The Role of Neighbourhood Centres in Supporting New Arrivals to Integrate Into Life in South Australia

by

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SUMMARY

This study considers if the participation at neighbourhood centres by newly arrived migrants to South Australia assists in their connection to community and the establishment of supportive social networks. It examines how South Australian neighbourhood centres understand their role in assisting those newly arrived to South Australia to integrate and belong, and whether they have been effective in filling the gaps in the Australian National Settlement Framework.

Neighbourhood centres in South Australia are locally based multifunctional services that rely on a small core of paid staff and many volunteers. They function as a focal point for the local community, providing a meeting place and offering a range of strategies to assist individuals in community education, volunteering, health and wellbeing, social inclusion and life-skills programs.

This study seeks to understand the perspectives of the main stakeholders - staff and volunteers working in neighbourhood centres, and new arrivals who use the centres - on three specific research questions. What role do neighbourhood centres in South Australia play in the integration of new arrivals into their local community? How do new arrivals become socially connected to their local community through participation at neighbourhood centres? What are the limitations and opportunities of neighbourhood centres fostering social capital among new arrivals in South Australia? The research framework draws on social capital theory and its application to migrant integration, and uses a multi-method qualitative design from a social constructionist perspective.

This research identified two distinctive approaches to newly arrived migrants operating within neighbourhood centres in South Australia. One approach focusses on service delivery, where individuals and groups are perceived to have needs that can be met through programs, services and activities. The neighbourhood centres tended to take an economic perspective on their work and measure their efforts in numerical terms. They conceived of community members as users, customers or clients who attend programs and were reluctant to reach out to newly arrived migrants. This approach was associated with a focus on specific needs or deficits of individuals, with the overall objective being self-reliance.

The other approach taken by some neighbourhood centres is a people-centred holistic approach looking at the individual as a whole person, as a member of the

broader family who comes with deficits (lacking skills, English language difficulties) but also capabilities that can benefit the neighbourhood centre and the local community. The more holistic neighbourhood centres described members of the community as contributors and active participants, and understood their own role as assisting community members in building social relationships, cross-cultural understanding and a sense of belonging. The concern here is with the new arrival's sense of belonging and feeling part of their new community, and with the host community gaining insight and cultural understanding of the new arrivals' way of life. This approach is more conducive to a two-way form of integration.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed.....

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Community Alive

We're gifted and we're grounded;
We're full of hope unbounded
We've all come together to see what we can do.
We've come to get connected.
In a place that we've elected.
To be our community centre
For folks like me and you

Chorus:
The dream we have is special
It's simple and it's precious:
Community among us and friendship where we live.
May we who've been rejected
Find this where we're accepted
And make our life together
As good as we can give.

Friends from other places
They come and tell their stories
In every kind of language from every kind of land.
To hear a story spoken
From a heart that's nearly broken
We want to try to listen
We want to understand

The neighbourhood's our workplace
Our battlefield and platform
Giving invitations,
And welcome, how've you been?
Each smile that makes a friend here
Each cake and cup of tea here
Gives listening to our people
Whose voice was never heard.

We've been around for ages,
Developing in stages
And now the tide is turning
And now our time has come.
We come from near and yonder
And to this place we wander
To celebrate each Centre
With joy and harmony.

Peter Willis 2015

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The aim of my research is to investigate the role neighbourhood centres play in the settlement experience of newly arrived migrants in South Australia. Previous international studies have argued that neighbourhood centres are generalist, mainstream community organisations that connect people with one another and play an important role in building bridges between new arrivals and other members of the local community (Lauer & Yan, 2010; Yan & Sin, 2011). Neighbourhood centres' involvement with newly arrived migrants in Australia, however, is relatively recent, and research examining social capital and neighbourhood centres in relation to the integration of new arrivals in a South Australian context is severely lacking. Neighbourhood and community support are crucial elements of resettlement as well as local social cohesion which are key objectives of the federal government in fostering a socially cohesive society that enables equitable participation of recent arrivals (Flatau, Colic-Peisker, Bauskis, Maginn, & Buergelt, 2014).

Neighbourhood centres are the focus of this thesis, firstly because they represent a community-based organisation that has a long history of working with members of society who are less easily integrated into the community. Secondly, neighbourhood centres in South Australia are providing specific services targeted at new arrivals, such as English speaking classes, which complement settlement services provided by the government. Thirdly, there has been little independent research on the effectiveness of neighbourhood centres in the context of migrant integration. In particular, the views of newly-arrived migrants who participate in neighbourhood centres will be explored along with those who can influence their participation and social connection: staff and volunteers.

This thesis contributes to existing research on neighbourhood centres by investigating whether neighbourhood centres play a role in the settlement experience of new arrivals, what this role is, and how they perform this role. The study investigates how various stakeholders including the new arrivals, staff and volunteers working within South Australian neighbourhood centres play a role in reducing the challenges associated with settling new arrivals into their local community. The objective of this study is to analyse, through the lens of social capital theory, the role of neighbourhood centres in assisting the integration of new arrivals. The central premise is that social capital can play an important role in

facilitating or discouraging new arrivals to integrate through their involvement at neighbourhood centres (Yan & Lauer, 2008b). This research looks at new arrivals' participation within neighbourhood centres, explores how social capital arises from the social connections and networks in which they are involved, and examines how the facilitation of staff and volunteers can affect, positively or negatively, the new arrivals opportunities to feel they belong in their new country.

This thesis will also investigate how neighbourhood centres can contribute to building social capital (knowledge, information, skill development) and the opportunities (volunteering, employment, and program participation) that are made available to new arrivals. It examines the influence of social capital in the journey of new arrivals from the moment they access a neighbourhood centre to the subsequent experiences they have from their participation.

During this research it was evident that many neighbourhood staff members were unfamiliar with the distinctions and under which category those newly arrived to Australia fitted, whether refugee, migrant, or asylum seeker. Unlike other settlement service providers, neighbourhood centres do not require any entrance criteria or eligibility for services and attendees are not screened for visa categories. For this reason I chose not to distinguish between these groups of new arrivals. Acknowledging that while there are differences in their experiences prior to coming to Australia, new arrivals often share similar challenges once in the community, including skills development, retraining, English language and social connection.

The key research questions are

1. What role do neighbourhood centres in South Australia play in the integration of new arrivals into their local community?
2. How do new arrivals become socially connected to their local community through participation at neighbourhood centres?
3. What are the limitations and opportunities of neighbourhood centres fostering social capital among new arrivals in South Australia?

1.2 Historical Background to Australia's Migration Program

Since 1945, Australia has welcomed in excess of 7 million permanent immigrants, of which around 10 per cent are refugees or displaced people (Castles, Hugo, & Vasta, 2013), with the first group arriving after World War 2 when Australia provided permanent protection to eastern Europeans fleeing Nazi Germany (Hugo, 2011). Between 1940 and 1980, the selection of migrants to Australian was based largely

on population and labour force requirements (Schech, 2012). The racially based White Australia policy in place from the turn of the 20th Century until 1973 focussed on attracting white-skinned migrants from the United Kingdom, with the aim of fulfilling the needs of a fast-growing economy suffering from labour shortages. However, the migrant intake increasingly diversified to include other (Southern and Eastern) Europeans as the century wore on, and in the 1970s Australia settled a significant number of Indo-Chinese refugees fleeing the Vietnam War (Poynting & Mason, 2008). Migration during the 1990s saw further ethnic diversification with the recruitment of skilled migrants, family migrants, humanitarian settlers and others (Hugo, 2014a) from Asian and African countries. In the past two decades Australia's refugee intake has originated from the Middle East, Africa (including Sudan and Somalia), Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Asia (Bhutan, Sri Lanka). Skilled and family migrants are now coming from a growing range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds including China and India.

During the post war years, Australian settlement policy was assimilationist and new arrivals were directed to become Australian citizens and ignore their cultural heritage and practices. The 1970s saw political change and the end of the White Australia policy thus heralding a new direction for refugee settlement in Australia. These new arrivals were in sharp contrast to the previous dominance of Anglo Celtic migration and began the cultural diversity now experienced in Australia today. The Australian federal government developed a comprehensive refugee policy built upon the premise of permanent protection and permanent resettlement. The new policy included the provisions of an allocation of settlement places on an annual basis for refugee and humanitarian migrants.

The Whitlam Labor Government first supported multiculturalism in 1973 and the subsequent Coalition government led by Malcolm Fraser further developed policy in that area which has remained a feature of Australian society to the present day. The Galbally report (Galbally, 1978) was a significant government publication which promoted Australian multiculturalism. The principles that guided the Galbally (1978) report continued to resonate with subsequent multicultural policies. These principles are worth outlining:

– All members of our society must have equal opportunity to realise their full potential and must have equal access to programs and services;

– Every person should be able to maintain his or her culture without prejudice or disadvantage and should be encouraged to understand and embrace other cultures;

– The needs of migrants should, in general, be met by programs and services available to the whole community, but special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure equality of access and provision;

– Services and programs should be designed and operated in full consultation with clients and self-help should be encouraged as much as possible with a view to helping migrants become integrated (Galbally, 1978, p. 4).

The principles of the Galbally report still guide the settlement framework used by current settlement providers, however, their interpretation varies between mainstream and specialist providers. There is debate over the right balance between specialist and mainstream services, and how services and programs available to the whole community can be made accessible to new arrivals. Connected to this is the need for mainstream community organisations to consult with new arrivals on the design, operation and services delivered. Also relevant to this study is how new arrivals can maintain their own cultural heritage whilst gaining knowledge of local procedures, customs and expectations, and how best the host community can gain an understanding of the cultural backgrounds and practices and the circumstances of the new arrivals.

Australia's current migration program has two components – a migration stream for skilled and family migrants that is aligned to the needs of the Australian economy, and a Humanitarian Program that responds to international refugee and humanitarian developments. The latter comprises two components, onshore protection for those already in Australia who are recognised by the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951 and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees (known as asylum seekers until their cases have been determined) and the offshore resettlement program which offers resettlement through the UNHCR Program (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b).

Neumann, Gifford, Lems, and Scherr (2014) argue that much of the Australian academic literature regarding new arrivals has focussed on the differences between the migrant categories and how this affects their settlement into a new country. Some refugees and asylum seekers may bring with them problematic baggage,

years of trauma and lack of skills, limited English and a disrupted educational background (Neumann et al., 2014). Those who have migrated voluntarily on the other hand are often favoured for their knowledge and skills which make them attractive to fulfil the needs of growing economies faced with skill shortages (Hugo, 2014a). In their first years of settlement into Australia, some new arrivals experience difficulties such as isolation and disconnection from the wider community, and these can extend beyond the initial years of arrival. It is argued by some (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008; Hugo, 2011; Jackson, Jatrana, Johnson, Kilpatrick, & King, 2013) that refugees do not settle as easily as other types of migrants and require more assistance. For these reasons the Australian government and nongovernment agencies provide a range of services designed to assist them to rebuild their lives, settle and integrate into their new country. These services tend to focus on skill generation, cultural orientation, housing support, trauma counselling (if required) and intensive English language classes (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b). Many are in place some only for short periods of time (6-12 months) often not enough time for new arrivals to become active participants in their new country, feel at home or that they belong. A recent report of the South Australian parliament into new migrants acknowledges that settlement and integration is a process that takes much longer than the official, government supported settlement period:

> Migration is not a single act of crossing a border, but rather a lifelong process that affects all aspects of the lives of those involved… Even those who do not migrate are affected by the movements of people in or out of their communities and by the resulting changes (Social Development Committee Parliament of South Australia, 2013, p. 9).

According to this view, the whole community is affected by migration. New arrivals can enrich and broaden the culture and social life of the communities where they settle. When newly arrived migrants attend neighbourhood centres, this may impact on their own lives as well as the lives of other people involved with the centres. How, and what, outcomes result from participation within neighbourhood centres will be discussed in this thesis.

1.2.1 The South Australian Context for Migration

In response to its low levels of demographical and economic growth in recent years, South Australia was the first of Australia's mainland states to develop a Population Policy, with migration being the central theme (Hugo, 2008). Low fertility rates, an

ageing population and a growing number of young people leaving South Australia seeking a brighter future in the more prosperous and dynamic cities of Sydney and Melbourne, has been the key influencing factors in the development of a State Specific Regional Migration Scheme. This scheme channels skilled migrants into South Australia, and along with South Australia taking a proportionally higher percentage of humanitarian migrants that exceeds its share of the Australian population (Hugo, 2008), the combined impact has been a significant increase in new arrivals. New arrivals have a vested interest in succeeding in their new country in order to gain a degree of self-sufficiency in order to participate in the social life and contribute to the economy. They bring skills, knowledge, labour, and families to boost South Australia's dwindling birth rate, and they are also consumers in the economic system. Many succeed in building or rebuilding their lives in South Australia and contribute to the richness of our social, cultural and economic lives (DIMIA, 2003; Social Development Committee Parliament of South Australia, 2013). However, some new arrivals (mainly refugees and humanitarian migrants) do not settle as easily and require assistance in order to reach their full potential, become integrated into the broader Australian community and feel that they belong. There is evidence that social support from families, communities or other sources acts as a protective factor against the impacts of social isolation experienced by new arrivals (Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008). A study by Hugo (2011) examined the social participation of refugees within their own ethnic groups and the wider community and found evidence that high levels of participation in attending local community organisations resulted in higher levels of satisfaction with life in Australia. Three quarters of respondents in his study reported having strong networks of friends in the neighbourhood, 95% participated in community activities such as playgroups, religious services, school events and attending the local library. These social connections produce a sense of belonging and improved wellbeing (Hugo, 2011). A high level of satisfaction with life in Australia has also been found in other studies on refugees (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008). However, these studies have also identified barriers (such as access to adequate long-term accommodation, little time to fulfil English language training and failure for overseas qualification being recognised) that refugees and humanitarian migrants, in particular, face in connecting with the wider Australian community.

There are many reasons that people choose to migrate to South Australia, with each hoping to achieve the same ultimate goals as other permanent residents, such as a good education, secure employment, suitable and affordable housing, quality health

care, personal security, and the ability to participate fully in the social, cultural and economic life of the community. New arrivals with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds want to develop social connection beyond their own ethnic communities, they want to feel Australian, and want to be accepted by the host community. They want to belong (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a). However, settlement presents a range of challenges, and different cohorts of migrants face different challenges in settling into a new country. For example, families experience different challenges and invoke different responses to those of single males or women separated from their husbands as a result of war or violence. Therefore, there is a need for flexible, diverse, individually tailored support. This research aims to investigate whether, and how, neighbourhood centres play a distinctive role in settlement and integration; one that enables new migrants who experience such challenges to feel a sense of belonging.

1.3 The Focus of the Research

Since the Industrial Revolution, neighbourhood centres in North America (called settlement houses) and the United Kingdom have been involved in the integration of migrants, and helping communities adjust to rapid social, cultural and economic changes (Johnson, 2001). This history will be further explored in Chapter 3. In South Australia, neighbourhood centres have recently reported a growing number of new arrivals (predominantly from non-English speaking backgrounds) seeking assistance with their settlement progression, and this is posing new challenges for the neighbourhood centre sector (O'Neil, Kaye, & Gottwald, 2013).

1.3.1 Neighbourhood Centres

'Neighbourhood centre' is a generic term that refers to a variety of community-owned and managed organisations, as well as community-focussed organisations under the management of local government and other authorities. Organisations called 'neighbourhood centres' in this thesis are sometimes referred to by other names, often reflecting their varied historical beginnings. These include Community Centre, Community House, Living and Learning Centre, Neighbourhood House and Family House. Whilst there is much discussion around the definitions, differences and similarities between neighbourhood centres, learning centres, community centres and neighbourhood houses, they are usually bound by a common goal as set out by Community Centres SA (the peak association for neighbourhood centres in South Australia); that is, to respond to the community's needs through supporting the provision of services, programs and activities in an informal, caring and

supportive environment. Community Centres SA defines a neighbourhood centre as a community organisation that provides informal support services and accessible programs that foster links within the community and complements formal health, welfare and education services (O'Neil et al., 2013, p. 1). Neighbourhood centres have developed as meeting places, as an information exchange, and, in particular, as a family and children's service location. A neighbourhood centre is a multifunctional service, based in a local community and uses the labour of paid staff and volunteers. It functions as a focal point for local community organisations, providing a venue for meetings, social activities, events, adult education, youth groups, parents groups and leisure activities. Some neighbourhood centres are used as premises for formal service provision; for example, consultation by community and child health nurses and community welfare workers, and for short-term courses provided under the auspices of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) (O'Neil et al., 2013).

A more detailed definition by Macarov (1978), which has been adapted to the Australian context, identifies five criteria that distinguish neighbourhood centres from other community organisations. These include:

(1) The use of a building (which excludes services that are not building-based such as street-corner youth work, or service organisations such as Rotary Clubs which meet at community halls.

(2) Dealing with more than one age group (which excludes child care and senior citizens centres).

(3) Engaging in a variety of activities (which rules out sporting clubs).

(4) Open to everyone who wants to participate (which excludes ethnic or professional associations).

(5) Concern about the geographic locality (which excludes centres with no local commitment) (Healy, 1989).

In South Australia, the peak association is known as Community Centres SA (CCSA). It describes neighbourhood centres as nongovernment, non-religious organisations that operate from a philosophy based on the broad principles of empowerment, the belief that individuals have the ability to fulfil their needs and

wants, and equity and justice for those who are disadvantaged in the community (Paltridge, 2001). Community Centres SA's vision articulates this as follows:

> For a vibrant network of community and neighbourhood centres and their mission is to build the strength, capacity and influence of the community and neighbourhood centre sector through advocacy, workforce and organisational development strategies (Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association, 2011).

CCSA identifies neighbourhood centres as organisations that offered services that focus on supportive and preventative strategies, foster personal development and provide links between isolated people and their communities.

Based on these definitions, there were 103 neighbourhood centres operating in South Australia in 2017 across both metropolitan and regional areas. Neighbourhood centres have been identified as having an important role to play in assisting their participants and communities to rebuild fragmented lives by increasing their capacity to address social concerns (Rooney, 2009). It has been argued that because of their traditional community development roots, neighbourhood centres are a critical resource in building community solidarity (Paltridge, 2005).

Creating a cohesive society requires opportunities and places where citizens can work together in making sense of their world, develop and share their knowledge and skills, explore and develop their individual and collective citizenship (Glover, 2004). Such activities as those found in neighbourhood centres where people can participate in discussion groups, cooking programs, playgroups, as well as volunteer, can lead to the development of intercommunity connections and networks where individuals and group values, goals and concerns can be explored.

As the existing literature emphasises the social role of neighbourhood centres, this thesis will use social capital theory to frame its investigation of the working relationships between staff members and volunteers and the interpersonal dynamics in relation to neighbourhood centres and new arrivals. In order to do this, the study will explore how neighbourhood centres evolved; their historical background and their purpose in contemporary South Australian society. By exploring the lived experiences of staff members and volunteers who work towards creating a sense of community, this thesis investigates their contention that neighbourhood centres can and do promote integration by developing the social capital of new arrivals. It also

investigates the perspectives of new arrivals, what attracts them to neighbourhood centres and how they benefit from, and contribute to social connections occurring through these centres.

1.3.2 Settlement Assistance

Since the mid1970's Australia's population has increasingly become more ethnically diverse (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007). In 2013, 27.7% of Australians were foreign born from over two hundred and forty different source countries. Australia is a nation built on migration with vast experience of settling new arrivals, and like many other such countries (including Canada, USA, and New Zealand), it is facing fresh challenges for integration, including the increased ethnic diversity and the rise of forced migration. It is new arrivals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly humanitarian migrants, for which this research will be most beneficial.

Australia is claimed to provide some of the best formal settlement support services for newly arrived humanitarian migrants. The first of a two-tiered program of settlement support is available on arrival and lasts between 6 and 12 months. These services are delivered primarily through the Humanitarian Settlement Services program (HSS) grants (in South Australia one agency provided this support), and includes meeting refugees at the airport, short term housing (6 months), household goods, food packages and orientation to Australian society. This formal support is brief (6 months to a year) and arguably not adequate to achieve settlement goals including learning to speak English and finding meaningful employment or adequate housing. On exiting the HSS the second tier of services are available for up to five years though the Settlement Grants Programs (SGP) administered by the federal government (DSS, 2017). Due to these federally funded settlement support programs, mainstream service providers who offer programs and services available to the whole community have tended to see service provision that meets the specific needs of humanitarian and culturally and linguistically diverse new arrivals as a federal government role and not as their own responsibility.

While this support is available in some places and to some groups under the Settlement Grants Program (SGP), not all new arrivals have access, and neither do these grants enable organisations to provide ongoing and systematic settlement support (Sampson, 2014, p. 102). Some are excluded from most or all of these settlement support services; for example, new arrivals who come as asylum seekers, and economic or family migrants are deemed to either not need any

support or to have adequate support from their own family or social networks. Therefore, there are gaps in the settlement program provided by government that informal support services such as those provided by neighbourhood centres seek to address.

In South Australia, settlement services are predominantly provided by specialist nongovernment settlement agencies such as the Australian Migrant Resource Centre, and the Australian Refugee Association. While this support is focussed on the individual humanitarian migrant, new arrivals also need communal places where they can develop their skills and enhance their social connections with others (Permezel, 2001). Policy and decision makers at all levels of government (particularly state and local government) need more in-depth analysis in regard to the role communal places such as neighbourhood centres play within a community. Exploring what neighbourhood centres have to offer can assist in ensuring that newly-arrived people have equitable access to social supports; that services are well coordinated and that the available support is effective in achieving specific integration goals such as proficiency in English language.

The goals of Australian settlement support services (mainstream or specialist) are influenced by Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptualisation of integration that equates integration with a degree of self-sufficiency in order to participate in the social and economic life of the community. They argue that integration occurs when new arrivals have access to housing, education, employment, health, and other services, framed through an ideal of full and equal participation for all in society. In addition to the provision of services that offer new arrivals access to the technical aspects of belonging, employment, housing, education, and health (Strang & Ager, 2010), there is a need to focus on encouraging an emotional connection of belonging in the wider community (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a). Less attention has been paid to integration at the local community level as most governments usually view integration through an economic lens measured through outcomes such as employment, and are less interested in social networks formed in the mainstream community, life satisfaction and belonging (Colic-Peisker, 2009).

On reaching a new country, new arrivals from countries of non-English speaking background often experience language barriers, cultural barriers and discrimination that can impact on opportunities to make social connections (Humpage & Marston, 2005). The lack of social networks and support services is a common theme in many studies that explore the settlement experience of new arrivals in Australia

(Fozdar & Torezani, 2008; Gifford, 2012; Jackson et al., 2013). A lack of social networks results in isolation and loneliness and an overall sense of not belonging to, or fitting in with the Australian community (Pittaway & Muli, 2009). With few, if any, connections with other Australians, new arrivals have few opportunities to gain familiarity with the Australian way of life and can easily develop feelings of not being welcomed and supported by the Australian community. In this situation many new arrivals seek support from people within their own ethnic community, which offers valuable bonding social capital. There is also a suggestion from many new arrivals, that while they appreciate and value the services they receive in helping them settle quickly during their initial period of resettlement, they feel a strong need for social intercourse with the 'mainstream community' (bridging social capital) to become fully functioning members of Australian society. This does not happen easily and, as a result, some new arrivals have feelings of not being welcome, isolation, and not belonging, which has meant for some an urge and yearning to go back home (Pittaway & Muli, 2009).

The importance of social connections within and between communities is crucial to community cohesion, as new arrivals and longer-term residents learn from socialising with each other what the rules of social engagement are, how to read social situations and communicate through cultural difference. The successful settlement of new arrivals in Australia is dependent on the extent to which they have the ability to access a wide range of government and community sector services. But integration also requires a sense of belonging where new arrivals are recognised as an integral part of their local community where they live, as well as feel valued, listened to and feel at home in a new place (Antonsich, 2010). Existing research suggests that participation of new arrivals in community-based networks enhances their capacity to build relationships within the community (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Hugo, 2014b; Losoncz, 2015). Voluntary organisations and social networks are seen as key agents in promoting cultural diversity and sustained settlement (Papillon, 2002). An important dimension to integration is the extent to which new arrivals participate in the daily life of their community, the neighbourhood and society more broadly. The challenge of maintaining socially diverse communities lies in creating an environment that facilitates integration through an institutional network that responds to those requiring greater support during their settlement process (Papillon, 2002). From this research it is evident that social connectedness and positive social interactions are important factors of integration and ultimately long term settlement into a new country.

This raises the question whether community-based organisations like neighbourhood centres can be enablers for connections that will enhance the social inclusion of new arrivals and the creation of new social networks. There is evidence that social support from families, communities or other sources act as a protective factor against the impacts of social isolation experienced by new arrivals. During times of difficulty, new arrivals were shown to discuss problems and emotional issues with members of their social network that included friends, family and neighbours and is seen as an effective coping strategy (Khawaja et al., 2008). Bonding and bridging relationships (Portes & Vickstrom, 2011), which will be discussed in Chapter 2, are particularly important to newly-arrived refugee communities.

This research thus examines the ways in which new arrivals access, maintain and construct different social networks (social capital) in various neighbourhood centres and with a variety of people. It is not concerned with quantifying social capital or measuring it but, rather, with the qualitative exploration of the subtleties by which social capital can affect integration or barriers to it in regard to new arrivals. Nor is this research aiming to view social capital as always positive as it will also explore the negative consequences and barriers to integration. The relationship between social capital and neighbourhood centres is examined in order to understand how the various types, bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Putnam, 2000; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock, 1998) can offer new arrivals a broader range of opportunities and resources such as volunteering and in developing social connections of support and social development. Although the focus of this study is the settlement process in relation to new arrivals, the intention is not to provide a detailed analysis of the government settlement policies and settlement processes. Rather, it will investigate the role neighbourhood centres play in the process of working with new arrivals and attempt to determine if this has a positive impact on their settlement. By highlighting neighbourhood centres, this research does not ignore the fact that there are other communal sites where new arrivals can mix with members of the host community, develop skills and potentially have their social support needs met. The functions and practices of neighbourhood centres however, deserve their own focus due to the large number of centres across South Australia and their increasing usage by new arrivals.

The main argument of this thesis is that contemporary neighbourhood centres are a mainstream community resource that can provide a physical space and community

focal point with resources, (including staff and volunteers) to create an ideal situation for integrating new arrivals. This research will determine if neighbourhood centres in South Australia have been able to rise to this challenge, and are able to offer new arrivals a place for them to access, participate and belong to a wider network of people. Although governments at all levels provide settlement supports and programs including English language skills, assisting with accessing employment, accommodation and housing supports, for new arrivals this is not an end in itself to settling into the local community. A core aspect to settlement is feeling at home and a sense of belonging which in turn is a key aspect of wellbeing for new arrivals (Gillford, Bakopanos, Kaplan, & Correa-Velez, 2007).

1.4 Study Methodology

A qualitative framework was determined to be suitable for this study because it is seeks to build a complex, holistic picture by portraying detailed views of informants and interpreting their words (Creswell, 2007). Data were collected using a multi-pronged approach; conducting a mapping survey, focus groups, interviews and site visits. Each of these methods provided different facets of information, and an opportunity to delve deeper to gain a greater understanding of the research topic. The research design was informed by a social constructionist perspective. A constructionist approach seeks to explore, understand, and theorise the sociocultural contexts and the structural conditions that enable individual accounts that are provided. In this perspective of how knowledge is created, meaning is constructed out of the mind's interaction with the world (Crotty, 1998). Social constructionism seeks to understand the world in which individuals live and work. This study aims to understand multiple views of meaning from multiple stakeholders, including perspectives of the staff of neighbourhood centres and those of the new arrivals. The goal of research, using the positioning of neutral observer and reporter, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. The generation of knowledge and ideas of reality is not derived by individuals but through social processes, in this case during focus groups. If all reality is socially constructed and historically bounded, it is formed through interaction with others (Sahin, 2006).

1.5 Summary and Outline of Subsequent Chapters

Thus far, this introduction has identified the scope of this research and provided an overview of the areas to be addressed in this thesis. The aim of my research is to

investigate the role neighbourhood centres play in the settlement experience of new arrivals in South Australia. It seeks to examine how participation at neighbourhood centres by new arrivals can assist in their settlement process, and the lessons learnt from this study may assist those working in the sector throughout South Australia and beyond.

The literature relating to social capital, integration, community and place is critically reviewed in Chapter 2. This chapter explains the conceptual framework of social capital (specifically bonding, bridging and linking capital) and how it will be used to explore neighbourhood centres' contribution to integration of new arrivals into South Australia. The limitations in the current literature will be further explored as well as how the current study will address and identity these gaps.

The historical background and international, national and local contexts of neighbourhood centres are discussed in Chapter 3. That chapter will also provide an overview of the activities, programs and opportunities for social connections that South Australian neighbourhood centres offer. This will set the scene in which this study takes place and provide a current understanding of the roles that neighbourhood centres play in the service provisions, social networks, support and activities for new arrivals in South Australia.

Chapter 4 describes the design and methodology of this qualitative study and the specific methods used to undertake the research. The research questions, sampling and participant information, data collection methods, and analysis techniques for each phase will be outlined. Ethical considerations relating to research with new arrivals, staff members and volunteers will also be discussed.

Based on the data collected through these methods, Chapter 5 presents and discusses the reasons why new arrivals attend and participate in neighbourhood centres, the types of programs and services accessed and the nature of the work carried out by neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers. It also examines some of the barriers new arrivals face and the strategies used by some neighbourhood centres' staff and volunteers to overcome these barriers.

Chapter 6 provides an analysis of the role played by neighbourhood centres in assisting new arrivals to develop a sense of belonging in their new community. The role of place making, cultural awareness and understanding on behalf of the host community, the facilitation of social connection, the opportunities for new arrivals to

participate in volunteering at neighbourhood centres and the differential models for services delivery and their impacts on outcomes for new arrivals will be discussed.

Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the primary findings of the study and presents the overall conclusions and implications on future policy and practices for the neighbourhood centres sector in South Australia. The limitations of the study will also be discussed and areas for future research highlighted.

Existing research indicates that neighbourhood centres have a role in cultivating a sense of place (Paltridge, 2005; Rule, 2005). It will be the task of this research to determine if neighbourhood centres in South Australia play a role in reconnecting people who have lost their place. Neighbourhood centres see it as their role to foster social connection and are in the business of building bridges, some more encompassing than others. This thesis examines how effectively they do this in relation to new arrivals.

The need for this research is underscored by the current unprecedented scale of worldwide people movement, both voluntary and forced. Whatever the next few decades may bring in terms of Australia's migration policy, there will be an increasing need for people to assist each other with their settlement journey. It therefore makes sense to try and understand how to enhance the informal social supports required by new arrivals within the local Australian community. Funding bodies and governments need to look beyond existing strategies and consider how a much wider range of less obvious organisations can assist with the settlement and integration of new arrivals. Neighbourhood centres are among those less obvious organisations that may have the capacity, networks and support systems already in place to make such a contribution.

2 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a conceptual framework that informs the methodological approach used in this study, and forms the basis for discussion of the research findings in subsequent chapters. Previous research presents neighbourhood centres as sites that foster connection by providing a place where people can interact with others, assist in each other's skill development, reduce social isolation and cultivate a sense of belonging (Izmir, Katz, & Bruce, 2009; Paltridge, 2005; Rooney, 2011). Social capital theory explains how social networks strengthen bonds within communities and establishes connections to needed resources that are formed beyond the neighbourhood centre's immediate domain. A conceptual understanding of social capital is necessary for this research as the term social capital is a dominant focus for many of the outcome reports (Izmir et al., 2009), policy statements, grant applications, and existing local (Crnic, 2012; Paltridge, 2005) and international (Lauer & Yan, 2007; Yan, 2004; Yan & Lauer, 2008b; Yan & Sin, 2011) research on neighbourhood centres. It is necessary therefore to examine the theory of social capital and how it relates to neighbourhood centres.

The literature on neighbourhood centres suggests that interpersonal relationships that evolve into social networks can be developed, fostered and maintained within the context of community organisations such as neighbourhood centres (Rooney, 2011; Yan & Lauer, 2008b; Yan & Sin, 2011). The pivotal role of neighbourhoods as spaces of social belonging is emphasised by Kelly, Breadon, Davis, Hunter, Mares, Mullerworth, and Weidmann (2012, p. 22):

> The neighbourhood we live in has an impact on our daily lives, our possibilities to access resources, health, wellbeing and security. Ultimately neighbourhoods are significant places for creating a sense of connectedness and for relationship building. Socialising with people in the neighbourhood creates a feeling of belonging. Connecting with others in the neighbourhood may also add to wellbeing and a sense of self. This connectedness becomes alive through the places that neighbourhoods are built upon. Community and neighbourhood centres are such places within a community, common places to meet and to join certain activities or local events which encourage a sense of identity, a sense of belonging and social connection.

According to Kelly et al. (2012), the pivotal role of neighbourhood centres is due to the fact that they work at the local level where social connection is built. In Australia, neighbourhood centres are similarly described as places where community engagement and connectedness are fostered but they have increasingly become 'multi-service hubs' for the local neighbourhood (Healy, 1991; Mlcek & Ismay, 2015). As they become incorporated into the broader human service system as points of service delivery for community members, they also become more reliant on government funding and associated accountability measures. This may change the ways in which neighbourhood centres see their role in building social capital in ways that conflict with their mission to be flexible, inclusive and responsive to the broader community as well (Izmir et al., 2009; Pope & Warr, 2005).

2.2 Social Capital

The social connections people make within a community or network are more than a series of relationships. They are the basis for something known as social capital, an important resource seen equally as valuable as economic capital for governments, communities and organisations to invest in. As Portes (1998) explains:

> [w]hereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inheres in the structures of relationships…. To possess social capital a person must be related to others, and it is those others not himself who are the actual source of his or her advantage (Portes, 1998, p. 7).

Social capital theory has been used to explain how social structures, institutions and shared values can work to make up communities. It has been widely used to describe how communities and individuals may or may not have access to, and effectively connect with, a range of civic, cultural and economic structures and contexts. It has also been linked to social cohesion, integration, democracy, community wellbeing and education, to name but a few domains (Poder, 2011).

Social capital plays a role in the facilitation of access to resources that enables people to develop positive (or negative) social connections to support integration, wellbeing and social harmony amongst members of the community (Pittaway, Bartolomei, & Doney, 2015). Despite its diverse applications social capital is essentially concerned with the notion that social networks have value (Portes, 1998). Social capital is the product of the connections among individuals or social

networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from these connections (Onyx & Bullen, 2000; Putnam, 2000). Social capital has been described as an investment (Poder, 2011) and thought to offer an effective answer to a neoliberal critique of social spending as wasteful and a source of dependency. In attempting to combine social and economic needs, social capital underpins social programs that advance economic development.

The concept of social capital was first developed by Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) but it was Putnam (1993; 1995; 1996; 2000) who popularised the concept that is today used across the community service sector and government organisations alike. According to Putnam (1993, p. 35), 'social capital refers to the features of social organisations, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate action and cooperation of mutual benefit'. For Putnam, social capital includes the family, friends and other members of a person's social network that constitutes an important source of material aid and opportunities for social connection, enjoyment, and support in a crisis along with other resources (Winter, 2000). He also sees the benefit of belonging to voluntary associations such as sporting and interest groups, service clubs and community organisations because they foster a sense of belonging, group identity and strengthen community norms and values that encourage civic engagement (Putnam, 1993, pp. 35,167). When people make face-to-face social connections, trust, mutual reciprocity, and community networks develop to form social capital. This capital becomes a resource which can be used to achieve objectives that are usually for the common good (Putnam, 1993). Social capital according to Putnam (2000) consists of three main components:

1) Social norms or the informal rules that condition the behaviours of people in certain circumstances. Norms can be specific to certain circumstances and situations such as those followed at work or at school, while generalised norms include tolerance, reciprocity and honesty.

2) Trust or the level of confidence a person has in others that they will act, or say they will act as expected to act, or that they will do what they say they will do. Putnam argues that social trust relates to shared norms that affect levels of safety, security, attitudes to strangers or those of different background, whereas personal trust arises from shared norms and values that foster reciprocal relationships between members of families, organisations and communities. Both social and personal trust underpin successful social and economic policies of a nation and

won’t function well if social trust and community norms that enable civic involvement are weak (Putnam, 2000).

3) Social networks of connected people who usually exhibit commonalities of interest Bailey, Savage, and O'Connor (2003) say social capital is created as a by-product of social relationships. People have a need to participate in society and to engage with others in order to gain personal benefit and in turn to benefit others through interaction and connection.

This thesis will focus mainly on the third point, that of social networks, and on the places where social interactions occurs such as the groups, networks, and volunteer opportunities of those participating in neighbourhood centres in South Australia.

There are two main streams of social capital literature. One stream stems from Bourdieu (1986) and includes Portes (1998), who refers to the resources that individuals can acquire through relationships. These resources can include information, skills, assistance, and ideas accessible by and through relationships. A person’s position within a network can determine the amount of resources and therefore the level of social capital they can obtain. The structure of the network, who interacts with who, when, where and on what terms, impacts the flow of resources available to the person. Bourdieu’s theory sees social capital as allowing the individual to mobilise others in a network, and as the investment in establishing or reproducing social relationships that are usable in the short or long term. These relationships can be formed in the family, neighbourhood, or at work. For Bourdieu, social capital is a means of getting access to economic and cultural resources through social connections (Winter, 2000). Bourdieu (1986, p. 245) defines social capital as

> The sum of resources, actual or virtual. Furthermore these resources are said to be accrued to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of a more or less institutionalised of mutual acquaintance and recognition.

The participation in the social network enables its members to have access to their collective resources. By continuing the involvement in the group, the group members are ensured mutual benefits. Bourdieu also considers the accumulation of economic capital by individuals in a capitalist society and how social capital can be influential in increasing an individual’s economic capital. Bourdieu's perspective of social capital treats it as a possession that can be drawn upon and utilized to

give an added advantage over others, and this may not necessarily be for the common good.

The second approach to social capital is derived from Coleman (1988) and popularised by Putnam. It relates to the nature of scale and web of networks, both formal and informal. Coleman contributes to the social capital theory by referring to 'aspects of social structure' (1988, p. 98), comprising of obligations and expectations, information channels, norms and effective sanctions that constrain and or encourage certain kinds of behaviour, and these exist in relationships amongst people (Winter, 2000). Coleman applies a financial analogy to his definition when he explains what constitutes capital resources for individuals. The obligation to reciprocate a favour done by person A for person B constitutes a credit for person A. This credit can be redeemed in a network and A trusts B to return the favour in the future. This establishes an expectation in A and an obligation on B that the credit will be redeemed in the future and is based on the trust produced by the part of the social structure that has provided the resources. Coleman sees social capital as resources that can be stored, used and exchanged. Social capital therefore comprises trust, reciprocity, belonging, networks and mutual support (Coleman, 1988). He sees individual behaviours influenced by the characteristics of a social system, and individuals' actions motivated by personal interest. He uses social capital as a means of transition between the micro (beyond family) and macro (groups, collectives) levels of society. In order to get by and move ahead, individuals use social capital as an exchange to promote their self-interest, but they also build long-lasting relationships which become part of social structure (Poder, 2011).

The difference between Coleman's and Bourdieu's definitions of social capital starts to occur from this point. Bourdieu allows social capital to belong to the individual, whereas Coleman sees social capital as the outcomes of social interactions, and not held by an individual. Social capital for Coleman is about the roles of norms and sanctions as a resource available to the group that enables the group to solve their problems (or 'get ahead').

Putnam's approach to social capital is based mainly on the work of Coleman. For Putnam social capital in the US context is associated with civic involvement, particularly through involvement in voluntary associations, which is the foundation of democracy in American society. The civic culture he speaks of is characterised by a society in which citizens trust and show interest in public affairs by

participating in associations and electoral participation. The construction of civic culture is founded on participation in associations and face-to-face relationships, where norms of reciprocity emerge that enable society to function well. Putnam's analogy that more and more Americans were 'bowling alone' rather than as part of a bowling league was for him both a symptom and cause of widespread civic disengagement and resulted from a decline in social capital. At the core of Putnam's concerns is the decline of social capital which he sees connected to a decline in democracy, increased violence and inequality, and impoverishment (Poder, 2011). His main argument is that engaged communities produce cohesive societies of active citizens. Social capital for Putnam helps to resolve individual and societal concerns and accumulates with use. Putnam distinguishes between different kinds of social capital, as will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 Bonding, Bridging and Linking Social Capital

There are three main types of social capital that have been defined in the literature: bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Pardy & Lee, 2011; Putnam, 2000; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004; Tzanakis, 2013; Woolcock, 1998). Bonding social capital is the social connections that one has within one's own social, ethnic, work or religious group, it can provide social supports and resources to enable someone to 'get by' in life (Woolcock, 1998). It refers to the strong social ties between people such as relatives, close friends and those from the same ethnic background. Bonding social capital (within groups) promotes homogeneity, trust and is inward looking towards the group or concerned mainly with the welfare of the group. From a social identity perspective bonding capital can be seen as the process whereby people in a group interact, thereby increasing their sense of similarity, cohesion and trust in the other group members. It can be displayed within community organisations, service clubs or neighbourhood centres where cliques of people form to the exclusion of others. An adverse effect of strong bonding social capital can result in the exclusion of others, restrict freedom and keep downtrodden groups in their place (Portes, 1998). However, this does not mean bonding groups are not beneficial (McMichael & Manderson, 2004), as most individuals receive social support through bonding social ties (Coffé & Geys, 2007).

Putnam draws a distinction between 'getting by' and 'getting ahead'. He argues that moving from getting by to getting ahead involves a shift from bonding to

bridging networks. Social and geographic isolation can prevent opportunities for exchange and interaction between communities of people. Being isolated from the wider community and only mixing with their own ethnic groups can result in individuals only forming bonding ties. Bridging capital is vitally important to gain access to knowledge, skills and ideas.

Bridging social capital refers to the building of connections between homogeneous groups and these ties can foster social inclusion. Experiences with dissimilar individuals offers those within the bonded group to form different ties of cooperation, trust, and the opportunity for 'getting ahead' compared to those only offered through interaction with similar individuals in terms of characteristics, attitudes and behaviours. The experiences gained through cooperation in diverse groups can be transferred to the heterogeneous groups outside the group. Bridging social capital can offer an individual access to a broader range of opportunities and resources such as employment and social groups if not available in one's immediate social circle. This process is illustrated by Aldred, Buckingham, and Clark (2004) who point out that social capital occurs when the connections between people form bonds from which they can obtain something personal or collectively useful. Playgroups, women's groups, support groups, gatherings of people brought together to engage in gardening projects, exercise classes, or the men's shed groups, are all interest-related and facilitated within neighbourhood centres. For example, women can bond with each other over their children and develop bridging capital through networking. By sharing childcare, school transport runs and children's play dates, networking could lead to other opportunities including information about employment or social opportunities.

Extending from Putnam's bonding and bridging social capital is another form of social capital - linking capital. This is defined by Szreter and Woolcock (2004, p. 655) 'as the network of relationships between people who are interacting across institutional power and authority'. Linking capital refers to the ties between people in dissimilar social situations that enable individuals and groups to access a wider range of resources including formal institutions and resources outside the local community. Linking individuals with institutions can develop into linked networks between people and local service providers such as neighbourhood centres, and government representatives that facilitate the exchange of information, build capacity and promote sociability. Leonard and Onyx (2004) describe the aims of neighbourhood centres in terms of linking social capital, as they create an arena

for collective action for the public good by reaching out to other networks and opportunities.

Several scholars have used the concepts of bonding, bridging and linking social capital in relation to migration and the integration of new arrivals. An argument can be made for new arrivals to establish or relate primarily within their own ethnic or cultural group when settling into a new country (bonding) as these groups are important social support networks particularly in the first years of settlement (Pittaway et al., 2015). They can provide the individual with a sense of ethnic identity, a feeling of belonging, and a place of security. They enable the new arrival to share cultural practices and maintain familiar patterns of relationships (Ager & Strang, 2008). However, the new arrival may feel a lack of freedom to enter or leave the ethnic group and pursue their own lives, and may lack the knowledge of how to access services outside the ethnic community. This can lead to new arrivals being isolated from mainstream society and establishing social enclaves within their new country (Phillips, 2006). The counter argument is that a heterogeneous (established through bridging social capital) support network can provide new arrivals with diverse types of support strategies and greater freedom to explore new ways of participating for long term adjustment to a new country. Social connectedness and positive social interactions are important factors for integrating into the wider society. Settlement involves the establishment of connections to place in relation to home, neighbourhood, and public spaces such as schools, libraries, neighbourhood centres, as well as the development of feelings of belonging to social spaces in everyday life. By being involved in many social networks with numerous social connections, an individual will accrue social capital. For example, and following Putnam's example of bowling, research highlights the importance of people being involved in leisure and social activities as an avenue for new arrivals to develop companionship and friendship (Bailey et al., 2003; Coleman, Seppo, & Ahola, 1993). Participation in local sport and recreation has been identified as assisting new arrivals to become more attached to their area because it facilitates the development of social contacts and supportive social networks at the local level (Spaaij, 2012).

