Swan River Belonging: social and emotional interactions with an urban river in the South West of Western Australia

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I explore concepts of belonging in relation to the Swan River of Perth, Western Australia. The primary focus of my research was on the various ways in which people expressed their social and emotional connections to a waterway often referred to as the ‘soul of the city’. The people consulted derived from two main groups: a local inner city catchment group and a collection of artists. Drawing on literature such as Kay Milton’s theories of emotion, culture and the environment to explain my ethnographic data, I show how and why people’s interactions with the Swan River are motivated and enacted.

This thesis demonstrates that human relationships with rivers such as the Swan are complicated by themes that include nostalgia, memory, aesthetics, space, proximity, ecological concerns and development issues. By drawing on a range of methods (participant observation, interviewing) and travel modes (walking, cycling), I found that current day practices were affected by historical decision making for both indigenous and non-indigenous groups. My research conveys the value of doing socio-cultural research on rivers in urban and in other contexts, especially in circumstances where water matters are becoming increasingly paramount.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

...It is the Swan River, not the coast, that is the soul of the city

1.1 SOUL OF THE CITY

In this thesis I focus on Perth's Swan River, a major natural and cultural icon of southern Western Australia. The waters flowing into the Swan River are part of the Swan coastal plain referred to by some early commentators as 'Swanlands' (Brearley, 2005). According to Nyungar, a predominant local Indigenous group, the Swan River area is known as 'the heartland' of the south, a point that Burningham (2004, p. 14) explains:

Perth, the capital city of Western Australia, like all Australian state capitals, is the home of a large proportion of the state's population. And like all the other Australian state capitals it is a coastal city, but it is the Swan River, not the coast, that is the soul of the city.

My interest in the anthropology of water developed in 2000 when I completed an honours thesis in Anthropology at the University of Queensland. Titled “An Anthropology of the Sea: Sensing, Negotiating Identity and Constructing Blue Spaces”, I found that people from different cultural backgrounds of north east Arnhem Land related to their water environments in a range of intertwined ways. I explored water/human interconnections noting that people’s identities were mediated by the social construction of maps and sea spaces; the sea was seen as a place that contained high levels of meaning and significance. For example, I learned that the Yanyuwa people of north east Arnhem Land expressed belonging to the sea through interactions such as song and dance, through body design, naming practices and bark painting. ‘Yanyuwa people identified with and were known by their relationship to different water environments, for example, via names such as ‘the saltwater people’ and the ‘freshwater mainland people.

This research provided me with a helpful background to understand the diverse social and cultural relationships people have to water generally, and eventually led me to become involved in the current urban-based Swan River research. It became clear to me that a focus on water – especially people’s

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1 I was awarded a postgraduate scholarship to complete an MA thesis as part of a three year Australian Research Council funded project "Under Water: an ethnographic analysis of water use and natural resource management in
interactions with water – could facilitate understandings about human societies and cultures that I had not understood before.

1.2 A RIVER CITY

The Swan River is the social and ecological lifeblood of Perth (see Appendices, Map 1). The waterway travels through both natural and built environments and radiates life-giving qualities. A body of fresh and salt waters has gathered from inland tributaries, beginning at a small rural town known as Wickepin (23/02/06, field notebook no 12). Another river, the Avon, gathers waters as it passes through regional centres and travels westwards, where its name changes to the Swan River, a point I return to in later chapters.

The Swan River initiates a great deal of discussion among local groups about how the health of the river is managed, and how people use and enjoy such a substantial and renowned natural resource. Notably, the Swan River today flows through an ever-changing built environment that includes constructed islands, reclaimed foreshores, created wetlands, river walls, gentrified inlets, waterfront development, coves with residential apartments and complex drainage systems. Of interest too is that permanent and temporary residents enjoy protected foreshores and reconstructed, revegetated and landscaped parks. Heritage signage and artworks, managed flora and fauna, boat wash and foreshores to the constructed ‘gateway’ of the city, built roads, railway lines, tunnels, canals, jetties, bridges, city sky rises and built residential homes add a further dimension. Both the natural and built environments in which the Swan River flows provide diverse spaces and places with which people interact in multiple ways, referred to throughout this thesis as demonstrating an active and observable sense of ‘belonging’. Evidence of ‘belonging’ occurs via social gatherings, recreational activities, painting the Swan River, making the most of sun, wind, water, and fishing or relaxing in protected and shady or dry places, and undertaking practical and environmental work. As I will show, the themes of social and emotional belonging were consistently demonstrated among the people with whom I worked.

Queensland and Western Australia* awarded to Sandy Toussaint and Veronica Strang in 2003. While the larger project focused on three water sites in northern and southern Western Australia and Queensland, my role was to work in urban Perth with a focus on the Swan River. My ethics approval for this project was granted through the larger ARC project awarded to Toussaint and Strang.

\[2\] In this thesis I refer to the collection of my own data via notebook number and date. This style continues throughout unless otherwise noted.
From data I have collected, it is clear that the Swan River is a central living natural feature for residents and tourists; it is a national and international identifying marker. The river is also a principal playground providing a variety of bays, inlets, caves, estuaries, tunnels, lookouts, islands, sandbars, harbours and cliffs for people to explore regardless of warning signs. There are many places where designed walks have been mapped out (Department of Conservation and Land Management, 2005) and relaxing barbeque sites (Ward, 2005) have been established. There are also places for bird watching (Delft, 1988) and fishing, each of which creates water environments where people connect with the river in ways that I describe as embodying a sense of socio-cultural and emotional belonging.

The growing city of Perth, evident via spreading infrastructure, buildings, roads, railway lines, pipelines and drains along, across and through an assortment of watery environments, connect with the Swan River system. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007a) the city of Perth had the fastest population growth of all Local Government Area cities during 2005-2006 (12.4%). Perth’s population is 1,507,900, an increase of 29,900 people (2.0%). The Swan River flows through changing rural and urban environments including the capital city of Western Australia. Perth includes residents from a diverse range of socio-cultural backgrounds who have connections locally, nationally and internationally. A relevant point of enquiry for my research on what a ‘sense of belonging’ means to Perth residents is provided by Read (2000, p. 2) who expands this understanding of belonging to include:

Australians of every variety: young Australians, Asian Australians, foreign-born Australians, rich Australians, seventh-generation Australians, rural Australians, just-arrived Australians, poets, artists, country and western musicians, atheists, metaphysicians, spiritualists, those who have worked closely with Aboriginals, those whose land is under Indigenous claim, those who have yet to meet an Indigenous person face to face. What concepts of belonging will they bring to this divided land?

Perth residents come from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds and places of origin; they partake in a multitude of occupations that specialise in fields across disciplines, skills and passions. People work and play within both natural and built environments, and within private, public, industry3 and community sectors. Through practice alone, people draw on diverse ways of using and enjoying their environments.

The Swan River is a key landmark for Perth development. Urban development spreads eastwards inland and in opposite directions north and south along the Swan Coastal Plain, and blocked in the west by the coastlines meeting the

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3 Among a range of commodities exported, the major commodities include iron ore, gold bullion, petroleum and petroleum products, wheat and wool. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007b), Vol. 2007 Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
Indian Ocean. Although many people have an affinity with the Swan River, the majority do not live close to it. Many women, men and children live closer to other kinds of water environments within the broader catchment including, lakes, wetlands and various beaches. The locality and interactions of people’s everyday lives in relation to the Swan River are significant factors for understanding diverse relationships. A growing population increases the pressures on water use and the ecological surroundings, a point of concern for government, industry and the local population. What people do in their private homes or in their ‘own backyard’ impacts on the health of the Swan River; however these connections are not always taken into consideration by government. Spreading residential development covers wetlands and destroys wildlife habitat creating new extensions of suburbia. River environments are undergoing constant changes both from natural ecological processes and human habitat impacts which are embedded in diverse social and cultural uses and interactions.

Whereas my concern as an anthropologist was with the ways in which people physically, socially and emotionally demonstrated their connections to the Swan River, environmentalists usually emphasised environmental changes and different forms of pollution, disease or ecological degradation. Human users are often referred to as the cause of environmental changes without acknowledging and further explaining the human social and cultural needs within river environments. The diversity of human interactions with the Swan River help to explain the complexities of human relationships to environmental issues and the human need for increased ‘watershed democracy,’ as discussed with regard to water systems by Worster (2006). For example different types of waters reflect some of the different human uses and meanings with regard to different types of water. Fresh water, saline water, brackish water, storm water, sewerage water, filtered water, vapour, steam, muddy water, rain water, deoxygenated water, toxic water, fishing waters, kayaking waters, water quality, bore water, recycled water, grey water, drinking water, bath water, chlorinated waters, spa water and icy cold water. Each has the potential to represent different ways that people interact with water. The soil composition on which the city of Perth and urban sprawl have been constructed is a sandy porous movable base, incorporating wetlands, lakes, underground aquifers, tunnels, mounds and springs. Perth is a place where land and waters merge and move in both predictable and unpredictable ways, resulting in a precarious place to inhabit.
1.3 IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND PROBLEM

A growing concern about the ways people interact with their environments is covered by Bodley (1996), who uses anthropological perspectives to explain contemporary human problems. Environmental issues, including global warming, species extinction, changing weather patterns, declining fresh water resources and increasing pressure on local resources, have led to research into these changing human/environment relationships. Questions relating to human behaviour and behaviour change have facilitated broader discussions, possibilities and innovative solutions for reducing carbon emissions, recycling and reusing materials within everyday life, while taking into consideration existing social and ecological connections.

My concern in this thesis is to investigate the how, why and the extent to which two local groups—one a group of artists, the other a non-government water catchment group—interact with, use and represent a section of the Swan River. With a guiding interest in learning about how people used the river, the meanings river interactions held for them, and whether the river could be identified as a site of belonging, I solicited insights about how, when and where people visited the river, what emotions were experienced with the river, the memories they sustained about the river, and their involvement as members of a group (i.e. as an artist or catchment group member). For example I asked participants from both groups - When you think of the different places along the Swan River is there a particular place or view that is special to you? Could you tell me what this place or view is and what meanings it has for you? Another question asked was - Has there been a time when you have experienced a strong emotional reaction in relation to the Swan River? If so would you explain to me what happened. I also asked - Who do you use and enjoy the Swan River with and what kinds of experiences do you share or what memories do you have of these particular social spaces? I gathered my data through interviews but also by conversation, participant observation and my own experiences with the Swan River. I found the research process useful because it gave me the opportunity to tease out the complex meanings, often intangible and elusive in everyday interactions to understand human relationships to a major waterway.

While my research took me to several emphases and bodies of literature (e.g. the culturally different ways in which people conceptualise the river, river restoration, and river governance), I eventually turned to literature and theories on concepts of belonging which best explained the data collected. These matters are addressed further in Chapter Two on Literature and Theory.
1.4 **RESEARCH BOUNDARIES**

The Perth waterway creates geographical boundaries that impact on the built environment where communities can be linked through roads, rail, bridges and drainage systems. While political boundaries between government bodies are constructed for managing catchments, the Swan River Trust has primary governance responsibility for the Swan River. The waters that run into the Swan River are collected from a large catchment that is described in political terms as the ‘Swan Canning river system’, which covers a catchment of up to twenty-eight local government regions. While some of my research took place via the Swan River Trust, a government body established to administer the river, most occurred outside its domain, most notably, as mentioned above and explained further in Chapters Four and Five, with two local groups that held strong connections with the river in inner urban settings. In particular my focus was on field sites along the Swan River that were of interest to a group known as the Claise Brook Catchment Group (CBCG) and another group of artists who came together to work on a project focussing on the Swan River. The interactions of CBCG members centred on wetlands, Claisebrook and Swan River foreshores within the inner city area, whilst the interactions of artists were directed more broadly along the length of the Swan River between Guildford, the city and Fremantle (see appendices, Map 1). In a sense, then, my river research occurred in conjunction with groups who had particular involvements with the river that can be geographically rather than socially contained. Whilst persons within each group shared in common a love of the river, a quality that accords with Milton’s (2005) interest in people’s emotional responses to the environment, and acted in a voluntary capacity, their interactions with the Swan River were bounded by, on the one hand, the privileging of aesthetics for the artists and, on the other, an overriding interest in the environment for the CBCG. Of course, and not unusually, these positions were not mutually exclusive. For example the coordinator of the artist group took a strong interest in environmental issues and in her spare time participated in environmental politics, although in another area. I also observed an artist practicing her environmental values of recycling and reusing items during artistic work and everyday life. Whereas, members of the CBCG showed an interest in artworks in parks such as sculptures, murals and paintings, one of these artworks was created with the purpose to remind the public about fishlife in waterways. For example symbols of fish were painted near drains to evoke a connection between people’s actions and to water draining into the Swan River.
1.5 Thesis Qualities and Limitations

Working with two urban groups who sustained varying aesthetic and environmentally practical ties to the Swan River characterizes the thesis; another primary theme is its focus on water-related issues at a time when water issues and climate change are being highlighted.

Carrying out urban anthropological research as a postgraduate student also presented me with a wide range of challenges, including those discussed in Hume and Mulcock (2004). I was confronted with a spectrum of challenging issues during fieldwork. Not unusually for an anthropologist, collecting data in diverse field sites meant learning to ‘fit in’ with different groups’ values, beliefs and practices, often requiring role play in different situations. There were many experiences where ambiguity was evident, at times making field research uncomfortable. For example, away from the academic environment and in unfamiliar circumstances, I found it hard to know when it was appropriate to speak, and what and how much information could be shared within group contexts. I believe that one of the difficulties I experienced was that my purpose for being in either group was different to the purpose that group members were there. For example as a participant observer I was there to watch, listen and learn about the group as well as participate in group activities such as tree planting or painting. My focus on observing each group set me apart from group members and the activities of the group and therefore I was not one of them. So although I was given insider access through activities and group participation, I was seen as an outsider as a result of my research practices. Each group was being watched and therefore some group members had a feeling of being a ‘lab rat’ during this research process. As Mulcock (2004, p. xi) states ‘participant observers deliberately place themselves in a series of very awkward social spaces, some of which are more difficult to inhabit than others. Mulcock (2004, p. xii) goes on to explain that it is normal to have feelings of inadequacy and social failure as part of successful participant observation.

1.6 A Note on Methods

I carried out extensive participant observation research, and informant and open-ended interviewing. My data collection was derived from a range of travel modes including walking, cycling, boating, canoeing, and sailing. Transport by cars, buses, trains and planes allowed me the freedom to visit many places locally and nationally.
during my research. For example I attended an Environmental Workshop in Brisbane in October 2004. These various interactions with multiple fieldsites allowed me to make comparisons from different perspectives and highlighted for me what was most important in the study.

Post-fieldwork, my notebooks were bursting with field notes, and I had diaries, stacked books, piled high reports, conference proceedings, pamphlets filed in folders, seminar posters, hand scrawled notes, hung and stored paintings and sketches, scattered stationery, photocopied interdisciplinary journal articles, boxed newspaper clippings, stacked disks storing thesis drafts, hundreds of photos, and electronically saved interviews. My borrowed laptop stored thousands of megabytes of files, edited thesis versions, saved cutout sections, research proposals, plans and diagrams, presentations, world wide web links, downloaded papers and digital photos, emails and Endnote references, most of which have now been revised into thesis format.

There was a range of people I interacted with and talked to throughout the period of my research in both formal and informal contexts. Various formal institutions included universities, government departments, museums, libraries, art galleries, conferences, historical societies and environmental centres. Informal interactions related to Swan River issues led me to join different social groups where I attended tea and coffee meetings, dinners, dances, barbeques, picnics, outdoor concerts, river cruises, art exhibitions, parties, theatre productions, indoor and outdoor movies, music festivals, walking and cycling excursions, community fairs and marketplaces. Although I have collected large amounts of data, I have primarily referred to data collected from sixty-eight informants alongside textual material and the relevant literature, government reports, media items and case notes for participants and observations.

I lived in Perth similarly to informant groups, so access to the people I was researching was relatively easy. I met with both groups about twenty times. I met with the artist group at organized meetings held at places along the Swan River, at art galleries, private homes, cafes and parks. I met with the environmentalist group at monthly meetings, working bees, private homes and at walking and cycling tours.

I began making contact first with my artist group who had formed in response to an advertisement in the paper. A range of artists living in Perth, some close to the Swan River, had come together to produce artworks in celebration of the 175th anniversary of settlement of Western Australia. Each artist was skilled at using different mediums and styles of artwork. For example we had a textile artist who used a sewing machine to create sewn materials, another artist used natural materials by weaving them by hand into statues. There was an artist who used clay
to mould sculptures. Other mediums included acrylics, water colours, charcoal and oil paints.

The second group, environmentalists, had already been formed for some time through monthly meetings and outdoor activities in local parks and waterways. Members shared a common interest in ecological restoration. This common interest was made evident through conversations and practical application. Members carried out various jobs using a range of skills that were directly and indirectly connected with ecological restoration. Some members demonstrated knowledge of local history, ecological practices and water quality issues, while others shared insights of the inter agency politics and the workings of bureaucracy.

One continuing theme that I encountered throughout my fieldwork interactions related to the ambiguity of what anthropology may offer. Palmer's (2007) discussion on anthropology and native title have some relevance here. While talking about a different context, I have drawn on his comments to explain this point further:

The profession of anthropology has a deal of work to accomplish in educating the public about what it does. The term 'anthropologist' is used by a wide range of scholars (and others as well) with a variety of research interests developed from differing theoretical perspectives. This may call for a clearer enunciation of the bases of the practice by those involved in native title inquiries. Misunderstandings about anthropology and anthropologists continue to be common and are not limited to the general public. Judges also appear not to have appreciated what anthropologists do or how they do it. Understanding the nature of the expert is an essential first step in gaining an appreciation of the contribution they could potentially make to any legal process (Palmer, 2007, p. 4).

In addition to not being well informed about the profession of anthropology, I found that fieldwork participants often made misguided attempts to 'help' me in the field with information that they thought I needed or made assumptions about my discipline without fully understanding my role and anthropological methods used to collect and synthesize data. For example, one common assumption that some people made was that I came from environmental science rather than a social science background. Again, Palmer's (2007) comments are useful here on the anthropological process:

Data, as collected, should then form the basis for the provision of an expert opinion. Anthropologists develop ways of understanding social relationships, based upon that data and their theoretical or paradigmatic assumptions which are a part of the training of their discipline. They do not simply present raw data or iterate the words of those with whom they worked. There is a vital step between the presentation of the data and the articulation of its interpretation. Such a step, characterised by the moulding of the material consistent with theory or paradigm renders the opinion substantially different to the data. The two should always be clearly distinguishable and the expert view must be clearly derived (or based upon) the data and the relationship be able to be demonstrated, if required (Palmer, 2007, p. 6).
The Introduction gave a brief background of my research interest in anthropology and the way the Swan River is perceived as an icon and the soul of the city. A social and geographical context highlights the many features of the river city, also known as Perth’s social and ecological lifeblood. The Swan River is a central living natural feature and provided a context for researching anthropological perspectives and people’s diverse interconnections with it. I have explained my guiding interest during my research with two groups, artists and environmentalists and further explanation has been provided identifying the research question and problem as well as the research boundaries. Information on thesis qualities, limitations, and methodological issues within anthropology was also presented.

In Chapter Two I present a theoretical framework and an overview of bodies of literature. I have categorised these as social and ecological theory, anthropology of rivers and water, theories of belonging, fiction and non-fiction work on the Swan River. The last category is material on concepts of social and emotional belonging. Chapter Three provides archival research of the history of the Swan River, and Chapters Four and Five focus on ethnographic data collected from artists and environmentalists. Chapter Six analyses the preceding material, and Chapter Seven discusses the study’s Conclusion and implications in relation to a sense of social and emotional belonging among artists and environmentalists with the Swan River.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

‘Emotions are fundamental to human life; they define its quality and motivate action’ (Milton, 2005, p. 198).

2.1 SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL THEORY

In this Chapter, environmental and cultural anthropology are explained as setting the framework for my research. I am especially concerned to explore notions of belonging in environmental contexts.

Hardesty (1977) provides an overview of key authors on themes, beginning with environmental determinism to possibilism, as well as ecological perspectives. Within an ecological perspective, the foci include cultural ecology, population ecology, systems ecology and, more recently, ethnoecology. Edited works by Crumley, Van Deventer et al. (2001) include research exploring environmental and human connections through defining the environment and interpreting nature, providing deeper understandings of beliefs, values and environmental justice in relation to anthropological application and engagement. Within this field, anthropologists investigate water in relation to the human condition, noting the need to consider the holistic aspects of human/environmental relationships.

Milton takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of environmental issues, an approach that implies the pooling of knowledge and expertise, the creation of a joint enterprise to produce a deeper understanding, and a way of finding common ground (Milton, 1996, p. 219). A workshop held at the University of Western Australia in 2006 which focussed on the Swan River also demonstrated the diversity of perspectives when pooling knowledge (Toussaint, 2006), an epistemological shift of interest to me.

Head, Trigger et al. (2005, p. 252) focus on an undervalued area of environmental humanities research – cultural analysis of the beliefs, practices and often unarticulated assumptions which underlie human-environmental relations. They argue that all people ‘have culture’ in that they are socialised to think about land and natural species in particular ways. The commonly held assumption that science and culture are distinctly separate entities exacerbates three assumptions that Head, Trigger et al. (2005, p. 252) wish to challenge.
• The widespread notion that culture refers purely to the mythical and irrational parts of human life that are not amenable to rigorous research and scholarship.
• The related idea that culture can somehow be contained in a 'black box', separate from other dimensions of life, rather than being understood as a set of processes and assumptions that pervade all of our lives and institutions, including scientific ones.
• The frequent association of 'culture' with a high level of difference, especially with indigenous or ethnic minorities, rather than the mainstream citizenry. Contrary to this view, all humans have culture in this sense of a social set of assumptions and beliefs about the world and their relationship to it, a point of value to my research on the Swan River.

The above points were useful while carrying out research on the social and cultural meanings and interactions of the Swan River because I kept in mind the complexity of cultural connections to the Swan River while continuing to question assumptions.

2.2 **Anthropology of Rivers and Water**

Academic writing on water within anthropology includes work by Strang (2004, p. 2) who, concentrating on England's Stour River, explained that:

> To understand why people, particularly in Western societies, are so passionate in their desire for water, it is necessary to go under the surface and explore the complexities of their relationships with this most vital resource and with each other.

Strang (2004, p. 2) writes about the cultural landscape in which rivers are embedded. She found that there is a highly complex relationship with water, in which physical, sensory and cognitive experiences articulate with cultural meanings and values. As well, ethnographic data collected by Strang suggests: that the meanings poured into water have proved highly consistent over time; that they exert a powerful influence over every decision involved in water use; they form a deep rationale for increasing levels of usage; and they are difficult to alter (Strang, 2004, p. 3).

As well, Toussaint (2004, p. 3) provides a detailed account of the multiple contexts of peoples' interconnections with, and responses to, rivers and water along with important lines of inquiry that question broad assumptions about how people interact with their cultural environments. On an ABC Radio National broadcast (2004) Toussaint emphasised:
Ockham's Razor, [a science program on the national broadcaster] provides a wonderful reminder of the need in problem solving to realise that sometimes that which is most obvious remains elusive. The water/human relationship presents a rich illustration of where this seeming paradox is evident, in part because of its universality but also because of its many social and cultural variations.

Bradley (1997, 1998) considers Aboriginal knowledge of water and emphasises the central role of song cycles and how Yanyuwa people in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria conceptualise sea spaces. Bradley (1998, p. 131) states: 'It is the sea more than any other geographical feature which Yanyuwa use as their existence and identity'. This insight facilitated my research in several ways. It revealed that water is not just a liquid to be passively viewed, but an important ecological resource for human subsistence that is also embedded with diverse social and cultural meanings.

McDonald, Coldrick et al. (2007, p. 4) write about Aboriginal cultural values associated with ground water-related environmental features and processes on the Gnangara Mound in Perth's northern metropolitan region. One research finding emphasised 'water is life' as axiomatic for all humans, especially for the Indigenous people of Australia, in the world's driest inhabited continent.

Other anthropological research by Williams (2001, p. 409) examined the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C. and explored ways that the river is polluted, yet people who live along its shores cherish the river and fight to make it clean. Williams examined political ecology, power relations, inequalities, connections, and contradictions that join natural and social processes over time and enlarge historical and anthropological theory. William's (2001, p. 411) work focuses on the contradictions within each new historical formation on the Anacostia River between four main transformations and the people who live there. The first transformation included the British conquest which afflicted Indian communities. The following four changes were state formations that began with nationalists treating the Anacostia River as a lifeline to the North American West. One hundred years later government used the centralized civil service, standing army and trains to strengthen its power and river based economy. The third transformation happened in the 1950s and privileged developers and their visions for the city. New highways were built to allow visitors into the city and to view pristine monuments while downtown residents were removed to east side of the Anacostia River. The new highways trapped and discharged rainwater, oozing with oil, into the contaminated river. Currently a neoliberal state and its growth-politics allies aim to open the river for development while undermining the efforts of environmental justice activists (2001, p. 411). Efforts have celebrated the return of osprey, blue heron, egrets, and bald eagles to the shores. Williams provided a social and cultural context of a river that guided my
interest in understanding my own research of the Swan River. For example in Chapter Three I have used historical examples to show changes that have occurred on the Swan River and the background contexts to current interactions. William's work also provided me with a background understanding to possible contradictions and power relations for current activities between environmentalists and government. Brierley, Hillman et al. (2006, p. 131, 141) examined river resources and environmental management. Both Australia and New Zealand have suffered at different scales and rates from habitat loss, extinction of species, soil erosion, invasive plant and animal species, the ongoing deterioration of water quality and loss of the integrity and connectivity of river systems. These challenges led to a reappraisal of people's relationship to the natural world and a shift in social, cultural and institutional responses to environmental management. Maintaining an appropriate sense of place requires due regard to be given to the distinctive social, cultural and biophysical attributes of any given catchment, through inter-disciplinary thinking and practice.

Sinclair (2001), writing about the Murray River in South Eastern Australia, explores people's interactions with the Murray, noting the different meanings of the Murray River through themes of regulation, fish and river experiences. Sinclair summarises that 'memory and emotional attachment are as much a part of the Murray as fish, irrigation and flood' (back cover). Of particular interest to my research, Sinclair includes artists work on the Murray River, referring to John Davis who created a sculpture called 'Observatory' from a tree stump to which twigs, bark and mud were added. Davis (in Sinclair, 2001, p. 4) explained:

> It was an urge to make something on the river...I sort of just responded to this stump and it evolved really. I didn't know what I was going to do until I saw it. I wander around the bush for a while until suddenly there's a place that makes some sense and I feel okay, this is where I want to work. It's probably got something quite special about it, I don't know quite what. It takes some a while...It's also a sense of place. You embellish that; make it stronger and more obvious.

Sinclair (2001, p. 5) claims that Davis's concern was that his art made 'some connection to who we are now in this country, what we were before and where we are going', a point I shall return to in Chapter Four where I consider aesthetic relationships to the Swan River.

Strang (2001, p. 69) asserted that one of the central issues in modern anthropology is the need for theoretical approaches that deal with the complex dynamics of industrialized societies, in which there are multiple subcultures and contexts of social being. As an example, investigations of groups in the Mitchell River area included the Aboriginal community in Kowanyama, European Australian
pastoralists, miners, commercial fishers, environmentalists and national parks rangers and tourists. All of these define themselves partially in relation to each other, their representations defining the qualities and actions that they own or disown.

Jackson, Storrs et al. (2005, p. 39) also discuss cultural understandings of water and rivers in northern Australia. They refer to Langton (2002) who noted that ‘an affiliation with a dominant environmental feature, such as a river or spring, may play a key role in the formation of group and individual identity’. This point was explored further in a quote by Toussaint et. al. (2005) quoted in Jackson, Storrs et al (2005) who emphasises the connection between language and water:

For one group, whose country is found between the fish and Moyle Rivers west of the Daly River in the Northern Territory, their very name refers to the riparian world, where language relates people to place. Ngan’gikurunggurr means deep water Sounds (Ungunmer 2003; pvii). It is described as the language of the swamp people who live in the lower reaches of the Moyle River, cultural affiliations to water are expressed in other ways too: through social etiquette, place-based knowledge, narratives, beliefs and daily practices (Jackson et al., 2005, p. 39).

2.3 THEORIES OF BELONGING

The following literature helps to make clear a framework for describing and analysing the complex relationships between people and the Swan River. Here I use cross-disciplinary theories on belonging to frame the central roles that the Swan River plays with regard to natural and built landscapes. I then relate this material to ideas and description from a range of authors who have written fiction and non-fiction accounts which refer to the Swan River. My aim is to tease out some of the human/environmental connections to the Swan River to explain more clearly what a ‘sense of belonging’ means in people’s everyday lives.

2.3.1 Human Needs

The psychologist Abraham Maslow (1943) ranked human needs in order of necessity beginning with physiological (breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis and excretion) characteristics. On the second level, Maslow ranked safety needs (security of the body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property), and on the third level, Maslow ranked love and belonging (friendship, family and sexual intimacy). Once these human needs were met Maslow ranked esteem (self-esteem, confidence, achievement, and respect of and by others). The last human needs ranked related to self-actualisation (morality, creativity, spontaneity,
problem solving, lack of prejudice, and acceptance of facts). Maslow (1943, p. 375) stated that 'if both the physiological and the safety needs are fairly well gratified, then there will emerge the love and affection and belongingness needs'.

Many years later, Baumeister and Leary (1995, p. 497, 500, 501) wrote that the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation. Human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships. The need to belong has two main features. Firstly, people need frequent personal interactions with each other and ideally these interactions are affectively positive or pleasant or free from conflict and negative impact. Perceptions of these interpersonal bonds or relationships are marked by stability, affective concern and continuation into the foreseeable future. To satisfy the need to belong, the person must believe that the other cares about his or her welfare and likes (or loves) him or her. Simply knowing that a bond exists may be emotionally reassuring, yet it would not provide full belongingness if one does not interact with the other person. Thus, we view the need to belong as something more than either a need for affiliation or a need for intimate attachment.

Perspectives by Maslow, Baumeister and Leary focus on human interactions whereas my research extends their views to include human/environment relationships and interactions. This is the sense of belonging that I found among groups through the ways and the extent that they use and interact with the Swan River. A human need to belong extends the call for literature on people/environment relationships. Milton (2005, p. 202) is helpful here because she examines the ways that emotions fundamental to human life connect people between nature and culture. For example, Milton examines what a person feels motivates them to act or drive what they do in everyday life. Various approaches have been taken in the study of emotion, including as a biological phenomenon, as a cultural phenomenon, and as a social phenomenon. However, Milton examines how emotion can be understood as an ecological phenomenon, a learning process that can be understood between an individual organism and its environment. Milton suggests that it is a process whereby individuals receive and interpret information from their surroundings (both social and non-social environments) and become skilled movers within their environment.

Bott, Cantrill et al. (2003, p.100) summarise literature on place identity and a sense of self-in-place in relation to several psychological frameworks to highlight connections to conservation psychology research and practice. Distinctions are made between built versus natural places, explanatory versus normative stances, and humanistic versus scientific approaches. Place perception and cognition provide insights into mental and collective representations of place. Affective or emotional
constructs, such as a place attachment and dependence offer ways to consider the strong bonds people form with places, which can be significant factors in land management. Place identity research describes how a person may have a sense of belonging in a place or environment and how this may vary with background variables.

2.3.2 Cultural Identification and Belonging

I have consulted the study by McCreanor, Penney et al. (2006) on the culturally specific experiences of belonging within Oruāmo/Beachhaven, a suburb in North Shore City in New Zealand. The construct of a sense of place is used to understand ways of thinking and talking about particular places, their liveability and their positive and negative impacts on well being and belonging. The research focuses on how feelings about aspects of neighbourhood-level place and especially belonging are associated with cultural identification. It articulates a sense of place in terms of the sentiments of attachment and detachment that human beings experience, express and contest in relation to specific places within a collective expression of belonging to place. A comparison may be made with the Swan River environments. From research conducted by McCreanor, Penney et al (2006, p. 205) in New Zealand, it was established that:

Participants talked about the natural environment – the beach, the bush, the landforms – as well as public spaces such as Shepherd’s Park, wharf and village shops as places of familiarity and collective activity. For many Māori and Pākehā, and to a lesser extent, Samoan caregivers, these environments were where they belonged and community events and incidental meetings with local people commonly occurred at these sites.

McCreanor, Penney et al. (2006, p. 205) explain this interpretation as both the physical features and social aspects being integrated at both personal and collective levels. The participants talk of:

Beach haven as fundamentally built on interpersonal and group interactions from the most mundane to the more activist or self-determining. Relationships, families, institutions, formal and informal networks figure largely in their talk about place and help to define what the place is and how they belong to it.

Eyles (1985, p. 59) discusses a sense of belonging as distinct from alienation in relation to community. He argues that community appears to be a contradictory phenomenon. Not only may a sense of community be absent, but it may also appear as both a fulfilling and an alienating experience. Eyles examines what makes a community take a particular form using three elements – the social (what is often seen and experienced), the ecological and the ideological (what may be beyond
immediate experience). Whereas Anderson (1983, p. 15, 16) explores community and defines it as an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them yet in their minds of each lives the image of their communion. The nation is limited because even the largest of them, has finite, if elastic boundaries beyond which lie other nations. It is imagined sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which enlightenment and revolution was destroying the legitimacy of the divinely – ordained hierarchical dynastic realm. It is an imagined community because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

Stefano (2002, p. 38) examines a sense of home and belonging in relation to displacement and identities via the context of an airport. Whereas the Swan River provides a long, moving,' iconic natural and cultural feature to understand a sense of belonging. It is also a landscape for people to identify with and in relation to which they experience a sense of belonging. Stefano states:

For many people today who are displaced due to various social, political, or personal reasons, the notion of home is perhaps best understood as a sense of being between places, rather than being rooted definitively in one singular place and, by extension, exclusively to one singular identity.

Stefano (2002, p. 38) goes on to emphasise a ‘temporary’ connection to home through placelessness. The work by Stefano examines how people construct a temporary or moving sense of belonging and longing. The Swan River landscape provides a moving yet constant background for people’s everyday lives where people carry out interconnecting relationships; express different beliefs and partake in diverse activities structured by time and space.

