

## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology and Dissemination**

### **Chapter Outline**

This chapter locates my personal position in relation to the research and defines the research subject, Aboriginal Cultural Markers, and the research area, greater metropolitan Adelaide. It then outlines the research process utilised and ethics considerations. Whilst initially a Participatory Action Research methodology was proposed with the Kurna community, this did not eventuate due to circumstances beyond my control. An alternative qualitative, reflective, cyclical approach was adopted to both collect data from, and disseminate research findings to, the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

The chapter outlines that there was no existing data kept centrally on Aboriginal Cultural Markers in the public space by any public space authority. The first cycle of data collection started from a personal knowledge base and contacting local councils, the primary managers of public space. The second cycle extended the data collection by examining state government records. The third cycle of data collection was facilitated by research dissemination, outreach and data provision to the community in the form of a photo documentary exhibition and public forum, conferences and participation in community events, in particular events surrounding the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the 1967 Commonwealth referendum on Aboriginal issues. The photo documentary exhibition *Ways of Belonging* (2007) was developed for the celebrations and became a principal means of communicating with the community. The opportunities and events that evolved during the research could not have been predicted in research planning and the research methodology and focus were adapted accordingly. The approach to research actions and outcomes is also outlined.

The chapter also presents categories in which to group Markers within the phases I have identified. The categories describe a level of importance or functionality. This enables comparative analysis between the phases (beyond numbers), a better appreciation of what has occurred and a way into understanding the social and other significance of the Markers.

The chapter concludes by describing a suggested methodology for locating Aboriginal Culture Markers in Australian capital cities to facilitate comparable studies, especially by those researchers who do not have deep or wide connections to local Aboriginal culture or groups.

### **Positioning Statement**

This study draws on my personal experiences as a visual artist (1991 to present) and my prior career as a public servant (1969-1990). As a public servant I was the inaugural Secretary of the South Australian Heritage Committee (1978-1981), chartered with identifying and protecting South Australia's built European heritage. During that period I also acted as Secretary to the Aboriginal and Historic Relics Advisory Board, chartered with protecting Aboriginal cultural sites. From 1981 to 1990 I was Administrator of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide and State Herbarium. These experiences give me a familiarity with heritage conservation, public space governance structures and administrative processes, all of which informs my writing.

As an artist (non-Aboriginal) I began working cross-culturally with the Kaurna Aboriginal people in 1996, two years after my graduation from art school, and have done so ever since. This long-term collaboration has been on public art projects, broader Kaurna cultural and spiritual renewal and cross-cultural reconciliation. My first cross-cultural collaborative public art project *Tjirbruki Narna arra' The Tjirbruki Gateway*<sup>4</sup> with Kaurna artist Sherry Rankine (and non-Aboriginal artist Margaret Worth) was dedicated in 1997 and is located at Warriparinga, in suburban Adelaide. Warriparinga, a 16 ha council reserve vested in the City of Marion, is a place of high cultural and spiritual significance to Kaurna as part of the Tjilbruke Dreaming and is now a place of cultural and spiritual renewal for Kaurna as well as a place of conciliation between the incoming and existing culture. It is the location of the Living Kaurna Cultural Centre, dedicated in 2002. I was part of the design team for the interpretive content of the Centre.

In late 1997 I was asked by the City of Marion to live in and look after Fairford House, an early settlement farmhouse located at Warriparinga, for up to three months whilst the selection of a Kaurna custodian to live there took place. The appointment of a Kaurna custodian did not eventuate and my tenure extended to four years. During that time Fairford House and Warriparinga were meeting places for Kaurna for political, cultural and spiritual activities and I was intimately involved in those activities. I developed friendships or cordial relationships with many Kaurna which continue to this day and was privy to much behind the scenes activity. This experience informs this thesis. Since my departure from Warriparinga in 2001, I have continued to be involved in cross-cultural collaborations and be informed of Kaurna cultural and political activities and issues, insights and background not generally of a public nature. This informs statements made and influences views expressed in the writing which can not be referenced to particular public sources; they are part of my personal experience over fifteen years. The views expressed are mine and in doing so I am mindful of writing 'with' and not 'for' Kaurna and other Aboriginal people (Sultana, 2007:375).