Neighbourhood centres have also been shown to play a vital role in building social capital both bonding and bridging (Pope & Warr, 2005), however there appears to be no identified discussion of linking social capital in the literature on neighbourhood centres. Yet this is important because community organisations

provide an opportunity for people to extend their networks beyond their immediate bonding groups to form both informal connections with other groups and links with institutions. Membership and attendances in community organisations precede the development of friendship networks.

People create bonds or close ties with those with whom they are most familiar and similar. When people lack opportunities for social overlapping connections they can become isolated and disconnected from the wider community. Leonard and Onyx (2003) argue that most people are located at the intersection of multiple social categories, therefore organisations like neighbourhood centres are places where new arrivals can form ties with people of different socioeconomic backgrounds and between people of the same age but different ethnicity.

Professionals as well as volunteers working within community organisations can play a facilitative role in forming bridging relationships within a community organisation and linking relationships outside the organisation, extending to other institutions. The professionals, including teachers, community workers, pastors and volunteers who work in the community can be seen as boundary crossers or social capital enablers, moving between organisations and groups, respected because of their position in society. They provide the bridge that can link new arrivals to their host community (Pittaway et al., 2015). In their 2003 study, Leonard and Onyx stated that participants named professionals as central to their development of bridging relationships. The professionals were valued, respected and trusted, providing a facilitative role connecting people across the groups. Although they provided a sense of mutual support and they worked together as equals they were not referred to by participants as a friend but played an enabling role beyond their duties. Professionals are seen to enable the introduction of networks and the sponsoring of relationships between individuals and organisations in which people cooperate for their mutual gain.

Volunteering is also seen as an important component in the facilitation of social capital (Baum, Modra, Bush, Cox, Cooke, & Potter, 1999; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). Volunteers can aid in the facilitation of social connections for new arrivals by organising events and meetings, running programs, and providing the venues and spaces for social interaction and social capital to emerge. Previous research into volunteering indicates it is an important way through which social capital can be generated (Foley & Edwards, 1999). The experience of volunteering within a neighbourhood centre creates opportunities for new arrivals to connect with other

participants contributing to the wider community as a whole (Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Yan & Lauer, 2008b). A study by Foley (1993) provides interesting insights into how volunteering can produce a sense of community. One of the outcomes of feeling a sense of belonging to a community is the feeling that one can trust and be trusted by other members of the community. For women, volunteering in neighbourhood centres is a mechanism for them to develop their social networks and render their lives more meaningful. Other research has found that volunteers tend to be well integrated into their community as they are more likely to be involved in a greater range of activities, therefore contribute towards social capital stocks. The value of volunteering can be observed at both an individual level and at a whole of community level (Baum et al., 1999). Volunteering may result in improving an individual's health and wellbeing by overcoming isolation and perceived powerlessness (Bailey et al., 2003) and it also has the capacity to build bridges between strangers and enrich public participation (Wilkinson & Bittman, 2002). As neighbourhood centres have had a long history of using volunteers, both to facilitate and govern their structures, the role of volunteers and volunteering in building social capital among new arrivals will also be explored as a part of this research.

2.4 Social Networks and Social Support- The Heart of Social Capital

Social capital provides a framework in which to examine social support, supportive networks, introductions to friendships and access to material goods needed by new arrivals to facilitate their integration into a new country. Life's events - which can include the separation from a significant other, interpersonal conflict and social isolation, the death of a loved one or friend, and settling in a new country - can increase an individual's feelings of loneliness and the need for support (Gottlieb, 1985). Different types of relationships may provide different types of support. Social support refers to the practical, emotional and informational support individuals receive from family, friends (bonding social capital), co-workers and others (bridging social capital). Social support is provided by other people; it arises within the context of interpersonal relationships. Social support can be described generally and loosely as all those forms of support provided by other individuals and groups that help an individual to cope with life (Duck, 1990). The daily transactions between people are important in terms of social support as are the times when social support is provided during a crisis or special circumstances.

(Spicer, 2008). Social interactions can be a major source for resource acquisition and protection. A person who sees him or herself as loved and supported is likely to conclude that they have the ability and skill to control their own wellbeing, reduce stress and adapt to the a changing situation. Social support can have a preventative, therapeutic, even a buffering effect for individuals and groups under stress. Such support might be vital to the handling of a critical life event like integrating into a new community.

Informal networks and social supports are particularly relevant for new arrivals as they play an essential role in the process of adjustment when moving to a new country. To be able to combat the various problems new arrivals face in their country of resettlement, they need efficient associations and social networks. Numerous studies have identified that refugee resettlement requires concentrated long-term support from formal service providers such as government and not for profit organisations as well as kinship networks (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Hugo, 2011). Hugo (2011) and Fozdar and Hartley (2013a) highlight that social support and good social relationships make an important contribution to health and in resolving some social inequalities such as poor housing, unemployment or poorly paid work. Social networks are thus seen as a web of social relations or resources that surround an individual or a group (Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000).

Neighbourhood-based associations whose members exchange goods through food co-ops or community garden networks are an example of a social structure unit that can aid in establishing an individual's social connections and may replace some of an individual's primary ties such as a family, friends, faith-based groups or workplace (Cohen, 2004). Cohen (2004) suggests that social networks are important both for their contribution to the wellbeing of individuals and families, and in creating and maintaining social cohesion and fostering a sense of community. Social networks promote generalised feelings of psychological wellbeing that protect individuals from ill health. They provide members with a sense of predictability, stability and norms for behaviour, encourage positive effects and enhance feelings of self-worth and belonging (Hillier, 2007). Social networks can alleviate feelings of loneliness and are essential in preventing social isolation.

Building on these arguments, this research investigates if neighbourhood centres make resources available to individuals that enable them to build social

connections, develop a sense of belonging in a new community and fulfil some of their settlement needs.

2.5 Critiques of Social Capital

The concept of social capital remains contested and critiqued. The debates indicate there are differences in opinion on what social capital is, how it is applied, who and what benefits from it, and whether it is always for the common good. There are also differences of opinion between authors over what contributes to social capital, what are the outcomes associated with social capital, whether or not it is an individual or group resource and whether or not it is the same for all groups of people and for all communities (Poder, 2011). Social capital has been described as a soft concept, a 'catch all of useful things' (Poder, 2011 p. 351) or a term for all, where authors can see what they want to see from the concept. In other words, social capital has numerous meanings, is vague and lacks a precise definition, leading it to become a term that can be used for a variety of forms, causes and consequences (Poder, 2011).

Social capital is generally portrayed as promoting social goods ranging from better health and wellbeing to higher educational standards and stronger democracy (Putnam, 1993). Portes (1998) argues the contrary and provided a list of the downsides of social capital, including exclusion of outsiders, reduction of individual freedom and a downward levelling of norms whereby norms operate to keep oppressed groups in place and force the more ambitious to escape from their clutches. Not all social ties are created equally, and not all social connections connect people to resources that enhance their wellbeing. Social capital's negative or dark side is that it can restrict outsiders from the group and enhance the social connections of the group into illegal activities. In other words, not all social ties have a positive effect and they can lead to negative consequences. For example, joining a criminal gang or a white supremacist group can create negative social capital.

Social capital requires access to networks and resources (Foley & Edwards, 1999). An individual requires access, meaning that resources are not equally available to all individuals. It is not enough merely to be in proximity of resources - they need to also be accessible. Pivotal to the idea of social capital is the notion that strong social networks and relationships benefit group members. However, this does not imply that this is for the wider public good and used for purposes of

protecting the group. Social capital can also come at a cost including the exclusion of others by religion, ethnicity, social origin, the creations or reinforcement of intergroup resentment, and the risk that it can evoke violence, inequality and restrict individual freedom. In locations of poverty and where interactions only take place between people of the same levels of disadvantage, bonded social relations can give rise to more disadvantage if interactions only take place between each other and not the wider community, leading to a culture of dependence.

Due to social capital being defined in numerous ways it is seen as difficult to measure, resulting in difficulties in drawing conclusions across different studies, as each study is measuring different phenomena. While economic capital is relatively easily measured, social capital has presented challenges in this regard. In Australian literature, much of the work on social capital has been used in quantitative large- scale survey-type research (Baum et al., 1999; Leonard & Onyx, 2004; Onyx & Bullen, 2000). But other research questions how social capital can be seen as a resource that is applied or actioned, and ultimately measured (Hanna, Dale, & Ling, 2009).

Putnam's conceptual understanding of social capital is used to describe the presence or absence of civic engagement in different localities. He has been criticised for attributing most of the decline in participation in American community life to factors such as watching too much television, time pressure, increased workforce participation by women, increasing divorce rates and increased mobility (Bryson & Mowbray, 2005). He argues that people should participate more, and government should facilitate participation. For this reason Putnam's concept of social capital is critically viewed as overly romanticising the account of complex community relations.

Fukuyama (1999) took issue with Putnam's research findings, arguing that it is not the decline in associational activity in the US that may be a factor in reduced levels of democratic engagement and institutional disillusionment, but rather it is the changing nature of associational activity. Fukuyama suggests that the nature of associational activity has changed. There is a new kind of participation in society rather than less participation, and it is not bounded by geographical space as Putnam suggested but extends beyond local boundaries.

The critics of social capital see it as hiding a conservative social agenda, claiming that it reinforces existing social patterns and social inequalities (Portes, 1998). They argue that proponents of social capital theory seek the return of traditional community structures, such as those embedded in social clubs and associations. However, such social ties can lead to greater control over unruly behaviour and provide the privileged access to resources (Portes, 1998). As Portes (1998) points out, social capital does not always work for the common good but rather for the good of those in the network, meaning that people can be locked out of groups because a network promotes common norms of 'people like us'. Exclusion can occur when the norms of a group act as a barrier to participation for people who are different. Portes (1998) argues that the concept of social capital has heuristic power because it focuses on the positive consequences of sociability (while putting aside the negative features), and places them into a framework of capitalist relations by arguing that a non-economic form of capital can be an important source of power and influence just as monetary forms of capital can be.

Despite the criticisms of social capital, the notions of social connectedness, bonding, bridging and linking social capital will be used in this thesis as a framework to make sense of the experiences of new arrivals participating in neighbourhood centres. There appears to be a consensus that social interactions are at the core of social capital, and that social interactions occur at both the individual and group level through participating in a social network or an association. However, as critics point out, social interactions can occur at a cost or a benefit to those directly involved, such as other members of the network or group, and to those who are outside of the social interaction place. The mechanisms that lead to the formation of social capital are connected to the communication of information, establishment of trust and the growth of collaboration. It has been suggested that more qualitative work is required to enable the complexities of social capital to emerge and to reveal the ways in which trust, reciprocity, and community participation are related in everyday life (Boneham and Sixsmith 2005 cited in Kirkby-Geddes, King, & Bravington, 2013). This thesis is responding to this call.

2.6 How Social Capital has shaped the Discourse of Integration

Social capital, or the fundamental aspects of it - bonding, bridging and linking - play a driving role in the process of integration at the local level (Spaaij, 2012). Analyses of integration place high importance on reciprocity and trust through the development of social connections, along with the need for people to meet and exchange resources in ways that are mutually beneficial (Ager & Strang, 2008). In order for this to occur, new arrivals and members of the host community need places for everyday sharing to take place (Putnam, 1993; Strang & Ager, 2010), such as local sites like neighbourhood centres.

Most research on the theory of integration in relation to new arrivals looks at it from a civic perspective. Successful integration and settlement within a country is the ability of an individual to obtain a degree of self-sufficiency and to participate in the cultural, social and economic life of a country (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a). The concept of integration appears in some of the discussions surrounding the work of neighbourhood centres (Yan & Lauer, 2008b) but has been theorised more in literature that focuses on new arrivals (Strang & Ager, 2010).

The term *integration* has been used by both policy makers and theorists but an agreed definition of immigrant or refugee integration is lacking. It has been criticised as being vague and slippery and applied to whatever people wanted (Castles, Korac, Vasta, & Vertovec, 2003). Shadid (1991, p.362 as cited in Rane and Hersi (2012, p. 136) attempts a definition by stating that integration is the

> [p]articipation of ethnic and religious minorities, individually or as groups, in the social structures of the host society while having possibilities to retain the distinctive aspects of their culture and identity.

This definition sees integration as a one-way process as there is no emphasis on the part of the social structures and culture of the host society to change and adapt to newcomers. In an Australian policy context, settlement and integration go hand in hand. Since the 1960s, policies of multiculturalism and then integration have replaced assimilation. Assimilation describes a process that requires the new arrival to shed their cultural identity, replacing traditional norms and behaviours with those of the host community. The realisation that refugees and migrants were seeking to maintain their cultural practices and ethnic identities led to the creation

of new policies which still anticipated that migrants would adapt to the dominant culture and the Australian way of life but accepted that they may continue to maintain their own cultural practices in private. This can be also described as a one-way version of integration, because it envisages no or little change in the dominant culture as a result of the migrant presence. For example, the host community does not attempt to adapt to religious customs such as providing a prayer room within a public building or alternative meal options on a menu.

The assimilation policy of the 1960s gave way to the Australian multicultural policy of the 1970s and 1980s. Multiculturalism was the ideal with legal citizenship at its core. Belonging in Australia was interpreted to mean that new arrivals had legal rights and an ability to retain their own cultural identity. The integration policy of the Howard Government (1996-2007) turned away from multiculturalism and envisaged a distinctly Australian identity where cultures were required to blend under one core culture and an Australian way of life (Tate, 2009). Integration was the term used, but it was only marginally different from assimilation, and implied an embracing of dominant Australian customs with an aim to build a homogeneous version of Australia. Similar retreats from multiculturalism were observed at the time in Europe and North America (Schneider & Crul, 2010). Today the integration policy of the conservative Australian government is one of integration but still very much of a one-way nature where new arrivals are encouraged to embrace normative values including loyalty to the nation, use of English language and a focus on adapting to an Australian way of life whilst quietly celebrating customs and practices, mainly during times of celebration. Concerns of a loss of Anglo Saxon Christian characteristics are at the forefront of political rhetoric that expresses unease with cultural diversity that threatens social cohesion. Inflammation by the effects of the 2001 US terrorist attacks and the increased number of refugee arrivals by boat to Australia again heralds a return to a policy of integration to remain one-sided on behalf of new arrivals (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a; Tate, 2009).

Integration has been reinterpreted by researchers and practitioners seeking to understand a two-way process of social and cultural change, which holds greater potential for achieving successful settlement of new arrivals in Australia (Pittaway, 2013). It is this definition of integration that this thesis is concerned with exploring. Two-way integration involves changes of behaviours, values and norms for both the new arrivals and the host community. Minority groups are encouraged by the

host community to maintain their cultural and social identity whilst gaining an understanding and greater knowledge of the host community along with a willingness of the host society to be responsive and adapt services to meet the needs of the new arrivals. The ability of new arrivals to effectively integrate into a new country is as a result of their effectiveness to tap into existing community networks and for the willingness of the host community to engage with them (Strang & Ager, 2010 p. 600). Whilst there is an argument for new arrivals to connect and form ties only with others of the same cultural background or from the same family ties for example, the theory of immigrant and ethnic enclaves proposes that there are advantages for new arrivals to live and mix with those like themselves for language, and cultural aspects, as similarity breeds trust. Lauer and Yan (2010) suggest that research should continue to find the advantage of new arrivals finding diverse social ties.

When referring to refugees and migrants, integration is mainly understood in practical and functional terms. Aspects of functional integration include access to housing, employment, training, English language assistance, and political participation. Integration is then the process through which individuals and groups participate in the larger societal structures of their new homeland (Berry, 1997). Integration from this perspective is focussed on the acquisition of legal and political rights by the new members of a society so they become equal partners in their new country (Castles et al., 2003). Goodman (2010) defines integration in terms of civic integration that involves mandatory integration requirements, including the need to learn the local history and language of the new country, undertake a citizenship test and value commitments to status acquisition. Fozdar and Hartley (2013b) see settlement connected to integration as acquiring a sense of self-sufficiency to participate in the social and economic life of the community and to retain a degree of personal identity. Integration can be seen as having two aspects, according to Fozdar and Hartley (2013a). One is civic-national belonging which they describe as having the right to access services and programs available to all Australians. The other is ethno-national belonging, that is a sense of connection to the people in the community, the social and emotional integration new arrivals experience that may encourage mutual trust and friendship. Both aspects of integration are two-way in this conceptualisation – for new arrivals to access mainstream services and programs, these have to be made accessible (e.g. by adapting the services to the needs of new arrivals). To enable new arrivals

to connect with other members of the community, the latter may have to learn new skills and question their norms.

Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) divide the components of integration into four domains.

1) Structural integration - the acquisition of rights and access to position or status in the host society.

2) Cultural Integration - the acquisition of the core competencies of the culture of the host nation.

3) Social integration - acceptance and inclusion in the primary relationships and social networks of the host society.

4) Identification integration - feelings of belonging to and identification with the host society.

This definition of integration discusses acceptance of new arrivals into core institutions, relations and positions of a host society. Bosswick and Heckmann (2006) discuss integration requiring a learning and socialisation process requiring commitment on behalf of the host community and the new arrivals. They suggest that their definition be used to develop policies to influence integration but neglect to explain how integration will occur, what strategies or programs can be used and by whom. The definition appears to be directed towards institutional structures rather than the grassroots level where people interact and learn to know each other.

It is the functional model of integration by Ager and Strang (2008) that is acknowledged worldwide by both policy makers and researchers (Enns, Kirova, & Connolly, 2013). Ager and Strang (2008) see also Strang and Ager (2010) develop the concept of integration as being a two-way process between new arrivals willing to adapt their ways without losing their cultural identity along with the host community willing to welcome and be responsive towards the new arrivals, and for public institutions (such as neighbourhood centres) to meet the needs of diverse populations. Ager and Strang (2008) developed a framework of ten core domains reflecting an understanding that to achieve integration it relies on social connections that include social bonds or the connections made within a group, bridges or connections between groups and links to structures of the state. These

ten domains are arranged across a model comprising four layers beginning with a foundational domain of rights and citizenship (see Figure 1). The next layer comprises facilitators that include language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability. This domain is associated with broad cultural knowledge and competence considered necessary for successful integration including English language acquisition and learning. Facilitators of safety and stability make up the next layer include actual or perceived threats to safety and the establishment of relationships with neighbours across the new host community creating conditions of safety. The next domain includes social bonds, social bridges and social links, collectively described as social connections and closely aligned to Putnam's (2000) work on social capital. These domains are regarded as relationships within common groups of people (bonding), with members from other groups (bridging) and with institutions and organisations outside of one's civic or state structures (linking) and may also be measured through participation by voting in elections. The final layer is classified as 'means and markers', described as such because achievement within these areas can indicate that integration is occurring and as a catalyst for further integration across the dimensions of the framework. The means and markers include employment, housing, education, and health (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Means and Markers	Employment	Housing	Education Health
Social connections	Social bridges	Social Bonds	Social Links
Facilitators	Language and Cultural Knowledge		Safety and stability
Foundation		Rights and Citizenship	

Figure 1 Integration Framework (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 170)

Integration is seen to be successful when new arrivals have access to and can participate in social networks. But this is difficult for those, such as women and the

unemployed, who are at risk of being socially isolated. Visually the Integration Framework depicts bonding, bridging and linking as the 'connective tissue' between the 'foundational principles of citizenship and rights on the one hand, and public outcomes in sectors such as employment, housing, education and health' on the other (Ager & Strang, 2008 p. 177). These connections are valuable as they may facilitate material outcomes or reduce conflict through the creation of common spaces. They also contribute to the less objective but equally valuable notion of a sense of belonging, attachment to a new country and trust in the integration process. In this model no one domain is considered to be more influential over any other. This model of integration with its inclusion of bonding, bridging and linking behaviours offers value, as this thesis considers the relationship between social connections of new arrivals and their host community through participation in South Australian neighbourhood centres. There is a need for organisations to be proactive and build places that enable new arrivals the opportunities to interact with the community to meet and exchange ideas (Strang & Ager, 2010). However, there is a lack of understanding and research of the social aspects of integration processes and how relationships between new arrivals and established community members are formed at the local level.

Removing barriers to social connection is a role for individuals and community organisations to play in the process of integration at the local level. Active mixing of people from different cultural and social economic groups within a community develops a sense of belonging for individuals. The friendliness of people that new arrivals encounter on a daily basis, being recognised and greeted, are seen by Ager and Strang (2008) as highly valued by participants of their study. People participating equally without prejudice in activities such as recreation, education and other available leisure pursuits was seen as an indication of integration. Connecting new arrivals to services relevant to their needs is a major task in supporting integration. Fostering integration requires the host community to assist with the facilitation of resources to overcome barriers of language such as offering interpretative services or the translations of written materials. There is a need for cultural knowledge to enable integration to occur from both the perspectives of the new arrivals to gain knowledge of the local procedures, customs, expectations and facilities; and for the host community to gain knowledge of the cultural backgrounds and circumstances of the new arrivals (Ager & Strang, 2008). The present research draws on integration theory to understand how neighbourhood centres facilitate social connections between new arrivals and host community

members. Neighbourhood centre programs including English literacy training, and skills development are active in the facilitator domain and can lead to employment and education, as discussed in Chapter 5.

New arrivals face disruption in their lives and disconnection from their families and friends. Whatever the reasons a person may decide to move to a new country (forced or freely decided), the move is generally intended for the betterment of their life, or that of their family. The hope is that the move will generate new or improved opportunities. Along the way, however, many barriers may impede this new life, thus, Ager and Strang (2008) suggest that in order for new arrivals to integrate and feel at home in their new country, they must have equal and fair access to the activities and pastimes that are available. Barriers to participation within neighbourhood centres are discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

Much of the literature on integration and migration is of European extraction with few local examples. One of these, Fozdar and Hartley's (2013a) study, indicates that most refugees in Australia experience belonging in relation to their access to rights and services, which the authors describe as civic belonging but many sense a level of exclusion from the mainstream host population. This moves beyond the conceptualisation of integration by Ager and Strang (2008) and acknowledges social links with state structures that are fostered through settlement services, are important, but not enough to provide emotional connections with place and community. There is a desire among new arrivals to also experience a sense of belonging in a more emotional and culturally meaningful way, not only within one's ethnic community but with society more broadly. New arrivals want to feel Australian, and that other Australians feel they belong (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a, p. 15). The participants of Fozdar and Hartley's study recognised their entitlements to assistance to achieve 'means and makers' (Ager & Strang, 2008) and their foundational rights to citizenship, but consider social bridges and bonds with the host community to be something to be developed in the future when facilitating factors such as language, cultural knowledge, safety and stability are available.

The settlement services that are provided by the State may not be enough for new arrivals to feel a sense of belonging. Belonging, or the sense of emotional connection and social and cultural inclusion, remains as something longed for by new arrivals (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a p. 5). Having been forcefully displaced, humanitarian migrants must re-establish themselves in a new place where they can feel safe and secure, not merely in a physical sense of being safe from

persecution or crime, but also in terms of a feeling of freedom and dignity, for example, being able to express their religious identity through wearing a hijab. To speed up emotional belonging, initiatives and organisations that encourage mutual trust and friendships and reduce racial and cultural tensions are vital, as are measures that foster two-way integration by encouraging attitudinal change, cultural and awareness training for the broader community to enhance the public's understanding of the issues impacting refugees in Australia (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a).

Two-way processes of integration will be explored within this study in relation to the role neighbourhood centres play through their service provision. I argue that bonds between existing groups, and bridging and links with new groups are required by individuals to develop a connective tissue (Ager & Strang, 2008) needed to belong to a new community. Community-based organisations that work with new arrivals can play an important role in enabling them to settle successfully. The first function of community organisations working with new arrivals is to provide information and direction to appropriate government departments, agencies and nongovernment institutions. The second function is to act as a place where they can join social groups and committees. The third function that can be played by community organisations is that of a collaborative partner in programs that provide knowledge of the various domains of integration such as employment, accommodation and health (Strang & Ager, 2010). This research seeks to determine the extent to which neighbourhood centres in South Australia fill the gap between the civic and emotional connection of integration (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b) that existing settlement support services fail to meet. The programs and services that neighbourhood centres deliver to assist with the functional domains of integration will also be analysed (Ager & Strang, 2008).

2.7 Community

Neighbourhood centres are said to be both 'place based' and 'interest based'. They are seen to be operating within a community and claim that the work they perform meets the needs of their community. The term community is used extensively throughout their value statements, funding applications, publications and the research that has been written about them. Neighbourhood centres appear to be concerned with community, the people in it, both through their names and their claims (Clark, 1982). It is therefore necessary to briefly examine community in historical, theoretical and critical terms, what the term community means, and to

reach conclusions about what the term implies and how it is expressed in the functions and activities of neighbourhood centres in South Australia.

The word community is mostly used and interpreted in positive terms and very rarely seen as carrying unfavourable or negative connotations (Clark, 1982). Bell and Newby (1971) note that there is a tendency to conflate empirical descriptions of community with prescriptions of what it should be. Community is described by some (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981; 2005; Jones, 1977) as an 'aerosol word' that is used with wild abandon to apply to everything, including programs, organisations and government departments (Mlcek & Ismay, 2015).

The sociological concept of community was conceptualised by Tonnies (2001) as *Gemeinschaft,* and he contrasted it with *Gesellschaft* (society) (Bradshaw, 2013). The *Gemeinschaft,* or community, describes the historical village or small town setting where inclusive social ties occur amongst the members of the community, based on holistic views of families, tradition and stable social rankings that have developed over time through trust and familiarity with people as the basis of relationships (Bradshaw, 2013). *Gesellschaft* in contrast refers to the industrialised city where people are isolated and alienated from each other; they are defined through their roles and contributions to the society as a whole. Relationships and social ties are replaced by legal contracts and rational will. Tonnies (2001) argued that the new industrial society caused the destruction of a stable environment and traditional patterns of authority, the loss of close-knit ties and networks and the transfer of functions to government and profit-making concerns. For the individual, a loss of community is experienced in the movement from local, integrated networks of relationships to individual isolation in a modern mass society where relations become impersonal and people no longer know each other. Neighbourhood centres, it has been argued (Buckingham, 1997; Clark, 1982; Rooney, 2009), play an important role in providing a structure through which individuals can establish relationships where they feel isolated and alienated from mainstream society. Neighbourhood centres have been idealised as a form of *Gemeinschaft* where social relationships are intimate, ensuring and long lasting (Shore 1993, as cited in Yan, 2004).

Community is this idealised concept that everyone must aspire to belong to and feel a part of. The perception is that it once existed and society has changed so drastically that now we must do what we can to recapture this lost ideal. It is this notion that leads to a discussion of the loss of community and the role

neighbourhood centres can play in re-establishing a sense of community. This can be traced back to the historic roots of community having been defined as geographical with shared boundaries within a geographical location such as a town or residence.

> The feeling of community is crucial for feeling at home. Above all it involves lives in a space where one recognises peoples as 'one's own' and where one feels recognised by them as such….It is a space where one knows that at least some people can be morally relied on for help (family or friend) (Hage, 1997, p. 103).

To those who experience isolation from their own ethnic communities, neighbourhood centres can offer an involvement in a local community, an opportunity to form social networks of meaningful relationships and feel a sense of belonging to the community. Chapter 3 of this thesis provides insight into the historical evolution of neighbourhood centres and their role in counteracting loss of community for individuals in society from their historical connections to the women's movement to their work with new arrivals (Yan, 2004).

Place-based community no longer encompasses all the manifestations of a community. Bradshaw (2013) suggests that community today has lost the place identity but this does not mean a loss of community. People can find a common identity and a set of shared norms and values in ways that are not tied to place. If bonding and solidarity are the key ingredients to community, bonding can take place anywhere (Bradshaw, 2013). As people's lives have changed in recent times, so have their communities and their conception of the community. For example, many people live in highly urbanised environments and are heavily engaged in their work and their own lives without knowing who their neighbours are and what is happening in their neighbourhood. Such people's sense of belonging often lies elsewhere, not necessarily in the locality. Communities are socially constructed by the members who constitute them (Giddens, 1998). Each community is unique as are it members and people can belong to more than one community at a time. For example, they can belong to their work community, online community, religious, sporting, or social community. A community can then be understood as an evolving social space.

Being part of a community can enhance the likelihood of creating social bonding and bridging relationships, leading to increased perceived social support. Barnes and Aguilar (2007) have developed a definition of community as a readily available

mutually supportive network of relationships a person can be part of, sense belonging in and depend on. In this sense a community does not have to be based in a residential neighbourhood, but can be anywhere. Therefore, a more dynamic understanding of community is needed, one which is fluid and imaginative not bounded and cohesive.

At the micro level of community in the individual day-to-day activities, social capital can be accumulated by individuals interacting and working together. At the macro level of organisations and institutions within community, social capital can be fostered and developed through the individual benefiting from involvement in social connections, and the community benefits as a whole from the network of connected people who develop norms of mutual obligation and cooperation. Social capital can promote a nostalgic version of community that promotes a homogeneous society that reinforces community structures that resist integration and diverse community interests (Yan, 2004). Social capital can also be used by researchers and policy makers to explain how social networks strengthen bonds within a community and to establish the social ties that are required by an individual but originate outside the immediate community's boundaries.

The mission and vision statements of neighbourhood centres include the term community to state a claim to a geographical location in a suburb or neighbourhood. In their names, catchment claims to certain areas and constitutionalised objectives they empathise a concern for a geographic community. Both debates around the term community - as either a geographic location or place, or a symbolic community as represented by a sense of belonging - will be explored in this research when looking at the role neighbourhood centres play in the integration of new arrivals. To new arrivals neighbourhood centres may offer a local place within the geographical community where services and programs are provided along with a physical entry point for integration into a new country. Neighbourhood centres will also be examined as places that play a bridging role where new arrivals can interact with mainstream members of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures, to develop a sense of belonging through the development of emotional and social connections.

2.8 Place

Place has not been extensively addressed in the literature on social capital. Hanna et al. (2009) suggests that social capital cannot be formed in a spatial vacuum.

Although Putnam (2000) mentions a sense of belonging to the community in his definition of social capital, he neglects to explain place or integrate this concept into his overall theory. Yet other researchers argue that our interactions are significantly influenced by our sense of belonging in any given environment, and that people are happier and more comfortable where they feel at home and have positive interactions in the place where they live (McMichael & Manderson, 2004) .

For social capital to develop, it requires a safe place where contacts with strangers or those outside a person's immediate social network can be made and where contacts and conversations from people of various backgrounds can occur. Access to social capital and the value of its usage is determined by the location in which it is generated. Understanding the ways in which the places and spaces frame the informal and formal networks in which people participate will provide an insight into the process that sustains access to resources.

The role of neighbourhood centres is to assist in the removal of barriers and to promote the fostering of opportunities for interactions between groups. As Daley (2009) suggests, groups left to themselves remain within their own comfort zones. Everyday lives of new arrivals are lived and social relations are negotiated at the local level of the neighbourhood. Local places like parks, shops and libraries play a vital role in shaping outcomes of new arrivals. Recent literature has begun to pay attention to the way new arrivals and those working with them make places as a response to alienation, isolation and differences they can experience. Place making can aid in developing new identities and sustaining and empowering marginalised groups (Pardy & Lee, 2011). The loss of one's place can be devastating and have long term effects on an individual's wellbeing. It can result in difficulties of attaching to a new place, making a new home, a neighbourhood or a community. Having a sense of place is important to all human beings as Relph (1976, p. 1) points out, 'to be human is to have and know your place'. Those who have lost their place or homeland and moved elsewhere will be searching for a new place to feel at home and belong.

A study of social capital and community group participation by Kirkby-Geddes et al. (2013) demonstrates that in order for social capital to grow there needs to be the right kind of physical structures in place, where individuals can meet and where weak ties essential for bridging social capital can flourish. For new arrivals place is particularly paramount as it reinforces this sense of belonging to the community.

The notion of social networks implies spatial arrangements, location and places for interaction and relationships to occur. This place-based approach prepares the ground for collaboration between diverse networks and stakeholders. Meeting places included social gatherings such as community lunches, clean up days in local parks, markets or cultural fairs and celebrations. Bringing together local residents though does not guarantee that bridging social capital would be created.

Fraser (1997, p. 81) further adds to this vein of research by suggesting that when there are 'no venues in which to undertake communicative processes, marginalised groups such as women, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, gays, lesbians and indigenous groups are less likely to find the right voice or words to express their thoughts'. Fraser argues that there is a need for forums 'that catch people' who do not feel they fit into the mainstream so they can participate and have their voices heard in the presence of others. For those wishing to engage with others they need to find a place where they can freely participate and have their needs met. It has been argued that neighbourhood centres can play a role in reconnecting people who have lost their place (Rooney, 2011). Previous research indicates neighbourhood centres offer a communal space where people can participate as equals and relate to one another on a particular topic or who share a common interest. A considerable amount of the interaction in neighbourhood centres takes place in social areas like the kitchen, café, lounge areas or outside settings. For instance, people can be brought together through a shared interest in building a pizza oven for the neighbourhood centre's community garden (Rooney, 2011). This research will determine whether South Australian neighbourhood centres offer spaces that are conducive to developing a sense of emotional belonging, what these spaces are, and how they work.

2.9 Conclusion

This thesis is concerned with how neighbourhood centres in South Australia assist new arrivals in connecting to and integrate with their local community. The theory of social capital and its adaptation in Ager and Strang's (2008) framework of integration offers a valuable theoretical perspective from which to better understand the role played by neighbourhood centres. Integration as in this thesis is a dynamic process that occurs within broad social places, and is influenced by the new arrivals themselves and the communities that receive them, or in other words, by two-way processes and interactions. This conceptual framework

recognises bonding, bridging and linking social capital as important influences in the overall process and the experiences of integration that unfold differently for each individual based on their personal experiences. As the foregone discussion has shown, research on the integration of new arrivals has focussed on the means and markers of integration that include employment, housing, language acquisition, skill recognition and education (Ager & Strang, 2008; Strang & Ager, 2010). While this framework is well understood at the abstract level, what is less clear is how it is applied to the actual integration and establishment of a sense of belonging at the local level, within specific communities. There has been limited focus in the existing research on the role of place in developing a sense of belonging, or on the emotional aspects of integration including cultural expression at a local level (Antonsich, 2010). Drawing on the theory of social capital this thesis will examine specifically how neighbourhood centres can contribute to the integration as a two-way process in the settlement of new arrivals in South Australia.

A common theme running through the integration and social capital literature examined in this chapter is that integration requires people to interact not only within their own social networks of bonded relationships, but also across boundaries with other groups (bridging and linking social capital). If new arrivals are unable to make connections within the local community, contacts need to be positively encouraged and organised by social capital enablers committed to the facilitation of these contacts. These facilitators can include the professionals and volunteers working in community organisations also known as social capital enablers (Pittaway et al., 2015).

As the next chapter will establish, existing national and international literature confirms the valuable function of neighbourhood centres and indicates that some neighbourhood centres are contributing to a range of social support services in their local communities by providing access to information, referrals and more intensive services (Buckingham, 1997; Izmir et al., 2009; Lauer & Yan, 2007; Mlcek & Ismay, 2015; Rooney, 2009; Rooney, 2011; Rule, 2005; Yan & Lauer, 2008a; Yan, 2004; Yan, 2002). These connections build social capital, social networks and social support to enable integration.

3 THE EVOLUTION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES AND THEIR PRESENCE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

> The Community Centre idea involves much more than the mere erection of a club room, a playground, or a dance hall. Fundamentally it is the embodiment of the good neighbour policy; of tolerance and understanding, of learning to live, not as isolationists, but as members of a community banded together in spirit of cooperation for the common good (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1945, p. 7).

3.1 Introduction

Existing research on neighbourhood centres claims that they play an important role in assisting community members to rebuild fragmented lives, and their capacity to address social concerns (Guinness, 1998; Kimberley, 1998; Kirkby-Geddes et al., 2013; Paltridge, 2005; Permezel, 2001; Rooney, 2009; Rule, 2005). This chapter provides a historical context of neighbourhood centres, where and why they emerged and how their roles and functions have evolved over time. The quote above indicates that community centres are a post-war creation in Australia as part of the emerging welfare state, but in North America and Northern Europe they have a longer history. This chapter will set the scene for discussing the current role these organisations play in South Australia and how they present themselves and their work to the community, and which target groups within the community they are addressing. Resource material provided by the neighbourhood centre sector including information on the variety of services, programs, funding and management structures of those currently operating in South Australia will be explored as this provides a context in which to place their contribution to the integration of new arrivals into South Australian communities.

Australian neighbourhood centres are generalist organisations that vary in size, history, financial resources, management structures, service schemes, activity levels and primary objectives. Generalist organisations are described in both the national and international literature as unequalled in their ability to provide a continuity of services to people through their changing life stages (Humpage, 2005; Mlcek & Ismay, 2015; Pope & Warr, 2005; Yan & Sin, 2011). They cater for a wide range of community members including individuals, families, and people with a disability. Neighbourhood centres in Australia present themselves as working with any individuals or groups of people who are either categorised or consider themselves disengaged or disadvantaged, and newly arrived migrants are among their target

groups (O'Neil et al., 2013). The generalist approach used by neighbourhood centres is advocated by the International Federation of Settlement and Neighbourhood Centres, which states that in order to strengthen local communities, neighbourhood centres must utilise a range of approaches, including social services, health and recreational programmes, community development and economic development activities (International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, 2005).

Across Australia, neighbourhood centres' mission and vision statements claim they

- provide life-skills, health, recreation and education programs which build skills and knowledge for life and work
- encourage self-development and personal growth through involvement with others and engagement in activities
- volunteering opportunities which build confidence, job skills and a sense of belonging and well-being
- provide information, resources and referral services to other community and government organisations
- encourage preventative health practices; and
- promote social inclusion and celebrate diversity (ANHCA, 2009).

The last point goes to the heart of this thesis as it articulates the desired outcome, while the other points are examined as a means to achieve this outcome.

Neighbourhood centres can be large multi-purpose organisations, or be smaller-scale facilities that can operate from a single room for just a few hours per week (ANHCA, 2011). The Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association (ANHCA) propose that there are over forty different direct services that centres provide including: information, advice and referral, groups, courses and classes, individual and family support, youth activities, emergency relief and practical support, child care, transport and community development. Some centres offer a wide range of these services while others are more focussed around a specific issue (e.g., families, women, and ethnicity) and provide a more limited selection.

The ANHCA says that people come to neighbourhood centres because they are local, accessible, welcoming, non-threating, and because programs are designed to meet the needs of participants and prospective participants (ANHCA, 2011). Neighbourhood centres have had a longstanding focus to direct their resources to the most disadvantaged and least powerful groups within society. They have

enabled individuals and families to overcome social isolation and become more resilient through the development of community networks, mutual support, learning opportunities and collective action. The linkages of programs and services within one organisation, combined with the community volunteer base, create locations that are recognised by the surrounding community as being for and of the community. The result is the establishment of an identity that people with specific needs and issues can access neighbourhood centres more readily than other services publicly identified as meeting those needs. Neighbourhood centres promote the ability to facilitate meaningful intergroup contact, dialogue, address issues that challenge prejudices and encourage participation and cooperation all of which are critical in the development of social cohesion. This, coupled with a sensitive process involving skilled support and safe spaces, is crucial to building a sense of belonging (Daley, 2009). In this research it will be determined if and how neighbourhood centres have successfully broadened their focus to include working with new arrivals.

The concept of neighbourhood centres is recognised across Western countries (Rooney, 2009). As shown in section 3.2, neighbourhood centres are a specific form of community organisation founded in the Settlement House tradition that dates back to the late 19th century. They have been recognised for their success as community-building agents (Johnson, 2001; Yan, 2004; Yan, 2002). As will be shown in this chapter, neighbourhood centres in South Australia share a similar approach. Whether they are settlement houses in the USA or neighbourhood centres in Australia, these organisations have had a history of fostering relationships and being an 'extended living room' for the participants that attend (Yan, 2004). Neighbourhood centres have an emphasis on participation, inclusiveness, reciprocity and trust and are based on the assumption that these are more likely to develop in a community which has access to a common physical space and appropriate human resources (Lauer & Yan, 2010). Informality characterises the place, the way services are offered and how individuals participate. Another distinctive aspect of neighbourhood centres is that active participation is encouraged, rather than only passive reception of services. Participation can involve volunteering at the neighbourhood centre, which further assists individuals in becoming confident and valued community members (Pope & Warr, 2005). This chapter explores the vision statements of neighbourhood centres both in Australia and around the world which describe an organisational commitment to inclusion. It will examine how they articulate their claims in creating a welcoming safe

environment, promote civic engagement, oppose exclusion, strengthening supports in diverse settings, use a range of strategies for communication and expressions to establish networks for learning and exchange of information (ANHCA, 2009; International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, 2005).

The evidence analysed in this chapter includes Australian statistical data which offers some useful descriptive information on neighbourhood centres and their practices in Australia. The main sources of information are government reports and unpublished theses (Buckingham, 1997; Guinness, 1998; Kimberley, 1998; Paltridge, 2005; Permezel, 2001; Rooney, 2009; Rule, 2005). The government reports are limited in their analysis of neighbourhood centres due to the underlying assumption that neighbourhood centres automatically benefit all individuals without any detailed critique of practices and outcomes. The underlying ideology of neighbourhood centres is thought to be implicit and as not requiring articulation or critical investigation (Izmir et al., 2009; Pope & Warr, 2005). Nevertheless, these are important sources to establish the claims neighbourhood centres make about their capacity to meet community needs and about their specific approach to community making.

3.2 Historical Context

3.2.1 Settlement Houses

The origins of neighbourhood centres can be traced back to the 19th century Settlement Houses that developed in the USA and the United Kingdom (Gilchrist & Jeffs, 2001). The first known settlement house was established in 1884 at Toynbee Hall in London by a group of Oxford University students. The settlement house model was developed to address the effects of industrialisation on the lives of people who had migrated from rural villages to cities in search of work and ended up living in urban slums. The industrialising countries of the late 19th century experienced social problems including unemployment, poor housing, health problems and mass poverty on an unprecedented scale (Johnson, 2001). The settlement house services founded under the direction of Jane Addams were described as social, educational, humanitarian and civic, catering for the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, and educational level.

> A settlement [house] is simply a means by which men or women may share themselves with their neighbours; a club house in an industrial district, where the conditions of membership is the performance of a citizen's duty; a house

> among the poor, where residents may make friends with the poor (Barrnett, 1898, p. 10, as cited in Johnson, 2001).

The first settlement workers lived and worked in the settlement house befriending residents of the local neighbourhood and encouraging them to become members of the settlement house. Individuals took part in adult community education classes, clubs and social groups, mothers' meetings, dances and dramatic societies, to assist in building social bonds between residents and encourage cooperation and interdependence. The focus of their work included educational programs and services encouraging members to gain skills to improve their living and working conditions through building individual's capacity and focusing on strengths rather than deficits. Settlement house pioneers believed in nurturing human progress through interdependence and friendship between people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or race, and this belief is said to continue in the form of neighbourhood centres (Freeman, 2002; Gilchrist & Jeffs, 2001; Yan, 2002).

In the USA and Canada the emergence of settlement houses coincided with the arrival of large numbers of overseas migrants. While settlement houses in the UK aimed to knit the rural migrants into urban communities, settlement houses in North America were developed to cater for the European immigrants who had arrived in American cities. In 1889, Jane Addams established Hull House in an immigrant neighbourhood in Chicago, Illinois, USA, with the aim to nurture a form of reciprocal social connectedness across the different classes and sectors of the community (Yan, 2002). She called the settlement house a 'solidarity of the human race' (Addams, 1910, p. 5) where people from different backgrounds could go beyond appearances and preconceptions, get to know others and the value of humanity and individuality of each other, with the aim to lead to mutual respect. To achieve this solidarity, settlement houses developed a flexible and holistic service delivery model that catered for a wide variety of local community needs and promoted civic participation and governance through the extensive use of a volunteer workforce (Yan & Lauer, 2008a).

