardest things, missing my little brother growing up. So I was 20 and he was 14 when I left so I knew I was going to miss his teenage years. I was a little bit funny about that. Not seeing him go through school was a bit sad to miss out on that.

Brad (Established player)

Brad was ready to move out of home and intimated that at the age of 20 he was not expecting to feel homesick. During the first two weeks in Victoria (2500 kilometres away from home), Brad experienced homesickness but said it did not last long as he had access to his family.

Probably a little bit fearful of getting homesick but I was old enough to realise I'm out here to make something of my life and not to get dragged down by family. Mum and Dad were good to me, they let me go. It's only a phone call away. They didn't want me to come home and do anything. They were quite content for me to be in Melbourne and to be playing football.

Brad (Established player)

Brad has used this opportunity and the available services to study at the tertiary level and hopes to finish off his degree in the near future. His described his experiences as;

It's busy, it's a good lifestyle, the football is great, the life of a footballer is short, make the most of it. Work hard, do everything right. Get the most out of yourself but have a good time at the same time. Try and marry those things together and enjoy it.

Brad (Established player)

Joseph saw his drafting to the AFL as an opportunity to move away from home. Joseph was no stranger to itinerancy and described a desire for adventure in wanting to experience the different features of a new place. He spoke of ambition and achievement of a dream by playing football on the big stage with other footballers that he once perceived as mythical. Joseph grew up on a mission until he was nine years and lived in several foster homes after that. Aged 12, he went and lived with his father and siblings. Joseph was keen to move to a new place and believed that irrespective of where he was drafted to, he would make the most of the opportunity.

I always just wanted to get drafted by interstate, I'd love to go interstate and try something different, I mean I have travelled all my life, moving out of (names places spanning three states and one territory), and like with the foster homes as well I had to travel for that, so I have always been getting up and going places so it never really bothered me going interstate. I think my dream would have been playing footy on the big stage, playing AFL and rubbing shoulders with blokes that are considered myths. Like guys like (names two team mates), you think they don't exist and then you meet them and you go around their

houses and befriend them and all that sort of stuff. Sometimes you have to pinch yourself when you go to bed at night. Shit you know this is great.

Joseph (Established player)

Common initial reactions were associated with feelings of reluctance. Nominating for the national draft requires relinquishing control over the destination of the future AFL club. A footballer can hope for a particular AFL club, but the only choice he has is to accept an offer from the club that drafts him. Some Indigenous players' comments suggested uncertainty about their particular destination as well as excitement and fear about moving. Although Paul was resigned to accept any offer, he was anxious about the new environment because it was not familiar to him.

I was freaking out because I was hoping it was going to be (city) because I'd been there and know my way around there.

Paul (New draftee)

Paul relocated to Victoria at 18 years of age. Although Paul was aiming to be picked up in the draft, he confided in me about his fear of moving to Victoria. His fear related to unfamiliarity with the new environment and being isolated from family and friends. Paul had experienced moving out of home the previous year to attend boarding school during the school term. He had access to extended family while at boarding school and found this comforting. Paul also knew he was able to go home every school holiday to be with his immediate family. Knowing he had access to his family in approaching holidays eased his feelings of homesickness. Moving to Victoria was frightening for Paul because it was more than 3000 kilometres from his family and a completely different environment to what he knew. Reflecting on his first year of AFL football and living in Victoria, Paul believed he adapted to his environment well in his first year but believed there was an expectation that he would fit in quickly, "Some other people just expect us to fit in real well.... but just give us some time".

"Relocation transforms people's lives; the shockwaves continue long after the furniture is rearranged in the new house and the last of the crates is unpacked" (Coyle & Shortland, 1992, p. 45). Transitions are defining in that they place focus on the individual undergoing the transition and

the sociocultural context in which they are leaving. An Indigenous footballer's initial reaction to relocation can result in a change in assumptions he holds of himself and the world and subsequently involves a corresponding change in his behaviour and relationships (Schlossberg, 2005). The physical and logistical move of leaving home has an effect on the individual leaving his familiar surrounds such as his home, family, and community. The family and community left behind also take part in the experience either as an onlooker or as a future passenger.

The expectations the player has of the receiving environment and whether these expectations are fulfilled can represent a crucial factor when determining adaptation (Furnham & Bochner, 1994). The fulfilment of expectations can also be applied to the discrepancies between community/home environment and the new environment an individual is settling into. If the discrepancies are too many and the player's expectations not met, then it may take him a longer period to adjust. It took a long time for Chris to begin settling and adjusting to his new environment and this may be because of the discrepancy between his expectations and fulfilment of these.

Sometimes you think "I can't wait to get out of home" (giggles), and when you do you kind of go "no I want to go back" (giggles), yeah the thought of that, "yeah I'm on my way, I can do this and I can do that, I am on my own now". But then "Oh I want to go back home". It's a bit hard. I was pretty excited at the time....can't wait to start a new life but when you get across here and you've got no family here to help you out, Dad or Mum to give you advice or anything, you sort of get lost. So yeah, I didn't really realise how hard it was until I actually came here. Punched me straight in the face.

Chris (New draftee)

A player's initial reactions are important to consider when examining the experiences of relocation as these can set the scene for how a player prepares for his upcoming move. His preparations can also be affected by the way those closest to him respond. Although it is usually a footballer's decision to nominate himself for the draft and make the final decision to accept the club offer, the reactions from family members may alleviate or add pressure to the relocation process by the way they react. The reaction of partners and family can have a considerable effect on how an individual prepares for the relocation and subsequently adjusts in the settlement stage.

Out of all of the participants, I found it easiest to interview Chris. We had met a few times before the interview so when I invited him to be interviewed he excitedly agreed. Although sometimes shy and nervous in his responses he was open and comfortable sharing his story. Chris described his family as very 'tight' and described his role within his family unit as crucial. He was like a parent figure to his siblings and provided much of the care to them. He was also close with his parents, and half-siblings, and considered himself an integral part of the family unit. Initially Chris did not want to go to the club that had drafted him because there were no other Indigenous players. Upon arrival at the club, he was relieved when he discovered otherwise and met another newly drafted Indigenous player. Chris was really excited about being drafted; he had two or three days to prepare, and believed he was strong enough to tackle any obstacle.

Yeah I'm on my way, I can do this and I can do that, I am on my way now. But then I got sort of like 'Oh I want to go home now'. It's a bit hard.

Chris (New draftee)

Chris admits that there have been times when he has thought of quitting football for a variety of reasons. He has experienced homesickness, loneliness, feelings of being misunderstood because of his Indigenous identity, and culture shock. Although it is obvious Chris has struggled to fit into his new environment, and at any moment he looks as though he could break down when he explains how and why he has been afflicted by such intense homesickness, there is an air of resistance and determination to succeed in his endeavours. When I asked Chris about the expectations he has of himself he laughed and said, "Become a superstar. For this year, make a few AFL games, at least 7 or 8.... any more that is great. Just keep moving the next few years; just make my family proud, that's probably a big motivation for me this year"

The reactions from family members for both new draftees and established players included shock, fear, sadness, and excitement. Some reactions that were not so positive, emphasised by elements of protection, concern, and sadness. Max was not concerned about whether he would cope, but anxious and worried about how his mother would cope without him.

I was really worried about leaving family behind and living without them. My family is really close, all my cousins and stuff are like brothers, yeah really nervous about leaving the family behind. My mum didn't want me to leave. She was worried that I wouldn't cope and scared for me I suppose. She cried a lot, and she always rings me. I think it was hard coming to Melbourne, such a big city and so much going on and so many things to learn. I have pulled back a bit. My mum still cries and rings all the time, but she's my mum, she's allowed to ring when she wants.

Max (New draftee)

A common theme emerging was the feeling of ambivalence felt especially by mothers or primary caregivers. Alexander recalled his parents being worried that he would not adapt to his new environment because of homesickness. He remembered the hardest thing was to move away from family but believed he was more prepared than his parents initially suspected.

I think mum was a bit worried about it, more than anyone else. I think I was more ready to move away from home, more than what mum or dad probably expected. They probably thought I would get more homesick than I did and were more prepared for that than I was.

Alexander (Established player)

Alexander dreamt about becoming an AFL footballer and believed it meant more to him because he had to make significant life changes to achieve that dream. He was nervous about leaving home but recalled the multitude of things that were exciting; the move, the new club, meeting all the players, first pay, and first game. Although Alexander experienced some struggles throughout his first year in his new environment, he believed it was all part of the learning curve.

Being the only Indigenous player at the club, Alexander recalled behaving differently around his Anglo-Australian peers. It took him around six months to feel comfortable. Alexander found that with time, he became more comfortable to be himself around the non-Indigenous players, through becoming more familiar with them and those players becoming more familiar with Alexander.

When I stayed with a few mates from home, I was more relaxed, joked around a bit more, let loose a bit more. Where if I was around the club I'd be a bit more tense and sort of worried about what I might say or do, it might be different or wrong.

(Alexander, Established player).

Looking back on his behaviour, and with several years of experience behind him, he often encourages other younger Indigenous people to "be themselves. Probably one thing I did was hide in my shell for 6 months or so, be as confident as you can and be yourself and be proud of who you are and where you come from".

Another element of ambivalence was highlighted in two interviews with secondary informants who encouraged families to let their children go and renounce their protective roles. Both secondary informants encouraged parents and communities to let their children dream and strive to reach their goals. They believed that protection is a natural instinctive process, but this needs to be examined because it may be hindering Indigenous Australians from exploring and striving to achieve their goals.

There is hesitancy in some family members letting their kids go, because they know what their kids are going to face and all too often, our families and our communities throw a blanket around us. You only have to look at the ones that have come through as exceptions, the Michael Longs, Maurice Rioli, Michael Mitchell, the Polly Farmers the Syddy Jackson's, Pastor Doug Nicholls, all these people have said "No I am going to do it, I am going to take the risk". We have so much talent in our families and communities but our parents and communities don't take the risk in letting the kids go. It is about security, it is about protection, it is our natural cultural instinct to protect, which on one hand is fine but on the other we have to change that.

Secondary informant

Historically Indigenous people have been "forced" into mainstream society through assimilationist policies that have been enforced for "their own good" (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1989). It is understandable that Indigenous families would want to protect their children from a society imposed upon them. Many would argue that society today is different, but the AFL has evolved from Western perspectives and it is difficult to erase the pain resulting from assimilationist policies, and possibly a natural instinct to protect a child from the society that once imposed and continues to impose these policies and oppressive practices. Oppression can continue when the receiving environment expects an individual from a minority group to assimilate into the dominant culture by leaving culture of origin behind. This is what happened when Indigenous Australian children were

forcibly removed and placed in orphanages under the 1905 Act (Collard, 2000). For example, children were instructed to speak English and punished for retaining their own tribal language.

Indigenous families have to let their kids dream and train them to realise their dreams. Tell them what they can do rather than what they can't do. A lot of the brick walls, not all of them, apart from racism and cultural difference, a lot of the brick walls that stop the kids, we put them up ourselves. Our family put them up, we put a security blanket up with many bricks in it so when they walk through, it isn't that soft, they hit their body, their head and they take two steps back rather than three steps forward and that is what we have to stop doing in our communities. Let our kids dream, show them what they can do, point them in direction, and let them know about the programmes out there and what we have all gone through and not be afraid to do that. All too often, our families and communities tell the kids what they can't do so they work within limitations, we can't keep setting them limitations. We have to treat all kids like an open book with unlimited potential.

Secondary informant

In some instances, not being able to let children go is a protective response, a way of shielding them from experiencing similar negative practices. Parents worry about their children losing their identities through processes of assimilation. Parents also worry their children will not have the resources to cope without the safety of their own family and community. For these reasons, it has become more common for Indigenous players to be accompanied by family members while making the move.

# Adaptation and Settlement

The AFL relies on the mobility of Indigenous and non-Indigenous footballers for growth, especially since becoming a national organisation and changing the process of the national draft system. A common theme emerging in sport, education, and business relocation literature, is that the earlier an individual settles into and adapts to his new environment, the sooner he will be an asset to the receiving environment (Coyle & Shortland, 1992, Marks & Jones, 2004; Schlossberg, 2005). This has also been found in AFL football (Cronson & Mitchell, 1987). The environment pertains to the new home an AFL player will be living in and the new workplace and community he is moving into. A draftee is expected to fulfil the performance demands set by his contract, acting as a reminder of the ruthlessness of AFL and the reality of being moved or traded among teams when his contract expires, through de-listing or encouragement to retire.

The different issues that affect relocation and settlement are multifaceted and can be analysed in a variety of ways. The current findings suggest that the process of relocation can be made more manageable by implementing strategies and process including social support, acceptance, a welcoming receiving environment, cultural awareness, and adequate preparation. Settlement in a new place usually occurs when an individual has gained an understanding of his new surroundings and is able to perform in a competent manner in his new environment (Fiske, 2004). Settling in depends on how an individual interprets or makes meaning of his new environment in relation to his own identity and understanding of his own culture.

Some variables can complicate and facilitate the relocation process. In some instances individual and interpersonal aspects such as personal development and growth, connection with family and community assisted with settlement and adaptation. Other stories spoke about the issues existing at an institutional level such as how the receiving environment welcomes cultural diversity. There is an overwhelming sense that an Indigenous person needs to change to fit into his receiving environment and the ability to resist dominant scripts in those environments. Some of the receiving environments, with all of their policies and procedures, culture, and histories, generate an expectation that players will adapt, even assimilate. At some AFL clubs, coaches, and management, appear to have a greater understanding and appreciation of culture and therefore provide environments that are conducive to personal development as well as football development. The players' stories in the current study provide an insight into how they managed and coped with their new environments and the extent to which their new environments provided and met their needs. To represent an Indigenous footballer's experiences of settlement the following section will focus on the factors that foster the relocation and those that hinder the process.

Growth, Coping, Dreaming, and Aspiring

Emerging from the stories were themes of aspiration, growth and the ability to cope. Several of the participants reflected on their maturity and personal development during their relocation experience. Campbell believed his maturity helped him fit into a professional work environment, describing his development as a necessity. He made comparisons between the person he had become and the person he once was and related to these changes in positive terms. He declared each of his achievements since relocation were a product of his maturity, including his dress and comportment.