As discussed later this chapter, my research was not a formal participatory process with Kaurna. I research and write as a public space arts practitioner who is uniquely positioned because of my experiences of cross-cultural collaborations and on-going involvement with members of the Kaurna community. I am not seen as an external person researching and writing on Aboriginal issues but as a long-term collaborator on issues of mutual interest. Whilst I am mindful of issues of power structures, positionality and reflexivity (Sultana, 2007, Nagar & Ali 2003) this research is more about the actions of the non-Aboriginal than the Aboriginal community.

Because of my friendships and collaborations I am seen to be aligned with the Williams clan of the Kaurna, particularly Georgina Yambo Williams, Nganke

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<sup>4</sup> Language Note - Spelling of Tjilbruke/Tjirbruki

The name has two spellings Tjilbruke and Tjirbruki. The orthography Tjilbruke is used in this thesis as it is the one utilised in the initial public commemorations. Tjirbruki is used when it has been spelt that way in other texts. There has been and still is contention as to the appropriate spelling. During the Jubilee 150 year Tjilbruke Track commemoration there was a debate within the Aboriginal community as to the spelling. This led to a community meeting being called at the Aboriginal Community College on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1986 to decide upon the spelling. Tjilbruke was preferred by the meeting and then adopted by the Tjilbruke Track Committee for the marking of the Trail. Kaurna descendant Georgina Williams, a Committee member, did not agree, stating that from her research she advocated the spelling as Tjirbruki, which anthropologist Tindale had used (OAA 18/25, 1986).

burka<sup>5</sup>, Senior woman, Kaurna and her son Karl Winda Telfer, Kaurna Traditional Owner. I have collaborated with both over many years and they are referred to in this thesis. Georgina Williams has been active in Kaurna political and cultural renewal, public space commemorations, and public speaking over some decades. She is therefore often quoted in this research. I also often refer to another senior Kaurna person, Lewis Warritya O'Brien, who has also been active in Kaurna cultural renewal over some decades and who is also well known to me.

Throughout the seven year period of research for this thesis (including intermissions) I have maintained my visual arts practice which incorporates gallery exhibition, ephemeral artworks in the landscape, cross-cultural collaborative public artworks and public space design, and tertiary teaching in the fields of art, architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and cross-cultural collaborations. As I practice in the field on which I am writing I am included in the commentary and my collaborative works are referred to. The maintenance of my arts and teaching practice has informed the research and vice versa. There has also been an ongoing attempt by me to translate the research thinking into the public space artefact (for example, through the collaborative public artwork *Bulto Ityangga Traces*, described in Chapter 8) and public space design (for example *Victoria Square Tarndanyangga Urban Regeneration Project*, also described in Chapter 8). This thesis is a reflection of these experiences, it is reflective, the 'I' is very much part of the story and process (Mansvelt & Berg, 2005).

## **Definition of Terms**

### **Aboriginal Cultural Markers**

For this research Cultural Markers are defined as monuments, memorials, public art and design, community art and commemorative and interpretive plaques and signage, which are present in the public space. Aboriginal Cultural Markers are those Cultural Markers which include a representation of or reference to Aboriginal culture or to an Aboriginal person, or are made by an Aboriginal person. 'Marker' is used in this thesis as an abbreviation of Aboriginal Cultural Marker. Throughout this thesis the word Aboriginal is used in two ways: to mean 'an Australian indigenous person' as in 'an Aboriginal'; or 'of indigenous Australians' as in 'Aboriginal art' or 'an Aboriginal committee'.