Fenster (2005, p. 242) talks about belonging through gendered constructions and everyday life. Gendered interactions are explored within the built city environment, a different context to those interactions and meanings experienced along the natural and built environments of the Swan River. Fenster wrote about gender in relation to formal expressions of belonging built into the different definitions of citizenship or through religious and national attachment to territories. These formal definitions however do not explain forms of belonging that are similar to the Swan River.

From another perspective relating to environmental management, Trigger and Mulcock (2005, p. 1301) examine the contested issues of ‘indigeneity’ and ‘belonging’ in relation to beliefs and practices in urban environmental management of a settler-descendant society. They argue that ‘ideas about which species constitute
weeds or pests and how those species should be managed can be strongly grounded in cultural values and beliefs'. Trigger and Mulcock (2005, p. 1306) include an example from a Perth inner city environment. The perspective put forward emphasises ecological sustainability as incompatible with exotic species. These two perspectives conflict in the urban environment. For example there is tension between 're-naturalising' what might be termed European-style' parks in inner city areas and maintaining introduced flora as part of a valued non-native heritage. Non-native heritage introduced historically from Britain such as 'plane trees will be protected' explained by a Councillor against the conservationists recommendation that these deciduous vegetation needs to be removed to restore these urban environments (2005, p. 1306). People value both environments whether they hold meanings from the historical presence of Indigenous people or those environments that were constructed in a European style. This sense of belonging in relation to vegetation is relevant for understanding how people connect with inner city Perth environments. Similar tensions between ecological sustainability and using exotic species can be applied to understandings of the way the Swan River is managed, and how people construct a sense of belonging to this waterway. For example, in relation to the Swan River foreshores. In Chapter Five I explain how environmentalists carried out ecological restoration on Swan River foreshores replacing European style vegetation with native plants, demonstrating how a sense of belonging to the Swan River is enacted through practice and how emotional responses to vegetation are learned. Trigger and Mulcock's discussion about belonging in relation to types of vegetation planted also relates to work by Milton (2005) on emotion. Trigger and Mulcock tease out the contested issues between people over which types of vegetation is planted and explain how there are emotional connections to particular types of environments.

Milton (2005, p.198) writes about ecological approaches to emotion between an individual human being and their environment. She explains how people are connected emotionally to their environments; how people develop a sense of belonging. Milton (2005, p. 203) explains that emotions which bridge the division between nature and culture are thought of as both biological and cultural (there is no clear line between biology and culture) and consist of both physical feeling and cultural meaning. Emotions enable us to learn from our environment, human or non-human. For example, (p. 204) an emotional process begins with a stimulus (e.g. a snake). There is a bodily response or emotion (tight stomach, quick heartbeat) which then leads to a feeling or perception of emotion (fear) and then there is action (throw stone or run). According to Milton (2005, p. 204) our bodies can learn to respond
differently to specific stimuli, a second point at which learning might play a role is between the bodily response and the perception or subjective feeling of it. Milton suggests that this pattern might not be fixed and that in different cultures people might learn to perceive similar bodily responses differently or that an individual might perceive similar bodily processes differently depending on the circumstances. The third point at which learning plays a role is between the subjective feeling and the action that follows. It is well established that different societies, groups and individuals have different ways of displaying their feelings. Milton (2005, p. 205) explains that learning and emotion affect each other. Emotions shape learning, but emotions themselves are not fixed. What we learn, through our engagement with our environment (social and non-social), shapes our emotions – it affects the way our bodies respond to environmental stimuli, it affects how we perceive those responses and it affects how we display those feelings in action.

An ecological model (Milton 2005, p. 206) of emotion recognises that the essential ecological relationship is between the individual human being and their surroundings for two reasons. First, the individual is the only entity in human society capable of experiencing emotions and having feelings, the only seat of consciousness, and therefore the only entity capable of learning. Second the individual is the only entity sufficiently discrete to have an environment or that which surrounds. Questions about how people come to respond, emotionally, to different things lie at the root of understanding why people act as they do, because there is no action without motivation, and no motivation without emotion. So the key to understanding human action is to understand people’s emotional commitments – what they care most about and why, how they come to care about particular things. Therefore, work by Milton is very useful to understanding how and why people develop a sense of belonging to the Swan River. Emphases such as these were obviously useful to my Swan River analysis, especially with regard to how and why people were socially and emotionally motivated to interact with the Swan River.

Work by Strang (2008) is also useful in understanding how different groups in South Queensland interact with and relate to watery environments. Strang examines the cultural meanings encoded in water to articulate social connections and notions of belonging. The research was relevant to my study because it examines two different approaches to watery environments. Data was collected from a community catchment group in Brisbane and participants from a water festival in Maroochydore. Strang (2008, p. 30) finds that their visions of what constitutes care and their forms of knowledge and discourse differ considerably. The two groups reveal some of the underlying differences in social and environmental knowledges and values which
underpin wider debates on water issues in Australia. The approaches involved (1) a technical model in which humankind and ‘nature’ are considered dualistically, and (2) a more holistic model in which humankind is perceived as being within and integral to ‘nature’.

Strang (2008, p. 30) writes that the former vision dominates the environmental relationships of Western societies, and reflects the abstraction and conceptual compartmentalisation of large industrialised societies. Within this dualistic model, humankind is seen as separate from ‘nature’ and ‘the environment’ is seen as a separate material context to be acted upon. The spiritual and social meanings of water are expressed mainly in abstract terms within the context of religious activities and media. Water is viewed as part of nature with a focus on the scientific and technical protection of ecosystems or as a material resource: an economic commodity is fundamental to processes of production and central to a political economy. This is also an intensely masculine approach, which subsumes a more feminine concern with social relations, and thus expresses gender and power relations. Strang (2008, p. 38) uses this model to explain findings taken from the local catchment management group in Brisbane which present water as the basis for ecological rather than social regeneration. As well, Strang (2008, p. 38) finds that the catchment group has a physical relationship to the creek. There is sensory pleasure in digging holes in the mud and pouring water in them in handling the delicate tree seedlings and scattering sweet smelling mulch around them. People who are often confined to office work environments are given the chance to physically exert themselves as a rewarding task.

The second approach that Strang (2008, p. 39) writes on is a more holistic model of participants at a water festival who are seen to have the opposite approach to the scientific, managerial approach that dominates the catchment group. Instead it focuses on social, spiritual and aesthetic interactions with the local waterways. The Splash Festival aimed to make collective social change, rather than through the managerial application of science. Both groups encourage change in environmental practices. The Splash Festival aims to challenge and subvert what it perceives as an exploitative and materialistic use of land and resources and encourage people to embrace more holistic and sustainable forms of interaction with the environment. The festival challenges the technical model of environmental management that dominates the activities of government agencies and conventional catchment management groups, proposing instead that sustainability will only come through a resanctification of the environment, greater valorisation of its non-human elements, and the re-establishment of community ties and long term affective relationships with
place. The Splash Festival (Strang, 2008, 42-43) includes the active participation of the local indigenous community which has been influential in establishing a set of practices that valorise co-identification between people and aspects of their local environments. Therefore there is the communal production of material culture that celebrates totemic species, and performances in which people are imaginatively transformed into aquatic animals, butterflies and water itself. This co-identification with place and with aspects of the local environment is crucial to the generation of deep affective concern for its well-being. The involvement of indigenous participants has helped the groups concerned to articulate their ideas and develop a poetic language with which to describe connective social and environmental relationships. This affective concern is also evident in work by Milton (2005) in relation to human emotional connection to the environment. Both Strang (2008) and Milton’s (2005) work facilitated my approach to the study groups and the Swan River to explain different emotional relationships to water and forms of belonging.

Different landscapes, whether they are along the Swan River or the coast, provide social contexts in which peoples’ relationships and a sense of belonging are defined and expressed. Within Tasmania, Davison and Chapman (2006, p. 1) examine shifting attitudes toward, and experience of, nature in Australian cities. They comment about the emerging politics of belonging of social movements such as ‘coast care’. Ideas are based on nativeness and biodiversity that extend beyond strictly ‘objective’ interpretations. Davison and Chapman (2006, p. 1) argued that for the group to advance their social aspirations, ‘they need not just to advocate ecological diversity, but to incorporate a self-reflexive interest in a diversity of social values’. This point is relevant to understanding the people’s relationship to Swan River environments because it highlights the diversity of social values held by people from both groups to their environments.

The metropolitan landscape through which the Swan River flows provides a complex setting in which people search for or, perhaps, indirectly inculcate their own sense of belonging. In relation to understanding identity and people and their having a ‘sense of belonging’, Mulcock (2006, p. 92) explores ideas of belonging within a diverse settler-descendent society:

Feelings of belonging and not belonging are a significant part of human experience, especially in times of increased movement within and between populations, where belonging is most likely to be challenged or contested. Mulcock uses Elspeth Probyn (1999, p. 8) to explain, for example, that ‘being ‘outside of belonging’, ‘longing for belonging’ in other words, is a significant stimulus for thinking about what it means to ‘belong’. Mulcock unpacks the concept of ‘belonging’
in order to enhance its usefulness as a theoretical tool for understanding settler-
descendant claims to indigeneity as an expression of attachment to place (Mulcock, 2006, p. 92). Forming a sense of belonging is closely tied to emotional connections to Swan River landscapes. Mulcock (2006, p. 100-101) concludes her discussion on belonging by asserting social researchers should ‘suspend judgement and delve deeply into this area of inquiry’. In particular Mulcock highlights the aspect of settler Australians who ‘attempt to feel their way into the landscape’ – through activities that include gardening, spiritual practice, environmental conservation, innovative business ideas, through recreation, the creative arts, writing and reflection. Mulcock emphasises ‘a different kind of welcome for settler Australians, one that is not focused on ownership of place, but on understanding of what it means, to be truly in and of place, to really ‘belong’.

My research explores some of these abstract processes or ‘placeless’ ways of what it means to belong for instance, through the literature on diverse interactions to Swan River environments (see Chapter Three, History of the Swan River) and the present as found in literature which explores identity and belonging. My own data, in Chapters Four and Five, also provide new sources of information on the ways and extent to which people demonstrate social and emotional belonging to the Swan River.

2.3.3 Bodies, Rhythms and Rivers

A sense of belonging may be interpreted in ways other than those described above. Relevant work by Wessell is useful to understanding how flood affects a waterway and can be used in relation to the Swan River. Within Australia, Wessell (2004) writes about flooding as a form of remembering across time and space. The periodical flooding of the Richmond River through Lismore, New South Wales, overflows across the ground upon which many people make a claim to knowing their place, a claim to local knowledge. Alongside indigenous claims to land, different forms of settler identification with the land have also been pursued self-consciously. According to Wessell (2004, p. 202) it is time-space relations, or the idea of a timescape that is central to this way of knowing, a way of understanding the relations between flooding, memory and identity. The history of Lismore has been spatially structured around the river and living in a floodplain.
landscape over time, they are a product of change across time, they bring about change in time and the memories they evoke are not diluted by time (Wessell, 2004, p. 202).

Wessell (2004, p. 203) takes the approach that it is through cultural processes – imagining, seeing, remembering – that space becomes a culturally defined landscape. A floodplain is a symbolically charged landscape, but it still refers to a particular physical environment, with associated cultural qualities. Through reading the floodplain as a timescape, Wessell brings together the relationships between local place and culture as they are situated in time and space.

A relationship between memories of place and identity is important in the sense of belonging to land and to place. Memories of the land and identity are reflected and reinforced through culturally and temporally specific meanings inscribed on the landscape (Wessell, 2004, p. 203).

Belonging through time encapsulates a range of interactions across natural and built environments that bring together both past, present and future constructs. Through various experiences across time human/environmental relationships emphasise feelings, for example, loyalty to particular places emerges. In Lovell’s (1998, p. 1) introduction to belonging, he defined it as:

Belonging to a particular locality evokes the notion of loyalty to place, a loyalty that may be expressed through oral or written histories, narratives of origin as belonging, the locality of certain objects, myths, religious and ritual performances, or the setting up of shrines such as museums and exhibitions. Yet belonging is also fundamentally defined through a sense of experience.

Rose (2000), writes about Aboriginal people in the Victoria River District of Northern Australia, and explores time in patterns of motion and pause. She explores rhythmic patterns in the domains of nomadology, ecology, dance and cosmology.

One of the many delightful aspects to our multi-dimensional existence is that we occupy space. Our body fills its space and creates ‘particular sensuous spaces’ (Rodaway 1994: 38). We move around and engage with other embodied beings also filling and moving through sensuous space. Encounter and withdrawal mark this motion. The great rhythms of the earth are built on motion and on the intervals or pauses. We are tuned to life before we even come into the world; the heartbeat is part of these patterns. Dance mobilises and extends these possibilities, conjoining action and pause, space and place, time and rhythm, politics and poetics (Rose, 2000, p. 287).

As I will show, the physical motions of bodies may be found through various interactions including walking, jogging and dancing within different Swan River environments. Through the rhythms of everyday life, people’s movements respond to moving to and from work at the beginning and end of working hours. As discussed further in Chapter Two, interconnections with time are embodied locally through Swan River landscapes.
Place making is just one form of human/environmental relationships often related to the process of making a 'sense of belonging', and its artefacts can be visually present through various place-making signage and physical structures. This kind of place-making exists within Swan River environments. Markwell, Stevenson et al. (2004, p. 458), discuss place-making and belonging through heritage walks and interpretation:

Various strategies including interpretive heritage walks, cultural heritage databases using collected oral histories; public artworks; special events; and the adoption of a place-identification theme such as 'heritage suburbs' that is widely used by local businesses, schools, and promotional bodies. Projects of this kind seek to identify and mark places of contemporary and historical significance and to interpret them and their broader connections to the city, its people, past and future.

The use of time within the process of place-making relates to constructs of meaning overlaying each other within human/environment relationships. Different layers of constructed time are present within Swan River environments. Time becomes important when discussing a sense of belonging as Markwell and Stevenson et al. (2004, p. 470) note:

'Place-making' is as much about forgetting as about noticing and remembering. With place-making and heritage projects used increasingly as part of city re-imaging strategies, it is inevitable that many histories will be overlooked in favour of others. These stories are required to sever links with a stereotyped past while resisting fanciful cultural constructions based on nothing more than wishful thinking about an idealised past and present.

Section 2.3.3 reviewed ways that people feel and experience a sense of belonging through, first, understanding impacts of not belonging; then exploring belonging through identity; an implicit sense of presence and experience. Belonging through diverse embodied interactions and emotions relating to time, and movement and memory was also revised. I will now turn my attention to literature focussing on the Swan River.

2.4 THE SWAN RIVER: FICTION AND NON-FICTION

In researching material on the Swan River I canvassed a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Whilst concentrating on those authors with anthropological and sociological backgrounds, I have included a few non-fiction texts that complement descriptive meanings found during my fieldwork. In that regard, the following material presents a social science and humanities mix of relevant Swan River literature.

Burningham (2004), a marine archaeologist whose work has contributed substantially to this thesis, describes a self proclaimed obsession for sailing ships
and boats, including the Dutch sailing ship replica known as the Duyfken often sighted moored in front of the Swan River Brewery. Burningham takes readers on a leisurely sightseeing journey of the Swan River both up and downstream in his small sailing craft named ‘Earnest’. On the eighth of March 2002, the exploration boat trip symbolised the 175th anniversary of Captain James Stirling’s expedition up the Swan River. Burningham provides a narration across many themes as he travels along the Swan River. He discusses a wide range of meanings for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal (or settler) historical associations and contemporary uses of places including a curiosity for wineries, cultural and natural heritage sites, changing natural and built environments, aesthetic views of the Swan River, comments about architectural designs, the worth of bridges, jetties, shipbuilding, ferries, road and rail transport; private and public access to river foreshores; observations of flora and fauna (both native and introduced); various ecological issues and the wide variety of social activities on the water and land.

Burningham also explores sensory and aesthetic representations of the Swan River and the landscape through art history. He refers to the work of Garling, a noted nineteenth century artist who accompanied Governor Stirling on his first Swan River expedition:

Garling was a good watercolourist and provides a reliable record. It is often said that the artists who came to Australia in the early days of colonisation could not paint Australian trees, and that their Australian landscapes look more like English parks. Garling, however, seems to have had no trouble painting convincing eucalypts (Burningham, 2004, p. 308).

Evident in these comments is that the Swan River can be interpreted from a number of perspectives, including via natural and built environments. Travelling along the Swan River, for example, provides uninterrupted spaces for people to contemplate life via river views similar to those pondered by Wessell. Evident in my fieldnotes, participants refer to space and time while recounting personal experiences with the Swan River. Burningham, ponders the ways and the extent to which peoples’ interactions, including his own, have changed over time. He shows how the use of memory can evoke a sense of historical and contemporary associations:

The rivers are relatively unchanging and provide a strong link to our past. As time flows, the [Swan] River flows to the sea. Yet we may follow a river upstream to its source, going against the flow of time. As the river flows to the sea, it simultaneously cuts deeper and deeper into the geological past. The Upper Swan and Canning rivers seem to be cutting back into our historical past. You may follow the rivers back through the origins of the Swan River Colony to find yourself in a time of primal solitude (Burningham, 2004, p. 421).

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4 The Dutch were the first Europeans to sail into Australian waters in 1606, 164 years before the sailor Captain James Cook Mitchell, N. (1999) In Quantum, Vol. 2007 Australian Broadcasting Corporation, pp. Interview with Nick Burningham.

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There are many other references from the literature that link people physically to the Swan River and the Indian Ocean. For example, Seddon, an environmental scientist, summarises that ‘Perth and its people want the [Swan] River as it is – a glorious stretch of water to look at, to lounge about, to fish or to swim in, to sail, motor, row or ski upon’ (Seddon, 1970, p. 2).

Burningham is also interested in showing how busy the Swan River becomes for everyday activities. He describes a conflict between different forms of physical exercise including that of dog owners, walkers and rollers\(^5\) who negotiate the sharing of Canning River foreshores:

> The lower reaches of the Canning are deservedly popular. On a Sunday, particularly following the shores of the first reach from the mouth of the Canning to Bull Creek, a cyclist has to manoeuvre slowly and carefully to avoid getting entangled in dog leads or clobbered by the swinging fists of power walkers. If there are enough of you cycling and properly dressed in Lycra it is probably better to wobble down the middle of the road obstructing the traffic than it is to mix with the walkers (Burningham, 2004, p. 367).

What these authors show is a complex spectrum of Swan River usage over time, a point vital to understanding river/human interactions in particular, and human/environmental relationships.

An aspect of the Swan River that is constantly changing apart from the water itself, is the wind, an ecological issue that is part of the landscape that affects how, when and by whom the Swan River can be used. The wind experienced on the Swan River can assist sailors but it can also be dangerous. For example, Burningham (2004, p. 15) explained how he used wind to assist the movement of his small sailing boat, ‘Ernest’:

> During investigation of the lower reaches of the [Swan] River, near Fremantle where I live, I could return home each evening, but from Perth Water onwards that would not be practical. The winds would not often favour an evening return to Fremantle, where the [Swan] River meets the sea. Most days there is an easterly breeze off the land during the night and the morning and a sea breeze from the south-west [locally known as the Fremantle Doctor] during the afternoon and the first part of the night.

Central to the Swan River are the connections between people and birdlife and their habitats. A range of references to birdlife made by authors has been a constant theme in fiction and non-fiction literature, as well as my own fieldwork notes. These connections provide a variety of interactions between people and the Swan River. Similarly to waterways elsewhere, birds are integral to the life of the Swan River. Seddon (1970, p. 1) for instance notes the centrality of pelicans, and Burningham observed:

> The bird life should not be disturbed of course, but Earnest loves to tear past the Attadale shore where strong south-westerlies funnel over a

\(^5\) Rollers refer to anyone using wheels for example, cyclists, rollerbladers, skateboarders, and people in wheelchairs.

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relatively low saddle of the limestone ridge and blast out from the shore over perfectly smooth water allowing us to scorch along at the greatest possible speed heading towards Point Walter (Burningham, 2004, p. 400).

An emotional connection exists through the observations of birdwatchers. Brearley provides a slightly different ecological view (2005, p. 67). In particular she emphasises the ‘sense of wonder’ felt in relation to the bird and fish life that populate the urban Swan River environments. She observes that natural and built environments provide habitats for birdlife. At Belmont Racecourse, Burningham also expresses his sense of wonder to sightings of spoonbills (see Appendices, Map 8). He records that:

Belmont Racecourse is surrounded by fairly extensive wetlands which provide habitat for a range of birds including spoonbills. It’s a wonderful thing to see such rare and curious looking birds feeding and breeding in undisturbed tranquillity little more than a kilometre from the city centre (Burningham, 2004, p. 308).

Other favourite birds such as pelicans can be observed. At Ascot, Burningham (2004, p. 303) can see pelicans interact within urbanised environments including a housing estate with a pond. A common sight along the Swan River is ‘shags’ or cormorants with their wings spread out drying. Near Garvey Park, Burningham also observes the birdlife sunning themselves in the warm sunlight. Iconic birds such as the Black Swan, which the Swan River was named after, were sighted near Maylands where Burningham sighted:

A pair of black swans bred last year in the wetlands on the western side of the island. It is said to be several decades since black swans last bred on the [Swan] River that was named after them. In places one can see flocks of twenty or more black swans, although usually one sees only one or two at a time (Burningham, 2004, p. 305).

Strong connections between humans and birdlife throughout Swan River environments are also discussed by literary writers, such as Gail Jones. Jones refers to birdlife in her writing and shows how bird sounds act as a marker of time between human sleep and wakefulness and provide a sense of familiarity or a sense of belonging with the Swan River:

The summer weather had begun and the days were long and bright. Alice was woken by loud birds, squabbling and feeding in the bushes and trees near her apartment. Magpies called to each other with sovereign command. Wattle-eaters cackled. There were kookaburras far off, in the stand of tall salmon gums down near the river and the brash distant caw of a flock of black cockatoos. Here at home she could identify the birds (Jones, 2006, p. 192).

Birdwatching is connected with relaxation, sailing and fishing on the Swan River. Birdlife including the black swans are observed along with iconic bird shapes such as shags spreading their wings out to dry. Most importantly noting the role of preservation sites for migratory birdlife for habitation.
Bringing these issues together, it is clear that the Swan River on its own and in conjunction with the landscape and interrelated species evokes a range of interactions and forms of belonging. For example, sensory and aesthetic representations of the Swan River capture a particular visual link with the past. The way time and space are pondered links the past, present and the future. A range of physical interactions allows the Swan River to be used and enjoyed in a variety of ways. The effect of the wind is a constant factor to be considered within any experience of the river whether it assists or desists a person’s interactions. There is a significant presence of birdlife on the Swan River which forms a sense of belonging through sound, sight, emotion and practical issues of maintaining bird habitats.

2.5 SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL BELONGING:

Social and emotional connections were often recorded during fieldwork in relation to Swan River environments. Work by Milton helps to explain these links, for instance a wedding ceremony is a formal bridge that connects people socially and emotionally to Swan River settings. The Swan River provides many romantic and social settings for activities such as weddings and functions. Novelist Brenda Walker describes such moments in the ways a character in a book, ‘Zettler’, thinks about Swan River environments before he and ‘Elizabeth’ are married:

The Swan River flowed below the cathedral, wide and calm, thick at the edges with birds. Swans, of course, with their heavy black plumage. Small-headed waterbirds standing on huge red claws. Zettler, waiting on the slate steps of the church, fixed on a pair of black cockatoos tearing the shoots from an olive tree, and on the distant swans with their guard-dog tempers. The drive was full of tall figures in hot, well-cut wool. He caught the honey smell of beeswax leather polish. Women strolled in the sunshine, shaded by straw hats (Walker, 2005, p. 56).

Memories, love, pregnancy and physical associations are also intertwined and connected to Swan River environments. There are many different contexts in which social and emotional experiences are carried out on the Swan River. Novelist Drewe wrote about one example of a couple and their physical connection with the Swan River:

She was my first steady girlfriend, we'd known each other a year and I loved her. Of course, I said. I thought, eighteen, nineteen, whatever. I was still numbed by the first important thing she'd told me. She was pregnant. It was winter. We were sitting on the grass in the middle of the windy Esplanade, [facing Perth Waters, part of the Swan River] the wide stretch of lawn between the river and the city's business district, and in my daze at her news I found myself stroking the big fake-fur collar on her corduroy coat (Drewe, 2003, p. 241).
A different kind of intimate and pleasant space observed by Burningham is located in a section of the Canning River between the Canning and Mount Henry Bridges (see Appendices, Map 1). He notes a rare combination of vegetation on the Swan where 'white sandy beaches are backed by luxuriant melaleuca and she-oak'. Burningham emphasises human social activity amongst the vegetation when he notes that these pleasant banks were also known as:

"The Shells' and that they were famous for an activity known as nooky [sexual intercourse]...[A caption underneath a photo reads] The Shells a secluded spot with erotic associations for several generations of schoolboys (Burningham, 2004, p. 329).

Play, emotion, intimate personal relations, romantic liaisons, memories of courtship include close physical contact is evident in human social and physical interactions and a sense of belonging to a diverse and sensuous character of Swan River environments.

Going to the zoo\(^6\) is a traditional outing especially between parents and children and the outing begins with crossing the Swan River on the ferry from the Bell Tower at Barrack Square jetties. Human and animal interactions are also associated with positive emotions. Morgan (1987, p. 253) writes 'we were all very excited' and 'going to the zoo gave everyone a lift'. Personal memoirs by indigenous author, Sally Morgan emphasise the life giving qualities of different watery environments. As well as life on the Swan River, swamps are places full of life and meaning connecting people to watery landscapes through wildlife and emotion. Seddon (1970, p. ix) illustrates how his Swan River experiences are linked with memory, intimate relationships and a sense of masculinity. Burningham also associates personal happiness with sailing in his boat Ernest in the Swan River. Of interest too is that one of my informants, artist 'Dannie', described her personal memories of growing up, including her connection with birdlife and fishlife on the Swan River. She said:

I lived on the Swan River and my family had a house there which I go back and visit but now I live in Greenwood where we can afford. I used to go out on a wooden dinghy, go fishing, riding around in a boat, swimming, paddling, walking from Cunningham Street to Point Walter. You can walk the whole way on low tide and see swans, pelicans. It was a childhood made in heaven...Less built up. When winter rains, the [Swan] River would fill right up and cover the road and we loved to see that it would stop traffic! We used to pick up mussels, cobbler (watch the poison spines) There was fish everywhere, very easy to catch, crabbing and prawning; we use to feed people when they were out of work...I have a great attachment to the Swan River, it's part of me, I don't know how I would have lived if I didn't have that (10/11/2004, field notebook no 1).

\(^6\) At Harvey Beach, a popular swimming spot for locals, there was a jetty at the end of Harvest Road until the 1980 when the present water police station was built. During the 1930s the North Fremantle Council provided an annual ferry trip to take school children for a picnic at Perth Zoo and the ferry would pull alongside the jetty (31/0/6, field notebook no 12)
In the genre of a personal memoir, a different childhood experience included playing along the Swan River (Chappell, 2004, p. 33). ‘Janine’, a polish refugee who endured refugee camps in Uzbekistan, Persia, Northern Rhodesia and Tanganika arrived in Western Australia in 1950 when she met Tim Chappell as a young boy. On one occasion the parents leave Tim and his brother Jeremy in the care of Janine for the day. The boys had other plans to play in the Swan River, as the following reveals (quoted in Chappell, 2004, p. 33):

I wandered down the path to the banks of the Swan River. We didn't think of telling anyone where we were going; we were just going to our place on the river to muck around. It took Janine about forty-five minutes to find us. We were playing in the bamboo when we heard her shouting to us from afar. Her voice was high and strained and I sensed we were in trouble. We ran up to meet her while shaking the rough sand off our feet.

‘What for you go in the river?’ she began.

‘Janine, we always play in the river,’ I said.

‘No,’ she said very upset, ‘no you don’t. Little children should never play in river.’

‘Janine,’ I said, dropping the bamboo spear I was carrying and holding my palms out to reason, ‘we’ve always done it.’

‘That is very, very dangerous. Anything can happen. Shark can come and bite you.’

‘There are no sharks here,’ I said quickly.

‘And what if man comes and hurts you? Eh? Or you can fall in a deep hole in water and that will be the end.’...

‘Janine,’ the river here is very shallow. It's only this deep.’ I held up my fingers to show three inches. ‘There are no holes, it's not dangerous, and we can't drown.’

‘Notta you swim in the Caspian Sea and see if you not drown.’

We were silent.

‘In Caspian Sea they drown in this water. Doesn't matter how deep this water was.’ Her eyes distant with emotion while she looked at us...

This passage compares ways that people are emotionally connected to two kinds of water sources. It also emphasises the different cultural meanings and the social and emotional responses people have with such water sources.

As well as nostalgic responses, a sense of social and cultural interactions are present indicating a sense of belonging to the Swan River. Burningham explains how he initiates social conversations with people while exploring the Swan River. He would sometimes comment on the weather as a way of making contact with people that he met along the Swan River banks. For example, Burningham would initiate a conversation with ‘Glorious day’, ‘Yes it is. Better if it was raining though’ (Burningham, 2004, p. 210).

Teasing out diverse cultural interactions along Belmont Reach (see Appendices, Map 8), Burningham also experienced through boating on the Swan...
River conversations with other motorboat users. One of these was with Umar who was from Jakarta and spoke fluent Indonesian (Burningham, 2004, p. 121). A different cultural interaction occurred through fishing in shady places, an ecological combination of natural and built environments. Burningham noted that all the bridges over the Swan River provided shade which in turn attracted both fish and fishers in sunny weather. During one visit to the Middle Swan he saw a Vietnamese couple anchored under the bridge fishing noting they were catching small mullet or bream (Burningham, 2004, p. 140).

The Swan River also provides a forum for existing and new social relationships to develop and or to stay in contact. Boatbuilding activities, for instance, generate socio-cultural spaces for people to continue existing long term relationships. At Maylands boatyard, Burningham meets up again with an old friend, Ray from Ireland whom he knows through previous boat building interactions at the Fremantle Harbour. Ray had built traditional Irish boat designs used as displays in various Irish pubs, clubs and other centres (Burningham, 2004, p. 167).

The social activity of picnicking along various Swan River foreshores and parks is popular with Perth residents. During my fieldwork, picnickers could be seen daily along the Swan River foreshores. Burningham (2004, p. 104) also commented that Matilda Bay is the 'archetypal Swan River family picnic location' (Burningham, 2004, p. 104). Novelist Winton (1991, p. 1,2) writes too about social activities on Swan River foreshores in 'Cloudstreet':

Will you look at us by the river! The whole restless mob of us on spread blankets in the dreamy briny sunshine skylarking and chiacking about for one day, one clear, clean, sweet day in a good world in the midst of our living. Yachts run before an unfelt gust with bag-necked pelicans riding above them, the city their twitching backdrop, all blocks and points of mirror light down to the water's edge. Twenty years, they all say, sprawling and drinking. There's ginger beer, stagger juice and hot flasks of tea. There are pasties, a ham, chicken legs and a basket of oranges, potato salad and dried figs. There are things spilling from jars and bags (Winton, 1991, p. 1, 2).

Upstream near Guildford (see Appendices, map 9), picnic facilities make it possible to picnic at night time. Burningham notes there were powerful floodlights, good benches and tables, soft turf, toilets and a sandy beach between two jetties. At the picnic table he ate ryebread, cheese and tomatoes and drank wine (Burningham, 2004, p. 118). A section in 'Cloudstreet' called 'Moon, Suns, Stars' Winton (1991, p. 422) reveals a range of social and ecological human interactions with the Swan River. In this passage Winton brings out the subtleties of how people relax on the grass under shady trees, the kinds of foods and drinks enjoyed and an indication of class differences and a sense of occasion symbolised by white linen napkins. Images such as these share some resonance with interactions I observed on the Swan River:
On the long grassy [Swan River] bank beneath the peppermint trees and the cavernous roots of the Moreton Bay figs, they lay blankets and white tablecloths which break up in the filtered sunlight and they sprawl in their work clothes and stockings, rollers in, buns half out. Out of the crates come hams, cold chickens, lettuce salad, hardboiled eggs and asparagus, potato salad and shredded carrot, chutney, bread, a jar of anchovies and a vat of pickled onions. Lemonade, Coke, ginger beer, squeezed juices and a hip flask of Chateau Tanunda. A collective groan goes up at the sight of the white linen napkins that Dolly hauls out. A weddin’ present, she says. Could never think of a decent bloody reason to get them dirty (Winton, 1991, p. 422)

Romantic landscapes, socio-cultural and nostalgic relationships between people and the Swan River include a range of interactions. A sense of belonging includes forms of nostalgia, that associated with boat building, fishing, personal Swan River experiences, childhood memories, local knowledge and physical experiences, conversation, a sense of humour, common interests, picnicking and picnic places, sexual nostalgia, embodied romance, eating, drinking and relaxation in natural and built environments, changed land use and social activities, social and class differences, music, games, dancing, laughter and the sounds of water.

As discussed earlier, the study of emotion is essential to understanding human/environmental relationships. For example, Milton (2005, p. 198) states that ‘Emotions are fundamental to human life; they define its quality and motivate action’. This is also evident in the ways in which people relate socially and emotionally to the Swan River. Burningham puts this nicely when he describes how he ‘slips quietly’ into a lovely corner for a piece of solitude:

‘Mrs Herberts’ is a very small park, but well appointed with benches, tables, drinking fountain, public loos, adventure playground and barbecues. The turf is soft and well watered and there is plenty of shade from big old peppermint gums and other eucalypts. It’s a lovely corner of Freshwater Bay to slip quietly into on a bright weekday morning (Burningham, 2004, p. 94).

Different Swan River places allow for different feelings to be experienced. Milton (2005) explains that people respond emotionally to their environments. Watery environments connecting with the Swan River also produce primeval feelings and the ability to absorb all other sounds; quiet places are described by Burningham:

Like all swamps they have a primeval feel, even under the brightest midday sky. The dense, needle-leaved foliage of both the swamp Melaleuca lanceolata and the casuarina (she-oak) produces a soft but insistent susurration even from a light breeze; it seems to absorb all other sounds adding to the eeriness of a swamp even when you are only a few hundred yards from a main road (Burningham, 2004, p. 178).