I've grown up a lot. Matured quicker than I thought I would. This time last year I would have been back home finishing high school, messing around with the boys and picking on the teachers. I've grown up a lot and found that I've had to. If I hadn't grown up I'd probably be a long way back from where I am now. Last year I went back to the high school during my break to see the boys and they said to me I'd changed. The way I look, dress, and talk. They said I was weird. I just said I had to grow up and get more mature; always being around men, you've got to do that. I don't miss being that other way too. I reckon the way I am now is a good thing.

Campbell (New draftee)

Chris acknowledged a change in his self-definition. Prior to relocation, he thought he was more robust than he actually was. Soon after he relocated, he realised he needed to build on his emotional strength. Chris talked throughout the interview of initial excitement about leaving home; it was when he arrived that his excitement was dampened by the reality of being away from his family. Redefining one's own strength can provide a starting point for an individual to assess his own coping strategies and hence build on those to assist with settlement.

When I first came here, I thought I was stronger than what I was. Stronger now. Now I am getting on my own two feet, not quite there yet but...I'm a little better now. I went home about seven or eight times last year. I took every chance I could, like even if it was for two days.

Chris (New draftee)

Chris' initial beliefs of himself were challenged by his relocation experiences, which required corresponding changes in personal development. Sometimes these challenges can be too difficult or character breaking, but for Chris it provided an opportunity for identity resynthesis. Similar to Wirrpanda who needed access to family support for validation, Chris needed to go home on various occasions throughout his first year in the AFL. William also realised he had to depend on himself and his own coping strategies to deal with his new situation and environment. He spoke

of his internal coping strategies such as perseverance and continually working hard to achieve his goals. William said that it took between three and four years to become comfortable in his new environment. Being alone in a new state, a new AFL club, and knowing that it will take hard work and persistence helped him make the necessary changes to succeed in his new career.

I learnt I had a lot of growing up to do, you think you are pretty old when you're 18, but when you move interstate by yourself your eyes really open to the world and you realise you've got a long way to go in life. You've got to put your head down and work hard, like with anything and if you work hard enough you will get the rewards. It probably took me three or four years to get comfortable here and I just stuck it out and was pretty lucky I was playing games early on that sort of made it easier. Just perseverance I think a lot of it is, because with some people as soon as something goes wrong they crack it and want to go home but um you have to persevere, that is the main thing I think.

William (Established player)

When Alexander and I spoke about his coping skills and personal characteristics that facilitated his settlement and adaptation, he remembered being shy and reserved when he first arrived in Victoria. When recalling his first six months of football he could see how much he had developed since those early days and recognised the importance of being proud of himself and his heritage.

Probably one thing I did was hide in my shell for 6 months or so. I would tell a new Indigenous recruit to be as confident as you can and be yourself and be proud of who you are and where you come from and don't hide away from issues that come from your community. Like today we had a respect and responsibility seminar and it was all about sexual assault against women and it came up with rape in Indigenous communities and if I had have heard that in my first year I would have sat back in my seat whereas now you defend those things because not all of what you hear is true, even though it happens. Don't be ashamed of issues that happen in your communities, it isn't your fault and I think being a young player hearing those things they sit back and don't say anything and going into their shell a little bit and think it's their fault. Just be strong and a leader. Because if they haven't been strong they wouldn't be at an AFL club at the start and now with 70 plus Aboriginal players in the AFL lists so it just shows, more players that are getting drafted is giving more hope to other young kids and great work being done in WA at the school over there. Hopefully there will be an Indigenous team in the AFL one day that would be great. Alexander (Established player)

Stories in the present study also revealed that settlement was facilitated by the perceptions an individual held regarding his new career and new environment. Sport has been viewed as one option for Indigenous Australians to gain social mobility and the opportunity to climb the ladder of

social improvement (Godwell, 2000). For some Indigenous players in the present study, the AFL provided a career opportunity and a way out of their own communities that were lacking in opportunity. Max believed that the AFL provided him with an opportunity to have a better life, and although he struggled at times during his first season with things like paperwork and homesickness, he believed an AFL career was his avenue for making it happen.

If you just keep at it, you can make a better life for yourself and achieve things that you wouldn't achieve at home. I am happy I got through the first year and have settled in because I have a new car, (giggles), and a chance to study; I don't think I would have had that back home, maybe I just wouldn't have thought to go to school. Yeah more opportunities if you just stick it out. It was hard to leave them, but when I got here, there were some times I was even a bit happy to be away from the family. Even though I missed them, I didn't miss some of the stress that happens in families, you know what I mean?

Max (New draftee)

Yeah, I certainly do.

Emma (Researcher)

(We both laugh at the silly face I have pulled)

Max explained the difference in opportunities between the environment he had left and his new environment. Having the option of studying or owning a new car were signs of prosperity that he felt he would not have had if he remained at home. James also believed there was a difference between his home and receiving environment. He recollected the difference between himself and other Indigenous men who could have made it in AFL football. James believed he had to leave his own home where opportunities were sparse and to make it in football and achieve success required he follow his dreams and believe in himself. Both James and Max lived in remote communities, where unemployment rates were high and to pursue a professional career required leaving home.

The biggest downfall that I saw growing up as a teenager was how many talents there were in the NT. I saw so many people that could have and should have made it in the AFL. The biggest thing for them was leaving family behind so my advice to them would be "follow your dreams. There's not much for you at home. If you follow your dreams well enough then you can live your life to the fullest. With footy there's a lot of success just within footy. Whether it's personal or team orientated, just go for it, don't be shy and try and live your own life".

James (New draftee)

Brad's perception of being 'rookied' was that it was an opportunity to make a dream come true and would open the door for further opportunity. Brad settled in quickly and attributed his success to his hard working mentality and motivation to achieve.

I was excited about just playing football, realising your dreams partly come true with playing AFL football. You've got your foot in the door and basically making the most of your opportunities. I learnt that I am pretty disciplined and hardworking and if I put my mind to something I can usually get it done. I don't mind hard work. I've been through adversity a lot of times and I've gotten through it. From a football point of view, I've got through being knocked down and I've got myself back up. I heard there's not even 10 Aboriginal people qualified as (Occupation) so that's something I want to be qualified as and make the most of that.

Brad (Established player)

Alexander viewed his AFL career as an opportunity to give back to Indigenous communities. AFL football gave Alexander an opportunity and the assistance to give back to his community so that he would be remembered by both his footballing skills and community work.

One player said to me "When you finish footy what do you want to be remembered by?" I thought about that and I want to be remembered by community and mentoring work but obviously on-field stuff as well. I know other players that feel the same way about issues in the community and don't really do anything about it whereas if I want to change something I will, if I want to say something I'll say it. Issues in the Indigenous communities is probably the biggest thing in Australia at the moment, with just living, poverty, unemployment and all that, it's a big issue that is Australia wide and being an Aboriginal person you can't escape it. So the way I find to help other people out, I found that I was in a good position to help other people where there's a lot of other people that want to help but don't have the resources or whatever. So I found that in the position I am in I can help a lot of other people and people want to help me help other people.

Alexander (Established player)

It raises the question whether Alexander would have had the resources had he not been an AFL footballer. Godwell (2000) stated that Indigenous Australians excel in sport because they are not given the opportunity to excel in other areas. He warned that this message for young Indigenous Australians is problematic because they may believe they have no other options for success or social mobility. If sport, and in particular the AFL, is one of the few options for Indigenous Australians to excel, one might dare ask the question of what options exist for female Indigenous Australians?

The data shows that players had to make significant personal changes as part of the relocation process to assist them with adapting to their new environments; often requiring personal development and maturity. Many of the players spoke about how they relied on their own internal resources. Aspiration and determination featured in many of the player's stories also, their drive to achieve their dreams and make the most of opportunities afforded them during their AFL careers. *Social Support and Kindredness* 

Another kind of support operating at an interpersonal level refers to the assistance and resources provided by family, other Indigenous people, and connectedness. Based on previous transition research (Berry, 1997; Cutrona, 1990; Furnham & Bochner, 1986, Sarason & Duck, 2001; Trickett & Buchannan, 2001), it is not surprising social support was seen as facilitative of Indigenous players' relocation, settlement, and adaptation.

Although Campbell made his first trip to Victoria alone, he knew his mother would join him two weeks later. Relocating to live in Victoria was a decision he and his mother had made prior to him being drafted. Moving to Victoria together had been a dream they shared, and knowing his Mother was as excited as he was, Campbell found it easier to leave his hometown. Campbell recalled having someone at home at the end of the day to talk with about any topic apart from football was important to him.

It would have been pretty hard without my mum. I remember speaking to a lot of boys last year, the other Indigenous boys that got drafted and found it hard 'cos they were missing their families. Me having mum here they said "You're lucky, I wish I had my parents here". That opened my eyes up and I saw I was lucky to have my mum here and have her help me out. Takes my mind off other things being with my mum and just being able to talk about something else other than footy.

Campbell (New draftee)

A partner or family member joined three players from the current study soon after they had relocated. The purpose of having a partner or family relocate was to add support during the relocation and settlement stages. Oliver, Campbell, and James, believed having a partner or family member move with them provided a sense of familiarity and security, which helped the adaptation

process. Other players were joined by their partners at a later stage, but journeyed through the relocation process and settlement phases alone in their first year of AFL football.

A common theme emerging in the data was the familiarity shared among Indigenous footballers, knowledge about each other's culture even if they have lived miles apart. In Anglo-Australian terms, we might refer to this notion as camaraderie, and in this study, I have referred to it as shared emotional connection naming it kindredness (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1089). Especially since times of dispossession and the implementation of assimilationist policies, it is common for Indigenous Australians to establish their identities, interests, and connections, for the purpose of determining relatedness (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1989).

Chris relocated alone and lived with an Anglo-Australian host family. Chris stated that he liked his host family but tended to spend a lot of time with a family friend living nearby, Greg. Chris felt comfortable with Greg because of his cultural awareness and similar upbringing. Friends are an important form of social support and Greg provided an environment for Chris to feel welcome, he had created an open door for Chris. Chris found this to be helpful especially when he had struggled with a variety of factors such as loneliness, difficulty fitting in and belonging, grappling with his new environment and training demands, and feeling misunderstood. When Chris arrived in Victoria, he struggled to settle and believed this was because he arrived with his own set of values and assumed meanings. He believed his ideas and usual ways of being did not fit in with his new environment, prolonging his settlement period. Misunderstandings and conflict are inevitable because of the difference in meanings, rules, and values between the two cultures but Chris had difficulty finding space for his own identity. He struggled to find a place for his culture, and felt it was the open door welcome provided by Greg that helped him to be himself.

My dad had friends here and I met Greg through one of my dad's friends. It was really good having him here because we are so similar, brought up the same, he understands. It's been real hard but having said that, Greg has been really good and helped me out a lot. Sometimes I have experienced times when I am trying to explain something and people don't seem to understand what I am saying. I think to myself "What the hell's wrong with this fricken idiot". I don't know how to explain it, but sometimes when you are different

you feel as though others don't understand you. It was hard but I had Greg, he understood me. I was lucky to have him.

Chris (New draftee)

Social support was considered by almost all of the participants to be a facilitating factor for settlement and adaptation. The flipside; loss of social ties and social support, was considered confronting for the players who relocated from a vastly different environment to a new place that requires a completely different way of life, in a mainstream setup such as the AFL. Leaving home for each of these players signified leaving familial roles and responsibilities, having less contact with family, sometimes minimal or inadequate face-to-face contact with family, having to depend on oneself without a safety net to fall back on, managing financial issues on one's own, and dealing with loneliness and homesickness.

Each player mentioned homesickness and loneliness, discussing ways to combat it and how it hindered settlement and adaptation. Chris admitted that in his first year he struggled to adapt to his new environment and attributed this to his loss of caretaker role and minimal access to his family. He returned home as often as he could during his first season and believed his level of homesickness hindered his adaptation and settlement.

I do think about homesickness a fair bit, that's probably the biggest thing. I grew up probably looking after my brothers and sisters 'cos I was the eldest. You can't just get up and go around the corner and see family. I used to ring home about 4 or 5 times a week when I first got here and I went home at least 7 or 8 times.

Chris (New draftee)

Although William was eager to leave home and live elsewhere, he also experienced homesickness. It took William between three and four years to adapt to his new environment, and homesickness hindered his settlement and adaptation.

I think you experience a lot of lonely times, a lot of down times, but there's always light at the end of the tunnel you know, nothing is ever smooth sailing so you have to roll with the punches but um it takes a while to get used to a place. It probably took me three or four years to get comfortable here and I just stuck it out and was pretty lucky I was playing games early on and that sort of made it easier. Not having the family there is always the hard bit and not working a lot and not having enough money is hard on them too but

thankfully, I can pay my own way now. The hardest thing was not having family there to fall back on.

William (Established player)

When Joseph arrived in Victoria he struggled to adapt, and during times of loneliness, he felt he compensated by going out with friends on the weekend, drinking alcohol excessively and trying to forget about his homesickness. He recalled it did not take long for these behaviours to be pulled into line, especially when he had skin-fold tests. Joseph believed he had difficulty during his first pre-season because he was strictly abiding by a timetable during the week and then had no idea what to do with himself on the weekends, hence resorting to disadvantageous behaviours.

Joseph learned quickly that the media were relentless and being an AFL footballer included additional stressors not outlined in a player contract. He began combating loneliness by taking trips home, learning that the security of family and home was crucial for him to experience success in his new career. He also referred to the importance of kindredness and attachment to country. In his second pre-season things were different, he had learned from his previous mistakes.

The main one (issue) I reckon was loneliness, that probably came out in wrong ways, to combat loneliness we'd go out on a Saturday night and have a few beers and that would get me in more trouble than what I needed. Because I was so lonely I would go home on a weekend, it was all good during the week because you've got things to do, I was busy with training, you forget about the loneliness, but then the weekend comes and you've got the weekend off, you've got no friends or family here outside of footy. That was one thing I didn't do very well when I first got here. I didn't really bond or gel with mates on and off the field and we only won a few games, so I was on my own at home and doubled my social life to fill that hole I think. Got me into more trouble than I needed. I missed home a lot actually, I still miss home now. I miss home a fair bit, the relaxed atmosphere back at home, no pressure to do anything, I think that's why I missed it a lot...I would go home, go fishing, take the motorbikes out, take the guns out and go shooting, no pressure at home, just relax and properly wind down.