Through direct personal encounters people were enabled to go beyond appearances and preconceptions and get to know and value the each other, leading to a shared respect for one another whilst building a stronger sense of community (Johnson, 2001). Johnson (2001) stresses the importance of mutual relationships between people from different backgrounds within what he describes as the 'settlement framework', where everyone had the right to grow and develop

themselves. Effective change was evolutionary and strong communities and social reform was dependent on personal communication across the social and economic divide. Johnson (2001) describes the settlement movement's basic approach in terms of social capital (as discussed in Chapter 2), in particular bridging capital. The approach of the settlement movement's work was to build bridges between different social classes and groups through common effort in poor neighbourhoods. Much of the work that occurred within such places assisted people with skills development to enable a fuller and more productive life. This work could only be effective if it was adapted to suit the specific neighbourhood.

The settlement movement is based on the conviction that personal contact is the resource through which people best influence each other and promote each other's development (International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, 2005, p. 5). By connecting contemporary community and neighbourhood centres to this tradition, Matthews and Kimmis (2001) suggest that no other community development movement has survived for over 100 years, spread so widely across the world, nor continued unchanged by factors of time or culture. They argue the element that is still recognisable in contemporary neighbourhood centres is the core principle to bring people together across social divisions for the improvement of their neighbourhood. Like the new migrants in the US of the 19th century, many people who live in large urban communities or, conversely, in isolated rural communities, experience isolation and a sense of disconnect from others, and neighbourhood centres provide an opportunity for them to come together in a safe supportive environment (Yan, 2004). Although community workers no longer live on site, the modern neighbourhood centre is still focussed on community building combined with service provision to address social needs of marginalised and newly arrived residents.

3.2.2 History of Neighbourhood Centres in Australia

The historical development of Australian neighbourhood centres had two distinct phases. The first was the Labor Post-War Reconstruction Program that saw the establishment of centres during the 1940s and 1950s, and the second was the Whitlam Labor Australian Assistance Plan (AAP).

Australia's post-war reconstruction program included financial cooperative societies, rural reconstruction, public housing and the development of social services within Australia (Dean, Boland, & Jamrozik, 1988). 'There a new spirit abroad - the spirt of community' the words used in a live radio broadcast in 1945 on the development of

neighbourhood and community centres in Australia. The broadcast was referring to the perception that the ideals of neighbourliness, mutual aid, cooperation had declined with urbanisation and industrialisation:

> For hundreds of years most people lived on the land in small self-contained communities. No one knew very much about the rest of the world, but every man knew his own community pretty well. The village square and the market place formed the nucleus of community life. Then almost overnight the structure of society changed. With the process of industrialisation and the drift to the cities, the community life declined. The village green disappeared and the modern factory came in its place. The market square gave way to the shopping centre. Evolution and scientific advances brought us all the marvels of modern engineering - of refrigeration and hot water services, of aeroplanes and fast electric transport, of telephone and radio. But we lost something too. Nothing replaced the old community spirit and the facilities for social intercourse. Opportunities for culture, recreation, individual development have not been made available to the vast mass of the people on the same scale as have electricity and good roads (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1945, p. 5).

In the post-world-war context, neighbourhood centres were portrayed by the Australian public broadcaster as a way to channel the community spirit of wartime Australia into solving social problems collectively (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1945, p. 5). During wartime men and women joined community organisations for civilian defence, and care for each other's children. They formed clubs, discussion groups, took part in leisure pursuits and shared food. Neighbourhood centres offered a way to carry these practices into the peacetime era to counteract the loss of social connection felt in urban areas and larger rural communities of Australia.

The second phase of neighbourhood centres' historical development is associated with the women's movement of the 1970s (Golding, Kimberley, Foley, & Brown, 2008). The three most common impetuses for the development of neighbourhood centres in Australia was the need for adult learning opportunities especially for women, filling service gaps such as child care, and the founding of self-help groups and social support programs (Golding et al., 2008; Kimberley, 1998; Paltridge, 2005). Available government funding was combined with a strong community volunteer base to deliver these activities and services in a common meeting place where local people could develop and create their own activities.

In the early 1970s, the Whitlam Labor Government embarked on legislative social reform to support a shift away from highly centralised human services to community

based services (Rooney, 2009). In 1973, the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP) was introduced with the aim to improve the wellbeing of all Australians as well as to decentralise government structures and create an encouraging environment for neighbourhood centres to pursue their aspirations. The Australian Assistance Plan was the first large-scale community development initiative in Australia's history. The AAP was based on the premise that individuals had the right and responsibility to determine the direction of their own lives and that people at the local level should be directly involved in decision-making processes affecting their communities (Aytan, 1991, as cited in Kimberley, 1998). The stated aim was

> [t]o assist in the development, at a regional level within a nationally co-ordinated framework, of integrated patterns of welfare services, complementary to income support programs and the welfare-related aspects of health, education, housing, employment, migration and other social policies ... (Australia. Social Welfare Commission. Interim Commitee & Ly, 1973, p. 157).

The principles on which the Plan (AAP) was introduced have been important for developing community services. The support for neighbourhood centres was mentioned in the Australian Labor Party (ALP) platform and many neighbourhood centres at the time received Commonwealth government funds for programs such as child care. The Social Welfare Department recommended that neighbourhood centres should receive government funding. The recommendation was that

> [n]eighbourhood houses can provide relatively small communities with a range of services to meet community needs. Their small scale, localised nature makes for easier access to services for the community and more than likely they are able to better cater for their local community needs. Neighbourhood houses are characterised by greater local participation in their day to day running (Dean et al., 1988, p. 19).

While the original initiative and stimulus for their establishment came from the Commonwealth government in the early 1970s, their development in subsequent years has been due mainly to initiatives by State governments. The State governments, particularly in Victoria and South Australia, continued the progressive agenda set by Whitlam and embarked on a building initiative of neighbourhood centres not seen since. In 1976, twelve neighbourhood centres in Victoria formed a coalition to approach government for funding. In their supporting document they articulated what they felt distinguished them from other community-based organisations that provided adult community education, and that theirs was a more socially progressive agenda which included women's liberation and access to free

childcare (Kimberley, 1998). Not long after, in 1979, the national peak organisation the Association of Neighbourhood Learning Centres was established. The Association (now known as the Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association) remains the peak association in Australia. It works across the Australian states and territory organisations, which are all formal members of the ANHCA. As the national umbrella organisation, the ANHCA advocates for the interests of and supports more than 1000 community and neighbourhood centres across Australia. The ANHCA defines their purpose as policy development of neighbourhood centres, promotion of the national identity of the sector, enhancing quality, skills and knowledge and to support the activity and work of the neighbourhood centre sector in Australia (ANHCA, 2011).

The development of neighbourhood centres in South Australia parallels that of other states and is clearly influenced by Australian government policy. The initial growth of neighbourhood centres in South Australia was stimulated by a growth in interest amongst various governmental levels and locally-based social action groups. A number of specific organisations and structures had a direct impact on the initiation and the ongoing support of neighbourhood centres in South Australia. Organisations including school-based groups, the Adelaide University Social Action Group, the South Australian Council of Social Services as well as church groups have all played a part in the initiation and development of neighbourhood centres across South Australia. Many independent neighbourhood centres would not be in existence if it were not for these organisations assisting in their establishment and seed funding (Clark, 1982).

The South Australian state government also impacted on this development, particularly under the leadership of progressive State Premier Don Dunstan (1967-68 and 1970-1979). His government's strong community development focus ensured that by the 1980s, neighbourhood centres could count on receiving base funding. As Clark (1982) notes, it may have been difficult for many neighbourhood centres to continue and accelerate their growth without the continuing commitment of state government involvement. Even in their heyday, the changing governmental commitments impacted on both the level of funding and interest in the role played by neighbourhood centres in South Australia (Clark, 1982).

With the 1980s came an increasing level of involvement from local government in community development projects in South Australia. The State government under Liberal Party Premier Tonkin called an end to direct state government involvement

in community development and devolved the responsibility for supporting it to local government. The provision of community services along with the realisation that neighbourhood centres offered great value to their local communities was a crucial factor in the development of neighbourhood centres. Local government provided the properties through which neighbourhood centres could operate as well as paying the coordinators salaries and, in some cases core funding for the neighbourhood centre (Clark, 1982).

The increase in the neighbourhood centres throughout South Australia led to the development of a state association Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association (CANH) in 1981. The role of the state association was to link the neighbourhood centres into a single peak body enabling them with recognition, policy development, training and mutual support.

In the 1980s, neighbourhood centre management structures changed from grassroots voluntary-based boards of management to professionally governed management models, accompanied by formalised accountability requirements in relation to legal, financial and reporting procedures. Government funding of neighbourhood centres in the 1980s required their activities be linked to government strategic planning processes and frameworks. Neighbourhood centres were encouraged to be the deliverer and sites for a range of social services (Rule, 2005). By the end of the 1980s, neighbourhood centres had established themselves in the eyes of all three levels of government as essential community services that provided adult community education, strengthening the social fabric and providing preventative social support (Guinness, 1998). Neighbourhood centres had retreated from their traditional community development, community activist, social welfare roots and had become community-based organisations driven by government funding priorities. Their early connections with the women's movement, civic participation and governance were arguably in conflict with a growing movement towards market oriented and bureaucratically managed facilities.

The 1990s ushered in an era of economic rationalism and the language of mutual obligation and contractualism, and the community sector was charged with delivering a government-directed agenda of economic rationalism, subcontracting government welfare services. Community organisations including neighbourhood centres entered contract service arrangements with specific targets, measures and service outputs. The language of programs, services and target groups replaced community development work and participation for participation sake (Rule, 2005).

Despite the move towards the adoption of policies that ushered in efficiency and effectiveness in welfare service delivery, neighbourhood centres claim to still engage in a wide range of community activities for diverse target groups, operating multiple functions in order to meet the demands of multiple and complex needs of their local communities (Mlcek & Ismay, 2015). The neighbourhood centres of today are placed in a precarious position between the top-down pressures from government that want to control the role of neighbourhood centres through funding programs and accountability measures, and the bottom-up pressures of residents, volunteers and neighbourhood centre participants who want to preserve their autonomy to determine their own fates and those of their local community (Yan & Sin, 2011).

3.3 Neighbourhood Centres' Visions and Aims

The Australian grey literature on neighbourhood centres suggests that they share some common principles and philosophies about their purpose and role. These include affirmative action towards disadvantaged groups of people, local participation and control, and a focus on community development and self-help. A 'typical' neighbourhood centre includes the common features evident in all neighbourhood centres relating to place, skill development, and social support or caring (Neville & Kennedy, 1983). It is a general characteristic of neighbourhood centres to describe themselves using terms such as 'community based', 'local', and 'heart of the community'. This suggests a strong identification with a particular geographical region.

A study of over 200 Australian neighbourhood centre identity statements found that the identity statements of neighbourhood centres illustrate the types of processes used by neighbourhood centres to deliver services (Rooney, 2011). The many processes mentioned give an indication of what neighbourhood centres do or, as Rooney (2011, p. 4) puts it, 'say they do'. The prevalence to use statements such as *address change, reduce, serve, and strengthen,* describe material processes that lead the reader to believe neighbourhood centres to be dynamic, active organisations, a perception that Rooney suggests is supported by the variety of programs and activities they deliver.

Neighbourhood centres identity statements speak of the importance of people. A few claim to work with everyone, although this could not be possible, and most suggest they work with everyone within a specific location, community or region. It is

more plausible to conclude that they work with targeted groups; for example, vulnerable people, people with a disability, families, women, and migrants (Rooney, 2011). The ability of neighbourhood centres to refresh and adapt to meet the changing community needs and develop their foci over time is said to be one of their core strengths (Rooney, 2011). Their style of work has been described as dynamic and flexible, never static, constantly changing and evolving (Humpage, 2005). Some neighbourhood centres have chosen to broaden their range of issues and developed into large multi-purpose organisations, and some have made conscious choices to remain small grass-root organisations that are nimble and flexible enough to change direction as required (ANHCA, 2009). This flexibility and variability has meant that it is difficult to define the role of neighbourhood centres by their work. This can be seen as a weakness but also a strength, as 'the freedom from the constraints and boundaries associated with robust definitions affords neighbourhood centres substantial fluidity in developing appropriate organisational identity' (Rooney, 2009).

Previous PhD research identified neighbourhood centres as providing an important information-brokerage service for local people to access external support in stressful times. People can be directed to the appropriate services within the organisation, utilise the free counselling services available in the form of legal, financial, personal, family, domestic violence and/or career counselling. These services are usually delivered by professionals and can be funded by an outside organisation that may operate from the neighbourhood centre or in the community on a regular basis. They provide informal services, such as 'drop-in' centres, barbecues and op-shops as well as formal social care services such as personal legal and financial counselling. Through these methods and by engaging with other community services, local Councils and outside bodies have the capacity to strengthen community ties and enhance community wellbeing (Paltridge, 2001; 2005; Rule, 2005).

The role of self-help within the programming and management of neighbourhood centres is evident throughout the literature on neighbourhood centres. This term, it seems, has now been replaced by concepts such as social support and social capital, but have been used in the earlier literature too:

> Social networks or helping networks refer to the various individuals to whom each of us turns for coping with daily and more serious problems of living. They are not necessarily groups. They often do not know each other. They are combinations of people we turn to: a spouse, a neighbour, friends, relatives and co- workers. Together they form the 'natural helping networks' of an individual (Warren 1971, p.194, as cited in Clark, 1982).

The support offered through a social network can include the presence of someone in whom to confide. At best, supporting networks can supply intimacy, caring and reflection (emotional support) along with practical support for the individual in the form of information about problem solving. They provide emotional and personal support (social support) during the times of a crisis, a shoulder to cry on where someone would listen to you and give you their time in a spontaneous informal manner, where no appointment was necessary in order to gain assistance from a staff member or a volunteer. Neighbourhood centres emulate this idea of mutual and informal support. They are usually concerned with the needs and rights of disadvantaged groups and can act as a substitute for the services they need and are not receiving.

The importance of reliability of place, the prominence of informal classes held in neighbourhood centres, friendliness, accessibility and homeliness are all terms evident in mission and value statements. The focus of neighbourhood centre programs on skills training, support, and social interaction between participants is to foster social networks, wellbeing and personal development. Furthermore, a significant amount of unintended informal learning is gained through participation in neighbourhood centre activities, community action and experiences (Foley, 1993). Women in particular were found to access neighbourhood centres when they were experiencing social struggle of some kind as they strove to gain greater control over their lives and it was then that important incidental or informal learning occurred. Significantly, Foley's study highlights the importance for some women, of (1) 'finding a place' when there is social struggle; (2) learning through participation in activities; and (3) learning through 'struggle to find a life'. He argues that these factors are essential aspects of women's learning experiences in neighbourhood centres. Such learning experiences involved periods of personal reflection and analysis that had meaningful life outcomes for the women involved. Critical learning experiences could be gained from involvement in committees, taking responsibility, working together as a team, supporting each other and being a catalyst for participation in more formal learning activities, courses and involvement in the wider community. His research findings suggest that neighbourhood centres can be seen as ‘liberated spaces’ in which women have opportunities to explore their experiences and build women-centred, nurturing relationships (Foley, 1993).

The techniques and practices used by neighbourhood centres have been described as facilitative, developmental and inclusive. The style of work undertaken by staff

and volunteers in their delivery of programs and services is informed by the principles of community development (Humpage, 2005). A facilitative process that can be seen to be mimicking a web that spans across the community, the weblike process enables connections to be made through informal and formal interactions by staff, volunteers and participants. Many neighbourhood centres provide programs and attribute their success to the levels of participation. Participation levels are only one measure of their ability or inability to meet the needs of their local communities and their users. The community development work that neighbourhood centres align themselves with is not necessarily occurring in all neighbourhood centres. The local solutions to certain issues and the social action that once took place in neighbourhood centres is now replaced by an abundance of programs and services that are said to include, strengthen, and enhance people's wellbeing and skill levels.

Neighbourhood centres are expected to meet the needs of their community including issues such as long-term unemployment, poverty, drug use, domestic violence, as well as the more recreational needs and health and wellbeing of their participants. To maintain their local resources, centres have to balance service delivery to the disadvantaged with social activities for the whole community (Mlcek & Ismay, 2015). Some of the groups identified as having high needs are new arrivals.

3.3.1 Neighbourhood centres' work with new arrivals

Over the years, a number of sector reports and academic studies have reported on the work of some Australian neighbourhood centres with new arrivals. These studies show that neighbourhood centres were mainly encouraged by State government funding to engage with new arrivals, indicating recognition that the non-stigmatising nature of neighbourhood centres can provide effective prevention and early intervention services for hard to reach groups with whom the more targeted mainstream services fail to engage (Brown & Barnes, 2001). The studies also indicate that neighbourhood centres' work with new arrivals has revealed a number of challenges including a need for attitudinal change and training among staff, tensions between existing user groups and newcomers, and the need for additional resources.

One such study focussed on the ethnic diversity of Victorian neighbourhood centres and expressed concern about the inclusion and empowerment of migrant communities (Guinness, 1998). This resulted in difficulties to attract new members and affected attendance rates, which in turn created difficulties in attracting funding. Other Victorian studies identified the barriers migrant women faced in their

involvement within neighbourhood centres. For example, Kimberley's (1998) research found that women of non-English speaking background, Aboriginal women and women with mental health issues were not equally welcomed at most Neighbourhood Houses in Victoria. She concluded that little time and resources were spent to encourage the attendance of these groups living in the wider community. In essence, they were passively discouraging these groups from attending the neighbourhood centres because of the tension caused with the existing groups that met there.

Guinness' (1998) survey of studies undertaken by the Victorian Association Neighbourhood Learning Centres and state government bodies identifies a number of issues that prevented people from migrant backgrounds from attending neighbourhood centres. People from non-English speaking backgrounds faced issues that were different from the mainstream community and could only be addressed if specific funds were allocated to do so. Additional resources were therefore required for appropriate child care, multicultural training for staff, and translation of information into various languages. English language classes were easily established with retired teachers ready to volunteer, but were often seen as a quick fix to the broader challenge of migrant inclusion.

As Guinness (1998) points out, the new arrivals' and other community members' needs also overlap. Examples are women who are housebound with children, individuals who need information about available services, and the human need for leisure and social activities. However, Guinness found that neighbourhood centres that attempted to move towards a more inclusive culture sometimes faced resistance from established groups within the neighbourhood centre who wanted to preserve the status quo. Conflicts arose over which activities and programs to deliver, which groups should be provided with space, where funding should be sought and what behaviours were deemed acceptable. In order to address these conflicts, Guinness (1998) recommends that neighbourhood centres need to create opportunities for participants to both receive support and give it back, employ ethnic minority staff members, challenge ethnocentric practices, and broaden existing and develop new programs in response to needs of ethnically diverse groups.

Studies in other Australian states also revealed that the efforts of neighbourhood centres to engage with ethnic diversity had met with limited success. As Guinness (1998) reports, the Local Community Services Association of NSW produced a booklet for neighbourhood centres in an attempt to change some of the attitudes

that were prominent in and across the NSW neighbourhood centre sector. The booklet stated that 'despite the innovative and effective programs of a few centres, community centres have not, on the whole, been responsive to the needs of migrants (Guinness, 1998). Community Centres SA in the early 1990s also looked at ways in which it could assist the neighbourhood centres in South Australia to work with people from non-English speaking backgrounds in the community. A project funded by the then Department of Community Welfare and Community Centres SA employed an Ethnic Community Worker to find ways to improve access and equity for migrants and bring about attitudinal change among staff members. Under this project, cultural awareness seminars and workshops were carried out with staff and volunteers across the sector. It also explored ways in which neighbourhood centres could work together and develop partnerships with ethno-specific agencies. Although the project led to the development of a policy on 'Working in our multicultural community', further progress was halted when funding ran out and the project officer left.

An example of the work of Australian neighbourhood centres with new arrivals can be seen in the documented account of the Fitzroy Learning Centre in Victoria (Humpage & Marston, 2005). This neighbourhood centre identified that three factors played a significant role in participation of new arrivals in their community. These include the material and welfare needs of the groups, the lack of opportunity to develop friendships and networks in the community, and the inability of new arrivals to feel a sense of belonging to any place. Engaging in informal community networks helps to address the recognition of injustices faced by new arrivals. The Fitzroy Learning Centre has enabled new arrivals to develop friendships with Australian citizens, thus building trust between different groups in the community. By sharing in a community lunch or participating in a social activity together, new migrants come to feel as though they belong and are now part of their new country (Humpage & Marston, 2005).

Canadian research has also examined the role of neighbourhood centres in terms of their effectiveness in bridging newcomers to the community (Lauer & Yan, 2007; Lauer & Yan, 2010). Neighbourhood centres in Canada have worked closely with immigrants to address social services and community education to facilitate positive interactions among their local community (Yan & Lauer, 2008a). It is often through their connection to neighbourhood centres as program participants and volunteers that new arrivals take the first steps towards participation in their new community.

The Canadian research indicates that intense involvement through frequent participation with other neighbourhood centre participants through targeted activities or programs leads to more bridging social ties, while involvement in general programs means these connections evolve over a longer period of time.

Each of the above examples contributes insights into the work of neighbourhood centres with ethnically diverse cultural groups. Some reports are limited because of the underlying assumption that neighbourhood centres automatically benefit individuals without offering detailed critical reflections on practices and outcomes. A few more critical studies suggest that the efforts of neighbourhood centres to accommodate cultural and linguistic difference have met with mixed results. Perhaps the most obvious area of neighbourhood centre activity has been in addressing the needs of migrants to build their English language skills (Guinness, 1998). Overall, however, the studies indicate significant 'shortcomings' (Paltridge, 2005) and a discernible gap between rhetoric and reality. The rhetoric suggests that neighbourhood centres cater for everybody, but few have successfully and sustainably managed to incorporate cultural diversity into their services. Concepts such as empowerment, advocacy, self-help and community ownership and inclusion still pervade neighbourhood centre identity statements, but whether and how they translate into practice is up for question. In the absence of recent research on the role of neighbourhood centres in the inclusion of new arrivals in South Australia, the present study aims to uncover what neighbourhood centres today are doing to provide new arrivals with opportunities to connect with the wider community.

3.4 Neighbourhood Centres in South Australia Today

Currently, there are 103 neighbourhood centres operating in South Australia across both metropolitan and regional areas with the peak body being Community Centres SA. According to CCSA, the objectives of South Australian neighbourhood centres are to act as platforms of social inclusion where individuals and families can become connected, find information, learn, and improve health and general wellbeing. Neighbourhood centres claim to practice preventative and early intervention strategies, based on the idea that a fence at the top of the cliff is far better than an ambulance at the bottom (Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association, 2011). This role involves collaborating with a broad range of organisations and government agencies.

A commitment to social justice is central to most neighbourhood centre mission statements. It is claimed that they have always sought to direct their resources to the most disadvantaged and least powerful groups within society, to enable them to overcome social isolation. Building their resilience through the development of community networks, mutual support, learning opportunities and collective action is a core objective (Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association, 2010).

A mapping survey conducted by CCSA in 2009 provides a snap-shot of the average neighbourhood centre in South Australia. Based on information provided by five neighbourhood and community centres said to be representative of the sector in South Australia, the profile of 'the average centre' was obtained. The average centre has been operating in South Australia for just over 24 years with an average staff of 5.8 fulltime equivalents per week. On average, a centre has 54 volunteers who contribute a total of 552 hours each year. The average neighbourhood centre is accessed by 400 people per week. Across South Australia, an estimated 42,800 people access services in neighbourhood centres every week or over two million every year, and more than 15,000 hours of volunteer labour is accumulated per week. The value of volunteer labour is estimated to be over $16 million per annum (O'Neil et al., 2013).

3.4.1 Neighbourhood Centre Funding

The neighbourhood centres within South Australia are funded and supported through a variety of government (Federal, State and Local), nongovernment, philanthropic organisations, service groups, industry, corporate and community resources. Funding is utilised to support operational costs including paid staff, program delivery, training of volunteers, as well as utility expenses and rent. Some neighbourhood centres are able to generate their own funds through venue hire, registered child care, social enterprise activities and sponsorship from local business entities and service clubs such as Rotary and Lions Clubs.

Prior to 2013, the state government's Family and Community Development program was considered to be a core funding source for a significant number of the neighbourhood centres in South Australia. The fund is mandated under the Family and Community Services Act 1972. The program guidelines state its main purpose is 'capacity building of community development activities for families, young people and individuals; especially financially disadvantaged people' (DCSI, 2012 as cited in O'Neil et al., 2013, p. 17). In 2014, neighbourhood centres were advised that they

would not receive these funds as core funding but instead would need to apply through a public tender process, competing against a variety of other nongovernment and not-for-profit community organisations. The outcome of the tender process was delayed until January 2015 and three South Australian centres were unsuccessful in the tender and were not funded. As a result, one centre closed, one continues to operate with volunteers and the third remained opened with funding received from local government. This demonstrates the limitations of the existing funding models for neighbourhood centres in South Australia, and reveals how vulnerable these organisations are within the current economic rationalist climate.

Currently, South Australian neighbourhood centres face the prospect of reduced available funding from government sources resulting in a greater emphasis on a user-pays system to help generate income. One of the more creative funding avenues is the development of social enterprise projects whereby an organisation pursues social change by generating a sustainable income. Twenty-six neighbourhood centres in South Australia have commenced some form of social enterprise activities as additional sources of revenue (O'Neil et al., 2013). Examples of social enterprise activities include op-shops, coffee shops, community gardens, markets, festivals, and selling participants' homemade clothing.

The variety of funding sources on which neighbourhood centres rely indicates that there is no one size fits all model of available funding for neighbourhood centres in South Australia. The government's neo-liberal focus on service delivery and competitive tendering processes to distribute limited funds leaves neighbourhood centres reliant on short-term contract-based funding.

This results in the larger organisations having to devote more staff time to managing complicated tendering processes. Smaller neighbourhood centres whose management committees rely on volunteers are generally less skilled in writing tenders and risk missing out on funding altogether. Funding is tied to operations to provide specific types of services and programs, to specifically eligible participants, as determined by performance measures based on limited target groups and a narrow range of efficiency indicators (Van Gramberg & Bassett, 2005). This movement towards market-based service arrangements has been described as the corporatisation of the neighbourhood centre, 'diluting its democratic foundation, and over time, abandoning its focus on citizen development' (Glover, 2004, p. 64).

As a consequence of this shift, neighbourhood centres have adopted the notions of efficiency and effectiveness which resonate with their funding agreements (Aldred et al., 2004; Yan & Sin, 2011). To be able to demonstrate efficient service delivery, they have to focus on results that can be measured. Social capital is a discursive tool (Pardy & Lee, 2011) that organisations can use to legitimate their work in a currency familiar to government. The funding of neighbourhood centres can be justified by government departments as an investment in their work, as an investment in social capital. The term social capital provides the neighbourhood centre sector with a legitimacy and currency that is valued by governments, the argument being that an investment in the work of neighbourhood centres is in turn an investment in social capital (Pardy & Lee, 2011). The shift towards program delivery has a significant impact on the use and availability of physical space. Where once neighbourhood centres were more focussed on being spaces for community members to call in, have a coffee and a chat with fellow participants, volunteers and staff members (Guinness, 1998), in many South Australian neighbourhood centres availability of free space is reduced with scheduled activities required by funding bodies, or by local government wanting to recoup revenue for the public space it provides (Aldred et al., 2004). This leads to a reduction in social space and opportunities for informal interaction among neighbourhood participants, which is pivotal to establish a sense of place (see Section 2.8).

As well as these challenges, there has been an increased focus on accountability and outcomes (Baulderstone, 2008) to provide funding bodies with information about operations, activities (outputs) and outcomes. Performance measures make neighbourhood centres accountable to their funders and the community and enables self- improvement through the analysis of their operations. Motivations for undertaking performance measuring include government funded organisations being accountable to government as the primary motivator, particularly when funding is based upon meeting pre-determined performance criteria. Performance measures can be undertaken by neighbourhood centres who are interested in gaining an understanding of the ways they operate and the impact this has on target groups or the broader community (O'Neil et al., 2013). The rational to undertake performance measurement is that understanding can lead to opportunities for growth and improvement. It can also assist neighbourhood centres to attract support partnerships and funding; programs that are able to be measured and can demonstrate the connections between outcomes and community level impacts are of most interest to funders of community based organisations.

Neighbourhood centres have expressed interest in moving away from the rather narrow scope of outcomes that have often been imposed, and to look instead at how their work can respect the wide range of outcomes being achieved by programs. Together, the interest and participation of diverse groups in refining the frameworks affirm the multisector approach to building a body of knowledge about what contributes to positive outcomes for clients and communities.

Increasingly the approach used by neighbourhood centres in South Australia to measure their effectiveness is Results Based Accountability (RBA), (Friedman, 2015, p. 11). The approach incorporates starting with an end in mind and works backwards, step by step, to achieve the goal. RBA involves stating the desired result, identifying an indicator that represents progress on that result and outlines a strategy or actions required to achieve the result. RBA is an evidence-based methodology which has been effectively used around the globe, especially in the US, Canada the UK and Wales. Results-Based Accountability is made up of two parts: Population Accountability and Performance Accountability. Results-Based Accountability is the overarching idea which includes results-based decision making and results-based budgeting. Accountability is by someone to someone for something important. It is a planning, evaluation and continuous improvement methodology which has been designed specifically for the community sector. RBA is based on two supporting concepts: the validation of practice based on results (outcomes) and the support of these results by clear evidence. RBA work starts with ends and works backward, step by step to means. As a concept it relates results (outcomes) with indicators and performance measures as a way of showing the efficiency of strategies in attaining these results. Within a RBA framework accountability functions at two levels: Population accountability addresses the well-being of a population in a certain geographic area. In contrast to that, performance accountability deals with a leader or a group of leaders who take the responsibility for the performance of a program, agency or service system (Friedman, 2015).

Often policies of accountability have been implemented without recognising the challenges of measuring performance and outcomes in human services context (Baulderstone, 2008; Glover, 2004; Lyons, 2001). Community development has taken a back seat as centres are moving away from locally driven community activities that are responsive to people, context and specific issues (Mowbray, 2010). Aldred et al. (2004) describe the dilemma of neighbourhood centres that

attempt to meet every need in the community in order to meet the requirements of funding bodies, but miss the most disadvantaged due to extensive accountability requirements. To restore the community focus, Lenette and Ingamell (2014) have called for a broader funding paradigm that values community development and empowers and enables people. In answer to this dilemma Community Centres SA, community and neighbourhood centres, the State Deaprtment of Community and Social Inclusion, councils, not-for-profit organisations and other stakeholders have joined together to form a Community of Practice group. This group is for anyone who has an interest in sharing, learning and improving their practice using the RBA framework. The focus of the group is to share ideas and experiences on a program level, not a focus on collective impact at the population level. It is an open discussion forum on RBA related matters where group members can exchange their thoughts and concerns. Different stakeholders report about their practice experiences using the RBA framework, for example for organisational planning and to improve customer satisfaction. Community and neighbourhood centres in cooperation with Community Centres SA are in the right position to govern and support such collaborative approaches due to their capability and experience in engaging individuals and establishing and maintaining partnerships with diverse stakeholders. Effective collective impact approaches can assist government to use cross-sector community and service organisation's power to bring about measurable results in a community setting and progress in programs through a focus on results (O'Neil et al., 2013, pp. 75-76).

3.4.2 Management Structure and Facilities

Neighbourhood centres are located in five geographic regions that cover both metropolitan (73% of centres) and rural (27% of centres) regions of South Australia. Their contexts, shapes and sizes vary, as do their management structures. The majority of neighbourhood centres in South Australia operate from local Council facilities whereas others use South Australian Housing Trust owned buildings, church halls, school buildings or a shopfront community owned building. Many of these centres are community-owned and managed, while others are owned and managed by local Councils. Of the 103 neighbourhood and community centres that are members of the peak association Community Centres SA, over half operate on an independent basis, meaning the neighbourhood centre is community owned and managed. These neighbourhood centres are incorporated associations that act as

the legally constituted body of the organisation with a community board of management. All independent centres with a Council employee are located in metropolitan Adelaide. Of those independent centres without a Council employed coordinator, 45% are rural and 55% are located in metropolitan Adelaide. These centres are managed by a volunteer committee generally comprised of local residents and participants.

A third of the neighbourhood centres in South Australia is managed and operated by local Councils and managed by employees on the Council payroll. Most (86%) of the Council-managed centres are in metropolitan Adelaide. A minority of centres are managed by not-for-profit organisations, usually larger charitable organisations that are church-based, for example, Centacare, Anglicare or the Salvation Army. Fifty three of centres run by not-for-profit organisations are rural and 47% are in the metropolitan area (O'Neil et al., 2013).

3.4.3 Staffing of Neighbourhood Centres

As mentioned above, neighbourhood centres in South Australia operate with both paid and unpaid (volunteer) staff members. *Community Development worker* or *Neighbourhood Centre Officer* is the general term used to describe the paid part-time or full time coordinator who is employed by the local Council, an independent neighbourhood centre or by the not-for-profit organisation. In the case of the independently managed organisation the staff member is accountable to the Board of Management. The role of the coordinator is to support the community, to empower it, to advocate for its needs, issues and problems, to deliver information, to foster skill development and to help the community access resources (Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association, 2011). In my own experience, the role of the coordinator of the neighbourhood centre includes managing the other staff members of the organisation (paid and voluntary), overseeing the operation of the centre, writing grant submissions and developing courses and programs. In addition, coordinators are expected to network with other service providers, respond to the needs of user groups and local residents, disseminate information and refer participants to other services.

Employees of neighbourhood centres are drawn from a range of people with differing qualifications and life experiences. Some are qualified Social Workers, Developmental Educators, Teachers, and Youth Workers; others have gained on-the-job experience and moved from being a volunteer to a paid position. In 2003, CCSA identified a business and management skills shortage in the sector,

particularly in relation to entrepreneurship, human resource management, financial management, risk management, and, Work Health and Safety Legislation. It developed a Workforce Development Strategy aimed at up-skilling the management qualifications of the workers in neighbourhood centres. A model of recognition for prior learning was established in partnership with TAFE SA which identifies training gaps, and provides mentoring opportunities to workers.

3.4.4 Participants of Neighbourhood Centres

People from all walks of life attend neighbourhood centres and for a variety of reasons. Many people attend neighbourhood centres because they face barriers to participation in the wider community and the mainstream education system, and seek social connection (O'Neil et al., 2013). The main groups of participants attending neighbourhood centres in South Australia are reported to be:

- Women aged 45 years and over;
- People with a disability;
- People with a low income;
- Culturally and linguistically diverse people;
- Newly arrived migrants;
- People with low levels of formal education;
- People at risk of social isolation; and
- Children below school age (0-5years) attending children's programs (O'Neil et al., 2013).

This may give an impression that neighbourhood centres only cater for disadvantaged groups and women; however, this is not the case. For example, women may attend a neighbourhood centre because they are looking for opportunities to return to work, gain new skills and increase their confidence. Others are drawn to neighbourhood centres because they offer childcare support alongside adult education programs. There are increasing numbers of older people in the community who experience social isolation and attend to participate in social support programs. New arrivals attend to search for courses to improve their English language skills and to enhance their employment opportunities (O'Neil et al., 2013).

The survey of neighbourhood centres in 2009 found that more than half had a predominantly female clientele (60 to 70 per cent of participants were female). Only ten per cent of the centres had equal male and female participation (O'Neil et al., 2013). Over the past 15 years there has been an increase in participation among older men as neighbourhood centres offer courses and services more attuned to

their interests, including computer classes and men's sheds. Participation patterns are partly a reflection of the opening hours which remains Monday-Friday 9am-4pm for the majority of neighbourhood centres, in line with traditional school operating times and stemming from an era when the main participants groups were women. There is recognition within the sector that to enhance participation by males and those working, hours of operation need to reflect the changing needs of the community. Some neighbourhood centres now also operate after 4 pm and on weekends (O'Neil et al., 2013).

3.4.5 Neighbourhood Centre Activities and Services

The programs, services and activities provided by neighbourhood centres cover a wide range of interests and pursuits. The Mapping Survey (2009) found that ninety per cent of neighbourhood centres across SA offered skills and personal development programs, physical activities, self- help, mutual help and social support programs. Eighty-two per cent of the centres provided health promotion programs, 87% provided programs for special interest groups (such as Alcoholics Anonymous) and 76% provided children's programs including crèche facilities, school holiday programs and after-school activities such as homework clubs. Sixty per cent of neighbourhood centres also provided programs that they were contracted to deliver (e.g. State and Commonwealth Government funded programs to assist people aged 65 and over to continue to live in their homes, and for younger people with a disability). A quarter (24%) also ran programs that fell under 'other categories', including life skills programs, (counselling, community gardens, cafés, wood work and men's sheds). As well as the structured activities and courses, neighbourhood centres provide a range of volunteer programs which can lead to skills development and pathways to employment.

The nature of the work conducted by some South Australian neighbourhood centres with new arrivals will be further explored in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis. These chapters will also examine how neighbourhood centres balance the pressures to adhere to the neoliberal paradigm with their commitment to social inclusion through grassroots community development.

3.4.6 Volunteers of Neighbourhood Centres

As pointed out earlier, volunteers represent a valuable resource for neighbourhood centres and are seen as the backbone of the movement. They are a vital part of the fabric of the organisation (Paltridge, 2005), supporting what is usually a very small

team of paid staff in running the daily operations of the centre, organising events, tutoring classes, staffing crèche and undertaking reception duties.

Volunteering within a neighbourhood centre is a diverse activity. It can range from assisting a new arrival with English tuition, to reception duties, kitchen-hand duties, and maintaining the community garden to being a member of the management committee. As many neighbourhood centres have limited and variable funding, volunteers provide additional staff resources and enable them to operate for longer hours and provide services and programs needed by the community. The annual replacement wage bill for volunteer continuation to the South Australian Neighbourhood centre sector, based on a rate of $22-$29 per hour, is estimated to be in the range of $32-$42 million. Or, in other terms, the wage bill can be translated into 7.6 fulltime-equivalent staff per neighbourhood centre in South Australia (O'Neil et al., 2013). The 2013 Economic and Social Impact Study of the South Australian sector indicated that for every hour of paid staff time there was 1.2 hours of volunteer time provided in 2012.

Neighbourhood centre volunteers are recruited by a variety of means which include referral from other organisations such as Centrelink or Job Network providers, direct recruitment through the local Council volunteer coordinator, word of mouth or involvement in a neighbourhood centre program. Many volunteers start their journey to volunteering as a previous program participant. Having enjoyed their involvement and developed new skills, they offer their time to the staff through becoming a Board member or a facilitator themselves. Volunteering is seen as a pathway to employment. Some centres describe volunteering not only as a source of unpaid staff but as a key role of their centre offering pathways to future employment, development of leadership skills and generating a sense of connection to an organisation for some who are no longer actively in paid employment or family duties. However, being successful in this role also has drawbacks. High volunteer turnover can be frustrating for staff members who have to recruit, train, and then recruit again. Volunteers also leave for many other reasons such as increasing pressure from family demands, health and mental health related issues, or returning to study.

Stukas, Daly, and Cowling (2005) argue for a functional approach to volunteering. It is based on the premise that different volunteers can choose the same activity for various reasons, goals, and motivations and that recognising the underlying motivations are key to recruiting and retaining volunteers. Secondly, the volunteer

should be matched to an activity that is appropriate to their goals and motivations. The nature of volunteering has changed over the years and with the increasing demands placed on neighbourhood centres to undertake quality services, and risk-management framework, all volunteers are required to undertake police screening and training prior to commencing their involvement as a volunteer.

This study will explore the role played by neighbourhood centre volunteers in relation to supporting new arrivals to connect with local community. It will investigate the opportunities for new arrivals to participate and connect through volunteering in neighbourhood centres and the effect involvement in these activities has on the new arrivals.

3.5 Conclusion

Evidence from the local and international literature (Humpage, 2005; Izmir et al., 2009; Rooney, 2011; Yan & Lauer, 2008b) suggests that neighbourhood centres provide a unique set of resources that contribute to the impact on the social capital of their communities. At the most basic level these resources include the building, materials, programs, support networks and the personal assistance to their participants (Pope & Warr, 2005). At a more in-depth level they are communities of practice formed to develop the social connectedness of people in an increasingly fragmented world of individualism and increased technology. Neighbourhood centres across Australia claim to practice the principles of community development which include community participation, community ownership, empowerment, lifelong learning, inclusion, access and equity, social action, advocacy, networking and self-help. They are based on the premise that individuals have a right and responsibility to determine the direction of their own lives, and that people at the grassroots level should be directly involved in decision making processes affecting their communities.

A unique social resource provided by neighbourhood centres is social connection. When people participate in discussion groups, cooking programs, playgroups, and volunteer, they develop intercommunity connections and networks through which values, goals and concerns can be explored. Neighbourhood centres in South Australia have the potential to be an instrument for assisting new arrivals in their settlement process through the provision of information, referral, access to support services and personal development opportunities. Evidence from early Settlement Houses and of neighbourhood centre practices today suggest that neighbourhood

centres can assist individuals in times of crisis, stress or need, and that it is the informal, secular, nonthreatening, caring, supportive environment that attracts newcomers to these centres (Pope & Warr, 2005).

The ideology of neighbourhood centres contains a certain amount of romanticism which some argue no longer truly fits the current situation. Neighbourhood centres could resort to being seen as merely subservient providers of government funded programs that view new arrivals as a problem that needs fixing. They might view integration as a function of program attendance and skills development rather than recognise that new arrivals' lives are shaped by being part of social settings and developing social networks (Lenette & Ingamell, 2014). It is through participation in skill development programs and building social networks in mainstream organisations like neighbourhood centres that new arrivals can become truly integrated into the community and access social capital (Daley, 2009).

There are some differences between Australian neighbourhood centres and similar organisations in North America. Unlike historical settlement houses, which focussed only on a specific geographical area, the modern neighbourhood centres work with and often provide for multiple target groups across multiple neighbourhoods and work collaboratively with a range of partners. In contrast to North American settlement houses, South Australian centres' service provision to ethnically diverse community members and new arrivals is a much more recent phenomenon. This may be the reason why integration, a term mainly used in relation to ethnic minorities, is not a part of the discourses of neighbourhood centres in South Australia. Instead, references to inclusion pervade their vision statements and reports. However, their focus on development of social connections and social networks is central to integration, and this will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

The role of the next chapter is to describe the methodological framework and research design undertaken for this study. It will provide insight into the location of the research and how participants were selected. It will also reflect on my position as a practitioner researcher and the challenges encountered in undertaking this research.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2 provided guidelines for my analysis of the role played by neighbourhood centres in the integration of new arrivals in South Australia. The Indicators of Integration Framework of Ager and Strang (2008) in the domains of education, for example, as well as social capital indicators of bonding, bridging and linking of Putnam (2000) and Szreter and Woolcock (2004) influenced my research approach. Much of the work written on social capital in Australian literature has been used in quantitative large-scale survey-type research (Baum et al., 1999; Leonard & Onyx, 2004; Onyx & Bullen, 2000). More qualitative research is required to enable the complexities of social capital to emerge and to reveal the ways in which bonding, bridging and linking activities are carried out in neighbourhood centres and how they are experienced by new arrivals in a local community setting. To recapitulate, three specific research questions guide this research:

1. What role do neighbourhood centres in South Australia play in the integration of new arrivals into their local community?
2. How do new arrivals become socially connected to their local community through participation at neighbourhood centres?
3. What are the limitations and opportunities of neighbourhood centres fostering social capital among new arrivals in South Australia?

Based on the existing literature and my knowledge of neighbourhood centres in South Australia (being employed as a manager) I determined that a qualitative research framework was most suited to this investigation. The framework, methods and approach to data analysis are explained in the following sections. This chapter will also comment on my research journey and my experiences whilst conducting this research. The research journey itself has been complex and difficult at times, particularly when it involves cross-cultural research with people who can be seen as vulnerable. Discussing it will provide insight into being researcher/ practitioner and the impact this may have had on the outcomes of this research.

4.2 The Approach to the Research

To explore the role of neighbourhood centres in building social capital and the impact of this on the integration of new arrivals, a qualitative research design was adopted. A qualitative framework was determined to be suitable for this study because this approach seeks to build 'a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting' (Creswell, 2007).

> Qualitative techniques allow the researcher to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives. Researchers using qualitative techniques examine how people learn and make sense of themselves and others (Berg & Lune, 2012).