The ways that people use and enjoy the Swan River on a day to day basis forms a structure on time and place of when and where solitude may be found. Time of day and week is associated with feelings of solitude. For example, ‘early in the morning and at the end of some days the Swan River is cheerful and busy with canoeists and
rowers, but for the rest of a weekday it is a place of solitude' (Burningham, 2004, p. 183).

Both Nyungar and settler-descendant people of Perth share a sense of belonging, although in different ways and to different extents. Of significance here is that Collard (2006, p. 129) explains that the Nyungar, indigenous people of the south-west of Western Australia, believe that the Waugal (also spelt Waakal, Warrgal, Warrgle, Wagyl, Waugyl, Wakyl etc (Burningham, 2004, p. 81)), or Nyungar Rainbow Serpent, created water. Nyungar firmly believe that the Waugal is the giver of life because of its role in maintaining freshwater sources. Belief in the Waugal and its control over the fresh water is as relevant today as it has been for millennia. Social and emotional belonging develop from dreams, visions and beliefs that are imbued with meanings of the Swan River. A vision of the Swan River included beliefs associated with the Waugal social and cultural activities all provide a sense of belonging for people to Swan River environments.

2.6  CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter Two I have brought together broad social and ecological theory, as well as specific literature on rivers and water. I have explained theories of belonging that cover four main themes, including human needs, cultural identification and belonging, bodies, rhythms and rivers. I have also explored the Swan River across two broad themes of social and emotional belonging from interactions with diverse fauna on the Swan River via non-fiction and fiction, and I have used Milton to examine social and emotional belonging to the Swan River. Milton's work frames what seems elusive connections to the Swan River as something more tangible to understanding complex water/human relationships. In Chapter Three the history of the Swan River includes records that focus on a range of social and ecological interactions with the Swan River post 1980.
...today there is a total fire ban, and in any case, wallabies have been largely displaced by domestic dogs and cats which we should probably not eat. So, we shall take along some bread and cheese (plus various salamis and cold meats, pickles, olives, salads, a curry and rice, beer and half a crate of wine) (Bumingham, 2004, p. 142).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

There is a significant amount of literature relating to the Swan River, including its relation to the built environment, in particular the historical buildings of heritage value. Most historical texts focus on the routes of travel by early explorers and pioneers, whereas later texts concentrate on early settlements in the main urban centres of Fremantle, Perth, Guildford and suburbs linking these main towns (See Appendices, Map 1). My research has shown there is a lack of literature on areas between Perth and Guildford, and that many historical texts tend to follow early explorer expeditions upstream from the mouth of the Swan River at the port city of Fremantle. Using historical sources post 1980 that relate to social and ecological connections between people and the Swan River, I have categorised these records into themes relating to my data Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Three sorts historical and contemporary data into the following subsections: Nyungar Perspectives, European Settlements, Swan River Ecology and the Swan River Today.

3.2 Nyungar Perspectives

As well as being obtained from fresh water sources, Aboriginal food supplies were found in the Walyunga National Park and along the upper Swan River. Dale (in Hallam, 1998, p. 4) reported from his expedition upstream along the Swan-Avon River (see Appendices, Map 4) that they come across:

Two pools of fresh water, around which were several traces of natives’, with 'small fish, and a musk duck', to a conspicuous 'peaked hill' [County Peak?], from which they saw to the NW 'a sheet of water...around which were seven native fires.

Swamps are known places used for obtaining food resources. According to Hallam (1991, p. 48) the area of Walyunga is also known for its zamias and swamp products and the Upper Swan River area with side channel swamps alongside the Swan River is known for yams on the alluvium of the river terraces. In 1843, the maps of Phillip
Chauncy record 'warran holes' or yam-digging pits (Hallam, 1991, p. 49). Hallam explained that the women dug roots and used a long pointed stick held in the right hand, which is driven firmly into the ground where it is shaken to loosen the earth which is scooped up and thrown out with the fingers of the left hand. Yam patches are fixed and therefore tied women and their families to particular areas during certain seasons (Hallam, 1991, p. 50). According to Moore (in Hallam, 1991, p. 50) despite European presence, Aboriginal families tried to maintain their pattern of continuing use of the Upper Swan Valley over much of the year (see Appendices, Map 4).

The Swan River bends around the townsite of Guildford bounded on the south by the Helena River. An important resource area is located around the Darkin Swamp, at the headwaters of the Darkin River on the watershed between the Darkin/Helena river system and the Dale/Avon system. These swamps provided Aboriginal families with a great variety of plant resources, particularly reed rhizomes, probably warran, but also zamia nuts, a storable staple once they were detoxified, plus plenty of small invertebrates and vertebrates to provide protein supplements ‘barde’ grubs, gilgies, frogs and turtles (Hallam, 1998, p. 17).

According to Hallam (1992, p. 8) the ridge (also known as Byerbrup) running from the crossing [at Heirisson Isles] up to Mount Eliza:

Was flanked on one side by the Swan River with its abundance of fish in the shallows, and on the other by the chain of freshwater lakes and swamps running from what is now Lake Monger, through lesser swamps where for example Perth Railway station now stands, debouching into the Swan through Claise Brook.

I will refer to these swamps within the Claisebrook catchment or the 'string of pearls' again in Chapter Five. Butler's Swamp, Perry Lakes, Lake Jualbup, Mabel Talbot Park were remembered as swamps, overgrown with trees and patches of swampy ground. However, in the 1920s the water table in the Perth region rose forming 'lakes' (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 185).

According to O'Neill (2001, p. 60), the precinct of Claise Brook was formerly known as Clause Creek, or prior to European occupation, as Mardalup. The Waugal created this area and an important Aboriginal site is the Claisebrook Camp which extended from Claisebrook in the north to Nile Street in the south. Camps were generally tucked into recesses and nooks along the upper banks of the Swan River which was used as a water and food source by Nyungar (also spelt Nyoongar, Noongar and Nungar (Burningham, 2004, p. 107)) people. For example, Tea Tree Lagoon, adjoining Claise Brook provided an important food resource and habitat for

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7 A map of the Bibbulmun Nation and States including further detail of seasons has been prepared by Toogarr (Jerry Morrison) July 1996 and may be viewed at Mount Lyell, Mosman Park (31/01/06, field notebook no 12).
black swans and other water fowl. Another Nyungar campsite was located on the former Haig Park site where Claise Brook is at the foot of Haig Park. Fresh water tortoises were most easily captured when lakes like those at the north of Perth had shrunk to their minimum. According to George Grey (in Hallam, 1991, p. 46):

> Fresh water turtle are cooked by being baked, shell and all, in the hot ashes; when they are done, a single pull removes the bottom shell, and the whole animal remains in the upper one, which serves as a dish. They are generally very fat, and are really delicate and delicious eating.

A story told by Bates (2004, p. 59) associated with Crawley relates to the landing of Lieutenant Irwin on the banks of the Swan River in 1829. In his camp by a little spring called Goordandalup, a wilderness of bush that is now the metropolitan subdivision of Crawley, Yalgunga lay dozing in the heat of mid-afternoon....Round the bend came an open boat, and the phenomenon of jang-ga, spirits of the dead who had come back as white men, borne upon the waters...Yalgunga and his family moved to the swamp at Gooabbilup, which is now known as Lake Monger.

According to Hallam (1992, p. 8) on the southern flank of the ridge where Perth stands, Yangan (wife though which Yellowgonga probably held his usage rights around Perth) dug potatoes on Mr Shenton's land, where the University of Western Australia is now located.

As well, Hallam (1991, p. 38) claims that Fanny Balbuk gathered jilgies and vegetable food with the women in the swamp where Perth railway station now stands. Heirisson Island, along the northern ridge, is known for subsistence resources of the line of lakes and swamps running east from Lake Monger through the low land north of the present railway to drain into the Swan along Claise Brook; and along its southern flank lay the rich fishing grounds in the shallows fringing Perth Water (Hallam, 1991, p. 38).

One particular place along the Swan River known as Success Hill embodies Aboriginal significance (see Appendices, Map 9). This reserve is the Aboriginal camping/mythological/ritual site that existed in pre-European times. Success Hill is a significant Swan River site because the Waugal is believed to have come from the freshwater spring overlooking the Swan River at the eastern edge of Success Hill. This activity caused the spring to flow and his continued presence guarantees this flow (O'Connor et al., 1989, p. 23).

Apart from water supplies, oral historical records show that wilgie (ochre) was quarried 'from a hole in the bank under a big red gum tree' near the spring (O'Connor et al., 1989, p. 23). Previously, sacred stones were stored at Success Hill, but were moved to the Mundaring area when European settlement of Bassendean and Guildford developed. These stones had gendered meanings. The presence of these
sacred stones meant that the area above and west of the spring was taboo to women. A corroboree ground was also located in this area. However due to extensive scrub clearing and landscaping, the exact location of the ground cannot be identified (O'Connor et al., 1989, p. 23).

Freshwater Bay (referred to in Appendices, Map 5) is imbued with many meanings. In particular, one Aboriginal story explains that there is a shaped rock that had once been a pregnant woman whose people had angered and been eaten by the Waugal. This huge mythical serpent was said to live underneath Karbomonup, the high hill (Butlers Hump) rising above the western shores of Freshwater Bay. The Waugal emerged from this place and crawled its way to the sea creating the Swan River (In Catomore, 1986, p. 1). There are important Aboriginal camping, hunting and ceremonial places along the Swan River with Aboriginal names for bays, headlands, foreshore springs and country adjoining the Swan River between Boorlo (Perth) and Walyaluop (Fremantle).

Aborigines knew the attractive site of Freshwater Bay as a campsite of plentiful spring water, abundant fishing and a wide range of birds including duck, teal and pelicans (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 4). Springs on the northern and western sides of Freshwater Bay would have been camp sites for Aboriginal groups engaged in harvesting crabs and swans and spearing tailer and herring in the Swan River shallows in summer and autumn (Catomore in Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 11).

There were permanent quarters at Butler's Swamp and two or three temporary camps of remaining Aborigines in the Claremont neighbourhood (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p.75). About twenty Nyungars were permanently camped at the south end of Butler's Swamp. However, their tenure was never secure and eventually in 1912 their camp was shifted 'because of a fly nuisance' (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 75).

Yams were very important to Aboriginal subsistence and settlement patterns because they occurred in concentrated localised patches, mainly on rich alluvial soils. European settlers used yams as an indicator of good arable land with devastating consequences for Aboriginal people (Hallam, 1991, p. 48). According to Hallam (1992, p. 8) yams had:

Grown on the alluvium of the ridge as they did on similar alluvium higher up the Swan and probably also the Helena and Caning alluvium and were now inaccessible on the 'grants' Europeans had made to themselves.

According to George Grey (in Hallam, 1991, p. 46)

Native women with their long sticks, and their long thin arms, which they plunge up to the shoulder in the slime, manage to drag them [frogs, and
freshwater shellfish] out, but in summer a whole troop of native women may be seen paddling about in a swamp, slapping themselves to kill the mosquitoes and sandflies, and every now and then plunging their arms down into the mud and dragging forth their prey.

Hallam explains that all these resources would be available in the swamps and lakes around the earlier British settlement on the Swan – those on the northern side of the Perth ridge, and others like Lake Monger, Herdsman's Lake, Shenton Park Lake or Butlers swamp (Lake Claremont). Wetlands offer reliable resources, plant foods and carbohydrate staples such as reed rhizomes. For example James Backhouse wrote in 1836 that some lagoons at the back of the town were filled with Cats-tail Reed, Typha latifolia, the roots of which is eaten by the natives (Hallam, 1991, p. 47).

In Moore’s vocabulary (1884, p. 81 in Hallam, 1998, p. 16) Yanjidi is an edible root of a species of flag Typha angustifolia growing along freshwater streams and the banks of pools. It consists of many tender filaments, with layers of a farinaceous or floury substance. The aborigines dig the roots up; clean them, roast them, and then pound them into a mass, which, when kneaded and made into a cake, tastes like flour not separated from the bran. This root is in season in April and May, when the broad leaves will have been burned by the summer fires.

As well as being a prominent meeting place, hunting rituals and festivals also occurred where the Pioneer Women's Water Fountain stands today as a feature of Kings Park. According to Catimore (1986, p. 1) at Aboriginal initiation times kangaroos were driven over the high cliff at Gargatup or Mt Eliza for spearing by hunters waiting below8. Water holes and the Swan River were used for trapping kangaroos9.

According to Hallam (1991, p. 44) a kangaroo drive occurred in a valley leading down to a steep drop over the Kings Park cliff. This must have taken place in the hollow where the Pioneer women's fountain is now placed, leading down to a sheer drop to the old Swan Brewery on the site of the 1830s.

Women and children would take part in these drives provided sufficient cover is available and after a successful drive, much feasting took place. Large gatherings of people were necessary for such drives and for ceremonial occasions (Hallam, 1991, p. 45). Bates (1985, p. 246) says that Aboriginal people from Perth and Guildford

8 Bates, D. (1985) *The Native Tribes of Western Australia*, National Library of Australia, Canberra. explains in more detail three general methods of hunting kangaroo were used. These included a kangaroo battue (drive); stalking, or running down the animal; and digging pits near its watering places or on tracks leading to favourite feeding grounds.

9 Aboriginal people of the southwest or the 'river people' as Bates (1985) in *The Native Tribes of Western Australia*, National Library of Australia, Canberra) records caught kangaroos using the banks of the river, and many traps would be set at the junction of streams. At the usual crossing place of the animals hunters placed a row of stakes in the ground, with their pointed ends upwards, and the ends being smeared with a thin coating of blackboy/grassstree or balga [Xanthorrhoea] resin. The sharpened ends were laid at an angle of about 50 degrees. On the opposite side of the river another row of stakes were erected. When the kangaroos were caught on the stakes, hunters rushed out and speared them. Communication signals used by older men when hunting kangaroo are described by Bates Ibid.. When a male kangaroo is sighted, the person motions their hands and arms in imitation of the forearms of the animal, and scratching ribs. When a female kangaroo is sighted, the person leans back and thrusts out and scratches the breast.
used water sources for trapping animals\textsuperscript{10}. Social etiquette for eating meat is associated with country and family relations\textsuperscript{11}.

According to Bates (1985, p. 253) Aboriginal people swam in estuaries and rivers, but the mamman waddarn or father sea was always too angry for them to venture into it, and they never troubled about the islands beyond swimming distance. After the islands became disconnected with the mainland, no Aboriginal person has swum to them. Based on a tradition both in the Swan and Murray districts that an Aboriginal person once swam out to Rottnest Island and returned saying that 'the place was full of sharks'. Since then no other Aboriginal person followed his example. Rottnest Island was colonised in 1831. However, this settlement did not thrive, and in 1858 the island became an aboriginal penal settlement (Bates, 2004, p. 111). Ironically, the island is now a favourite tourist destination for thousands.

### 3.3 European Settlements

There are different perceptions of 'beautiful' landscapes along the Swan River. Historical sources describing the Walyunga section include an account by Stirling. At this place, Stirling wrote on 13 March 1827:

> The richness of the soil, the bright foliage of the shrubs, the majesty of the surrounding trees, the abrupt, red-coloured banks of the [Swan] River occasionally seen, the view of the blue summits of the mountains from which we were not far distant, made the scenery round this spot as beautiful as anything of the kind I had ever witnessed (Heritage Council of Western Australia, 1988, p. 25).

Along the Upper Swan River flora and fauna generate a variety of landscapes that people use and enjoy in many ways, including for weddings. For example, the Arum Lily Farm or the Richard Edwards House 1847 is one place of interest (see Appendices, map 9). There are different senses of beauty experienced in diverse

\textsuperscript{10} Aboriginal people dug a hole in the track along which emus and kangaroos went to for water. They covered the hole with brushwood and built a fence round the water-hole, leaving a small opening for the animal or bird to pass through. On the outside of the fence at the other end the hole was made and the animal or bird, jumping the fence, fell into the pit. People did not drink water from the water-hole before the animals had come to drink. According to Ibn, emus were usually speared in the Southwest and only three men at most would join in an emu hunt, permissible only on thick scrubby country.

\textsuperscript{11} Bates (1985) describes the social norms relating to eating kangaroo within the south west of Western Australia. For example, when a young hunter has killed a kangaroo on his people's ground, he brings it to his father's camp for the latter to distribute. The father then portions out the meat according to invariable usage, keeping a certain prescribed part for himself and his family and so sending the young hunter some part of the meat. However, different norms apply when the hunter is visiting his wife's people's ground. When a young man has permission to hunt over his father-in-law's territory, if he brings down a kangaroo, the whole of the animal goes to the wife's people. In the South west, young bandicoots, opossums, eaglehawks, etc., are generally given to the parents-in-law of the hunter. The best portion of the food is always given to them if they are in the vicinity. The food is never handed to relations-in-law; it is generally placed on a clean portion of ground near their camp. A man may give food from his hand to his own parents and to his father's own brothers and sometimes to his mother's own brothers, but in all other cases the food is placed on the ground for the recipients to pick up. The fear of magic from the body of the giver to the receiver, or vice versa, is the reason for this law.
Swan River environments. According to Bates (2004, p. 55) when referring to the view from King's Park to Perth provided a:

Panorama of that young and lovely city, from the natural parkland on the crest of Mt Eliza that is its crowning glory for all time, without a vision of the past, the dim and timeless past when a sylvan people wandered its woods untrammelled, with no care or thought for yesterday or tomorrow, or of a world other than their own. Scarcely a hundred years have passed since that symmetry of streets and suburbs was nothing but a pathless bushland, a tangle of trees and scrub and swamp with the broad blue ribbon of river running through it, widening from a thread of silver at the foot of the ranges to the estuary marshes and the sea.

Gargatup, Gargarup, Ga-ra-katta or Barradh (Vinnicombe, 1989, p. 36) now known as the top of Mount Eliza and the public space of Kings Park provides places and lookouts to experience panoramic views of the city skyline and the Swan and Canning Rivers. In 1801, French explorers from the ship “Naturaliste” camped near a steep slope on the [north] side of the Swan River, and the next morning they climbed the hill (Mt Eliza) and appreciated the beautiful view over the Swan River (Catimore, 1986, p. 1).

Dutch explorer Vlamingh and his party arrived at the Swan River mouth in 1697. They rowed and sailed up the Swan River. However, they were obstructed by the rocky bar at the Swan River mouth (Catimore, 1986, p. 1). In the early years of the colony, this part of the Swan was shallow and obstructed at the mouth by a rocky bar which was covered at high tide by only 1.5m of water (Catimore, 1986, p. 1). Doyle (in Brown, 1996, p. 18) believed that a navigation channel within the Swan River would be impossible without constant and costly dredging. Unable to navigate the Swan River, large sea-going ships landed passengers and goods at an ocean jetty south of Arthur Head. They were transferred across land to a jetty on the Swan for passage upstream (Catimore, 1986, p. 14).

A freshwater spring also runs at Success Hill, near Guildford, which Captain James Stirling12 was ‘delighted to find in 1829’ (Grace, 1992, p. 2). However, I found another source that claims Stirling discovered the spring at an earlier date. Near Guildford is Success Spring named by Stirling during his exploratory trip upstream in 1827 to prepare a report on the suitability of the Swan River district for settlement (Carden, 1991, p. 2). Opposite Success Hill, a flood plain was surveyed by Sutherland as a possible town market with provision for cattle, sheep, poultry and pigs. However, it was used instead as a fish market where fisher people and boat operators traded fish and other produce (Heritage Council of Western Australia, 1988, p. 27).

12 The original home where Stirling lived is known as Woodbridge and it is where the Governor Stirling High School assembly Room now stands Heritage Council of Western Australia (1988) Heritage Council of Western Australia, Perth.
Claise Brook enters the Swan River a short distance downstream on the northern side of the Swan River from the Goongoonup Bridge. According to Burningham (2004, p. 152) it was at Claisebrook that Stirling first encountered Nyungar people in 1827. Claisebrook Cove, the mouth of the tributary brook was named after Surgeon F. R. Clause who had sailed with Stirling on HMS Success when he first visited Western Australia and also with Fremantle on HMS Challenger when he first arrived. Clause pronounced his name Claise.

On the 16th March, 1827 Stirling stopped at Point Heathcote when returning from an exploration trip upstream. Later on he wrote:

There I had discovered from the top of a high hill that the branch of the river that the French had named Entrée Moreau and called an ‘arm of the sea’ extended for seven or eight miles to the S.S.E. I determined therefore, to ascertain this nature, and I despatched Mr. Belches in the gig to explore it: this he accordingly did, and on his return two days afterwards I learnt that after tracing it for 20 miles, he found it to be a fresh water river, similar in every respect to the one we had just descended (Carden, 1991, p. 2).

According to Carden (1991, p. 2) the first recorded mention of Canning River was not until 1828. Reports by Botanist Fraser and Captain Stirling leave the river nameless (Carden, 1991, p. 3). Fraser describes the country from Point Walter to Moreau, the mouth of the Canning River as diversified with hills of gentle elevation and with narrow valleys, magnificently clothed with trees of the richest green.

The names of Cannington, Canning Highway, Canning Vale and Canning Shire Council all derive from the naming of the Canning River (Carden, 1991, p. 3), indicating the river’s value at settlement.

Captain Fremantle stopped at Point Heathcote where he made contact with a group of Aboriginal people. At this site Fremantle gave his hat to an Aboriginal man and other gifts were exchanged. Amicable relations continued throughout the following days (Burningham, 2004, p. 155). However, relations then deteriorated. One explanation put forward by Captain Fremantle in a visit during 1832 is:

We take possession of their country, occupy the most fertile parts, where they are in the habit of resorting for nourishment, destroy their fishing and kangaroo, and almost drive them to starvation, and they naturally consider themselves entitled to our sheep and stock whenever they can get hold of them (Burningham, 2004, p. 156).

The Fremantle Literary Institute was viewed as being the jewel in the crown of Fremantle life. In 1901, a committee installed reading rooms, debating rooms and smoke rooms. It was proposed that the institute would be a venue for university extension lectures, and the library was enlarged to house 4000 books. In 1903, an Amusement and Recreation Committee organised chess and draughts competitions,

13 In 1828 the name “Canning River” was also used to locate a 250 000 acre grant to Thomas Peel.
14 Vegetation includes the genus Banksia, consisting of three species B. Grandis; B. Menziesii and B. Attenuata.
concerts, balls, card parties and moonlight river trips on its programmes, and it installed a billiard table (Brown, 1996, p. 138).

In 1898, William Moore purchased the Osborne Hotel, a structure set in the grounds that extended from the present Stirling Highway to the Swan River shore and included an artesian bore and water works (Brown, 1996, p. 69). Upon visiting this place (16/11/05, field note book no 11) I found a plaque that read:

This site was Karbomunup, a place of special significance to Aborigines. Artefacts have been found here. It was from this point, in the late 1890's that the Osborne steps gave access to the Osborne Hotel.

The construction of sewerage services provided employment for migrants. Records from 1935 show disputes by locals that the Claremont Council was bringing in outsiders to work on their sewerage projects instead of hiring locals (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 170). Although Claremont was not a heavily populated suburb, it was considered to have comparatively better developed services to other suburbs. Water, electricity and gas were laid on. A pan system of sanitation remained. However, most houses had established their own septic tank systems. In 1936, deep sewerage was extended and an allowance was provided to householders who had septic systems already installed. They did not have to bear the expense of connecting with the main until after the lapse of two or three years (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 189). Further detail relating to sewerage structures and the Swan River are relayed in Chapter Five as part of the environmental history walking tour.

3.4 Contextualising the Swan River Ecology

Aboriginal people, early explorers and settler-descendents valued the abundant birdlife on the Swan River, which has become an important part of the social and ecological life of this waterway. According to Bates, when Aboriginal people sighted a duck their signal was a hand and arm bent over head, but lower down (Bates, 1985, p. 247). According to Vinnicombe (1989, p. 12) a special ritual associated with a harbinger in the form of a crow had to be performed before approaching the Waugal dreaming track area. Crows are regarded as 'keepers of the country' and symbolically represent the coastal Nyungar as opposed to the inland Nyungar whose symbol is the White Cockatoo. When speaking about white cockatoos, indigenous custodian Ken Coibung (Bloor 1987, p. 6,9 in Vinnicombe, 1989, p. 12) explained that they:

Got their sites up towards the top end of the Swan and the Crows have got all theirs down this end, and that's why you've got to ask the crows'
permission to come. They've got to hear you and if they hear you, then you're right! If you couldn't find them here, you couldn't do anything.

Meeting places and the time of festivals were determined by the breeding season of Black Swans. At Black Swan breeding time, both at Gingin and all along the beela or Swan River provided another intertribal festival (Bates, 2004, p. 58).

The French explorers journeyed to a point above the present day Guildford. On return they experienced an exhausting trip downstream, their supplies ran short and water birds had to be shot for food (Catomore, 1986, p. 2). The French explorers led by M. Heirisson from the French ship the Naturaliste spent the night below a high bank on the right shore opposite the entrance of the 'Moreau' (Canning), which is below the Mount Eliza cliff, and observed 'great numbers of pelicans'. Heirisson's party first saw black swans at Heirisson Isles (Hallam, 1992, p. 7). In particular, black swans were noticed by early explorers, including Vlamingh and his party.

According to Hallam (1992, p. 7) when explorer Vlamingh was travelling upstream the boat parties had seen “many swans,” geese and cormorants, as well as ‘an abundance of fish floundering in the water’ probably in the shallows at the foot of Mount Eliza. On returning to the “Geelvinck”, Vlamingh ordered his men to anchor off the mouth of the Swan River, in which they were able to row over the bar and proceed up the river. After rounding a bend, they were amazed to see a flock of black swans at rest on the water. In Europe black swans are unknown, unlike white swans, and so to prove that black swans existed on the Swan River Vlamingh captured three to take with him to Batavia; unfortunately, they died on arrival at Java. However, Vlamingh was so delighted by the spectacle of black swans on the western shore of Freshwater Bay that he named the Swan River after the black swan (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 4) and (Catomore, 1986, p. 2)]. Stirling and his party ‘marvelled at the colour and noise of hundreds of black swans rising from the Swan River before their boats and the crew feasted on roasted swan daily’ (Catomore, 1986, p. 2). In 1986, Catomore recorded that the number of black swans on the Swan River has changed and now black swans are an uncommon sight, where once they could be seen on the water by the hundreds (1986, p. 3). Even though the numbers of black swans have decreased in comparison to original numbers sighted by early explorers, there are various Swan River places that remain popular habitats for black swans (Seeman, 2005).

At Freshwater Bay (see Appendices, Map 5) the surrounding bush has abundant Banksia and Marri trees from which nectar laden flowers can be picked in autumn for flavouring water at festive group gatherings. The bush also supported
snakes, goannas, bush turkey, and birds of various kinds, all of which were harvested as a source of protein including eggs (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 11).

The waters of the Swan estuary provide an important habitat for more than one hundred species of fish, as well as crabs, prawns and other marine life. In the 1980s more than one hundred tonnes of fish were caught annually by professional fisherman for food and bait (Catimore, 1986, p. 21). The sea coasts, estuaries and rivers were full of fish, and the inlanders and hill-folk were always welcome visitors in the spawning and crabbing seasons....Mountain creeks were alive with 'yabbies' and 'jilgies', a diminutive fresh water crayfish (Bates, 2004, p. 57).

Mosquitoes had social meanings for Aboriginal people and settlers. Mosquitos are often referred to as a 'nuisance' (Environment Protection Authority, 2004, p. 116). In 1994, another report (Klemm et al., 1994, p. v) aimed:

To establish a program for the control of health threatening mosquitoes that is cost-efficient, effective by health standards and sustainable, whilst maintaining the integrity of wetland ecosystems*

Mosquitoes breed in salt marshes adjacent to rivers and estuaries and in those salt marshes that retain water for longer than one to two weeks will produce significant numbers of mosquitoes. Areas disturbed by the activities of humans or livestock are likely to contain breeding areas like pot holes and wheel ruts and these kinds of disturbances vastly increase the numbers of mosquitoes breeding (Klemm et al., 1994, p. 9).

Submerged off Point Waylen there is a raised part of a fossil shell bed which extends beneath Melville and [Booneenboro (Vinnicombe, 1989, p. 36)] now known as Perth waters. This shell bed was formed less than 10 000 years ago (Catimore, 1986, p. 21).

Along the eastern side of Freshwater Bay there is a relatively unspoilt cliff face north of the boat shed at Peppermint Grove. The dense vegetation of Rottnest cypress, acacia, peppermint, tuart and other species may be found here. There is also an exposed marine shell bed of fossil molluscs in the cliff face. The shell deposit reaches to 6m above the existing low water mark of the Swan River. It was laid down about 200 000 years ago when ocean levels rose from glaciers and ice sheets melting in other parts of the world (Catimore, 1986, p. 9).

Downstream from Point Roe there are layers of fossil marine shells embedded in the limestone river banks up to 6m in places above the existing water line. It is believed that around 130 000 years ago, a rising sea level intruded inland to form a marine gulf which included this part of the present Swan River estuary (Catimore, 1986, p. 12).
Frogs known by Nyungars as goolyarr, kooyarr or kwiyar are found in a place at Mount Eliza (next to Goonininup or Swan Brewery) named after them also known as Kooyamulyup, a name that derived from the many frogs found at this place (Vinnicombe, 1989, p. 14).

According to Clarke (1994), flooding of Swan River banks was a regular occurrence, the worst in memory being that of 1862. Fortunately at that time, convicts under the charge of Lt. Col. John Bruce (p.1) were on hand to repair massive damage through the settled area of the State. Further floods in 1872, 1915, 1917 and 1926 called for permanent control measures to safeguard real estate along Swan River banks. The last flood of 1926 was almost as severe as those in 1862. Occupied homes along the Nedlands foreshores faced the Swan River at their doors. Keith Carnaby (In Clarke, 1994) remarked 'We were lulled to sleep with harmony from the soprano mosquitoes and the deep bass of the bullfrogs' (Clarke, 1994, p. 83).

Severe floods appear to be a thing of the past, and frogs rarely disturb or contribute harmony to sleepers close to the shoreline. As one resident recalled, ‘I saw them one day like a little pool of green and gold moving around the tap down on the foreshore’ (quoted in Clarke, 1994, p. 92). A circle of about six feet in diameter moving in and out like waves on the beach. No species of frog is known to have become extinct in Western Australia since European settlement. However, the species of beetle sand birds photographed and chronicled by Keith and Ivan Carnaby, that bear their names, are gazetted as threatened or in need of special protection (Clarke, 1994, p. 92).

3.5 The Swan River Today

Today, the Swan River is a main artery carrying waters east to west, through a bulging estuary, protective bays and a dredged harbour into the Indian Ocean. The Swan River enters the Indian Ocean and (from 1829) Fremantle became the Swan River's maritime port and expanded to meet new needs along with the development of Western Australia (Catimore, 1986, p. 3).

A significant form of interaction or ecological bridge exists between humans, birdlife and the Swan River. Bird watching connects people emotionally not just to birds but also to experiencing various Swan River environments. As Milton (2005, p. 204) explains; the human emotions experienced first physically and then through feelings connect people to their environments. Various bird habitats continue to exist
along the Swan River. Upstream at Sandy Beach Reserve in Bassendean there is a
habitat for birds including the Sacred Kingfishers, Striated Pardalotes, Tree Martins,
Port Lincoln Ringnecks, Black-shouldered Kites, White-faced Herons, Laughing
Kookaburras and Galahs nesting in Flooded Gums. Yellow-rumped Thornbills live in
Marri Trees. Ascot joins Claughton Reserve, in the suburb of Bayswater via the
Redcliffe Bridge which crosses the Swan River carrying the Tonkin Highway. The
official emblem of the City of Bayswater is an Olive Tree. The Bayswater Bird
Sanctuary encompasses an inlet that meets the Swan River. The Sanctuary,
recognised by the Royal Australian Ornithological Union was set aside in 1976 as a
haven for waterbirds away from the disruptions on the Swan River by speedboats
and water skiing and is home to some 74 species of birds (Western Australia
Heritage Committee, 1988, p. 5). Prior to foreshore settlement at Sandy Beach,
trees including fine Swamp Sheoaks and Lake Club Rushes most likely grew in this
place (Western Australia Heritage Committee, 1988, p. 6).

At Point Currie, Pelican Point or Crawley, there are tidal flats and a small lake
set aside as a bird sanctuary (see Appendices, Map 7). Together with Alfred Cove
and the South Perth foreshore, Pelican Point is an important habitat for almost 30
species of wading birds which annually migrate to the Swan River from breeding
grounds in the northern Hemisphere. The Duke of Edinburgh, a keen naturalist,
watched the birds from the Pelican Point lookout on a Royal Visit on 27 March 1963
(Catomore, 1986, p. 6).

Comparatively shallow water extends between the Canning mouth and the
Narrows producing tidal flats along the South Perth foreshore on Melville Water.
These flats like those at Alfred Cove and Pelican Point have the food required by
water birds and the many species of transequatorial migratory waders which visit the
Swan River each summer (Catomore, 1986, p. 23). Melville’s foreshore at Alfred
Cove has tidal flats and salt marshes which provide an outstanding bird habitat.
More than 120 different species of birds have been sighted here including
transequatorial migrators such as the red necked stint (Catomore, 1986, p. 21).
Ancient links exist between the Swan River, Rottnest Island and Carnac Islands
include animal life. For thousands of years the island’s salt marshes have provided a
habitat for the same migratory wading birds which visit the Swan River from Siberia
each year. An early whaling station site, Carnac Island is now a sea bird habitat and
its rocky ocean shores still shelter seals (Catomore, 1986, p. 16).