Joseph (Established player)

Moving to a new state is a major life event and for some people requires leaving family behind or packing their lives up too. In the present study, the other major life event involved in the relocation was to embark on a new career. Both of these major life transitions require a level of adaptation. Although being accompanied by family can be a facilitator, it can also be considered a

risk factor. These findings are similar to those reported by Sonn et al (2000) who explored Indigenous tertiary students relocating for study at university.

Oliver relocated with his partner and child, which meant his partner had to leave her employment, family, and friends. Similar to Sonn et al's study (2000) choosing to relocate with immediate family affects not only the individual relocating but those that have to pack and relocate also.

My partner, she had to give her job up to come over here, stuff she loved doing just to make me happy to follow my dreams. And that's something I will always remember like because we had a little daughter at that stage and it was pretty hard financially and we still managed to save up and get our stuff over. She's been an enormous help. You never know if she had have stayed up in (home) with my daughter and said "no I'm not moving down there because my friends and my work are here", I might have been playing crap footy because I was unhappy down here without her and my daughter. I was lucky because she came down and touch wood, been going alright. She may have found it a bit more difficult because she didn't have any friends here and me being a footy player you tend to make new friends. She found it hard for the first couple of years but slowly people have moved down from (home) and she has made a couple of new friends through partners of the other players. We can now relax and kick back for the next few years until my career is over and then we'll move back home where the rest of our family and friends are.

Oliver (Established player)

From Brad's experience, he saw how difficult relocation was for other Indigenous footballers.

Especially if they are young, 18, 19, 20, and they've got a new baby that's on the way or if they've got a child that's one or two, that's going to be harder because you are taking the mother and child away from their support base in Darwin, Perth, Adelaide, wherever, then coming down to Melbourne. The Mother and baby have to fend for themselves as well. That would be pretty tough and stressful. You're off training, trying to make your footy right and also trying to make home life stable as well. If the club's helping you out with that making your wife or girlfriend happy then that makes a difference.

Brad (Established player)

The comments offered below from secondary informants points to the importance of access to family and extended family for Indigenous players moving away from home. It is mentioned how AFL clubs are trying different things, such as increasing access to family within the season, by sending the players home or flying their parents over.

It is about how the family gets there week in week out to support them and watch them train and make sure they are not watching them get assimilated. That is one of the big issues. Families need to have access all the time to their kids, if a kid gets drafted into the AFL, the AFL and the club have got enough money to fly their family over. Clubs do it differently, (AFL club) let their players go home, for impromptu cultural practices or for family reasons, and without putting their spot on the team at risk. Now that is unheard of. (AFL Club) relocate the family.

Secondary Informant

One of the big things, Emma, is to let the Indigenous boys know that after relocating there will be tough times, it's normal, don't be embarrassed, no need for shame, the sooner you put your hand up and let us know you are feeling homesick, the sooner you recognise it and own it, and speak to the club, then we can do something about it, send them home for a week or two, or bring their parents over. Maybe at weeks three or four after relocating, I think that's a good time to say ok how are you going, need a trip home, and it gives them the opportunity to say, yeah I'm a bit homesick. They might need to see their parents, or partner, and a lot of the times they have children.

Secondary Informant

I think it's very frightening for some of them. Not having that extended family, not having that 'hang' time with people you know and trust, and have a relationship is really difficult.

Secondary Informant

Players who miss their family, (player's name) was home much more than here in his first two years, not just for births, deaths, mourning, just needing to be home for mum's birthday, just knowing the need to be home.

Secondary Informant

At both an interpersonal and organisational level, mentoring was considered crucial for settlement and adaptation in the current study and related to kindredness. Each participant discussed the importance of having another Indigenous person play a mentoring role or being in the role of mentor for new draftees. Mentoring is further enhanced when the mentor shares similarities with the individual receiving the mentoring and resembles another form of kindredness. A study by Schinke et al (2006) found that surrounding athletes from a minority background with other individuals, who shared similar backgrounds and ancestry, reduced the likelihood of isolation and loneliness, the perpetuation of stereotypes and support and assistance with settlement and adaptation. Australian literature found that Indigenous students were more likely to settle and adjust when they were with other Indigenous students, specifically senior Indigenous students that

could provide a mentoring role (Farrington et al., 2001). Having another person who is like-minded or shares a similar reality and history, or even a kindred bond appears to be a major facilitative factor for Indigenous footballers in the present study.

James and Max discussed the importance of having an older Indigenous player at their clubs. The mentoring process educated them about the workings of the club and AFL while providing support and a sense of belonging.

Probably (Indigenous teammate) he was the one I clung to when I first arrived, he helped me out a lot. He showed me a thing or two. He was the one I was always sitting down talking to, asking questions....

James (New draftee)

There is another older Aboriginal player at the club and he has helped me heaps, because he saw how stressed I was getting with the family calling me and wanting stuff all the time. He just said, "Max, you have to look after yourself first, footy doesn't last forever, so set yourself up first". Just because he was Aboriginal, I just felt comfortable with him from the start. I didn't know him before I moved to Melbourne and we just clicked. He treated me like a brother. If I didn't have him I don't know what I would have done. He helped me with all the paperwork and all the forms, there is so much paperwork, I am not too good with that. They should warn you about the paperwork. Just being around another Aboriginal person who understands my culture and the way I was brought up.

Max (New draftee)

Indigenous players that relocated prior to 2002 were able to reflect on the mentoring they have received and the mentoring they have provided. Brad recollects the mentoring he received from an Indigenous player who played a significant role in building cultural awareness in the AFL. Brad also shared how he has played the role of mentor for a young Indigenous recruit for a young Indigenous player struggling to cope with the demands of football and family. Brad also recalls the way the AFL club treated a top 10 draft pick compared with a lower draft pick and made mention of the incongruence of support provided to these two Indigenous draft picks.

With other Indigenous footballers being at the club it kind of helped as well. They're a pretty pro-active club, in what they want to do; especially (Ex-Indigenous Player) he's a good mentor and good at taking the initiative and getting programs started. When I was at (AFL Club) I was an older player and seeing how they treated the younger guys, especially the difference between a top recruit and a recruit that was low in the draft, you could really tell the difference. (Indigenous player) was on the lower end of the draft, his family saw that he was in the AFL and would try and scunge off him and get his money. The club's been trying to help him organise his family. He's rung me a few times to get things sorted

and ask for advice. We've had him over a lot to help him out and try to get him sorted so now I think he's starting to pay dividends with that.

Brad (Established player)

William believed that having other Indigenous players at his club helped with his settlement because it gave him a sense of familiarity. William's comment below reflects how pivotal a shared worldview is and reflects consensual validation (Sonn, et al., 2000).

It is just having people around you, you can trust, it is probably the same with anyone, whenever another Aboriginal or Indigenous person comes to the club you just always immediately feel comfortable with them, because they know what it's like and it is so much easier to relate to them. They know and you know what they are going through because you have been in that boat at some stage.

William (Established player)

Oliver talked about himself and other Indigenous players as sharing a common "way of being", shared emotional connection, kindredness. Although Oliver did not use the term kindredness, he spoke about the values and characteristics he and other Indigenous players shared that illustrate the characteristics of kindredness.

It's one of those things having older Aboriginal players at the club, there are (number) of us, they kind of look up to us. You look after them, that's just the way we are, we just sense that we got to make them feel welcome, I mean we all get on well. We don't even realise it but they are probably going home and think they are looking up to us, and we just treat them on the same level. That's our job to make them feel welcome, it's nothing different, that's just the way we are.

Oliver (Established player)

When the siren sounds at the end of an AFL match, the Indigenous footballers seek each other out; referred to as *brotherhood*, by Daniel Wells (Lyon, 2004). Michael McLean believed Indigenous footballers seek each other out to enquire about each other's well being and to enquire about how the family are faring (Gardiner, 1998). William spoke about how he viewed the bond Indigenous players shared on and off the field.

Yeah I think it's about the genuine care for each other. I mean it happens with non-Indigenous as well, when they know each other they have a chat, but because we are Indigenous it just gets publicised more. We just know them and after the game we'll go up and ask them how their family's going and that sort of stuff, it just get publicised more with us.

William (Established player)

One secondary informant discussed the familial context and the change in linguistics when Indigenous people come together. He also talked about extended bonds and the importance of caring for each other.

The context of extended families, the way in which Aboriginal people live today, is not that much different spiritually today as our ancestors lived 40,000 years ago. If you look at the way we talk when we are all together, if you look at all of our non-verbal communication, the extended family that will never change for black families, never. White fellas only know their second cousins at weddings and funerals, we see all our second cousins as bro and sister, we call all our aunties and uncles, mum and dad, and if you don't, it is disrespectful. Now if today whether we are driving commodores, working in front of a computer or getting an education, the way we care for our people is not much different. The way we speak when we are all together, pigeon or koori English comes into play, when I am home talking with my mob at home around the dinner table we all madly drift off into the environmental framework of the language that is spoken there. The cultural differences are great.

Secondary Informant

Each player interviewed discussed the importance of social support and in particular the power of mentoring. The players also referred to Indigenous visibility as helping with settlement and adaptation. Relying solely on social supports can sometimes have a hindering effect. As William stated above he tended to engage in club activities more so when there was Indigenous representation at the club. William stated the reason it had taken him three to four years to feel settled in his new environment, may have been the result of an insular protective mechanism (Sonn & Fisher, 2005). He tended to associate and socialise with other Indigenous footballers and when there were no Indigenous footballers at his club, he refrained from socialising and isolated himself from the playing group. William's choice seems to have played a large part in his difficulty to adapt in his settlement.

It is not a set down plan, it just happens, you try and give them some advice wherever you can and they might take it on, they might not. It is certainly easier if you have people telling you how things work around the footy club. There were two (Indigenous footballers) that were already here, then they both left within two years and then I was the only one here for a few years, but they showed me the ropes and told me how things work at the footy club and took me under their wing and looked after me. I play on one of them now, and it's always good fun to have a chat with him on the field and I am grateful to him for teaching me what I should do based on what he hated and now I use it against him. (Laughter). When I was at the club on my own, I'd train and go home that's all I'd do, I wouldn't hang out with the other boys. Not because they didn't want me to, but I'm a bit of a loner so I used to go home do my thing. Whereas now, we've got a few more Indigenous boys here I

have started hanging out with them a fair bit, do everything together, that's good, I think that's the key, you have to have a few, just to feel comfortable. I think it's very hard if you are at a club on your own. You talk to other guys at other clubs on their own, I mean there was only 20 to 30 Aboriginal boys playing footy, now there's 50 or 60, pretty much one per club and some clubs 5 to 7. It makes it easier and you find at any club all the Aboriginal boys running around together. It is probably like white people, I shouldn't say this, but they hang around together because they feel comfortable with each other. Some you mix with some you won't, same with every culture.

William (Established player)

Although it is common for people to want to be with others that are like-minded or from a similar culture, when those people leave the club to play with another club, the individual is left to start again with building friendships. For instance, William chose to train, play football, and leave the club straight after when there were no other Indigenous players at the club and may explain why experienced difficulty settling.

At an organisational level, the AFL club can provide social support. Many AFL clubs put together resources for players and their families relocating. These resources often have the best intentions and aim to help with settlement and adaptation. Effective social support transactions between a club and the individual relocating require that the resources and the people providing those supports are empathic and in tune with the experiences of each individual player. The current study highlighted the ineffectiveness of providing a "what to do" manual for each player relocating, because recipes do not necessarily consider the needs of the individual, they tend to advise. What appears to be more effective for an individual's settlement and adaptation is a level of understanding of the needs of each player on an individual basis and tailoring how social support can be of benefit for the player.

Many of the players reported that their clubs provided support in various forms. For instance, Paul found that his head coach was aware of Indigenous culture and prepared to send a player home if experiencing homesickness. Paul stated the club also helped him bring his girlfriend down to Victoria and found that assisted his settlement. James also reported his club being

supportive and helpful, by introducing him and his partner to a family as a point of contact for support or help.

(Coach) will send you home if you get homesick no matter what time of year it is. Or he'll send the family down. Whatever to keep you comfortable and keep you playing good games, he'll do it for you which I found really, really helpful. Some other people just expect us to fit in real well.... but just give us some time. I gradually got my girlfriend down. She's staying with me now, which makes it more comfortable, a lot easier.

Paul (New draftee)

Clubs these days aren't too bad. The boys from back home where I am from think if they go down there (Victoria) they won't be allowed to come back home but that's not the deal these days. At the club (AFL club), if there's ever any family problems or special events you've got to get back to they let you go back and spend a few days. As long as you do right by them, they do right by you. You get plenty of chances to get home. For me I just wanted to get away from home. They (AFL Club) introduced us to a family that they thought would be able to help us with settling in and surviving on our own. It was just me and my girlfriend moving out of home for the first time. We didn't know how to cook very much. The family helped us out a lot and they're pretty good friends now.

James (New draftee)

I think the clubs have got better, they had to, get the kids as settled as quick as they can. Especially because it's a national competition now, a lot of kids are coming from Brisbane, Darwin, all over W.A.

Brad (Established player)

Chris was initially reluctant to speak about his feelings of homesickness and isolation with anyone at his AFL club and felt afraid to. After a while, he realised that there were people at the club who were a form of social support and were familiar with difficulties associated with settlement and adaptation. Although it took Chris time to approach the club, and specifically the PDM he felt that it was a positive step in his settlement, knowing that support was available. Also knowing that there was no objection to him going home when he had the chance was an additional positive for Chris.

I know I was a bit scared to speak to the club but I thought I better try it. Finding the guts to go up and tell them wasn't easy. They're real understanding and real helpful and they do understand homesickness. They probably go through it every year. Every time I've gone to seek some help and stuff they've always got the right answers.

Chris (New draftee)

Alexander found that the services and initiatives provided by the AFLPA, such as the Indigenous camp and the Indigenous co-ordinator, was supportive for the players and helped with

settlement and adaptation. Alexander believed there was much improvement to be made by services and recommended an Indigenous mentor for Managers in their dealings and offering of support for Indigenous players.