The research methods were chosen with the objective to capture the voices, experiences and meanings given by the people studied. Qualitative research uses participant responses as a starting point from which broader analytical categories are drawn (Ezzy, 2002). This framework enabled me to study how neighbourhood centres see their role in society, how they function, and what role they play in assisting new arrivals who are new to their communities. To gain a holistic picture it was equally important to examine the experiences of new arrivals, what brings them to neighbourhood centres and how participating in these centres relates to the challenges they face in the settlement process. Qualitative research methods are considered appropriate for gaining in-depth knowledge about the integration experiences of new arrivals (Korac, 2003) because they allow the researcher to collect data about the opinions, feelings, knowledge, experiences, actions and behaviours of research subjects. They do not only ask 'what' these opinions, actions and behaviours are, but 'how' and 'why' they are as they are. In particular, qualitative research methods enable the researcher to hear the voices of those who are silenced or marginalised by the dominant social order. They provide the researcher with the opportunity to develop rapport with the participants and to gather sensitive data and see the world from the participants' perspective (Liamputtong, 2007).

The research design was informed by a social constructionist perspective. A constructionist approach seeks to explore, understand, and theorise the

sociocultural contexts and the structural conditions that enable individual accounts that are provided. It aims to understand multiple views of meaning from multiple stakeholders including perspectives from the point of view of the staff and volunteers of neighbourhood centres and the perspective of the new arrivals themselves. In the tradition that knowledge is created and meaning is constructed out of the mind's interaction with the world (Crotty, 1998), a social constructionist approach was chosen as it seeks to understand the world in which neighbourhood centre workers and participants live and work (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). The knowledge and ideas of reality are derived through social processes and reality itself is formed through interaction with others. Constructionism holds that our interests and values can never be detangled from our observations, and therefore research can never be truly neutral. Meanings are not inherent in objects or situations; rather, people make meanings out of what they experience through interactions with others. Constructionists see multiple competing viewpoints of the world rather than one true view. Knowledge is conceived as being multiple, fragmentary and context dependent and local (Sahin, 2006).

Social constructionism encourages researchers to investigate the social influences on individual and group life and how individuals are positioned within communities and relate with their social environment in often complex and contradictory ways (Galbin, 2014). Proponents of social constructionism argue that the way people understand the world is a product of a historical process of interaction and negotiation between groups, and that the constructs of self, emotion, and mind are not intrinsic to individuals but are a part of social discourse. Reality is created through language and social processes. Meaning given to events and objects is not the property of the objects themselves but it is the product of the prevailing cultural frame of social, linguistic, discursive and symbolic practices (Gergen, 1985). The goal of research using this positioning is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation and the meanings they create.

4.3 A Multiple Methods Approach

A multiple methods approach was chosen as the most appropriate research strategy to capture a deeper and broader range of the participants' perspectives and experiences than the reliance on a single method. Multiple methods research employs the use of several different qualitative methods, each used so that it contributed something unique to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon

under study (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, & Alexander, 1990). The methods were mostly qualitative, for reasons given earlier, and included focus groups and interviews with key informants working in neighbourhood centres, interviews with new arrivals, and site visits to neighbourhood centres. In addition to these, to provide some basic data on the neighbourhood centres and their work, an electronic survey was conducted among neighbourhood centres in South Australia. These methods are outlined in more detail below. I used triangulation techniques to ensure validity of the research (Patton, 2002) by cross referencing the information obtained through the various data collection phases. Triangulation was not only used for validation of data incorporating several viewpoints and methods but it also offered the opportunity to widen and deepen my understanding of the research topic. Social realities are complex and the ability to capture their meaning with single method is limited (Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012, p. 156). Therefore, triangulation can aid the researcher in providing a more holistic view of social reality.

The process of data collection took place over a period of two years commencing in October 2011 and concluding in November 2013. During this process I interviewed 30 new arrivals and 10 neighbourhood centre staff, led four focus groups with neighbourhood centre workers, and conducted five site visits. In recruiting research participants, a key strategy was to seek the support and cooperation of Community Centres SA (CCSA), the peak association for the neighbourhood centres in South Australia (see Appendix B). CCSA assisted in promoting the study at events such as the state conferences and Annual General Meetings where I was able to speak briefly, seeking support of staff and volunteers to participate in the study. The CCSA website was a useful resource as it lists over 100 organisations that identify as neighbourhood centres. This enabled me to post information about the study on the organisation's website and disseminate it through the E-Newsletter which is sent to all neighbourhood centres on a fortnightly basis. The research design was intended to be minimally intrusive on the staff members, volunteers and the operations of the neighbourhood centres. I aimed to ensure that, as a researcher, I would not be disruptive to the staff and volunteers working in neighbourhood centres. As a practitioner within the neighbourhood centre sector I understood the time constraints, staffing issues and other pressures that affect the sector. At the same time, I anticipated that this research would require a high degree of collaboration. Balancing this required respect for and rapport with the staff and volunteers of the neighbourhood and community centre sector in South Australia.

4.3.1 The Mapping Survey

Stage one of the research design involved a mapping survey of the neighbourhood centres sector across South Australia. The data collection instrument used for the mapping survey was an electronic survey questionnaire developed to achieve two main aims (see appendix C & D). The first was to elicit information from those neighbourhood centres in South Australia that provide services and programs to new arrivals and the numbers and types of programs and services available. The second was to recruit participants, staff members and volunteers working within the neighbourhood centres, for the future focus groups. The aim was to keep the survey tool as simple and as short as possible for the respondents to complete because this would enhance the likelihood of completing it. Contact information of neighbourhood centres is available to the public through the CCSA website.

The Mapping Survey was sent out in electronic format through the CCSA's E-News in early October 2011. Initially, only six centres completed the survey by the due date of 31st October 2011. My timing for survey completion was unfortunate as the sector was in the middle of a campaign to persuade the state funding body (the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion) to reverse its decision to cut funding. With the sector being bombarded with information and promotional material at the same time as receiving the survey, the energy and focus of many of the recipients was on more pressing matters. Of the 103 neighbourhood and community centres across the State surveyed, just over 50% responded. Follow-up reminders were sent out on four occasions and resulted in a total of 52 neighbourhood centres completing the Mapping Survey.

The mapping survey was developed as a result of consulting the literature on social capital and integration (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a; 2013b; Putnam, 1993; 1996; 2000; Strang & Ager, 2010; Tzanakis, 2013), discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, and was also based on my prior experience of working in the neighbourhood centres sector in South Australia. The survey provided a basic understanding of the level of involvement new arrivals had in neighbourhood centres and the extent to which staff members and volunteers were assisting them. The questions asked about the cultural backgrounds of those participating, the types of programs they accessed, the use of volunteers, and the types of assistance provided to new arrivals accessing the neighbourhood centres. The survey provided the basis for further exploration of the questions asked during the focus groups and

one-on-one interviews held with staff members and volunteers.

4.3.2 Focus Groups with Staff and Volunteers

The second stage of the research design consisted of focus groups with members of South Australian neighbourhood centres including staff and volunteers. This method was selected to encourage participants to discuss their experiences when working with new arrivals. The focus groups allowed participants to construct, explore and clarify their points of view through interaction with each other (social construction of data) (Liamputtong, 2007). The focus group questions explored the reasons and perceived benefits of attending neighbourhood centres and the practices used by staff members to include new arrivals into programs and services. They also explored the barriers faced and the capacity for new arrivals to undertake courses and activities the neighbourhood centres offered. Through the interaction between the moderator and the group as well as the interaction between group members, information and insights are elicited that are rarely derived from observations, surveys and less interactional interview techniques (Liamputtong, 2007). The focus groups were therefore reflexive, guided by the social constructionist approach. The focus group discussions were guided by the participants and enabled them to tell their lived experiences of neighbourhood centres.

To test the questions and themes, I conducted a pilot focus group with staff and volunteers I knew through my employment within the neighbourhood centre sector. In addition to refining the questions, piloting helped me to develop strategies in responding to silences and engaging less vocal members of the group, and to establish a suitable timing of the focus group session. During this pilot phase I used a digital tape recorder rather than taking notes, which allowed me to focus on the dynamics of the discussion. Morning or afternoon tea was offered to each of the focus groups to acknowledge and thank those participating for their time and contribution to the research. The setting for the focus groups was Community Centres SA head office at Glandore, as it is familiar to all stakeholders and centrally located to all neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers.

Recruiting focus group participants proved to be a challenging task that required several different strategies. The first strategy was a question in the Mapping Survey (sent out via E CCSA's E-News) inviting neighbourhood centre respondents to identify their willingness to participate in focus groups. Neighbourhood centres that indicated an interest were sent an invitation via post. Eleven staff and volunteers

were recruited in this manner. Additional participants were recruited through follow-up letters and a Community Centres SA annual conference which provided me the opportunity to promote the focus groups. Three focus groups were completed by July 2012. A fourth focus group was planned to gather the voices of rural neighbourhood and community centres, but proved elusive. I succeeded however in gathering information from several rural neighbourhood staff members who had come to Adelaide to attend the Annual General Meeting for CCSA 2012 and were staying in Adelaide for the evening.

Focus groups proved to be of mutual benefit to both the researcher and the participants. Many participants of the focus groups commented that they had increased their understanding of the work the sector was doing with new arrivals as a result of their involvement. They also gained an additional benefit of being exposed to new ideas and potential strategies to try in their work after attending the focus groups.

4.3.3 Interviews

At stage three of the data collection, I conducted 10 individual interviews with staff members and 30 interviews with new arrivals at neighbourhood centres (for details of the participants see Appendix G). First I interviewed neighbourhood centre workers, including neighbourhood centre coordinators, cross-cultural workers and migrant health workers. Interviews enabled staff members who were interested in the research, but unable to attend focus groups, to provide valuable information. The interviews explored a similar set of issues as the focus groups but were more in-depth and were conducted at the interviewee's workplace. Data collected in this manner was helpful in identifying issues for further exploration in the interviews with new arrivals. The interviews with new arrivals were then undertaken to explore their experiences of attending neighbourhood centres and how this impacted on their settlement experience in South Australia more broadly.

Potential interview participants among new arrival users of neighbourhood centres were identified by staff and volunteers as meeting the criteria of living in Australia for between one and five years. This time frame was selected as the first 12 months are considered the most intensive for new arrivals who need to find accommodation and employment, learn English, and organise schooling for their children. Integration and belonging are a lower priority in this phase of settlement, and new arrivals do not need the added burden of being involved in a research project. During their first year

of settlement, many new arrivals receive intensive support if they meet government funding criteria, and are less likely to come to neighbourhood centres. Those living in Australia for up to five years are still considered 'new' to Australia and grapple with challenges related to settlement and integration.

Assistance was again sought from the Peak Association CCSA and E-News, an electronic newsletter that is emailed to all centres across South Australia. An information sheet (see Appendix H) was sent to the staff and tutors working with news arrivals, asking for nominations of individuals who might be willing to participate in interviews, and posters (see Appendix I) were displayed within neighbourhood centres across the state inviting participation in the research. Follow-up contact was made by telephone with many neighbourhood centres requesting staff to nominate additional respondents. As I was unable to directly speak to participants for ethical reasons, I relied on staff members of the neighbourhood centres providing information to participants about the purpose of the research and allowing them to make a voluntary decision whether to participate or not. Once interviewing commenced, new arrivals themselves identified additional participants that wished to take part in the study. This meant that neighbourhood centres with weak links to their community groups would most likely be excluded from the research, along with rural centres, as they were more difficult to contact and connect with. This limitation has ramifications for the research findings which are more reflective of participants who are based in the metropolitan areas and neighbourhood centres that are engaged with new arrival community groups. The interview stage with the new arrivals took considerably more time than anticipated. The respondent referral process and interview procedure were time consuming and highly dependent on gatekeepers (workers in the sector of Community and Neighbourhood Centres and Settlement agencies) referring potential respondents. An unanticipated benefit of this drawn-out process was that it did enable time to reflect on the interviews and the process.

Interviews were conducted in a quiet and private location at a neighbourhood centre, as well as the Peak Association Community Centres SA offices. The settings were known to the participants, informal and relaxed, enabling the researcher and respondent to get to know each other first over topics unrelated to the interview, such as family and food, to break the ice and establish a rapport. An informal style of interviewing was adopted which allowed flexibility to the questions being asked but remained focussed on the issues that were central to the research (for an

example of interview questions see Appendix F). The interview was more like a conversation, as participants focussed on their perception of self, their life and experiences, and expressed them in their own words (Minichiello et al., 1990). New arrival interviewees sometimes asked me questions regarding volunteer or paid work, accommodation and medical matters, indicating that they considered me a source of information not just an interviewer. In line with ethical conduct of research (Project No. 5343), respondents were asked if they felt comfortable with the interview being recorded and offered the opportunity to review the transcript. The length of the interviews ranged from 15 minutes to 60 minutes.

Interpreters were used during the interviews when the respondents felt they were required; this was left to the respondent to decide. The respondent was asked to nominate an interpreter; on some occasions when no interpreter was available I was able to provide an interpreter through my networks. Working with an interpreter was something I had not experienced before in research, and I felt it made the interview process disjointed, forever stopping and starting. The use of an interpreter also resulted in interviews being shorter in duration, less detailed and less exploratory in nature.

The demographics drawn from the mapping survey provide a snapshot of the characteristics of the new arrivals in attendance at the neighbourhood centres at the time of the mapping survey, including their cultural backgrounds, age, and gender. The majority of the 52 neighbourhood centres that responded to the survey reported a low number of new arrivals using their centre. Whereas the overall level of attendance for the neighbourhood centre was typically in excess of 450 people per week, 17 neighbourhood centres indicated that, on average, less than 25 new arrivals were attending per week. One neighbourhood centre reported that a group of over 300 new arrivals attended the neighbourhood centre once a month. Further questioning revealed that this was an African community group that hired the venue for a religious gathering, and the members did not participate in any of the programs delivered by the neighbourhood centre.

The main cultural groups represented across South Australian neighbourhood centres at the time of the mapping survey, in descending order of attendance numbers, were Middle Eastern, African, Indian and Chinese. This pattern was also reflected in the one-on-one interviews. Of the thirty new arrivals interviewed, twelve identified as being from refugee or humanitarian background and eighteen identified

as migrants, and only four were men. The mapping survey indicated that most new arrival participants were aged between 18 and 35 years followed by a 36-55 year-old group, and that female participants predominated. These figures indicate that new arrival participants are somewhat younger than the average age of attendees to neighbourhood centres across South Australia, who are mostly in the 45+ age range. The gender breakdown reported in the mapping survey was 75% female and 25% male new arrival attendees. This is comparable to the data for the general population attending neighbourhood centres in South Australia which was 60-70 % female (Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association, 2010; O'Neil et al., 2013).

4.3.4 Neighbourhood Centre Site visits

In September 2013 a further stage of data collection was added to the process to provide an additional perspective on the work some neighbourhood centres were conducting with new arrivals. Chapter 2 discussed that access to social capital and the value of its usage is determined by the location in which it is generated. Neighbourhood centres through staff and volunteers can cultivate a sense of place, be welcoming, and can assist people to feel at home in a new place. In order to investigate neighbourhood centres as places of social contact and encounters, and to understand the social situations that give rise to social connections and feelings of belonging and how they are formed, I conducted site visits to gather information on appearance, décor and building layout. The aim was to gain a more holistic picture of the neighbourhood centres as a place for social capital building.

I chose neighbourhood centres that identified themselves as providing assistance to new arrivals in focus groups and in interviews with key informants. I made contact with key staff members in these neighbourhood centres and asked to visit the sites to spend time observing the work of the staff and volunteers in their workplace setting. Five neighbourhood and community centres agreed to participate. To preserve their anonymity each was given a pseudonym as follows.

- Neighbourhood Centre West
- Neighbourhood Centre North East
- Neighbourhood Centre North
- Neighbourhood Centre South
- Neighbourhood Centre Regional

A range of methods of data collection were used during the site visits including

direct observations of the processes and work practices, observations of neighbourhood centre design layouts and décor such as photographs, displays, and signage. This phase of the research was undertaken from September to December, 2013. Observation is a valuable tool to explore and better understand the work of neighbourhood centres as it allows for holistic inquiry into real-life social events, such as organisational processes. The purpose of the site visits was to shed light on particular topics such as a process or program to better understand why they were used, how they were implemented, and with what results (Yin, 1989).

4.4 Ethical Issues and Data Collection Challenges

As this research involved the use of human subjects, ethical approval was obtained from the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee at Flinders University in September 2011 (Project No. 5343). A modification to the Ethics process was also sought and approval provided in August 2013. At all stages of the research, participants received information about the research and about confidentiality of participation. The letters of introduction and information sheets sent to Community Centres SA, individual neighbourhood centres and participants requesting interviews all contained a statement guaranteeing confidentiality (see Appendices A & B). Formal written consent (see Appendices J & K) was received from each of the participants involved in this research in the form of a signed consent form. To protect the identity of participants, pseudonyms are used throughout this thesis. Information provided in the interview that could have potentially identified a participant was not used in the thesis. All data pertaining to the mapping survey, focus groups and interviews, (that is, consent forms, copies of letters, transcripts) were stored in a secure locked cupboard.

Researchers have highlighted the importance of ethical and culturally appropriate conduct when interviewing (Liamputtong, 2007), particularly when working on themes that are sensitive or intimate. There is the potential for an unequal power relationship between researcher and the participant, particularly if the latter is from a disadvantaged, impoverished, discriminated, stigmatised or otherwise vulnerable group (Liamputtong, 2007). The researcher needs to be aware they may pose a threat or risk to vulnerable people in the community and must take extra care to ensure their rights and needs. Members of ethnic communities, migrants and refugees are often portrayed as vulnerable people, particularly the latter, who are likely to have experienced trauma in their lives prior to coming to Australia. While the

purpose of the interviews with new arrivals was to discuss their experiences of participating in neighbourhood centres in South Australia, the risk remained that the interview could raise upsetting memories for the participants. They were offered the opportunity to withdraw during the interview process, skip any questions they found uncomfortable, take a break whenever required, or stop the interview should it become too stressful. The participants were provided with information at the beginning of the interview about counselling services available to new arrivals. All participants coped well with the interviews and I ensured that no participants were left in distress at the end of the interview. Whilst there were some tears shed by some interviewees when they spoke of their losses and grief, none became overtly distressed, and when the discussion went off topic I was able to redirect the conversation. If participants requested additional support or counselling on various issues that arose from the interviews, they were provided with a list of counselling and support services that provide assistance to refugees on various issues. These services included:

- The Australian Refugee Association (for free case work including housing assistance, legal assistance and employment assistance)
- Families SA Refugee Services (for issues relating to family problems, living skills and health)
- The Migrant Resource Centre (for complex case work, free cross-cultural mental health support and referral to other support services).
- Baptist Care Refugee Services (for mentoring assistance).

Some challenges in the data collection process have already been mentioned in regard to recruiting research participants but one particular issue that requires further discussion relates to the recruitment of new arrival participants. As there were no comprehensive lists of attendees at the various neighbourhood and community centres from which to draw a sample, I relied on the good will and judgement of the staff, volunteers, settlement workers and health workers to refer people to be interviewed. I regularly contacted key persons known to me through the Peak Association CCSA to assist in finding possible respondents for the study. These contacts included workers and volunteers in settlement agencies (Baptist Care, Lutheran Care, SA Health staff, Muslim Women's Association). As gatekeepers they had broad knowledge of settlement issues and provided me with advice on undertaking research with new arrivals. Once gatekeepers were identified, initial meetings were set up (either pre-existing sector-wide meetings or separate

meetings one-on-one) to explain the research and the need for interviews, along with the role they would play in identifying respondents to the research.

Gaining access to new arrivals within neighbourhood centres can be described as challenging and felt at times like a tightrope-walking act (Sixsmith, Boneham, & Goldring, 2003). It became apparent that obtaining access to interviewees was not simply a matter of recruiting people into the research, but rather a complex social process of gaining access into the neighbourhood centres themselves. The observations of Sixsmith et al. (2003) about the benefits and disadvantages of using community leaders for accessing participants are relevant to my research. Neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers were often helpful in recruiting participants to interview but they could also act as blocks in their role as community gatekeepers. Gatekeepers know the neighbourhood centre and its people, have influence, and add credibility and validity to the project by their acceptance to be involved. They can also be a disadvantage by erecting barriers, preventing access and effectively shutting the project down before it can begin. For example, a staff member from one particular neighbourhood centre told me ‘we don’t have any refugees here’ but sometime later another staff member provided access to two participants to be interviewed from the same neighbourhood centre. This may be a reflection of staff not being fully informed about the migrant background of their client group, or the length of time they had lived in Australia. Gatekeepers were often very busy people with little time for this research, or had difficulty identifying willing participants. At times I felt uncomfortable that I was putting undue pressure (although unintentionally) on certain gatekeepers and therefore ceased the connection.

It seemed to be challenging for gatekeepers to grasp the finer distinctions between different migrant groups. I needed to clarify that my target group was people who had recently arrived with a plan to settle in Australia long-term, not international students or migrants who had been living here for many years. Furthermore, some of the interviews that had been arranged led to little valuable information as the respondent either did not regularly attend the neighbourhood centre or had insufficient experience of the centre. As I was not involved in making the initial contacts with respondents due to ethical considerations, it was difficult to establish how many respondents were approached and declined to participate in the research.

Being reliant on referrals sometimes caused awkward and frustrating situations. For example, on one occasion I had made contact with a rural neighbourhood centre's Coordinator who indicated that group of new arrivals were regular attendants. On arrival at the neighbourhood centre I was taken into the English Language class and introduced to the class as someone who was there to conduct interviews and see whether they wanted to participate. To be asked on the spot without prior warning placed them in a difficult situation and no-one initially responded. I waited outside the room to avoid the impression of coercion to be interviewed, and after several minutes one person agreed to be interviewed and later referred three others of her class-mates to me. Being flexible and responsive to changing circumstances was important, as shown in another example where I had arranged to interview two mothers at a playgroup run by the neighbourhood centre. On arrival it turned out that the neighbourhood centre staff member had forgotten to confirm the interview with the women, and neither was present. Two other women who were approached by the staff member on the spot kindly agreed to participate in the interview, but only one of the interviews produced useful data for analysis.

Word of mouth was the most effective recruitment method. The use of fliers and posters (see Appendix I) with information about the research project and how to participate proved to be an unsuccessful strategy and only yielded two informants. Although posters were sent to all neighbourhood centres with the request to display them within their buildings, I was unable to know if in fact the posters were displayed. Posters also relied on the ability of new arrivals to be literate in English, which would have excluded those who were not.

One successful method to interview several new arrivals was the use of affinity groups. These groups are naturally occurring or established groups within a neighbourhood centre, such as English conversation classes. Affinity groups provided a comfortable and open environment in which participants could speak about their involvement in the neighbourhood centre. For the participants who felt hesitant or vulnerable about being interviewed individually, this provided a safe environment where a range of different views could be voiced and allowed me to gather information on why they attended the neighbourhood centres. This technique was also valuable as it caused minimal disruption to the neighbourhood centre, as the participants were attending the class or program anyway and did not require me to meet them at an alternative time. Furthermore, it provided an opportunity to observe the participants in their involvement within the neighbourhood centre.

Researching refugees and migrants requires extraordinarily special considerations and places demands on the researcher - known as the 'ouch factor' (Alty & Rodman, 1998, p. 275). The 'ouch factor' refers to certain experiences in the process of conducting qualitative research that cause a short, sharp shock to the researcher. This shock can develop into a chronic ache if not addressed early, by stepping back and reconsidering the options (Alty & Rodman, 1998; Liamputtong, 2007). As a practitioner working within the neighbourhood centre sector (Manager with 20 years of experience, and qualifications such as Disability Honours and Public Management), I had experience in working directly with vulnerable people of all ages from culturally diverse backgrounds, in both community and institutional settings. Although I was aware of the impact my role may have on some of the staff members and volunteers working in the neighbourhood centres, I did not consider the impact the research would have on me. One aspect of this research I was not prepared for was the emotional experiences and the mental impact of observing and interviewing some newly arrived people. This has been referred to in the literature as 'labour pains' or 'emotional labour'. Interviewing about sensitive issues can be distressing to the researcher; it can involve dealing with the participant's feelings about telling the story and the feelings involved in the research of hearing the story. This is known as subject distress because they have to endure and share the pain of their research participants (Liamputtong, 2007). The process of data collection was an emotional process and at times I felt it to be emotionally draining. Fortunately, as a part-time student I could conduct the interviews over a period of twelve months, as the time delay in between, provided an opportunity for a debrief and recovery, to gather my thoughts and provided a buffer for my wellbeing. I would often have a sense of helplessness and distress after hearing some of the new arrivals' stories, particularly those from refugee backgrounds who left traumatic lives behind. My feelings were often mirrored in those I interviewed. I would find myself feeling angry and frustrated for hearing the stories but unable to assist or change their circumstances. I began the interview stage of my data collection naively thinking I would be detached from the 'real life' experiences of the interviewees but soon learnt that I underestimated the effects that some of the interviews would have on my emotional wellbeing. I found myself on several occasions tearing up as I conducted the interviews and on returning to the confines of my car or home bursting into tears. On the other hand, my work experience gave me a sense of feeling helpful and offering advice to those who sought it. Advice on volunteering opportunities, where to seek assistance with housing and other daily life needs were

subjects that often came up in discussions. My peer group and fellow PhD students were an invaluable source of both emotional and practical support when discussing my research experiences. They would act as confidants and provide a supportive ear to debrief with and at times a shoulder on which to cry.

As a researcher undertaking work in a community setting it was necessary to consider my personal safety and what to do when faced with potentially dangerous situations during the data collection process. It was not only a consideration for the interviews but also me when it was suggested that interviews be conducted in a place that was comfortable and easily accessible. The location of the local neighbourhood centre or Community Centres SA offices was considered as other people would be present and it was a public space. I would always ensure I had my mobile phone close by and that I advise someone where I was going and approximately how long I would be. All but one of the interviews was conducted at the interviewees' local neighbourhood centre, it was conducted in a private home. At the time I remember feeling uneasy about the situation but I was advised that the interviewee would be meeting with a group of woman on that day and I was welcome to join them and conduct the interview after the group met. As an aside note I would not recommend conducting interviews in the private homes of people with whom you are not familiar, however in this case it was deemed necessary as the information supplied was important to my research.

4.5 Data Analysis

Interpretation involves making sense of the data and gaining an insight into what has been learnt (Creswell, 2007). In this study both the interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded using a small digital recording device. The recordings were then transcribed by me and a professional transcriber was engaged to assist in the transcription process. In order to validate the accuracy of the transcription each interview and focus group recording was listened to and compared with the transcript. The transcribed data was produced into Word documents that were then analysed using computer software program NVivo 10 to manage the data. Nvivo 10 enabled the data to be coded and analysed. The recorded data from the interviews and focus groups was then analysed using a thematic analysis framework. Thematic data analysis involves familiarisation with the data, flexibility, accessibility, mapping and interpretation of the data for the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Familiarisation with the data involved reading and rereading the transcripts until I

had a general understanding of the content and then searching for meaning and later patterns in the data. Important ideas and recurring themes were then identified and a thematic framework was developed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method involved open coding including identifying, naming, sorting and describing all the information contained in the transcripts to provide a better understanding of what the respondents were saying. More general thematic categories were then identified that fitted with the various aspects of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) and barriers to integration.

Findings are presented in Chapters 5, and 6 according to the themes that emerged from the interviews with new arrivals and neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers, along with information gathered during focus groups and site visits. Where extracts from interviews are presented from new arrival informants, they are represented by their first name (pseudonym) and the abbreviation NA. The staff informants are referred to using the abbreviation NHCC1 meaning neighbourhood centre coordinator, AW – Agency Worker, and Focus Group 1 participants, indicating the focus group they attended. The terms neighbourhood centre and community centre are interchangeable but for the purpose of this research the term neighbourhood centre is used.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methods used to investigate the role neighbourhood centres play in the integration of new arrivals into their local community. It has discussed the research design and the sequence of research steps, the field of investigation, the issues associated with undertaking the research, and the methods of data collection and analysis. This research has methodological foundations in social constructionism and comprises a staged sequential qualitative design. The qualitative design made use of several methods of data collection including a mapping survey, focus groups, interviews and site visits. The issue of validity and credibility were considered in choosing methods as well as the use of triangulation to verify the data.

The research design was not without its limitations stemming from the involvement of people in the design. Through the interactions with the neighbourhood centres, the Peak Association (Community Centre SA) and the staff members making the referrals for the new arrivals interviewed, decisions were made about which neighbourhood centres would participate and which new arrivals would be referred

to be interviewed and take part in the research. Guided by a social constructionist approach, the voices of the new arrivals were brought to the fore and, as a researcher, the final product reflects my interpretation of what was said. The approach to the research design proved fruitful in its ability to provide a rich set of data for analysis using thematic framework of analysis. The findings from the data collected will be discussed in the next two chapters of this thesis.

5 THE ROLE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES IN PROVIDING SETTLEMENT SUPPORT TO NEW ARRIVALS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter responds to the question of what role neighbourhood centres play in the settlement of new arrivals in South Australia. How do neighbourhood centres fit into the broader landscape of settlement services, and do they provide different services, or similar ones in different ways? The chapter explores these issues from the perspective of the neighbourhood centres' staff and volunteers, examining what they say and offer to new arrivals attending their centres. Secondly, it contrasts this with how new arrivals perceive the role of neighbourhood centres in the landscape of settlement services, how they use these services, what barriers they face in accessing them and their opinions of them.

Neighbourhood centres offer a vast array of services and programs (as indicated in Chapter 3.4.5) that can be accessed by the broader community, including newly arrived migrants. These programs aim to engage, include and empower participants. However, increasingly neighbourhood centres also offer specialist programs targeted specifically at newly arrived migrants. These particular programs are intended to support new arrivals in their settlement process and provide them with the tools and capacities to establish themselves in South Australia, and eventually become integrated into the broader community. As discussed in Chapter 3, inclusion is central to the self-understanding of neighbourhood centres, but integration is not part of their discourse. Given the large presence of neighbourhood centres in South Australia (103 in 2017) and their claims that they play a significant role in community education, engagement and empowerment, it is important to explore how effective they are in including new arrivals. Many neighbourhood centres offer programs in key areas that are identified as critical to successful settlement (integration), including proficiency in English language, education, employment, social connection, cultural knowledge, health, housing, safety and stability, rights and citizenship (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b).

This chapter examines data from a Mapping Survey of South Australian neighbourhood centres (see Chapter 4.3.1) to establish what programs and activities are offered by the centres, and how they are utilised by new arrivals. To explore the views of neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers, I draw on

information collected through focus groups, one-on-one interviews and site visits to five neighbourhood centres that see the inclusion of new arrivals as an important focus of their organisations. How new arrivals perceive the services offered by neighbourhood centres is explored through data drawn from the thirty interviews I conducted with new arrivals.

The underlying impression from the data is that some neighbourhood centre staff members perceive that the participation of new arrivals in the various activities and services automatically enables them to become integrated and contribute to their local community. This chapter discusses this assumption along with the types of support new arrivals receive from neighbourhood centres, the perceived barriers as identified by neighbourhood centre staff and by the new arrivals.

5.2 The Gap in Settlement Support Services for New Arrivals

Some new arrivals will make their way into Australian society quickly and independently without calling upon the assistance of settlement services. Almost all new arrivals however will have some on-arrival needs related to their migration experience. Some will only require information about how to gain access to Australian institutions and services, while others will require intensive support in the form of a caseworker to assist with accessing health services, housing and employment.

As explained in Chapter 2, the Australian government defines successful settlement in terms of new arrivals attaining self-sufficiency, a degree of personal identity and integrity and the ability to participate fully in economic, social cultural and political activities of Australia (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b). The ability to participate does not necessarily mean that a person does participate, or is integrated. The settlement experience of new arrivals varies according to a range of factors including English language ability and pre-migration education, employment and other life experiences. In addition, personal coping strategies, availability of family and community support, and the degree of understanding and exposure to the values or Australian culture affect a migrant's settlement (Jupp 1994).

The Federal Department of Social Services (DSS) offers a variety of settlement services for new-arrival migrants who are categorised as humanitarian migrants. These services are delivered in three key areas; The Humanitarian Settlement

Services (HSS), The Complex Case Support (CCS) and Settlement Grants Program (SGP). These settlement services are tendered for and delivered through a range of Nongovernment Organisations (NGOs) in each State of Australia (DSS, 2017).

The HSS program is provided for a period of 6-12 months for eligible new arrivals under the humanitarian program. Services include:

- meeting clients at the airport
- help with transport to their initial accommodation
- assistance with finding suitable longer-term accommodation
- property induction
- providing an initial food package and start-up pack of household goods
- assistance to register with Centrelink, Medicare, health services, banks, schools and an Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) provider
- orientation into life in Australia, including health, education, employment and Australian laws and culture (DSS, 2017).

All new arrivals have differing needs and pre-migration experiences; therefore not all services offered through the HSS are required by each new arrival. On exiting the HSS services it is expected that the new arrival will have the necessary skills and information to access mainstream community services and/or those offered through the Settlement Grants. It is anticipated that these settlement outcomes will be reached between six and 12 months of the new arrivals living in Australia. Exit from the HSS program is based on clients achieving clearly defined settlement outcomes (DSS, 2017). These include:

- residing in long-term accommodation (generally a lease of at least six months in length)
- links to the required services identified in their case management plan
- school age children are enrolled and attending school
- clients have understood the messages delivered through orientation and have the skills and knowledge to independently access services.

From 30th August 2013, the Australian Government placed restrictions on two groups of new arrivals, those being asylum seekers who are granted Protection Visas while living in the community on a Bridging Visa E or in community detention and those in community detention. These restrictions do not apply to

unaccompanied humanitarian minors or most people granted a Protection Visa while living in an immigration detention centre or facility. People on Bridging Visas and in community detention can access other settlement programs including:

- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) – provides interpreting services 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- Settlement grants (see below) – delivers targeted services to communities and locations in greatest need of settlement assistance
- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) – delivers up to 510 hours of basic English tuition to eligible migrants and humanitarian clients who do not have functional English
- Complex Case Support (CCS) program – delivers intensive case management services to humanitarian clients with exceptional needs.
- Torture and trauma counselling under the Program of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma, administered by the Department of Health and Ageing (DSS, 2017).

Once a new arrival has lived in Australia for six months and exited the HSS program they may be eligible for participating in the Settlement Grant Program (SGP). The purpose of the SGP is to provide support for humanitarian entrants and other eligible migrants in their first five years of life in Australia, with a focus on fostering social and economic participation, personal wellbeing, independence and community connectedness (DSS, 2017). The degree to which these outcomes are met is determined by the levels of support agencies can provided, the levels of funding they receive and the ability of the new arrival to participate in the programs provided.

Eligibility to Settlement Grants funded services is restricted to those permanent residents who have arrived in Australia in the last five years as:

- humanitarian entrants
- family stream migrants with low English proficiency
- dependants of skilled migrants in rural and regional areas who have low English proficiency
- selected temporary residents (Prospective Marriage, Provisional Partner, visa holders and their dependants) in rural and regional areas who have arrived in the last five years and who have low English proficiency.

- newly arrived communities which require assistance to develop their capacity to organise, plan and advocate for services to meet their own needs and which are still receiving significant numbers of new arrivals (DSS, 2017).

Temporary visa holders, such as skilled entrants or students, who enter Australia for a specific and time-limited purpose are not eligible for services funded under the Settlement Grants. They are expected to be supported by their sponsors or make their own provision for employment, accommodation, and access to health and other services while they are temporarily in Australia.

The third category of settlement-funded services, the CCS program, delivers specialised, and intensive case management services to eligible humanitarian entrants with exceptional needs that extend beyond the scope of other settlement services, such as the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program and Settlement grants (DSS, 2017).

As indicated above, the intensive settlement support provided to some categories of new arrivals ceases in the first 6-12 months from time of arrival, unless individuals are fortunate enough to be referred to services offered by Local Councils and NGOs that have successfully applied for Settlement Grants funding. Such programs offer additional assistance for up to five years for example, community mentoring schemes that match volunteers to new arrivals. This leaves two kinds of systemic gaps (Galligan, Boese, & Phillips, 2014) in service provision which could potentially be filled by neighbourhood centres: one pertaining to new arrivals who are not eligible for settlement programs, and the other pertaining to local areas where services are not provided because organisations have not applied or not been successful in their application for Settlement Grants.

The roles of the Federal and State Government settlement services (often delivered through NGOs) are juxtaposed with the role that neighbourhood centres play in relation to services for new arrivals (see Table 1).

Table 1:- Settlement support programs available to new arrivals.

Service Program Area	**Commonwealth**	**State**	**Neighbourhood Centres.** NB - not all neighbourhood centres provide these services
English Language classes	Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS), Adult Migrant English program (AMEP) 510 hours delivered in SA through TafeSA. Additional 400hrs for eligible new arrivals	ESL programs in schools for new arrivals	Mainstream Adult Community Education (ACE) Language, Literacy and Numeracy classes, conversation classes
Adult Education Skills Training		TafeSA vocational education and training	Mainstream foundation skills Adult Community Education programs
Employment assistance	HSS Employment Job services Australia SGP- Job ready training	Mainstream employment programs	Mainstream pathways to employment training, volunteers programs
Health wellbeing	HSS Program Assistance, Case management support	Mainstream health services. Targeted intervention initiatives	Mainstream health prevention and recreation programs, community gardens and information sessions
Housing	HSS, Short term assistance- 3 months Settlement Grants Program (SGP) Access and support of private rental tenancies	State provision of housing, homeless services	References and referral to mainstream services
Financial	Centrelink payments HSS, SGP funded programs	State Gov't funding provided to Nongovernment Organisations (NGOs) to deliver mainstream courses and counselling	Mainstream financial counselling, budgeting programs, Tax Help programs
Transport	Settlement grants programs – NGOs		Community transport training. Some Local Gov't accessible Community Bus services for Transport disadvantaged groups
Family and social	HSS, SGP, Unaccompanied minors	Child and Youth Health, mainstream programs. family support, parenting	Programs and services for aged, crèche, child care, volunteer support
Emergency – clothing, food	HSS Funded services. On arrival household goods.		Provision of emergency food, clothing and basic household groups
Youth Settlement Services	SGP Funded services casework services, arranging suitable group activities leadership, education, employment readiness, social skills, community links, homework support groups	Mainstream youth services	Homework clubs School Holiday programs Recreation programs
Support for Ethno-specific Communities	SGP- fostering the ability of new and emerging communities to connect with each other and more established communities, appropriate services	State not for profit peak bodies, for example Association of Burundian Communities SA.	Ethnic Specific groups meet within neighbourhood centres

Losoncz (2015) highlights a systemic disconnect between the Australian government resettlement policies that emphasise economic participation and embracing Australian cultural values as the principal criterion for successful settlement, and the pathways provided to achieve these goals. New arrivals are expected to be able to access mainstream services and employment after only a short transition period, which does not sufficiently take into account the disadvantage of humanitarian migrant groups. For many South Sudanese migrants in Losoncz's study, the Australian system – the protocols and processes that govern Australian institutions - remains a labyrinth which they find difficult to access and navigate even years after their arrival.

The terms settlement, integration and resettlement are often used in the literature interchangeably to mean one and the same. Some authors state that resettlement occurs and therefore integration when the new arrival's life has return to normal (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003). Successful settlement into a new country has been defined in terms of new arrivals obtaining a degree of self-sufficiency to participate in social and economic life of the community, to retrain and develop new skills and gain recognition of qualifications (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b). This definition connects to Ager and Strang's (2008) markers and means of achieving integration including stable housing, employment, education and health. However, the social connections of bonds, bridges and links (social capital) facilitated by language, cultural knowledge, safety and stability are also key components of integration. Social connection occurs when the new arrival is prepared to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without having to lose their own cultural identity, and the host society is welcoming and responsive to new arrivals and mainstream public institutions are willing to adapt to the needs of a diverse population. As Fozdar and Hartley (2013b) explain, successful settlement is defined as integration and the process of integration is influenced by the environment of the receiving host society as well as those settling, in this case new arrivals. As highlighted in Chapter 2, integration should be seen as a two-way process: The ability of new arrivals to integrate into a new society relies on their effectiveness to tap into existing mainstream community networks and on the willingness of the host community with resources to overcome barriers, for example, language barriers, by offering interpretative services or translations of written materials. The host community assists integration also by seeking an understanding of the cultural backgrounds and circumstances of the new arrivals (Strang & Ager, 2010) and ways to communicate and interact with them.

Settlement assistance is often required beyond the initial stages and it is here where the role of neighbourhood centre programs comes into play. Omidvar and Richmond (2003) suggest that the settlement process continues throughout life. While it has been noted that Australian settlement services for new arrivals are international best practice (Barnes, 2001; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Taylor, 2004), there is scope for improvements including better coordination between service providers (mainstream and specialist), and less fragmented and more holistic service provision. There is a tendency for agencies to focus on deficits rather than embracing and harnessing the capabilities of new arrivals, often seeing them as passive recipients of services rather than empowering them to build social networks within the wider community, not solely within their own ethnic groups (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Pittaway et al., 2015). Better linkages between the Australian government settlement programs such as HSP and SGP and mainstream community organisations such as neighbourhood centres could result in better settlement outcomes because it would enable more sustained support of migrant and refugee settlers throughout their life course. This is particularly important for those who are from cultural backgrounds that are markedly different to the Australian culture, and those who have experienced forced migration due to war, social unrest, disrupted education, torture, trauma, political oppression or who may have lived in refugee camps for extensive periods (Taylor, 2004). The Commonwealth government and funded settlement agencies speak of settlement in terms of timeframes and new arrivals pass through various phases of adjustment along a continuum. Galligan et al. (2014, p. 103) say it is dynamic, more nuanced, and should focus more at the local community level. 'Settlement should be conceptualised as an individual person-centred process with inputs from funded services and local community groups.'

Participating in local community activities is a strategy used by community-based organisations to assist in social engagement and demonstrates commitment by new arrivals towards their new community and indicates successful settlement. Many new arrivals experience a sense of distrust towards government agencies resulting from traumatic experiences in their country of origin or during their immigration journey (Colic-Peisker, 2009). This can be heightened by language barriers and cross-cultural misunderstanding. For these reasons, Colic-Peisker (2009) suggests that community-based services, as well as informal support networks and exchanges of information, are crucial to getting used to living in Australia. As Majka (2001) notes, those charitable and not-for-profit organisations such as

neighbourhood centres are filling the gaps left by other service providers. In addition to eligibility gaps already mentioned, Galligan et al. (2014) suggest that these organisations can be more flexible by using volunteers as informal supports, offer skills development courses and opportunities for volunteering to develop work-ready skills. Based on the overview in Table 1, the coming sections of this chapter will identify the role played by some neighbourhood centres to fill these gaps.

5.3 Neighbourhood Centres' Responses to Settlement Needs of New Arrivals

Informants in this research (neighbourhood centre staff, volunteers and new arrivals) gave two reasons why new arrivals were attending neighbourhood centres in South Australia. Firstly, they came to Neighbourhood Centres because they were no longer supported through federally funded settlement programs, or were not eligible for these programs, and needed further settlement assistance. Secondly, neighbourhood centre programs and services offered additional or alternative ways to gain employability skills, learn English or develop pathways to employment through volunteering opportunities, as well as a range of cultural and social initiatives that can assist in gaining a sense of belonging. Additionally, new arrivals often lack the necessary skills including language, local knowledge, customs and strategies relevant to accessing services. Neighbourhood centres therefore play a linking role in directing and introducing new arrivals to the appropriate service. Neighbourhood centre staff also indicated that they provided referrals to other service providers including NGOs, churches, TAFE SA (Technical and Further Education), Job network providers, Housing SA, doctors and schools.

The Mapping Survey (described in Chapter 4.3.1) asked neighbourhood centre staff to indicate if they provided support services to new arrivals and what kind of assistance was provided. Of the 103 neighbourhood and community centres across the State surveyed, just over 50% responded. It is likely that those neighbourhood centres used by new arrivals were over-represented in the responses. Ten neighbourhood centres gave specific information about the nature of the supports. They reported the greatest number of enquiries from new arrivals for assistance is the areas of parenting support (N=10), followed by employment (N=8) and advocacy (N=8). The Mapping Survey indicated that neighbourhood centres mainly referred new arrivals to other service providers for health matters (N=15), housing assistance (N=15), advocacy (N=12) and employment (N=11). In some of the neighbourhood centres, staff and volunteers indicated they were the point of contact and the first

line of resources for new arrivals needing to access and navigate the complex formal social service system of Australia. This confirms findings elsewhere that neighbourhood centres provide a non-stigmatising, soft entry point into the service system (Brown & Barnes, 2001; Yan & Lauer, 2008b). Riessman and Hallowitz (1967) as cited in Izmir et al. (2009, p. 6) have described the main role of neighbourhood centres as 'psychosocial first aid station' where 'centres provide the opportunity for anyone in the neighbourhood with whatever kind of problem or trouble to walk in and talk immediately to someone about his/her concerns and to get some degree of help'.