In the ethnographic present day, the Swan River waters contain both fresh
and salt water species of fish life. According to Allen and Midgley et. al. (2002, p. 1)
Australian freshwater fishes may not be as readily recognisable as the more heralded
kookaburras, kangaroos and koalas, however they are just as unique. Some reasons suggested for this unfamiliarity include that 'most Australians have had little or no interaction with our native freshwater fishes'. Although they have interested research scientists over the past few decades, a greater number of scientists have focused their attention on and have more knowledge and direct experience of introduced species such as trout, carp, perch and the myriad of exotic fish available in the aquarium trade. Adding to the mystery surrounding native fishes is also partly to do with the stringent regulations imposed on the collection of animals from the 'wild' and including the characteristics of the fauna itself and the environment it inhabits. A broader issue highlighted by Allen (1985, p. 2207) is the attention to fish studies which have focused on the Great Barrier Reef on the eastern coastline with the main centre of ichthyological research being at the Australian Museum in Sydney The fishes of Western Australia however have been largely ignored.

An environmental scientific investigation (Dibden et al., 2000, p. 6) into maintaining black bream stocks found that captive-bred black bream fish grown to about 15cm in the hatchery, and then introduced into the wild, can contribute to recreational fishing. Black Bream inhabits Southern Australia from Shark Bay, Western Australia eastward to Mallacoota, Victoria, and is found mainly in brackish waters of coastal rivers and lakes, occasionally penetrating fresh water (Allen et al., 2002, p. 344).

During Burningham's (2004, p. 157) Swan River expedition he noted how he 'skirted the remnant mud bank where fishermen sometimes go to dig for worms'. Burningham compares historical and contemporary choices of food sources and activities along the Swan River. He explained that:

Captain Stirling's party had to land each afternoon in time to set up camp, shoot local fauna, and make the fires to cook their dinner. But we shall not be doing that: today there is a total fire ban, and in any case, wallabies have been largely displaced by domestic dogs and cats which we should probably not eat. So, we shall take along some bread and cheese (plus various salamis and cold meats, pickles, olives, salads, a curry and rice, beer and half a crate of wine) (Burningham, 2004, p. 142).

On the southern side of Melville Water the river branches off into the 'less regarded, almost secret river', the Canning River (Burningham, 2004, p. 14). The Canning River and the waterways east of the Causeway seems to have had less attention paid to them in the literature as noted by Seddon (Seddon, 1991, p. 7).

Development of East Perth during the 1990s or 'urban renewal' period included some negotiations between Nyungar people and developers which resulted

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in the establishment of various forms of recognition of the original inhabitants. For example, on the north bank of the constructed Claise Brook Cove, the place was named Mardalup Park. A gravel path was made, known in Nyungar as the Ngango Batta’s Mooditcher Path, along with twelve granite stones representing the now covered lakes between Claise Brook and Lake Monger built over by Perth city and adjoining suburbs. Burningham (2004, p. 157) visited Claise Cove as represented on his road map as ‘Ngango Battas Mooditcher Path’ in Victoria Gardens, (a park in East Perth). However, unlike the road map, the path is signed as the ‘Ilia Kuri Sacred Path’. Burningham has found that ‘Ngango Batta’ is the Nyungar term meaning ‘sun beam’ (Burningham, 2004, p. 159).

The Janet Holmes a Court’s Art Gallery houses both Aboriginal and European artworks. Other public art is represented by a sacred dreaming path known as Ilia Kuri which symbolizes a journey of initiates through the Claisebrook valley along with an Aboriginal mosaic that represents a story of an Aboriginal dreaming myth. Built into the bank of Victoria Park, East Perth overlooking Claise Cove there is a large mural painted inside a cement shelter that expresses both Aboriginal and European meanings from settler history (O'Neill, 2001, p. 61).

3.6 Swan River Trust

Today many people cooperate and work towards improving the health and protection of Swan River environments directly and indirectly. Some of these organizations include Swan River Trust, Swan Catchment Centre, Water Corporation, Department of Environment, private businesses, catchment group representatives, Conservation and Land Management, town planners, media, councils, the port authority and yacht clubs.

Government reports from the Swan River Trust (1994-2004) are concerned with the management of the health of the Swan River in relation to the physical, biological and social environment and the development of these areas. Information from annual reports focuses on the physical and biological environments in great detail, including many different types of tables and maps that represent different layers of knowledge and understandings of the Swan River system. The social and cultural information about people living within the Swan Coastal Plain and how they relate to water remains vague, however. At best, the reports include references to ‘community involvement’ and ‘participation’ through various recreational activities and/or organised Swan River management strategies. The inhabitants of the Swan
River Coastal Plain are usually categorised simply as the ‘community’ and consequently all interactions and responses with the ‘community’ are viewed and treated as the representation of one group. Other than the ‘community’, some information and references are made in relation to the differing cultural heritage and histories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Natcher and Hickey (2002:350) comment on the problems of homogenization:

> Advocates of community-based resource management often depict indigenous communities as homogeneous sites of social consensus. While proving successful at advancing local involvement in the management and decision-making process, these idealized images fail to represent the plurality of values and personal interests nestled within indigenous communities.

Attention is drawn to peoples activities in relation to the Swan, but only when problems arise within the ‘community’ including noise pollution, overcrowding, overfishing, littering, destruction of cultural heritage, water quality, and the pollution and degradation of the environment. The complex meanings held by many groups within the ‘community’ and their interactions with water along with their values, beliefs and expectations about the ways that the Swan River system is cared for remain unexplained. One of the key points stated by Miller (2004) in an Australian Broadcasting Commission Television program ‘Stateline’ interview (broadcast: 16/4/4) emphasised the ‘requirement for expectations of water management to be defined’.

Part of the Swan Canning Clean Up (SCCP) program included weekly boat trips whereby employees explored, observed, measured and took water samples for testing water quality. For example, one of the changes observed by ‘Danny’ a participant in the program, was the single green line of trees growing along the edges of sections of the Swan River. Some trees had fallen into the water completely; others were growing horizontally reminding people that they were the last existing memories of what was once a densely vegetated Swan River foreshore (07/09/05, field notebook no 8).

Danny (04/11/2004, field notebook no 1), drives the boat on Swan River sampling trips and helps to clean up the river rubbish. Danny observed that during the past five years there have been behaviour changes within the community regarding rubbish. Danny noted that there used to be lots of rubbish, but now there was very little rubbish dumped in the Swan River. However, he considered that people who live along the Swan River do not appreciate what they have. For example, he expressed that although there was lots of water in Perth, the wetlands were being filled in for development and to build real estate, a shift thought to impact on the degree of algae blooms because wetlands help to act as filters for water
Danny, who grew up playing on the Swan River foreshores, said:

I saw wetlands disappearing as a kid....They used wetlands as a dumping ground. Other places like Ascot Race Course were built on top of a drained race course and then reconstructed lakes on their land.

At an estuarine restoration workshop (01/10/05, field notebook no 9) the focus was on explaining estuarine processes and changes. For example, the Swan and Canning Rivers used to be fresh – you could drink it – but now since the sand bar was blasted at the Fremantle Harbour, opening the Swan River to the Indian Ocean, the Swan River waters have become salty. There are different layers of water; the salt water sits on the bottom of the freshwater. The animals also use the oxygen. Lots of wind mixes up the salt and fresh water forming brackish water, which becomes more salty than ocean water. It is the salinity that is responsible for the different processes that happen in the Swan and Canning Rivers. Algae (green, brown and red) also live in the water and provide habitat for other animals. Algae absorb nutrients through the surface. When algae bloom, there is discolouration of the water. Blooming occurs in patches; it does not look appealing and it can smell. Most species of algae are not harmful to humans. However, when there are warnings about not entering water, they need to be taken seriously because the

16 All photos presented in this thesis were taken by Marie Seeman unless otherwise stated.
water is contaminated and harmful to humans. The main message of the workshop was that we need to, ‘Stop nutrients going into the Swan River’. However it was noted that, ‘It is difficult to get the message across to people’.

While walking along one section of the Swan River, another Swan River Trust interaction focused on the Swan River foreshores protection and rehabilitation as part of the Riverbank program. Areas of assessment included physical features (erosion, built structures, wave analysis); ecological issues (vegetation, floodplain, using geographical information system (GIS) and field assessments). Social factors included forming a communications and sustainable foreshore plan strategy. The aim of the strategy was to set visions for the Swan River, to work out how the Swan River is perceived (including historic and current land uses) and to understand threats and current concerns. ‘Meagan’ (22/02/05, field notebook no 4) questioned ‘What does river health mean? Because it is so debatable. The social is hard as there are so many different people...We’re trying to make sense of it’. During a planning meeting at the Swan River Trust (22/09/05, field notebook no 9) for instance, I learned that the public tends to react more to developments on or near the water then those developments further back.

During a Riverbank assessment there were keen observations made of vegetation life within the natural and built environment. While walking along the Swan River foreshore, information was obtained about the colour, shape, size, smell and look of a plant and it was recorded using digital mapping. This information was compared to previous literature, existing management plans and interagency studies to identify and categorise it as a native or introduced species. A difficulty existed when identifying ‘weeds’ because often these plants were considered pretty.

Meagan believes that if the Swan River were not present, then Perth would not exist. Meagan commented further on how different the Swan River is in different places. Meagan grew up in the hills area and used to go on family picnics on the Swan and the Avon Rivers. Some main differences between upstream and downstream observed by Meagan included ‘There are not so many people upstream, it’s more rural. There are more bush and more natural areas. It is really different in the way that the water moves, there are more rapids’. Meagan concluded that there was ‘a different feel to these areas of the Swan River’ and that:

The Swan River is more manicured and controlled by people. Whereas the Avon is pretty good and peaceful, it is dramatic in some ways. It makes you think of Nyungar people and how they use the area – it is more spiritual – moving away from the city and into country and into more of Australia.

‘Dianne’ (02/03/05, field notebook no 4) also works on the Riverbank program, and has a significant amount of experience working for a community catchment group.
She said 'we were always fighting for money'. Dianne obviously felt that she has 'A duty and a passion to protect and care for the planet, it is a driving force behind working for community groups and working for the Swan River Trust'. Dianne has always lived near the Swan River and thinks that it is:

The 'heart of Perth, a place of beauty and value for the whole community. If the Swan River was not here, I probably wouldn't live here. I always like being near water so I'd probably live near the coast or a different river.

And it is where she:

Walks, cycles and canoes for its beauty. However I go swimming at the beach not the [Swan] River. I see dolphins, pelicans and sunsets, you can sit and relax along the fishing jetties. The beauty of nature – it is very soothing to be part of nature – something incredible.

However Dianne recognised that some people who live on the Swan River 'Do not appreciate the fringing vegetation and wildlife and would prefer lawns up to the river edge for views'. Dianne found it upsetting when algae blooms and fish kills occurred and that 'People have a lack of understanding and education about the Swan River and its value'. Another Swan River Trust employee, 'Kym' (16/03/05, field notebook no 4) nostalgically commented that:

I miss the boat. I'm always in the office. My office was on the boat – on the river...not just paper in an office and in front of a computer...I actually had physical touch with the water...people on the boat are really important people because they see change.

Kym is working on the Swan Canning Clean up Plan (SCCP), a program to reduce nutrients entering the Swan and Canning Rivers. Concerned about the catchment she stated:

The Storm water drains are all hidden and nobody knows they are there...Out of sight out of mind...There is an effective design in town planning – creating living streams for water runoff...There are different perceptions of what we think is beautiful. For example, there are different perceptions about the kind of river wall used – a concrete wall with manicured lawns or erosion on the river bank. Also a lot of people do not think wetlands are pretty because they can be scraggly and there are seasonal water increases and decreases... However, the wetlands are the 'eye' of the watertable but they’re drying up due to people using bores and using water from the water table. They are not a perfectly manicured system of constant water supply and some people want views of real estate development of permanent artificial lakes. Some people only see the Swan River when they drive to work; they don't see all the tributaries up in the hills.

Ways to engage people with her concerns about reducing nutrients were discussed by Kym. The SCCP program was originally set up with a nutrient focus, but pressure broadened focus to 'ecosystem health' and instead of just nutrients, looking also at fish dynamics, heavy metals and toxicants. Kym is interested in communicating the message out to the public, but said that:
Nobody cares about nutrients, but if you put a fish in there it helps to get people interested. People have an association with fish because dolphins are dying. For example, fish kills get peoples attention.

Plate 2: Walking along Pelican Point surveying native vegetation 13/09/2005

A common question voiced by Swan River Trust employees was ‘How do we get the public to engage with contributing towards the protection and care of the Swan River? One activity that focused on ‘engaging people’ was Corporate Care Day (17/06/05, field notebook no 6) which allowed for Industry groups to participate in Swan River care activities. Employees from a Westpac Bank along with Swan River Trust employees and volunteers from the group known as ‘Men of the Trees’ volunteered at Attadale Reserve by digging holes, planting sedges and weeding introduced species. Participants were given instructions and extra information about planting correctly as it was thought there was a lack of knowledge relating to restoring wetlands. It was obvious that participants were delighted to escape from the office environment for the day and have a long weekend. Conversations overheard included comments about gardening, mulching and shared tips about plants. These interactions allowed participants to experience the Swan River and gave consistent insights into how people revealed a sense of belonging.
Along the Canning River, a different kind of interaction focused on the restoration of Liege Street Wetlands. This community project included representatives and supporters from a wide range of different groups with an interest in the success of the project. Liege Street wetlands gave people a sense of belonging through their involvement in the project. I explored a sense of belonging via these kinds of catchment interactions like those at Attadale Reserve and Liege Street wetlands in Chapter Five through other Swan River field sites.

Other kinds of interactions focused on peoples' gardens through workshops whereby community members were invited to listen and learn about appropriate waterwise gardening techniques. Participants were provided with ample information, demonstrations, and prizes to encourage behaviour change and water use in their own backyards and the Swan River. For example, the Bayswater Main Drain is the largest urban catchment in the Perth metropolitan area. Groundwater and surface waters are collected by the Bayswater Main Drain from a catchment that covers 2700 hectares consisting of land uses including residential, commercial and industrial. The catchment may be described as sandy soils which have a limited ability to absorb and retain pollutants, and a high water table. A network of drains was built to drain the winter waterlogged soils. As well, along this drainage system are many domestic and industrial septic tanks. The Bayswater Main Drain carries a significant amount of
pollutants into the Swan River entering at the end of King William Street (Swan River Trust, 1991, p. viii). The Swan River Trust has a 'Drainage Improvement Program' and the 'Drain Nutrient Intervention Program'. ‘Sarah’ (23/03/05, field notebook no 5) explained how the language used is an important issue when communicating and engaging the general public. For example;

There are technical and engineering connotations with the wording of ‘intervention’, but I want to change the name to give it a natural feel. Change the program title to something that has more of a natural association, for example ‘drain restoration’ because the aim is to turn the polluted drain into a living stream and give value back to the drainage system. People dump stuff into the drain because they think it’s a waste stream.

Changing language within environmental management programs reflected changing values towards water-built environments. As well as language, the design of drains is changing. For example, Sarah explained that ‘Drains are in straight lines, but we are trying to create natural living streams that meander through urban areas’.

The management of urban drains crosses organisational boundaries. For example, constructed water environments link government and non-government organisations including the Swan River Trust, Water Corporation, Councils, the Department of Main Roads, other private property owners and catchment/river care and community groups. Although drains link a range of organisations, the transformation of ‘polluted’ drains into ‘living streams’ relies on maintaining good relations with the ‘property owner’ of the drain. However, the capability for other interested parties to contribute towards management decisions is fraught with difficulty. Sarah exclaimed ‘There’s not a lot of room to do much work, but we (Swan River Trust) don’t own any of the drains’.

Different drain owners have different priorities in relation to the management of these built environments. For example, the Swan River Trust is concerned with ‘improving the water quality’ of drains whereas ‘Water Corporation is focused on the conveyance of water away from properties’.

Milton (2005) is again useful here, especially with regard to contextualising and explaining the emotions such as those expressed by the community and Fran in relation to Swan River issues. Communication plays an important role within the operations and representation of the Swan River Trust. The media, newsletter, website, annual report, brochures are some ways that the broader community is conveyed information. Spokespersons put a positive rather than negative spin on problems such as sewerage spills or algae blooms. Fran (09/11/2004, field notebook no 1) exclaimed that the Swan River is ‘everyone’s natural resource’ and that the Swan River Trust ‘encourages everyone to keep rivers healthy’. It was also
important to 'get people to know that we're [Swan River Trust] here for a good cause'. For example, one complexity related to letting people know about algae blooms because water sampling tests take two to three days for tests to be done, which makes it difficult to tell the public straight away. Fran added 'People are still coming to terms with what algae is and not all algae is harmful. There is always algae in the Swan River but there are different kinds and different levels and locations of where the algae grows'. Human emotion was present in everyday communications in relation to Swan River issues. Fran's emotional distress was obvious when she commented on the way the spill was handled by the Swan River Trust. Spokespersons put a positive rather than negative spin on the problem, indicating that their main concern was to protect the river. Handling emotional people required good communications skills. For example, the recent sewerage spill near Caversham required tactful responses. Fran described the incident as 'a very intense period of handling the situation'. However, Fran also noted that 'the way the incident was handled led to a lot less outrage then was expected'. The ways that the Swan River Trust is represented is through stories in positive ways. There are positive things that the Swan River Trust is doing to help protect the Swan River. In addition to the Clean-Up Day, there are more than twenty projects including fixing a jetty for access to the Swan River. These interactions demonstrated a practical sense of belonging with subsequent social and emotional connections to the Swan River, a framework I extend in the ethnographic chapters.

3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The Swan River and swamps provided abundant and a great variety of food and water resources for Aboriginal people, especially in the last century. The activity of food gathering created social ties between Aboriginal women and their families to particular areas during certain seasons. Fishing, crabbing, digging for yams, vegetable foods and swans were all food sources sought after. An Aboriginal site exists at Success Hill. It is associated with the Waugal, a mythical snake that caused a spring to flow, and its presence guarantees this flow. Sacred stones were also linked with meanings that some places were taboo for women. Mt Eliza was a major meeting place for hunting rituals and festivals.

Many places used and enjoyed by Aborigines were also popular places later used and enjoyed by European settlers. Early explorers settled in the same Swan River places that held special meanings to Aboriginal people. Settlers were delighted
to find fresh water sources, fertile land and abundant wildlife, such as fishing. The foreshores provided access to food and water resources and places for physical interactions within beautiful environments. The birdlife on the Swan River was valued, and Black Swans were used to name the Swan River.

Various changes have occurred to Swan River environments from forming the Walyunga National Park to the gentrification of East Perth and making a canal across Burswood. The present day Swan River is used and enjoyed through various physical interactions along the foreshores via nature trails, picnic areas, walking and cycling paths, fishing, and bird watching. The Swan River is a major artery and life giving natural and cultural icon. Managed by the Swan River Trust to improve the health and protect the resource for future generations, historical records show practical, social, emotional, physical and ecological belonging to the Swan River. The following Chapters Four and Five provide alternative ways in which people relate to Swan River environments. A key point that arises is that the river provides a clear means of demonstrating social and emotional connections for two divergent social groups based in urban Perth, a matter I address in the next two chapters.
CHAPTER FOUR: SWAN RIVER BELONGING THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF ART

'I come here [Ellis House next to the Swan River] for her wellbeing...we live together' (Trevor, artist)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I bring together ethnographic data to explain how a group of artists with whom I worked used, interacted with and represented the Swan River. Interested in exploring how and to what extent the Swan River influenced people’s access to, and their participation in, Swan River environments. I examine social, ecological, aesthetic and practical values.

I begin by explaining more about the artists group. Pseudonyms have been used throughout. During my interactions with artists I was privileged to be invited into their homes for meetings as part of a (2004) project titled ‘Rivers and Parks: A Personal Perspective’ where I observed and interviewed participants. I have included data from those people who live on or are closest to the Swan and Canning Rivers.

4.2 Profiling the Artists

My initial fieldwork began with involvement with fourteen artists working together on the ‘River and Parks’ project in Perth in 2004. The project was coordinated by ‘Lara’ and funded by the Government of Western Australia as part of the Western Australian 175th Anniversary Celebrations. Its purpose was to create artworks to celebrate the anniversary. Artists had the opportunity to work together and to share knowledge on the natural heritage of the Swan River and adjacent parks. Artwork themes focused on the natural heritage of river sites and the project culminated with an art exhibition held at the Constitutional Centre, Parliament Place in West Perth.

The group was mostly comprised of women except for one male. Their ages ranged between 30 and 70; most were between 40 and 60 years old. The artists had been settled in Perth for many years, except for one who had recently moved from the eastern states of Australia. The artists originated from both rural and urban backgrounds in Australia and were from diverse cultural backgrounds including New Zealand, England, South Africa and North America.
Socio-cultural and economic backgrounds ranged from wealthy property owners living in suburbs at the high end of the real estate market to those renting property in suburbs at the bottom end of the market. Most people lived on both the north and south sides of the Swan-Canning Rivers ranging in proximity to the Swan Estuary or living on the banks of the Canning River with panoramic views of Aquinas Bay or bending around Perth City upstream along the Middle Swan River taking in Guildford (See Appendices, Map 1).

Others lived in distant suburbs at least 20 kilometers from the Swan River, near the coast, or in the hills. Artists came from diverse social units including the nuclear family group, ‘empty nesters’ or couples whose children had left home, and ‘Dinks’ (couples with double income and no kids), single parents and widows. Artists were either living with their families, partners, by themselves or sharing.

The data that I provide in this chapter explores personal stories and meanings ascribed to Swan River places. It shows the ways that artists expressed a sense of belonging to Swan River environments through sites visited during fieldwork.

4.3 Interactions with the Swan River: Lara’s Story

As well as a range of values expressed within the artist group, a diverse cross section of Swan River places were visited by the artists as part of the project. Lara shared an insight about the extent of personal interactions with Swan River places:

The feedback that I’ve got from a lot of people is that this [meaning the project] has been great for me, I’ve seen places that I’ve never been to before, even though I live in Perth and I’ve been here all my life, there’s some places that I just would never have gone to (11/03/05, field notebook no 19).

Evident in Lara’s comment is a sense of belonging through strong social and environmental values, an emphasis that emerged during many conversations. Lara also shared her personal perspective of the Swan River and how important the waterway was to her emotionally while living in Perth. Milton (2005, p. 199) observes that emotions define the quality of life. At any given moment, feelings determine whether life is good, bad or somewhere in between, and they determine precisely how and why it is good or bad. Milton explains that:

‘They motivate me to act; a niggling unease tells me if I have done something I should not have done, or failed to do something I should have. Feelings of love, guilt, anxiety, envy, hope, desire, drive me to do what I do in my everyday life’.

The emotion of anxiety drove Lara to walk along the Swan River:
When I moved up [to Perth] I lived walking distance to the Swan River in South Perth and I didn’t like leaving the country to live in the city but the [Swan] River made it easier...I was used to the bush and the spaces and I didn’t like the congestion and built up areas and so the Swan River was psychological enrichment – the parks and the grass. I used to walk as an escape from problems and thinking through problems. I liked to walk in the bush or the beach. I think I walked down that [Swan] River many times through crises and that kind of stuff...I used to go on a morning and afternoon walk, mostly morning. I used to go walking and cycling to get rid of my anxiety. Cycling was better for getting rid of anxiety. If you’re not expressing it creatively then you need to go outside an exercise. I used the cycleway a lot and went over the Narrows to Perth. It’s a big expansive space, no cars, less people and it’s close to nature. Nature makes you feel good and psychologically it does things that I couldn’t put my finger on. There’s no comparison with built up environments and also because I was born in the bush (11/03/05, field notebook no 19).

Milton (2005, p. 204) discusses how our bodies can learn to respond to our environments. This ecological approach suggests that our bodies learn, through their engagement with their environment, how to respond to particular things. For example some people learn to love mountains while others learn to love flat open plains and in Lara’s case she had moved from a country environment and subsequently learned to have positive feelings to the Swan River:

As well as responding positively to the Swan River as an individual, Lara shared both positive and negative feelings in a group context during social activities:

On the bright side, there were lots of occasions when I organised or my friends organised get togethers down there, picnics, birthdays and when there were functions or free concerts. I used to watch the annual sky show. People used to always come to my place and leave their car there and walk to the Swan River to watch the sky show and people would part afterwards. I lived there for 14 years from 1986 to 2001. I have never fished in the [Swan] River but have many recreational experiences and with artists who went down there to draw a lot. I’ve never been swimming but tried once over near Dalkeith and got up to my knees and my legs went red. I was on a picnic with a friend (11/03/05, field notebook no 19).

One form of belonging became evident via the way artists talked about their work. For example the type of techniques they used to represent the Australian landscape, native flora and fauna, and the ways they used camera equipment to record certain colours, textures, shapes and detail in addition to sketching their subject. For example one discussion focussed on the quality of digital prints, the brand of camera and type of colour printer used. These examples demonstrate how artists learn to represent the environment through creative practices.

Heirisson Island provides a particular focus located between Victoria Park on the south and East Perth on the north sides of the Swan River, linked by the Causeway Bridge. When we visited this reconstructed island, some artists said they had not been there before and they were very interested in the view from Heirisson Island towards the City and Kings Park because it was an unusual perspective across Perth city, Perth Waters and South Perth. Experiencing a new environment
such as Heirisson Island gave the artists the opportunity to learn about their built environment through visual connection.

The location of Heirisson Island divides the Swan River waters before they meet Perth Waters also known as the Swan Estuary. As I walked with ‘Maria’ along the edges of the Island foreshore, she shared personal memories of the Swan River as both a participant and a spectator:

When I was going to school, I used to go rowing and would have to wake up really early for practice on the river for competing in regattas...I’ve also gone to the Avon Descent race\(^\text{17}\) (11/03/05, field notebook no 19).

During the walk, the only other visitors to the park included a Vietnamese couple who were fishing while some pelicans swam by. The man was using a fishing rod; he had caught a Black Bream fish and proudly held it up to show his catch. Watching the couple fishing provoked an artist to comment that she and her family:

Used to have prawning parties along the [Swan] River and that they were very popular, everyone used to do this on a Friday night and you would see lots of lanterns lit along the banks of the river, that’s where people were dragging their nets (11/03/05, field notebook no 19).

I also noticed artists looking down into the depths of water, pointing to a floating brown jelly fish. One person remembered their physical contact with jellyfish ‘They are the ones that people used to throw at each other as kids when they were

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\(^{17}\) The Avon Descent Race is an annual kayaking race beginning in Northam on the Swan-Avon River ending at Bayswater Gardens.
swimming in the [Swan] River'. Embedded in this context is a clear connection between a physical interaction with the river and the kind of emotional response discussed by Milton (2005, p. 204) who argued for an emotional process that begins with stimulus and ends with an action. For example, the jellyfish acted as the stimulus; there was a physical response such as the quickening of a heartbeat on seeing the jellyfish, which then led to emotions and the action of throwing the jellyfish.

Plate 5: Walkers and Rollers on a dual use path along Burswood Foreshore 19/02/2006.

The Swan River and the foreshores provide multiple spaces for many physical and social activities, including water skiing, boating, picnics, cricket, cycling, walking, rolling, volley ball, canoeing, and children’s playground and during summer there is an outdoor movie theatre run by volunteers to raise money for charity. As walkers follow the path, a plaque records the historical physical interactions of an:

Australian Champion Marathon Swimmer Shelley Taylor-Smith who won the Gold Medal at the 1991 World Swimming Championships in the 25km long distance swim. She is pictured at the finish line on the Burswood Park Foreshore. Shelly unveiled this plaque to mark her achievement on the 12 January 1998 (21/02/06, field notebook no 12).

Swimming is an activity that reveals how the Swan River that has changed over time. For example, ‘Barbara’ explained that ‘When I was a kid, it was more acceptable to
swim in the [Swan] River, but I don't know if the water quality was ok or whether people didn't know about the quality of water' (17/03/05, field notebook no 15). This knowledge shown also indicates the type of relationship that exists between learned responses to water and water quality, a point discussed (albeit in a contextually different environment) by Milton (2005, p. 204).

The presence of a variety of species of jellyfish caused different reactions in swimming places. There are a range of Swan River places where Barbara described enjoying swimming. Such as at the Swan River near Maylands where 'the sedges grow on the banks', and a section near Mosman Park where Barbara swims, but 'if there are too many blue stingers in the water' then Barbara swims 'near Meads and the Swan Canoe Club'. The brown jelly fish in the Swan River are not harmful, Barbara laughs explaining that 'We used to throw them at each other'.

In addition to those described, there are other emotional experiences that can be discussed that emerge from interactions with the Swan River. At a Town of Vincent garden competition dinner, for instance, I spoke with a contestant about the fear he experienced in relation to swimming along the shores of Mosman Park. 'Simon' remembered 'being pushed in the Swan River as a kid by someone behind me and how frightening the whole experience was’ (16/11/05, field notebook no 11). From a different perspective, gendered meanings were imparted by many people with regard to Swan River features. For example, Simon commented about gender constructions and the Swan River landscape. The way vegetation fringed the waters edges. He explained that 'I feel that the [Swan] River has a very 'female' presence especially where waters meet the riverbanks and foreshores and the type of vegetation' (16/11/05, field notebook no 11). Another form of gendered representation became evident when, during an interview with an Aboriginal man, 'Will' said 'The Swan River is considered female because of the shape on a map (24/11/04, field notebook no 1).

4.4 Forms of Belonging

Although there are many physical ways to interact with Swan River environments, it is walking that allows the greatest freedom and intimacy to experience the smells, sights, sounds and feelings of being in a place and to learn about some of the meanings, and a sense of belonging to be discovered.

For example, walking is one way that I found a statue of the Dutch navigator William de Vlamingh (21/02/06, field notebook no 12) which was unveiled by his
Royal Highness the Prince of Orange on 12 January 1997 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of De Vlamingh’s exploration and Naming of the Swan River in January 1697 (refer to Chapter Three). The sculpture pays tribute to the significance of the early Dutch explorers (including Dirk Hartog) and the discovery of the Western Coastline of Australia prior to Captain Cook. Close by is a sculpture of the Black Swan with expanded wings providing a permanent reminder of the iconic status attributed to this waterfowl. Further over an adult figure and a child sculpture represents the passing on of family history though the ancestors or ‘The Swan River Saga’ and pays tribute to Mary Durack who ‘captured the essence of life in Perth in the Colonial Days’.

A different walk that brought together both Indigenous and settler-descendants occurred on a major public occasion where people came together for a ceremony and walking trail along the Swan River foreshore through both natural and built environments to Kings Park. A pilgrimage of meanings including spirituality and reconciliation brought people together symbolising a sense of belonging to the Swan River during the walk. Findings from work by Strang (2008, p. 30) as discussed in Chapter Two reveal similarities between artists and the broader Swan River environment.

The opening of the Perth International Arts Festival 10 February, 2006 (field notebook no 12) was symbolized through a trail designed to link a range of sites beginning at Heirisson Island and culminating in Kings Park. Inside the conservation area of Heirisson Island an official welcome to country was carried out by male and female Indigenous elders instructing participants to ‘look, listen and learn’. The Elder explained that ‘The women lighting the fire will bring warmth to us all and is symbolic of women and camps’. And then there was a song story about two birds known as the Willy Wagtail and a Crow that represented women and girls dancing around a fire. As the ceremony continued, a male and female lit the grass tree or balga with fire and the female burns the rest of the tree.

Women wearing black and white costumes and walking on stilts with face paint represented women dancing in a circle to celebrate being together and happy. The men were wearing traditional dress and white paint called out to prepare for the celebration as the fires continued to burn representing courage and strength as

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18 There are many sculptural representations throughout Perth and along the Swan River. An annual sculpture exhibition that people can walk through is held at Cottesloe Beach.
19 Although there is a mooring place for the Duyfken Replica at the Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle, I have often seen the Duyfken moored on the Swan River in front of the Swan Brewery.
20 There are diverse dancing styles in Perth including swing dancing, salsa, latin, rock and roll.
21 Fiona Wood, recognised as ‘Australia’s most trusted person’ is known for the innovative spray on skin used on burn victims to regenerate damaged skin (ABC Radio National, pers.com 26/5/7).
they danced around the fire. The sounds of didgeridoo or gumbe vibrated\(^{22}\) across
the Swan River. Voices called out ‘all the people of the Nyungar region – bringing
indigenous and non-indigenous people together in celebration of ‘our heartland’.

The Swan River was in sight for most parts of the walk. The fresh smell of
the Swan River was more noticeable when walking along the edges of Heirisson
Island and over the passing waters underneath the Causeway Bridge. The walk was
held on a hot February afternoon and many artists carried their own water bottles to
quench their thirst.

The symbolic walk led hundreds of people across the Causeway Bridge, past
Point Fraser Demonstration Wetlands, a lawn bowling club\(^{23}\); and a place to hire
bicycles, family quadcycles, kayaks and skates and the Australian Broadcasting
Radio and television studios and along the exercise fields, performance spaces of
Langley Park and the Western Australia Rowing Club, the Commonwealth Law
Courts and the Perth Concert Hall. We entered the Supreme Court Gardens
opposite Barrack Square where people found some shady areas for relief from the
burning heat. The trail also led people further away from the Swan River and only
allowing glimpses of Perth Waters.

At the beginning of Mounts Bay Road people walked up steps and through an
overpass tunnel into the Convention Centre\(^ {24}\) where a very long mural of the Waugal,
a rainbow serpent hangs. The image provides a significant visual symbol connected
with the creation of the Swan River. However in this section of the walk through the
Convention Centre foyer area, people’s sight of the Swan River is blocked.

The crowd walked across a footbridge above the busy traffic on the Mitchell
Freeway. When walking up a steep incline, many people had to stop for a rest
before entering the landscaped gardens of Kings Park on top of Mount Eliza and
heading towards the concert at the Pioneer Women’s Memorial water fountain.
Close by the Bessie Rischbeith (also known as the Grand Lady of the Swan)
Memorial\(^ {25}\) is also located. The opening concert was a spectacular event and was
also a showcase for a large painting. There are similarities with the Maroochy River
Catchment in work by Strang (2008, p. 39) who found that the Splash festival

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\(^{22}\) At a Light and Sound Exhibition held at the Fremantle Arts Centre the guide explained how he demonstrates
vibration using a tuning fork. The vibrating tuning fork is put into a container of water to show how much it is vibrating
and water is flicked everywhere.