The AFLPA are doing a lot more than the AFL with the Indigenous camp, the Indigenous co-coordinator one day a week, I think it would be better to have a full time person, if someone was there full time it would be easier. I think managers especially for young Indigenous players need a young Indigenous mentor in their management group. Players feel a little more comfortable having an Indigenous person who can relay info on to the manager. The AFL clubs are taking better steps to securing Indigenous players that come down and making sure they are comfortable. AFL clubs and managers have a lot more to do with players than the AFL and AFLPA and I think there is still a bit more improvement to be made.

Alexander (Established player)

AFL clubs are also known to fly particular family members down for an individual's first game of football. In the present study, this was considered an excellent source of recognition and support.

With all new draftees they fly your parents down to see your first game and the club puts them up for a week. So they get to experience all the buzz and stuff, they were probably more excited than me I think.

William (Established player)

The club flew my Mother down, it was good they really looked after her and help out the Indigenous boys because they know how hard it is for us moving away from our family. I mean (home) is probably three suburbs of Melbourne. Some of the boys from Adelaide are lucky they have a 50-minute flight, they can shoot back when they can. We have to wait for holidays to go back home.

Oliver (Established player)

People that don't have a problem are those that are supported culturally in their move that is the crux of it. They could get (Indigenous player) over here and give him a brand new Jeep, a new mobile with unlimited calls, he's not going to last three months if he hasn't got his mum or access to his family, I mean he is coming from one side of the country to the other. He'll need to go home occasionally, he's only a boy, and he needs that support.

Secondary Informant

Culture Shock and Lack of Indigenous Visibility in AFL Club

Throughout the interviews, the participants discussed positive and negative experiences and phenomena that contributed to their settlement and adaptation phases of relocation. Each player in the study relocated to Victoria from their hometown; five players from the outskirts of a

city with a population exceeding 100,000 and 50% from a rural town with a population between 1,000 and 10,000. To put these numbers into perspective, the players that relocated from populations that exceeded 100,000 people were from cities whose populations did not exceed one million; different to Victoria whose population is around five million. These demographics symbolise one of several differences between an Indigenous footballer's hometown and his receiving environment in the AFL. Considering the myriad of differences between the two environments, it might be expected that each of the players reported symptoms of culture shock.

Culture shock refers to losing all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. Where some players made a conscious attempt to adapt to their new environment and "get amongst it", other players reported difficulties adjusting to the differences between the Anglo-Australian and Indigenous cultures (Oberg, 1960). Differences included level of cultural awareness, Indigenous visibility in the club and community environments, training requirements, traffic, paperwork, food preparation, and the general speed of lifestyle.

The effect of relocation can be mild disorientation resulting in unusual behaviour resulting from lack of familiarity with the new environment (Furnham, 1990). Other studies have found more severe effects such as psychological and physical health problems arising from relocation (Furnham & Bochner, 1986). Paul commented on the difference between lifestyles and although he adapted to his new lifestyle he initially struggled to find a sense of belonging in his new environment among other factors (traffic, training schedules, dietary changes).

It's pretty hard to fit in. Make new friends again and the lifestyle is full on and on the move all the time. (Hometown) is pretty laid back. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want. I got used to it (Melbourne), I kind of like it now. I just found the training, just getting to and from training, because I had to try and read the traffic and vary my times on when to leave. The right food to eat that was a big thing. Now that's come along real good, all those little dietary stuff and the traffic was pretty hard at the start, but now I know.

Paul (New draftee)

Many of the Indigenous players stated that they had to make many changes to adapt to their new lifestyles and careers. Moving from rural or less populated areas and arriving in Victoria,

or specifically Melbourne, required adapting to a new-paced lifestyle, new training itineraries and abiding by new menus. Culture shock is also noted for self-development and personal growth (Bhugra & Ayonrinde, 2004). Each of the players noted experiences of culture shock, but not one player was debilitated by it. The following excerpts from interviews describe some of the difficulties players had when moving to their new homes.

Traffic is a big one. I still haven't adapted to the traffic. Just the culture down here, you have to change everything. Like (hometown) is easy going, do whatever you want whereas in Melbourne you've got to watch your step and everything you do

James (New draftee)

Getting used to training. I remember I used to come home from training about 1:30pm, 2:00pm and wouldn't even get to my room, I'd fall asleep on the couch.

Chris (New draftee)

There is so much paperwork; I am not too good with that. They should warn you about the paperwork.

Max (New draftee)

Melbourne is a lot different to (hometown). It's always on the go. The trams and the hook turns in the city. I remember one of the first times I drove into the city I nearly hit a tram. I didn't see it. You do get used to it. It's all so compact whereas (hometown) is all spread out over so much land up the coast.

Brad (Established player)

I was eating pasta every night and you just can't do that because of carb overload and you get fat sort of thing. I thought I was doing the right thing, it's pasta, and then I found out when I moved in with the players and learnt what they eat and soaked it all up, so it's good to get in there and learn. I think most Indigenous boys, they're not your bookworm types, or learn from reading, we learn from doing it and experiencing it.

Joseph (Established player)

There were a few times I rocked up to training late because I slept in and you learn pretty quick and catch on. You learn these things and like with your skin fold tests if you come in a bit too high you know that you're not eating right and once you start eating right your skin fold tests come down and then you know right from wrong. The first year was a big learning curve for me and the second year you sort of establish yourself and get everything right then.

Alexander (Established player)

Culture shock provides some insight into the relocation experiences for Indigenous footballers and their experiences of intensified contact with Anglo-Australians. Racial and cultural identity is often made more salient because of increasing contact with Anglo-Australian people

after moving from a sparsely populated area predominantly inhabited by Indigenous Australians (Sonn et al., 2000). The move away from rural and remote areas adds another dimension to the relocation experience because of differences in environmental, social and community structures. At a community level, both James and William were aware prior to relocation that Victoria has less Indigenous visibility in comparison to the Northwest.

You don't see many Indigenous people down here and when you do it's sort of special because you have that comradeship, you learn to adapt though. There's more (Indigenous) people coming through now.

James (New draftee)

I knew what to expect, anywhere down south doesn't have much Indigenous representation or business people in administration that prepared me for Melbourne.

William (Established player)

Lack of Indigenous representation and visibility at the AFL club level has also been noted as a hindering factor for some people's settlement and adaptation. Max noted that he felt lonely when he first arrived in Victoria and stated one of the reasons for this was the lack of Indigenous representation at the club. Initially Max felt anxious about "standing out" but believed this subsided as he became more comfortable with the other non-Indigenous players.

Being away from family, being on my own and feeling lonely. There weren't too many other Indigenous boys, except for one he was drafted same time as me, but he was a really high pick. Sometimes when the other boys weren't there and I was the only Aboriginal boy, I felt a bit funny, standing out, but after I got used to the people at the club I didn't worry about that as much.

Max (New draftee)

Chris recalled feeling anxious about the club he had been drafted to and was worried that he would be the only Indigenous footballer at the club. Prior to learning about his success in the national draft, he had shared his worry about two particular clubs for this reason, and subsequently picked up by one of them. He recalled a conversation he had with his younger brother on the day of the national draft.

My brother said, "What team don't you really want to go to?" I said (team name one) or (team name one) (laughter). People said that (team name two) didn't have any Indigenous players and I didn't want to be there on my own. That was the reason I didn't want to be

there. My name got called out for (team name two) and my brother just killed himself laughing.

Chris (New draftee)

## Racism and Homogeneity

Racism can take on a variety of forms. Old-fashioned racism (overt racism) refers to notions of racial superiority (Wright, 1999). For instance in the VFL/AFL prior to the implementation of the Racial and Religious Vilification Rule (1995) a legal mechanism did not exist for a player to lodge a complaint about vilification. Instead, Indigenous players were encouraged to turn the other cheek and cope with the racial denigration in silence (Gardiner, 1997). Racism has evolved, and now fits in and entrenches itself within the philosophies of a democratic society, commonly referred to as "modern racism" (Augoustinos, Tuffin, & Sale, 1999, p.90). Modern racism operates in a covert manner and expressed in ways that are considered "socially acceptable", occurring when an individual from a minority group is judged or racialised by dominant mainstream values (James, 1997). Modern racism, like old fashioned and blatant racism still operates on the premise of rejecting others from minority groups based on invalid assumptions of inferiority (Sanson et al, 1998). In Australia modern racism is evidenced by the disparities in living conditions and resources.

Homogenisation, the process where people from dominant culture assume that people who belong to a minority group are all the same, is a form of modern racism. Modern racism ignores cultural diversity. Homogenisation was a common theme in the interviews with Indigenous footballers in this study. Max explains it in the following way:

Sometimes we are treated as if we are all the same. I mean I get along really well with (Indigenous teammate) but him and I come from very different places, different lands and we have been brought up very differently. We are both Aboriginal but we are not the same. At the club where I am, there was an Aboriginal bloke that didn't last very long because he was in heaps of trouble and sometimes people at the club have warned me about the trouble he got in, maybe thinking I would do the same thing. That pisses me off. They didn't warn the other Aboriginal recruit I don't think.

Max (New draftee)

Alexander, like Max, had a similar experience where club officials warned him about a previous Indigenous player. Alexander and his father were not impressed with the prescient warning.

When I got drafted they had just had the (Indigenous player) era, 'cous' was probably one of the best Indigenous players going around. The only thing that pissed me off a little bit was that I think that a couple of things that he used to do away from the club with his night life, I think a lot of it reflected back on me when I was there. Therefore, they, a lot of the club thought his behaviours were going to be my behaviours and that sort of ticked me off a little bit. Dad got that sort of drift and didn't appreciate it either.

Alexander (Established player)

Literature has described Indigenous athletes in the past in derogatory ways, suggesting they are all the same. Homogenisation continues to be a problem in the AFL because people are unaware of the different forms of racism (Hallinan, Bruce, & Coram, 1999; Tatz, 1998)

Paul acknowledged early in his interview that he had been drafted to a pro-active club that appeared culturally aware of Indigenous culture. Paul highlighted the perils associated with the "one size fits all" homogenising approach by recognising that people who have some knowledge can generalise it in a detrimental way. People with romanticised views of the Indigenous culture have been referred to as "idealistic helpers" (Dudgeon & Oxenham, 1989). Although driven with good intentions, sensitive stereotyping undermines idealistic helpers' actions. Paul believed his coach had great intentions but felt he was treated as if he was the same as other Indigenous players.

If you've got some issues (coach) will pull you aside and tell you...it doesn't mean just because you're Indigenous you will experience what Michael Long experienced. There are very different cultures and different languages with Aboriginals so everything is different to what they say. They say all Aboriginals are the same but they're not. That's the one thing everyone has got to get straight, we're not all the same.

Paul (New draftee)

In four of the interviews conducted with both new draftees and established players, the issue of skin colour was discussed within the context of racism and media descriptions. Comments included; "I have never experienced racism, I don't think people really see me as Indigenous", "Not many people know I am Indigenous, they get a bit of a shock when they find out. The media don't

really know it so they don't publicise it much" and "It probably hasn't been too bad for me because a lot of people don't recognise me as being Aboriginal". It was also noted by two participants that they had witnessed a discrepancy in the treatment between two Indigenous footballers based on their skin colour, "Two new Aboriginal recruits were drafted, one "looked" Aboriginal, and the other was fair. It was the darker of the two who was warned not to stuff up like a previous Aboriginal player. I know they didn't warn the whiter looking Aboriginal player".

Comments such as these demonstrate how racism can be hidden in stereotypes and ideologies. They show how the images and impressions of Indigenous people held by those in mainstream society can perpetuate modern racism. The media is a powerful force that permeates the conditioning of public opinions and attitudes (Gardiner, 1999; Godwell, 2000; Hallinan, Bruce & Coram, 1999; Schinke et al, 2006). It does this by presenting stereotypical views of minority groups, based on the views and values of mainstream society (Sonn & Fisher, 2005). Negative stereotypes held by mainstream society tend to create considerable challenges for the development of and maintenance of a positive cultural identity (Fijac & Sonn, 2004). Stereotyping is central to 'othering', which can work to distance the dominant culture from the minority group by marginalising and dehumanising those who are different (Sonn & Fisher).

Chris spoke of his pride in his Indigenous identity. He struggled with transferring his Indigenous identity from home to his new environment and sometimes felt misunderstood by particular Anglo-Australians at the club regarding his identification with his Indigenous culture. During these times his homesickness and yearning for home amplified. He had trouble with the media's portrayal of him and felt confused about whether it was acceptable to be proud of his heritage or whether he was expected to assimilate. He experienced an identity crisis.

When you're in the paper a fair bit, it's always like they say you are an Indigenous player I don't know why they don't refer to other footballers as non-Indigenous football players...(laughs). So you kinda get the message that being Indigenous is good, but then the media get on your case if you are too black, well that's been my experience

Chris (New Draftee)

Brad also made mention of the media and their relentless portrayal of the negative aspects of Indigenous Australian culture. Similar to Godwell (1999), who believed the media's representation of Indigenous culture, was "gimmicky" when promotions of Australia were aired worldwide. He also stated that a more authentic representation of the Indigenous culture needed to be exposed rather than inaccurate snippets. Brad also believed the whole picture including the socio-cultural history of race relations needed to be aired or reported by media, rather than commonly reported distorted fragments.

It's not as bad as it is even though there's a lot of publicity out there that's bad. Only the bad things get publicised but there are a lot of Aboriginal people who are doing good things for the community. It's just unfortunate that over the last 220 years things have gone the way they have.

Brad (Established player)

According to Gardiner (2003), the reduction in overt racism is because of the Indigenous sportsmen and women proffering a counter discourse by talking about their experiences of racism. This enables people in mainstream society to connect these stories of verbal abuse with other kinds of abuse in relation to human rights. The media is guilty of assigning particular roles or stereotypes to Indigenous Australians, and contributing to stigmatisation and inferiorisation (Martell & Martell, 2000). The persistent lobbying from Long and the poignant actions of Winmar provided a counter discourse in the AFL and by questioning the norm, a series of divisive debates ensued. The AFL was forced to adopt a formal procedure to obliterate racist speech.

Two of the secondary informants provide their perspectives on racism in the AFL culture.