A theme that emerged from the discussion with staff and volunteers was that neighbourhood centres perceived their role as 'filling the gaps' in government funded settlement programs. Although these programs provide a significant level of support to some categories of new arrivals, many still find it difficult in connecting with the wider community. Furthermore, new arrival informants pointed out that they had a limited amount of time in which to undertake the wide ranging settlement support services delivered to them, some of which only became relevant after they were no longer available. For example, parenting issues, intergenerational tensions and post-traumatic stress did not appear until sometime after the period of government-funded settlement programs ceased. Others argued that their visa category rendered them ineligible for these services. New arrivals are often considered as a homogeneous group, which is not the case as they do not experience the same set of circumstances or have the same pre-migration experiences. Some come from urban environments, others from rural communities, some have faced torture and trauma, others poverty and hardship. These differences, and the different resources new arrivals bring with them, impact on their choices and their settlement experience.

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) argue that the philosophy and policies of the agencies providing settlement have a strong impact on new arrivals' settlement experience. They compare active and passive resettlement styles, whereby active styles advocate focus on the strengths and capacities of individuals to achieve emotional and social wellbeing, and passive styles see individuals mainly as victims who are in need of external support. The focus is on clinical intervention rather than establishing a normal lifestyle through the inclusion into the structures of the host community, employment and social life. As argued in Chapter 3, neighbourhood centres are philosophically attuned to community development, empowerment and

skills development. Their focus can therefore be described as aligned with an active rather than a passive style of service delivery.

New arrivals interviewed for this study explained why they chose to attend their local neighbourhood centres for assistance programs. Although some were aware of the NGOs that administered Settlement Grant programs, they were unable to access these due to a lack of regular transport, or because the desired services were only available in the City of Adelaide, requiring them to travel great distances. The style in which these services are delivered also made some new arrivals feel uncomfortable, or it did not suit their needs. For example, the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) - that provides up to 510 hours of Basic English tuition to eligible migrants and humanitarian clients who do not have functional English - is delivered through TAFE (the designated training provider) in a classroom-style setting with large numbers of people attending with differing levels of education and literary skills. Some women interviewed indicated that their inability to access these classes was due to a lack of child care, being unable to travel alone due to cultural practices, or because information about mainstream and specialist services such as those provided by AMEP was offered in a format they did not understand or were unable to read.

During focus groups and interviews, neighbourhood centre staff expressed the view that current settlement service programs provided by government departments and the NGO sector were not adequately meeting the settlement needs of new arrivals. They suggested that new arrivals seemed more comfortable in seeking support from local rather than centrally located service providers. One focus group participant used the analogy ‘that people use a pharmacist instead of the doctor, and they use a community centre instead of an agency as they [community centres] are less threatening’ (Focus Group 2 staff participant).

A neighbourhood staff member gave an example of how they helped new arrivals navigate the education, medical and housing systems by taking them to the service providers, introducing them to key persons and staying with them until the appointment was booked. This staff member portrays the centre as an easily accessed point of informal help which does not discriminate:

> One day I was opening the centre on a Friday and I saw this man and I said hello and he wasn't able to speak English well and I asked him if he spoke Farsi and we talked and he wanted to enrol the boys in the kindy but then

> he started coming here because I said, 'any time come here for help'. Every now and then he comes here and asks for help, he feels comfortable. Although I can't help with everything I can refer him elsewhere, he sees me as a support worker for him. There is a gap in the service, something missing in the services; he might not have been a refugee so there are no services. They [centre users] see a connection, and I am trusted (NHCC5).

In this quote, the fact that the neighbourhood centre staff member could speak Farsi did not only enable communication but also engendered a sense of comfort and trust. Another neighbourhood centre staff member suggested that new arrivals lacked trust in institutions and saw the neighbourhood centre as a conduit that they could trust more readily:

> People come here when they don't know what to do or where to go and I can't see how that's not my role where it helps, where else are they going to go? Who do they trust? (NHCC1).

As the first port of call, neighbourhood centres were often not able to provide the services sought by the new arrivals, but were able to facilitate access or accompany them to other institutions that would be able to do so. Thus, one important function of neighbourhood centres is to provide a soft entry point into the mainstream service system for new arrivals. This involved providing assistance with the completion of forms for Centrelink (an agency of the Australian government Department of Human Services which provides welfare payments), booking medical appointments, contacting schools on behalf of parents who had limited English, and accompanying new arrivals whilst searching for suitable housing. The literacy demands placed on new arrivals are now more prolific and complex than they were in previous decades. Centrelink and other government agencies increasingly use on-line forms which create a barrier for new arrivals with low levels of literacy (Thompson, 2015). Neighbourhood centres can assist here by providing not only English classes but also access to computers to complete these requirements with the assistance from staff and volunteers.

However, there was some debate among interviewed neighbourhood centre staff about the extent to which they were responsible for filling the gaps in settlement services, and how far their responsibility should stretch. One neighbourhood centre staff member spoke of the extensive time commitments in assisting new arrivals that exceeded what she considered to be her regular scope of duties.

> We often provide bus tickets for others, we do a lot of informal case work and advocacy for people, things we are really not resourced to do but we just do, we support people as much as we can with what we have (NHCC7).

This staff member described her role as that of a quasi-caseworker, and while pointing out that they were not resourced to do this work, she felt it was the right thing to do. This commitment to caring for others was shared by most staff members interviewed for this research, even though the official job description of a neighbourhood centre employee does not state case work (see Chapter 3.4.3 for role of neighbourhood centre staff description).

A neighbourhood centre Family Support Worker interviewed for this research, who is funded to run programs on how to parent in Australia, explained that she often receives referrals from government and other service providers to do a range of other tasks that are not within her role:

> I do get referrals. I am funded to do parenting programs, [but I also] give information, advice and family supports, and housing letters and things like that. I might work with the family re: Visa application; take them to ARA and sit with them to make sure they understand what's happening (FW1).

In this quote the interviewee identifies a number of examples where she was filling a service gap. Conversely some neighbourhood centres surveyed did not view their role as providing settlement support to new arrivals. The staff members of these centres considered new arrivals as special needs cases requiring specialist services and organisations, however most agreed there was no justification to refuse assistance when approached. The majority of neighbourhood centres researched said that new arrival participants assumed it was the responsibility of staff members to provide settlement assistance, while staff members perceived new arrivals as just another group of people in the community that neighbourhood centres serve. However, all conceded that the presence and needs of new arrivals were changing the roles and focus of many neighbourhood centres in South Australia.

Apart from filling the gaps in settlement services and responding to individual needs of new arrivals, neighbourhood centres' main mode of intervention is through a wide range of skills development programs which will be discussed in the following section.

5.3.1 Personal Skills Development Programs for New Arrivals

Education and skills development can enable new arrivals to formalise their existing qualifications and skills, which are often unrecognised in Australia, and gain new skills to access employment. Education and training are also valuable means by which to build self-esteem and confidence among new arrivals. Although not integration in itself, education is an important pathway to integration. Participating in courses and programs can enable new arrivals to become self-sufficient for themselves and their families in South Australian society (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Jackson et al., 2013; Lejukole, Rainbird, Blewett, Every, & Clarkson, 2012). The learning opportunities provided through programs such as Adult Community Education (ACE) courses delivered through neighbourhood centres lead to self-development outcomes, improved personal and social skills, increased self-esteem, self-confidence (Sandercock & Attili, 2009) and greater autonomy (Miralles-Lombardo, Miralles, & Golding, 2008). An example of this is provided by Sula, a Bhutanese woman who had lived in a refugee camp her entire life before coming to Australia.

> You can't go outside of that boundary [of the refugee camp]. But we do have education, education and like a hospital and basic treatment. They are inside the refugee camp and we have no mobile phone. We have no electricity and we have nothing. We are like dark place, a dark life…. Um, god blessed me to come here. I got a chance to get a good life. I got a new life in Australia I think. Ah, its important things is like if some course, they [staff] will tell me about the course, I will do that course. That will help me for the learning something about getting job. Ah, and like talking and conversation, that also help me to get a job and confident….when I come to Australia I was not able to talk like this and now I am confident to talk and that will help me when I'm doing interview time. (Sula, N/A).

Sula describes her life in the camp as restricted and dark, though elementary education and health services were available. In contrast, life in Australia holds new opportunities and she trusts the neighbourhood centre staff to guide her to adult education classes that enable her to achieve her goals. By participating in courses, Sula also increased her English language skills and gained the confidence to seek employment.

A number of Australian studies of neighbourhood centres have highlighted their potential to be providers of adult community education to culturally and linguistically

diverse migrant groups (Golding et al., 2008; Kimberley, 1998; Rooney, 2004), but this research argues that this is already occurring. The new arrivals indicated that extended lesson time afforded by staff and volunteers at a neighbourhood centre was not provided elsewhere, and enticed them to participate in courses there. These findings are also in line with the work of Schuller, Brasse et al. (2002) who contend that learning in an informal supportive environment is likely to contribute to further learning. The mixing of new arrivals in a group assists with social integration and wellbeing, and if the environment is right, can stimulate the learner to learn, gain confidence and build self-esteem.

In answer to the question 'Do refugees/migrants newly arrived to Australia in the past five years attend your Centre?', 46 centres in the Mapping Survey indicated that they did. The survey also asked neighbourhood centres to identify the top 20 programs attended by new arrivals (Table 2).

Table 2:- Top 20 programs attended by new arrivals ranked highest to lowest

Rank	Program
1.	English Language Classes
2.	Computer classes
3.	Children's programs
4.	Literacy and numeracy
5.	Driver's education
6.	Employment skills
7.	Cooking
8.	Exercise/fitness
9.	School holiday activities
10.	Crèche
11.	Playgroup
12.	Support group
13.	Health/ wellbeing
14.	Life skills
15.	Gardening
16.	Budgeting/finance
17.	Meals service
18.	Arts/Crafts
19.	Parenting skills
20.	Men's specific

Source: Mapping Survey (2012).

Eighty per cent of the surveyed neighbourhood centres indicated that English Language classes were in greatest demand among new arrivals, which indicates the importance of language as a facilitating factor in integration (Ager & Strang, 2008). Other highly sought-after classes included computer skills (an aspect of literacy),

and driver's education classes (related to transport as a facilitating factor), and employment skills, all of which assist in making new arrivals self-sufficient. Crèche and children's programs were particularly important to women as these services enable their access to the above-mentioned courses, and offer opportunities to mix with the broader community and become less isolated.

Data collected by Community Centres SA in 2013 indicated that enrolments for Adult Community Education classes were split 70/30 female to male across neighbourhood centres in South Australia. Staff in this research reported that participation by male new arrivals was low or non-existent in their neighbourhood centres. The main reason given was that many women arrived in Australia unaccompanied or with children only. Certainly, some of the humanitarian new arrival women indicated their husbands had died as a result of conflict and war in their home country, or became separated during their journey to Australia. But there are other reasons for the low attendance levels among men. Another reason given for low rates of male participation included men actively looking for work during the opening times of neighbourhood centres, (between 9 am and 4 pm daily on average). The focus group discussions revealed that male new arrivals approached neighbourhood centres to establish whether it was safe for their wife to attend, rather than for themselves. They accompanied their wife the first time before the women could attend alone, a practice reported by staff at both a northern and southern neighbourhood centre. Some staff indicated that through their involvement with women they built credibility and some of the men over time would start to participate as volunteers. Young men were reported attending a western neighbourhood centre to participate in recreation programs including soccer and music. Staff suggested that attracting males required them to seek out the interests of the male participants, and the ability to have males on staff was seen as an advantage.

An alternative approach used by a rural neighbourhood centre to attract male participants was to encourage intergenerational programs. One such example given by a particular rural neighbourhood centre was a program that included young men from the nearby detention centre and children from the local primary school working together on woodwork activities. Other types of programs attractive to men included men's sheds (social interaction occurs between men whilst undertaking wood work activities), hospitality training and employability skills programs. This is consistent with the findings by Community Centres SA which reported an increase in male

participation rates in the areas of skills development programs, such as those provided through Adult Community Education courses, volunteering, and through participation in men's sheds and through pathways to vocational education training courses (O'Neil et al., 2013).

The Mapping Survey revealed that the neighbourhood centres provide a vast array of programs and activities that varied from centre to centre but many had similar core programs. These included children's programs (playgroups, school holiday programs), skills and personal development classes (Language, literacy and numeracy, Adult Community Education), health promotion (e.g. dietary or quit smoking information sessions and mental health first aid training), physical activity (yoga, tai chi, keep fit), employability skills development (resume writing, interview skills), men's sheds, contracted programs (such as those provided through State Government) and programs for special interest groups (people with a disability, elderly). According to neighbourhood centres staff and volunteers, the only programs that were offered specifically to new arrivals were English Language classes and children's playgroup activities; all other programs and activities were open to the wider community. Participation in these programs thus provides opportunities for new arrivals to build their skills while connecting with people outside of their own family and social networks.

When I asked if the programs offered at a southern suburbs neighbourhood centre were inclusive to everyone who attended the centre, the manager replied:

> Like I said, I think that the programs become more accessible as we engage people from different cultures and so we are constantly trying to review them to make them more accessible because we know that if it's more diverse, then everyone is gonna benefit more, you know (NHCC4).

This quote demonstrates that through offering programs to diverse cultural groups, the neighbourhood centre staff assumed that they are committed to including all groups of people. Separate groups for new arrivals were established, but preferably they were included in the generic program, such as playgroups, cooking classes, and adult education programs. It was evident from the data analysed that the programs and courses accessed by new arrivals in South Australian neighbourhood centres were inclusive in the sense that they were able to participate in any program or service that was currently offered. But neighbourhood centres did not offer programs that resulted from consultation with new arrivals, nor did they include their input into the development and facilitation of their courses. In other words, the

neighbourhood centre staff expected new arrivals to access their current courses and programs in their generic form, even if the new arrivals were not comfortable with the format or received very little support from staff. To promote a more inclusive environment for new arrivals and the existing members of neighbourhood centres, the values and practices of all who attend should be respected. To assist with the integration of new arrivals, the programs on offer to participants should extend beyond the use of translated materials into the language of the communities that they attempt to engage. As will be shown in Chapter 6, some neighbourhood centres recognised this and started to serve culturally diverse foods, offer time and space for prayer, opportunities to share their knowledge, or provided women-only information sessions, which enhanced their inclusiveness**.** These practices also help educate those of the host communities to become more aware of the new arrivals' cultural heritage and the difficulties that some face in adapting to their new life in South Australia.

5.3.2 The Role of English Language Programs

As stated before, one of the few programs that neighbourhood centres specifically target towards new arrivals are those that teach English as a foreign language. Significant funding is provided by the government for the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), but it remains an ongoing concern to researchers and those working with new arrivals that a quarter of all humanitarian entrants do not complete the free English classes (Fozdar and Hartley, 2013b). Secondly, the 510 hours of English classes funded by the Federal Government under the AMEP are inadequate for many new arrivals to reach a level of English needed to obtain employment, confidently access services and establish close links with members of the wider community. Some new arrivals are not eligible for AMEP due to their reasons for migrating to Australia; for example, those who moved to Australia as a result of marrying an Australian citizen or to reunite with family. Neighbourhood centres in contrast place no restrictions on eligibility and can support this group.

English language proficiency programs were highlighted as a major area of need by neighbourhood centre staff members, focus groups, and new arrivals. Many new arrivals that come to Australia are from countries that do not speak English as their first language. The majority of new arrivals interviewed for this study indicated they attended neighbourhood centres primarily to increase their ability to speak English. The motivations to learn English ranged from more functional reasons such as gaining employment, gaining recognition of their overseas qualifications, and being

able to go shopping without assistance, to more social reasons such as being able to communicate more effectively with their now English-speaking children, meeting new friends, speaking like an 'Aussie' and being accepted by others.

The academic literature connects the ability to speak and understand English to many factors of integration including education, employment, and social connections (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Hugo, 2011). Not being able to speak English is a barrier to economic and social integration (Ager & Strang, 2008) and to full participation within the South Australian community (Social Development Committee Parliament of South Australia, 2013). The Australian government views English proficiency as a precursor to participating in the social and economic life of Australia (Losoncz, 2015).

Neighbourhood centres across South Australia offer Language, Literacy and Numeracy classes, English as a Second Language classes and conversation cafés. English language classes have been delivered through the neighbourhood centres of South Australia since their inception, and now, increasingly, including a service catering for new arrivals along with others of non-English speaking backgrounds. Classes can be accessed by anyone over the age of 18, regardless of their residency status, and are supported by crèche facilities in the majority of neighbourhood centres in South Australia. Neighbourhood centres are able to offer these classes at low cost or free of charge because they are delivered by volunteers and supported by qualified Language Literacy and Numeracy trainers. Funding for these programs is provided through the State Government Department of State Development through the Adult Community Education program. New arrivals are attracted to these courses because they offer assistance with listening and spoken English, understanding Australia accents and lessening their accent to be understood in Australia. The courses offered by the neighbourhood centres help prepare them for sitting the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, which is required by many employers in Australia, and the citizenship test. Good English is necessary to communicate during job interviews, write job applications, and most workplaces require their employees to be able to read and write reports, and understand work and health safety instructions. Even new arrivals with tertiary qualifications that are recognised in Australia have been found to still require additional English language skills to gain employment (Lejukole et al., 2012).

It could be assumed the longer a person resides in Australia, the more proficient their English language skills would become, but this is not necessarily the case.

New arrivals, especially women, may be prevented from accessing AMEP when eligible because they are caring for their family, children, and elderly family members. They risk becoming socially isolated as time progresses, and feeling increasingly trapped and embarrassed by their lack of English skills, as Hewagodage and O'Neill (2010, pp. 34-35) explain:

> Problems of cultural disorientation, geographic segregation, lack of supportive financial assistance, family constraints, and personal problems, such as, opposition of husbands to their wives enrolling in courses of learning were all found to contribute to the participants feeling anxious and embarrassed about their situations.

In addition to language courses, English language learning also takes place in other neighbourhood centre programs. Sula's example in the previous section already suggested this. As one neighbourhood centre staff member explained, new arrivals attending a sewing group were gaining English language skills as well as practising their sewing skills:

> Women are coming for sewing classes but it's not about the sewing, they wouldn't have had the connection with their wider community if they didn't come along. They are appreciated for what they do with their sewing, they bring their children and it helps them with their English, finding friendships and making clothing for their children. Their confidence grows (Focus Group 1 participant).

A new arrival similarly argued that attending the sewing group at her neighbourhood centre had improved her ability to communicate with her children at home in English. She explained the benefits of attending the neighbourhood centre sewing group with her daughter, who acted as an interpreter.

> Alright, she said that normally she just comes here for sewing but then it also helps her to learn English, when she communicates with people, she learns new words. She comes home and asks me lots of new words, and I have to explain it to her (Lema/NA).

Hewagodage and O'Neill (2010) stress the social nature of learning a language. They argue that people are more likely to learn when they can see a clear purpose and use for the language, and when the learning is embedded in meaningful communication. They advocate that English language programs should facilitate community participation and encourage interactions between learners and native English speakers. In this way, language programs can provide pathways to local events and opportunities to socialise within the wider community.

Flexible timetables for classes, a nurturing environment, possibly same-gender classes for women, and flexible teaching delivery assist learners in gaining English skills (Hewagodage & O'Neill, 2010). Neighbourhood centres are perhaps uniquely placed to respond to this call. The learning sites themselves are flexible with language learning taking place in a variety of environments including sewing classes, cooking courses, community garden spaces and café areas. English language classes provided through large institutions can be said to discourage learning. Hidi and Nancy, both new arrivals, described the AMEP classes offered at TAFE as providing limited contact time, only two hours per week, which did not allow them to make much progress even if they completed their full entitlement of hours.

> When I first came to Australia I went to for a month at TAFE not enough for 2 hours. … I went to TAFE too many people at all different levels many people many different, some English very good, some just ABC. I come here to Rita. Teachers very better for us (Hidi/NA).

> I learnt English at TAFE and I learn 510 hours. Later someone tell me to come here I like to learn English better. Learn English here is very slowly and maybe if I had English every day I could remember. TAFE too many people. But here teacher slowly helps, happier here, I like (Nancy/NA).

Hidi found the varying degrees of English proficiency of students in the TAFE class made it difficult for her to learn. Nancy, who had limited or no schooling in her native Afghanistan, found the class difficult to follow. The allocation of 510 hours over 6-12 months of language training is inadequate for people like Nancy who have not undergone formal learning prior to coming to Australia, and for those illiterate in their first language (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b). In contrast, the neighbourhood centre provided a more conducive environment, where teachers are patient, friendly and helpful. Furthermore, there are no limits to the number of classes a person can take, and tutors are willing to adjust their delivery to the needs of participants and offer one-to-one support in a non-threatening, non-competitive environment. This gave both women a happier learning experience.

Hidi became quite emotional when she spoke of her desire to learn English:

> I want to learn more English, make some friends, we still have many things we can't do. Friends help me, like shopping if they go to Adelaide, she will ask me what I need and she will get it for me. Before I had kids I went to Adelaide every week, but now I always stay home, nowhere can go,

> it's boring….Because of the kids nearly all the time at home, then go to shopping then I begin English Class and then because at all day at home do house work, kids do their own thing. When talking with other people my English can get better (Hidi/ NA).

Hindi explains how a better grasp of the English language can lead to a wider social space and new activities. She sees English proficiency as opening new opportunities for her to make friends and leave the home to do other things. Even taking the step to learn English at the neighbourhood centre takes her outside the confines of the home and brings her into contact with other people.

The interview and focus group data indicate that some of the English language programs available through neighbourhood centres are limited to those who have some Basic English language skills. For those that speak no English at all, conversation groups provide a bridge to English classes. One such group is *Chai and Conversation* developed in a southern neighbourhood centre, where volunteers meet with new arrivals and engage in informal conversation over morning or afternoon tea. The only rule is that everyone speaks English and the use of interpreters is discouraged.

While English language, literacy and numeracy are a key to entering the labour force, and thus attract the most interest among new arrivals, the next section discusses other ways in which neighbourhood centres assist new arrivals on their pathways to employment.

5.3.3 Providing Pathways to Training and Employment Opportunities

The neighbourhood centres researched in this study were all providers of training and skills development courses through Adult Community Education programs. According to the Community Centres SA Mapping survey in 2009, over 90% of South Australian neighbourhood centres were active in this realm, and many of these centres have developed partnerships with TAFE SA and other registered training providers to offer accredited certificate-level training opportunities to their participants. New arrivals, particularly from refugee backgrounds, are often assumed to be under-skilled and lack qualifications, but in reality many new arrivals have skills and qualifications that are underutilised and unrecognised (Hugo, 2011; Lejukole et al., 2012). Improving the processes of skills assessment and recognition would speed up the economic inclusion of new arrivals and bring benefits to the Australian economy (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a). Neighbourhood centres play a role

here as they offer bridging programs that pave the way into further education and employment.

The new arrivals who took part in this research had diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from university degrees (13 participants) to no schooling (four participants). Most of the university educated participants were the partners of skilled migrants and of either Chinese or Indian backgrounds. Seven women had attended high school in their country of origin, five of whom had completed their final year. The four women who had not completed any schooling originated from Afghanistan where women were denied education under the Taliban regime. Seven new arrivals had completed a certificate-level qualification, and four of them had achieved this at a neighbourhood centre. One of the research participants had lived almost her entire life in a refugee camp in Bhutan and was not able to indicate the level of education she had completed there. Attending the neighbourhood centre had encouraged her to enrol in a certificate-level adult education course in Children's Services. Regardless of their education level, most participants had not been in paid employment since arriving in Australia. However, five of them were engaged in some form of volunteer work within a neighbourhood centre.

Volunteering in a neighbourhood centre was mentioned by staff as one way in which new arrivals could apply their existing skills and gain work experience in Australia. For example, new arrivals with experience in working with children could undertake accredited training in Children's Services through TAFE partnerships with neighbourhood centres. This involved working in the neighbourhood centre crèche through the recognition of prior learning process and being assessed on the job. As many neighbourhood centres were running crèches, some new arrivals were later employed by the neighbourhood centre where they had undertaken their training. These women became the success stories of neighbourhood centres and their achievements were proudly recounted by staff. One staff member from a western suburbs neighbourhood centre expressed pride in the role her centre played in a Nigerian woman gaining employment. She had started as a volunteer in the centre's crèche, went on to undertake a Certificate 1 in Food Preparation and then a Certificate 3 in Children's Services (nationally recognised and accredited vocational education and training), and later gained employment in the Child Care facility at the neighbourhood centre where she had undertaken her training. The woman was described as feeling connected to the neighbourhood centre that had supported her in getting a qualification and then paid work. This case study illustrates not only the

success of a determined woman but also the difficulty many new arrivals experience in gaining access to work. For the new arrivals interviewed in this study, the ability to find work was a direct result of the close connections forged by volunteering and training opportunities on offer at their neighbourhood centre.

One research participant, Tida, explained the connection between study and employment in the following way:

> Um, actually when I was looking for job over here (in Australia) um I found out that if you have experience over here, it may be easier for you to get a job over here, or if you are studying or working it is easier. So since I didn't study over here or I didn't have any experience, it was hard for me to get a job over here so I was struggling a lot (Tida/NA).

Other research has identified work experience as one of the main stumbling blocks for refugees seeking employment in Australia (Hugo, 2014b). Employers perceived new arrivals lacking job-ready skills, particularly 'soft skills' related to 'Australianness' (the ability to understand the Australian workplace culture and how to 'fit in at work') (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Losoncz, 2015). Although few arrivals interviewed in this research spoke of direct discrimination in obtaining employment due to not having 'soft skills' or not being Australian enough, one woman described how she altered her résumé, taking out some of her qualifications so she was not perceived as over-qualified for the position. Tida alludes to discrimination in her comment about her accent not being 'right'.

> My experience of the Centre is good and I've completed one year on the 22nd, so yesterday Melody gave me a lunch. That was very nice I thought. See I appreciate all they have done for me and I think that nobody does this much for volunteers but Merry does because that was very motivating for me and if something happens then you feel like coming back and yeah, it's, it was motivating and I told her thank you so much for grooming me, thanks for giving me the first opportunity to work here. Initially it was hard for me because I always think that maybe I need to improve my English and not, maybe my accent is not quite right (Tida/ NA).

Tida was describing the support and encouragement she received from the Coordinator. She was appreciative of the additional effort she received in gaining work experience with the offering of volunteer work. Despite having a Masters qualification and experience in India this new arrival was not able to secure employment interviews or work experience in South Australia.

Staff discussed the difficulties some new arrivals faced with undertaking the interview process, not knowing what the employer required, or understanding the interview process itself. Neighbourhood centre staff members offered suggestions as to how they helped new arrivals in their quest for employment such as; suggesting new arrivals enrol in courses such as *Win that Job* that enables new arrivals to gain the necessary skills in resume writing, along with interview coping techniques (by partaking in mock interviews with class mates). Other examples included offering work experience onsite at the neighbourhood centre within the areas of reception duties or as kitchen staff. Neighbourhood centres thus provide valuable public and community spaces for new arrivals to informally practice skills that Australian-born members of the host community take for granted, including answering a phone, using the internet, email and undertaking reception duties, resume writing and what to wear to work. Neighbourhood centre workers also mentioned that they utilised their community links to network with other agencies and employers to connect job seekers from refugee backgrounds to employment opportunities.

Social enterprise is a means of self-generated income that has become increasingly popular amongst neighbourhood centres in South Australia over the past ten years as a means to diversify their income sources, with 26 centres stating their commitment to social enterprise activities (O'Neil et al., 2013). Social enterprises utilise market-based approaches to address either social, cultural, community or economic issues. Social enterprises aim to support marginalised people find ways out of poverty whilst offering an income stream for the neighbourhood centre, as well as business skills and an income for the new arrivals. Women in particular benefit from participating in social enterprises, both economically and vocationally, as the community development worker in a northern neighbourhood centre explained. The women shared the profits of their labour with the neighbourhood centre which in turn buys more materials and new equipment. According to the staff member, the participants gained self-confidence and a small income from the sale of the things they produced:

> They've been selling some of their things at the market so yeah. Well it's really good for them because many of them don't have very much confidence and don't think that their work is of any worth.... for some it's the first time they've ever had work, the first time they've ever had any money (AW3).

In summary, neighbourhood centres see themselves has having more flexibility than other service providers to offer opportunities such as volunteering and social enterprises to new arrivals to help them navigate their way into Australian society and employment. The education and skills development courses can also enable new arrivals to formalise their existing qualifications and skills which are often unrecognised in Australia, along with acquiring new skills to assist in gaining employment.

5.4 Barriers to Accessing Neighbourhood Centres

Although neighbourhood centres see themselves as soft entry points to Australian institutions and pathways to integration into the wider community, they are not accessed by all who could benefit from their services. There are various reasons for this offered by the neighbourhood centre staff and new arrivals who took part in this research. While the barriers to accessing neighbourhood centres may be lower than those that have been identified in the literature in regard to integration more broadly, they are of a similar nature. Common barriers - practical and emotional - identified in the literature include low awareness of available services, difficulties in accessing them, accelerated modernisation, social isolation, lack of English language, inability to gain employment, and a sense of being an outsider (Ager & Strang, 2008; Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008). New arrivals are often not aware of neighbourhood centres and what they can offer. Nor are they helped by the fact that most information about neighbourhood centres tends to be provided only in English. The same factors that prevent new arrivals from accessing other services, such as transport, family responsibilities and financial resources, also affect their participation in neighbourhood centres. Furthermore, the very concept of neighbourhood centres is not familiar to most new arrivals and neighbourhood centres are still developing the cultural repertoires they need to make new arrivals feel comfortable. As the sections below will show, there are some similarities and also some differences in the perceptions of these barriers emerging from the interviews with staff and centre users.

5.4.1 Lack of Awareness

One significant barrier to new arrivals accessing neighbourhood centres and the services they offer is that they have limited or no knowledge of their function and service provision. They are not alone in this – previous studies have shown that most South Australians have little knowledge of neighbourhood centres and the services and programs they provide (Clark, 1982; Paltridge, 2005; Rooney, 2011).

This lack of awareness in the wider community of neighbourhood centres is partly due to the limited promotion that occurs, which in turn can be attributed to inadequate marketing funds and human resources (Kimberley, 1998). As Partridge (2005 p. 22) found in her study of SA neighbourhood centres, the lack of publicity 'contributed greatly to their invisibility in the community', to the extent that they are often mistaken for Neighbourhood Watch services (where neighbours keep an eye out for each other's property in an effort to prevent crime).

New arrivals who took part in this research mentioned an additional factor that affected their access to neighbourhood centres. Of the thirty new arrivals interviewed, more than two thirds stated that neighbourhood centres were an unknown concept in their home country. Going to a neighbourhood centre is foreign to them, and seeking assistance beyond the family or kinship network to resolve problems and issues in their lives is unfamiliar. One African participant, Guy, expresses this unfamiliarity and limited understanding of neighbourhood centres:

> You don't know about it, most people they know that neighbourhood centre only for elderly people who become old, they don't think they are for everybody, and that is why people are not coming. But now they started to know that the neighbourhood centre is not only for elderly people it is for everybody to come and learn, if you want to join activity you come in. The problem is that the information is not disseminated to people, they didn't know (Guy/ NA).

In addition to finding out what a neighbourhood centre does – offering 'activity' for anyone who is interested – Guy also revised his assumption that it was a home for the elderly. This indicates that neighbourhood centres are associated with people in need or with vulnerability by the public. As the quote below indicates, new arrivals often find out about neighbourhood centres when they no longer need help:

> Community Centres I think hmmm, I don't know many who come to Australia they don't know actually about this Community Centre and what they offer. After, when they understand, actually they don't need much help. Maybe when migrants come to Australia, they have some; there are some booklets for them where if they have this Community Centres, that they can help, maybe it would be more helpful for migrants (Mel/NA).

How to convey information to new arrivals while they do need help is a challenge. Some Local Government authorities have information booklets, as Mel suggests above, but only on request, presumably due to the limited quantities produced. This

seems to defeat the purpose, with new arrivals needing to be aware that such a resource exists in the first place.

The inability to speak and read English was described throughout the interviews with new arrivals as a barrier to finding out about neighbourhood centres and the services they offer.

> So it's definitely that they are thinking these people don't speak my language, how can I explain myself, I don't know what to ask, I can't, there's no one I can talk to. So that's probably the biggest barrier (NHCC6).

The majority of written information distributed by neighbourhood centres is in English and very few centres translate their promotional materials and program timetables into other languages. Of those interviewed, three staff members indicated they translated their material into other languages including Farsi and Arabic and this had increased the numbers of people attending their programs. Most neighbourhood centres rely on their own promotional activities, usually through newsletters and fliers produced in-house by volunteers. Only a few neighbourhood centres use professionally produced promotional materials and even fewer advertise their services in local newspapers or online. None of the new arrivals interviewed for this research found out about the neighbourhood centre they were attending through newsletters and flyers.

The limited research available on how people find out about neighbourhood centres indicates that written information has less impact than word of mouth or referrals. A Victorian study of Community Services 1990 cited in (as cited in Paltridge, 2001) found that most people found out about services by word of mouth (28%) or referral from other agencies (20%), which also involves personal communication. At that time the local newspaper was also an important source of information (20%), followed by other written information such as posters or fliers (16%). Today the Internet plays a greater role, and new arrival participants who were confident in using the Internet found out about neighbourhood centres while searching for locally available training courses online. Culturally sensitive marketing practices involve the use of non-English language and non-mainstream marketing channels, advertising in a variety of languages, multilingual newsletters and program guides distributed to migrant community groups and organisations (Forde, Lee, Mills, & Frisby, 2015). These were deemed desirable but unmanageable by most neighbourhood centres due to lack of available funds.

Neighbourhood centres interviewed for this research were uncertain whether more publicity would address the information gap. One staff member suggested that the lack of knowledge among new arrivals about neighbourhood centres could not be addressed through written information as many were illiterate in English and sometimes even in their native language, and struggled with information overload particularly during their early settlement period:

> If there is any kind of barrier or a block then it's too hard and they won't attend. Sometimes the amount of information provided is so overwhelming it's too much and new arrivals can't navigate their way through it (AW1).

This staff member went on to describe Australian western culture as task-oriented while many new arrivals come from societies built around relationships. Rather than handing out a flier and simply saying 'come along', new arrivals needed personal introduction and accompaniment, or 'hand holding', to feel encouraged entering an unfamiliar space. This may be a simplification of the processes through which new arrivals target their efforts to engage with Australian institutions and organisations. However, there is clear evidence from this research that most new arrivals found out about neighbourhood centres through word of mouth, sometimes through professionals (teachers, refugee support workers), but mostly through other new arrivals:

> They come to us because they either know a friend, know a tutor; someone from a particular community is then telling others from that community. People know about us through word of mouth, through their friends, receive newsletters, when they attend English Classes, neighbours tell them to come along (Focus Group 1 participant).

> I have made a lot of friends, I see them at the other Centres or at the shops, and I tell other people to come when they were new to Australia from Middle East. If they speak the same language, I tell them that it's friendly and it's safe, I tell them a lot about the community centre (Ann/NA).

> It was literally my friend who, within a week of being here, we were staying at the same, you know mutual friends' house and she just said, look, I'm going to playgroup today, do you want to come along and I'm like, okay, I've never been to playgroup, let's just go, why not (Sue/NA).

> Through one of the parents at the school actually, would you like to come to a Centre, what is that? (Sam/ NA).
>
> Oh my friends, she told me that there is a group here, you can come here for some entertainment kids will enjoy there

> and I started to come here as well as in Children's Centre (Savan/ NA).

It is not easy for new arrivals to find out about neighbourhood centres, and as indicated in the above quotes, neighbourhood centre staff members are unsure how to address the information gap. However, there are strong indications that neighbourhood centres rely in part on the recommendations of existing users.

5.4.2 Referral Processes and Communication Barriers between Organisations

Given the importance of oral communication, some neighbourhood centre staff indicated that they spent time attending local networking gatherings with other services providers to promote programs through word of mouth. Staff reported that although this method of promotion was time consuming, they considered it a valuable and worthwhile task to reach those in need of their services and programs. According to neighbourhood centre informants, referrals to neighbourhood centres come from a variety of institutions including from other community service agencies, schools, health services, and in various forms, either by phone, email or in person. It was often a concerned individual at these institutions, rather than formalised referral processes that triggered the connection. For example, one coordinator from a regional neighbourhood centre explained how a migrant couple from Bangladesh had found its way to the centre:

> Biggest issue is getting people into us and knowing we exist…. For example, the Bangladesh couple that came in the other day. They went to Centrelink for help, they aren't eligible for Centrelink but the social worker there she felt for them and wanted to help them and rang us (NHCC 2).

In this case, the couple being ineligible for social benefits meant that the government institution they initially accessed was unable to provide assistance, and they were directed to the neighbourhood centre to 'fill the gap'.

However, staff also indicated a lack of coordination between settlement service providers and neighbourhood centres. Fozdar and Hartley (2013b) suggest this is as a result of the competitive funding model for service provision that encourages a disjointed and competitive framework rather than a holistic one. But a lack of knowledge and understanding of each other's role also can hinder coordination of

efforts to meet the needs of new arrivals. It was of concern to neighbourhood centre staff that referral processes needed to be improved.

During the focus group discussions, some neighbourhood centre staff expressed their exasperation with settlement agencies that referred new arrivals to neighbourhood centres but didn't accompany them or introduce them to the staff. Personal introduction was seen as important to gain greater understanding of the new arrival's circumstances, why they needed assistance and often to act as a translator if English language was lacking. Furthermore, some staff argued that more regular communication between settlement service providers and other agencies working with new arrivals, and neighbourhood centres would be desirable:

> Referrals by settlement services are limited, a lot is word of mouth, I've tried to work with some agencies but it's limited. The way in which the staff work, networking, someone rang yesterday and they got my name and said I know R (staff) she'll help you out, that personal referral stuff is important, at least if you have a name and ask for someone they (new arrival) can feel comfortable (NHCC6).

The communication that does exist between organisations is based on personal connections, and when staff move or retire these links are broken, and new connections have to be established. As a result, new arrivals suffer because they are not aware of the resources on offer.

> More than often they don't know about us, we try to get the message out there that we offer many programs and services. Perhaps the funding body should get the word out about Neighbourhood Centres. We have tried approaching the TAFE English Language classes that run the 510 hours of compulsory English classes for New Arrivals but staff change and they don't get the message across. New Arrivals often say that there is nothing for them after TAFE then they meet at the bus stop and someone says come with me and they take them to the Centre, they are not referred by organisations that could send them to us (Focus Group 2 participant).

In this quote, the neighbourhood centre staff member tried unsuccessfully to establish a connection with the AMEP provider so that the new arrivals who had exhausted their allocation of free English classes could be informed of the English language classes offered by her neighbourhood centre. Staff members also felt that they would offer a better service if they had more information about the new arrivals at the time of referral, especially if they had little English.

Staff indicated they were not always provided with information about new arrivals' circumstances when they were referred to their centre, and the language was often a barrier when determining the individual's support needs. An example was given by a literacy educator at a northern suburbs neighbourhood centre who described how she had to adapt to new students just arriving (unannounced) to class without a formal referral. Rather than turn them away, she welcomed the new students to class and interviewed them at the end of the session ready for the following week. This tutor was aware that some new arrivals do not understand the need to book into a class. For some new arrivals the courage it takes to walk into a neighbourhood centre for the first time may have their confidence damaged if those conducting the classes are inflexible in their approach to new comers. It also raises issues of the inflexibility of some services offered through neighbourhood centres, despite a claim to be open to all. The inability by some neighbourhood centres to adjust to the haphazard referral system of some agencies saw new arrivals becoming disgruntled, feeling unwelcome and not returning, indicating a discrepancy in the level of service provided across neighbourhood centres. If a clear pathway of referral is established this would aid in a smoother transition for new arrivals.

5.4.3 Barriers to Participation

New arrivals have a strong desire to engage with their new country and local community but can experience barriers to participation in doing so. The sorts of barriers to accessing neighbourhood centres identified in this study included lack of knowledge and understanding of the functions of a neighbourhood centre, barriers to transport, financial barriers, language barriers and personal circumstances including limited child care.

The barriers to participation in mainstream community activities identified in the literature (Hugo, 2011; Jackson et al., 2013; Lejukole et al., 2012) were mainly in relation to the Australian experience of employment including low-level English proficiency, limited qualifications, lack of opportunities, networks and work experiences, limited knowledge of the Australian workforce and misinformation provided by government agencies about employment opportunities and mental health issues. These barriers have also been reported by researchers in other countries; for example, the investigation by Lauer and Yan (2010) in Canadian settlement houses. Despite presenting themselves as more open and more flexible service organisations neighbourhood centres still put up barriers, sometimes

inadvertently, to those members of the community that they were trying to reach - usually the most vulnerable and isolated members of the community including new arrivals.

Language and unfamiliar cultural protocols can be a barrier, as words and phrases have different meanings, especially to those new arrivals with a limited understanding of English. Neighbourhood centres often use certain phrases and words in their promotional materials to describe programs that can push people away, or be misunderstood. Using colloquial language can unintentionally create an 'us and them' situation, where those who do not understand the meaning of the words can experience a sense of exclusion or a sense of not belonging (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). One example mentioned at a focus group with neighbourhood centre staff are the labels attached to informal conversation groups, such as *Coffee, Cake & Chat.* While the neighbourhood centre sought to convey the sense of informality and leisure of these conversation sessions, new arrivals reported thinking that this referred to a café and did not associate this with an activity which could help them learn English. Others reported misunderstanding *Bring a plate to share* as meaning they were required to bring an empty plate to share, not a plate of food to share with the group. The cultural meaning of these concepts is quite specific and local, and even new arrivals familiar with the English language might not grasp them and find themselves in an embarrassing situation. Focus group participants were aware of these pitfalls of colloquial language and discussed them in great length, but seemed at a loss as to how this could be rectified.

Misunderstanding English conversation sessions with a café also brings up the issue of financial barriers, as new arrivals might assume that they needed money to participate in *Coffee, Cake & Chat*. As mentioned earlier, the majority of new arrivals participating in this research that used a neighbourhood centre were on low incomes and had to budget their finances carefully. Some neighbourhood centre staff took on the role of one-to-one budget officers with some centre users to help them work out how they could access more courses and, more broadly, how to set up a bank account or access financial assistance from government and nongovernment institutions. Most neighbourhood programs and services are provided at zero or low cost (usually less than $5) to participants, but even this can prove difficult to afford for some. Many neighbourhood centres are willing to waive fees or financial contributions but they have to also cover their costs. As one staff member points out:

> Not being able to pay is a barrier that somebody doesn't attend, people are asked for a gold coin donation if they can't pay the fees but this soon adds up across a week if they are attending multiple times throughout the week. Staff need to let people know that they know they have made a contribution but don't need to pay every time they attend as this could be prohibitive to their continuing (NHCC7).

While waving fees and being flexible with contributions on an individual basis might be well intended, some staff members were also conscious that course participants may experience shame at being unable to pay for classes. For this reason is it a common practice for neighbourhood centres to wave participation fees. Others offer new arrivals the option to pay when they can afford it, and at some centres new arrivals are offered the option of volunteering at the centre in exchange for attending of a course.

A further barrier to accessing services commonly experienced by new arrivals is geographical distance and lack of transport. Neighbourhood centres are usually located in close proximity to public transport, and some neighbourhood centres also are served by the Local Government-funded Community Bus (a door-to-door low fee service provided for eligible residents). Despite this, the cost of public transport prohibits many from making the journey to their nearest neighbourhood centre. According to neighbourhood staff interviewed for this study, most new arrivals who attend their centre lived within walking distance, which suggests that those who live further away are at risk of being isolated.

Other research found that women from non-English speaking backgrounds are more transport disadvantaged and are less likely to drive and this can result in social isolation (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Hewagodage & O'Neill, 2010; McMichael & Manderson, 2004). This might be due to a number of reasons. One is that inexpensive accommodation tends to be located further away from service centres and less well served by public transport. Secondly, newly arrived migrants first need to learn how to navigate the public transport system, and some reported reluctance to travel alone. Eleven of the female participants interviewed for this research relied on others (such as family or service providers) for transport to and from their local neighbourhood centre. One Afghani woman explained that she needed someone to accompany her on public transport. This may be due to cultural reasons, as travelling alone is not deemed appropriate for women in some cultures, but it could also be a protective measure. It is known that women face the possibility of being harassed or attacked in public by strangers, particularly if they are visibly identifiable

as Muslims or migrants on the street or on public transport (Colic-Peisker, 2009). Unsurprisingly, there is a widespread desire to learn how to drive, as is evident from the popularity of *Getting your Ls* program (a driver's education program to gain the Learner's driving permit) offered by some of the neighbourhood centres. This program is less expensive than commercial driving schools and there are long waiting lists.