Restricting the research to only monuments, memorials and major civic art works would not fully reflect the broader social change that has occurred since the expansion of public art from the 1970s. Public art, and its companion public space design, takes many forms; sculpture, paintings, murals, photography, earthworks, installations, details in streetscapes, text and multimedia (Arts, SA, n.d:4). Public art has extended public participation in the public space. Previously public representations such as monuments and classical statues largely reflected the dominant ruling class and their aspirations and values (Cameron, 1997). Public art in many ways has replaced the classic monument although contemporary public art, as will be outlined in this thesis, also encompasses commemorative outcomes (Arts, SA, n.d:5). Whilst this can be a function of public art, it is not its dominant role.

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<sup>5</sup> Williams does not use the designation 'elder' but prefers an acknowledgement of her cultural status which is tradition based.

## **Public Space**

A public space is generally accepted as a space where anyone has a right to come, that is open and accessible to all regardless of race, ethnicity, gender age or socio-economic level. 'It is the visible and accessible venue wherein the public – comprising institutions and citizens acting in concert – enact rituals and make claims designed to win recognition' (Goheen, 1998). For this research public space refers to 'both indoor and outdoor spaces that are accessible to a wide public, including parks, open plazas, road reserves, civic centres and library spaces' (Arts SA, n.d:4). My definition includes the foyers and public access spaces of public buildings, which aligns with the Arts SA definition. The definition includes public universities and public schools but not private schools nor such places as commercial shopping malls.

## **Phases**

I have used the term phase to describe the distinctive stages or periods of Aboriginal inclusion in the public space. For this research I have used the term phase to mean 'any of the appearances or aspects in which a thing of varying modes or conditions manifests itself to the eye or mind' (Macquarie Concise Dictionary, 2004). This does not imply that phases must be chronological although they may be. Two of the phases I define have been largely concurrent but the 'varying modes or conditions' within them I believe are sufficient to justify them as separate phases.

## Research Geographical Area

The research area is greater metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia, comprising seventeen local government areas (Figure 3-1). It is 85km north to south and approximately 20km wide from the coast of the Gulf St Vincent to the foothills of the Mount Lofty Ranges. This is an area of 1700 km<sup>2</sup> and contains a population of just over 1.1 million people.