From our understanding and from the players Indigenous camp the levels of racial abuse or perceived lack of respect for Indigenous people is not there amongst the players at all. There's a lack of understanding on the coaching staff if anything and generalisation. Certainly the players are fine. Our results, in terms of feedback from players is there's no issue there it's more of a lack of understanding from the coaches about cultural uniqueness.

Secondary informant

I had the opportunity to work with (AFL Coach) for a couple of years and he was very understanding that everyone's different. He helped build an environment to cater for those differences whether they be Indigenous players or whatever their cultural background or nationality. Probably a greater level of tolerance, in terms of flexibility and how you have to bend a little bit, I think that helped. The outcome of that is that each of the clubs that have been successful with respect to Indigenous players and had a player that has kind of set the tone, burnt the trail if you like. Michael Long certainly blazed the trail at Essendon and kind of helped the club in bringing players in. Also some people at the club are very supportive as well but Michael helped grow the awareness and make it easier for those that have followed him.

Secondary informant

The following comments relate to the consequences of homogenisation and the importance of cultural awareness. These comments emphasise the importance of treating each player on an individual basis, creating a better understanding of that player's experiences and an enhanced relationship with that player.

From our end, one thing you notice when they are making that initial transition is... there are so many different factors and also different communities. My first impression was that all Aboriginals were the same. They come from different communities, different cultures within, different laws, different local laws, that you don't understand. Someone from Darwin may be very different from someone from the islands versus someone from WA versus someone from Port Lincoln. You tend to find similar values and also beliefs when you work out where they are from.

Secondary informant

They are very big on culture and they've all got their own their own little cultures, different tribes. Just trying to understand and get to know how their tribes work and trying to deal with that and explain to coaches and other players, trying to educate the footy club on how different Indigenous boys can be.

Secondary informant

For me I find some tension sometimes in terms of isolating the group and collecting them as a whole. All players have problems with relocation, regardless of being Indigenous or not but Indigenous players seem to have more unique issues than non-Indigenous but where's that line and boundary. I find it hard to know if it is an Indigenous specific issue or is it not and do you tailor it differently or is it the same? It's something I have had a few conversations with the boys about. We've probably come up with the solution is to "just ask". Rather than assume. The boys are really open to that.

Secondary informant

The last comment offered by a secondary informant embodies a cautionary note against homogenising and it encourages people from non-Indigenous cultural backgrounds to take on the role of novice, rather than expert. It also symbolises the acceptability of asking a player rather than assuming, creating a more collaborative relationship for mutual cultural learning.

Chapter seven will provide further discussion about the findings outlined in this chapter. It will consolidate each of the participant's stories to generate an individual synopsis and summarise the findings from chapter six. In chapter seven I will also reflect on the evolution of the current research process, the research process, and my part in the process, implications for applied practice and research, and future directions in research.

#### **CHAPTER 7**

#### DISCUSSION

Within the current study, I examined relocation and settlement experiences from the vantage point of Indigenous AFL footballers. Essentially, I aimed to describe and clarify the challenges faced by Indigenous footballers who joined an interstate AFL club. The study was designed so that I could identify the social, cultural, organisational, and psychological challenges that influence adaptation in the receiving environment such as the new football club and home. I also endeavoured to identify the social, cultural, and psychological resources that facilitate transition and adaptation. A summary and interpretation of the findings, and methodological and practical implications will be provided in this chapter.

# Summary of Findings

The findings suggest relocation has the potential to lead to both positive and negative outcomes. Relocation involves severing community ties, loss of familiar social networks, and resources. Moving into a new and strange environment can mean the loss of taken-for granted systems of meaning (Fiske, 2004; Marks & Jones, 2004). Moving into a new environment and embarking on a career in elite sport can symbolise opportunity, social mobility, personal development, and a time for excitement. The relocation stories revealed a variety of coping styles and supports players drew upon to integrate social and cultural systems from their home environment and new environment to facilitate adaptation and settlement.

Difficulties with settlement and adaptation post-relocation lasted for more than a year for some players and for one participant as many as four years. Not one of the players interviewed in the present study said they would do it differently if they had their time again, irrespective of the difficulties they faced during their relocation and settlement phases. Almost all established players in this study reported that psychological challenges were more prevalent soon after contact with their new environment and for most issues there was a decline over time. Similar to the findings of

Bhugra and Ayonrinde (2004), each player described personal growth in the face of adversity. Therefore, it seems the goal is not to prevent but to enhance an Indigenous player's ability to grow and develop during these major life events (Danish & D'Augelli, 1980). This is not to say that specific processes such as homogenisation and racism should continue for the sake of making a person stronger. Racism, in all forms, must be challenged at every possible level.

Relocation for all AFL footballers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, will involve a level of disruption and one might suppose some of the themes emerging in the current study to be pertinent for Anglo-Australian footballers. Upon examination of the disparities between Indigenous and Anglo-Australians such as their vastly different living conditions, it is not surprising that Indigenous Australian footballers in the present study considered relocation experiences different for themselves in comparison to their Anglo-Australian counterparts. They described the differences based on connection with family and country, family structure, racial identity, and how it is more common for an Indigenous player to relocate with a partner and children.

Although Indigenous Australians are under resourced in almost all aspects of Australian society, the Indigenous players in the current study described their culture as different to mainstream society in more positive terms. Greater connection to family, spiritual attachment to country, and differences in family composition, represented some of the meanings attributed to cultural disparities existing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous footballers' relocation experiences. These findings steer away from the usual negative representations of Indigenous Australians and provide an alternative insight into stories of strength and determination. Too often, Western psychological research presents a deficit-focus, especially when it concerns cultural minorities (Gridley, 2005). The typical images depicting Indigenous Australian culture tend to focus on the bleak contrasts or stereotypical cultural representations. These cultural stereotypes have evolved from categorisation and labelling and has lent toward simplifying the complexity of

Indigenous Australians and their culture (Sanson et al., 1998). Cultural stereotyping perpetuates racism, by establishing a hierarchy between groups in our society.

Four major themes were identified in the current study; perception of opportunity and social mobility, social support and kindredness, culture shock, and resisting dominant scripts such as racism and homogeneity.

### Opportunity and Social Mobility

The reasons and motivations for becoming an AFL footballer meant different things for each player and raised questions at a societal level regarding alternative opportunities. Players who perceived their opportunity to play AFL as a form of social mobility or as a prospect tended to focus on this perception to help them persevere during the difficult times. Statistics continue to reveal the lack of access Indigenous Australians have to education, health, employment, and longevity (ABS, 2007). Is it any wonder why sport has become such a powerful activity for Indigenous Australians? Sport represents an opportunity, a resource, even a future, for some Indigenous Australians (Oliver, 2006). Racial stereotypes entrenched in mainstream society have been found to perpetuate the belief that sport is one of the few options open to Indigenous Australians due to the overrepresentation in numbers in comparison to other workforces.

These findings raise questions of available opportunities at a societal level. Godwell (2000) asked specific questions about why sport, in particular the AFL, is one of the few opportunities for young Indigenous men living in remote Indigenous communities. Several of the participants said that playing football in the AFL enabled them to study at school, university (one in particular described the pride in becoming qualified in a profession that has only ten Indigenous Australians employed Australia-wide), to purchase a car and a house, to provide financially for family, and to make their families proud. Some players admitted they would not have had the same opportunities in their hometowns, because of the lack of resources, poor living conditions, unemployment rates, and limited education.

The findings of the current study support Godwell's tenet that AFL provides one avenue of opportunity for Indigenous Australian men. These findings represent a sad reality about Australia. If sport and culture represent the only opportunities for Indigenous Australians to access resources, how do Indigenous Australians in non-sporting endeavours gain access to these resources? The current study represents the stories of ten Indigenous Australian men who have worked hard and are driven to succeed in their sporting careers. What opportunities would have been available to them had they not been drafted to the AFL?

The current findings suggested an AFL career represented access to resources or additional resources, an opportunity to achieve a dream, leave home, or as an adjunct to an already existing career. Max and James in particular viewed AFL as an option for leaving sparsely populated areas with minimal opportunities. Although both have had different relocation experiences, each saw their drafting to an AFL club as an opportunity for success. Lack of resources and alternatives for education and career has been considered by the RCIADIC as a precursor for juvenile crime and higher suicide rates in Indigenous communities (1991). Sport was described as the best antidote for boredom and played a significant role in reducing juvenile crime and suicide rates. Both Max and James recognised that they too could have made poor choices within their minimally resourced communities like others from their hometowns, including friends and family members, but were motivated to take the AFL opportunity and make something of their lives. The way a participant viewed his opportunity of playing AFL cannot be described in a cause and effect way; James settled immediately and Max struggled to settle for his first 6 to 12 months.

According to Tatz (1998), the AFL has traditionally represented a sport considered "open" to Indigenous Australians by travelling into remote geographical locations to promote the sport and offering a variety of communities the opportunity to participate. Oliver's (2006) report written for AHREOC (2007), found several barriers that increase exclusion from sport for Indigenous Australians and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) groups. Fear of racism in sport is a

major barrier to participation for Indigenous Australians and individuals from a variety of ethnic and cultural groups. The message is clear; ongoing work in sporting organisations to combat racism is crucial for the individuals from minority groups to feel welcome, included, and safe to make the choice to participate. Other barriers include; lack of access to sport due to geographical location, exclusiveness of the current structures of some sports, lack of familiarity with sporting clubs and environments, feelings of isolation, language barriers, lack of financial resources for activities and equipment, absence of effective public transport, family or cultural communities may take priority over sport, and barriers for young women within their own communities and from sporting organisations. There are many barriers that sustain exclusion from sport. We know that these barriers exist with different sporting codes and in all other aspects of society. It is promising that initiatives have been taken to combat racism and barriers in sport, and specifically the AFL, but exclusion and discriminatory practices continue to exist at very ecological societal level.

Social Support and Kindredness

Each player interviewed was drafted during late adolescence, a crucial time for the process of identity formation (Erikson, 1968, 1980). Erikson's model is typically used to explore identity formation and focuses on the salient question of "Who am I?" Moving away from family, friends, and community, requires negotiating ways in which the old environment and family of origin and culture will fit into the new environment without the usual communal supports. Strong identity and self-worth have been found to assist during transitions and can help with adaptation and settlement (Berry, 1997). The findings in the current study were not as straightforward. Players who relocated with family tended to settle and adjust because of their additional support, but others who believed they had a strong cultural identity tended to struggle to adapt and settle because they felt their culture did not fit into their new environment.

Many players spoke of the importance of having social support, such as, emotional support (having trustworthy person to confide in about feelings), guidance (mentoring, providing information

about career resources and receiving environment) and material aid (housing and support). Many players also felt positive adaptation depended on the support from family and partners travelling with them, as well as the support received from friends and teammates from Indigenous backgrounds. The current study found that those players who relocated with a partner or family member tended to adjust quicker than the players who relocated alone. These findings are consistent with previous research (Berry, 1997; Cutrona, 1990; Gullan, 2000; Petch, 2006; Robinson, 2005; Sarason & Duck, 2001; Trickett & Buchannan, 2001). It was also found that social support was important during the transition process because of its link with identity, culture, and sense of belonging. Social support and social networks can act as mediators for the individual and the new environment, building communication and understanding from both sides.

A fear expressed by some of the family members, according to several secondary informants, was related to assimilation. Secondary informants believed that many Indigenous families experience a feeling of reluctance about letting their children go, especially to a mainstream environment. One way of supporting the player and family has been to relocate the player's family to strengthen the support base for the Indigenous footballer but this process seems to have both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, it provides the player with emotional support and it allows the family to provide a safety net for their child. On the negative, it removes the whole family from their sources of support such as community, extended family, and country.

Players also highlighted the importance of family members settling into the new environment and the additional pressure and burden experienced when the family members struggle to adjust and settle. A common observation has been that each Indigenous player joining an AFL club has 45 new friends immediately; the family are not so fortunate. McCubbin's (1998) research with migrant families in the armed forces also found that it was imperative for families to adapt to their new environment. McCubbin placed emphasis on the partner being self-reliant and

the family having quality time together that increased the possibility of positive settlement. Similar findings emerged in the present study. Relocating with family (partner, partner and children, parent) was considered a valued source of support in the present study. Oliver, Brad, Paul and Campbell spoke of the importance of partners and family members having the ability to develop their own networks and goals so that they too can make the most out of their transition and subsequently adjust during settlement.

Having a mentor or friend to rely on for support, a person who is culturally aware and provides an 'open door' type of support was also considered a valuable source of support. Similar to the findings of Sartour (1992) having somewhere to go to that resembles home, where a person feels they belong and can be themselves, was crucial for settlement and adaptation. Chris, for example, accessed Greg's home regularly because he believed it to be a space where he could express and strongly identify with his Indigenous culture. Chris felt as though the AFL club he had been drafted to minimised the importance of culture and he felt pressured to withhold from asserting or expressing himself culturally. Chris believed there was a strong expectation for him to assimilate into the mainstream culture at the club, and instead chose to seek out others that were similar to him for consensual validation. Chris believed he would have returned home had he not been able to access Greg's home, a place where he felt safe to be himself.

Although their 'country' was sometimes 1200 kilometres apart, the players talked of sharing a bond. Kindredness is an under-examined term of reference, but an overarching theme in the current study. The players repeatedly reported the importance of extended family, ancestry, and heritage (kinship), and referred to the mutual understanding Indigenous Australians share.

Core to these sets of understanding is that Indigenous Australians feel at home with one another and it is this commonality refers to the feelings that are present in interactions between Indigenous Australians that transcend their differences (Sansom, 1982; Mullins, 2007). It is during these interactions that players spoke of being able to make sense of their new environment while in the

safety of being with someone who symbolised their home environment. Whether the player was mentoring or being mentored, each discussed the importance of being with others from a similar cultural background. Many players in this study reported that at the end of an AFL game they would seek out another Indigenous opponent to enquire about their family and acknowledge them as kin. Considering homesickness was a major barrier for all players in the current study it is not surprising that many of the participants described the importance of 'catching up' after an AFL game, or on the AFLPA Indigenous camp, or playing together in an 'All stars" AFL game. It was often noted by Indigenous participants that an "All-Indigenous" team would be an asset to the AFL, often regarded as *unbeatable*. A cautionary note needs to be added that not all participants held this view or expressed it.