The fourth barrier that was frequently mentioned by research participants, both neighbourhood centre staff and new arrivals, also affects women more than men, and relates to childcare. Many of the women from new arrival populations that attend the neighbourhood centres are the primary caregiver for young children, and some are sole parents. These women are recognised by neighbourhood centre staff as being particularly at risk of becoming isolated in their homes and unable to connect to the wider community. The lack of suitable childcare or crèche facilities is therefore a major barrier for them to participate in neighbourhood centre courses and activities, but conversely, neighbourhood centres that do offer some type of childcare can contribute significantly to their social integration.

Of the 52 neighbourhood centres that responded to the Mapping Survey, 13 indicated that a crèche was part of the services they offered all users. Crèche is a free service provided by neighbourhood centres and is generally staffed by trained volunteers. To offer child care facilities the neighbourhood centre requires government registration to ensure adherence to standards and regulations regarding staff qualifications and child-to-staff ratios. Only seven of the 103 neighbourhood centres operating in South Australia are registered as fee-for-service child care facilities. Privately run child care was described by both staff and new arrivals as expensive and often not available at short notice. Informal child care arrangements involving family supports or friends are widely used by the mainstream population but new arrivals are often without these methods of community support (O'Neil et al., 2013).

According to research participants, many people, both new arrivals and mainstream users, rely on the crèche services to be able to attend neighbourhood centre courses. One participant, Sue, explained that without the crèche she would not have been able to enrol in the employment skills course she was undertaking at the neighbourhood centre:

> I mean it was fantastic with the crèche, because I couldn't have done the course without the crèche being there (Sue/ NA).

A crèche can provide an opportunity for women to have their children well cared for whilst they participate in adult community education classes, workshops and information sessions. As well, it can offer women some respite from their child/children and the opportunity to socialise with other adults, and at the same time give their children opportunities to interact with other children. It is not always possible within the family home environment for women to find space and personal time away from small children, as one new arrival explained:

> If I don't come here, I don't have anyone's support then. It would be very difficult. And there are no places and no people ....So this is a good support isn't it, this coming here is a fabulous support. I think that's all for me because I come here, we have babysitter and we are, we have lunch together and we are sometimes um, speak together and say about something and it's good (Terry/ NA).

Terry alludes to the isolation experienced by stay-at-home mothers without support, who have 'no places and no people'. The crèche at the neighbourhood centre acts as a pull factor that takes her out of the house and brings her into contact with other people, allowing her to pursue her other interests whilst still being in the same space with her children knowing that they are being well cared for.

Neighbourhood centre staff mentioned the initial reluctance of some new arrivals to use crèche services, which they attributed to cultural factors. As one staff commented, 'this thing of day care or going off is a white or westernised concept, it's not in the cultures of those coming' (NHCC3). There may also be other factors explaining the reluctance of some new arrivals to leave their children in the care of a person unknown to them while attending a class. For example, experiences of separation from family members haunt many humanitarian migrants, and some may have been separated from their children. However, once trust was established and new arrivals saw that their children would be well cared for, crèche facilities were embraced by new arrivals as a positive feature of neighbourhood centres.

5.5 Addressing the Barriers to Participation

As seen in the previous section, new arrivals experience both passive and active barriers to their involvement in neighbourhood centres. Some of these barriers are being addressed through internal measures, for example, by offering free crèche

services, waving fees or arranging transport to the centre. However, the structural and cultural barriers are more complex and require networking and bringing new elements into neighbourhood centres. This section discusses how some neighbourhood centres have sought to address the lack of communication between service providers by developing community partnerships, and how these contribute to linking social capital. Secondly, neighbourhood centres have identified the use of bilingual and bicultural staff and volunteers drawn from new arrival groups as an effective strategy to increase the involvement of new arrivals in their programs and services.

5.5.1 Community Partnerships

The potential for South Australian neighbourhood centres to grow and develop, and to meet the changing demands of the communities in which they work, is threatened and constrained by the broader funding environment in which these organisations operate. As discussed in Chapter 3, neighbourhood centres work with limited and often insufficient, non-recurrent funding. They experience increased pressures including managerial demands, along with increased costs associated with legal, accountability requirements and insurance. The funding environment in which neighbourhood centres operate is reported to be short-term project based with little or no support for long-term ongoing conventions. This is unrealistic, and is placing increased burden on the smaller neighbourhood centres to constantly apply and account for funding and its outcomes. The more programs, projects and groups that a neighbourhood centre provide the more time is spent managing, administering and reporting on them, and this is exacerbated when the projects and groups have multiple funding sources, as each will require its own accountability (O'Neil et al., 2013).

The current funding model for neighbourhood centres in South Australian has seen the introduction of competitive tendering by the South Australian Department for Communities and Social Inclusion. The move to three-year funding cycles with a preference to fund larger organisations such as Council-managed facilities is threatening the viability of smaller independently managed neighbourhood centres. The inconsistency in funding can also result in the inability to attract and retain suitable staff, resulting in uncertainty in the continuation of services and programs and can cause issues with the continuity of the relationships that had been formed between vulnerable and isolated group participants (Aldred et al., 2004; Paltridge, 2005; Sandercock & Attili, 2009). With these increasing financial pressures, some

neighbourhood centre staff members feel unable to cater for the additional demands of the community including new arrivals.

Resourcing neighbourhood centres has been an issue since their inception. The new funding model requires a collegial approach to engage in formal resource-sharing partnerships to enable neighbourhood centres to work with those most in need in their communities. There appears to be a difference in attitude across the sector - some find that the funding environment offers opportunities; others find it restrictive and inhibiting. This has to do with staff attitudes, levels of training and cultural awareness and the governing body at the helm (Local Government, Church based, independent) of the centre that may or may not have a desire or agenda to work with new arrivals.

Some neighbourhood centres clearly demonstrate their ability and confidence in working with new arrivals. All neighbourhood centres are operating in the same funding environment, so why are some able to be responsive to the needs of new arrivals yet others are not? Some centres have the capacity to be flexible and responsive to shift priorities and resources as new community needs emerge. They have the capacity, through staffing, resources and infrastructure, that can respond to emerging issues and opportunities. The success or failure of any organisation (with all things being equal) usually comes down to the people involved and the effort and commitment they put in. Leadership is a vital ingredient (Jackson, Jatrana, Johnson, King, & Kilpatrick, 2012, p. 19; Sandercock & Attili, 2009, pp. 75-76) and how neighbourhood centres cope with the continual challenges faced with limited recourses often comes back to management and the people in leadership roles. If the person employed to run the centre sees his or her role as nothing more than keeping the doors open, ticking the boxes of funding requirements or maintaining the status quo, not challenging the staff with new ideas or offering new initiatives to those who require extra services such as new arrivals, then the community loses out.

To be effective in working with new arrivals, neighbourhood centres need to network, form partnerships and share resources with each other and across service types. Discussions with neighbourhood centre staff indicated the importance of localised initiatives and community partnerships in the development and implementation of services and programs to support new arrivals. In the five centres observed for this study, it was evident that these partnerships were across nongovernment sectors as well as the three tiers of government, along with small

and large community organisations, universities and businesses. In interviews and focus groups, staff identified a range of partners including the Australian Refugee Association (ARA), Migrant Resource Centre, Lutheran Community Care, Baptist Care FUSE program, Salvation Army, the Bhutanese Community, the Muslim Women's Association, Flinders University, local real estate agents and local government.

As indicated in the literature on linking social capital, discussed in Chapter 2.3, assisting new arrivals to make social connections, community organisations including neighbourhood centres have to step up and provide linkages to enable new arrivals to access the wider community. Linking capital (Woolcock, 1998) is defined by Szreter and Woolcock (2004, p. 655) as the 'network of relationships between people who are interacting across institutional power and authority'. Linking individuals with institutions can develop into linked networks between people and local service providers such as neighbourhood centres, and government representatives that facilitate the exchange of information, build capacity and promote sociability. Networking across organisations was discussed as a linking strategy used by neighbourhood centre staff for referring new arrivals as well as receiving referrals for new arrivals into the neighbourhood centres. These examples indicate the types of partnerships pursued by some neighbourhood centres and other agencies and identify an important finding of this study. This contrasts with the earlier finding by Paltridge (2005) that neighbourhood centres had weak networks with other agencies. This research validates that the neighbourhood centres visited have evolved, developed strong partnerships and are adopting an external orientation to enable them to become greater contributors to social capital (Onyx & Bullen, 2000) and have a more visible presence in the wider community.

Illustrations of community partnerships formed by neighbourhood centres included; - A western neighbourhood centre partnering with Australian Refugee Association (ARA), the local Council and the Bhutanese community to arrange training for women who experienced violent behaviours from their teenage children. The program set up *Who's in Charge,* a parenting group run across eight weeks with intensive sessions for parents to work through strategies to deal with the issues of family abuse.

Staff in a southern neighbourhood centre spoke of them conducting professional development and training sessions for neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers. Training provided knowledge of various new arrivals groups, types of visa

categories, cultural norms, and circumstances leading towards displacement. These programs provide knowledge and experiences of educating the neighbourhood centre sector on people from refugee and migrant backgrounds (Sidhu & Taylor, 2009).

The Muslim Women's Association and a north-eastern neighbourhood centre, linked with the local health service to aid in the referral process for women requiring assistance with women's health issues. Other examples conveyed were Blue Light Discos (a dance program for teenagers conducted by the local Police) in conjunction with the neighbourhood centre and the Sudanese community. A staff member told of situations where young Sudanese members of the community feared the Police and did not understand the relationship staff had with them. Over time, through their interactions at the Blue Light Discos, the young people have come to know that the Police have a relationship with the centre and they are not to be feared.

Another western neighbourhood centre staff spoke of examples of partnering with the local High School to provide afterschool workshops for young African men. The schools reported issues of violence and inappropriate behaviours, so the program was set up over a 10-week period to deliver information on sexual health, domestic violence, and consumer rights. Traineeships were also established, offering young people from Vietnamese and African community organisations opportunities for community development work within the neighbourhood centre.

A rural neighbourhood centre established a community garden at their centre in partnership with the Country Health Service. The centre coordinator explained her role in networking with the local industries and job network providers to encourage new arrivals to attend the neighbourhood centre with the aim of growing vegetables for their consumption. Through the community garden program, new arrivals practised their English language skills by bringing along a recipe and were encouraged by staff to create healthy meals with the produce they grew. The coordinator explains that the process was reliant on the relationship which staff built with external agencies and industry.

> We have worked with Country Health and we have a monthly cultural lunch where people bring a recipe and they translate the recipe and learn the health focus. There is a lot of industry in Murray Bridge, mushroom farm, abattoir and Big W. People come to work in these industries as refugees, we are trying to link with the Employers I go with DEWR and job network agencies,

> all the conversations are happening but nothing has started as yet. Very much personality driven I worked at TAFE now I work at the Centre and it just happens to be the right time to start something (NHCC10).

The neighbourhood centres staff members are seen as activating their own linking social capital by the referring agencies as trusted professionals helping to create opportunities for interaction between new arrivals and the host community members. This kind of activity has been described as boundary crossing, or moving between the internal domain of the neighbourhood centre and the external domains of the wider community and other service providers (Jackson et al., 2012).

Living in Australia courses, provided in partnership with funded Settlement Support agency Baptist Community Care, delivered orientation sessions and bus tours for new arrivals to familiarise them with the local council region. Tours were provided using the Council community bus, and lunch was catered for by the neighbourhood centres' volunteer lunch program. Neighbourhood centre staff indicated new arrivals were more likely to use local services if they were first shown locations and introduced to key contacts within the local community and at the neighbourhood centre. Participants attending such sessions have provided feedback to the Settlement worker that they found the tours both practical and informative and that they gave them a better understanding of their local Council and what it could offer them.

In regional towns, where fewer specialised settlement services exist and communities are smaller, the neighbourhood centres tended to have a broader view of their roles compared to metropolitan neighbourhood centres. Neighbourhood centre staff took on formal linking tasks and worked in collaboration with local government and industry bodies. An example of a regional neighbourhood centre supporting new arrivals was the Advancing Whyalla program, developed in conjunction with the City of Whyalla and the Economic Development Board of Port Augusta. This program developed a partnership between the coordinator of the neighbourhood centre and the Migration Officer located in Whyalla. The Migration Officer, through her dealings with industry and businesses in the area, identified a need for assistance with the skilled migrants arriving in Whyalla for employment, but were reported as leaving soon afterwards due to being unhappy and dissatisfied with their new town.

> An employer would ring us and say, look I've got a family coming out from Manilla, here's their email address, here's their contact numbers. They need help finding accommodation, need to do tours of the town to show them where the shopping centres were, all that. To help find accommodation maybe (NHCC2).

The program involved neighbourhood centre staff taking groups of women for a walk around the local area to acquaint them with what was available. Staff described themselves as 'link workers'. They identified the needs of the newly arrived participants attending their centres and used their local knowledge of the services, shops and agencies that could provide new arrivals with the goods or services they needed. This work is not typical of metropolitan neighbourhood centres but was mentioned by a rural neighbourhood centre staff member as being a common occurrence where the coordinator took on a wider role to support families with matters of accommodation, shopping, and assistance in navigating their way around the town.

These forms of linking social capital discussed above provide access to information, resources and support in the local community beyond the programs and services within the neighbourhood centre (Leonard & Onyx, 2004). These methods of linking are described by Falk and Mulford (2001, as cited in Jackson et al., 2012) as enabling leadership where community leaders require two forms of social capital internal communal and external linking social capital to assist in new arrivals making social connections.

Interagency trust and cooperation has been a cornerstone of community service work (Sidhu & Taylor, 2009) and that of neighbourhood centres. Partnerships have become a means for neighbourhood centres to secure scarce resources, whether it is knowledge, trainers, use of facilities, or staffing. Partnerships between neighbourhood centres and other organisations have been demonstrated to fill identified gaps in service delivery for new arrivals (see section 5.2). Sidhu and Taylor (2009) argue that it is the nature of tendering within the multicultural service sector that has diluted the collaborative spirit of partnerships through increased competitiveness and contractual funding arrangements.

5.5.2 Bilingual / Bicultural Staff and Volunteers

Discussions with neighbourhood centre staff members highlighted the importance of having bilingual or bicultural staff working within the neighbourhood centres. Earlier Australian work by Guinness (1998) and Canadian research by Yan and Lauer

(2008b) suggested that when staff and volunteers speak the languages of the new arrivals, it helps them to access mainstream services. A familiar spoken language is considered an important cultural factor in creating a sense of belonging for people, evoking a 'warm sensation' to be among people who can understand what you say and what you mean (Ignatieff, 1994 as cited in Antonsich, 2010, p. 648). Bilingual/bicultural staff were seen as the most important aspect of effective service provision and the main reason why clients from refugee and migrant backgrounds chose to attend certain community based organisations over others (Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008). Information about services provided, newsletters and fliers translated into languages other than English can be a significant contribution to make new arrivals feel at ease. In the quote below, a neighbourhood centre staff member explains how having bilingual staff in the centre creates a more welcoming environment for new arrivals:

> We offer crèche so that makes it a whole lot easier to come. The crèche worker speaks Farsi, we get a lot of people from Afghanistan and Iraq, so that makes it so much easier to communicate with the crèche worker…. They feel comfortable coming here because they feel that I am not Australian as well, and I ask them if I can help them. We often make appointments for them, I call around and I get them to go where they need to go. I am from a CALD background I came here as a religious refugee many years ago. I know one small thing can change your life for better or for worse. I know when you come out and someone approaches you and you feel comfortable and you are given the opportunity to participate. It's everyone in our Centre everyone has the patience…. I see this place as a refuge for some people (NHCC9).

This staff member starts by explaining how being able to speak their own language at the neighbourhood centre makes new arrivals feel at ease. But equally important is the understanding staff bring to the refugee condition, or the experience of leaving the home country and becoming a new arrival. She argues that bilingual staff and staff with migrant or refugee backgrounds are more likely to have this understanding which helps to establish a feeling of acceptance, and perhaps even belonging, in the neighbourhood centre. Interestingly, this staff member uses the term 'refuge' to describe her centre, where staff and volunteers cultivate a welcoming place where new arrivals can feel at home in an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile environment. Speaking your own language is an important aspect of this sense of home and refuge. The quote below reaffirms this:

> We don't have one at the moment, but when we had Farsi speakers at our reception, you just watched the fear come out of people's eyes when they were able to, you know, they were dialoguing well in English, but to be able to explain their story in a much quicker, easier, simpler way, the relief of that. So I just think having volunteers from people's groups just makes every program more accessible and it does make people, integrate with the [mainstream] community far quicker (NHCC4).

Using bilingual/bicultural staff from partnering agencies can also assist neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers in gaining insight into new arrivals' experiences. They can also provide new arrivals with timely and current information on services and supports made available to them. It is also seen as essential for bilingual/bicultural workers to operate in community organisations in order to engage new arrivals in consultations and program planning as new arrivals would not speak up if they felt their English language skills were too poor to engage (Miralles-Lombardo et al., 2008).

Some new arrivals, predominantly women from particular backgrounds, struggle with English language due to cultural practices and lived norms including education, home life, and isolation from mainstream community, resulting in less opportunity than men to develop English language skills (Flatau et al., 2014). Women remain dependent on males, their children or service providers to speak for them; this can be particularly concerning when incidences of domestic violence or health-related matters are raised. Having bilingual/ bicultural workers on staff can establish trust and the opportunity for women to speak up. A bilingual social worker employed by a north-eastern neighbourhood centre provided insight into her ability to offer counselling services to new arrivals in their native language and to link them into existing programs and services offered through the centre. An example given was of a new arrival who, not accustomed to making appointments for specific medical services and not feeling comfortable going directly to a mainstream service provider first, asked for assistance (traditionally support from an extended family would have been sought). The social worker translated for the new arrival and provided the initial introduction for the service needed.

It is apparent by the examples shown that recruiting bilingual staff members and volunteers who can converse in the language of the newly arrived assists neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers to cater for the needs of new arrivals and

has significant benefits. The 2013 Parliamentary inquiry into new migrants (Social Development Committee Parliament of South Australia, 2013) recommended that mainstream service providers become more responsive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The inquiry found that many mainstream service providers fail to meet the needs of new arrivals, having limited or no multicultural input into service planning, development or delivery. Rather, mainstream services were reported seeing it as the role of multicultural agencies to meet the needs of new arrivals. However, multicultural agencies are only one portion of the community services network. I argue that from the data gathered during this research, a key component of good service delivery and the ability of a neighbourhood centre to assist in the settlement of new arrivals is the employment of bilingual staff and volunteers within neighbourhood centre settings.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how neighbourhood centres in South Australia see themselves as contributing to the settlement (integration) of new arrivals in practical domains of integration, language and cultural knowledge, education, pathways to employment, and support to gain housing and health needs (Ager & Strang, 2008). The degree to which new arrivals adjust to their new life in South Australia, and the speed at which they do so, is dependent on many factors that can be supported by neighbourhood centres. The contribution of neighbourhood centres' work towards the integration and ultimately settlement of new arrivals appears to be the development of them becoming self-sufficient, financially independent, literate in English and not solely reliant on government agencies.

Core to the neighbourhood centres' contribution is the provision of courses intended to develop personal skills, professional development, and English proficiency, which can help new arrivals navigate their new environment. Most of these courses are not specifically targeted to new arrivals, and in this sense the neighbourhood centres introduce them to mainstream services where new arrivals mingle with long-term residents and Australian-born users of the centres. The programs and courses delivered by most South Australian neighbourhood centres did not result from consultation with new arrivals or include their input. Few centres considered adapting their offerings to serve new arrivals more effectively. In other words, the neighbourhood centre expected new arrivals to access their courses and programs, fit in, feel comfortable and accept what was provided. The research also shows that unless new arrivals are able to negotiate their own way to a neighbourhood centre,

they may never know of its existence. Many staff members of neighbourhood centres, it seems, just wait for new arrivals to walk through the door rather than actively seeking them out or engaging with them, as their philosophy suggests they do. As noted in Chapter 3, neighbourhood centres in South Australia articulate their claims that they create a welcoming, safe environment, promote civic engagement, oppose exclusion, strengthen supports in diverse settings, and use a range of strategies for communication and expression to establish networks for learning and exchange. However, the extent to which these aspirations are realised depends on the interpretation of their role by those who are employed by centres and on how well funding and available resources are administered.

Some neighbourhood centres have actively started to engage with new arrivals. They see themselves as filling the gaps left by other service providers who have failed to meet the needs of new arrivals. These neighbourhood centres play a role as a soft entry point to the wider system of government-funded services, and/or as a stop-gap for new arrivals who for one reason or another do not qualify for these services. However, even neighbourhood centres are not always accessible to any new arrival that might need their services. Barriers include personal circumstances, mental health issues, no access to transportation, timeframes, finances, or cultural assumptions and prejudices. In order for neighbourhood centres to be more effective in the lives of new arrivals, organisations that are mandated to provide settlement services and neighbourhood centres need to become more effectively engaged with each other and with new arrivals. The general consensus of neighbourhood centre staff members that took part in this study was that when community partnerships were formed, they played an important role in the development and sustainability of neighbourhood centre programs catering for new arrivals. Regular networking needs to occur to enable organisations to connect and provide better support services. Engaging bilingual and bicultural staff, and specifically adapting programs and services for new arrivals in their community, also helps to shift the practices and approaches used by neighbourhood centres from inclusiveness to integration.

The difference between inclusion and integration is that inclusion is a one-way process of allowing new arrivals to participate in programs and access services with little adaptation to the original program models (Forde et al., 2015). This focus is aligned with the government focus on self-sufficiency, where new arrivals are expected to work on individual deficits and problems that hinder their entry into the

labour market and mainstream services. In contrast, integration is a two-way process**.** In order for neighbourhood centres to practice two-way integration strategies they will need to alter their services, practices and structures to meet the changing needs of their communities. This would require neighbourhood centre staff/management to reflect on their practices to include the needs of new arrivals, actively cater for them, and address the barriers to accessing programs (Forde et al., 2015). It would also require leveraging resources from community partners, facilitating rather than stifling, and engaging with new arrivals in program development. From the information gathered from those working in neighbourhood centres, existing program policies appear adequate because new arrivals are not excluded from participating. Although, but not being excluded is not the same as belonging.

This chapter has identified an approach to service delivery, where individuals and groups are perceived to have needs that can be met through programs, services and activities. This approach focusses on service delivery, where individuals and groups are perceived to have needs that can be met through programs, services and activities. The neighbourhood centres tended to take an economic perspective on their work and measure their efforts in numerical terms. They conceived of community members as users, customers or clients who attend programs and were reluctant to reach out to newly arrived migrants. This approach was associated with a focus on specific needs or deficits of individuals, with the overall objective being self-reliance.

However, neighbourhood centres can also be sites where social relationships are fostered and cultural knowledge is exchanged. This happens when both new arrivals and host community members participate in activities that encourage a sense of belonging and reduce social isolation (the other domains of integration). The next chapter examines the contexts and processes through which participation in neighbourhood centres can contribute to new arrivals developing social relationships (social capital) with others and support their integration into South Australia.

6 NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES AS PLACES OF SOCIAL CONNECTION

> The art of belonging is not just about finding your own place in the networks and neighbourhood that sustain you; it's about creating spaces for others to join (or re-join) the circle (Mackay, 2014).

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will analyse the role played by South Australian neighbourhood centres in developing social connections through which new arrivals can construct a sense of belonging. The previous chapter focussed on the courses and programs neighbourhood centres offer, and found that some centres have adapted their programs to respond to the needs of new arrivals. English language and driving courses are such examples, as well as sewing groups, cooking programs or other services built around the needs, skills and interests of women of migrant background. For the most part, neighbourhood centre programs do not offer programs to specific ethnic groups. Instead, programs are intended to be inclusive of all community members, whether new or older arrivals, or Australian born. Integration of new arrivals into the mainstream community (to the extent that neighbourhood centres reflect the mainstream) is not easy to achieve. New arrivals tend to be perceived by some service providers as having special needs and lacking social capital that enables integration. As Chapter 5 argued, many neighbourhood centre staff members share this view, highlighting the gap in settlement services and how to fill it by either offering specific assistance, or linking new arrivals to mainstream services. Broadly speaking, this can be described as a one-way integration whereby new arrivals have to gain skills, capabilities and resilience in order to integrate. These neighbourhood centres that focussed primarily on service delivery tended to take an economic perspective on their work. Community members were seen as users, customers or clients who attend programs, and the effort of the centre was measured in numbers of clients, contact hours, and skill-development courses. This approach was associated with a focus on specific needs or deficits of individuals, with the overall objective being self-reliance. The local solutions to certain issues and the social actions that once took place in neighbourhood centres is now replaced by an abundance of programs and services that aim to strengthen, include and enhance, people's wellbeing and skill levels.

As described in the opening quote, in order to find belonging which is required for two-way integration to occur between new arrivals and their host community, welcoming places need to be created within local neighbourhoods to enable new arrivals to join in and connect. This is a role that some neighbourhood centres have adopted. They claim that by establishing social connections between new arrivals, neighbourhood centre staff, volunteers, and other members of the host community who attend the centres make a significant contribution to a two-way process of integration. If they are effective, these neighbourhood centres could be important places where new arrivals can belong in a more emotional and culturally meaningful way. As research has shown, new arrivals want to connect with people from the wider community and feel a sense of belonging in Australia (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013a, p. 15).

Yan and Lauer (2008a) highlight the flexible approach that neighbourhood centres in Canada have adopted to service design and delivery that they argue sets them apart from other settlement service providers. They found that neighbourhood centres were instrumental in helping ethno-culturally diverse newcomers establish social capital by expanding their social networks and addressing the isolation of people who have recently arrived. By connecting new arrivals with members of the broader community, new arrivals gain access to emotional, physical and financial support, and the broader community develops more positive attitudes towards migrants and refugees. Fozdar and Hartley (2013a, p. 13) call for more programs and services to be established in Australia that improve interaction and encourage reciprocal trust and friendship between new arrivals and the mainstream community. The evidence discussed in Chapter 5 argues that the settlement services offered by government departments and NGOs can be enhanced and complemented by neighbourhood centres.

This chapter seeks to provide answers to research questions two and three that ask: How do new arrivals become socially connected to their local community through participation at neighbourhood centres? How do neighbourhood centres encourage a sense of belonging and connection, and what are the limitations and opportunities of neighbourhood centres fostering social capital among new arrivals in South Australia? The chapter will draw on the notion of social bridges and social bonds in Ager and Strang's (2008) integration framework. This chapter focuses on a sub-set of neighbourhood centres that are actively working to create bonding and bridging social capital. As Chapter 2 argued, bridging social capital is about building social connections between homogeneous groups, between people who are strangers and

come from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Putnam (2000) argues that extending one's networks beyond close kinship or co-ethnic networks, or the bonded group, creates new cooperation, trust and opportunity for 'getting ahead'. Bridging social capital can offer an individual access to a broader range of resources such as employment and other opportunities that are not in one's immediate social circle. Within neighbourhood centres this can occur through creating a welcoming space and through various programs and activities that bring new arrivals together with other users of the neighbourhood centres. The experiences gained through cooperation in diverse groups can be transferred to the wider community.

6.2 Creating a Sense of Place

Neighbourhood centres provide what Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) describe as a third place for people between home and work, a communal place where they can interact with others and socialise. The neighbourhood centre as a third place can be a catalyst for various types of exchanges to occur and for creating new connections. One neighbourhood centre staff member considered that this need for a communal place and to feel at home is evident across the whole community:

> People need a communal place just to come and link up with others…there are lonely people right across the spectrum and they all need our assistance, they need our friendship, support and a place to belong and we need to learn about their cultures too (Focus Group 3 participant).

At the same time, the communal place is also envisaged as a space where strangers can meet on an equal footing and learn from each other – the staff member identifies the cultures of the neighbourhood centre users as something mainstream society needs to learn about. Place making can be of a temporary nature, for example, in relation to a specific event or activity, or a deliberative planned process of changing the permanent space of neighbourhood centre buildings both internally and externally. When place making is more deliberative and ongoing, it involves neighbourhood centre participants to be involved in the creation of the communal space including its design, appearance and usage. In this sense, a neighbourhood centre is created as a third space through 'the *making process;* the iterative actions and collaborations inherent in the making of places nourish communities and empower people' (Silberberg, Lorah, Disbrow, & Muessig, 2013, p. 3). The actions of the people involved in the neighbourhood centre create the place - the staff, volunteers and participants.

It is the virtuous cycle model that sees the community and the relationships formed within neighbourhood centre that 'transforms places which in turn transforms the community itself' (Silberberg et al., 2013, p. 3). The places within neighbourhood centres (gardens, cafés, activity rooms) like those of the wider public realm are the 'connective tissue' (Ager & Strang, 2008) that can bring and bind the community together. Third places are also the places of social gathering where the community comes together informally, to see familiar and unfamiliar faces, where civic discourse and community connections can happen (Oldenburg, 1999). As Oldenburg (1999) posits, third places are great levellers of status where people can engage in grassroots initiatives, learn about each other in a safe and playful environment and create relationships with diverse others. Timm-Bottos and Reilly (2015) write about Settlement Houses (see Chapter 3) in America as protected and safe spaces where community members can develop their unique voices, explore their creativity, nurture leadership potential and express themselves openly. They argue that vulnerable and marginalised people benefit from such places which commonly use a 'rhetoric of care, concern and connection' to describe their ethos (Timm-Bottos & Reilly, 2015, p. 104).

A person who comes to a third place may by chance meet a friend, a friend of a friend, someone's visiting family member, someone new to the street and maybe a regular user of the place. Ideally, neighbourhood centre participants are not only the users of places that are already made, but active participants in the making of the spaces. It is the making of the place that brings people together, creates engagement and enables social connections. This thinking has been behind the murals (Figure 2) and community gardens that have been created in many parts of South Australian neighbourhood centres (Figure 3), along with the constructing of pizza ovens, making mosaic pots, and wood turning in neighbourhood centre sheds. These activities intend to bring people together to meet each other, and the process of making the place forges relationships that are as valuable as creating the place.

Figure 2 The mural displayed outside a neighbourhood centre

Figure 3 Community Garden space

Creating welcoming environments requires a combination of physical and human supports. When done properly they become what IFS describe as a ‘community living room’, where interaction, teaching problem solving, encountering difference and discovery can occur to cultivate a sense of welcome (International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres, 2005, p. 23). The elements of spatial organisation help support social capital to develop, it is based on the ability to form relationships and lack of space in a place for connectivity to happen, deliberatively

and spontaneously, directly shapes people's perceptions of social capital in their community. Social interactions delineates a territory as the community locale. Social capital depends on social interaction, social capital can emerge in any setting and community development can nurture this possibility (Glover, 2004, p. 64). Here bridging capital is built not through a program or course but is embedded in all activities (Yan & Lauer, 2008b). Staff and volunteers can be seen as catalysts enabling new arrivals to connect with others in their new community. In these organisations the focus is on creating a homely, comfortable 'third place' (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982) where people can participate in activities and gain skills through their involvement. New arrivals that walk through the doors of these neighbourhood centres are welcomed as people with something to contribute to the organisation whilst at the same time being offered opportunities to extend themselves.

A sense of welcome within a neighbourhood centre can be fostered through the design of the building, its layout, furnishings, naming and signage. A neighbourhood centre building that is situated on a busy highway surrounded by a high brick wall with large iron gates, no signage or surrounding garden does not suggest a welcoming place; nor does a centre that has an interior decorated in dark colours with ugly tattered furnishings, poor lighting and no floor coverings or paintings. The neighbourhood centres that actively create themselves as a third place (Oldenburg, 1999) have welcoming entrances and public spaces including community gardens (Figure 3) kitchens and cafés (Figure 4) that are vibrant, colourful and informal, often displaying images that tell a story about the many users and activities that take place inside.

Figure 4 Café within a neighbourhood centre

> I think the design of the space is really important. The design of the building, and yes the built environment but also then what you do inside it. You know, you don't see the Centrelink 'take a number' stuff. You don't see a waiting room full of 30 people…. so it's about the systems and the design that generate that safe place, safe environment, where it's ok to ask a question (Focus Group 4 participant).

This staff member identified the building design as an important factor in creating a place, but then goes on to say the interactions that take place are even more important. She contrasted the mechanical interactions found at mainstream human service agencies such as Centrelink, a cold, impersonal place full of strangers, where clients are required to take a number and wait for service, to a neighbourhood centre where people can walk up to a staff member and ask a question at any time in a familiar place surrounded by familiar people and not be treated as just another number in a queue.

The value of well-functioning welcoming third places lies in the potential for individuals to safely create relationships with people across all social divisions and cultural backgrounds and outside their immediate circle of family and friends by providing a public space for daily interactions (Lownsbrough & Beunderman, 2007). A Muslim Women's Group worker explained how the neighbourhood centre was providing a safe, local space for Afghan women to come to, share their experiences and connect with other participants at their own pace and over time feel comfortable.

> Because they don't have the family support networks here that they would have overseas. Um, and just because of the environment here is so much different to where they've come from you know, it's more community orientated and in a village you would have like every relative you know, and one would be a doctor, one would be a nurse and one would be a butcher.....You know, so you didn't have to go very far um, so they're not quite used to the idea of here where, you know, things aren't quite situated like that and it's not that hub. So we try to create that way, being close to their home so they can have somewhere outside of home where they feel safe and comfortable (AW3)

In contrast to the lives of the rural Afghan women in their native country, where they lived in small villages surrounded by family members and where they would know most of the residents, life in an Australian city where most neighbours are strangers is much more impersonal. This worker argued that neighbourhood centres recreated a sense of closeness and neighbourliness that enables the women to feel at ease. Ann, a member of the group facilitated by the Muslim Women's Group worker, expressed her satisfaction with attending the neighbourhood centre, saying that 'this place feels safe, feels like home' (Ann/NA).

The design and layout of the neighbourhood centre premises can enhance or hinder social interaction. There are real, tangible, visible and artistic ways to include new arrivals, such as those I observed during site visits where photographs displayed on the walls show people's faces from various cultural backgrounds, whilst displayed art works and handicrafts produced by the participants at neighbourhood centre courses send messages of harmony and welcome (Figures 5 & 6). A north-eastern neighbourhood centre, for example, chose to show its cultural inclusiveness through a large map of the world highlighting the many countries from where the participants originated. Such images signal to new arrivals a place where their culture or religious group is welcomed and 'inclusion is the quality of welcome' (Guinness, 1998 p. 103).

Figure 5 A centre hall space displaying a mural

Figure 6 A sign saying welcome in many languages

Staff and volunteers need to be aware of the subliminal messages they are conveying to potential new attendees. For example, if a welcome sign hangs on large iron fences around the perimeter of the neighbourhood centre, the doors to the

building are kept shut and the surroundings are drab and uninspiring, newcomers might read this as a message that they are not welcome inside. Like first impressions, first connections are also important. The welcome sign is not enough; staff members need to be welcoming and willing to engage with new arrivals as they walk through the entrance door. A negative encounter with a member of the public, another participant or a volunteer, that is not sensitive to the needs of the new arrival can undermine their confidence, may be enough to dissuade the new arrival from returning. Focus group discussions emphasised the need for the neighbourhood centre sector to actively welcome new arrivals into their centres and programs. It was apparent from those who attended focus groups that they had differing views about how new arrivals perceived neighbourhood centres and why they did or didn't attend.

A family worker reflected on the discussions staff and volunteers at her western neighbourhood centre about how they could increase participation.

> When you look around here there is a lot of information about the Centre, but there is not a direct invitation. People need to know, 'yes you are welcome'…. We recently had a community consult and one of the questions was how can we get more new arrivals and Aboriginal people to come to the Centre? We have an Aboriginal member here and she said you need to be visible, in order to have more people come in you need to have visible people at the Centre. You need to go down to the shopping centre and hand out brochures saying this is the [neighbourhood centre] and I am inviting you to come to the [centre] Have that conversation with the Somali group and the Bhutanese group that may help them as well. Do we go out and find people? Why wouldn't they just come, a million reasons why they wouldn't come - if I don't feel comfortable walking through a new door, how would someone else? It's a bit of a block in our thinking, its resource intensive but it is worth it. (Family Worker 1).

This worker argued that centre workers needed to venture outside of their buildings and invite people into the neighbourhood centre instead of waiting for people to just walk through the door. She describes her colleagues thinking as a 'block' in assuming people who are interested would find their own way to the centre. Another Coordinator from a southern based neighbourhood centre recalled the ways in which she approached new arrivals in her community.

> so we first approached them, we had our cinema in the park and they came over to watch and so then we went and talked to them while they were sitting on the grass you know and, how long have you been here and how did you move here, do

> you know we do this and why don't you come and join us and so it's a bit of both. So you know we try and keep a balance between not being too overwhelming for them you know. Hey, hey, hey, come and see us!! We try and do that gently in a way that makes it say we are here and we are available for you and this is what we can do for you, our doors are open. If you want to come along (NHCC 1).

These particular staff members I have quoted are providing the extra contact, support and encouragement needed to attract new arrivals into their neighbourhood centre. This contrasts with other neighbourhood centres where staff would wait to see if new arrivals made their own way to the neighbourhood centres and if they did, would offer support and assistance. The reluctance to leave their comfort zone is reinforced through other practices such as the use of information fliers printed only in English. This is not necessarily a conscious decision to exclude but conveys a hidden message of exclusion, or at least an unwelcoming atmosphere that is instantly perceived by newcomers.

The importance of engaging with newcomers on a personal level was also discussed in focus groups:

> Learning names and using people's names and helping people with what they have to do in the Centre, orientate them, you make people welcome by greeting them with great energy. It's very tiring at times but it's worth it spending so much energy. .. if you create that hospitable feeling, people feel they belong (Focus Group 3 participant).

Even though neighbourhood centre staff may see themselves as creating a welcoming space, this is not always how new arrivals experience it. Volunteers and tutors (some of whom are untrained in cultural diversity) are often the first contact the public meet, not the neighbourhood centre coordinator nor a paid staff member. Most centres have one staff member (very often part time) and one paid support officer who is not always available to meet and greet new people into the centre. This can result in neighbourhood centres not being experienced as welcoming, as this new arrival points out:

> You get hesitant because sometimes the people on the other side are, there's a barrier they're never that open. We walk in with our scarves, you see it. They don't know how to engage with people properly but once you start talking, they do, some of them do open up and they will realise okay, I don't have to be fearful of her. And look I can understand when I look at it from the other side, there are some women in our community who

> would probably do the exact same thing. But that was only because of their discomfort (Ruby N/A).

Ruby describes how staff members from the neighbourhood centre (presumably Australian - 'the other side') respond to her appearance by putting up a perceived barrier. She interprets their lack of engagement as a sign of discomfort when faced with an unfamiliar culture, a response that happens on both sides. Her way dealing with the barrier is to engage in conversation, as this establishes a social connection. Other people might be discouraged or feel rejected by a surprised look on a neighbourhood centre worker's face when encountering someone dressed differently. Such problems could be alleviated before they arise with cultural awareness training of volunteers.

The reception area of a neighbourhood centre is often the first opportunity for staff member and volunteers to meet and greet a new arrival and make them feel welcome. Staff members should be aware that a person with limited English language skills will need assistance in making sense of the material on display boards often found in the entrances of neighbourhood centres (see figure 7). Bombarding a person with numerous pamphlets and fliers on programs and services can be confusing and overwhelming and if not conducted carefully and good-naturedly can have a negative effect on how a new comer to the centre perceives it.

Figure 7 The reception area depicting centre programs

As South Australian neighbourhood centres have become places of education and training, every room is utilized and taken up with scheduled classes. The timetables are full. More and more of the 'drop in' or common areas are in decline and there are less chances for casual contact. The coordinator of a northern suburb neighbourhood centre spoke of how replacing lounges in the reception area that took up lots of room and provided limited seating with café style tables and chairs more people were able to congregate in the area and socialise.

> When we were talking the reception foyer area …. we used to have lounges in there and a Community Health Worker said to us, you know, by having, lounges, if you've got one lot of people sitting there, it is a barrier for other people to even use it. So now we have chairs and tables. But we find they all get used, so. Just little things like that….We've got a café that runs in the Centre for like a social conduit to help people that don't have to come for anything specific, just come and have a coffee and a chat (NHCC8).

The decline in open spaces in many neighbourhood centres has resulted in the development of additional spaces, such as community gardens or cafés. Common areas (such as the café area described above) offer the opportunity for people to share experiences, exchange opinions, discuss available resources and encourage incidental encounters, the vital ingredients to the development of social connection (Sandercock & Attili, 2009). Common meeting spaces within neighbourhood centres bring new arrivals into contact with other neighbourhood centre participants, be they other new arrivals from a different culture, from the same culture, or people from the host community. It is here (the neighbourhood centre) where everyone can and meet on an equal footing and form the basis of creating bridging social capital (Agger & Jensen, 2015). A participant, Savan, explains how attending the neighbourhood centre offers relief from homesickness, as people from all different cultures can gather and have shared experiences.

> Sometimes you feel that oh, its hell, you can't stay here, you want to go back, and you don't have enough money to go to your country. Yeah, like these groups are good. When you come here, I think all around the world groups here, Indian groups, Afghani group, Chinese group, people come here and they can use the kitchen, it's full of food, if you want to make things, bread, all these things are free…. everybody can come here and enjoy that (Savan/NA).

The findings show that in order for a two-way connection with people from all walks of life to flourish (bridging capital) there has to be places for new arrivals and others to meet so real ties can occur. However common spaces and bringing together culturally diverse groups of people within the neighbourhood centre is no guarantee that bridging social capital will be created. For social connections to occur there are other factors in play such as cultural awareness and understanding on behalf of existing users, the mind-sets of those who are employed or volunteer at a centre and how quickly new arrivals adapt to feeling comfortable when meeting, conversing, and sharing experiences with new people in unfamiliar surroundings. These factors will be examined in the next section.

6.3 Cultural Awareness and Understanding

Integration has been defined as a two way process between new arrivals and the wider community (Ager & Strang, 2008; Strang & Ager, 2010), with new arrivals adapting to the lifestyle of the host community without having to lose their own cultural identity (Zetter, 2005) and the host community being receptive to newcomers. Public organisations (government and private) must adjust to the needs of a culturally diverse population. As Chapter 3 argues that South Australian neighbourhood centres have worked with different cultural groups throughout their history. But for many, providing English as Second Language classes and celebrating diversity with cultural festivals, and community lunches has been the extent of their engagement with multiculturalism. This research indicates that initiatives such as introducing a social enterprise for women of various cultures to sell their handiworks made at the centre or community gardens where participants can grow vegetables and herbs to use in the centres kitchens, have been the result of a single committed staff member applying for a government grant or a committed group of volunteers. Some neighbourhood centres have developed their own approaches to promote cultural understanding between new arrivals and the host community. They also challenge the attitudes of groups meeting within their neighbourhood centres and develop partnerships with schools; other nongovernment organisations (NGOs) including the Migrant Resource Centre, churches, and ethnic organisations to broaden the cultural diversity of their staff and volunteers (see Chapter 5.5). As a result to these adaptations, some neighbourhood centres have become places where new arrivals can learn about multicultural Australia and the diverse cultures of the community.

An example of cross-cultural exchange took place between migrant women and Aboriginal women associated with a north-eastern neighbourhood centre. An unfortunate encounter had occurred between these groups and the neighbourhood centre's staff considered it appropriate to tackle prejudices and negative stereotypes that had emerged by bringing together the migrant and Aboriginal women from the local area. The migrant Muslim women, who originated from the countries of Turkistan, Iran, Somalia, and Indonesia, participated in cross-cultural visits with Aboriginal students and their family members from the Aboriginal Community College in Port Adelaide. The group visited the Lartelare Park in Port Adelaide, a significant cultural site of the Kaurna people to gain an appreciation of Aboriginal history and culture. Through conversation and sharing stories the women discovered similarities between each other's cultures, such as the importance of the extended family system, and were able to compare the loss of land through war and colonisation. Both sets of women had an opportunity to talk about the identity challenges they faced and the racism they sometimes experienced in the Australian culture due to negative labels given to them. A neighbourhood centre staff member pointed out the role of storytelling in opening up the conversation:

> We have volunteers write stories on people's lives. Other people start to understand what people are going through. You read someone's story and they become closer to each other. Everyone has had a struggle and everyone has a story to tell. If you heard someone's story attitudes are changed and people may look at people differently. Suddenly people are talking, that wasn't hard, was it? I will personally challenge people's attitudes, I will put a different perspective across to people, opening up conversations, just having conversations. I will ask volunteers or other participants (NHCC6).