\(^{23}\) As well as lawn bowls, bochi and coquet are popular ball games that people play in parks and ten pin bowling is
played indoors in Perth.

\(^{24}\) The Perth Convention Centre was used for conferences including the Even/woman Expo and Sexpo (A place
where issues of health, entertainment, sexuality and adult lifestyles. The aim of the exhibition is to allow adults to
access frank and accurate information on all such matters, all in one convenient location.

\(^{25}\) Rischbieth was the vice-president of the Women’s Services Guilds. Reclamation of the Mounts Bay for the
Mitchell Freeway and the Kwinana Freeway began and after the first dumping of a truckload of sand, Rischbieth
waded into the river to stand in front of the bulldozers to protest this reclamation Burningham, N. (2004) Messing
about in Ernest, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle.
focused entirely on social, spiritual and aesthetic interactions with the local waterways.

On another occasion, artists arranged to meet at the ‘DNA Observation Tower’ located at the end of the Boardwalk which links with the Western Power Parklands. From here some artists participated in guided wildflower walks overlooking the Swan River; it provided an iconic conduit for the walk and a focal meeting place.

Two visits to South Perth included going to Heritage House revealing information about changes to the South Perth foreshores facing the Swan River. Many physical changes have taken place along the Swan River in the vicinity of the central business district and South Perth throughout the history of settlement. The impact of these can be seen through the example at the Heritage House where, on at least one occasion, there were two elderly people engaged in different activities: a woman who was concentrating on recording history notes at the table in the front room, whereas a man who was glad to tell me that he knew some of the people in the photographs on display. The artist group was informed of the changing Swan River landscape from colonisation onwards via hanging aerial photos of the Peninsula or South Perth. Artists expressed an interest in learning about these environmental changes. Places had been reclaimed, shorelines changed in response to decrease erosion, walls were put in to reduce flooding, dredging was done for boats to move about in the Swan River and come into shorelines, freeways were built and bridges were made. Reeds were being restored to encourage more of a ‘natural’ ecosystem. Artificial lakes have been built and places where there was water have been filled in to make car parks. One artist, ‘Dannie’, originally from South Perth, showed a strong interest in her ancestry and local history. She was enthusiastic about some of the cultural heritage pictures and she recognised some of the homes, landscape features and people. In Dannie’s case, it was evident that the Swan River acted as a catalyst to expose a range of positive Swan River experiences and emotional connections.

On the second visit to South Perth (29/04/04, field notebook no 1), artists met at the South Perth Sir James Mitchell Park at the east end of South Perth Esplanade near the Scented Gardens and barbecue area. People demonstrated connections to

26 The cultural centre officer, LaVone Varendorff spoke about May Gibbs 1877 - 1969, a progressive artist for her times who was known for her deep love and understanding of the Australian bush. Gibbs was the Artist and author, the daughter of H. W. Gibbs of Perth, WA, and Surrey, England. Her books included The Gumnut Babies (1916) which was about Australian bush fairies; Snugglepot and Cuddlepie (1918). Her publications include Flower Babies, Wattleblossom Babies, and other Gumnut fairytale books including a “Bib and Bub” comic strip series that ran for years in Sydney newspapers. Gibbs was appointed a MBE for her services to Australian literature, and the Commonwealth Literary Fund awarded her a pension. She married B. J. Ossoli Kelly. Childless, she willed her house and contents to be auctioned for the benefit of UNICEF Australian Government Department of the Environment and Water Resources (2004), Vol. 2007 Australian Government, Canberra.
the Swan River through their aesthetic appreciation, and emotional relationships to the Swan River, a process that became evident via observations about the calmness of water and peacefulness. Artists showed a different sense of belonging through their conversations. People chatted in an animated way about a visit to the cultural centre and the landscape changes viewed in the photographic aerial images. An environmental connection was discernible when an artist commented that it would be good to regrow seaweeds along the shores again...[and that there was] a seaweed farm set up to grow seaweeds. In response to sitting on the Swan River foreshore and experiencing the immediacy of ecological qualities of the waterway, people also conversed about birdlife and about Russian birds27(Makine, 1994) that migrated to Perth each year and that there was a special program set up to make sure their habitat was not destroyed. The matter of birds, and their connection to Swan River places, emerged on many occasions during fieldwork, as discussed below and elsewhere.


Following the discussion on seaweeds and migratory birds, artists were inspired to explore the scented gardens to take in the diverse scents wafting around the salty fresh air. We walked over the manicured lawn to the landscaped gardens

breathing in fragrances such as lavender. This unstructured walk had a relaxing effect on people as they strolled around the paperbark trees. The scented spaces provided a peaceful way for artists to engage with the Swan River. While walking and talking, people shared stories about their everyday lives and close relationships. One woman spoke about her connection to South Perth through her family relations. Other women paired off as they walked, with some taking close-up photos of flowers along the way. There were clonking sounds as we walked on the boardwalk into the paperbark forest where we stopped in the middle so people could sit and rest. Some unpacked their sketch pads and pencils to draw the layered textures of tree trunks or inner spaces of swamp scenes demonstrating a creative and emotional connection that shares resonance with the emphases embedded in Milton’s (2005) work.

The representations of Swan River environments presented creative contexts for artists to express their belonging to the Swan River that did not happen to the same extent away from the Swan River. I asked Mandy about artwork that showed her connections to several places and from different perspectives. She explained:

I’ve got two charcoal drawings of Point Walter done or almost done at the moment and I intend to do another two. I’m doing four from each point of the compass at Point Walter looking from different directions. I’ve got one done of the nightclub going across the causeway and another one of from South Perth looking across to the city which is almost finished and I did the paperbarks there on the foreshore and I would have loved to have just left it like that but unfortunately I had to go back and do the city above it and hope I don’t spoil it by doing it…but I thought it was important that the vision of the city combine with the natural aspects of the swan was also important to this particular painting. That’s what I’ve got done so far.

On visiting Point Walter, the artists were invited by an Aboriginal Nyungar leader, Trevor Walley, to walk with him down to a sand bar. Everyone then sat down in a circle to listen while Trevor shared an Aboriginal Dreamtime story that explained how the sandbar (or Joondalup which means a lock of blonde hair) was formed at Point Walter:

There were two blond Aboriginal Gods living on the land. The husband developed a taste for ‘baby spirits’ which we know as our stars. As he greedily ate the baby spirits, the wife, feeling sorry and sad, hid them in her long blond hair. Searching everywhere, the husband in a bid to satisfy his terrible hunger and craving, eventually found their hiding place. He started grabbing the baby spirits out from their hiding place and again greedily sated his appetite. The wife, her deceit revealed, escaped high into the sky where he could no longer reach her - the baby spirits safely entwined amongst her long shimmering hair. Today we can still see her hair flowing in the night sky with the babies safely interlaced; we know it as our ‘Milky Way’.

People gathered at the kiosk for morning tea and in response to the interaction at the sandbar and listened to Trevor Walley share the Aboriginal story, one of the artists, Heidi, was inspired by the meanings of the Aboriginal story of the sandbar to paint a canvas (see plate 7).
Plate 7 © Sushi. Artwork inspired from interactions with the sandbar at Point Walter, 1305/2004 and the meanings from an Aboriginal story shared by Trevor Walley.
At an Aboriginal workshop called Sharing the Way of the Land, Tjuntalup Kadujin – Point Walter Learning (Blurton, 2005, Collard Nyungar Birdiyia, 2005), participants were split into two groups led by Nyungars Neville Collard and Brian Blurton. In my group, Blurton led us past the sand bar and along the Swan River banks. We listened to him talk about native flora and fauna social and cultural uses and meanings. The teachers had a captive audience as they explained how ‘The deepest place in the [Swan] River is a footprint from Joondalup and the Joondalup story is found up north as well’. Blurton told us that:

The sand bar also acted as an original rock fish trap whereby dolphins would chase fish into a big U shape between the sand bar and the [Swan] River bank. People would tap branches and sing to attract the dolphins to come down and chase the fish into the fish trap. People would also go swimming and playing with the dolphins (Collard Nyungar Birdiyia, 2005, Blurton, 2005).

The process of restoring the river fish traps at Point Walter required an integrated approach between several government agencies including the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA), The Swan River Trust (SRT) and Local Government and a Local Politician. Blurton explained that ‘It was still ok to take fish from Point Walter but not near Burswood. Here there is more salty water - more flushing at Point Walter and not so much pollution...You can keep the fish in the water trap too, like a fridge’. I also found different uses for a range of native species, including a few examples relating to the Swan River. For example, Blurton said:

The Peppermint or ‘Wannell’ tree is used for medicine, to clear the chest for asthma and hay fever. It opens up the nose, the chest and makes breathing easier. If you take leaves from the tree, you should give them (the used ones) back as mulch. The leaves from the Wannell Tree are used in fish traps to stop fish from escaping. The leaves are used as a drag net for prawning.

The Acacia Cycop tree, one of 128 species was also pointed out for its many uses. Blurton explained that ‘It could be used for making soap, a moisturiser, sun block, skin coolant and you can make food from the dried seed pods. Blurton likened it to the Italian Kalamata olive trees and jokingly said that ‘The seed pods may have floated down the [Swan] River out to sea and over to Italy in return’. There are a wide range of uses for the Grass Tree or Balga. He referred to the grass tree as a:

‘Life saver’, the grass leaves can be used for a bed, they are waterproof and the water runs through and away on the ground. You can eat the white fleshy bits, its tastes a bit like coconut. The Balga gum is used to make tools. The black stem part of the tree is used to start fires and for incense. The flowers can be smoked and eaten.

When the people among whom I worked commented about fish and fishing there were a range of reasons that exemplified diverse connections and a sense of
belonging. People referred to memories of fishing in the Swan River, such as the following:

I used to go to prawning parties along the Swan River years ago (Mandy, 60 years, artist, 29/04/04 field notebook no 1).

When I was a growing up I used to go fishing with my friends and/or family (Michelle, 25 years, public servant, 29/04/04, field notebook no 1).

I used to go with my husband when we were first married, but now he just goes with one of his mates (Fern, 40 years, artist, 29/04/04, field notebook no 1).

There have been fish kills/algae blooms; I don't think there are many fish left in the river anymore (Maria, 40 years, artist, 29/04/04, field notebook no 1).

What becomes apparent is that, a connection between passing traffic and people’s views of the waters flowing under the Narrows emerges. I listened to a fisherman (12/08/05, field notebook no 11), for instance, who told me that:

Once I caught what looked like a dolphin on my line, about twenty cars stopped near the large roundabout and people got out of their cars to come and comment about my catch, however it was a shark, no dolphin. I’d never go swimming in the Swan River because there’re too many sharks!

While fishing for food occurs in different parts of the Swan and Canning Rivers. The practice of fishing also meant more to some people then catching an edible fish. Although artists talked about ‘going fishing’ other people participated in a range of other social activities during a fishing trip. I found, for example, at Kent Street Weir on the Canning River that this publicly accessible Swan River place provided spaces and facilities for people to engage in a range of social activities including kayaking, walking, cooking and sharing food, playing games, talking with friends and family while enjoying nature. It was apparent too that the act of fishing was a way for complete strangers to engage in social interaction with each other. For example, one informant, ‘David’ told me that:

When I first arrived in Perth and didn’t know anybody, I used to go fishing along the Canning River near the Shelly Bridge. I used to walk with my fishing rod and pass other people going fishing as well. I often asked the other fishers what fish they had caught and where they were biting (05/06/06, field notebook no 15).

David’s girlfriend ‘Jade’ also commented on the social and emotional value of fishing, in particular the way in which fishing activities regulated their pattern of living. Evident in her comment too is their interaction with, and response to, the warmth evoked by the river environment. Jade said:

We go fishing in lots of places in the Swan River...Usually in a spontaneous manner, sometimes we’ll go a couple times a week in the warmer months (05/06/06, field notebook no 15).

Tuart Trees standing tall on the Swan River banks near Point Walter are connected with freshwater and an Aboriginal Dreamtime story. The Tuart Tree is known as a
‘freshwater tree’ because it needs about 360-405 litres of water per day. Tuart Trees indicate that freshwater is running underneath down to the Swan River. The Tuart Tree is also connected with meanings of Aboriginal Lore relating to blood and family relationships. Referring to the Swan River as the lifeblood, Blurton explained that:

According to the Lore, the mixing of blood is the worst sin! It means death. To save years and years of setback you always marry forward. You need to marry into another group. Kids have to keep moving forward into another group (02/04/05, field notebook no 5).

As we stepped carefully through the grass and around the branches we walked past some Black Swans, Blurton commented:

Black Swans\textsuperscript{28} have soapy meat, not good for eating, but will stop you from starving\textsuperscript{29}. Black Swans used to be white and the story goes that the black swan is always looking at its reflection in the [Swan] River, grooming\textsuperscript{30} itself. The old eagle plucked its feathers to remind it that once it was a white swan. The black crow felt sorry for it when it saw it crying red blood. The red blood is the colour of the beak.

It was also notable that both indigenous and settler histories connected artists to Point Walter, providing rich material, imagination and feelings for their art, ‘Jody’ for example explained:

My sculptures feel like they’re creating themselves! They’re really life like, it’s not totally planned. I like to let go and see what happens. Some things are planned technically for example the glaze, fire the kiln, but when you come to the creative moments I’m not thinking about it (09/11/04, field notebook no 1).

Jody’s artwork could be described as an extension of her body. Her art piece focussed on watery physical properties of the Swan River that were ‘Wet and oozy, like they’ve come out of the water – they look like they are organic and growing’ (09/11/04, field notebook no 1). The drawings made by Jody interwove ecological and human elements that ‘Reflect the micro aspects of the Swan River. Like a mirror. They also reflect human form, human curvy shapes’. Transformational experiences

\textsuperscript{28} During the Dreamtime, swans were white. During that time, two swans rested on a lagoon, unaware that it belonged to the eagle-hawks. The eagle-hawks resented this intrusion, and savagely attacked the swans. There they picked them up in their sharp, strong claws, and flew with them far to the south. Even while the swans were being carried away to this strange new land other eagle-hawks tore at their wounded bodies, plucking out still more feathers. Finally, the swans were dropped on the rocks of a stony desert. There, naked and almost dead, the swans heard the call of the black mountain-crows. They looked up and saw hundreds of them; either on the wing or struggling for places on the few branches of the desert trees. "The eagles are our enemies too," the crows called out, in their strange, croaking voices. "But we won’t let you die. We will send down on the breeze some of our feathers to keep you warm, and when you feel strong enough they will help you to fly again." The tom-out white feathers of the wounded swans, taking root between the rocks on which they fell, grew into the dainty flannel flowers of the eastern Australian coast, and the blood of the birds was transformed into the blossoms of the scarlet heath. And ever since that day all Australian swans, except for a few white feathers on their wings, have feathers as black as the crows which clad their nakedness and helped them to fly again Mountford, C. P. and Roberts, A. (1971) \textit{The First Sunrise}, Rigby Limited, Perth.

\textsuperscript{29} Australia is a wealthy nation, however in other places where starvation, malnutrition, diseases and death occur daily. A growing organisation based in the United Kingdom known as ‘Make Poverty History’ is calling on world leaders to work together on this human problem. One of the many groups participating in this cause includes the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

\textsuperscript{30} The act of grooming is found in animals and humans. There are many hairdressers, beauticians, health and wellness centres throughout Perth providing a range of relaxation and beauty treatments.
of appreciating art are defined through two dimensional art and three dimensional pieces. According to Jody ‘Sculptures transform a space, as you move around it, they’re different viewpoints and to me that is transforming art! They fill the space, not as safe as two dimensional’. The artwork that Jody made derives from her photographic memories and emotions that she experienced of Swan River places. ‘I go there to take a feeling away from a place and when I’m creating, that feeling comes out...there is also the artistic memory for shape, form and colour’. This is an example of an ecological approach discussed by Milton (2005, p. 203) although in a different context. That Jody is stimulated creatively by her environment when she goes there and that she then experiences the place emotionally and through her active memory, is revealing because it represents place in her artwork.

Jody also discussed the significance of her next project in relation to the diverse cultural life of the Swan River mouth. Noting how different languages are spoken to a part of the Swan River as it opens out into the Indian Ocean, she observed:

The ocean and [Swan] River meet at Fremantle -- the [Swan] River mouth, a greeting place where women and men meet traditionally for humans and the environment. The energy of Fremantle, a meeting place for settlers, migrants, port, ships, cargo, boats and sheep. It reflects diversity of this place, original land owners -- a curvy wall for the artwork.

Point Heathcote Museum and Art Exhibition Centre was chosen for the venue where artists visited to combine the viewing of a local art exhibition by ‘Wendy’ who was also a member of the Rivers and Parks group. Wendy’s exhibition was inspired by a sense of spirituality of being at the wetlands at Piney Lakes. This Swan River place is a draw card for people interested in the history of the Cultural Precinct and art exhibitions. Many people from the community go to this site to paint as well as to attend barbecues and picnics. There is a children’s playground and paths where people walk as they gaze across the expansive views of the Swan River. I observed that this viewing practice was particularly noticeable at another exhibition that I attended at this site. A large number of people who attended an exhibition inside the centre proceeded to move outside once they had seen the artworks. In my assessment, they did so to continue socializing, as well as to share the consumption of food and view the sunset in an iconic river environment.

4.5 EMOTIONAL BELONGING

The Rivers and Parks group met for the end of year luncheon in a local café at Heathcote to debrief after the eight month project. I again found that the scenery of
the Swan River was a focus. Many comments were made about how beautiful the views were from Point Heathcote as people shared lunch together and talked about how the exhibition was responded to at the Constitution Centre. At times people looked mesmerized by the natural beauty of the Swan Riverscape. Some of the Artists were very pleased about the artworks they had produced; others linked an environmental theme with other art exhibitions. For example, 'Helen' went on to produce artworks on the theme of water, and there was an overall sense that each artist felt good about being part of the Rivers and Parks project. The social interactions that this group provided during artmaking revealed how socially and environmentally important the Swan River was not only to the group but also to individuals.

Centered on the Swan River, social conversation revealed that there was considerable diversity within the artist group including about the ways that they valued the waterway. For example, at a meeting at one of the artists private homes at Salter Point, ‘Kelly’, her husband and children overlooked Aquinas Bay next to the elbow of the Canning River. At the meeting, people gathered in the front living room where there were clear glass doors letting bright sunlight indoors and allowing people to look out across the bay. These impressive views of the bay became a popular topic of conversation while enjoying a cup of tea or coffee and cake around a large table in the living room. When people entered Kelly's home for the first time and experienced these Swan River views, their comments combined aesthetics and ecology. Lara, for instance observed that ‘It's a beautiful view of the river, lots of water, very appropriate for the artist workshop! (Lara, Artist, 05/11/2004, field notebook no 1).

Ideas discussed during the meeting related to the use of water in an installation. Both positive and negative values relating to pollution were put, however the positive values were also connected to economic success as evident in the following comments. Jody suggested that ‘We can put polluted water in bottles as an installation’ to emphasize the water quality (05/11/04, field notebook no 1). However another artist, Fern disagreed and said ‘It has to be positive – we have to create a positive image to sell our work! (05/11/04, field notebook no 1). Meaning that polluted water held a negative value.

Aesthetic appeal of the Swan River and water can also be tied to economic success in sales relating to property and artwork. The impressive cobalt blue colour of the river landscape is valued highly, for instance, whether viewed in real life or represented in art.
4.6 Kelly’s Story

After the meeting, Kelly (11/11/2004, field notebook no 1) shared her perspective about living on the Canning River and what it was like. Her response highlighted an ongoing physical and emotional conflict about different kinds of access between property owners who live on the Canning River, and restrictive environmental legislation designed to protect and conserve Canning River foreshores for the benefit of the public. However, having access to the life generating qualities of the Canning River was obviously important to Kelly’s everyday social and emotional life as she explained:

We walk four and a half kilometers in the mornings, to walk the dog. The last three years I have consistently done it. I used to go by myself now we [my husband and myself] both go for the last three years which is good. We’re also going to buy a kayak which we had when we’re first married. Started walking the dog and walking around the [Swan] River for exercise and it’s nice and it lifts the spirits.

It was during these daily walks along the bay that Kelly’s artwork was inspired. Kelly ‘loves the [Canning] River’ and her artwork included uplifting abstract paintings of the local bird life to celebrate the 175th Anniversary Exhibition.

I think I paint from my experiences and feelings. I love the [Canning] River and I continued painting birds for the Rivers and Parks Project. The [painted] birds are funky, whimsical, an element of fun and joy when you see birds, they are not real birds, not scientific representation. Not an accurate representation. It’s about the joy of seeing the birds; paintings of birds do not accurately exist. I’m not taking it too seriously like a bird watcher, just the uplifting feeling.
However, even though Kelly enjoys the undisturbed natural Canning River foreshore she recognizes there is a lack of democracy relating to the ways people can use and enjoy the Canning River. She exclaimed that:

We are not allowed to use motorboats in the bay, we can only canoe, and we can’t do anything! We wanted to build another house below for our children but we are not allowed. Environmentalists don’t want to cut down a tree or do anything. They tell us too much of what we can’t do.

Kelly also described activities at Aquinas Bay. For example, she saw a pod of dolphins, and then sea birds attacking the dolphins and pelicans. Kelly saw rowers on the Canning River in the morning, sometimes she saw yachts, an occasional windsurfer and speed boats on the weekend. ‘With a view you are always more aware of the weather’ as Kelly commented on the constantly changing weather coming in from the south-west. Kelly noted how the warm temperature made it difficult to do painting. She observed that ‘You get a sea breeze in summer, sometimes a fog, white and misty. There is a low tide and you can see the mud flats, and the change of season’. As well Kelly observed ‘Big snakes, dugites, they are nasty snakes, at the beginning of warm weather and people walking dogs’.

Fishing and the connection with onlookers had also changed, in part because it is an increasingly interesting activity. Kelly noticed that ‘Sometimes you see big fish being caught which is interesting to watch. You can walk out to the red marker
and there are people standing in the middle fishing, it's very shallow'. However Kelly keenly observed fishing is now obsolete: 'The fishermen stopped fishing now, licences ran out'.

The colours of the living Canning River are associated with both aesthetic beauty and negative emotions, such as anxiety about the degree of pollution that exists. Kelly explained that 'The [Canning] River is not often bright blue because it is a muddy river, no algae, it's further away. The speed boats aerate the water and it keeps algae away'.

Kelly returned to the issues of access again and in relation to the often hidden emotion of shame31 and explained differences in human use between the Canning River and Kings Park. She explained that there used to be:

Two seaplanes, a red and yellow would taxi off the water but now they have stopped. Not allowed to have a boat shed and build a jetty which I think is a shame. They are trying to keep it environmentally pristine which is ok to a point but it's more dynamic to be able to use the waterfront and sometimes things are too sterile, too regulated. For example, Kings Park bush are hardly used, there could be more public use of the environment. There should be allowed to have more boats and jetties and yachts on the [Canning] River.

Looking across Aquinas Bay from her living room, Kelly talked about the local heritage values and the experiences of isolation. The Canning River is also known as a Secret River (Burningham, 2004, p. 369) implying that there is also an unknown human use of this waterway.

4.7 Moira’s Story

Moira’s story provides a slightly different perspective. On the other side of the Canning River I visited her, someone who has returned to live in the area. She shared some of her enjoyable childhood memories and attachments to living near the Canning River:

I was born in Mount Pleasant and lived here as a child so it was a place that I wanted to return to. As a child I played on the [Swan] River and learnt to swim at Applecross jetty and I've seen all the changes along the [Swan-Canning] River and the bridges being developed and wanted to return to this area because I enjoyed it so much as a child (25/08/04, recorded interview).

Moira talked about how the Swan River was used as a place for learning in relation to the physical and pleasurable activity of swimming:

Well, I remember obviously learning to swim, all the children...that was my playground in the 50s and 60s. So all children then, it was pretty hard to go

31 According to Dalziell, (1999) Shame is deeply embedded in Australian culture and confronting this painful emotion is difficult, individually and socially. However, if such a confrontation occurs, it can lead to a deeper self-knowledge and a greater recognition of shared humanity. Reading autobiographies is one way for this to be achieved Dalziell, R. (1999) Shameful Autobiographies, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.
anywhere else, there were no swimming pools and so everyone swam in the [Swan] River and held swimming classes in the [Swan] River, so we would have to dive in and swim with all the jellyfish and there were fish and it was clean...and we had great fun in the [Swan] River (25/08/04, recorded interview).

Memories of life on the Swan-Canning River included the building of the Kwinana Freeway, a significant road linking the south and north sides of the Swan River and giving people easier access between south and north sides of the Swan River. The Freeway also mostly closed off human access to existing social and emotional connections to this section.

There were lots of jetties, there was a huge jetty at Como and of course no freeway and so it was just open to all. You would just drive up to the foreshore; it was the whole foreshore along there until the freeway went in and the narrows bridge...I remember vividly as a child that [the Swan River] did divide Perth. Anyone that lived south of this Swan River, or you lived north and it was a very sort of, it was hard to get, you had to either go via the causeway as a child or we had to go down to Fremantle and over the little bridge at Fremantle to get north of the [Swan] River, there was no other way to get across. So it was an expedition really as a young child to get north of the [Swan] River and yet we did it all the time (25/08/04, recorded interview).

Childhood play, in particular crabbing and prawning formed strong memories and connections for Moira’s Swan-Canning River experiences. In particular, Moira observed the decreasing numbers of prawns caught in recent times.

We would, as children just go down to the edge of the water and play. We would walk along the water, we would, it was quite sandy, and we would play in the reeds and climb the paperbarks that lined along from Deep Water Point. I guess one of the other most favourite things we did as children, we accompanied our parents crabbing and prawning. It was a really big thing to go prawning on the weekends and on a hot night; you’d get a huge net for the prawns. All the children would sit through the net and we had done some prawning since then, but certainly my memory. Well, we had never got that sort of catch, as I recall getting as a child. And also as a child, we had a boat, so we would just sort of on a hot day, slowly go as far as we could up the river on the boat and turn around and picnic on the edge (25/08/04, recorded interview).

Referring to a changing sense of safety over time, Moira observed changes to transport links along the Swan River and the Indian Ocean:

The suburbs really didn’t go past this area. There was no freeway, I mean you had Canning Highway that went down to the ocean which you would swim in the ocean or the [Swan] River and the suburbs really didn’t stretch out down towards the south. You would drive along the ocean through Fremantle and along, through the naval base and Rockingham to get down south. There’s wasn’t any of the roads or the suburbs so yeah it was safe, relatively safe during that time. It has certainly changed probably to when I had my children in the 70s although they still had...the suburbs were spreading and it wasn’t quite the same (25/08/04, recorded interview).

Upstream along the middle part of the Swan River, the artist group traveled to Bayswater Gardens and the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary that encompasses a creek running into the Swan River. The site of the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary has been restored to a habitat for birdlife from its previous use as a rubbish tip. Artists
gathered in wooden huts where people have an outlook across the pond and the various birdlife which are resting, feeding and singing. There were walking paths circling the pond which artists followed. I watched as artists left the cement pathways and stepped over dead tree branches to find a place to sit and sketch birds in their habitat. I saw *Porphyrio porphyrio bellus*, purple swamp hens, there on a number of occasions.

At Ellis House, a community art centre, various artists painted and drew representations of, among other subjects, the Swan River and associated species. Some artists had been painting for thirty years. Two elderly artists had various artworks on display including Swan River representations. As a reminder that the Swan River does not always provide a sense of belonging, ‘Trevor’ said he painted the Swan River because ‘I just paint it because it gives me something to paint...a subject’. However when I asked ‘Marion’ about her paintings...Trevor indicated a connection between painting the Swan River and mental health. He told me ‘I come here for her wellbeing...we live together’. Evident here is the connection between being physically close to the Swan River and the experiences of positive emotions for people.

Another artist, ‘Ellen’ explained that she had recently undergone surgery and was lucky to be at the Mercy Hospital (one of the first hospitals built near a river in Western Australia) because she had the healing powers of the Swan River nearby. In a handwritten letter to me Ellen stated that ‘If you ever have to have treatment that is the place to go – especially with these healing views. Ellen showed me six sketches that she made while staying in hospital and explained how and why they were meaningful to her:

**Sketch One:**

This view is of the old “St Annes” roof tops, I could see from my bed. Love the chimneys and watching the sky change colour at sunrise each morning.

**Sketch Two:**

From the window as darkness lifted a couple of rowers rounded the point. They must get up about 4.30am.

**Sketch Three:**

Sunrise over the rooftops 5 to 6am.

**Sketch Four:**

A distant glimpse of Maylands Yacht Club Jetty. My husband was a member for over 30 years, many memories there.

**Sketch Five:**
Bunbury Bridge and the new bike path. My daughters walked there waiting for my op to be over.

Sketch Six:

After the second operation in October. Sunday sailing by the Maylands Yacht Club. I can just make out "Moths" my husband's old craft. Should have brought in some binoculars.

Through her writing Ellen demonstrated healing connections with the Swan River, and via her sketches she showed that the waterway was meaningful to her emotionally, socially, nostalgically and aesthetically.

4.8 Ginger's Story

Through further visits at Ellis House located next to the Swan River foreshore, I met 'Ginger' who revealed a series of interwoven physical and heartfelt connections to the Swan River. Ginger began telling a personal story that expressed her human need for a sense of freedom, the ability to be self expressive through creativity pursuits and as a means to understand herself spiritually:

I was in an unhealthy relationship and I had to break free to be free and creative...it’s to do with your spirit...the spirit is who you are. When I broke free of that person I have the freedom to work. If you are a creative person it’s in here [points to her heart] and you have to be able to express yourself. I just have to have a studio or a space where I can be me. A place where I can come and create, it's me; I do it with the colours of the fabric and the shapes (20/11/06, field notebook no 18).

Ginger discussed a number of her internal dilemmas she was experiencing. Her sense of freedom became evident through the symbolic meanings within her craft representations of birds. She observed:

See here [points to Eric’s banner] it's called 'Flight of Freedom' brolga's winging through the air. The curved lines relate to the curves of the earth. The brolgas flying represent freedom to be who they are. I dye all my fabrics and I began with the outside with the folds of the land. It just took shape and I didn't know how else to explain it. It just comes from inside (20/11/06, field notebook no 18).
Plate 9: Banner made to commemorate Eric Singleton’s contribution to the community 20/11/2006.
Indicating a close connection to birdlife Ginger explained the long process of learning and putting her knowledge into practice through different creative techniques. Some of the birds represented in the banner included a great egret, a white faced heron, swans, a purple moore hen, a teal duck and a pelican:

Over the years (10 years) I’ve done lots of workshops what I found is when I stopped learning techniques that all this stored knowledge comes out and I found that this knowledge comes out in the work when I stopped running around I found that I can draw better with a sewing machine and needle then with a pencil and paper. I worked with Eric on birds and the banner (20/11/06, field notebook no 18).

My conversations with, and observations of, Ginger, also revealed how she linked the Swan River to the importance of childhood and environmental education. For instance, she explained that she spent a lot of time taking students to the Swan River to hear Eric Singleton. Identifying the importance of place, she recounted a story about an injured bird that had fallen from its nest. Singleton referred the bird for help for the Swan River sanctuary. This illustration helped me to understand the connection between the Swan River, humans and bird life and in Ginger’s case, how she experienced a sense of belonging.

4.9 Leanne’s Story: The Swan River’s ‘Comfort Zone’

A discussion with ‘Leanne’ about her artwork teased out a range of meanings, including the idea of a ‘comfort zone’ in relation to the Swan River. Leanne worked out of a small studio in Guildford. Her artwork was called ‘water, land and civilisation’ and it connected meanings of the ever changing or ‘flickering’ nature of water. Pieces of gold and silver leafed paper and burned edges represented bushfire and dryness. A black line drawing gave the feeling of looking down on the Swan River like a map. Leanne explained that her artwork is an abstract representation of what she saw using many close up photographs that she took in the field. Leanne explained that ‘Civilisation is encompassed in three small identical canvases painted in pale pink and edged in pink satin to suggest the ‘comfort zone’ (11/11/04, field notebook no 1).

Leanne commented about her participation in the Rivers and Parks project and exclaimed how ‘The best thing about this project was the exposure to new sites around Perth that offer the public a free visual feast’.

When I asked Leanne about the Swan River she took me to several Swan River places that were meaningful to her explaining that ‘I walk my dog to four
different parts of the [Swan] River, Fishermen’s Markets [Fish Market Reserve], Lilac Hill Park, Kings Meadow Oval - Bassendean Side and the Helena River’.


Leanne emphasised an important insight into the role that floodplains have played in the social life and aesthetic appreciation along the Swan River. Free access gives people of all socio-economic status the autonomy to use and enjoy the Swan River. She stated:

I am so lucky to live in Guildford. I have lived in Guildford for twenty years. The flooded [Swan] River has its own course. There are a lot of flood plains that are not allowed to be built on. We have picnics a lot. I’m a great picnic person. There’s a lot to do in Perth in the natural environment and it’s free! There are lovely wildflowers. Don’t need money to do lots of things in Perth. Lilac Park and the Swan River are fantastic, beautiful.

A visit to Lesmurdie Falls was interesting to the artists as it offered even more experiential variety in landscape and vegetation. The artists met at the bottom of the falls in the car park and proceeded to walk in single file along a trickling stream and through native vegetation. I listened to artists commenting about the sounds of water trickling past in the stream and their responses to the waterfalls up ahead that people were walking towards; The environment provoked a sense of well being and
connectedness: to be walking through nature content to be outside enjoying the warm sunlight and colours in the landscape. The walking trail took us past a range of vegetation and along the way and I observed artists stopping to photograph wildflowers, or to touch unusual leaves and the bark of the tree trunks.

The space of an artist studio at Robertson Park is shared by several artists including two participants, Dannie and Heidi, from the Rivers and Parks Project. The studio was also used as a venue for the project for the purpose of each artist to discuss the development of their personal artwork. I observed people arrive and look around inside appreciating other artworks and gather outside for a hot drink in the warm winter sunlight where seats were arranged in a circle. Each participant talked about the artwork context, the process of inspiration (including emotional responses and experiences) and provided some practice artwork samples to share with the group. Moments such as these encouraged me to see how the production of art via river scenes gave a sense of belonging evidencing how and why artists are connected to the Swan River.