The current study found that almost all players engaged more with other Indigenous Australians (teammates, friends, family) for the purpose of cultural maintenance. Cultural maintenance refers to the extent to which people maintained their cultural identity and behaviours (Berry, 1999). Spending time with people from a similar ethnic background enabled each participant to adjust and learn about their new environment from people they could trust and feel comfortable with (Berry, 1999). It seemed that as time progressed and as each player felt more comfortable at their clubs, some chose to branch out and engage more with others outside of their group. Berry referred to this as contact-participation. For the players that combined both cultural maintenance and contact participation, their adaptation and settlement was far more advanced than the players that preferred contact with only Indigenous Australians. For instance, William only attended club functions when other Indigenous players were present. There was a two-year period when William was the sole Indigenous player at the club. During this time he felt isolated because he had not previously made a concerted effort getting to know and feel comfortable with non-Indigenous players at his club by socialising with them at functions or away from the club

environment. He believed he prolonged his settlement by isolating himself because he felt he did not belong.

Although all players considered social support important in the current study, over-reliance on those supports was sometimes described as disadvantageous to adaptation and settlement. Sonn and Fisher (2000) suggested that reliance exclusively on group specific social supports and social networks can result in insularity and undermine an individual's adaptation post-relocation. Relying heavily on mentors had the disadvantage of prolonging the adaptation phase. Sonn and Fisher called this insular escape mechanism – a survival strategy in an ostensibly hostile environment. There appeared to be several reasons for players choosing an insular escape to cope, including a lack of Indigenous visibility at the club, uncertainty about how to mesh their own culture into their new environment, feeling uncomfortable in a predominantly white environment, and feeling lost without the familiarity of home, country, and kin. Loss of familial roles, social ties, isolation, minimal face-to-face contact with kin, appeared to prolong settlement in varying degrees. Loss was especially relevant when a player used ineffective coping strategies such as drinking alcohol, isolating self from the AFL club, and only spending time with other Indigenous players. Some players believed their homesickness was because of a lack of bonding with non-Indigenous teammates, spending too much time alone, and not having anything to do with their free time. It was also noted that refraining from speaking with the club about homesickness was to the player's detriment.

The importance of family and knowing there is access to family, seems to be an important factor for settlement and adjustment. Homesickness cannot be fully prevented per se, but anticipatory measures can be implemented. Some of these measures may include scheduled visits with family during and pre-season, such as flying the player home, or flying the family over to stay with the player. The current study has re-iterated the need for the players and their family and community members to be adequately informed about the relocation. There are going to be

challenges for each player to negotiate and cope with, and everyone involved needs to be informed about the available supports and the possible hurdles ahead. Collaborative approaches to relocation bring about ownership and responsibility and a strategic plan that caters for everyone involved.

These findings suggest that the most appropriate and effective way to assist any footballer relocating is to understand their needs, family composition, and personal values. Understanding a player's story so far, learning about their dreams and ambitions for the future, can provide a framework for how best to support them during their transition and settlement.

# Culture Shock

Many of the challenges experienced by Indigenous players in the current study were representative of culture shock. These challenges included; traffic, dietary changes, fast-paced living, training itineraries, paperwork requirements, and living arrangements. Those players that experienced a degree of consistency between home and new environment tended to settle quickly as has been indicated in other research on relocation (Farrington et al., 2001; Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Kutieleh, Egege & Morgan, 2002; Sonn & Fisher, 2005; Sonn et al, 2000; Zapf, 1993). Indigenous AFL players moving away from smaller towns with fewer non-Indigenous Australians were faced with a heightened awareness of their own racial and cultural identity.

Culture shock emerged because of the degree of difference in one's own and receiving context, such as the unfamiliarity of signs and symbols of social intercourse. For some of the players, the suddenness of moving into an AFL club and mixing with a larger group of Anglo Australians appeared to increase the challenges for settlement and intergroup relations. The challenges included working out how to negotiate ways of belonging in their new environment that was completely different to their previous one.

Several participants viewed lack of Indigenous visibility in AFL clubs and in the general community as a barrier for adaptation. Limited access to Indigenous Australians contributed to

136

feelings of loneliness and sometimes a sense of "standing out" and being on show. Some players had difficulties expressing Indigenous identity in environments that did not welcome it. It was also noted that indigeneity was strongly indicated by skin colour. Skin colour affected the degree of being "on show" during an AFL game and off the field. Berry's migration research found integration was more prominent when an individual was able to marry both cultures in the new environment. In the present study some footballers such as Chris felt their receiving environments did not understand Indigenous culture and did not consciously make room to welcome it. Other players felt as though the discrepancies between new and old environments were too drastic to adjust to in their first year of football. Loss of familiar signs and symbols of interaction that a player had taken for granted in his own family or community ceased to have a place in his new environment. Hence the settlement hurdles relating to the difficulty with integrating existing and new cultures.

McCubbin's (1998) research with African-American families relocating to Europe for employment in the army found that the family's ability to change itself in order to adapt was critical to resilience and positive adaptation. McCubbin focussed on coherence (family-environment fit), and argued that the receiving environment had the responsibility of creating an environment committed to promoting support and a sense of community. It is equally important for receiving AFL environments and each new draftee to prepare well for the relocation process and create an environment that is welcoming. An environment that may include having space for family members to visit, access to a mentor or like-minded person offering an open door, education and information sharing between all parties about the home and receiving environment, to reduce the possibility of culture shock. Many things can be done to promote coherence; it relies on the mutual understanding of each player's needs. Communication is a necessity in the planning processes, not just between the player and his manager, but also between the club, player, and family. As McCubbin stated a stronger sense of coherence is created when the individual relocating feels as

though they fit, belong, have some say in their future, and have some degree of predictability in a new place that can appear foreign in so many ways.

The current study revealed that players who identified with their old and new environments tended to integrate into their role as AFL footballer easier than those who did not. A greater awareness and insight into the new environment and the possible hurdles to overcome assisted with settlement and adaptation. Being open to the newness of the receiving environment, knowledge of the receiving environment and AFL clubs, and knowing the first year would have hurdles, helped the players remain realistic and assisted them to negotiate settlement. These players appeared to engage in contact-participation, a term coined by McCubbin et al (1998), that refers to how people value and seek out contact with others outside their own group and their wish to participate in the daily life of the larger society. A combination of cultural maintenance and contact-participation appeared to enhance the likelihood of adaptation and settlement.

It is impossible to change the receiving environments to mirror the home, but it is important to understand the meaning of home for each player relocating. The stories shared by several participants revealed the strong connection with home and spoke about it in terms of importance and safety. The home was described as country, family, spiritual connection, safe-haven, never referred to as an abode or residence. Home represented lifestyle, kindredness, and identity. The meaning of home will differ from one person to the next; it is crucial to refrain from making assumptions about how home is viewed by an Indigenous Australian.

In the first year of football, there are many things to learn and even more skills to develop for survival at an elite level of sport. Just as cultural awareness is important for the receiving environment, it is also imperative that a player is given information about the new environment he is relocating to. Additional information may give him a more realistic view about life as a footballer and help him to prepare for his new environment.

## Racism and Homogeneity

Every facilitative factor can be overshadowed, and every barrier factor magnified, when a player experiences racism. The findings highlight the complexity of racism and the multitude of ways in which it manifests. Although the AFL has made considerable efforts to remove racism, many practices within the whole AFL institution appear to reinforce normalised understandings of racial difference (Hallinan et al, 2005). Although old-fashioned racism did not surface in the present study, it does not mean that it has been eradicated. There were many stories pertaining to modern racism, whereby an individual from a minority group is judged by dominant mainstream values (Jones, 1997). Literature shows that racism has taken on a more subtle and complex form in recent times (Godwell, 2000; Hall, 1997; Hallinan et al, 2005; Jones, 1997; Tatz, 1998,). In this study, a lack of cultural awareness and the homogenising of Indigenous players in the AFL surfaced in the data analysis. Participants linked this with racism, commenting that being treated on an individual basis was much more appropriate than being homogenised and expected to have the same experiences as the next Indigenous footballer. People in positions of coach, PDM, and player agent, who treated their new recruits as individuals were considered supportive and culturally aware in comparison with those that adopted an "expert" position. For example, we cannot assume to know what is beneficial for an individual without consulting with them, as they are the expert of their own experiences and knowledge of self.

Homogenisation, the act of grouping all people from minority groups into categories and assuming "they are all the same" was a common theme in the present study. Paul experienced being coached by an 'idealistic helper', a coach that assumed he knew about every Indigenous player based on a previous relationship with an Indigenous player. Using a 'one size fits all' approach to help Paul, the coach instead insulted Paul by his homogenising behaviours. Cultural awareness is an excellent tool, but using it to categorise every Indigenous player as the same is problematic.

Both Alexander and Max experienced the fall-out from a previous Indigenous player behaving badly at their AFL clubs. They were "warned" about what not to do, and felt there was an expectation that they too would make those mistakes. Hallinan et al (2005) discussed the phenomena of a stereotype becoming assumed as an accurate and informative fact and how it can propagate acts of "othering". Players that were warned about "how not to act" were singled out based on their culture and appearance. It was mentioned by another participant that he noticed Max was warned about a previous Indigenous player's indiscretions but a higher drafted Indigenous player with a fairer complexion did not receive a caution.

The colour of skin also brought to light how many Indigenous players go unnoticed because they may be a "fairer" skin colour. When we read media reports about footballers they are often tagged with, "Michael Long, an Indigenous player", or "Leon Davis, an Aboriginal player". I was interested while reading about Andrew Walker in the Herald-Sun on the 28th January 2008 after his partner gave birth to their first child. He was not referred to as Andrew Walker, an Indigenous footballer (Ralph, 2008). It may have been an oversight, but these oversights rarely occur when articles are publicising the negative mishaps of Indigenous players who "look" Indigenous. It perpetuates the oppressive stereotypes that an Indigenous Australian needs to "look" Indigenous to be Indigenous. The media is a powerful force that perpetuates racism by conditioning mainstream public opinions and attitudes by presenting "us" and "them" reports.

Although racism occurs at every level of society, many Indigenous players are breaking stereotypes and resisting these stereotypes. Some have described their community work as a way of giving back to their communities and other Indigenous communities as a way of expressing their 'voice' and telling their own story. Community work is also viewed as an excellent tool for mentoring and helping younger Indigenous Australians to have self-belief and a willingness to dream. Being a role model to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians was considered a way of breaking down negative stereotypes, showing others what is achieved with determination,

self-belief, and dedication. Players also spoke about the 'watershed' moment when Long and Winmar challenged racism and prejudice, believing these players made it possible for them to play football without having to deal with overt racism from opponents or spectators. The photo displaying Nicky Winmar declaring his pride "spoke to every Australian, even those that did not want to listen" (Gorman, 2004, p. 149).

There is a responsibility for the receiving club to provide an approachable and receptive environment, open to cultural difference. There are a variety of ways the receiving environment can prepare for new recruits. Indigenous visibility is one way that has been shown to support new Indigenous recruits. Currently Indigenous visibility in coaching and administrative roles is rare and may send a misleading message about opportunities or lack thereof for Indigenous footballers after their football careers have ended. Similar to Rigney's (1997) research on heritage assessment at the Adelaide Oval, the AFL needs to concretise the lip service it pays to statistical discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous living and health standards and acknowledge it visually.

Homogenisation occurs at every ecological level and it can lead to prejudice. When individuals use knowledge they may have of Indigenous Australians and categorise them from their non-Indigenous perspective, they become cultural stereotypers. When a person groups all members of a minority group together based on limited cultural awareness they can become a 'sensitive' stereotyper (Andersen, 1993). A sensitive stereotyper may have good intentions, but has an unclear understanding of his or her own assumptions and stereotypes and may overlook or minimise contextual cultural information or overgeneralise from a limited level of cultural awareness (Gridley, 2005). At an institutional level, racism usually involves assimilationist goals of incorporating minority groups within the dominant group (Sanson et al, 1998). It further accentuates the assumption that the dominant group represents the normative and superior culture. Institutions such as the AFL need to take responsibility for their racialising practices. Indigenous Australians have a collective story and an individual story. The AFL needs to examine its policies and practices

and identify and address institutionalised racism within them. The AFL can continue to build partnerships with Indigenous communities and organisations and work collaboratively when formulating and implementing policies.

#### Methodological and Practical Implications

Reflecting on the Evolution of the Research

The motivation behind this research was the need to understand the experiences of relocation from the vantage point of a sample of Indigenous AFL players. It was not to investigate culture as another 'factor', but to look at how participants made sense of their relocation. Culture is not a stand-alone factor; it was the individual stories that highlighted how culture and systems intertwine and how connection between an individual and his systems is one way of presenting the stories.

In my review of literature, I found few studies that have examined the meaning and role of culture in sport and only recently has the absence of culture in Sport psychology been examined. Further investigation into the studies that have looked at culture as a factor suggests there is an overwhelming preoccupation with 'others' and conducted in ways that focuses on groups considered 'different' to the 'norm'. Sport psychology literature in Australia such as Hanrahan's 2004 exploration into Indigenous performers in the performing arts has attempted to investigate "multiculturalism", but has focused on outcomes more than processes and exploring individual stories.

### A Change in Direction

For the current research to evolve and comply with NHMRC and APS guidelines, several steps were taken to ensure competent research that presented the voice of the participant. The first step was to form constructive partnerships and build on collaborative research by introducing an advisory group. The second step required critical self-evaluation of my own culture.

Learning through the eyes of the 'Indigenous other' rather than the 'western self' enabled me to conduct research in an ethical and culturally appropriate way (Fielder, Roberts & Abdullah, 2000). Cultural consultants taught me to be aware of how my knowledge systems have evolved from the Western perspective and how some of my assumptions and stereotypes contributed to oppression. My advisors helped me break those oppressive practices through guidance and conversation. Reflecting on my own role in oppression was a difficult task because it involved a level of consciousness raising about my own subjectivity and limits, which was a difficult but rewarding process. I had to question all of my beliefs and ways of being that I had taken for granted and look at my own locations based on race, class, and gender and how these affected my day-to-day life. Engaging in reflective practice gave me a greater understanding of my profession, position as researcher, and myself (Sonn, 2004).