Stories are seen not only as a way to convey the experiences of new arrivals but also as a means to connect with others and establish a common humanity.

Some staff acknowledged the need to expand their knowledge in regard to unfamiliar customs and religious beliefs of neighbourhood centre users. For example, some women who had recently migrated from Afghanistan would not attend the neighbourhood centre before their husbands had first investigated the content of programs to determine that they were appropriate. As one staff member commented,

> The biggest barrier for us is being able to make sure that we are respectful and mindful of their belief systems and I think that's been probably the biggest challenge for us you know (NHCC1).

A question, asked of me by a fellow staff member, I found disconcerting when conducting interviews was *'What if they need a prayer mat?*' Citing lack of time, limited resources, and lack of cultural training was the excuse given for being ignorant of how to handle such a situation. Most staff, however, appeared to be willing to try and remedy this situation by engaging in further cultural awareness training. As discussed in Chapter 3, neighbourhood centre staff members are drawn from a range of educational backgrounds and life experiences. The interviews and focus group discussions revealed a lack of consistent training opportunities for staff that covered cultural awareness, or how to work with migrants and refugees. There was no cross-cultural component in the training that volunteers were required to undertake.

Some neighbourhood centres have partnered with settlement agencies such as the Australian Refugee Association (ARA) or the Australian Migrant Resource Centre to provide training for staff, explore their attitudes and values, and gain a better understanding of refugee experiences. In other neighbourhood centres staff and volunteers learned from multicultural colleagues about how to work with people from different cultures. If neighbourhood centres want to expand their work to include new arrivals they need to provide services of a consistent quality in a culturally diverse context, neighbourhood centres need a culturally aware model of service delivery (Martin, 1999). The Peak Association of neighbourhood centres in South Australia, Community Centres SA, can play a greater role of in-service training to develop cross-cultural skills. Regional neighbourhood centre forums can also be utilised to share of inclusive work practices, practical support strategies and mentoring of staff inexperienced in working with new arrivals. Such models of service delivery should incorporate practices that reduce barriers to participation for new arrivals, leverage resources, encourage the employment of bilingual and bicultural staff and volunteers, promote leaders or champions among staff who act as catalysts for organisational change by instilling an ethic of care through the provision of ongoing training in cultural diversity (Forde et al., 2015).

Many South Australian neighbourhood centres reported being actively involved in the multicultural calendar of harmony day, refugee week, festivals, celebrations, and

other local community events. These occasions provide opportunities for the wider community to participate, have fun and learn about the cultural practices of the new arrivals. These actions support the continuation of culture, community life, and hospitality and provide shared spaces and community life (McMichael & Manderson, 2004). Some neighbourhood centres were more active than others in making space for new arrivals to plan and participate in cultural celebrations, or organise their own. Neighbourhood centre staff members recalled being approached by various community groups to hire their facilities for spaces where large groups could hold cultural functions on a regular basis. This was described by staff as the development of a relationship between various cultural groups that would lead to inclusivity and integration over time. New arrivals spoke of a desire to share their culture and their traditions with other neighbourhood centre users, whether this is through dance, sharing food or telling stories.

> I think because when I am preparing the [harmony day] event I help them to know about that there's Indonesian music, traditional music groups, they learn our customs, our ways it's fun for me. And then from that, we are practising and then perform and then suddenly we became so busy (Ivy N/A).

In another neighbourhood centre, Ahmadiyya Muslim Women organise an annual Women's Bazaar. Ruby, a co-initiator of this event, explained that the main impetus in developing the event was to break down the prejudice she perceived in the community against the Muslim religion:

> I just want to tell the community we are peaceful people, you know we are friendly, we want to do something for community. Australia has given us so much (Ruby/ NA).

The bazaar has been running for ten years and become firmly established in the community calendar. Through market stalls offering clothing, food, beauty products and services such as henna art, and children's activities, the wider community can gain an understanding of the rich traditions of Muslim cultures. As Ruby points out, the event is an important way for the local community to mingle and connect:

> Through the Bazaar or through people knowing us… whether it's a Henna stall, whether it's to help with cooking, again to feel connected because trying to get everyone not to be fearful of Muslims, you know, to understand we are just the same as everyone else. It's also I think I suppose developing focus where neighbours actually know who their neighbours are, you know getting out and mingling you

> know, that's another thing I actually started now but that's also because of an awareness through my religion, because it was always stressed how important it was for you to know who your neighbours were and not only the house next door, but a fair few house next door (Ruby/ NA).

By mixing with other people, attending training together and sharing stories with one another, the barriers between the various cultural groups can be broken down. A volunteer at the same neighbourhood centre, John, saw value in mixing with other new arrivals from many cultures in the one location:

> And not only the people born here, you can learn and know about the other people from hundreds of countries, and that is good. Here sometimes come people from India, China, and from Croatia, Korea, it's incredible for us (John/ NA).

Incorporating opportunities for people to express their diversity into the daily activities of the neighbourhood centre is central to building cross-cultural understanding between them. Traditional music and cooking programs were examples of the opportunities new arrivals had to continue practising their culture and simultaneously share it with other people attending neighbourhood centres.

6.3.1 The Role Food Plays in Neighbourhood Centres

Food is at the heart of many attempts to bring people together, to bridge social divides, and is central to building community for new arrivals (Wise, 2011). Food can provide an entry point for other neighbourhood centre users to learn about each other's culture. Eating and sharing food with others (in this case neighbourhood centre participants and volunteers) plays a part in reconstituting identity and the recreating of the daily rhythms of home; home does not mean the domestic material space of a house but rather symbolic space that is familiar to the new arrivals, offer comfort, security and emotional attachment (Antonsich, 2010; Bailey, 2017). Memories of home are visualised through the preparation, cooking and sharing of special celebratory foods for festivals, and along with their shared symbols can create a link to a past life, culture and country.

Introducing one's cultural foods to other community members through cooking programs at the neighbourhood centre is also an opportunity for new arrivals to give something back to their new country. Sam was invited to present Indonesian food and culture at her neighbourhood centre's weekly community meal:

> Yeah, they have lunch here and they ask me to do the presentation of Indonesian culture and food, maybe 20%

> they come up to me and say thank you for sharing the culture and explain everything to us (Sam/ NA).

While cooking the meal, she was asked to share her cultural heritage through conversation, and participants had opportunities to ask questions. She was pleased about the positive reception of her presentation. Gail was similarly asked to present on the foods and traditions of her native country, Armenia. She described the sequence of the tastings she prepared for the community:

> I think, how I will line the history with foods, yeah, and I said in Armenian kitchen as well, ancient. And now we will taste some Dolmades. Dolmades was in the first break and the second break is chicken, apple, chicken the separate and apple with sultana, sugar and walnut. And after presentation was a sweet…Kaddafi. It is traditional sweet in Armenia and they like it. And then it was another idea to make some brochure where … I wrote recipe (Gail/NA).

The way food programs assist in making social connections between new arrivals and other participants is not only through the cooking of food, but the sharing of information, exchanging recipes and stories (McMichael & Manderson, 2004). Preparing a meal for the community can be the first step to feeling a part of it even if the participants have little in common. Food plays the role of a bridging agent in the formation of bridging social capital (Arvela, 2013); it becomes embedded in social interaction through the places where it is prepared and shared. The kitchens, café spaces and community gardens within the neighbourhood centres are the key places where new arrivals gather, produce and share food, and partake in community cooking classes and meals.

Sharing food provides a means by which members of the host society get to ask questions about a new arrival's culture in an un-intrusive way. It is also acknowledged as a way of sharing one's culture that is a nonthreatening way (Schermuly & Forbes-Mewitt, 2016). Examples are given in the following quotes:

> Yes, it [the kitchen] is open for everybody and so we just go and cook and have a laugh, sit together, you know, they ask about us, we ask about them. So it's just a get together, good, nice, we have a really nice relationship with the ladies and they look forward to our class (Ruby/NA).

> And it's nice because we are from all different walks of life, like different countries you know, it's fantastic really, the sort of people you probably wouldn't normally meet and yeah we have quite a good laugh so... a lot of the friends I've made which are lifelong friends, I've had round our house for

> barbecues, we see them outside of the Community Centre, I wouldn't have met them if it weren't for going to the Community Centres definitely (Sue/NA).

The quotes above demonstrate that the cooking and sharing of food enables new arrivals to reaffirm their cultural identity and to develop social bonds in a new country. They can also demonstrate resilience of the women where the cooking of traditional food could be used to initiate actions that comprised a meaningful existence for the women, to survive and create a successful, meaningful life in Australia.

The sense of fun, laughter and the informality of food preparation and sharing is a social act that encourages the development of relationships and the means of bringing people together (Bailey, 2017; Schermuly & Forbes-Mewitt, 2016). The examples given above demonstrate how women can not only perform the task of preparing food for themselves and others, but how cooking their traditional foods is a familiar experience that gives them a sense of wellbeing because they are in their comfort zone. For some women food preparation and cooking at the local neighbourhood centre may also be the only means by which they can feel empowered, especially when other aspects of their lives such as lack of English language may be disempowering and isolating.

Staff members talked about the reciprocal and informal sharing between cultural groups within their neighbourhood centres as a common occurrence, and something that they saw as distinctive to neighbourhood centres and setting them apart from other settlement service providers. A neighbourhood centre staff member from a refugee background explained how inclusive strategies such as community meals can enhance cross-cultural understanding and connection:

> Coming to Australia lunches, and Christmas in Australia and the New Arrivals Newsletter services, are an extra part of the services we can offer. It starts slowly but you look around now at the numbers of new arrivals, African people have increased in numbers. The cultural lunches is one of the amazing techniques sharing people's stories, how much it helps people to understand where we are coming from, or where a refugee comes from and why they are here not to cause any problems. They are good people if you give them the opportunity, help them out, they and you will achieve so much. You help people now and have a wonderful future for the whole community, or you could isolate them and bring out a lot of issues later on in the community, its health issues, mental issues (NHCC9).

According to this staff member, there are also broader societal benefits to be gained from fostering these low-key, everyday encounters, as early involvement in community activities can act as a preventive measure against physical and mental health problems experienced by some new arrivals. Food can provide continuity, security and mediates adaptation in an otherwise unfamiliar new place (Hage, 1997). The preparing of traditional food is a component of home building that connects a new arrival's past life with the present. Food also has an emotional component whereby the sustenance of familiar food and traditions can engender feelings of wellbeing and fitting into a new place, which Hage (1997) says is vital to successful integration.

6.4 Facilitating and Making Social Connections

To move from participation to belonging requires connecting people. It requires staff members, volunteers and other neighbourhood centre participants adapting strategies and practices to assist new arrivals in making social connections. Forming relationships will benefit not only the new arrivals but also the host community. Staff members and volunteers working within neighbourhood centres provide a crucial leadership role in facilitating connection between new arrivals and members of the host community (Pittaway et al., 2015), and are responsible for the nature and amount of support provided.

Assistance given to new arrivals varied across the different centres from no active support to intensive individual support and mentoring schemes. In those neighbourhood centres that practiced active engagement with new arrivals, staff members spoke about the need to be visible, introduce themselves and develop one-on-one relationships with new arrivals. As new arrivals became familiar with them and started to feel comfortable in their presence, they were more willing to ask for assistance. Staff members from migrant backgrounds with first-hand experience of the difficulties of being new to Australia were more able to empathise with new arrivals. Having a colleague able to communicate with participants in their native language was seen by neighbourhood centre staff as a real advantage because it put new arrivals at ease and enabled them to discuss their interests and needs more effectively.

The key difference in the way neighbourhood centre staff approached new arrivals is informality. There are no appointments, and very often the engagement is spontaneous. Encounters between staff and new arrivals are just as likely to occur

at the reception desk as in the kitchen over a cup of tea, or while working in the community garden. These unplanned, casual contacts over time enable people to connect and interact. An encounter may start with a greeting, a smile and then lead to a casual conversation that over time grows into more in-depth sharing of backgrounds and stories that can aid in social connection.

> Through conversations you find out individual needs, interests and histories, listening at that deeper level, as you get to know people, link people to resources and assist them to connect to others. We help facilitate those connections (NHCC7).

The importance of spending individual time with centre participants was mentioned by several staff members. For example, a neighbourhood centre in the western suburbs highlighted this in the context of building relationships with new arrivals:

> Being open and spending time with people, to be honest, it's about the relationship with me, this is their place, this is where they come. We (staff) have built the relationship, sitting back and opening up and hearing about their needs and what it's like in their culture, being open. People respond to you as a person (Focus Group 3 participant).

Relationship building requires time, and staff members have to be flexible so they can respond to individuals. The majority of staff members interviewed indicated that most of their time was spent managing the day-to-day running of the centre, responding to risk, meetings, grant writing and program planning. They viewed relationship building as a secondary role, indicating that many neighbourhood centres are not practising the values and principles they preach in their mission statements. Thus, they are not able to engage with the range of diverse interests and needs in the local community. This is also reflected in the findings by Aldred et al. (2004) who stress the importance of investing time in community development and social change, but point out that most neighbourhood centres only have part-time paid staff members, and time constraints are common.

Neighbourhood centres are places where both bonding social capital as well as bridging social capital can be developed (Leonard & Onyx, 2003). Connections across-cultural groups between neighbourhood centre participants were sometimes the only contact new arrivals had beyond their immediate family. An example of bridging social capital was described by a neighbourhood centre worker from the eastern suburbs. A pregnant new arrival woman, who had been participating at a playgroup, experienced an emergency situation when she went into labour one night while her husband was working interstate. She turned to another playgroup mother,

who had befriended her and whom she trusted, and asked her to look after her child while she went to hospital to give birth.

Another example comes from a neighbourhood centre in the southern suburbs. The staff member described her role as facilitating opportunities for women who attend the sewing group. According to this staff member, the sewing group has developed into a support network for women. It provides new arrival women with a social outlet and with opportunities to meet other members of the community. Older women who had become socially isolated as a result of being widowed were also able to reconnect to others through a shared interest of sewing. When one new arrival member of the group stopped attending the group after giving birth to a still-born child, another group member found out from her husband that she was very depressed and unable to summon up the energy to get out of bed and care for her other children. The sewing group members reached out to the woman and offered her transport to a doctor, prepared meals for her family, and performed other domestic chores for her. After several home visits from group members, the woman felt strong enough to return to the group. This example shows how a neighbourhood centre group can bring together individuals from different backgrounds, both new arrivals and long-term residents, into a mutual support group, and how loose connections (bridging capital) can develop into supportive bonds between the members of the group. Staff and volunteers play a strategic role in facilitating positive social interactions and developing relationships between new arrivals and the other participants (Leonard & Onyx, 2004; Pittaway et al., 2015).

New arrivals commented in their interviews about the connections they were able to make through the neighbourhood centre. Ivy refers to the centre she attends as a home and a place of friendships, indicating its role in promoting the development of social bonding:

> This is like my second home, so yeah … since last February I think, I spend most of half my week in here. So I've made quite good friends (Ivy/NA).

Many new arrivals experience mental health related issues due to the stressful experiences they encountered in their home country and during flight. Feeling overwhelmed with their health issues they find it hard to mix with others, and this can lead to isolation from their own cultural community as well as the wider community. Two women, Lema and Terry, explained their experience of feeling isolated, with Lema speaking through an interpreter:

> She said that before she knew about all the Community Centres, she always stayed at home, the day goes by, the night goes by, she's always lonely, um, she even had like, she had.....her heart was so dark. Like she wasn't happy at all, it was so bad then after that we came home, that's when she feels that like there's people to talk to but otherwise it was really hard, she said (Lema/NA),

> My husband was here and no one else, so my friend introduced me I'm alone. My family is not here, I am alone but um when I meet people I don't feel alone because I'm everyday go out and go class at community centre (Terry/NA).

Regardless of whether woman arrived in Australia alone with their children, or with their husbands, the experience of isolation was similar: being stuck at home, unable to speak English, with no kinship networks to turn to, and unaware of services that could help them. Having a neighbourhood centre nearby with a program of activities offered these women a way out of their isolation. Neighbourhood centres with crèche programs were particularly sought after by women caring for small children. Playgroups are examples of activities offered to new arrivals where they can come together with other members in the community. Attending a playgroup with their children presents opportunities to meet other parents, share experiences and offer and receive social support. A family worker (from a western suburbs neighbourhood centre) described their playgroup as very multicultural, with women from Africa, Sri Lanka and Vietnam attending on a weekly basis.

> Well as mothers who want to meet friends, I was at home every day just wake up, eating, just doing homework, then go to bed again. Just come here, it is good change for everyone (Savan/ NA).

The connections made at the neighbourhood centre developed into friendships for some new arrivals, and opened up the local neighbourhood to them. Many of the new arrival participants in this study indicated that attending the neighbourhood centre was the first step into the community. As Guinness points out, once comfortable in this setting, it 'can then lead on to involvement into other aspects of community life' (Guinness, 1998, p. 170). These other aspects of community life might be opened up through social connections made at the neighbourhood centre. Jack, a new arrival from Mexico, described how his life changed from not knowing anyone, to having friends in the community who would invite his family to their homes and introduce him to attractive places like the local beach:

> We arrived here to Australia, we didn't know anyone, we don't have family or friends here. Well at the beginning! Now we

> have a lot of friends. ….Yes within a week we have maybe one, two or three invitations to dinner, to go to the beach, you know other places that is beautiful. Ah, when the people open up their houses, their hearts, it's amazing for us and yes, even when I finished the lesson, I feel me part of the community because it's our idea, we find the community (Jack/NA).

By enrolling in neighbourhood centre programs new arrivals begin associating with people they would not normally encounter, and as regular participants become accustomed to new arrivals at the centres, friendships begin to blossom.

Neighbourhood centre staff observed that their centres were places where new arrivals would support each other. Often new arrivals who have been in Australia slightly longer would assist those how had arrived more recently. They would provide advice on where to buy food in the local area, inexpensive clothing for children, and second-hand furniture for their homes, or how to find rental accommodation and other general information about the local area in which they had settled. In one interview session at a western neighbourhood centre, a group of Middle Eastern women were observed exchanging information with a recently arrived group member. The women shared information about the local shops, doctors and schools. One woman offered to show the new arrival around, another gave her some vegetables she had brought to class, and a third offered to drive her to the next meeting of the group. This type of bridging social capital was described by the group facilitator as occurring on a regular basis and plays a crucial role in integration, particularly where no specific settlement services are locally available:

> And they [new arrivals] meet and they talk about any issues that they are having, any supports that they need, what their experience is like, they do activities for the children so that they are having fun and enjoying themselves as well. So the whole idea is to give them a voice and also give them an opportunity because down here there is very limited, well I would actually say there is no services really (NHCC1).

Some new arrivals take on the role of mentors or buddies to more recently arrived migrants, especially those from their native country, by taking them under their wing and supporting them while they find their feet at the neighbourhood centre. For these new arrivals, it is an opportunity to show their empathy and reciprocate the assistance they may have received upon arrival in South Australia:

> This will give me the opportunity to help others, you know when you have experience since childhood had a hard life,

> there is a feeling in my heart I have been like this. I must have the opportunity, I must help other people like me (Zen/ NA).

> The ones who have been here longer will help out the newer ones, um, others who just have a connection like a sisterly connection, you know, bit older but they've been here the same period of time, a cultural connection like if they are from the same country or from the same religion or the same ethnic group so um, yeah there's definitely that sort of helps (AW 2).

While connections between new arrivals come relatively easily, fostered through programs and activities that are relevant to them, it is sometimes challenging to implement the neighbourhood centre vision of inclusiveness. As discussed in Chapter 3, the common principles and philosophies include affirmative action towards disadvantaged groups of people, as well as community development and empowerment more broadly. One staff member of a northern suburbs neighbourhood centre discussed the tension between keeping well-established groups in her neighbourhood centre and including new arrivals. She gave the example of a craft class that had met at her centre for over 10 years and attracted many members from other neighbourhoods. The class was always well attended but the coordinator noticed that the newcomers she introduced to the class never lasted more than one session. It became evident that the group did not want any newcomers and when someone wanted to join, they would be told '*sorry we are full'* or '*you can stay today but we will need to add you to a waiting list'*, and never be contacted again. This class was clearly a cohesive group, with plenty of bonding capital, but inwardly focussed to the exclusion of anyone new. When challenging the group to become more welcoming to newcomers the coordinator was met with resistance, so she found them an alternate venue for their class and excluded it from the centre's schedule. She then set up a new program open to all newcomers. She commented on her decision to intervene:

> As a staff member you can be just be looking at numbers, just looking at general overall happiness and people can be very happy and there can be lots of them, but depending again what your purpose is, then perhaps your neighbourhood centre is not meeting the needs of those most in need as it could (NHCC8).

This example shows a tension between the neighbourhood centre's aim to have high levels of participation that meet grant funding criteria, and the aim to include and welcome new participants into the centre's activities. This illustrates the dark

side of social capital when the actions and practices of groups and activities can be divisive and exclusionary (Portes, 1998). In this example, social capital works for the good of those in the craft group but locks out newcomers who might not fit the common norms of the group or be 'people like us'. Membership to a group and ownership of the place in which the group meets are key elements in the politics of belonging. The politics of belonging involves two opposite sides, the side that claims belonging and the side with the power to grant others belonging (Antonsich, 2010). In this example, the staff member found that she could not persuade the group to grant belonging but took control of the place in order to make it available to others.

Mlcek and Ismay (2015) question the extent to which neighbourhood centre staff members are required to account for every dollar of funding they receive, count every transaction from number of attendees to hours of engagement and practice. They argue that staff working in neighbourhood centres must retain a balance between satisfying the requirements of their funding bodies and accounting for their work to governance structures, and contributing to an inclusive civil society (Mlcek & Ismay, 2015). This requires leadership, skills and the ability to prioritise and blend different services, programs and activities to meet the needs of a changing community that includes new arrivals.

A key theme that emerged in the interviews and focus groups was the value placed on strong relationships and connections between staff, volunteers and those attending neighbourhood centres. A crucial factor of these relationships is the role that someone in the neighbourhood centre plays. This person, usually the coordinator, a staff member or a volunteer, connects the dots, connects people and introduces them to individuals or to organisations and services. They can be described as relationship brokers. They have knowledge of the community's strength, preferences and needs, and are able to provide relevant information and linkages between individuals, families and other organisations (Pittaway and Muli (2009).

Just as important is making space for neighbourhood centre participants to become active themselves - taking charge in cooking programs, providing support to each other, and contributing to the activities of the centre. The interviews conducted with new arrivals show that neighbourhood centres serve as a vital connection to the community, a place where they encounter other community members, whether new arrival or old established immigrants, and can develop friendships. These connections between neighbourhood centre participants may start being personally

welcomed by neighbourhood centre staff into the centre, but in the end it is the relationships between participants, rather than with staff, from which new arrivals draw the courage and strength to engage with the wider community. This is aptly summarised by a focus group discussant:

> Neighbourhood centres provide a wraparound service, settlement is a lifelong process and our role is to provide a pathway for their own making, their own journey is shaped by the experiences they have in our community, in our neighbourhood centres. The role of staff is to smooth the pathway to participation and build the trust of new arrivals (Focus Group 2 participant).

6.4.1 Facilitating Relationships Through Volunteering

Most neighbourhood centres would not function without volunteers, and in most centres they far outnumber paid staff. As discussed in Chapter 3, volunteers are seen as the backbone of the neighbourhood centre. Some volunteers provide translation assistance (if they are bilingual) and assist in welcoming new arrivals and making them feel comfortable. Other researchers have identified community-based volunteers as an important resource in assisting with the development of social networks between the new arrivals and the wider community and taking the pressure off formal service providers (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b).

All neighbourhood centres in this research had core groups of volunteers who provided a range of duties including reception, tuition, crèche, maintenance, and many are also members of neighbourhood centre committees. Centre coordinators were unanimous in the view that recruiting, training and supervising volunteers required considerable skill, time, and perseverance. The positive outcomes that were achieved from the contributions by volunteers generally outweighed the negatives (red tape including paper work and training) associated with their supervision, however it is a constant struggle for staff having to balance the needs of the volunteers (including work experience students) and the needs of the neighbourhood centre. One staff member commented that her group of volunteers was a program itself to manage, but she would be lost without them:

> I am lucky, I have some exceptional volunteers who, everybody loves it here, they say ‘I [volunteer] don’t have a high skill level’. they are not great typists or word processors or publishers, and they don’t want to make newsletters and I don’t care, but what they are really, really, really good at is

> that many of them have been socially isolated themselves, many of them have had mental health issues and suffered domestic violence, been a single carer (NHCC 1).

This coordinator highlighted the main asset of her centre's volunteers as being their personal experience with hardship. Having experienced social isolation, domestic violence or mental ill-health enables these volunteers to connect with the people who attend the neighbourhood centre, who may be going through similar hardships. Another asset that volunteers have is time. While staff must attend to managing the centre, volunteers can sit with new arrivals and get to know them. Volunteers are often the first point of contact and in most circumstances spend more time with participants than do staff members. It is vital that volunteers have a strong understanding of cultural difference and are tolerant and accepting in their approach to others. Overall, volunteers were recognised by neighbourhood staff members as being crucial to the success of working with new arrivals.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Community Centres SA described the role of volunteers in terms of social bridging capital, whereby volunteers and centre participants represent different cultural and/or socioeconomic resources:

> Walking alongside someone who might be of a completely different background to you but share stories, share similar life experiences, such as raising children. Neighbourhood centres offer volunteers the opportunity to work shoulder to shoulder with someone with whom they may not normally mix, share stories and share similar life experiences.

The work of volunteers often extends beyond neighbourhood centre-based activities. They also provided assistance with daily needs such as shopping, banking, childcare and transport to appointments for attendees. A staff member commented on the wide range of activities carried out by volunteers both within and beyond the neighbourhood centre.

> Volunteers have a big role helping out people, often when they come to a class they are paired up with a volunteer, they just get together and they make friendships outside the classroom, to go to places together. We have had a pregnant lady come here and the volunteers at sewing help her get to different programs that help with pregnancy, purchasing things for the baby. They make time to visit people, take people to places and I mean we have got a really good community relationship and network with the volunteers, the hand of friendship extends beyond the Centre, it's really lovely, they are a lot of things that

> happened beyond what we see here or what we hear (NHCC8).

Volunteers also acted as mentors, buddies and participated in meet and greet programs that have proven to be a successful support mechanism for new arrivals. Behnia's (2007) study across twenty five organisations in four countries, including Australia, found that befriending or mentoring programs assisted in the integration of new arrivals into their new community. Volunteer mentors offer emotional, informational and instrumental support including aiding in learning about the new society, language, the teaching of social norms, practical supports such as searching for a job, and suitable accommodation. According to Behnia (2007) mentors can become role models, alleviate social isolation and loneliness, and contribute to the quality of life of those receiving the support.

The FUSE program a partnership between Baptist Care, and a southern neighbourhood centre was created to provide buddies to the new arrivals living in southern areas of Adelaide. The program provided a volunteer buddy for six months to assist the new arrival to take part in programs conducted at the neighbourhood centres. A FUSE project worker was based within the neighbourhood centre to assist with referrals between the two organisations and to act as a liaison person to external organisations. Buddies working with this program arranged bus tours of the local Council region and staff from the various neighbourhood centres within the region were introduced to the new arrivals upon each site visit.

Another example is the *Meet and Greet Team* which involved Whyalla neighbourhood centre volunteers assisting new residents and their families in the first few days and weeks of living in Whyalla. The volunteers would be advised by the Migration Officer in the town to expect new arrivals. The *Meet and Greet service* would contact the families, sending out a checklist asking the family to indicate their priorities so the volunteers could plan more effectively. The service included meeting the family upon arrival, a town tour, and a new resident's welcome pack which included information of local services, local shops, Australian laws, accommodation, public welfare services and neighbourhood centres programs. The volunteers also conducted programs including English classes, scrapbooking classes, coffee mornings, information sessions about the Whyalla Council, and social events for the family including welcome BBQs. Through these types of activities, volunteers fostered social connections between new arrivals and other members of the local

community, thereby making a valuable contribution to facilitating bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000; Yan & Lauer, 2008b).

While these examples show long-term residents becoming involved as volunteers, neighbourhood centres also rely increasingly on volunteers who come from a migrant background or are new arrivals. Both groups of volunteers generate social capital by creating connections between people, and by increasing the skills, experiences and confidence of the volunteers themselves (Foley & Edwards, 1999; Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Yan & Lauer, 2008b). For new arrivals, volunteering is a valuable opportunity to gain work experience in their new country as a potential employment pathway, as well as building self-esteem, confidence and knowledge about the community in which they now live (Hugo, 2011). Hugo's research indicates that people from refugee and migrant backgrounds make a significant contribution to volunteering in Australia which tends to be underestimated because much of it is informal and conducted within the migrant communities (Hugo, 2011). Most communities that have a traditional concept of reciprocity, altruism and community or religious obligation, will be able to find common understandings of volunteering, even if they may not use that term to describe the actions they are undertaking. In these communities people practice reciprocity, trust and mutual care but may view volunteering as a western concept that has limited meaning to people who hold collective, in contrast to individualistic, values (Hugo, 2011). For some of the new arrivals, the concept of volunteering was unfamiliar. Their understanding of volunteering is informed by their cultural norms, and may differ from one group to another.

Vangelista (1999), in a study of Vietnamese Good Beginnings Parenting program suggests that different conceptual frameworks inform people's attitudes to volunteering. She makes this reference in regards to individualism versus collectivism. Collective cultures value harmony, cooperation and group accountability over individual functions and responsibility. Cultural conditioning influences the way in which people perceive their responsibilities and how they view volunteering. Research has found that much of the volunteer work conducted by new arrivals is directed into assisting other members of the own communities to settle into life in Australia. Informal volunteering such as transporting, housing, child care and interpreting are all forms of volunteering contributions that may not be formally recognised. The concept of volunteering is then culturally constructed and requires an understanding by the various cultural groups. Martin (1999) suggests

this is commonly unrecognised by community organisations working with volunteers and has implication for organisations such as neighbourhood centres if they fail to do so. For example, service providers working with migrants and volunteers need to consider that social services and the use of volunteers are a foreign concept to some migrants.

The difference between Western models of volunteering and other forms of mutual assistance is evident in the formalised process Australia has to volunteering, and the many steps a community member needs to go through to be accepted as a volunteer. They are required to complete application forms, have a criminal history check (a police clearance) and undergo mandatory training (in child protection). Staff members pointed out that this formalised process was a deterrent to new arrivals who just wanted to 'help out'. One staff member described the frustration of a neighbourhood centre participant who just wanted to cook for the centre:

> some new arrival volunteers really struggle with the concept around volunteering the training that's involved, the formalised process that's involved. They come with a really great desire to assist their community and then we make them jump through 27 hoops....I think it does become quite a barrier for them… Police clearances as well. I've done enough forms, she [potential volunteer] said (Focus Group 4 participant).

Another new arrival, Guy, explained he and other African new arrivals were not familiar with the concept of volunteering but once they understood it, they wanted to participate in order to gain work experience.

> Volunteering is not known by new arrivals. They didn't understand the benefit of it, they think that it is not for me, they think I am really looking for work, but work with no network no, you cannot get job. You need to know people, if you don't know you stay for life looking for work. But if somebody knows you and your experience, that is where you get job. You need to even 1 hour a week, you learn something and that something will let you get experience. Even if you get the paper that is not enough you need experience (Guy/NA).

Neighbourhood centre staff members saw volunteering as providing new arrivals with three keys benefits - friendships and networks which reduce their social isolation, an opportunity to contribute to life in Australia and feel valued, and an activity that builds their confidence and skills. The staff members particularly

highlighted the opportunity volunteering provided to gain experience in an Australian workplace setting and in obtaining references for future employers:

> it gives them an opportunity to feel valued and contributing ….. confidence and self-esteem and thirdly it build skills and provide references. They don't have references and so if they come and volunteer with us, I can be a referee and that provides them with a reference opportunity as well (NHCC1).

This research found that the volunteer cohort of some of the neighbourhood centres, particularly those in the western and north-eastern suburbs, was made up of many nationalities including new arrivals from various African and South East Asian countries and from Afghanistan. These volunteers were working across all the areas of the neighbourhood centre, including reception work, crèche, community gardens, and management groups. Neighbourhood centre staff members matched the skills of the new arrivals to a particular volunteer activity. For example, cooking in a kitchen or café at the neighbourhood centre was one such activity discussed by staff where new arrivals can use their skills to contribute to the neighbourhood centre. A Sri Lankan woman described volunteering as a way of feeling connected and not alone.

> Every other Tuesday and Thursday is free so you know, at home I am alone, so going to place where I don't worry about everything. After that I am thinking about that, ah, volunteering, and you know, I like to do the volunteering because ah, this is my, you know I can't explain that because I am getting good things here, so I need to ...I'm always telling my kids also. Yeah, we are saving our life here, every Australian, we are really thanks to every Australians and we will try best to do good things. We will try, you know (Mary/NA)

A second important reason for volunteering, according to Mary, was to show her gratitude for being safe in Australia and to show her children and the community that she is willing to pitch in. Getting good things and doing good things are connected for her, it is about reciprocity. This example shows the relevance the distinction between passive and active approaches to service provision (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003), suggesting that enabling new arrivals to volunteer plays a role in challenging the construction of new arrivals as passive, needy and waiting to be saved. Neighbourhood centre staff members indicated that new arrival volunteers see volunteering as contributing to their social networking as well as that of other new arrival participants in neighbourhood centres. This active approach to service delivery empowers new arrivals to use their newly gained skills and English

language to volunteer and assist others, thus further developing social capital, a sense of belonging and improving wellbeing (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003). In the quotes below, Jack and Ivy allude to this in explaining what volunteering offers them:

> Yes for me is ah, be a volunteer, some people say, but you don't receive anything for your work and I think, no I receive a lot of things for my work. Things we, I can't pay with money. That is the most important. They are friendly, learn a lot from the people, the smile of the people, the opportunity to know and feel like another people in this place and that is ah, I can't say, describe very well that this is amazing. I think for me one of the best experience in this eight months, seven months in Australia is to be part of the Community Centres (Jack/NA).

> Yeah they say that they have many volunteers here so I think, yep why not. I think I can do something for them, maybe with events with my background or doing something that they need me to do. So yes, I since last February um officially a volunteer in here….. give you more like satisfaction with yourself. Like you do have a part in the community so like giving back something so. So it's nice, it's really nice (Ivy/NA).

New arrivals feel a part of the neighbourhood centre by having a specific role building their own capacity and seen as using an active approach to their resettlement, pursuing goals, and a positive attitude towards their volunteering experiences (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2003).

> People want to contribute and just feel a part of something, play a role even though they are new. Most people want to contribute and play a role (Focus Group 1 participant).

> People start to feel a little bit of empowerment, they start volunteering and feel wanted, helpful and appreciated (Focus Group 3 participant).

> We sign them up, give them that connection to the centre, they are volunteers they feel important they are a part of it (Focus Group 2 participant).

> We see outcomes through volunteering. The woman [who] came five years ago and looked at the grounds is now a volunteer and helping someone else who is new to the centre (Focus Group 2 participant).

Volunteering can also offer a new arrival more social support over time through the development of a one-to-one relationship with members of the community rather than the mere participation in a course or class. Volunteering sometimes takes the

form of providing community performances during festivals and events at neighbourhood centres. The Burundian Association of South Australia, for example, had regular meetings at a northern suburb neighbourhood centre where the women in their community practised their cultural traditions and volunteered as dancers at the neighbourhood centre's multicultural events.

A third group of volunteers in neighbourhood centres are university students doing a practicum. In the Settlement Houses (predecessors of neighbourhood centres in USA and Canada, see Chapter 3.2.1) of the past, Social Work students lived on site and as part of their training, worked and supported newcomers to the community. In the neighbourhood centres in South Australia, students are offered placements to support new arrivals. Providing student practicum placements is another example of neighbourhood centres working to bolster the services they provide. Various universities offer student practicum placements for students from a variety of disciplines including social work, occupation therapy and behavioural sciences. According to neighbourhood centre staff members, these students assist them with community engagement strategies, needs analysis, counselling, marketing and program design. Focus group participants highlighted the additional labour power provided by practicum students and were keen to attract students from various cultural backgrounds who could also offer insight into various cultures and speak different languages. Community Centres SA has developed partnerships with the Social Work schools of two South Australian universities - Flinders University and the University of South Australia. For the students, working with neighbourhood centres is a way of strengthening their skills in a Community Development setting.

The Coordinator of a north-eastern neighbourhood centre recalled how a social work student from a culturally diverse background enabled the staff to engage with the local Muslim community:

> The first student I took on was Muslim. Her parents came out to Australia over 30 years ago. She lived locally, had two small children and needed a final placement. At the local Mosque, 90% of the people who attended at the time were Uyghur people, a lot of women were at home, very isolated and not doing anything much during the day. They didn't know the language and it was not long after Sept 11, 2001, and Muslims were being reviled in the media. The woman were living locally, a Pakistani woman had a shot fired through her window, so many awful things were occurring in the community. So we started a women's group, we called it a Multicultural group, before this group started there was only one other CALD group in the Centre. We also had an

> ESL class. We hadn't had any Muslims come to the Centre at all prior to this group starting. Before we started this work the Centre wouldn't have been a comfortable place for Muslims to attend. We kept the Social Work student on employed she is now working at the centre as a counsellor; she speaks different languages and is able to work with them and other Muslims. We use Social work as a way in for relationship counselling, people come in to get help with filling in a form and then more information is discovered such as domestic violence, she works with such extreme issues (NHCC6).

The social work student used her knowledge of the local Muslim community and the ability to speak their language to encourage them to attend the neighbourhood centre. The valuable contribution the student made to the staffing of the centre was rewarded with employment at the same centre. As the quote above points out, the participants of the neighbourhood centre benefit from the free counselling offered by social work students. They also assist in the development of new programs (such as the multicultural women's group) and work with the neighbourhood centre staff to build bridges between the existing neighbourhood centre participants and the Muslim community.

6.5 Conclusion

This research identified two distinctive approaches to service delivery operating within neighbourhood centres in South Australia. The first as identified in Chapter 5 focusses on service delivery, where individuals and groups are perceived to have needs that can be met through programs, services and activities. The other approach to service delivery is holistic, looking at the individual as a whole person, as a member of the broader family who comes with deficits (lacking skills, English language difficulties) but also capabilities that can benefit the neighbourhood centre and the local community. The concern is with the new arrival's sense of belonging and feeling part of their new community, and with the host community gaining insight and cultural understanding of the new arrivals' way of life. This approach is more conducive to a two-way form of integration. The more holistic neighbourhood centres as discussed in this chapter have assisted community members to build relationships, and through social inclusion and participation, created a sense of belonging and understanding among them.

This chapter has identified that some neighbourhood centres are community organisations that act as a catalyst for new arrivals and host community members to come together and bridge cultural differences. The process of bringing people

together involves the negotiation of shared values established through social participation and social interaction. Neighbourhood centres, it has been shown, are physical places that offer opportunities for people to attend and interact but it is the lived experiences of building relationships that is a vital part of the work of neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers.

Relationships within a neighbourhood centre between staff members, volunteers and new arrivals are not necessarily friendships but they can be both pleasurable and beneficial to each party. The relationships provide sociability and reciprocity. The relationship between new arrivals and other group members is one of trust, where people do things for each other without expecting an immediate return of favours but knowing that at some stage it will be returned. This is what Putnam calls a trust between two acquaintances (Putnam, 2000). Wilkinson and Bittman (2002) call it sociability, or the need to seek out companions or people at the neighbourhood centre to trust. Reciprocity between new arrivals and others attending the neighbourhood centre is the extension of relationship-building work that sees the new arrivals not only as people in need but also as possessing the capacity to help themselves and others. This role is seen as operating in the examples of the work of neighbourhood centres in the numerous examples provided in this chapter, where there is a model at work as both meeting needs and giving back. This reciprocity is central to social capital because of the trust and mutual benefit that is formed through cooperation between new arrivals, staff and volunteers of neighbourhood centres (Sandercock & Attili, 2009).

The findings discussed in this chapter reveal that new arrivals gain a sense of belonging and connection through attending neighbourhood centres. Some new arrivals disclosed during interviews and it was observed during site visits that some neighbourhood centre staff members and volunteers exhibited mannerisms that were exclusionary, but this is not necessarily deliberate; rather, these mannerisms (such as avoiding contact, staring, speaking in a loud voice or not making eye contact when speaking with a new arrival) indicated a lack of understanding or staff training, and those who exhibited them were often unaware that they were giving unwelcoming signals. Fisher and Sonn (2007) point out that those exclusionary processes can take place in community settings, and community members may not actually realise how their behaviour can lead to excluding others.

The more welcoming neighbourhood centres discussed in this chapter have created places for connection and dialogue to occur, which Sandercock and Attili (2009)

maintain are the preconditions for relationship building. The everyday interactions between new arrivals and other participants of neighbourhood centres can occur in the community garden, during festivals, over lunch, during the adult education classes, by preparing and sharing food together in the kitchen, sharing facilities, and playing together. These places provide opportunities to meet others with the possibility of forming new connections and attachments; they provide an atmosphere that allows the overcoming of strangeness and fear through a process of interacting by performing mundane tasks and activities and the development of bridging social capital to grow (Kirkby-Geddes et al., 2013). This chapter also indicated that social capital building requires the dedication of trained and skilled neighbourhood centre staff as well as volunteers. Sharing commonalities and experiences enables understanding and support without requiring professional training, and the research has shown that volunteers play an important role in forging supportive relationships. However, these types of interaction do not just happen; they are the result of strategies, commitment and time spent by the organisation's staff members and volunteers. They foster a sense of community, nurture trust and confidence amongst the neighbourhood centre participants. It requires the selection of diverse staff and fostering of volunteers with empathy, skills, knowledge and cultural awareness to work with new arrivals.

The findings in this chapter also show that neighbourhood centres provide a valuable third place where new arrivals can access assistance, relationships can be built in the form of bonding social capital (connections within groups), and social connections in the form of bridging social capital (connections between groups) can be made. Both neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers, and new arrivals who attended the neighbourhood centres, agree that new arrivals benefit by developing social connections with people outside of their usual sphere of social connection, and that they can serve as a pathway to volunteering and possibly employment. Through the use of volunteers and culturally inclusive practices, some neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers have demonstrated that they practised a two-way integration, in the sense described by (Ager & Strang, 2008). Through cultural celebrations, preparing and sharing food and stories, new arrivals have been able to enhance their understanding of Australian life, continue to practise their cultural traditions and in turn the other users of the neighbourhood centres who share programs, courses and the facilities have gained valuable insight into the lives of new arrivals. The actions of some neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers thus

indicate a commitment to assisting new arrivals to experience belonging - the connection new arrivals feel to their new country and its people.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The journey of my thesis began at a Community Centres SA annual state conference seven years ago where practitioners called for more research into the role played by South Australian neighbourhood centres in assisting new arrivals. Many other organisations are tasked with settling humanitarian migrants, but it was argued that neighbourhood centres, as generalist community organisations, can also play a role in promoting their integration. Existing Australian research (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Hugo, 2011; Izmir et al., 2009; Jackson et al., 2013; Pittaway et al., 2015) and international research (Lauer & Yan, 2010; Yan, 2004) suggests that participation in community-based networks enhances new arrivals' capacity to settle and integrate, but there are few in-depth studies into the processes of integration in community organisations. This thesis set out to explore and analyse these processes in South Australian neighbourhood centres that work with new arrivals. In this final chapter, I will summarise the key points arising from the analysis and discuss the broader implications of this research, including its limitations, and ideas for further research.

7.2 Social Capital and Integration

The conceptual framework for this research is based on social capital theory, which recognises social connections between individuals and organisations as a linchpin of democracy, civic culture and social cohesion. Popularised through Putnam's (1993) work in the US, social capital is portrayed as the connective tissue that sustains and supports individuals and enables them to get ahead in society. Putnam's main argument is that individuals are actively engaged in their communities; they produce social capital which helps to resolve individual and societal concerns and accumulates with use. When social capital is absent or in decline, this can result in a decline in civic culture, increased violence, inequality and impoverishment (Poder, 2011).