4.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter Four, I have explored some of the ways and the extent to which artists use and interact with Swan River environments. I have discussed a range of meaningful relationships that explore different senses of belonging to the Swan River, including social, emotional, physical, aesthetic and ecological connections, each of which are considered in the literature (Chapter Two). I found that conversations about and representations of the Swan River emphasized social and emotional belonging through physical and ecological interactions. Aesthetic senses of belonging became evident through representations of, and comments about, Swan River environments. The Swan River provides a context for a range of physical, social and ecological interactions; however it is the emotional attachment that connects people in the most meaningful way. In Chapter Five I present comparative ethnographic data collected from members of the second group with whom I worked for this study, the Claise Brook Catchment Group.
CHAPTER FIVE: SWAN RIVER BELONGING VIA A LOCAL CATCHMENT GROUP

I just feel, it just feels great to have this open space, the breeze and you can actually smell the air because it's coming off the water, it's just a lovely environment and you look out across the [Swan] River (19/11/06, recorded interview).

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I discuss the Claise Brook Catchment Group (CBCG) by providing ethnographic data to explain how members used, interacted with and represented Swan River places. Interested in exploring how and to what extent the Swan River influenced people's access to, and their participation in, social and ecological restoration activities, I primarily draw on interviewee material.

I begin by explaining more about the group among whom I worked, and represent the data collected from people engaged with field sites that were visited, including descriptions and observations. Pseudonyms have been used throughout. The data recorded in this chapter will be compared in the analysis with that documented in the previous chapter.

5.2 Profiling the Catchment Group

I joined an inner city Swan River care group, the Claise Brook Catchment Group CBCG named after Claisebrook in East Perth. The group resolved to change its name from Claisebrook Catchment Group to Claise Brook Catchment Group because of the different meanings associated with a drain that carries waters into the Swan River. Claise Brook no longer exists as a natural waterway and major features named after Claise Brook, such as the train station and the cove, are called 'Claisebrook'. The existing Claisebrook Main Drain is owned by the State's Water Corporation and includes a system of underground water pipes beginning at Yokine (see Appendices, Map 10). Water flows through this drainage system and is then pumped up to the surface at a tortoise sculptured water fountain before running down a cement channel and into Claisebrook Cove, East Perth. The water then flows into the Swan River.
The group has been operating since 1997 when local residents became concerned about developments and their effect on their local community. The catchment group placed value on the cultural and natural heritage of the original free flowing Claise Brook. The name is also a reminder that they are working in a water catchment area that embodies natural and constructed features, including wetlands and streams. The group hold on to the possibility that the present water pipe system will revert to the original living stream.

Within the context of CBCG activities, I found that participants enacted a sense of belonging through the extent to which they were involved with the CBCG. CBCG members are made up of people who volunteer their time, energy, expertise, skills and labour. One person receives funding to carry out administration tasks. A regular CBCG activity includes monthly meetings which usually involved members attending a meeting after leaving their day jobs.

In addition to environmental management practices, group members are also involved with complicated and competitive bureaucratic processes, such as completing funding applications and meeting predetermined, set criteria. There was much discussion at meetings I attended, for instance, about acquiring funding that included a salary component. The Swan River Trust (discussed in Chapter Three) is the only organization that will provide the salary component within funding requirements. Hence maintaining good relations with funding bodies for groups that were outside the Federal government strategy and regional funding were crucial. CBCG work focused on highly structured and ordered group meetings and set agenda topics. To a certain extent, group activities were predetermined by funding, funding criteria, time available, people skills, knowledge and labour, matters that had the potential to distract members from their primary concerns about water.

The catchment group comprised a core committee including the members who played the roles of Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer, and regular members who attended monthly meetings. As well as interested local residents, others attended from State and Local Government agencies. Neighbouring catchment group members were invited and regularly attended. The core committee members were involved in the decision making, identifying projects, applying for funding, organising projects, managing volunteers, sharing local knowledge and environmental historical information to participants and students of different age groups. Different kinds of knowledge and expertise on landscaping and reconstructing wetlands existed. Anyone interested in discussing a particular issue could add it to the agenda prior to a scheduled meeting.
The reasons that volunteers gave me for participating in CBCG activities indicated a complex spectrum of belonging. For example participants responded in a range of ways to the question ‘When you think of the Swan River, what particular places comes to mind? Is there a special place that you think of, or like to go to and why?’ (04/04/05, Focus Group Meeting). ‘Peter’ (a 25 year old) commented that he liked ‘the [Swan] River mouth because of the interaction with river flow and paddling in the morning, whereas ‘Janet’ (also a 25 year old) encouraged me to see the links between being in a river environment and the value of physical activity. Using evocative words such as ‘relaxing’ and ‘meditative’, Janet made plain that the Swan River helped her to enjoy daily exercise, along the accessible sites. Peter and Janet’s commentary differed to that of ‘Nigel’ (a man in his 60s) who emphasised the way in which the river facilitated social interaction and the pleasure of returning to childhood memories. He said:

I like Barrack Street because I used to drive past Barrack Street every day. The Rottnest ferry leaves from Barrack Street. The boats go across to South Perth for transport; there are restaurants at Barrack Street. We used to go fishing for cobbler when we were children. Boat trips leave from Barrack Street for sight seeing (Nigel, 60).

‘Malcolm’ (aged 30) valued the Swan River differently. He emphasised the exclusive aspects of the river, such as the limestone cliffs at Blackwall Reach, Rocky Bay and Freshwater Bay, because these areas were difficult to get to and see. In other words, he enjoyed the feeling of being in a secluded area. ‘Abby’ (aged 30), on the other hand highlighted Heirrison Island and Point Fraser Demonstration Wetlands as her favourite places because of the enjoyable social relationships she developed through the water’s ecology. Abby spent 7 months working on a wetland construction project (which involved revegetating an area with native plants) where she met lots of people and learned a lot professionally and personally, including about local history. Abby said ‘I’m satisfied that this work has in a little way contributed to the environment especially the health of the [Swan] River.

‘Lindy’ (aged 40) enjoyed natural sections of the Swan River such as Belmont Foreshore with large trees and cycle paths. Lindy valued the indigenous vegetation, not the introduced and exotic; she liked the shape of the Melaleuca, the limestone cliffs, big old flooded gums and marri trees including samphire and sedges. The time of day was important, too, such as in the evenings because the Swan River was regarded as being tranquil at that time. ‘Lindy’, also a CBCG member, added a further dimension to Abby’s comments when she said ‘I like the calmness and the size and the strength of the river and the space...I live in the inner city and going down to the River is the only time in my day to day life I’m out in a large space’.

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Visual connections with the Swan River were highly valued. Participants were asked if they had a favourite view of the Swan River. Peter associated aesthetic views with the time of day. He said ‘It’s [Swan River mouth] a peaceful environment view, early in the morning when nature is just waking up. Whereas Janet, showed a preference for views on the other side of the Swan River seen from her work place, and Malcolm linked particular views nostalgically:

I like the view from Mt Henry Bridge looking towards Kings Park and the city driving north along the freeway. My earliest memories of coming to Perth are views across the [Swan] River from this point both at dawn, sunset, dusk and at night are the best times with the colours of red, pink and blues scattered across [Swan] River surface (Malcolm, 30).

Abby drew on memories relating to her favourite place when she saw people walk along the boardwalks and converse about local species, for example by asking ‘what flower plant is that?’ A romantic link at Bank’s Reserve was observed by Lindy who found that an evening in spring or autumn was very tranquil, the air pleasantly warm and enjoyable with her partner where they saw the broad stretch of river, sedges, trees and a big bridge and old houses in the distance.

A range of emotions were shared in relation to responses to the Swan River, a point discernible when I asked people if they had any strong emotional reactions to the Swan River. A response by Peter emphasised sadness: ‘The pollution that humans do to themselves, the dumping of chemicals, sewage pipes, the pollution of a catchment area and inappropriate management’. From a broader perspective, Janet showed surprise when comparing the Swan River with the Yarra River. When on holidays in Melbourne, Janet realised ‘how much nicer/better’ the Swan was from the ‘skinny little Yarra with all its litter traps’! At a local level, Nigel was upset about ‘The algae blooms, lack of mature fish and the chemical spill from Ascot park horse racing venue into the Swan River which killed 10000 fish’. Particular forms of behaviour were noted by Malcolm. He said he was very angry at Australia Day Sky works night (held annually on the river’s foreshore) because of what he saw:

There were many young men urinating directly into the [Swan] River from the river walls and jetties. This made me very angry as they on the one hand are waving the Oz flags and being patriotic but on the other hand being extremely disrespectful to the Swan River which every one values so much for Sky works as people gather on the South Perth foreshore and watch the reflection of the fireworks in the water.

Further responses by Abby showed strong emotional reactions when she found lots of plastic items, especially straws, cigarette butts after high tide receded, as well algae blooms, fish deaths and birds covered in algae. These made her feel sad, angry and disgusted. However Abby also showed positive emotional reactions to the Swan River when sailing on sunny Saturday afternoons and feeling totally peaceful.
Abby showed her willingness to help in any way to contribute to the health of the [Swan] River. Lindy emphasised a slightly different ecological emotional connection:

I went on a boat trip with people from the Swan River Trust – ‘Bob’ who explained how there are many different animals and life forms live in the [Swan] River – he said a billion different animals in the Swan River. I was amazed because previously I thought of it as biologically poor/dead/dying. But now I see it as strong and rich, but in need of care (Lindy, 40).

Knowledge of and access to Swan River places is highly regarded. Occasionally, CBCG members commented about being blocked by the activities and policies of government agencies, and/or being obstructed when trying to gain access to information whether it was historical knowledge of place, or cartographic changes to environments. As well as difficulties in gaining communicative access, community members had problems with telling their stories or writing articles about Swan River environments in the media aimed at the broader public. Their tenacity and consistent attempts to do so indicated strong connections to the Swan River.

5.3 **SWAN RIVER ACCESS**

Accessing the Swan River is not easy for many people who live within the Town of Vincent. However, some places along the Swan River were referred to by informants as places they accessed as alternative locations with which they maintained an emotional connection. For example, respondents highlighted the social connections they had when visiting the Swan River at Como, for instance, to be with friends when access to the city was blocked by a railway line. This example highlighted for me how emotional connections to particular parts of the Swan River were intertwined with physical access. As well as having difficulty of access, a second person noted a lack of awareness regarding how to access particular Swan River places: ‘The railway line blocks access to Banks Reserve, I didn’t know you could go to the [Swan] River at Banks Reserve’. Another stated that their ‘teenagers go to Banks Reserve’, however they lived close by and did not have to cross the railway line. Others showed an ecological interest with other Swan River places. For example, one person observed ‘I go to East Perth; they should put in reeds all along the [Swan] River’. Another showed a fondness for the south side of the Swan River, noting that ‘I don’t go to the [Swan] River enough, I go to Ascot, and it’s really lovely’. Noting a preference for the beach, an additional comment I recorded was ‘I don’t go to the [Swan] River; I go to the beach at Scarborough and Cottesloe. I work every day in the city’. Some people go to both the Swan River, the beach and to parks for social and physical reasons:
I go rollerblading at East Perth, Banks Reserve and South Perth. I go to the beach every weekend in summer; I go walking along the Swan River in spring and autumn when it's not too hot or cold. I go to Robertson Park, to go jogging around near Smiths Lake, Beatty Park and I live next to Robertson Park and I walk to work in the city, and I buy native plants to save water.

Interestingly, some people with whom I spoke revealed reasons to visit alternative places. In many ways their comments showed a sense of belonging to places near the river, most often for practical and emotional reasons. For example, the following informants reveal the value of people's attachment to a local park and a community centre:

> I love Hyde Park – it’s unique – lovely sense of history – the big trees are stunning. The whole thing, see men playing chess, there is a mixture of kids having birthdays, a community centre. The [Swan] River doesn't have that – I haven’t been there for so long – inaccessible. The railway lines and roads, can't easily get to the [Swan] River on foot.

Other reasons for going to parks included issues of proximity and time 'I don't go to the [Swan] River much, just sometimes for walks. I tend to go to parks more because they’re closer. And another informant said:

> I don't go to the [Swan] River. My husband goes fishing down near Cannington, but I don't go. I don't know why I don't go to the [Swan] River, I go to parks instead. Its' probably to do with not having enough time, I never really thought about the [Swan] River.

Many people cited physical activities as forms of interactions along the Swan River and park environments ‘I go to the Maylands Golf Course near the [Swan] River’. Some mentioned their attachment to birds and fish as reasons for going to the Swan River as evidenced in the following commentary: ‘I enjoy walking along the river and fishing but there’s nothing in there now and it’s really sad’. And ‘I love watching the jelly fish – there’s something surreal about them. Many comments emphasise a sadness with the loss of fishlife and the ability to see birdlife on the Swan River that can’t be seen elsewhere ‘There are lots of birds on the [Swan] River – spoonbills, irises, swans, pelicans, magpies, swallows, shrikes and ducks’.

5.4 LEARNING THROUGH WALKING

The East Perth Walk is one of several walks and cycling tours organized by CBCG with the aim of raising environmental awareness among local residents. These tours also provided social and physical interactions for participants and therefore generated a sense of belonging. The walking trail was designed to follow the original Claise Brook that now runs along Royal Street through a gentrified area comprising of new apartments, landscaped parks, cafes, restaurants, shops, gymnasiu
the constructed Claisebrook Cove that opens up into the Swan River. Throughout these walking and cycling tours deeper knowledge and experiences into the lives of people and their connections to Swan River environments were recorded. In addition to interactions observed during the tours, three other key relationships between community and the Swan River focused on landscaped waterways, path links to neighboring communities and a ‘living stream’. I begin with the East Perth Walk.

Plate 11: Walking tour participants meeting at the tortoise fountain, Claisebrook in the shade 18/02/2006.

Before the event (10/12/05, field notebook no 11), CBCG members put significant effort into it’s organisation including door knocking and handing out information flyers throughout East Perth. Significant interest was shown by local residents to the walking tour. Email invitations reminded walkers to wear appropriate clothing, comfortable walking shoes, to put on sunscreen lotion and bring drinking water. CBCG also provided additional free sunscreen lotion and drinking water\(^{32}\) for participants. A mixed aged group of about forty people registered. Artistic representations formed part of the walking tours. Various creative works whether poetry, paintings or landscape designs expressed different meanings about the Swan

\(^{32}\text{Bottles of drinking water were provided by the Water Corporation. I have observed 'free' bottles of water being handed out to participants at a range of community activities for example the Perth International Arts Festival Opening and The Swan River Bike Ride.}\)

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River. These included perceptions of indigenous and settler history and general impressions. A range of values were evident in relation to the conservation of trees. The significance of the Norfolk Pine tree was discussed openly by a CBCG member during East Perth Walks. Explaining the environmental history of Claise Brook, the Swan River and other parks and wetlands, a lone Northfolk Pine tree stands tall. This tree was saved by CBCG who fought to have the Trafalga Bridge redesigned so as the tree was not cut down during construction.

The tortoise fountain meeting place under a large shady Plain Tree represented the beginning of the walking tour. Alongside a drinking fountain poems were engraved on the sides by artists Nola Farman and Marcelle George.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Tap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over and under you go</td>
<td>Rushes from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You and this track</td>
<td>Still big Lakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This creek</td>
<td>Herdsman fenced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down the valley</td>
<td>Through Perth central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foundations absorbed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds and their eggs</td>
<td>Underfoot smell it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insects and frogs</td>
<td>Overshoes squelch it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortoise lily root</td>
<td>Cool potable water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaleuca shade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet tortoise flesh or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan with its goose cooked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then jump in the hot pool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down at the power station</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along the walk, we observed how the pathway followed Claisebrook and how the water had been redirected through a landscaped cemented drain through tunnels\(^{33}\), past Tea Trees, drinking and decorative water fountains and into the water body contained with Claisebrook Cove. Sculptures, murals, statues, engravings and paintings become part of these watery environments. We were surrounded by new terrace housing in a 'U' shape, restaurants and various watercrafts\(^{34}\) were floating inside the Cove and out on the Swan River. The walking tour gave people the chance to view artworks\(^{35}\) and read poetry representing Aboriginal heritage and early

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\(^{33}\) The sounds of water running through the pedestrian underpass/tunnel is part of the Australian Sound Design Project (2007), Vol. 2007 University of Melbourne, Melbourne.

\(^{34}\) A gondola described as 'a symbol of romance and a vessel of love' and 'your limousine on the water' is moored within Claisebrook Cove Gondolas on the Swan (2007), Vol. 2007 Gondolas on the Swan, Perth.

\(^{35}\) At the base of Victoria Gardens and the mouth of Claisebrook there is a large mural by Artist, Joanna Lefroy Capelle. The mural represents a 'history of Claisebrook and a story of the rising and falling fortunes of East Perth and traces its origins from the Bibbulmun nation to the arrival of Europeans, industrial and horticultural growth, the
settler histories; to appreciate birdlife including pelicans and Melaleuca trees\textsuperscript{36}. These organized tours gave people the opportunity to notice environmental and artistic features that may normally be overlooked. As a participant of the tour, I observed where the original mouth of Claisebrook was and saw some rats\textsuperscript{37} escaping into the reeds. One of the tour guides, Abby, pointed out which species of reeds were native and which were introduced demonstrating an ecological knowledge and connection to the Swan River.

At a second East Perth walk, a welcome talk (18/02/06, field notebook no 12) given to participants by a Councillor, Max Kay from City of Perth (COP) referred to a cultural and historical continuities through time of water movements within the catchment:

Claisebrook used to flow down to the Swan River. Where we are standing is at the end of a catchment, in the built environment, we still have water running through an underground water system and storm water drains.

CBCG leader ‘Henry’ informed us that the ground water flows underground from the highest point in Gnangara mound to Jandakot and then to the Swan River or the coast. The Councilor read aloud CBCG information to the walking tour participants who listened attentively:

It is still important to know that Claisebrook continues to flow to the Swan River and what our impact is on water quality into the Swan River. Claisebrook goes all the way to Yokine\textsuperscript{38} and into dog swamp and includes Mount Hawthorn, Leederville and East Perth. What people do in their homes impacts on the water quality and there are ways that people can create cleaner water.

The Councillor then emphasized some practical steps to take such as to ‘Pick up litter’. He reminded us that ‘Small/dissolvable things are a problem, for example the hydrocarbons from cars’. And that ‘The rain washes dirt into the storm water drains’. As well, he noted that ‘the deciduous leaves from Palm trees are washed into the drain’ and that ‘these are too much for the Swan River to break down’. Other practical issues included that ‘dog pooh washes into the drains and is high in phosphorous and harmful to the Swan River; and that ‘Feeding ducks is a problem\textsuperscript{39}’. The subdivisions cause problems because the sand and bricks sitting on the verge causes extra building materials to runoff into the Swan River. These issues were...
often discussed at various meetings. CBCB members expressed a high level of concern and commitment to environmental care of the Swan River and catchment.

During the walk two CBCG leaders provided a narration of environmental and historical changes to Claisebrook and the Swan River. Some themes included environmental management of water sources with a focus on reducing nutrients that ran into the Swan River. While gathered at Victoria Gardens, Henry exclaimed ‘In the 1920s the Swan River was disgusting and dirty and needed to be cleaned up’. Deep emotions were expressed in relation to pollution of the Swan River in both the past and the present.

On the eastern side of Claisebrook Cove, the soil toxin levels were very high from industrial use and needed to be fixed up before any houses could be built. During the redevelopment of East Perth Henry (18/02/06, field notebook no 12) explained:

> Across the cove on the eastern side, the soil was too toxic and a lot had to be spent to fix the soil before building houses. In the 1980’s the industries closed and moved elsewhere — it was a fairly derelict area. The sites were very contaminated and often people would dump it on Burswood peninsula... The EPRA [East Perth Redevelopment Authority] did a lot of work to decontaminate the area for houses. It is still an issue in other areas. North Perth, Northbridge and some areas needed treatment before building on. East Perth Power Station is being decontaminated.

Both water and soil pollution raised emotional responses from Henry. The walking tour followed the Swan River foreshore west. We walked past some fishers holding on to fishing rods with lines sunk into the passing current looking across at the bright green fertilized lawns of the statuesque architecture of the Burswood Casino and Golf Course. The level of fertilizer used for maintaining golf course greens was mentioned as another issue contributing towards the occurrences of some algae bloom outbreaks40. The reference to fertilizer use was a serious issue raised many times by CBCG members.

Deep emotions were linked to Swan River modifications including the filling in of lakes. Claisebrook began with a series of interlinking lakes and wetlands, also known as the String of Pearls. Most of these were filled in, drained and covered up for human usage. Claisebrook became a drain with rubbish dumped along its banks and used for carrying sewerage away into larger waterway. Legislative changes over time have seen human use of Claisebrook transform the way it interacts with an

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40 The type of fertiliser and the extent to which it is used by residents is a contested issue by a range of people concerned about the health of the Swan River. Fertilisers are needed to boost plant growth due to infertile soils; however poor drainage and excess nutrients eventually leach back into the Swan River and fuelling Algal and plant growth Brearley, A. (2005) Ernest Hodgkin's Swanland, University of Western Australia Press, Perth. Although awareness raising campaigns have been carried out, residents choose to continue to use fertilisers on their lawns and in their gardens to boost plant growth, including a number of golf courses located along the Swan River.
urban environment. Henry referred to the author Henry Lawson who was living in
Perth during the 1880s gold rushes.

Lawson kept a diary of the tent city and how it was close to a graveyard\(^{41}\)
which was not good due to leaching toxins. Lawson described how
Claisebrook became polluted within fifty years and called it a 'sewer'.

While listening I noticed some ducks and ducklings swimming near sedges and close
by there was a pair of Black Swans swimming. A 'shag' also rested on a rock with its
wings outstretched to dry in the warm sunlight. Other modifications included the
construction of river walls, dredging and the use of native vegetation. Both emotional
and ecological connections were evoked in Henry's narrative:

Dredging causes the [Swan] River to be deeper and black swans don't like
deep water. There had been discussions with EPRA for creating better
habitats. Dredging impacts other animals and the types of vegetation used
would encourage animals to come back to the Swan River...Limestone
walls also erode and fall away as well. There's lots of rubbish, for example
bricks on the edges of the Swan River that are used to reduce erosion.
People blame boats for wash, but there is also lots of wind that blows water.
Planting Native trees and making gentle river banks will help with reducing
erosion and to provide habitats for animals (18/02/06, field notebook no 12).

The way that Swan River foreshores were developed was connected to the
ecological quality of the broader environment. Henry showed his connections with
the Swan River through sharing environmental history, and knowledge of present
ecological issues. He was concerned that:

There is a new development proposal for the Belmont peninsula for a canal
to the casino. There are high nutrients in the Swan River and creating more
stagnate water may create serious environmental problems. There needs
to be constant flushing in an isolated inlet. At the far end of the Belmont
peninsula there is some swampy land, and you can canoe and see lots of
birds...will lose a lot so close to the city – we need to retain areas with
ecological value. Keep some areas for intense built up and some areas for
flora and fauna. In other parts of Australia industries are built on the river
edges however the Swan River is shallow and did have a bar at Fremantle
so Swan River is different to the Yarra and the Brisbane River. The Swan
River doesn't need to follow like the Yarra and the Brisbane River and
places like Southbank [located on the Brisbane River] may not suit the
Swan River (18/02/06, field notebook no 12).

For example, Henry proudly explained a positive environmental change:

Point Fraser which used to be a point before being reclaimed, dredged and
water filled in from dredging the Swan River and the river wall and created
more land for Riverside Drive...Now the newly constructed Point Fraser
Demonstration wetlands filters storm water and pollutants through an 'S'
shape before entering the Swan River.

Modifications also had an impact on social needs. Henry (18/02/06, field notebook
12) noted that 'Cafes are okay if they're done in an environmental way. But it is
important not to sacrifice ecologically valued areas and put built up stuff in other
sections'.

\(^{41}\) The east Perth Cemetery on Bronte Street, East Perth contains graves of many early colonial families.
In comparison, another area visited as part of the Walking Tour led people from a highly constructed Queens Gardens across a new development site before passing through Ozone Reserve\(^{42}\) and Vasse Lake at a landscaped gateway to Perth city. Along the walk I spoke to 'Pam' (18/02/06, field notebook no 12) who emphasized the importance of social interactions. She told me that:

> There needs to be things to do, see, places to rest and sit down, some barbeques, toilets, things to keep people interested in the [Swan] River foreshore....I like South Perth because there are lots of barbeques. I also like Point Walter because there are beaches and a café, good for kids. People like different things at different ages.

A transformation of old values to new values was materialised along the Swan River. At Point Fraser Demonstration Wetland, stage one has been completed and stage two was undergoing transformation. In response to stage two, Sam said with some concern that 'There is a proposed café to be built on the [Swan] River foreshore and the existing car park and helicopter ride business will need to be removed'.

At a different CBCG activity, participants were at Mardalup Park in East Perth, an area that is located on the Swan River foreshore and linked to Victoria Gardens on the other side of the Claisebrook Cove via a footbridge. Known as Trafalga Bridge, it provided access for people along the Swan River foreshores. People used this bridge to move between places for exercise, walking and talking, cycling to and from Perth City for work or other social and cultural activities including riding further along Perth Waters (via the Causeway that crosses Heirisson Island or through Point Fraser Demonstration Wetlands) sometimes enjoying a circular rides around the Swan River. At other times I saw parents pushing strollers or walking with small children.

On entry to Mardalup Park I passed some young adult males having a friendly game of basketball. However, the main hive of activity centred on landscaping gardens on the Swan River foreshore. People from the CBCG, the Town of Vincent and volunteers from local East Perth residences were mostly bent over digging and planting dug up grass patches with young native plant species. People were very enthused about planting and talking. There was lots of talking about the kinds of plants used with reference to peoples own gardens. Comments were intermixed between personal lives and shared knowledge of plant types and what they were like, what flowers they have, if it is pretty and what colour it is; what soil suits the plant; and does it like wet or dry conditions. There were trucks parked close by with City of Perth employees wearing khaki green work shirts carefully unloading trays of young plants.

\(^{42}\) Ironically, Ozone Reserve was used for an overflow car park during the Perth Motor Show 2007 Perth Motor Show (2007), Vol. 2007 Perth.
Indicating a clear connection with the Swan River environments and in keeping with Milton's discussion about the value of identifying motivation as a key indicator to understandings about belonging, there were a range of reasons that motivated participants to attend the Mardalup working bee. For instance, I overheard one volunteer talking loud enough for most of the group to hear while planting saying in a rebellious way how she (06/05/06, field notebook no 15) would like to ‘Come down at night time and plant some big native trees along the foreshore’ where the landscape had clear views of the water showing how aesthetics and type of landscape design is a contested issue.

There were positive emotions associated with planting. For instance a local resident who lives in one of the townhouses overlooked the Swan River and the newly planted landscaped gardens told me how she ‘loves planting, the kids love planting...I'm not a gardener, but my husband is and it's something we like doing together (06/05/06, field notebook no 15)’.

The actions from the above two examples also indicates the type of relationship that exists between learned responses to plants and planting, a point discussed (albeit in a contextually different environment) by Milton (2005, p. 204) who claims that our bodies respond to a stimulus which leads to an emotion and then an action.

During the morning tea break ‘Bill’, a City of Perth employee, explained the management of changing land use and the layering effects of clay is like an onion:

The history of Mardalup Park is a toxic dump. It requires a clay cap to protect the toxins from coming up onto the surface. The clay is also the garden soil base that holds the water. There is about 600mm of topsoil and so it also saturates easily and that's why there is the yellowing of plants from waterlogged conditions (06/05/06, field notebook no 15).

43 Clay pottery workshops held at Fremantle Arts Centre taught students how to coil a snake like clay and to hand make clay art works forming a range of pieces including fish, birds, bird baths, mother and baby, boy, flower vase, a Buddha meditating, chicken and Napoleon.
A personal perspective given by Bill shows his attachment to transformational landscaping within a public space subject to particular visual demands:

An excavator came through and put in a plant mix. It's all part of the management plan of the park, there is a definite theme. Originally the garden beds were empty and then we began to put in native species - it's my baby. Some of the residents here have million dollar views and we have to keep them happy as well... 'views with a price tag'. I have a chance to plant what I want to (06/05/06, field notebook no 15).

Indicating dual values, connections were also made between surfing at the beach and catching a good wave to recycling and reusing what other people discard. Bill explained that he 'likes 'verge surfing'...that's where people put out anything they don't want anymore and others can reuse other peoples junk... 'treasure and trash' (06/05/06, field notebook no 15).

During fieldwork I found that CBCG members expressed a range of emotional responses in relation to the changing Swan River environmental history. Volunteers often responded to conflicting human social and ecological values. For example, participants who were involved in restoration activities at Mardalup Park showed enthusiasm when replanting the manicured grassed area with native species,

44 Junk Busters Inc is a group who recycle junk at the entrance of a rubbish tip near Armadale.
however some expressed frustration and anger at why the natural Swan River vegetation was destroyed in the first place. There was a deep sense of sadness of the loss of the natural beauty of a Swan River ecosystem that once thrived and that has long since been destroyed, polluted, reconstructed, built on and gentrified and now undergoing another form of reconstruction. Just as Milton (2005, p. 207) argued that emotions connect us to the things that surround us, whether those things are human or non-human. Using this ecological approach Milton explains that emotions motivate a person to act. Feelings of love, guilt, anxiety, envy, hope, desire, drive a person to do what they do in everyday life. Therefore participants were motivated to carry out restoration activities responded to the health of the Swan River and their emotional connections to their surroundings.

During the Mardalup Park planting day activities, one of the volunteers, ‘Cathy’, exclaimed in an angry tone that ‘East Perth, prior to development was in a mess! It was a toxic dump, but it also had lots of native vegetation’ (06/05/06, field notebook no 15).

Not only was anger expressed at the destruction of original natural vegetation, but also at the ways that soils were moved about during the redevelopment of East Perth. Cathy explained that because:

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The top soils of Mardalup Park were toxic, they had to be removed, however these toxic soils were dumped at the old Western Power Station site on the other side of the Graham Farmer Freeway and now the wind blows this toxic dust across where people live and breathe (06/05/06, field notebook no 15).
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In East Perth, Walters Brook is also part of the CBCG catchment area and lies upstream of Claisebrook where it enters the Swan River through Banks Reserve. Banks Reserve marks the beginning of the newest section of pathway that goes past Mercy Hospital and links up with Bardon Park, the location of a newly constructed bike path providing greater access for pedestrians and cyclists along this section of the Swan River foreshores. One of the Swan River foreshores visited as part of the Autumn River Festival included Tranby House. The homestead was designed to suit the environmental conditions of Perth rather than those designs appropriate for European climates. The path continues under Garratt Road Bridge, past Ellis House and discontinues at Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary. People living in Bassendean and Guildford still need to use residential roads and verges before they can access the Swan River foreshore paths that lead into the city and on to Fremantle.

At the foreshore park there are free barbeques, picnic tables, toilet facilities and a car park suggesting community involvement. I watched as a group of young adults walked over and put down their eskies, fold up chairs, picnic baskets on the
wooden tables. Revealing a gendered division of labour, the women unpacked various bags and plastic containers of food and drink items ready for cooking. One of the men cleaned the barbeque and arranged pieces of fish, sausages and steaks and vegetables over the hotplate. While the food sizzled, a range of salads, bread buns, tomato sauce, plates and cutlery were put out on the picnic bench by the women, before their attention was drawn to what was cooking on the barbeque and then both genders became involved in checking and turning over the cooking food45.

In the background there was an amphitheatre and steps for people to sit for viewing purposes. Artwork in the form of sculptures representing Aboriginal cultural and natural heritage, drinking water fountains, large sunlit exercise field for humans and animals and a place to enjoy ball games on manicured lawns. On these playing fields people threw frisbees and kicked soccer balls. Cement and bitumen coated paths lined the edges of the playing fields for pedestrians, cyclists and rollerbladers; people with prams, wheelchairs, young people on skateboards and scooters, shaded bench seats within natural foreshore areas for people to sit down, relax, smelling the fresh and salt waters while they gazed out across the Swan River. While resting, people watched boating activity, jet skis, people sat still in their tin boats waiting for fish to bite, or a Captain Cook cruise glided by. Along the foreshores, people walked slowly wearing shady hats and comfortable walking shoes; both closed footwear and open sandals were worn. Between where the waters are lapping, I observed people touching and bending over on occasion to smell and feel the textures of fringing vegetation. Further along I saw where Swan River wash has systematically eroded sand away from tree roots. Some people walked solely and others in pairs and they talked and laughed or explained something in a serious manner. Occasionally I saw individuals bend down to pick up rubbish or to pick up dog litter in litterbags. And a woman carried a green hose with water bursting out as she held her finger over the end for optimal pressure to wash her plates and cutlery after eating.

In some places small children and dogs46 hid amongst the feathery sedges. Occasionally dog owners intervened to separate dog fights, sometimes they became embroiled in heated discussion about dog behaviours. Other dog owners come together and talked about their beloved pets and shared the dog exercise area. There are sandy beaches where I have seen children crawling around in the wet sand to build sandcastles. Some people go swimming to cool off in the refreshing tannin coloured water. Dog owners watched as their dogs jumped and splashed

around, some chasing a ball to fetch and return to their owner, and the place was given colourful life via children’s playground facilities. Standing on Banks Reserve foreshore, the panoramic view takes in scenes of the tall cement structure known as Goongoonup Bridge to the right with small and heavy vehicles rumbling across in the distance. Underneath, fishers take advantage of the shaded patch of water. A footbridge provided access across Walters Brook for pedestrians. It was at this place where I listen to CBCG member Cathy.

Plate 13: Community member with their dog at Banks Reserve 12/03/2006.

5.5 Cathy’s Story

Cathy, (19/11/06, recorded interview) a local resident, walks from her home in East Perth down to Banks Reserve as part of a daily life shared with the Swan River. As a mother of two teenage boys, she spends considerable time visiting this place and discusses the way it is used and managed. With her dog*47 called Jed close by Cathy’s story begins by explaining that ‘Banks Reserve used to be a rubbish tip’ and that ‘old and rare bottle collectors come here in the middle of the night on occasion

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and that’s why you often see holes dug up in the park’. The bottle collector activity provides ample evidence that the Swan River was being used by different groups along the waterway.