It was necessary for me to understand I am not separate from my own culture and that for me to understand another's culture I need to have a clear and strong understanding of my own (Sanson & Dudgeon, 2000; Sonn). I needed to become more aware of my location, involving myself within the framework, making my whiteness more visible, and taking a step back from the position of "objective expert" and instead recognising the ways my own subjectivity is embedded within mainstream cultural frameworks that have arisen from a racist society (Dudgeon & Pickett, 2000). For me the challenges were not about the participants' gender and mine (as I initially thought might be the case) but more about steering away from the stereotypes I had previously shaped in my own mind based on my experiences working with and making friends with Indigenous Australians. I believe I commenced this thesis as a sensitive stereotyper and had it not been for the guidance received from my advisory group and supervisor, I believe I would have perpetuated another comparative piece of research based on "us" and "them". Although transparency is currently a popular catchphrase, it was crucial for the current study. I think back to the absurdity of hoping to know everything about the Indigenous Australian culture prior to

interviewing participants, so I would appear credible and competent. I am fortunate to have the words of my advisors on repeat in my mind, "Emma, there is no absolute answer to that....I don't know, you'll have to ask him......slow down......take in one bit at a time......the rest will come when we want to give it to you". A very powerful reminder about whose agenda is being served by research.

Developing an understanding of the role psychology and sport psychology have had in research provided an insight into the assumptions about how people and cultures operate. Not only did I acknowledge my own limitations and weaknesses, but I also explored how psychology has operated on the assumption that humans can be understood in terms of Western understandings, thus rejecting, ignoring, and distorting Indigenous Australians' perspectives and perceptions by vanquishing Indigenous knowledge (Fielder et al, 2000). Knowledge of how a discipline has perpetuated racism, homogeneity, incompetent therapy and research, allowed me as a member of that profession, to understand how crucial and competent my ability is to interact with people from a culture that is different to my own (Sonn & Fisher, 2005). I was explicit about my own social location and how I locate myself within the discipline of psychology.

Kontos and Arguello (2005) declared that sport psychologists need to consider the importance of teaching novice sport psychologists how to examine their own place in society, their own story, and their stereotypes about cultures different to their own. Following on from Andersen's (1993) work, they called for culturally knowledgeable and sensitive sport psychologists, recommending they first develop an awareness and understanding of their own cultural group and surrounds before embarking on a journey of understanding other cultural groups. Rather than working from the 'expert' position, it is advisable to take on a novice role and work "with" Indigenous people and under Indigenous direction on issues affecting Indigenous lives. Respect and accountability are crucial for building culturally competent relationships

There are social, political, and ethical considerations for all research. Historically Westerners have gone into Indigenous communities, taken what they want, made interpretations and rarely given back to their participants. Heritage refers to the giving and receiving of knowledge and the reciprocal rights and responsibilities of using the knowledge (Daes, 1993). The present research set out to build relationships based on mutual respect by affirming identities rather than eroding and undermining them like past colonialist researchers. Knowledge will be returned to Indigenous communities through various written and oral forms to ensure sovereignty. From the beginning of this research intellectual property was discussed and it was decided that the researchers, University, and Indigenous communities would share the intellectual property. One way of ensuring sovereignty and sharing of intellectual property is to invite each participant to contribute to a booklet on relocation specifically for AFL clubs. This would promote ownership of the current study's findings and how best to present the themes arising from the current study. *Limitations* 

An advisory group was introduced to the current research with the main aim of conducting culturally competent and collaborative research. In hindsight I believe there could have been additional processes included to enhance a study with the main intention of implementing a decolonising methodology. The process of decolonising could have been pushed considerably by employing "talking circles" and "community meetings", two strategies that introduce the help and support from people of the intended culture for the development of themes and interview questions. Contacting various Indigenous organisations for the purpose of gaining community approval was attempted for the first 18 months of the study and it was decided that advisory group vouching, university ethics approval and acceptance from university department Moondani Balluk would be sufficient. Having greater community involvement would have enriched the current study and strengthened collaboration.

### Future Directions for Research

A major theme in the current study pertained to the sense of connection, referred throughout the thesis as kindredness. Dudgeon and Oxenham (1998) caution, it is a feeling, a tacit shared experience and form of spirituality that cannot be broken down and defined in words. Yet, it might be worth exploring how best to support Indigenous people to articulate kindredness because it its potential for contributing to positive identity development.

Furthermore, it would be of interest to explore the meaning of football after an Indigenous player retires. What life paths do they take and what cultural capital did they acquire that influence the lives post playing football professionally? Do they return to their home communities? Do they find opportunities within football administration, media, and other services? How do their life paths differ from non-Indigenous players? These are some questions worth pursuing because it may also shed light on how the different social, psychological, economic, and material resources acquired playing football is sustained beyond the football setting, that is the broader societal context.

### Conclusion

Ezra Bray left his AFL club in 2002 and his whereabouts in 2008 are unknown, he is only 25 years old. There has been a great deal of speculation and finger pointing toward the AFL, the club he played with, his family, and Ezra. Yet, the critical point is, we are still to hear from Ezra. We have learned from ten Indigenous AFL footballer's perspectives that things are changing in the AFL. The resources provided by the AFL, the AFLPA and PDMs in each club have evolved to make certain players such as Ezra Bray do not slip through the net. The supports have improved compared with 2000 but doubt exists whether the supports in place are strong enough to handle cases similar to Ezra. It comes back to the importance of understanding an individual within his socio-cultural context and hearing his version of events and experiences.

The AFL has implemented significant changes to welcome cultural diversity, but as a mainstream organisation it has failed to recognise that its evolution has been embedded in mainstream values. On one hand I want to commend the AFL for committing to promote football Australia-wide through programmes such as Kickstart, but on the other I want to ask, "Did the AFL Indigenous Australia foundation cease to continue because Michael Long chose to return home? Why didn't the AFL explore other options, such as other Indigenous Australians to head the foundation?" It seems that the foundation was built on a great idea, with a great man to run it, but with little thought for its future and development. If the AFL wants to de-institutionalise stereotypes, increase cultural awareness of all groups and be a forerunner of progressive race relations, it needs to support and build the Indigenous voice. It has been too common an experience for Indigenous Australians to lose their voice; years of incompetent Western research, oppressive assimilationist policies, and the demise of ATSIC.

Disparities between Indigenous and Anglo-Australian societies continue to increase (Shanahan, 2008). These disparities highlight the limitations of using football as a vehicle for stemming Indigenous disadvantage because it does not eradicate the structures of inequality in Australian sport and Australian society. These structures remain unchanged irrespective of the emerging identity through elite Australian football (Coram, 2005). It is exciting that Indigenous Australians make up more than 10 percent of the AFL's playing list, but off the field are Indigenous Australians making up more than 10 percent of administrative, coaching, and spectator numbers in the AFL? Outside of the football arena, are Indigenous Australians making up more than ten percent of our national workforce, our education systems, and our political arena? The answer is, No. But Indigenous Australians beat the rest of the population when it comes to statistics relating to death, unemployment, suicide and incarceration rates, infant mortality, and poor health.

Oppression continues to be an everyday reality for Indigenous Australians because racism, disadvantage, and discrimination are not being adequately addressed. Biological racism has been

replaced by cultural racism and the ongoing production of "us" and "them" reports continue to spread the message of cultural incompatibility.

Although general disparities show a bleak picture, this study has shown stories of strength, perseverance, and patience, told by men from a culture that has survived 40,000 plus years. These stories highlight the ways Indigenous Australians have resisted dominant scripts of racism. But if Australian Rules football represents one option for Indigenous Australian men, it emphasizes the lack of opportunity for Indigenous Australians and specifically, Indigenous Australian women. It further accentuates the necessity for race relations to be made a priority in Australia. Political, environmental, societal, health and wellbeing discrepancies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies require immediate and ongoing attention and action.

The main aim of the current study was to explore relocation experiences from the perspectives of ten Indigenous AFL footballers. There are many political aspects that need to be taken into consideration methodologically and the current study adhered to all guidelines and advice from advisors and mentors. In conducting this thesis I acknowledged my own location, which was different in so many ways to the location of the participants. By implementing cultural competence methodologies I sought to bridge the gap between our locations. Although cultural competence is necessary in conducting research cross-culturally, it does not eradicate or change the fact that past research has been colonialist and oppressive. Knowledge can be understood in a variety of ways and traditionally Western research has presented its findings from the dominant perspective giving little or no voice to the participant from a minority group. Rather than conducting meaningless research that has limited relevance for Indigenous Australians, the current study explored meanings about relocation, settlement, and adaptation and how these experiences have been facilitated and hindered.

Kindredness emerged throughout the study showing us that there are different ways of making meaning of experiences. The repeated exposure of Kindredness exemplifies how different,

and similar, individuals worldviews can be and the importance of them being represented at some level. Martin (2003) referred to this as "Indigenous ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of doing" (p. 12). There seems to be this underlying message that if members from a minority group choose to express themselves in ways that are different to mainstream society, they are disobeying the dominant societal laws. Whatever happened to the goal of multiculturalism? What makes us so afraid of cultural difference? Dudgeon, Garvey and Pickett (2000) described the diversity of humanity and culture in the following way, highlighting the importance of bridging different people's locations.

Underneath it all, despite our cultural differences, the fundamental truth is that our commonalities are greater than our differences. This is our great common humanity. This is not the notion of universality implicit in the discipline of psychology where cultural difference is treated as merely another variable, but is a shared spiritual humanity. We all laugh and cry, feel pain, and have the need to belong; love our children and our families; and take joy in the environment around us. This is what enables understanding and communication across cultures (p.5).

The current study has presented stories of relocation experiences from the perspectives of ten Indigenous AFL footballers. Stories are powerful tools; they constitute *history*. Australia has a black and a white history. Histories need to be recognised, including the oppression of Indigenous Australians that has occurred and the commitment to change the oppression of Indigenous Australians that occurs today. I have learned about my own commitment to social justice throughout the duration of this research. Oppression has been a visitor throughout all the ages. People have oppressed each other on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and emotional and physical disability status. Sport, like culture, has a developmental history. There will never be a 'perfect' state of sport without racism or oppression, just as there has never been a 'perfect' state of humanity. That does not imply that as psychologists, and as people, we are exempt from challenging and addressing oppression and ignorance displayed by others. Positive social change comes from challenging oppression and the ways in which we contribute to oppression. It is a life-long journey being an ally.

In Wiradjuri, to finish is to begin! Yalmambirra

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### APPENDIX A

### LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER

Mildura Aboriginal Health Service 120 Madden Avenue, Mildura 3500 Ph: 03 50220350/50210315 Fax: 03 50220942

# 20th September 2004

To: Whom it may concern

From: Ken Knight

Subject: Support Letter re: Relocation experience of Indigenous Australian Football players in AFL.

I am currently an Advisory Committee Member for Ms Emma Campbell, to support the project that she is undertaking on the subject as mentioned above.

My credentials in this area are:

- Aboriginal (Wemba Wemba) Lake Boga / Swan Hill district.
- Current position: Executive Health Manager, Mildura Aboriginal Corporation.
- Affiliation with Barkindji community
- 20 years experience in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health sector.

If any further support or information is required please contact me on the above number or on Email: KenKnight@mahs.com.au

Regards,

Ken Knight
Executive Health Manager
Mildura Aboriginal Corporation.
Incorporating:
Mildura Aboriginal Health Service
Coomealla Aboriginal Health Service
Balranald Aboriginal Health Service

# APPENDIX B

# LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER



# To whom it may concern:

Re: Relocation experience of Indigenous Australian footballers in the AFL.

As an advisory committee member to Ms Emma Campbell, I support and endorse the "relocation experience of Indigenous Australian footballers in the AFL".

I am of the Wiradjuri nation and am affiliated with Barkindji and Yorta Yorta nations.

Yours faithfully

Rose Gilby Aboriginal Liaison Officer Mildura Mental Health Service 03 5022 3500 0428 539 005

### APPENDIX C

# LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER



7th September 2004

### To whom it may concern:

# Relocation experience of Indigenous Australian footballers in the AFL.

I am writing in support of Ms Emma Campbell' project titled, 'Relocation experience of Indigenous Australian footballers in the AFL'.

Traditionally I am of the Barkindji nation from far western NSW and have been a resident in the state of Victoria for the past 10 years, I have affiliations with both the Wiradjuri and Ngiyampaa nations, and as a member of the advisory committee to Ms Campbell, I wish to inform you that I fully endorse and support the project.

Should the you wish to discuss the above further, please do not hesitate to contact me on the telephone contact provided (0428 236782).

Yours faithfully

Michael Gilby

Aborigital Natural Resource Officer

DIPNR

Lower Murray Darling – Murray Region

Buronga

### APPENDIX D

### INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

# The Relocation Experience of Indigenous Australian Footballers in the AFL

In 2002, the AFL implemented a new initiative called the AFL Indigenous Australia Foundation, whose primary aim is to assist Indigenous footballers with education, traineeships and the relocation process. The research here is focused on issues relating to the process of relocation of Indigenous footballers in the AFL from their place of origin to a city-based club.

The research will examine relocation of Indigenous footballers from three perspectives: those of (1) recently relocated players, of (2) players who relocated into the AFL prior to the formation in 2002 of the AFL Indigenous Australia Foundation, and (3), of representatives from health and welfare, coaching and organisation staff within the AFL.

I wish to invite you to participate in this important investigation. Your participation will involve a one-on-one interview with a member of the research team, and a second, follow-up interview to review key aspects of the initial interview and provide opportunities to add additional information. Each interview will be of approximately 1-hour duration, and will take place at a location that is convenient to you. An Aboriginal Liaison Officer will be available for the interviews with Indigenous players.

Please note that your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to discontinue at any time, without the need for reason or explanation. In addition, your participation in this research will in no way affect your current involvement in AFL activities and employment. No information gained from the interview will enable you to be identified to anyone other than the research team. All of the information and interview responses will be kept confidential and stored securely in the Office of Dr. Christopher Sonn, principal investigator. A research report detailing the pooled responses from all participants will be made available to the Indigenous Communities taking part in the research project. Note, however, that no personally identifying information about you or your responses will be included in the report.