Social capital theory has been applied to research and policies concerned with the integration of migrants into societies where they have settled. In particular, Ager and Strang's (Ager & Strang, 2008; Strang & Ager, 2010) research on integrating refugees has had a significant impact. Based on Putnam's (2000) and Szreter and Woolcock's (2004) conceptualisation of social capital, they identify three concepts - bonds, bridges and links – to describe different modes of social connection. Bonds

refer to the connection with like-ethnic groups which give refugees a voice, contact point, expertise and sensitive response, as well as offering opportunities to maintain their own cultural and social customs (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 178). Bridges refer to refugee participation in the host society (e.g. interacting with neighbours or participating in community associations) and links refer to connection with the structures of the state, including local government services. Integration is deemed more successful where migrants have access to diverse social networks, whilst those most at risk of being socially isolated, such as women with young children or the unemployed, are least likely to integrate (Khawaja et al., 2008).

In Australia, the coexistence of multicultural, integration and xenophobic discourses creates a complex environment for migrants rebuilding their lives and identities in Australia (Schech & Rainbird, 2013). The dual challenge for new arrivals is to become self-reliant as quickly as possible and unburden the welfare system, while also being active in forging social connections with mainstream society and using mainstream social services. Many refugees receive intensive support through government-funded settlement programs in the first six to twelve months after arrival, but other migrants do not. Some of the gaps in the institutional support structure are filled by community organisations, which also seek to provide social connections over the longer term. Community organisations based around national and ethnic identities are seen to provide bonding capital, and their role was recognised by Australian multicultural policies emerging in the 1970s as important to help migrants of different race or culture settle in a stable and prosperous society. With the Australian government's retreat from multiculturalism in the 1990s, the bonding capital built by same-ethnic social connections came to be seen as less desirable and as potentially contributing to ethnic and social divisions in society. The emphasis of policy makers shifted to citizenship, social cohesion and integration into an assumed core culture of western civilization, English language and Anglo-Saxon cultural roots (Tate, 2009). There is at times a narrow line between integration and assimilation (Schneider & Crul, 2010) with both relying on normative values including loyalty to the nation, shared language and other resources, and a focus on adaptation which involves abandoning cultural practices that do not fit the mainstream social norms of the host society.

Integration is a slippery concept that takes on different meanings depending on the environment and context in which it is used. It is often described in terms of successful settlement, which is said to occur when a new arrival has acquired

affordable housing and is able to access suitable training, education and employment (Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b; Fozdar & Torezani, 2008; Hugo, 2011). This thesis has argued that integration is more than achieving these markers, as it also involves new arrivals establishing connections to place in their neighbourhood and in public spaces, as well as developing feelings of belonging. The different perspectives on integration can be condensed into one-way and two-way integration, whereby one-way integration is mainly about new arrivals fitting into society. In this approach, social services operate from a deficit or needs-based approach and see their role as redressing the deficiencies of new arrivals so that they can fit in.

In comparison, two-way integration involves changes in behaviours, values and norms on both sides, the new arrival and the broader community, and is more conducive to a strengths and capabilities-based approach to integration. Thus the ability of new arrivals to integrate into a new country depends on being able to tap into existing community networks, and on those community networks welcoming them and being open to change (Strang & Ager, 2010 p. 600). This is where the concepts of social capital theory come into play. By ensuring a person is involved in many social networks with numerous social connections, he or she will accrue social capital and contribute to the social capital of others. Building social capital therefore requires social interaction (Winter, 2000), and community organisations are seen as key agents in promoting practices of social interaction that assist integration. Their role is critical in ensuring the sustainability and cohesion of culturally diverse societies (Papillon, 2002).

Drawing on the theory of social capital and its application in Ager and Strang's framework of integration, this thesis examined how neighbourhood centres contribute to integration by providing opportunities for new arrivals to access and form social networks, and whether their work is informed by a one-way or two-way understanding of integration.

7.3 Studying Neighbourhood Centres

As shown in Chapter 3 of this thesis, neighbourhood centres emerged at key moments of social and economic transformation. Their origins in Anglo-Saxon countries are variously associated with the social and cultural displacement caused by industrialisation, urbanisation, mass immigration, and post-war reconstruction. Neighbourhood centres in Australia grew from grassroots movements in the 1970s

to meet the social and cultural needs of the community, particularly of women. The three most common impetuses for the development of a neighbourhood centre was the need for adult learning opportunities, service gaps including child care, and the founding of self-help groups and informal social support programs (Foley, 1993; Golding et al., 2008). The Commonwealth Government in the early 1970s quickly recognised the useful role neighbourhood centres could play in strengthening the social fabric of local communities, particularly in areas of high levels of social disadvantage, and funded them through the Australian Assistance Plan (Ollis, Starr, Ryan, Angwin, & Harrison, 2017). In this heyday of community development, government and residents shared the view that each neighbourhood should have a common meeting place where local people could meet a friendly and nurturing environment and support each other in improving their lives. Government support for neighbourhood centres in subsequent years continued with initiatives by state governments that flowed on through to local government.

Research on neighbourhood centres (Kimberley, 1998; Paltridge, 2005; Rooney, 2011; Rule, 2005) indicates that staff members, volunteers and governing bodies of neighbourhood centres interpret the philosophical stance of the sector's vision statement in varying ways. This is reflected in ways in which community needs are identified and services are provided, and in the style and ambience of the facilities, which vary from one centre to the next. However, Kimberley (1998 as cited in Paltridge 2005, p. 160) argues that neighbourhood centres share a unique *magical, special, and strangeness* that distinguishes them from other organisations. The ideology of neighbourhood centres is based on a self-perception as a welcoming and empowering place where people who experience isolation, disadvantage and disengagement can find support and the means to progress. As one recent study maintains, what distinguishes neighbourhood centres is not so much magic but principles of grassroots community development:

> Safe places where participants can snuggle in and learn, develop, share, grow and dream and most importantly see these dreams come true. It's not magic: it's commitment, confidence, community, creativity and connection (Ollis, Starr, Ryan, Angwin, & Harrison, 2016, p. 7).

The neighbourhood centres in the present study all provided programs that combined community development and adult learning principles but their scope and reach differed according to locations, funding and other resources. They also differed in their approaches to including new arrivals in the centre's day-to-day

undertakings. This thesis found that the level of involvement among new arrivals depended mainly on the creativity and confidence of paid staff and volunteers, the informal and participatory communication styles they practised, and their commitment to a strength-based approach to capacity development.

Neighbourhood centres are generalist organisations that do not focus on specific issues, services, activities or target groups. They usually work across a range of issues and services simultaneously which encompass community development, health, education, and recreational objectives. The inability to pinpoint the role of neighbourhood centres in the broader context of social services can be seen as a weakness, but also a strength. As Rooney (2011, p. 221) points out, 'the freedom from the constraints and boundaries associated with robust definitions afford neighbourhood centres substantial fluidity in developing appropriate organisational identity'. Thus, the lack of a clear task description enables neighbourhood centres to continually restructure and adapt to a changing community whilst retaining their core values and commitment to community development. Some neighbourhood centres have evolved into multipurpose organisations that cater for a wide range of people with different interests and needs. Others have remained small grassroots organisations flexible enough to change direction as community needs emerge (Mlcek & Ismay, 2015).

In the context of a tightening government welfare sector and neoliberal discourses of self-reliance and self-improvement, neighbourhood centres are local, informal, inexpensive environments where people whose needs are not being met find assistance through the private sector or the public sector. Neighbourhood centre governing bodies increasingly refer to social capital theory to support their claim that social connection is central to their endeavours. Thus, neighbourhood centres aim to connect people to each other and to place. In relation to new arrivals, this may involve helping them to find a place to live, developing language and employability skills, getting to know other service providers in their neighbourhood, or making new friends. Community ties provide an important sense of belonging and social identity (Ager & Strang, 2008). Being part of a community can enhance the likelihood of creating social bonding and bridging relationships and improve a person's sense of wellbeing. While much of the literature on integration tends to neglect place belonging, neighbourhood centres operate under the assumption that belonging to an identifiable locale is vital to integration, and helps to alleviate isolation and alienation in modern society (Aldred, Buckingham et al. 2004, Lauer and Yan 2007,

Rooney 2009). Many new arrivals experience feelings of strangeness and isolation, and often also rejection and discrimination. They represent a wide range of socioeconomic, cultural, religious, language, and age groups, and can experience diverse settlement issues related to English language acquisition, skills recognition, unemployment, family separation, and disabling trauma. It is important to acknowledge that members of the 'mainstream society' may have similar experiences and feelings. Neighbourhood centres see themselves as offering a place where members of the local community, whoever they are, can build social networks and feel a sense of belonging.

This study investigated whether these principles, ambitions and self-perceptions of neighbourhood centres applied to new arrivals. Digging beneath the rhetoric posed some challenges, which were raised in Chapter 4. The design framework used for this study was a phased sequential qualitative design. It aimed to understand multiple views of meaning from multiple stakeholders including staff, volunteers, and new arrivals. The multiple methods approach included an electronic mapping survey tool of the 103 neighbourhood centres in South Australia, focus groups with staff and volunteers, some site visits, and semi-structured interviews with new arrivals and some staff. Capturing the voices of new arrivals and neighbourhood centre workers was vitally important to gain a more holistic, though always still partial, picture of the centres' role in settlement and integration.

7.4 Research Findings

About half of South Australia's neighbourhood centres indicated through the mapping survey that they offered programs in key areas that have been identified by researchers (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fozdar & Hartley, 2013b) as critical to successful settlement of new arrivals, including English Language, employment, social connections, and cultural knowledge. An important theme emerging from focus groups and interviews was that some neighbourhood centres were addressing the gaps left by settlement services for new arrivals. A second theme was that the settlement programs for new arrivals provided by the federal government did not extend to helping people settle into the local community, gain a sense of home or belonging, and this has also been identified in the literature (Gillford et al., 2007). Thus the work of some neighbourhood centres assisted new arrivals to integrate at the local level and at an emotional level in ways that other service providers were not able. The most effective centres achieved this by providing a communal space in which new arrivals could feel welcome, avail themselves of courses to increase their

capabilities, make social connections of various kinds, and take on active roles as mentors and volunteers. Thirdly, the research found that new arrivals encountered barriers to participation in neighbourhood centres that were similar to the barriers identified in the integration literature. However, it also found that some neighbourhood centres were aware of at least some of these barriers and were willing to address them through a variety of means.

7.4.1 Addressing Gaps in Service Provision

New arrivals are attending South Australian neighbourhood centres because their settlement needs are not being met elsewhere, particularly their needs for social support, skill development and social connections. Three factors contribute to this service gap. Firstly, some new arrivals complete the Humanitarian Settlement Support (HSS) program without having had sufficient time to become self-reliant and develop a familiarity with mainstream services. The challenges they encounter when trying to access mainstream services and connect with the broader community may explain why many new arrivals' initial positive and euphoric response to having arrived in Australia only lasts a few months before it is replaced by disillusionment (Beiser, 2009). Regardless of the type of services new arrivals accessed, they described themselves as feeling less supported, more vulnerable and more anxious about their situation after formal assistance ceased (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007). Secondly, some new arrivals are not eligible for HSS and therefore have to access mainstream services. Even when new arrivals know how to access mainstream services at a national, state, local or community level, they often encounter service providers who are not responsive to their needs as new arrivals from a humanitarian or culturally-specific background.

For new arrivals who required further settlement assistance, neighbourhood centres offer an alternative, but not all centres are able or willing to fill this service gap. Some centres clearly demonstrated their interest, ability and confidence in working with new arrivals, and the capacity to respond to new community needs as they emerged. These centres tended to be more capable in terms of staffing, resources and infrastructure. Other neighbourhood centres indicated that they required additional supports and resources in order to work with new arrivals effectively. Resourcing neighbourhood centres has been an issue since their inception. The current funding models require a collegial approach to engage in formal resource sharing partnerships to be able to respond to those most in need in the local community.

Despite a mandate to include everyone, some new arrivals reported their difficulty in locating and accessing a neighbourhood centre. Reported barriers to accessing centres included limited understanding of their role, financial difficulties, lack of transport, unavailability of child care, inability to speak and read English. Once new arrivals have succeeded in finding their way to a neighbourhood centre, their participation could be hampered by a lack of staff awareness of cultural and religious practices, or simply their limited skills in engaging with cultural difference. Such matters impacted an individual's ability to take the first step towards participation in a neighbourhood centre activity, course or volunteering opportunity. Neighbourhood centre staff members were aware of some of the issues impacting accessibility, but other barriers, particularly those related to cross-cultural interaction, were reported by new arrivals.

The ways neighbourhood centres addressed the gaps in services differed from one centre to another. All centres that participated in this study offered education courses at no or low cost and were open to any community member. These courses enabled new arrivals to acquire a range of skills and gain an understanding of Australian customs and employment practices. The informal and supportive learning environment, often with one-on-one tuition, distinguished neighbourhood centres from other service providers. As well as accessing courses and programs, new arrivals in some centres were also able to benefit economically and vocationally through participating in social enterprise programs or by volunteering in a neighbourhood centre.

New arrivals who took part in this research identified numerous skills areas that they had developed through their local neighbourhood centre, including English reading and writing, information technology, parenting, budgeting and volunteering. These are all skills that build a person's social capital and enable them to participate in the wider community (Ollis et al., 2017). New arrivals indicated that they felt more comfortable accessing classes or programs through their neighbourhood centre because there were no eligibility criteria and anyone could attend. The availability of child care services on site and proximity to public transport also made attending a neighbourhood centre attractive. New arrivals welcomed the opportunity to volunteer in neighbourhood centres as this contributed to the improvement of their English language skills, social networks, employability skills and confidence. For others volunteering was a vital source of pride and dignity as it enabled them to contribute to the neighbourhood centre's work, for example, through their language and

intercultural skills. Volunteering also presented an opportunity to give back to the community and help to shift the community's attitudes towards new arrivals, challenging the assumptions that members of such groups can only be recipients of services rather than contributors (Davis-Smith, Ellis, Howlett, & O'Brien, 2004). Active participation by new arrivals shifted the focus in the neighbourhood centre from a needs-based approach of servicing new arrivals, to one where their capabilities and cultural identities were valued. Some neighbourhood centres routinely incorporated opportunities for new arrivals to express their diversity and offer intercultural interactions into the daily activities and long-term programs of the centre, as they considered it central to building cross-cultural understanding between groups.

Some neighbourhood centres may need to assist more with transport information in regards to accessing public transport, along with assisting new arrivals obtaining drivers' licence training. The provision of transport for new arrivals could include negotiating (where possible) with the local Council to provide access to community bus services. To increase their accessibility for new arrivals living on tight budgets, neighbourhood centres should maintain a low-cost fee structure or alternative means to pay for classes and activities, by offering opportunities for people to (where possible) help out or volunteer at the neighbourhood centre in exchange for the fee of a class or course. By continuing to foster opportunities for new arrivals to volunteer, neighbourhood centres can promote skill development, valuable work experience and a sense of competence and connection to the local community.

7.4.2 Two approaches to Service Delivery

This research identified two distinctive approaches to service delivery operating within neighbourhood centres in South Australia. One approach focusses on service delivery, where individuals and groups are perceived to have needs that can be met through programs, services and activities. The other approach is a people-centred approach which looks at the individual as a whole person with capabilities and deficiencies.

Those neighbourhood centres that focussed primarily on service delivery tended to take an economic perspective on their work. Community members were seen as users, customers or clients who attend programs, and the effort of the centre was measured in numbers of clients, contact hours, and skill-development courses. This approach was associated with a focus on specific needs or deficits of individuals, with the overall objective being self-reliance. The local solutions to certain issues

and the social actions that once took place in neighbourhood centres is now replaced by an abundance of programs and services that aim to strengthen, include and enhance, people's wellbeing and skill levels. These neighbourhood centres have become an arm of their funding bodies, delivering programs and services in order to meet funding contracts and accountability requirements of governing structures and relying heavily on short-term funding for project-based activity. With staff members constantly working to meet the requirements of a particular funding body, key performance indicators and outcomes, they are not taking time out to reflect if they are meeting the needs of the whole of their community.

Neighbourhood centres operating in this model of service delivery see inclusion as not being discriminatory and having 'bums on seats' (in the words of staff). In these neighbourhood centres, staff members and volunteers saw new arrivals as additional work, beyond their call of duty and not within their job description. Thus, catering for new arrivals was seen to require additional resources, time, space and training of staff, and therefore further funding submissions. Typically these centres would offer English language classes, pre-employment skills and courses on the Australian way of life. This form of service delivery at best delivers a one-way form of integration where the new arrival has to adapt and fit in. These neighbourhood centres were reluctant to approach migrant community groups and organisations to market their services to new arrivals as they felt that they were already fulfilling their brief as long as people attended and classes were full. If neighbourhood centres wish to increase the participation by new arrivals at their centres and assist them to become part of the wider community, a rethink of their marketing strategies would be beneficial. The cheapest and most successful form of advertising, as evident from this research, is by word of mouth. If centres provide a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment and uphold the ideals of their mission statement, new arrivals will come and also encourage others along. Opportunities do exist for a much wider promotion of services by using the internet and social media more effectively, as well as non-mainstream marketing channels such as community radio. Good news stories in newsletters, annual reports and funding accountability reports offer opportunities for neighbourhood centres to share the success of their programs and generate interest in the wider community without added cost.

The other approach to service delivery is holistic, looking at the individual as a whole person, as a member of the broader family who comes with deficits (lacking skills, English language difficulties) but also capabilities that can benefit the

neighbourhood centre and the local community. The concern here is with the new arrival's sense of belonging and feeling part of their new community, and with the host community gaining insight and cultural understanding of the new arrivals' way of life. This approach is more conducive to a two-way form of integration. The more holistic neighbourhood centres assisted community members to build relationships, and through social inclusion and participation, created a sense of belonging and understanding among them. They used the vocabulary of community development to describe members of the community as contributors and active participants building social relationships, community connections and inclusiveness. Services and programs were timely, flexible and nurturing. In these organisations the focus is on creating a homely, comfortable 'third place' (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982) where people can participate in activities and gain skills through their involvement. New arrivals that walk through the doors of these neighbourhood centres are welcomed as people with something to contribute to the organisation whilst at the same time being offered opportunities to extend themselves. Here bridging capital is built not through a program or course but is embedded in all activities (Yan & Lauer, 2008b). Staff and volunteers can be seen as catalysts enabling new arrivals to rebuild their lives in a new community. The CEO of Community Centres SA describes these neighbourhood centres to be like a community within themselves.

> It's a bit like the community.... It would have the diversity of the community within it. The Centre would be really well aware of what changes are happening, the other organisations, and the other linkages they can be making and… ideally they would be resourced to make those things happen.

As stated in this quote, these neighbourhood centres are active, engaging places for social connection. They are the social hubs of their local community with connectors, or key people, including volunteers and staff. They also pursue strong partnerships and are adopting an external orientation to enable them to become greater contributors to social capital and have a more visible presence in the wider community. In these neighbourhood centres, staff members and volunteers who may have been migrants or refugees themselves were encouraged to work with new arrivals, as they have knowledge and experience of the services they utilised when they were new to Australia.

7.4.3 A Place for Social Connection

This research has found that some neighbourhood centres can provide an opportunity for people to extend their networks beyond their immediate kinship and ethnic community. As the literature emphasises, integration requires people to interact across social boundaries. Bridging relationships with the broader host community are vital for new arrivals to feel that they belong and are at home in their new country. New arrivals can experience neighbourhood centres as places where ties can be formed between people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and between people of the same age but different ethnicity (Leonard & Onyx, 2004). Such interactions flourish more easily if they are positively encouraged and organised by people committed to the facilitation of these contacts, as staff and volunteers in some neighbourhood centres are.

Informal activities such as cooking and eating together in neighbourhood centres were identified by staff as a significant technique in the establishment of social connections. For new arrivals, participating in such activities enabled them to share their feelings about specific places and cultural practices of their homelands with strangers, which builds cross-cultural understanding that can aid in developing a sense of belonging in Australia. For new arrival women, cooking and sharing food within a community setting was empowering because it validated their skills, cultural knowledge and identity even if they had few other opportunities for external recognition. At the same time, cooking classes also enabled participants to practise numeracy and literacy skills through weighing items and reading and writing recipes. Cultural celebrations, community arts workshops, events, parades, and constructing murals and mosaics provided new arrival groups with an opportunity to express and celebrate difference in an engaging and inclusive way within some neighbourhood centres. Programs such as sewing classes were not only about sewing garments. They provided social support, encouraged English language skill development, and the bonding that occurred between group participants was beneficial to their mental and physical health.

Place emerged as a central element in the formation of social capital in this research. Some neighbourhood centres were aware that creating a welcoming physical environment and a relaxed ambience were critical in attracting and retaining new arrival participants. They made the interior décor of a neighbourhood centre more culturally inclusive by depicting people from various cultural backgrounds in photographs or paintings, displaying the handicrafts and artwork

produced by the participants or messages of welcome in assorted languages. The use of space also had an impact on the degree to which a neighbourhood centre was able to foster social connection. Some neighbourhood centres created casual areas within their premises, such as drop-in coffee spaces, gardens, or a place to just sit and chat, because they recognised the important role of casual encounters between strangers in building relationships, engaging in dialogue and developing social connections. Centres that curtailed the need to fill every space and every timeslot with scheduled programs, and allowed for more casual drop-in times and spaces, also provided more opportunities for participants to create the place together and come up with new collaborative projects, such as communal art projects.

Creating a place where families, not just individuals, could feel at home highlights the important role of crèche facilities. Particularly for new arrivals with young children and no access to other childcare, being able to bring their children to the centre was an important facilitator of integration. Neighbourhood centres that had bilingual crèche workers found it easier to encourage new arrivals to develop trust in the centre and utilise its childcare services and programs. Offering crèche volunteers to undertake training in Children's Services through Vocational Educational Training had positive impacts on the neighbourhood centre, which gained a valuable staff resource, as well as the volunteers, who increased their prospects of gaining employment.

Welcoming informal social spaces, crèche facilities and adaptations to neighbourhood centre practices, such as broadening meal options during community meal programs, helped new arrivals feel they belonged. It is the atmosphere of a place that touches the soul of those who attend; that special something in the environment, the welcoming place that enables meaningful interactions which in turn builds social capital in the neighbourhood centre.

Developing social connections is important to retaining new arrivals, which is important for South Australia to reach its population growth and economic development target. New arrivals with stronger social connections are more likely to remain in their new place of residence (Jackson et al., 2012). Chen and Renzaho's (2017) longitudinal study of humanitarian migrants in Australia found a strong association between social integration and self-rated health. They argue that social integration means being able to communicate with local people, make friends from different backgrounds, attend social events such as places of worship, and adapt to

a new environment; all of which may increase accessibility and widen access to health information as well as emotional support.

This thesis found that few men from new arrival communities participated in neighbourhood centres. To enable them to access the bonding, bridging and linking social capital in neighbourhood centres, it may be necessary to review the opening hours of centres and the programs offered. This would require a review of existing service delivery and additional resourcing and funding.

The findings of this research suggest that at some neighbourhood centres, staff members and volunteers were actively involved in including diverse groups of people into their services and work. New arrivals also used neighbourhood centres to make social connections of their own. These centres embraced cultural diversity and the idea of welcoming people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and new arrivals specifically. At other neighbourhood centres, the research showed that involvement of new arrivals had not been a major focus or direction of their work.

7.5 Opportunities for Further Research

The investigation of neighbourhood centres in this research has contributed to a deeper understanding of their role in the integration and settlement of new arrivals in South Australia. New arrivals can lack opportunities for social connections resulting in isolation and feeling disconnected from the wider community. This study established that participation at neighbourhood centres can assist new arrivals to become connected to their local community by facilitating their development of social contacts and supportive social networks through the formation of bonding, bridging and linking social capital. It argued that staff and volunteers working within neighbourhood centres are the key facilitative component in forming bridging social capital for new arrivals. Neighbourhood centres serve as a vital connection to the community, a place where new arrivals encounter other community members and can develop skills and friendships. These connections between neighbourhood centre participants may begin by being personally welcomed by neighbourhood centre staff into the centre, but in the end it is the relationships between participants, rather than with staff, from which new arrivals can draw the courage and strength to engage with the wider community.

While this thesis has contributed to the further understanding of the role played by South Australian neighbourhood centres in relation to the integration of new arrivals, there are some limitations to this study that offer opportunities for further research. As the data collection process unfolded it became apparent that obtaining access to interviewees was not simply a matter of recruiting people into the research, but rather a complex social process of gaining access into the neighbourhood centres. As I was not involved in making the initial contacts with respondents, due to ethical considerations, it was difficult to establish how many respondents were approached and subsequently declined to participate in the research. The findings may not, therefore, be reflective of the experiences of all new arrivals attending neighbourhood centres. The content of this thesis may be useful for neighbourhood centres and service providers working with new arrivals or seeking to work with new arrivals both in South Australia and Australia in similar settings, provided that stakeholders apply the findings critically, within the context of the experiences at hand. The findings of this research are likely to exist among other comparable groups, although, their operation may produce different outcomes in different settings.

This research has provided the foundation from which insight into the needs of new arrivals can be further explored in future research. It has raised many questions and challenges regarding the future role of neighbourhood centres. It suggests the need for additional research across South Australia and Australia. Neighbourhood centres are generalist community-based organisations that emerged over 60 years ago, yet, surprisingly, still little research is conducted about them (Ollis et al., 2017). In the ever-changing policy environment in which neighbourhood centres operate it is vital that the practices these organisations offer is captured in research.

For practitioners interested in improved service delivery, opportunities exist for further study into particular age groupings of new arrivals, including the aged and children. As this research focussed on adults there would be greater understanding gained if further research was undertaken to include the role neighbourhood centres play in assisting new arrivals who face early ageing as a result of past life experiences, trauma and, malnutrition. Due to the diverse groups of new arrivals who attend South Australian neighbourhood centres, further research may benefit from comparing new arrival types and the impacts that neighbourhood centres have on their settlement experiences. For example, new arrivals from the Middle East may require differing supports than those from African backgrounds.

Additional research into the long-term benefits of attending neighbourhood centres for new arrivals is an opportunity to see the outcomes over a period of time. Many of the new arrivals interviewed in this study had not accessed the neighbourhood centres for a long duration; therefore, interviewing them in years to come may assist in determining the longitudinal impacts on their lives as a result of their involvement. Research analysing non-new arrival participants, their connections with new arrivals and what they make of the increasing cultural diversity of neighbourhood centres could warrant attention of researchers to gain further insight into integration outcomes. A comparative study of Australian neighbourhood centres with their overseas counterparts may also be an opportunity for further research.

Further examination of the funding model of neighbourhood centres is also needed. The potential for South Australian neighbourhood centres to grow and develop - to meet the changing demands of their communities - is threatened by uncertain and often insufficient funding. At the same time, neighbourhood centres experience increased managerial demands including increased costs associated with legal, accountability requirements and insurance. The introduction of competitive tendering has led to a preference to fund larger organisations such as local government-managed facilities, threatening the viability of smaller independently managed neighbourhood centres. This puts those communities at a disadvantage. The inconsistency in funding, results in the inability to attract and retain suitable staff members, causing uncertainty regarding the continuation of services and programs. This in turn can disrupt the relationships that had been formed between vulnerable and isolated group participants.

More research into neighbourhood centre staff could lead to a better understanding of why some centres are more open to working with new arrivals than others. Staff members have been drawn from a range of qualification backgrounds and life experiences. This study revealed that there was no consistent form of training provided to them by their employers that covered cultural awareness or working with migrants and refugees. Nor was there a specific cross-cultural component to the training that was a requirement to be undertaken by volunteers. This role could be undertaken by the Peak Association of neighbourhood centres in South Australia, Community Centres SA, by delivering in-service training and enhanced skill development along with cultural diversity training. Neighbourhood centres should also be encouraged to partner with various ethnic community organisations, and NGOs to deliver training. New arrivals should be supported in a professional manner

by neighbourhood centre staff members and this can only be achieved if staff members are well trained. Training should include how to work with and use interpreters as this will assist neighbourhood centre staff and volunteers working with new arrivals who are lacking support networks, facing challenges and experiencing trauma.

This study also highlighted that staff members of some neighbourhood centres were seen to be sitting back waiting for new arrivals to walk through the door and were not actively seeking them out or engaging with them, as their philosophy suggests. Neighbourhood centre guidelines of operation advocate for inclusion by encouraging participation and valuing diversity at all levels. This research found that most neighbourhood centres within this study reflect the ideas represented in these guidelines, policy statements and individual neighbourhood centre vision and mission statements. However, acknowledging the diverse nature of neighbourhood centre attendees who participate in the various courses and activities provided does not lead to integration and the sharing of lives. It takes more than attendees of the neighbourhood centres recognising and accepting cultural differences in each other to achieve integration. It necessitates strong leadership within the organisation (the neighbourhood centre) and a combination of well-trained staff and volunteers to provide a welcoming place, to be available and accessible, and to sponsor and encourage relationships between the new arrivals and those participants of the host community.

Neighbourhood centres are coming to grips with disruptions and inconsistencies in policy interpretations (Ollis et al., 2017) of settlement support for new arrivals. The research has uncovered the complexity and challenges facing neighbourhood centres as they respond to change in relation to the services and supports they seek to provide to new arrivals. This thesis provided evidence that neighbourhood centres **can** be the heart of their local community, providing a supportive place for new arrivals on their journey to settlement; the challenge for neighbourhood centres going forward however, is whether or not they want to be such places.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. Letter of Introduction

Dear Coordinator/Staff member

Re: The Role of neighbourhood centres in supporting New Arrivals in South Australia Study.

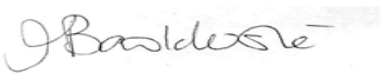
I am writing to introduce Cassandra Gibson-Pope who is a PhD candidate under my supervision at Flinders University. She is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications (such as Journal articles or conference papers) on the coping strategies used by new arrivals, in particular the role neighbourhood centres play in the settlement process. This study will provide information about how social networks, support and participation in community activity may impact on settlement.

The study would involve you volunteering your participation in a focus group with staff and volunteers working with new arrivals in neighbourhood centres within South Australia. The focus group will take approximately 2 hours and be conducted at the Glandore Community Centre.

The focus groups will be tape-recorded and your consent will be sought to record the discussion. It may be required that the recorded material be made available for secretarial assistance in transcribing the discussion. Be assured that the persons involved will be advised that confidentiality of the material be maintained and respected.

Any enquiries regarding this study should be directed to me on the above contact details. Thank you for your attention and your assistance.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor
Jo Baulderstone

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5343). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project, the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

APPENDIX B. Letter of Introduction to Community Centres SA

Dear,

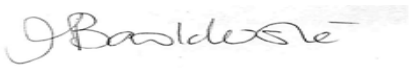
Re: The Role of neighbourhood centres in supporting New Arrivals in South Australia Study.

I am writing to introduce Cassandra Gibson-Pope who is a PhD candidate under my supervision at Flinders University. She is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications (such as Journal articles or conference papers) on the coping strategies used by new arrivals in particular the role neighbourhood centres play in the settlement process. This study will provide information about how social networks, support and participation in community activity may impact on settlement.

As the Peak Body of Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres in South Australia I would be most grateful if you would send an electronic mapping survey to each of the neighbourhood and community centres across the state. The mapping exercise will provide information on those centres working with new arrivals in this state. Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Any enquiries regarding this study should be directed to me on the above contact details. Thank you for your attention and your assistance.

Yours sincerely



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APPENDIX C. Mapping Survey

The Role of neighbourhood centres in supporting New Arrivals in South Australia Study.

PhD Research by Cassandra Gibson-Pope

Your assistance in completing this survey would be greatly appreciated.

As a member of the Peak Body of Community and Neighbourhood Houses and Centres in South Australia I would be most grateful if you would complete this mapping survey. The mapping exercise will provide information on those centres working with new arrivals in this state. Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Any enquiries regarding this study should be directed to me on 0402450834 or to Jo Baulderstone my supervisor on 82012878. Thank you for your attention and your assistance.

Regards

Cassandra Gibson-Pope

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5343). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

APPENDIX D. Mapping Survey

Example of Mapping Questionnaire

(As this will be an online survey the format and layout may differ from that below).

Name of centre: _____

Address of Centre:_____

1. How many staff and volunteers work at the Centre?
   Staff _____Volunteers _____

2. Do refugees/migrants newly arrived to Australia in the past five years attend your centre? Yes / No / Don't know

3. What are the main cultural groups represented?

4. Do you provide programs and activities specifically for refugees/ migrants newly arrived to Australia in the past 5years. Yes / No

5. From the list of programs below please indicate (by placing a tick in the appropriate box) if new arrivals attend the generic programs offered at your centre or if the programs are specially provided for new arrivals.

Program	New arrivals attend but generic to all participants	Specifically provided for New Arrivals
Art/craft classes		
Budgeting /finance courses		
Children's programs		
Computing classes		
Cooking classes		
Crèche		
Driver's Education		
Employment skills		
English as a second language classes		
Environmental		

Exercise/ Fitness classes		
Gardening		
Health & wellbeing		
Life skills classes		
Literacy and numeracy classes		
Meals		
Men's specific programs e.g. Men's shed		
Op shop		
Parenting courses		
Photography		
Playgroup		
School holiday activities		
Support groups		
Woodwork		
Other please specify		

6. Approximately how many individuals would you say attend your centre per week?

   0-25 ☐ 26-50 ☐ 51- 100 ☐ 101-200☐

   201- 250☐ 251- 300 ☐ 300 +☐

7. Of the numbers of people that attend your centre per week how many would be new arrivals?

   0-25 ☐ 26-50 ☐ 51- 100 ☐ 101-200☐

   201- 250☐ 251- 300 ☐ 300 +☐

8. Estimated gender profile (by %) of users of culturally specific programs?

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9. Place a number from 1-5 indicating from highest 1 to lowest 5 the age range of new arrivals participating at your centre.

   0-5 years ☐
   6-17 years ☐
   18-35 years ☐
   36-55 years ☐
   56 + years ☐

10. Do you provide a venue for different cultural groups to arrange their own events at your centres? Yes/ No

If yes, please indicate with a tick the types of activities that take place

Cultural celebrations	
Gatherings	
Markets	
Meetings	
Other please specify	

11. Do you have strategies for supporting new arrivals? Yes/No
    If yes please give some details.

12. Are there particular issues where additional support is provided to new arrivals in your centre? Yes/No
    If yes please indicate with a tick the types of support provided at your centre or if new arrivals are referred to other providers.

Type of support	Provided	Referred
Advocacy		
Clothing		
Counselling		
Community Care		
Disability		

Employment		
Financial		
Health		
Housing		
Parenting		
Spiritual		
Other please specify		

13. Do you have new arrivals participating in your volunteer program? Yes/No

    If yes, what area of your centre do they volunteer in? please tick if appropriate

Board Member	
Crèche	
Kitchen	
Office/ reception	
Program leader	
Program Tutor	
Other please specify	

14. If new arrivals volunteer, do you provide additional supports during the induction program Yes/No.? If yes, what kind of support?

15. Do you provide your staff /volunteers with any training or professional development to assist new arrivals? Yes/ No
    If yes please specify.

    Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

Volunteers Wanted for Focus Groups

I am seeking staff and volunteers who may be interested in taking part in a focus group to further explore the role or neighbourhood centres in supporting new arrivals as they settle into the community as part of the research towards my PhD. If you or

your staff and volunteers would be interested in participating please contact me on cassgp@internode.on.net or by mobile phone on 0402450834.

APPENDIX E. Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information sheet.
Staff Interviews

Neighbourhood Centres the Heart of their Community.

The role Neighbourhood Centres play in supporting New Arrivals who settle in South Australia.

My name is Cassandra Gibson-Pope, I am a PhD candidate at Flinders University, and I am undertaking a research project to explore the experiences of new arrivals (refugees and migrants who have been in Australia for the past 5 years). The purpose of this study is to examine the new arrivals experience of neighbourhood centres. The research will seek to investigate who tends to participate in neighbourhood centre programs and services, why they attend, what factors facilitate and motivate their participation, and the benefits gained from participating. I am seeking volunteers to participate in this study as part of my PhD work.

If you decide to take part in this study you will be asked to participate in an interview that will be conducted at a time and place that is convenient to you. The interview will take approximately one hour and will be audio-taped. It may be required that the recorded material be made available for secretarial assistance in transcribing the discussion. Be assured that the persons involved will be advised that confidentiality of the material be maintained and respected at all times.

During the interview you will be asked to talk about your experience and involvement working within the neighbourhood and community centre sector and in particular your work with new arrivals, the types or assistance, services and activities that you may offer and if you found these to be beneficial to newly arrived members of you community.

Although there may be no direct benefit to you participating, you will be helping me in better understanding the assistance that may be required by some who are new to this country and the relationships, support and activities required during settlement.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and if participation in this study raises any feelings of distress or discomfort, you may ask to withdraw. You do not have to give a reason if you decide to withdraw from the study.

All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information, which could lead to identification of you or any other individual, will be released. The aim is to publish the findings of the study in a thesis or other publications such as journals or conference papers, so that others may benefit from better understanding of the experiences of new arrivals.

Should you require any further information about this research please feel free to contact me on mobile 0402450834 or email gibs0028@flinders.edu.au Alternatively you could contact my supervisors Associate Professor Jo Baulderstone on 8201 2878 or Associate Professor Fiona Verity on 8201 2720.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5343). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

APPENDIX F. Interview Questions for New Arrivals

Interview Questions for Participants (New Arrivals)

1. How did you become involved in the neighbourhood centre? Did someone tell you about it or did you find out on your own?

2. Do you live close to the neighbourhood centre?

3. What kinds of things do you do at the neighbourhood centre? (What programs/ activities do you participate in or attend? Assistance with children, financial)

4. There are different kinds of support we give and get from others (English language, employment, etc.) what support do you get from people at the centre?

5. Do you give anyone support at the centre?

6. Do you mix with people only from your ethnic group at the centre and at home?

7. Do you mix with people or know people who are not from your ethic group at the centre or at home?

8. Does anyone at the centre give you help outside the centre (at home, with the children, with getting work)?

9. How have you felt about this support, (was it adequate, wanted/unwanted, met your needs, continued long enough?)

10. Have you met people? Would you say you have made any friends at the neighbourhood centre? Do you mix with them outside of the neighbourhood centre? Do they assist you with your life in Australia? How?

11. What do you know now that you did not before attending the neighbourhood centre?

12. Did you know anyone when you moved to Australia? (family or friends)

13. What did you do to keep busy before attending the neighbourhood centre?

14. Do you feel lonely or isolated? What do you do to cope with that? What difference has attending the centre made to your life? Has it made you feel less lonely?

15. Do you volunteer at the neighbourhood centre? Would you like to? If you don't, what assistance would you need to volunteer?

16. If you had the opportunity, what changes would you like to see in how you spend your time? (employed/volunteering /studying etc.)

17. Why do you think people don't participate in neighbourhood centres?

18. What resources do you think are needed in the neighbourhood centre to better assist you in settling into the community? (information, worker etc.)

Interview Questions for Participants (New Arrivals) cont.

Demographic information asked at end of Interview

1. How long have you lived in Australia?

2. Age

3. Male/female

4. Country of origin

5. Level of education

6. Occupation now and before arriving in Australia

7. Current postcode Suburb

APPENDIX G. List of Participants

	Pseudonym	Country	Age	Gender	Years living in Australia
1	Zen	Africa	23	F	5
2	Sally	Burundi	24	F	5
3	Terry	Afghanistan	33	F	2
4	Trina	India	28	F	3
5	Ivy	Indonesia	29	F	2
6	Hanna	India	38	F	8
7	Hidi	China	32	F	5
8	Emma	China	42	F	1.5
9	Nancy	China	31	F	3
10	Mel	Iran	35	F	1
11	Gail	Armenia	28	F	1
12	Sam	Indonesia	48	F	9
13	Sim	Iran	36	F	2
14	Naya	Congo	32	F	2
15	Savan	India	33	F	5
16	Sumer	China	32	F	5
17	Ann	Iraq	30	F	3
18	Jarod	Taiwan	24	M	1
19	Lema	Ethiopia	42	F	4
20	Tida	India	28	F	2.5
21	Lang	Vietnam	33	F	0.5
22	John	Korea	38	M	0.5
23	Jack	Mexico City	38	M	1
24	Nell	Mexico City	31	F	1
25	Sula	Bhutan	34	F	3
26	Mary	Sri Lanka	45	F	3
27	Ruby	Pakistan		F	5
28	Rema	Kenya		F	5
29	Saba	UK	36	F	1.5
30	Guy	Sudan	39	M	4

APPENDIX H. Participant Information Sheet New Arrivals

Participant Information Sheet- New Arrivals Interviews

Neighbourhood Centres the Heart of their Community. The role Neighbourhood Centres play in supporting New Arrivals who settle in South Australia.

My name is Cassandra Gibson-Pope, I am a PhD candidate at Flinders University, and I am undertaking a research project to explore the experiences of new arrivals (refugees and migrants who have been in Australia for the past 5 years). I am seeking volunteers to participate in this study as part of my PhD work.

If you decide to take part in this study I would like to talk to you for about one hour. We can talk at the centre or anywhere else where you would be comfortable. I would like to audio-tape the interview, but if you are not comfortable with this, that is ok. During the interview I will ask you about your experience and involvement within the community and whether or not you have participated in neighbourhood centre programs, services and activities and if these have been positive for you. The discussions will provide an opportunity for you to reflect upon the experiences you have had since arriving in Australia.

Although there may be no direct benefit to you participating, these interviews will help me to better understand the kind of help that may be useful to people new to this country so that services can be improved. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and if participation in this study raises any feelings of distress or discomfort, you may ask to stop the interview, take a break or withdraw. You do not have to give a reason if you decide to withdraw from the study.

All records containing personal information will remain confidential and no information, which could lead to identification of you or any other individual, will be released. The aim is to publish the findings of the study in a thesis or other publications such as journals or conference papers, so that others may benefit from better understanding of the experiences of new arrivals.

Should you require any further information about this research please feel free to contact me on 0402450834 or email me at gibs0028@flinders.edu.au

Alternatively, you could contact my supervisor Associate Professor Jo Baulderstone on 8201 2878. This project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Ethics Research Committee.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5343). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

APPENDIX I. Poster

Volunteers Wanted For Research

Are you newly arrived to Australia in the last 5 years?

Would you be willing to participate in a PhD research project?

Would you be willing to be interviewed for about 1 hour?

You will be asked some questions about what you do at this Neighbourhood/community centre, and if coming to this Centre has helped you feel part of the community?

You will not be asked questions regarding your past experiences prior to coming to Australia.

If you would like to participate please contact Cassandra on 0402450834 or email her at gibs0028@flinders.edu.au

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5343). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

APPENDIX J. Consent Form New Arrival Interview

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

(By Interview)

I……

Being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the Information Sheet for the research project on the role of neighbourhood centres in the settlement of new arrivals.

1. I have read the information sheet provided (or had it read to me).
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.

I understand that:

- I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
- While information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
- I may ask that the recording/interview be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the research without disadvantage.
- Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any service that is being provided to me.

Participant's signature……Date……..

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name …….

Researcher's signature……Date……

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5343). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

APPENDIX K. Consent Form Focus Group

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

(By Focus Group)

I……

Being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the Information Sheet for the research project on the role of neighbourhood centres in the settlement of new arrivals.

1. I have read the information sheet provided (or had it read to me)
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
   - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
   - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
   - While information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
   - I may ask that the recording to be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the research without disadvantage.

Participant's signature……Date……..

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.
Researcher's name …….

Researcher's signature……..Date……

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5343). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au

Appendix L. Focus Group Discussion topics

Focus Group Discussion topics

As a participant of the focus groups you would have been provided with a summary of the information received from the mapping exercise. This information will form the basis of the discussion during the focus groups. The following are questions that will assist with the discussion.

1. Do you have any comments on the results of the mapping exercise?

2. Why do you think new arrivals do attend neighbourhood centres or your centre?

3. What services /activities do they access?

4. Are there particular areas or issues where additional support is provided to new arrivals in your neighbourhood centre? If so what are they?

5. Have you seen linkages between new arrivals and the wider Australian community built? If so how?

6. Do you think some new arrivals don’t attend neighbourhood centres? If so, what barriers are there for not participating?

APPENDIX M. Staff Informants

Position
Community Development Coordinator (NHCC 1)
FUSE Coordinator (A W1)
Coordinator (NHCC 2)
Coordinator NHCC3)
Manager (NHCC4)
Social Support Worker (NHCC9)
Manager (NHCC5)
Cross-Cultural Worker (AW2)
Manager (NHCC6)
Team Leader (NHCC7)
Coordinator (NHCC8)
Muslim Women's Worker (AW3)
Family Worker (FW1)
(NHCC10)

STAFF IN CENTRE CALLED NHCC Neighbourhood Centre Coordinators

OTHER STAFF REFERRED TO AS AGENCY WORKER AW1-3

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