Cathy observed the irresistible urge in children to swim in the river. Her personal concerns for water quality in the Swan River aroused a sense of unease in relation to how her children have been taught not to swallow the water:

Quite a few children swim here...on a hot day it’s a little bit hard to resist the [Swan] River. My children certainly swim here, I just ask them not to open their mouths and swallow the water just in case, because we are just downstream from the Bayswater Drain. Walters Brook here drains out onto the little beach here on Banks Reserve and sometimes that water looks a little bit messy. It’s mostly ground water, drained off the street and you wouldn’t know quite what was in it.

Regardless of the water quality and development, Cathy went on to explain her observations and her keen interest in turtle nesting behaviours and risks taken along the brook. Cathy demonstrated her knowledge of turtle behaviour that she has learned from her environment:

Nonetheless I’ve seen turtles in Walters Brook and turtles I think would have been traditionally trying to nest at the top of Walters Brook where there used to be quite a lot of sandy areas. These have now unfortunately been changed as development has now built on to Walters Brook. We’ve found turtles in our back garden, baby ones; this makes you think it was the traditional place, a place where turtles lay their eggs. We’ve only found eggs, but only one small turtle just last summer and twice I’ve seen adult turtles crossing Joel Terrace and they’ve risked their lives of course to follow the line of Walters Brook.

Cathy noted her neighbour’s occupation in bird watching and possible birdlife urban environmental disturbances. She said that ‘we do have an owl that lives in a flooded gum. I’ve seen it a couple of times and you can hear it often’. Cathy observed that her ‘neighbour is a bit of a birdwatcher’ however she guessed that ‘the habitat for birds has been reduced especially in city areas’ (19/11/06, recorded interview). Cathy indicated that learned knowledge of birdlife was a shared activity between herself and her neighbour.

While walking to Banks Reserve Cathy described some of the ways the community value the public space through music, performance, sport and birdlife. She explained that ‘the natural amphitheatre has been made into an amphitheatre and it’s used by community groups for concerts and the Town of Vincent used it for its summer concert program’. However Cathy observed that ‘It’s a lovely open space, its green just now because of the rain we’ve just had and indeed when it rains quite a bit it floods and we get the waterbirds gathering over there, particularly over where the cricket nets are’. In this way Cathy’s ecological knowledge became evident indicating the multiple ways in which she interacted with her environment.

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Cathy demonstrated how she responded with positive feelings to the environmental stimuli of open space, the breeze, water, trees and other built environments:

I just feel, it just feels great to have this open space, the breeze and you can actually smell the air because its coming off the water, its just a lovely environment and you look out across the [Swan] River and you see the racecourse there and its more than that, you can see the trees and the downs and the hills and very often you can see the aircraft taking off as well. It's just a lovely open space and considering it's just two kilometres from the city centre we're pretty lucky to have Banks Reserve and it's a good feeling.

The weather and the environment were important to Cathy as she pointed out that Banks Reserve ‘gets a lot of use and in summer, the environment is a lot cooler down here then up in your house or where ever there is bitumen road’ (19/11/06, recorded interview). Cathy shows how she responds to knowledge of seasonal changes in her environment.

Although there are many positive aspects to Banks Reserve there remains an underlying fear of pollution and its consequences, a point that emerged in how Cathy interacted with her children. Cathy noticed the natural attractors and detractors such as sand bars and tides for children swimming and walking with the Swan River. She said ‘In summer the children do swim here, because there is a natural little sandbar that is formed by the tides. This section of the [Swan] River is tidal and the kids do swim’. However Cathy warned her children: ‘try not to swallow the water just in case’. The sand was quite clean, and children often attended the water with their little paddle boats, floaties and kickboards. Cathy observed that: ‘It is quite shallow; the spit goes out quite a way, perhaps ten metres, so the children can paddle quite safely’. However ‘there are the odd cockle shells which are a bit sharp underfoot just as you come into the curve of the little bay and you wouldn't recommend people walk there’.

As well as fears of pollution there were fears for safety, showing that both positive and negative feelings and behaviours existed in relation to Banks Reserve. A different use identified by Cathy related to glass and bottles. At Banks Reserve there was a noticeable concern for safety, however at Robinson Park rare and valuable bottles were highly sought after by collectors. A practical concern was expressed by Cathy about this situation: ‘Sadly you do have to be a little bit careful when you’re near the barbeque area because people smash their bottles’.
As well as kids paddling, the adults could bring a canoe to enjoy Swan River foreshores. Various reasons for canoeing in this place were described in terms of safety, privacy and cleanliness\textsuperscript{48}.

There was an ever present conflict between river users about how and when people interacted with the Swan River. The activity of rowing was a tradition and a popular way that the Swan River was used, although I sometimes overheard disparaging comments across community groups about having to wake up so early. Cathy observed ‘Trinity school boys out there doing their rowing practice. In summer, very early about 5.30am you hear them speaking through the PA system being instructed by the coxon to pull! Pull!’

Cathy noted the connection with Banks Reserve through ‘safe experiences’ relating to fishing and sailing within this space recognised by community connections between the Town of Vincent and people with disabilities. For example, the Town of Vincent has activities involving disabled fisher people who go there because it is a safe area. Cathy emphasised that ‘you can actually wheel the wheelchairs down to the foreshore area here by the picnic area. They also have a little sailing exercise that I’ve noted where they have little dinghies and they bring children down here.’ Other facilities included barbeques areas, a toilet block, water fountain and a play park. However facilities in the park are a result of negotiations. Cathy explained that the play park was sponsored by the Town of Vincent. The sponsorship and the redoing of the playground resulted from ‘The community who got together and made a submission to the Town of Vincent and said look we’ve got a 1950s playground that’s quite run down and sand which now unfortunately conceals some nasty things’. Collective action by the community was an important and ‘wonderful part of the process for changing space usage’ and kinds of human interactions within Banks Reserve. Cathy remarked that ‘A small committee, a branch of the Banks Precinct Action Group, got together and talked about the elements that they would like to see in the play park.’ Cathy explained that:

There are elements that would suit very small children right up to much older and tall children so they would all have an activity to do in the park. It's been a great success; it's absolutely wonderful and very well utilised.

Through collective processes, relationships with broader community playgroups and government were formed through the use and enjoyment of Banks Reserve. Cathy

\textsuperscript{48}Cleanliness is a value that is practiced in other river cities such as Brisbane. Strang writes that ‘there are also several million domestic water users, who convert the supplies pumped to their dwellings into physical health, energy and cleanliness, as well as green lawns and decorative water features whose purpose is purely aesthetic Strang, V. (2006) Transforming Cultures Journal, 1, 11.
said that 'Even playgroups have found it now and they bring their children down here because it's shady in summer, there are really big trees, it's safe and you have a soft fall' emphasising how communities can work together and with Council for a good outcome. Also evident is how groups of people have learned to respond to their environment and together with other groups to gain the best possible experiences within these places. Not only do people respond to the Swan River as individuals but also as groups through collective action.

Pleasure activities provided positive interactions and experiences and discouraged negative behaviours within Banks Reserve, for example, via the use of the basketball court to raise contested values within the community. Some community members thought the basketball court could attract teenagers who may be involved in antisocial behaviour and graffiti, drinking and making noise. However Cathy exclaimed that 'teenagers are part of the community as well and my boys are teenagers now and they have been using the park since they were very small and they absolutely love playing basketball'. Some activities along the Swan River raised strong reactions within the community indicating how conflict exists in relation to what constitutes positive actions. That is the actions carried out by teenagers playing basketball were not always perceived as positive by other people, however positive actions can also be learned behaviours.

Milton (2005, p. 200) discusses how people experience emotion more strongly when alone than when someone else is present. Emotions are often induced by non-social things and therefore while emotions are absolutely central and fundamental to social relationships, the converse is not the case. Emotions do not depend on social situations; they arise and operate outside these contexts as well. The following examples indicate how people experience the Swan River visually and emotionally on their own while meditating or enjoying lunch. Places to sit quietly and look out across the water also exist in Banks Reserve. Whilst talking with Cathy I observed that 'There's a man sitting there just meditating and gazing out across the water the whole time we've been talking' Cathy noted that community spaces provided escape for employees for lunch breaks:

> At lunch time particularly I see a few office workers coming out of Western Power just further down here at the top of Joel Terrace and you see them all in their short sleeves and they come down here to eat their lunch or go for a stroll and get some air and go back to their office refreshed. People do and you see people drive their cars down here and you might see delivery vehicles sitting in the middle of the car park just along the [Swan] River there and they come and read the paper and have their flask of coffee or whatever and just sit and look at the river.

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An indication of how strongly people feel about accessing the Swan River is revealed in this instance. Both moving and fixed natural and built environments are used for fishing. Cathy explained that ‘lots of recreational fisher people use a jetty to sit and fish from at all times of the day’. However the ‘jetty became deteriorated and unsafe, some vandals tried to burn some of the wooden boards and subsequently some orange tape with ‘do not enter’ was put up. But people pulled it down and continued to use the jetty’.

Another example of collective action was shared by Cathy regarding the jetty, an important built environment for the fisher people. The jetty acts as a focal point for a particular type of action such as fishing. The act of fishing is a learned social behaviour enjoyed and shared by many people who use the Swan River. Through the community group, the Banks Reserve Action Group contacted the Town of Vincent, the City of Perth and the Swan River Trust regarding taking steps to restore the jetty; however Cathy found that the buck was passed between agencies. Eventually the jetty was fixed by the City of Perth and the fisher people now fish there again.

Pollution was also a concern for Cathy. An environmental stimulus is the observation and impact of pollution; identifying it is often learned through actions including swimming and fishing. From the perspective of fishing, Cathy talked about her observations of pollution and warning signage. Last summer she observed that the Swan River Trust had a sign up saying do not swim here, however Cathy thought that it was further up the Swan River and up the Canning River that had areas where the algae blooms were more noticeable. Cathy noted that ‘We’ve never really seen any evidence for pollution and such, but the children and I, we don’t catch fish so I don’t know if there is none, but we’re not very good fisher people’. However fisher activity of digging for worms was associated with erosion. For example Cathy explained that ‘there was a sign saying do not dig for worms because the fishers would dig into the banks causing some erosion’. At Banks Reserve conflict existed between river users about fishing activities, such as digging holes for worms and sand erosion, concerns that impacted on people working on ecological restoration.

The visibility and invisibility of pollution were compared by Cathy between downstream and upstream waters, ‘Matilda Bay and Melville Water is very wide and I think that any evidence of pollutants is hidden or more easily diluted because it seems very clean but that beach is much cleaner then this beach. Cathy observed that ‘You can see the black sediments that are here. Who knows if they are left over from stuff that used to come out of the gasworks’. Cathy remembered that ‘Claisebrook used to have this nasty black stuff, black oozy stuff that used to come
out of the sides of the Claisebrook into the Claisebrook drain'. Further connections were made between the water quality and toxins to human disease such as cancer. Cathy recollected that the gasworks was still there in the black ooze 'you could see it coming out of the banks of Claisebrook and into the water, it was quite disgusting looking stuff'. Cathy exclaimed that 'there had been some analysis done on the water and there were heavy metals and carcinogens\textsuperscript{50} properties, mud and sludge'. The stimulus of pollution regularly causes negative emotions to be expressed and raises concerns about human disease.

I asked Cathy to imagine what it would be like living in Perth without the Swan River...‘How would it change your life?’ Recreational activities and aesthetic qualities were stated as the main relationships that would be missed. However Cathy went on to explain that ‘many people do not appreciate the Swan River’:

\begin{quote}
I think if you look at other city rivers around the world, life seems to gather around it for recreational activities. We’ve got the Maylands yacht club up here, if my boys couldn’t go there on a Sunday morning, it would be a real loss actually. It’s lovely that children can interact with the [Swan] River and have this enjoyment with it. I think it’s really the heart of Perth but Perth hasn’t in my opinion really acknowledged how important the [Swan] River is. It’s just there, it’s beautiful.
\end{quote}

It is evident that great emotion is associated with the Swan River. Although the acknowledgement of how socially, culturally and emotionally important the Swan River is may be lacking, it is evident through this study that there is a strong emotional attachment to it. In addition to the issue of appreciating the Swan River, Cathy emphasised the issue of increased pressures from a growing population: She stated that ‘Everybody wants to live now along the [Swan] River and there is more and more pressure put onto the [Swan] River. We actually do value the [Swan] River’. For example, the aesthetic experiences of the Swan River included the way it looks under lights. Cathy noted that ‘when you look across from South Perth foreshore towards the city, it looks absolutely amazing with the lights’. This is an example of another form of visual connection that people have to the Swan River at night time.

Cathy also talked nostalgically about what East Perth was like prior to its gentrification and how it felt to walk there. Cathy remembered how ‘the Greens Party used to do walks along this foreshore section when it was overgrown with hunters grass’. Cathy emphasised that it was ‘very exciting’ and ‘you felt like you were in the jungle, it was amazing to think that you were still in the city’.

\textsuperscript{50} While sitting at the Broadway Jetty, Nedlands I met a patient from the Cancer Ward, Charlie Gairdner Hospital who was wearing a head wrap because she had lost her hair through treatment. The cancer survivor explained to me how she goes walking along the Swan River and through Kings Park with her friend.
It was usually evident that when I worked with Cathy she displayed negative emotional responses to the pollution and erosion of the Swan River environment. An ecological model is discussed by Milton (2005, p.202). She helps to theoretically explain emotions and feelings arise between an organism and its environment. Deep emotion was expressed by Cathy when she discussed how breathing in polluted air was a concern for the community before the new East Perth was built. For example when the 'sludge and pollutant stuff was dug out and deposited in the sedimentation pits to dry out, it probably blew all over the place and into the community'. Cathy highlighted a contradiction when it was revealed that it was 'nasty poisonous stuff' yet 'it was dumped onto land next to the community to breathe in'. Cathy believed that 'I think it's very important that we look after what we've got'. She later discussed further plans for restoration at Banks Reserve with a financial commitment from the Town of Vincent for the restoration of Walters Brook foreshore along the front of the Western Power Station. Cathy noted that 'the banks are quite eroded and there is wash from boat traffic eroding the riverbank. The restoration will also involve an environmental contracting group and the CBCG'.

An example of how emotional responses to the environment can be learned (Milton 2005, p. 202) can be discerned in Cathy's preference for particular ecological restoration actions over other river users and river vegetation. Cathy was more concerned about restoring the Swan Riverbank than alternative options, including the need for fishers to dig for worm bait. For example, there are 'plans to put down some matting to hold what is there, plant some sedges and reeds to help stabilise the wash and deter people from digging for bait'. Another case showed how Cathy valued indigenous vegetation more highly than introduced species of grass. For example on the 'other side of the Swan River there is a lot of Pampas grass growing...and it gradually takes over from the indigenous vegetation'.

The way that people value particular features at Banks Reserve is highlighted by Cathy who emphasised the existence of conservation values and what contributes to forming natural and cultural heritage. The issue of the clay pits was of concern to Cathy, especially how they will be managed during the construction of the bike path link. For example, Cathy observed that the contractors were taking a lot of time to work out whether they are going to 'put in boardwalks or an elevated bike path because there are clay pits in there'. Cathy explained that: 'There are three main human made clay pits which I understand where people were looking for clay for the brickworks that was down in Maylands'...'The clay pits are like ponds and part of the natural environment.
Further conflict was evident for CBCG members in relation to modifications to Banks Reserve, such as that which occurred between home owners and public riverbank users. River users have learned to respond to using and enjoying the Swan River through different contexts including private and public access. However through a process of consultation, new responses can be learned. Banks Reserve marks the beginning of the newest section of pathway that goes past a Hospital and links up with Bardon Park. It is the location of a newly constructed bike path providing greater access for pedestrians and cyclists along this section of the Swan River foreshores, however after Banks Reserve, the path leads people around Maylands Peninsula and past Tranby House where private property cuts off Swan River foreshore access and a detour through Swanview Terrace is used before re-entering the foreshore. Cathy expressed how ‘heartening’ the responses were from foreshore residents to changes in relation to access by cyclists and pedestrians. Residents raised issues about the increase in pedestrian traffic and the degree of noise close to their homes.

Ecological restoration is usually a community based activity that operates through collective action. Cathy acknowledged that non-indigenous plants were devalued to the extent that they were totally removed or cleansed from the site. The process of restoration involved the community, they ‘will be asked to come and help restore and be part of the plantings’. For example, the ‘CBCG will also help even though it is outside their catchment area, they are very welcome…with their expertise and care that they’ve already shown in the area’.

As discussed by Trigger and Mulcock (2005, p. 1301), there are strong emotional attachments to particular species or landscapes that can shape individual and community responses to flora and fauna. In this example there are different values and emotional ties associated with native and introduced vegetation. Cathy explained how a sense of nostalgia for native vegetation is transformed into practice through preservation activities, a view that tends to overlook diverse socio-cultural settler-descendant society. For example, Cathy thought that with the ‘help of effective ownership’ it would become obvious how ‘important it is to preserve little areas’ of native species. Cathy observed that there is still some saltbush remaining despite European disturbance and settlement.

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51 Burningham, N. (2004) Messing about in Ernest, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle. identifies an issue relating to the Town of Vincent regarding access for walkers and cyclists along the foreshore in front of the Power Station and further along in front of the Mercy Hospital, East Perth. However during my research this section of the foreshore has undergone significant transformation to include paths for walkers and rollers. CBCG and ‘Cathy’ from Walters Brook liaised with the construction manager to ensure a management plan of the site included the conservation of foreshore vegetation.
It is evident that Banks Reserve held significant social and emotional meanings for Cathy. Other places held significant meanings for CBCG members. For example Sam compared the extent of people's connections to different Swan River places at Point Fraser and the Bayswater Floodplain through a rare sandphire plant which grows along the Swan River foreshore at Ascot waters. Due to its presence the community were in conflict about building a cultural centre in the vicinity. Sam believed that people were less connected to the Swan River near the constructed wetlands than at Bayswater because here people were more involved in watching changes along the river (27/08/05, field notebook no 8). On another occasion, the rare sandphire plant was saved from further development and housing by a local council due to the presence of radio towers. The radio towers worked better due to the natural flat area which helped to amplify the signals. The sandphire plant that grew across this flat area was then kept from destruction. This example indicates how an action to save the sandphire plant was motivated through an emotional attachment to place.

5.6. Lindy’s Story

Two cultural perspectives exist to explain the presence of oyster shells. The non-indigenous perspective is often based on scientific evidence, whereas the indigenous perspective is often based on a story passed on through the generations. While neither is mutually exclusive, both perspectives are learned responses to the presence of oyster shells in the Swan River. At the Point Fraser Demonstration wetlands, Lindy (non-indigenous) shared a different kind of story highlighting different social meanings of oyster shells. For example, the wetlands included oyster shells in the land fill dredged from the Swan River. Interestingly, Lindy was also interested in how indigenous people explained the presence of the oyster shells. She explained that: ‘at dusk, the Waugal [rainbow snake or serpent] moves down the Swan River. Its presence is signalled by waves and at Point Fraser the snake would shrug itself and the scales (oyster shells) would fall off’. Lindy emphasised that the ‘Waugal was considered a powerful and dangerous and indicated to people to move away from the Swan River edges and return to camp and not to stay out at night time’ (27/08/05, field notebook no 8).

As discussed by Milton (2005, p. 202) an animal that has emotions and feelings - an animal that feels afraid in the face of danger, for instance a dog or cat, has a better chance of responding appropriately, because it is motivated to escape.
An animal with self-consciousness, an animal that not only has feelings but knows that it does, can actively plan its activities to avoid unpleasant feelings, such as fear, and to pursue pleasurable ones. An example of this is evident when Lindy expressed deep emotions about decreasing biodiversity, a shift which has motivated her to teach walking tour participants about local environmental knowledge and conservation issues, including how indigenous Nyungar relate to the natural world. Various human pressures on the Swan River, led Lindy to talk about this problem. For example, at Point Fraser, 'Aboriginal people speared cobbler for a big feed. It was considered a time of plenty with heaps of fish, prawns, crabs and swans'. Unfortunately now the diversity of animals has decreased and dredging makes water too deep for swans to put long necks into find food on the riverbeds (27/08/05, field notebook no 8).

Another example of learning between an individual organism and their environment reveals some learned ecological behaviours over time. New behaviours often valued the Swan River differently than they once did, for instance, as a place to get rid of unwanted rubbish. This matter was evident when Lindy noted that 'Europeans didn't like mosquitoes and the smelly water. People used to think that disease comes from smelly water and an early health official was sent to 'smell out' bad odours'. Lindy explained that 'People use to throw rubbish in the water from an early time from the 1840s' (27/08/05, field notebook no 8).

Positive emotions were present when Lindy shared information about the operation of Point Fraser Demonstration Wetlands. Lindy talked excitedly about the changing nature of Point Fraser in response to changing environmental values towards the Swan River. For example, 'City of Perth were lucky to have Point Fraser to redesign because usually there is not space in the city for a storm water drain'. The point used to be covered in with natural vegetation and sedges before it was modified and now it has been remodeled into the demonstration wetlands to allow water runoff to be filtered before flowing back into the Swan River (27/08/05, field notebook no 8).
5.7 String of Pearls

The cycling tour provided people with access to both natural and built environments along the Swan River that they may not normally have experienced. It was also aimed at encouraging ecological awareness. Cycling was a way of promoting ecological sustainable transport. During a CBCG cycling tour in East Perth, I rode with members of the CBCG along Perth Waters and Riverside Drive to Point Lewis following the river wall. The straight edged foreshores to Barrack Square were supported by a built limestone retaining walls, Palm Trees\(^2\) and light poles with lamps shaped to represent various waterfowl as a form of memorial\(^3\). This foreshore section had undergone significant changes through dredging and infilling for a range of human uses. Further along, the Kwinana Freeway, also known locally as the Narrows Bridge, arched across the Swan River to join communities between north and south sides of the Swan Estuary and to carry traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. Perth city is built up across the Swan River flats and spreads out through the original

\(^2\) For further discussion on the meanings and the history of Palm Trees within Perth Municipal Gardens see Lilleyman, G. (2007) In History West, Vol, 46, pp. 7.

sites of lakes, wetlands and ecological habitats also known as the ‘String of Pearls’. The cyclists stopped at the northern end of Barrack Square, where a clear view of the Mounts Bay Drain opening into the Swan River was evident. Water entering the Swan River traveled through pipes and drains from various water sources including Lake Monger, a popular place where people go to walk, feed the birdlife and use the barbeques. While attending the Town of Vincent Garden competition dinner I was included in a conversation (16/11/05, field notebook no 11) between Henry and ‘Shelly’ a representative of the Water Corporation. Henry said that:

The Mounts Bay Drain running into Perth Water carries polluted water straight into the Swan River, in particular this area is an iconic section of the Swan River and it is close to the Mount Hospital and it needs fixing.

Through physical interaction with particular Swan River places, certain issues were raised with participants to heighten their ecological awareness. The group rested next to the Southern Cross Fountain where we watched many waterfowl, including ducks and black swans. Lindy was concerned about a health issue which related to breathing in the fine particles resulting from algae blooms that have occurred in the lake. The fountain helped to aerate the water. Although bird feeding is thought of fondly by some people, other people feel that it contributed towards ill health of birdlife. The human activity of feeding birds was an issue in regard to the health of birds and the spreading of disease; it also represents a conflict of interest.

Another example showed the need for environmentalists to be physically in a place to discuss particular interactions and modifications. On a different day at Smiths Lake while walking around Smiths Lake (see Appendices, Map 10), I observed several CBCG members (09/04/05, field notebook no 5) discuss restoration plans for landscaping the parkland, inspect native species, point to historic remnants and the proposed site for the walkway and a suitable barbeque site. The group pointed out certain features and then related this information back to landscape plans drafted in partnership with the Town of Vincent Garden Management staff. The waters that run into Smith’s Lake are pumped into the Claisebrook main drain. These are then carried and pumped through an underground system of pipes before surfacing at a decorative turtle sculpture near the corner of Fielder and Royal Streets in East Perth. The same turtle sculpture/water fountain became a meeting place for walking tours.
Participation in CBCG activities was a way for local ecological knowledge to be learned. ‘Nigel’ (09/04/05, field notebook no 5) who lived next to a drain and joined the CBCG about three years ago because of his interest in water pollution. He was also concerned to grow native species to help the environment. Nigel noted that some people had a lack of general knowledge about water issues and explained to me that ‘Smiths Lake is really just a big drain into the [Swan] River; a lot of people wouldn’t know that the water is connected to the Swan River’.

Ecological knowledge of the Swan River and its catchments was highly valued. Members of the group regularly expressed a concern about the quality of the water that ran into Smiths Lake and the uneven level of knowledge about and approaches to water management issues. For example, Lindy (09/04/05, field notebook no 5) remembered that ‘A resident suggested a solution to dirty water was to use a skidoo (jet ski) in the lake to oxygenate the water. The same resident put a crystal in a glass of water before drinking’.

Through physical engagement with Swan River places, dual use of features were identified. A CBCG member, Sam (09/04/05 field notebook, no 5) pointed out a ‘dying tree’ and commented that ‘the tree would be kept for a birds nest’. Another member walked over to the lake edge and emphasized the historical significance of the remaining rock wall and noted where the lake waters ran into the cement drain.
The drain needed to be extended and it was suggested that there could be a footbridge built over the top of the new drain.

A common theme was the visual connection with water, to the issue of losing sight of water was a concern for many. One issue that had to be taken into consideration when designing the landscape plan was a concern that residents would lose their ‘views of the wetland’ revealing a clear commitment to the area. Lindy (09/04/05, field notebook no 5) commented that there were ‘tradeoffs’ involved in landscape design. In a conversation about the townhouses that overlooked Smiths Lake, one specification was discussed relating to the ways that native species were chosen. Comments included ‘how tall they grew’ so as not to ‘block views of the water’.

People who used and enjoyed Smiths Lake had a contested sense of belonging to the lake. This was evident through their interactions, and the extent to which they used and enjoyed it. Many times negotiation and compromise were evident. For instance with regard to views of the water and accepting changing landscape designs for a healthier environment. As well as areas of conflict, there was positive feedback. For example, residents comments were thought to be positive in relation to the proposed wetlands and were ‘keen to participate in the frog project’. Nigel (09/04/05, field notebook no 5) happily told the CBCG members that he had ‘just seen his first green frog at home!’

According to Lindy (09/09/05, field notebook no 5), interest was also shown by residents for a walking tour of Smiths Lake to be held during spring season for the purposes of environmental education and awareness. Artwork featured as part of the walk and included a wall mural and a sculpture. The wall mural was painted over the top of graffiti art as a result of community complaints indicating different ways that public art is valued or undervalued.

As discussed in Section 5.3, access to Swan River places was regularly discussed by CBCG members, including where the footpath was to be constructed and what options for hard or soft materials were to be used. For example, ‘sawdust would give a softer look’ in comparison to the ‘harder feel of red bitumen’. However it was decided that ‘if red bitumen was used, it would be ‘keeping within a standard look’ and would meet other access issues for ‘people in wheelchairs’.

Similarly to the findings by Trigger and Mulcock (2005), discussed in Chapter Two. Varying views on different types of native and introduced vegetation were discussed. Links between the Swan River’s water and the broader environment included debate about trees, and whether they were native or introduced and, in the
case of the latter, which plants could be removed or replaced with native species. According to Abby (09/04/05, field notebook no 5):

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\text{Melaluca lanceolata, a Rottnest Island Tea Tree is representative of the wetlands and Swan Coastal plain environments. Box Trees from Queensland are decreasing in numbers because they are not suitable for wetlands and are being replaced as they die with Jacaranda's because that is what residents usually choose instead of native species for their street theme.}
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There was a fond interest regularly expressed in relation to the indigenous significance of trees in the area. Reference was made to a representative from the City of Perth who had found a cultural heritage list of significant trees. However according to the list, there were no trees with indigenous significance in Smiths Park. ‘Most trees in the park are introduced’ (Lindy, 09/04/05, field notebook no 5).

As noted in the preceding material, ecological restoration was a highly valued activity and goal of the CBCG. Robertson Park connected with a drain that carried waters into the Claisebrook drain and into the Swan River. A path for walkers and rollers wound its way from the park, some distance from the Swan River. The revegetated wetland was set aside for creating an ecosystem, to restore an area consisting of native trees, shrubs, ground covers adjacent to a constructed wetlands with a living stream lined with sedges in an attempt to replicate a model of an original Swan River environment, one believed to have been destroyed over time by a range of changing human uses. The natural ecosystem and wetlands is also part of a broader aim by CBCG to create green corridors that will help to restore wildlife linkages within the Claisebrook catchment and the Swan River. A Swan River link between the built environment and the natural environment was explained by Sam who said that ‘This path follows the wetlands heritage trail...Ideally the path will be a route that connects Lake Monger all the way through the boggy lands to the Swan River’.

On a different occasion, the National Day of Trees was one where CBCG organized tree planting activities at Robertson Park. Robertson Park as noted earlier is in Highgate and overlays the original site of Lake Henderson. It has a layered history of uses and interactions. Some historical uses of Robertson Park included a Chinese market garden, a bottle factory a rubbish dump and a former industrial site. Even though the site is not used as a bottle factory now, Sam (08/04/06, field notebook no 14) has observed activities connected to rare bottle searches. Some frustrating events are linked to property development as opposed to those activities that lead to ecological restoration. Sam explained that:

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54 There used to be a rubbish tip and a dairy farm at Lake Monger.
55 On issue raised at a CBCG meeting was the need for industrial areas to be cleaned up, however there was an issue with the funding as this activity was not part of SCCP clean-up program and associated funding.
Alan Bond (local entrepreneur) used to own the land. It used to be a bottle yard. They used to clean bottles here before they filled them. There was broken glass everywhere. The land sloped down into the wetlands drain. The land was filled with broken glass and sand was put on top. The City of Perth bought the land to put a community centre, but it was built on Loftus Street. The Town of Vincent wanted to sell land so the local community put up a campaign to save the land for investment, however the land was sold. Half of it to the park for investment for $2.1 million - bad business! Should have hung onto it and land would have gone up in value more. The sheds and bitumen were removed and bottle collectors were waiting for bitumen to be removed to find rare bottles - some worth thousands of dollars. The park was listed as an Aboriginal Heritage area, however bobcats began digging without approval and government security was required. One night guys in black clothes including balaclavas crawled through parkland on their bellies looking for the rare bottles. The land was advertised on Australia Day in the local paper in a small advertisement and there were three tenders. The person who owns it now is just sitting on it while it goes up in value. The bottle factory has now been renovated into refurbished apartments.

CBCG uses a section of land opposite the vacant block in Robertson Park to create habitat and develop a constructed wetlands. Sticky clay was brought in to create a bowl for the wetlands to contain inflowing water. The drain linking storm water runoff has been transformed into a living stream with a variety of sedges and rocks to filter out pollutants. Showing an interest in revegetation and the need of future generation, land and waters Malcolm explained in relation to revegetating the wetlands that 'We're creating a layered effect with tall trees...We're planting sedges naturally...seeding – second generational plants that are looking after the next'.

Robertson Park includes tennis courts with clubhouse, an adjacent car park, children's playground and an artist studio rented by individual artists, including those who participated in the Rivers and Parks Project (See Chapter Four). A section of Robertson Park known as the 'dog exercise area' is a large square (about 100m x100m) of manicured lawn. I have observed many people bringing their dogs to this area for exercise and to talk to other dog walkers. There are also artworks symbolizing local histories standing in one corner next to the CBCG wetland. A temporary fence has been erected between the dog exercise area and the CBCG wetland creating a physical boundary between the two groups. The fence also symbolized contested values between CBCG members and how dogs and dog owners may use Robertson Park. CBCG members erected the fence to keep dogs out of the reconstructed and revegetated wetlands from disturbing any wildlife that may be attracted to the restored habitat. The wetland collects water most of the year which runs down through a living stream. Although there is an ongoing conflict regarding dogs, Lindy (08/04/06, field notebook no 14) explained that 'There was public consultation prior to putting in the wetland vegetation and it was agreed that we wouldn't stop people using the area for dogs and we'd leave an unleashed area

At a CBCG monthly meeting, it was decided to consult an archaeologist prior to constructing the wetland.
for the dog users’. Dogs come in to have a drink and to swim in the water and to cool off. However dog behaviour becomes disruptive when, as Lindy (08/04/06, field notebook 14) remembered on one occasion a dog walker let their dog run into the wetland. This resulted in the dog chasing the birds, an action that prompted Lindy to yell out to its owner in a bid aimed at protecting both the birds and their habitats.

Jason, from Town of Vincent, compared the extent of work required for the regeneration of Robertson Park and Smiths Lake. He also observed some negative behaviours to plants:

We liaise with CBCG when planting seedlings and the design of Smiths Lake and Robertson Park wetlands. Because Robertson Park was an old bottle factory tip...there was lots of rubbish to work around and impossible to clear out. Whereas Smiths Lake was no problem -- easy site just weed control -- herbicide and then by hand. Plants are expensive and some people steal them, but they look nice. People get really drunk and when they come home and they smash things and steal plants. On one occasion people pulled out six grevilleas and through them against the council wall. Through awareness of native species, people are beginning to buy them for the first time and there is a noticeable behaviour change.

Significant emotional energy is put into creating and maintaining a restored ecological wetlands and habitat. CBCG volunteers contributed many hours of work to organise, design and reconstruct the native habitat and wetlands and hence much pride is also taken in creating a reconstructed wetland and habitat and maintaining this landscaped area (08/04/06, field notebook no 14).

Evidence exists of cooperation between groups in relation to the types of vegetation planted. On the eastern side an area left was unattended for future development. CBCG members claimed that this bare block could be used more productively and that it could be revegetated as well. As Sam (08/04/06, field notebook no 14) explained:

The council [Town of Vincent] put in 'flooded gums' along the road next to the park...they are very healthy. The Council held off from planting trees until CBCG started on the park. The trees have doubled in size. Council collected seeds from the original gum tree next to the art studio and germinated them to get the same species. Sometimes going to a nursery you might end up with species from down south. When I tell people, they are impressed with this story about the original gum being planted also because Council cares enough to do this...On the other side is the Queensland Box...very common tree planted fifty years ago. We replaced the Flame Tree which was dropping branches with the native gum. There was a bit of objection to removing trees because people don’t like to see trees being removed but they will begin to see the gums getting bigger. They also attract insects which in turn attract birds!