I thank you in advance for assisting us in our research. Should you have any concerns or queries about the research project, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Christopher Sonn at the address below. If at any stage you have concerns about the conduct of the research project, please contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University, P.O. Box 14428 MCMC, Melbourne, 8001 (ph. 9688 4710).

Dr Christopher Sonn Co-Investigator

Emma Campbell Student Researcher

# APPENDIX E

# CONSENT FORM



# Victoria University of Technology Consent Form for Participants Involved in Research

I would like to invite you to participate in a study that explores issues related to the relocation of Indigenous Australian football players from their place of origin to a city-based club.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT  1.
(insert name)
(insert address) certify that I am at least 18 years old* and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the research titled: The Relocation Experiences of Indigenous Australian AFL football players, being conducted at Victoria University by Dr Christopher Sonn, and Emma Campbell (Student Researcher). I certify that the aims of the research, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the research, have been fully explained to me by the researcher and that I freely consent to my participation in this research project.
Procedures: Your participation will involve a one-on-one interview with a member of the research team, and a second, follow-up interview to review key aspects of the initial interview and provide opportunities to add additional information. Each interview will be of approximately 1-hour duration and will take place at a location that is convenient to you. An Aboriginal Liaison Officer will be available for interviews with Indigenous players. The information that you provide will be treated as strictly confidential and no personally identifying information will be published or made available to anyone outside of the research team. Please note that participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to discontinue at any time, without the need for reason or explanation. If you have questions about the research please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr Christopher Sonn on (03) 9688 4000.
I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this research at any time, without reason or explanation and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way
Signed:
Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the chief researcher, Dr
Christopher Sonn, ph. 9688 4000. 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 of Technology, PO Box 14428 MC, Melbourne, 8001 (telephone no: 03-9688
4710).

### APPENDIX F

### LETTER OF DISCLOSURE

July 2004

Dear (Name of Participant),



I am a non-Indigenous Australian, born in Melbourne, Victoria. My parents were born in Scotland and emigrated to Australia 39 years ago. They first lived in Ballarat and after two years moved to the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. After 25 years in Melbourne, I moved from Melbourne in October 2000 to live in Mildura (located in the north-west of Victoria) for four years. I travelled weekly during semester to Melbourne to attend Victoria University. I was recently accepted into the Doctor of Applied Psychology (Sport) programme at Victoria University and have moved back to Melbourne to complete it. I am currently working two days as a university counsellor in Ballarat and two days with a psychology firm providing employee assistance programme counselling as well as running my own private practice.

As part of the course requirements for the doctorate a research thesis will be conducted. I have been interested in the topic of 'Relocation' and the experiences of relocation for AFL football players since 2000. I began to collect articles about relocation and the experiences associated with moving from place of origin to a city-based club.

In 2000, the AFL held a meeting with past and present AFL players from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds with the primary goal of addressing issues faced by Indigenous AFL Football players. These issues included; isolation, lack of family support, racial abuse, inadequate financial management, the need to promote education and training, attention to issues of numeracy and literacy and relocation (Herald-Sun, 2000). What was highlighted in the meeting was that most AFL clubs had insufficiently provided for new Indigenous recruits, giving little recognition overall to most, if not all, of the issues identified above. In particular, it was noted that leaving family or traditional community ties can make transition and relocation a difficult experience for any athlete, especially when an individual's identity and culture are tied to a specific area or region, as is the case with most Indigenous Australians.

In 2002, the AFL implemented a new initiative called the AFL Indigenous Australia Foundation working in conjunction with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council (ATSIC), the AFL Players Association (AFLPA), and traineeship sports programme 'Sports Ready'. The foundation's primary aim, according to their mission statement, is to assist Indigenous football players with education, traineeships and the relocation process.

During the four years of work at Mildura Base Hospital, part of my role as Psychologist with the Acute Response Service of Mental Health Services, I held the Aboriginal Corporation portfolio. This portfolio specifically looked at enhancing mental health services in the Sunraysia area for Indigenous Australians, including direct client contact, working collaboratively with Aboriginal Corporation staff and attending education seminars, policy and enhancement network meetings. All work was conducted under the supervision and in conjunction with the Mildura Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Rose Gilby. Through this work, I have learned and continue to learn about Indigenous culture and effective collaborative work for the health and spiritual well being of Indigenous Australians.

The Sunraysia district is the traditional land of the Barkindji nation, and unique to the Barkindji nation is their language, customs and traditions. I have been provided an opportunity to learn from many Barkindji people and as a result have been accepted to work with Indigenous Australians with other traditional tribes that have settled in the Sunraysia area such as the Wiradjuri, Yorta Yorta, Muthi Muthi and Ngyampa tribes.

In my role as Psychologist and portfolio holder, the main inroad was based around building trust with the Aboriginal Liaison Officers and Professionals at the Aboriginal Corporation and then building trust through conversation and therapy with the Indigenous Australians seeking support from Mildura Base Hospital. I have had to prove my credentials and ability as well as display a strong understanding of issues faced by Indigenous Australians, whilst continually remaining honest, open, competent, respectful and professional. These same attributes are required for research.

I have built networks, had many discussions and informal meetings pertaining to the proposed study. These meetings have been conducted with other Indigenous Australians, three of whom are part of the advisory group. Initially the informal discussions were to ascertain whether a need existed and whether the research would be considered valuable. I propose a collaborative piece of research that will enable readers to learn through the eyes of the Indigenous Australian Football players. Whilst undertaking the research, I will be keeping check constantly of my own Indigenous Australian knowledge systems and cultural background.

Yours Sincerely,

Emma Campbell
Student Researcher/ Victoria University
Psychologist/ACU National and Ausepsych PTY LTD

### APPENDIX G

### GUIDE OUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH RECENTLY DRAFTED RECRUITS

#### **Research Questions:**

To explore the relocation experiences of indigenous Australian footballers leaving home to play for a city-based AFL club within twelve months of being drafted.

#### Prior to relocation:

- What was your experience prior to being drafted
- What were your feelings towards moving to Melbourne
- Had you any experiences of being away from home prior to being drafted
- How would you describe home prior to being drafted (who was he living with, where, how old was he)
- How did the family respond with the news of you being selected by a Melbourne club
- What were you most excited about
- What were you most fearful about
- Was there anyone in particular that was in contact from your club, or agent, that helped organise everything
  for the relocation to take place
- Was it a time of pressure, or did it run smoothly
- Who would you say supported you the most during this time

•

### Relocating:

- What was the hardest thing about leaving home
- What was the easiest thing about leaving home
- How did your family respond to you leaving
- How did you settle when you arrived in Melbourne
- How does an indigenous footballer cope in a predominantly white system
- How has the transition been helped or hindered by people associated with AFL (PDM's, Managers, Coaches, services)
- How does relocation affect the identity of an Indigenous footballer?
- Were there any major issues you encountered during the relocation process
- Do you think relocating from home to a city based club is different for indigenous Footballers compared to non-Indigenous Footballers?
- What would the differences be
- What would be some of the similarities
- If you had to mentor a young Indigenous footballer relocating now, what experiences would you share with him?
- What advice would you give him?
- What would you tell him to look out for?

### In the last year:

- What have you done to get through a season being away from home, partner, children?
- What have you learnt about yourself since being away from home
- What have you been able to teach others about yourself
- If you were to go through the process again, what would you do differently
- Have there been any occasions, since moving to Melbourne, that you have been made aware of your indigenous culture?
- If you were asked to teach a non-Indigenous person about your culture what would you say
- If you could use your status as an AFL footballer to influence other Indigenous up and coming footballers
  what would you want them to know about your life?
- What happens when you return home? How does the family, extended family, community treat you?
- What are their expectations of you?

### APPENDIX H

### GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH ESTABLISHED PLAYERS

To explore recollections of experiences of indigenous Australian Footballers who relocated from home to a city-based club prior to 2002.

### Prior to relocation:

- What was your experience prior to being drafted
- What were your feelings towards moving to Melbourne
- Had you any experiences of being away from home prior to being drafted
- How would you describe home prior to being drafted (who was he living with, where, how old was he)
- How did the family respond with the news of you being selected by a Melbourne club
- What were you most excited about
- What were you most fearful about
- Was there anyone in particular that was in contact from your club, or agent, that helped organise everything
  for the relocation to take place
- Was it a time of pressure, or did it run smoothly
- Who would you say supported you the most during this time

#### Relocating:

- What was the hardest thing about leaving home
- What was the easiest thing about leaving home
- How did your family respond to you leaving
- How did you settle when you arrived in Melbourne
- How does an indigenous footballer cope in a predominantly white system
- How does relocation affect the identity of an Indigenous footballer?
- How has the transition been helped or hindered by people associated with AFL (PDM's, Managers, Coaches, services)
- Were there any major issues you encountered during the relocation process
- Do you think relocating from home to a city based club is different for indigenous Footballers compared to non-Indigenous Footballers?
- What would the differences be
- What would be some of the similarities
- If you had to mentor a young Indigenous footballer relocating now, what experiences would you share with him?
- What advice would you give him?
- What would you tell him to look out for?
- Do you think relocation is different for Indigenous footballers now compare with when you relocated?
- What are those differences?
- How do you think it has improved?
- What do you consider needs to change from your perspective

### In the first year after relocating:

- What did you do to get through a season being away from home, partner, children?
- What did you learn about yourself being away from home
- · What were you able to teach others about yourself
- If you were to go through the process again, what would you do differently
- Have there been any occasions, since moving to Melbourne, that you have been made aware of your indigenous culture?
- If you were asked to teach a non-Indigenous person about your culture what would you say
- If you could use your status as an AFL footballer to influence other Indigenous up and coming footballers
  what would you want them to know about your life?
- What happens when you return home? How does the family, extended family, community treat you?
- What are their expectations of you?

# APPENDIX I

# **GUIDE QUESTIONS WITH SECONDARY INFORMANTS**

To explore the perceptions of relocation for indigenous Australian footballers held by Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australian representatives in key positions associated with the AFL (AFL, AFLPA, Player Managers, Player Development Managers, past AFL Footballers).

- What is your role in the AFL
- What do you think are some of the issues associated with relocation for Indigenous Footballers
- What services/programs are available for Indigenous Footballers in the AFL
- What role have you played with regard to relocation
- How has the AFL tackled issues surrounding the topic of relocation
- What is your knowledge of the formation of the Indigenous Australia Foundation?
- Do you think there has been a significant change since the AFL has acknowledged relocation issues for indigenous footballers
- What do you think needs to continue or change

# APPENDIX J

# TABLE OUTLINING STEPS OF RESEARCH

<u>Table 4.</u> Building Collaborative Research Processes

Aim	Task	Conducted By	Timeline
To determine research strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.	S.W.O.T. Analysis	Emma & Advisory April 2003 Group	
Ethics Approval	Submit Ethics Application	Emma, reviewed by Supervisor & Advisory group	January 2004
Sovereignty	Discussion about Intellectual property	Emma, Advisory Group & Supervisor	December 2004
Community Acceptance	Present research At community level	Emma, AFLPA, PDM Conference	November 2005
Community endorsement	Ethics approval At Community Level VACCHO VAYSR MAYSR AFLPA	Emma, Letters of Endorsement AG	Ongoing
Conversational Interviews	Develop Interview Guide	Emma, reviewed by Advisory group	December 2005
Ensure Culturally Competent research	Data Analysis	Emma, feedback from participants, A.G.	February 2007
Collaborative Practice	Report Writing Ongoing feedback	Emma, feedback from Advisory Group Emma	July 2007 & January 2008 Ongoing

# APPENDIX K

# S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

# Table 5. S.W.O.T. analysis

STRENGTHS	<ul> <li>Ethics Approval</li> <li>Advisory group</li> <li>Researcher's willingness to learn</li> <li>Current issue needs addressing</li> <li>Bring in key people</li> <li>Giving back to community/foundation</li> </ul>		
WEAKNESS	<ul> <li>Willingness for participants to engage</li> <li>Need to fully understand project</li> </ul>	1. 2.	Ongoing review of recruiting processes Transparency regarding topic and information about it and research team and advisory group
OPPORTUNITY	<ul> <li>Endless</li> <li>Foundation that picks this project up</li> <li>Recruitment: AFL benefit from project</li> <li>Put AFL on notice for more employment to assist in transition</li> <li>Recognise difference between Indigenous and non-indigenous</li> <li>Catalyst to bring about change</li> <li>Koori Mail: Indigenous titles</li> </ul>		
THREATS	<ul> <li>Timeframe</li> <li>Topics of harm (Racism, Stolen Generations, Death/Suicide)</li> </ul>	1.	Need to be flexible with timeline, there may be a discrepancy between ethics timeline and community

- How information is interpreted in Aboriginal communities (bring it undone if interpreted differently to Advisory Group)
  Ensuring information is covered with participant, if not threat
- not, threat
- **Ensure Confidentiality**

- timeline.
- Adequate debriefing if topics of harm arise, offer of culturally competent counselling.
   Briefs provided by A.G. and Emma

Reiterate information about project, verbal and written accounts.

### APPENDIX L

### EMAIL SENT FROM HWT TO CONFIRM USE OF HWT PHOTO

### Good morning Emma.

The only image we have on our system is one taken by John Feder, who works for the Australian. If you do not need a copy of the Wayne Ludbey pic I am happy for you to use it in your thesis, provided it is appropriately credited (Courtesy of the Herald & Weekly Times Ltd). However if you need to shorten the credit to HWT that will be fine too.

Kind regards,

### Tamara

Corporate Photo Sales Herald & Weekly Times Pty Ltd PO Box 14999 Melbourne Victoria, 8001

Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Ph: +61 3 9292 2512 Fax: +61 3 9292 1335

Email: photosales@hwt.newsltd.com.au

----Original Message----

From: ecampbell@iprimus.com.au [mailto:ecampbell@iprimus.com.au]

Sent: Monday, 25 June 2007 3:59 PM

To: HWT Photosales Subject: Photo Nicky Winmar

Dear Tamara,

I have attached the first few pages of my Doctoral dissertation to provide a context for the photo requested.

Date: 1993

Location: Victoria Park Photographer: Wayne Ludbey

Picture: Nicky Winmar pointing to his skin

Thank you for your special consideration,

Kind Regards, Emma Campbell Psychologist