CBCG members demonstrated their attachment to place through their practical knowledge and interactions with the wetlands. The Town of Vincent has landscaped areas along an island section near the entrance of the CBCG revegetated area on the northern end. I observed CBCG members maintaining this garden on occasion and in ways that illustrated how they felt connected to the place. I heard a range of
comments about plants relating to the time it takes them to grow, diseases, how much water is required for a plant, knowledge about suitable flora, what fauna is attracted to the plant, the way that plants are embedded in the ground, soil type and the use of mulch, and how people use the wetlands. For example, Nigel (08/04/06, field notebook no 14) compared the rate of growth in relation to National Tree Day in 2004 to one year later, where the plants had grown one meter. Nigel pointed to a tree and commented on how it behaved in the wetland:

For example, see this flooded gum – Eucalyptus rudis – it's a classic tree for the wetland area – it doesn't mind its roots being flooded.

On a different plant Malcolm holds a leaf between his fingers and explained that: ‘It has lots of insects on its leaves…’gall worst’ lays its eggs and attracts birds’.

Excitedly, Lindy showed me some wildlife within Robertson Park, taking me to a tree where there were a dozen or so caterpillars climbing over each other. Lindy exclaimed ‘they attract birds…There are hundreds of insects’ and I observed Malcolm inspecting some sick plants and demonstrated his ecological knowledge when he commented that ‘They've been planted in the mulch, but they need to be planted in the soil. In a different place Malcolm predicted that ‘We'll probably get some weed growth from digging up mulch to plant trees’. Sadly, Malcolm observed that ‘Some people last year didn’t plant properly, they didn’t dig far enough down below the mulch layer’ Malcolm explained that it ‘Looks like a hole, a bit funny, not flat, but that’s the way it has to be’. In another section of Robertson Park, Malcolm compared plants and said that ‘Those dry land species aren’t going so well, need to plant more water species’ and he surmised that ‘the water table level might be higher then we thought, the yellowing may indicate water logging’. While walking through the reconstructed habitat, Malcolm noted the different kinds of landscaped gardens. He opined that: ‘It’s not like a tended garden, like a natural bush land, but a bit wilder…that plant over there that has fallen over, it will right itself like the natural bush land…next time you come it will be standing up. Lindy (08/04/06, field notebook no 14) commented about watering plants ‘I've checked the rainfall prediction and the soil is already wet from rain but I forgot to check the rainfall to see if that will be enough or whether they have to water the plants in’.

Lindy carried out a water test on the wetlands. Kneeling down on the bank, I watched closely as a portable, water testing kit was used to test for phosphate levels. Wearing gloves and using tweezers instructions were read and reread carefully and procedures followed with concentrated effort. While not letting sunlight into the testing kit, a syringe was rinsed, tablets were crushed; crumbled powder was
dissolved in water samples were held in test tubes. Specific time limits were set and Lindy (08/04/06, field notebook no 14) waited and commented that 'High phosphate levels can cause problems in the water body. Pollutants come off the street from washing cars with detergents'. As we waited for the specified time, we saw that the test tube water samples did not turn blue. Relieved with the findings, Lindy explained that:

This means there is no phosphate problem. However I did the same test in the Claisebrook Cove and the water sample was pink which means the phosphate level was high. Yesterday I also did a nitrate test and the water went pink which indicated that nitrogen is in the water. Nitrogen comes from the breaking down of organic matter such as leaves and dog poo. Deciduous trees have soft leaves and they fall off in autumn, and all at the same time and there is little creatures that can't cope with the soft leaves. Australian native animals are used to harder leaves. We need to work out all the science to develop alternatives to problems such as deciduous trees dropping leaves into water and also their roots sucking up lots of water.

Plate 16: Lindy carrying out a water sampling test at the wetlands in Robertson Park 08/04/2006.

As well as walking trails, cycling (as noted above) is a way of life for some CBCG members. I observed several CBCG members who lived in inner city areas or along the Swan River cycling to a range of catchment areas for different activities and I spoke to various participants at CBCG activities and found there were different reasons that motivated people to attend. Familiar spaces and feeling productive brought ‘Becky’ (12/08/06, field notebook no 15) who said that ‘I catch a bus to work
that goes past the Piazza Nanni site...it's good to see the work that I've helped with...I feel like I've produced something'. Dual identities were expressed by a volunteer. 'Margaret' (12/08/06, field notebook no 15) from South Africa, she wanted to take away with her some of the plants for nostalgic reasons and said that: 'I wanted to take on the identity of the place'. As well as revealing issues of relational identity. Margaret commented that where she was living impacted on her decision to participate with the group. She said: 'I don’t have a garden where I live because I’m in a small apartment and I miss having my own garden. I like participating in the working bee because it gives me a connection to plants and soils'.

Catchment members were interested in participating in catchment activities for a variety of reasons. I found that several people expressed a strong sense of history in relation to Swan River environments. In relation to the Claisebrook area, walking and cycling tours of Claisebrook were designed to encourage local residents to come along and learn about the environmental history of this inner city area. Through learning about ones environment a person also becomes aware of emotional responses that can be understood as belonging.

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In Chapter Five, I have explored how members of Claise Brook Catchment Group interacted with, and responded to, Swan River environments. A broad range of responses connected people with the Swan River and inter-connecting wetlands and lakes via volunteer activities, personal associations and work tasks. Through these interactions, it became evident that diverse connections included environmental aesthetics; practical engagement, physical, social, emotional and ecological meanings linked people to these watery environments. Deep emotional connections motivated people when undertaking ecological activities. In this Chapter, I have also discussed the ways that some people did not feel and/or develop a sense of belonging with the Swan River, and I have considered the practical implications of human/river interactions. In Chapter Six I synthesize and analyze my data both for this group and for the artists group (Chapter Four). I also integrate my ethnographic work with a selection of the literature that was discussed in Chapter Two.
Chapter Six: Analysis

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Six, I integrate data presented in Chapters Four and Five and discuss this in relation to the theory and literature provided in Chapter Two. My data chapters show a range of interactions and responses from two different groups: environmentalists and artists. I have recorded observations with the intention of focusing on an undervalued area of environmental/humanities research. As stated by Head et al. (2005), by investigating the ways that people are socialised to think about land, water and natural species, research in this important field will expand. My data has concentrated on how people use and enjoy the Swan River from two different perspectives highlighting similarities and differences across two socio-cultural groups. Data indicate that cultural interactions and connections exist between people and the Swan River in a way I have conceptualised as revealing a sense of belonging.

6.2 Literature and Data Integration and Discussion

Strang (2004) found a highly complex human/water relationship in which physical, sensory and cognitive experiences articulated with cultural meanings and values. The sorts of values she discussed in relation to England’s Stour River shares some resonance with those evident in the Swan River study, for example, that people’s river related experience was often mediated by social and emotional interactions, despite these being differentiated by gender and age, etc. In keeping with Strang’s integration of water as both natural and cultural resource, I found that the Swan River provided a range of contexts in which people responded to the river in a variety of meaningful ways that indicated a sense of belonging. The Swan River provided a range of contexts in which people can be shown to use and enjoy a natural and cultural resource, and establish meaningful connections with it. Just as Bradley (1997, 1998) clarified how the Yanyuwa people in north east Arnhem Land conceptualise and use sea spaces, I have examined how the Swan River - more than any other landscape feature in Perth - has become the central marker for different groups to enact social, ecological and emotional belonging. For example, the Nyungar people believe that the Swan River is their lifeblood, and that water is life and was created by a mythical serpent, the Waugal (McDonald et al., 2007).
Work carried out by Williams (2001) on the Anacostia River in Washington found that people cherish the Anacostia River and fight to make it clean. I have found that most of the women and men with whom I worked generally demonstrate an ecological interest in the health of the Swan River through different interactions, such as ensuring the river's care and protection.

Brierley (2006) discusses the reappraisal of people's relationship to the natural world, demonstrating how a shift in social, cultural and institutional responses to environmental management can extend a sense of place to social, cultural and biophysical attributes within a context and through inter-disciplinary thinking. Via an anthropological examination of people's relationship to the natural world, methodological approaches take into consideration broad concepts of its social, cultural and biophysical connections.

Strang (2001) asserts there is a need for theoretical approaches that deal with the complex dynamics of industrialized societies where there are multiple subcultures and contexts of social being. My research on the Swan River took into consideration two diverse subcultures and contexts of social engagements with urban sections of the Swan River.

Langton (2002 in Jackson et al., 2005) suggests that an affiliation with a dominant environmental feature, such as a river or spring, may play a key role in the formation of group and individual identity. For example one group whose country is found between the Fish and Moyle rivers west of the Daly River in the Northern Territory. Their name refers to the riparian world where language relates people to place. Ngan’gikurunggurr means deep water sounds (Ungunmerr 2003, in Jackson, 2005, p.106) Her comments share some resonance with my own research along where the Swan River was also found to be a dominant environmental feature that played a key role in both groups researched.

Toussaint et al. (2001 in Jackson et al., 2005) emphasises a link between language and water that can be expressed through names, social etiquette, place-based knowledge, narratives, beliefs and daily practices. I found similar links between Perth residents and the Swan River. Different kinds of social etiquette exist depending on the kinds of interactions. Walkers and rollers using dual-use paths are required to 'share' these spaces for example, walkers move to the left to let a cyclist past on the right hand side. However, conflict arises when cyclists can not pass walkers and have the flow of their ride disrupted.
Whilst distinctive, it quickly became evident that each group had its own place-based knowledge. For example, artists expressed knowledge of bird life through their artworks. How they painted birds and animals demonstrated a relationship to the Swan River and an intimacy of place. This finding can be compared with the bird knowledge shared by environmentalists who knew which plants to grow to attract bird life to the Swan River and connecting wetlands and lakes. The many stories shared by both groups provide insights into the social, ecological, cultural, aesthetic and emotional ways that people used and enjoyed the Swan River. It is through stories and observations that complex relationships, interactions and different forms of belonging to the Swan River can be clarified. The day-to-day experiences and interactions between people and the Swan River provided rich layers of meaning about the ways and extent to which people used and enjoyed the waterway.

Sinclair’s work (2001), as discussed earlier, was especially useful, in part because he takes into consideration ways that people experience the Murray River through memory and emotional attachment. Matters such as these share resonance with how I came to understand the Swan River and people’s relationship to it. Sinclair places equal value on nostalgic and emotional connections, along with other connections such as experiences of fishing, irrigation and flood, all of which help to explain how people feel when close to or via memories about a river environment.
Sinclair's work shows that a sort of connection can be made via visual relationships, an emphasis I took to the study of the Swan River. For example, an artist I interviewed, ‘Jody’, reflected Sinclair’s writing when she stated that, ‘Sculptures transform a space, as you move around it, they’re different viewpoints and to me that is transforming art! They fill the space, not as safe as two dimensional’.

Most aesthetic connections with the Swan River value direct views of the water. However, in built-up environments a symbolic walk connected with the Swan River (indirectly through a painting of the Waugal or rainbow serpent) evoked social and emotional responses even though the Swan River could not be sighted. As discussed in Chapter Four, I also found that both artists and environmentalists indicated a link between views of the Swan River and the way such an iconic water source connected with economic issues, such as real estate or sales of artwork.

Environmentalists also emphasised an economic link between aesthetics and ecological issues, such as when informant ‘Billy’ explained that ‘Some of the residents here have million dollar views and we have to keep them happy as well…’views with a price tag’. I have a chance to plant what I want to’.

Natural representations of the Swan River were preferred by many, as evidenced by both artists and environmentalists in the ways I have described.

At various times informants across both groups demonstrated a need to belong through social and interpersonal interactions with the Swan River. Whilst McCreanor and Penney (2006) discuss culturally specific experiences of belonging in a different setting (the Oruāmo/Beachhaven in New Zealand where it was found that most social interactions occurred where the Pākehā belonged), the Swan River provided many shady foreshores with manicured parks for all people to get close to the flowing and moving waters for picnics, barbeques, exercise and fishing. The lakes linked to the Swan River provide alternative venues for those people who cannot access the Swan River easily and for those who demonstrated their belonging through restoration values. McCreanor and Penney (2006) found that interpersonal and group interactions formed a sense of belonging at Beachhaven. Likewise, I found both personal reflections and group activities seemed to facilitate a sense of belonging with the Swan River. Nostalgic responses were common among all informants. Many memories of interactions with the Swan River connected people in different ways. For example and with regard to issues of access, Kelly remembered how access through the building of a boat shed and a jetty were restricted to keep the environment pristine.
From a different perspective, ‘Moira’ reflected social and ecological connections through playing on the water, in the reeds and climbing trees, along with crabbing, prawning and boating.

Eyles (1985) introduces the idea of a sense of belonging or alienation in relation to concepts of the community. In my research I found that a series of interconnected cultural and historical attachments to the Swan River existed. Although European settlement now dominates Swan River environments, some similarities between both Aboriginal and European settlers may be found. In some places along the Swan River, it was clear that informants held onto the possibility that wetland areas connected to the Swan River could be restored to their state prior to European settlement, showing a connection not only with Swan River environments, but also with Aboriginal ecological values.

Fenster (2005) notes different forms of gendered constructions, as they are expressed through women’s and men’s everyday life. I also found gendered constructions and connectivity through particular socio-cultural meanings ascribed to particular places: the type of tasks carried out at barbeques, and comments that associated the river with ‘female’ qualities.

Davidson and Chapman (2006) argue that to advance social aspirations, coast care groups need not just advocate ecological diversity, but also incorporate a self-reflexive interest in a diversity of social values. Likewise, the Swan River not only embodies a range of ecologies, but also a range of socio-cultural connections and interactions across Indigenous and settler society. Through these connections, a sense of belonging may be understood further - as noted by Mulcock (2006) - to clarify settler-descendant claims to indigeneity as an expression of attachment to place, or to understand the ways and the extent that people ‘feel’ themselves in the landscape, to learn at an abstract level, to be truly in and of place and to really ‘belong’.

Wessell (2004) writes about a sense of belonging in relation to timescapes and flooding. Likewise, a sense of belonging to the Swan River has been strengthened historically with reference to floods at particular times and places. Historical floods impacted on the development of real estate along the Swan River, leaving spacious floodplains. These floodplains were surveyed for particular land-uses, such as the marketplace at Success Hill. Connecting swamplands that became flooded were later used as playgrounds for children. Floods also led to the

57 Anderson, B. (1983) Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism, Verso, London. discusses the concept of an imagined community. I found data from two divergent groups to show that the community includes complex relationships with the Swan River between and across groups.
construction of river walls. Swan River flood plains provided many foreshores and parklands for social activities to occur, including via barbeques and picnic facilities. Thus, the floods have shaped the landscape over time and have been central to cultural life along the Swan River. Without the floodplains there would not have been the spacious foreshores and parklands now devoted to a wide variety of socio-cultural activities, indicating how the historical significance of floods in the past has impacted on the present and future social interactions along the Swan River. The significance of floodplains also lies in how they help to foster local memories of the Swan River and prompt questions related to identity, such as gender constructions relating to swamplands as seen in the example of a 'boys paradise' or romantic settings.

The moving and rhythmic landscape of the Swan River allows sensuous interactions to take place, not unlike Rose's (2000) ideas about beliefs and practices associated with how people fill spaces and engage with other embodied beings through motion. The Swan River is a central feature which involves walking, cycling or other modes of travel. For example, learning through walking involves some ways of engaging physically and meaningfully with the Swan River. Bird life also connects people to the Swan River through motivating stories and the enactment of dance.

These spaces allow for a variety of physical interactions to take place, which are related to the time used and shared spaces. The rhythmic utilisation and enjoyment of dual use pathways is one form of motion along the Swan River in which people are engaged. Other sensuous interactions are described by an artist talking about the process of creating a sculpture. For example, as noted in Chapter Four, Jody explained how her 'Sculptures feel like they're creating themselves! They're wet and oozy, like they've come out of the water...They also reflect human form, human curvy shapes'.

Lovell (1998, p. 1) examines belonging through time and how feelings such as loyalty emerge from these human/environmental interactions and relationships. For example, an artist 'Moira' explained how:

I was born in Mount Pleasant and lived here as a child so it was a place that I wanted to return to. As a child I played on the [Swan] River and learnt to swim at Applecross jetty and I've seen all the changes along the [Swan] River and the bridges being developed and I wanted to return to this area because I enjoyed it so much as a child.

Markwell, Stevenson et al. (2004) discuss belonging through cultural heritage and reveal how related projects seek to identify and mark places of contemporary and historical significance and their connections to the city and its people, past and future. One particular walk had cultural heritage value in the present, past and future by
bringing together both Indigenous and settler-descendants on a major public occasion for a ceremony and walking on a trail along the Swan River foreshore. During this particular walk, a sense of belonging was obvious by the way people emphasised activities relating to spirituality and reconciliation. Other forms of cultural heritage included the built environment on the Canning River. ‘Kelly’, for instance, said ‘There is a heritage jetty off Salter Point ‘Riverton’– Rossomoyne and Shelly Canning River Settlement which is interesting. I often wonder about how people used to live here. Historically it was a really isolated place’.

Upstream in the Swan River, Ellen’s views conveyed her interest in maintaining a cultural heritage in her sketches by showing a distant glimpse of Maylands Yacht Club Jetty as she remembered ‘My husband was a member for over 30 years, many memories there’. Another form of cultural heritage was evident through Aboriginal knowledge of fishing at Point Walter.

Both fictional and non-fictional authors provided deeper understandings of how people demonstrate a sense of belonging to the Swan River. Burningham (2004) explores connections of identity with living along the Swan River, while Jones (2006) teases out visual links and the various activities carried out on the Swan River waters. Art history is introduced by Burningham in relation to the ways that Swan River vegetation was represented. From a different perspective, Burningham describes how the Swan River connects people from the present into the past through geological features. On the other hand, Seddon (1970) focusses on the use and enjoyment of the Swan River in the present.

Burningham also explores the ways people exercise along Swan River foreshores and how dual use pathways are not always easily shared. Similarly, on the Swan River, canoeists, speedboat users and rowers competed on the waters surface for their own space. Burningham notes the different reasons for conflict over dogs. In one case he explained how wallabies have been largely displaced by domestic dogs and cats. I found that conflict exists between CBCG members and some dog owners regarding the way dogs are controlled on a leash near newly restored wetlands. Unleashed dogs sometimes ventured into wetlands chasing bird life, to the annoyance of CBCG members, who are working hard to attract these species. However, there were dog owners among both groups. For example, one CBCG participant who walked with her leashed dog to the Swan River each day. Both artists and CBCG members enjoyed taking their dogs for walks for exercise and to swim at different sections of the Swan River.

Whilst Burningham (2004) notes degrees of discomfort when using the Swan River, most participants talked with me about the variety of comforts it offered.
McCreanor, Penney et al. (2006, p. 205) emphasised how to some extent a sense of place impacts at the psychological level, moulding a resident's sense of self or identity to the point where it becomes the 'comfort zone' in a large and often challenging metropolis. McCreanor, Penney et al. (2006, p. 205) note too that in the literature there has been a lack of critical engagement with the differentiated ways and forms of belonging to the same place experienced by different cultural groups. However, when canvassing the literature I came across authors who made many references to the Swan River that assisted with creating a sense of self or identity or expressing a particular social, emotion or physical interaction.

Another kind of example was evident in the artwork in which 'Leanne' represented the Swan River as a 'comfort zone' through the use of colours. The Swan River is often used as a background and a context giving the impression that it is a kind of 'comfort zone' on which people can project their desires. However, I argue that both comfort and discomfort exist in relation to the Swan River. For example, physical interactions with mosquitos, the wind and issues of access exemplify the Swan River as a 'discomfort zone'. One particular sense of discomfort exists in relation to a conflict between river users and government about the degree of access to be allowed. For example, the multiple uses of the Canning River have been changed to reflect the 'pristine' values of the environmental legislation. However, artists want to use and enjoy the Swan-Canning River.

By integrating anthropological and other literature, and via data interpretation, it is clear that both positive and negative meanings are experienced by people along the Swan River, including in relation to bird life. Whether experiences of bird life are visually or aurally appreciated, the river provides a central landscape for a wide range of bird species to inhabit, including migratory species. Emotional connections with bird life exist within the literature and in my own data. Artists used different techniques to represent birds as a means of expressing themselves creatively and to make a social and emotional connection. For example, the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary became a focus for artists during Rivers and Parks, and for CBCG members when working towards restoring ecological habitats to attract birds.

**6.3 A RETURN TO KEY AUTHORS TO EXPLAIN SWAN RIVER BELONGING**

Kay Milton's (2005) work helped me to understand the connections between emotion, especially motivation, the environment and broader, more holistic ecological approaches. In particular, Milton explained how human behaviour and emotion
create a response to the environment as both meaningful in biological and cultural terms, an integrated concept defined as an ecological model. As noted earlier, the Swan River is a sensuous landscape, and different kinds of sensual relationships exist between people and the Swan River that reveal forms of belonging. Emotions are evoked, memories of sensuous experiences, the feelings of love, or pregnancy associating fertility and sexual relationships.

Authors such as Drewe (2003), Burningham (2004), Mathieu (2006) and Walker (2005) present examples of sensual and romantic events along the Swan River and the way love is expressed. They write of weddings, for example, an event and topic I often observed during fieldwork. As well as bridal parties, I observed many couples walking together holding hands, some lying on manicured grass, others sharing a picnic or enjoying a Swan River cruise or sitting close to each other while fishing. My informants referred to their partner or to their friends when explaining the ways that they used and enjoyed the Swan River. Lakes and parks had both fictional and non-fictional romantic meanings relevant to the past, present and the future. For example, the Aboriginal Dreamtime story about the sandbar at Point Walter included a married couple symbolized by tuart trees. In relation to the act of fishing on the Swan River, one artist said that she ‘used to go with my husband when we were first married’. Another artist explained that she lives with her husband in a house overlooking the Swan River and that they walk daily with their dog for exercise and that ‘it’s nice and it lifts the spirits’.

Upstream, in a different section of the Swan River, another artist talked about how her sketches brought back memories of herself and her husband. For example a sketch included a glimpse of the Maylands Yacht Club Jetty that relayed memories of her husband. In another sketch the same artist referred to her husband via illustrations of sailing craft used on the Swan River. Reference was also made to the beach and the Swan River when discussing activities that unite both partners. A range of activities connected both partners to the Swan River; for example, planting at Mardalup Park on the Swan River foreshore brought families together. As well as married couples, the formation of friendships occurred on the Swan River as noted by Seddon (1970, p. ix) ‘Those old friends who grew up in the same generation are closer friends because of our common experiences as boys and youths ‘on the river’ and because of our common store of remembered happiness’.

Drewe (2003, p. 299) also emphasised his experiences during ‘younger days’ with his friends on the Swan River through crabbing, prawning and fishing, and Burningham (2004, p. 167) refers to a boat building friendship developed whilst on the Swan River during one of his explorative trips. Another artist told me about her
role in organising her friends to come together at the Swan River for picnics, birthdays and free concerts.

Different activities carried out on the Swan River illustrate interactions for friends and partners to come together and enjoy each other's company. As ‘David’ pointed out to me when he first arrived in Perth he did not know anybody; however he met people through the activity of fishing along the Swan River. The Swan River provides a landscape for all ages to use and enjoy, a point put to me by a public servant who explained that when growing up she and her family used to go fishing with friends and other families. From a different perspective, Abby talked about how she formed friendships through her professional association with the development of the Point Fraser Demonstration Wetlands on the Swan River.

Milton (2005, p. 198-210) outlines a useful, integrated framework to explain the connections between people and the Swan River. She argues that emotions are fundamental to human life: they define its quality and motivate action. Milton highlights emotional grounding with regard to understanding a complex spectrum of relationships to the environment. The emotions experienced act as a kind of catalyst for interpreting human behaviour and reading ecological issues. The approach Milton puts forward is that emotions are treated as ecological mechanisms that operate in the relationship between individual human beings and their environment - a type of bridge between nature and culture. An example that helps to articulate this bridge was given by ‘Kelly’ who regularly paints about her experiences and feelings with the Swan River environment as her backdrop. And from a different perspective, ‘Ginger’ also demonstrated an ecological/emotional bridge through caring for an injured bird.

As discussed above and elsewhere in this thesis, my study elicited both positive and negative emotions as these related to Swan River settings. For example, ‘Lara’ used the Swan River as a place to exercise and to reduce anxiety, whereas Ginger focused on art therapy. Both these and other illustrations accord with Milton’s nature/emotion/ecology analysis (Milton, 2005, p. 198-210). A range of emotions bridged relationships between people and the Swan River. I found that several participants expressed sadness and anger, for instance, at polluting activities along the Swan River. But, as discussed, most responses revealed positive Swan River connections. A symbolic dance representing birds celebrated women being together and happy, and Burningham (2004, p. 230) noted how sand spits and vegetation are associated with pleasant feelings. ‘Lindy’ expressed sentiment and remembrance during a visit to sections of the Swan River depending on the time of day, the season and the person she was with on a particular occasion. Aspects of the Swan River
are also associated with solitude, as Burningham (2004, p. 94) explores. Qualities such as these reveal intertwined connections to Swan River environments that embrace not only aesthetic, ecological and emotional connections, but also those that I have described as demonstrating a clear sense of belonging.

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter I have re-examined theories and literature explored in Chapter Two, and analysed this material in relation to ethnographic data described in Chapters Four and Five. Beginning with a social, cultural and ecological theoretical framework, I then canvassed theories of belonging in relation to social, aesthetic and environmental interactions. Embodiment was also discussed to examine issues of time and landscapes before investigating Swan River interactions through a range of fictional and non-fictional authors. Within this context, I teased out multiple ways that people enact a sense of belonging to Perth’s Swan River
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

My concern in this thesis was to investigate how, why and the extent to which two local groups—one a group of artists, the other a non-government water catchment and environmental group—interacted with, used and represented an urban section of the Swan River. My descriptive, theoretical and analytical focus was on concepts of belonging.

Human needs discussed by Maslow (1943) recorded a sense of belonging as ranked third in order of importance after both the physiological and the safety needs have been satisfied. According to Baumeister and Leary (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p. 497) the need to belong is a fundamental human motivation, Milton (2005, p. 199) argues that emotions motivate action, and historical records to which I have had access helped to contextualise the changing landscape of the Swan River and its associated meanings. I found that artists demonstrated emotional belonging through various feelings experienced and represented in their artworks. Artists indicated how they belonged to the Swan River socially and emotionally through practical and emotional interactions with friends and family - for example, childhood memories of physical and social experiences with the Swan River. Many nostalgic responses connected artists to the Swan River in the past and present through art. Bird life became a bridging ecological feature between artists' feelings and the Swan River, as well as being used to express a sense of ecological belonging.

Fish and fishing were referred to via memories and contemporary social occasions. Artists reflected the life giving and healing qualities of the Swan River through their creative interactions. Also evident was the relationship between aesthetics and ecological and emotional meanings when connections were made with the Swan River. Artists showed a strong relationship when using and enjoying the Swan River for recreational and painting purposes. It was in this context too that issues of access became a point of conflict. There was also acknowledgement of the Swan River as a 'comfort zone', and the importance of the floodplains was noted for social activities. Dogs and dog walking became significant for both groups, engendering further example of how people illustrated Swan River connections.

By comparison, the location and description of Swan River foreshores, parks and wetlands provided contextual and interactive backdrops for CBCG informants. Claise Brook, which gives the group its name, and provides the focal point for the group, engages in restoration activities connected with this developed waterway and the Swan River. At monthly meetings the CBCG planned and discussed ecological
restoration activities and funding issues with members. A strong sense of community was linked with the procedural steps enacted by CBCG. Relationships with funding bodies and inter-governmental groups were valued highly for their existing and possible future support of CBCG ecological restoration activities. In many ways, the Swan River provided the cornerstone of such engagements.

Similarly, to most of the artists, CBCG participants liked the Swan River because of the way it made them feel, for its nostalgic value, for the capacity to enjoy it socially and ecologically, and for its sense of space. Participants valued the Swan River aesthetically in ways that connected them with childhood memories, through ecological interactions, and romantically. Strong negative emotional responses were connected with pollution, disrespect, fish kills, and algae blooms. However, pleasurable responses were linked to sailing and life giving qualities of the Swan River.

Access blocked some informants from interacting with particular sections of the Swan River, and many people indicated that they were motivated by social relationships to visit certain Swan River sections. Embracing a range of social, emotional and ecological meanings, some showed a preference for particular Swan River places, others showed an interest in going to the beach or various parks.

A key point for understanding ways that people used, interacted with and enjoyed the Swan River is learning through walking. Walking and cycling tours gave participants the opportunity to learn about environmental and historical changes to the Swan River. These learning tours provided participants with direct Swan River experiences. Tours led people through artistic spaces connecting them with the Swan River through poetry, paintings, sculptures and landscape design. The aim of these tours was to raise awareness among residents about the Swan River and their impact on these environments and water quality. Environmental history talks indicated how Swan River environments had changed through sewerage provision and industrial contamination, reclamation, the infilling of lakes and wetlands and dredging, development and social needs.

One particular activity that became the focus for CBCG volunteers centred on landscaping and revegetating the Swan River foreshore with native vegetation. People were motivated to participate in ecological restoration because they valued native vegetation within landscaped foreshores; they loved the act of planting as a shared family activity.

A strong sense of community was shared by local residents in relation to the Swan River foreshore and Walters Brook, which is part of the Claise Brook Catchment. Interrelated connections became evident among residents, workers, and...
visitors to the area through rare bottle collecting, swimming, dog walking, turtle and
bird watching, attending concerts, enjoying open space, paddling, cycling, using the
children’s playground, playing basketball, meditating, and fishing. Concerns focused
on issues of access and the ecological health of the Swan River.

While the String of Pearls is connected to the Swan River through drains,
there is a general lack of knowledge about how waters are connected to the Swan
River. People also revealed a ‘knowledge mix’ and a range of contested values with
regard to views of the lake versus ecological health and a balance was negotiated.
Similarly, contested values existed in relation to the use of native versus introduced
species. At Robertson Park, for instance, a revegetated wetland is set aside for
creating an ecosystem in an attempt to replicate an original Swan River environment.
Robertson Park also has many indicators of social and cultural heritage, including a
high priority to privilege real estate over restoration. Other contested social values
relate to bird feeding, dogs and keeping them from chasing birds – a hotly contested
issue between dog owners and CBCG members. Great care is taken by CBCG to
plant properly and to monitor water quality.

A range of motivations brought volunteers to participate in CBCG activities:
they include using the park daily, networking, feeling good, social activities, being
productive, expressing identity, and an opportunity to garden. Physical, aesthetic,
social, emotional and ecological connections formed different senses of belonging to
the Swan River. Therefore, any changes to the Swan River will obviously incur a
number of positive and negative emotional responses from people. Like the Māori,
Pākehā and Samoan caregivers and their environments, the Swan River was where
artists and environmentalists ‘belonged and community: events and incidental
meetings with local people commonly occurred at these sites (McCreanor, Penney et
al, 2006, p.205). Participants connected at both personal and collective levels with
the Swan River providing evidence of a sense of belonging that I have described as
generating from an emotional core . As Milton explains, emotions form a bridge
between nature and culture. Using an ecological approach to emotion locates it as
part of the relationship between an individual and their environment, whatever that
environment may consist of (Milton, 2005, p. 198, 203).
Map 1: The Swan and Canning River, Burningham (2004, p. 12)
Map 2: Melville Water (Burningham, 2004, p. 85)
WAYLO'S TERRITORY

MOORO YELLOWGONGA'S TERRITORY

MUNDAY'S TERRITORY

MIDGEGOOROO'S TERRITORY

BANYOWLA'S TERRITORY

PLACE NAMES AND TERRITORIES RECORDED BY ROBERT LYON

Map 3: Aboriginal Place Names and Territories recorded by Robert Lyon (Green, 1979, p. 174).
Map 4: Freshwater Bay Area mid nineteenth century (Bolton and Gregory, 1999a, p. 13)
Map 5: Point Fraser and Heirrison Islands 1895, State Library.
Map 7: Middle Swan – Claisebrook, Burswood Peninsula, Maylands Peninsula, Ascot and Bayswater to Tonkin Highway Bridge (Burningham, 2004, p. 162)
Map 8: Middle and Upper Swan, Success Hill to the Middle Swan Road Bridge (Burningham, 2004, p. 200).
Map 9: Claisebrook Main Drain and Catchment Area (Government of Western Australia)
1. A & B Beereegup: the place of banksias
2. Curveergaroup: unknown
3. Dyoondalup: the place of white sand where the dyoondal plant grows
4. Gabbee Derbal: body of estuary water
5. A & B Galbamaanup: the place of black water
6. Jenaiup: the place where the feet make a track
7. Karbamunup: the hill that is haunted, as punishment by the Waugul, due to Nyungars breaking a food law
8. Karkatta(up): the place of the sandbanks where crabs or spiers are located in Freshwater Bay
9. Katabberup: the high ground where the byer (zamia) grows
10. Mandyari: unknown
11. Mandyooranup: the place where young initiates visited, located near rocks at the upper entrance to freshwater Bay near Point Resolution
12. Mandyooranup: a fishing spot and market place
13. Maningyup: the place of vegetables
14. A & B Minderup: the place for alleviating or causing sickness (hot springs)
15. A & B Nyeergardup: the place where fresh water flows from the top of the cliff (nyeera = above) through limestone to its base (gardup = below)
16 A & B Waugul Mia: the Waugul's home
17. Compass directions
Katta moornda (East – blackheads or the Black Hills)
Minung (South – type of vegetable)
Woordal (West – ocean)
Yabaru (North)

Table 1: Key to Map 9 Kau Nyungar Boodjar Gabbee Gnarning Quobberup (Bolton and Gregory, 1999b, p. 2)


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