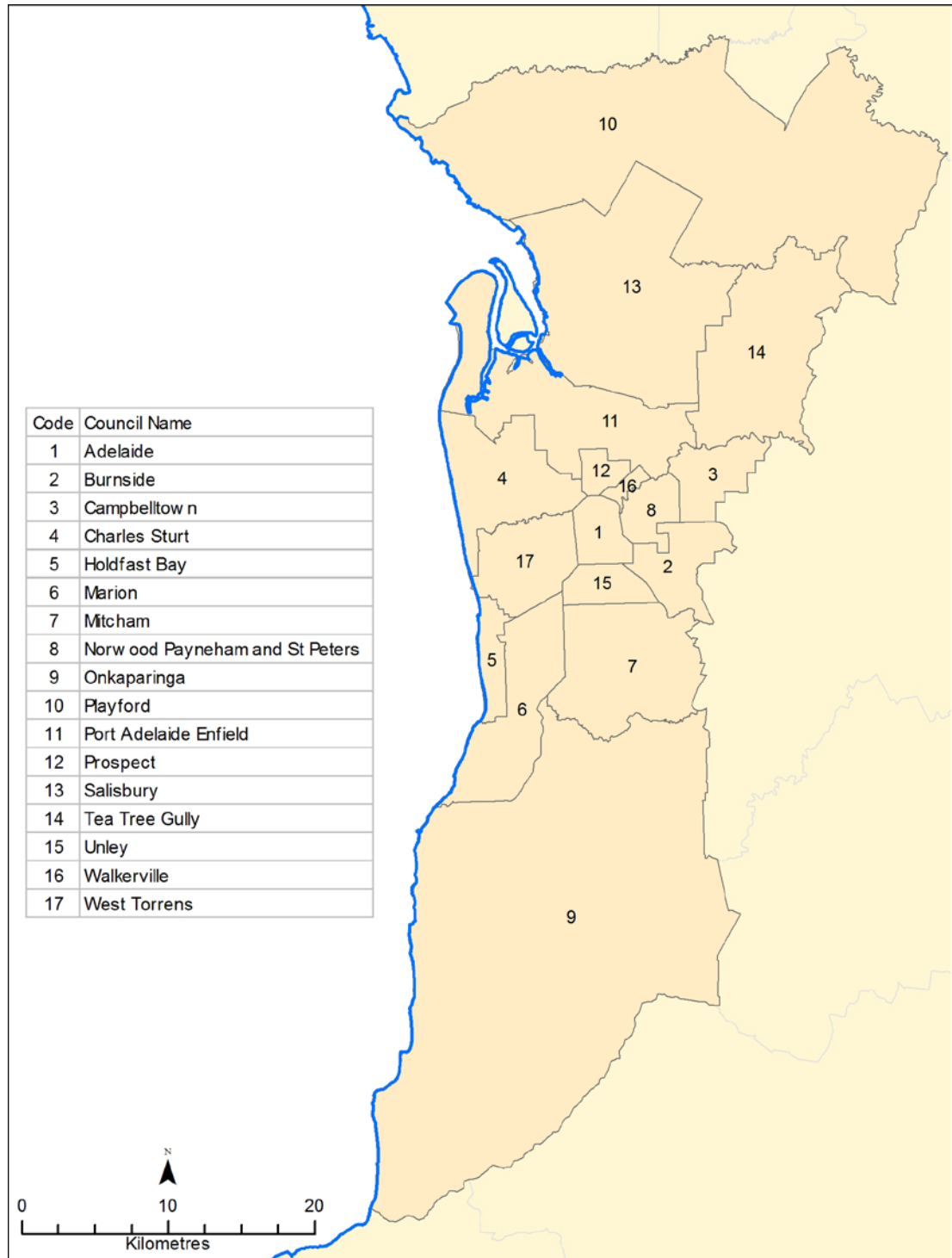


Figure 3-1 Research area - greater metropolitan Adelaide (with council areas)

## Research Methodology

Typically, the concerns and practices of cultural geographers and visual artists can be conceived as discrete from one another. However, while making use of differing methodologies, techniques and languages, these disciplines both make claims to investigate, interpret, and express individual and social subjectivities and relations in space. The qualitative research of both fields seeks to gain and express insights into people's attitudes, value systems and culture. The methods of investigation can be similar, the gathering and analysis of information, even if arts practice is more personal and less formal and usually sitting outside the academy. The methods of expressing research results are the main difference, one using (mainly) academic text, the other, various visual media. As a visual artist undertaking research in cultural geography I have used methodologies from both disciplines for both the research process and research output. This has included visual art exhibitions, cross-cultural public artworks, art journals, and community events, as well as standard academic writing and presentations for journals and conferences.

Initially, I proposed to conduct a Participatory Action Research project (Whyte, 1991, Chambers, 1997, Selener, 1997, Kesby, Kingdon & Pain, 2005) in collaboration with the Kaurna community. Participatory Action Research, also understood as community based participatory research (CBPR), has been used extensively with Aboriginal communities, particularly in health and social welfare areas (Meadows et al, 2003, Couzos et al, 2005, Mooney-Somers and Maher, 2009). Participatory Action Research can also be likened to cross-cultural collaborative arts practice or projects where the participants define the project (the brief), what is to be expressed (the cultural content or narrative) and how it is to be expressed (the medium).

Kaurna research collaboration was to be through the then newly formed representative body, the Kaurna Heritage Board. The Board had been formed in 2005 from several other Kaurna representative groups to provide a single organisation to represent Kaurna political and cultural interests, it having been a somewhat factional community. From September 2009 the Board changed its name to the Kaurna Nation Cultural Heritage Association (KNCHA). This approach was intended to allow the objectives and parameters of the research to be defined collaboratively, how it would proceed and who would be involved, particularly from the Kaurna community, and how results would be disseminated and utilised. Following informal discussions with the Board's Executive Officer and my Kaurna associates, a project proposal was submitted for Board consideration in May 2005. In summary the draft project was to:

- (1) *Investigate the ways Aboriginal peoples are represented, not represented or misrepresented in public spaces through monuments, memorials, public or civic art, place naming and signage which is influenced by -*
  - . *Political, bureaucratic and institutional processes that include or exclude Aboriginal peoples*
  - . *Community social attitudes*
  - . *The extent and the ways Indigenous people have been, or want to be, involved.*
- (2) *Critically analyse several public art and design projects and 'civic' spaces. What do they say about us?*

However, the Board, comprised of voluntary community representatives, was in the process of establishing itself, its operational procedures and scope of activity, and therefore had a considerable pressure of business. Despite follow-ups, after several

months my proposal had not been considered by the Board. I was working within the defined time frame of PhD tenure; 'precious' time was being lost. I then made the decision to proceed independently. The fact that the proposal had not been considered was not taken as an affront but rather it was accepted that it was not an immediate priority for consideration by the Board. The priority of one's own research idea may not necessarily align with the priorities of the community or individuals one proposes to work with. I did not wish to make demands for my own purposes as I was sensitive to the pressures and challenges faced by the Board. I adopted the approach that working either with or for Aboriginal communities can require an adaptive approach to the research aims and process. PhD candidate Annie Kennedy (n.d.) discussed a comparable experience in developing her research methodology for a project on remote Aboriginal housing, the need to accommodate community priorities and the concept of 'letting go' of a tightly defined research project.

A qualitative research method was adopted. This comprised field research to locate and document Markers, desk, internet and archival research of information on the public record about Markers, informal recording and collating of information gained during activities to disseminate my research findings, outlined later, and my professional activities as an artist.

Field research involved visiting the site of any potential Marker I became aware of throughout greater metropolitan Adelaide (1700 km<sup>2</sup>) to confirm its existence, photograph and GPS locate the Marker and record any information on dedication plaques or the like. This involved extensive travel as I became aware of individual Markers over an extended period of time. It included revisiting many suburbs when I became aware of another Marker, perhaps just around the corner from one already recorded. The three main cultural precincts of the City of Adelaide; North Terrace, Victoria Square/Tarndanyangga<sup>6</sup> and the Adelaide Festival Centre were surveyed on foot. Desk research was undertaken to locate potential Markers and to piece together the social narrative of the way the Markers had come about. Information gained during the dissemination of research findings and my professional activities often led to the identification of additional Markers and informed further field and desk research.

Whilst much of the field research to locate the Markers has involved non-Aboriginal organisations, it has also involved interacting cross-culturally with sections of the Aboriginal community in an informal way, which has both necessitated and facilitated an open or organic methodology. Opportunities that could not have been anticipated in planning a formal research structure arose to both collect data and disseminate results. And, as explained, unexpected opportunities arose because I already worked in the field of cross-cultural public art, and was active in reconciliation and Kaurna cultural renewal. The research process involved simultaneously gathering and collating data from various sources and outputting results through various community activities. This methodology served to inform the community of the research and its progress in an informal way, and resulted in information about further Markers being offered by the community. This enabled the data and social narrative to be presented in the research to become richer and deeper.

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<sup>6</sup> South Australia has the capacity for dual naming under the *Geographical Names Act, 1991*. The name Tarndanyangga was officially recognised by the Adelaide City Council in May 2002. Informal dual naming of places or artworks also occurs.

## **Ethics**

I had planned to seek formal ethics approval once the parameters of the project had been better defined in collaboration with the Kaurna Heritage Board. As this did not proceed and the actual subject matter of the research is public space artefacts, rather than human subjects, no formal ethics submission was made. The role of some Aboriginal people, as with non-Aboriginal people, in the creation of Markers is discussed to elaborate what has occurred but this is collated from the public record. The general principles for cross-cultural research as outlined in the *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2000), *Ask First: A guide to respecting Indigenous heritage places and values*, The Australian Heritage Commission (2003), *Protocols for research and work on Aboriginal land* and *General Research Protocol*, the Central Land Council (n.d.), *The Ethics of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples*, and the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre (2004) had been consulted in the development of the research proposal and provided the guide for my research. Later writing, for instance *Cross-Cultural Research: Ethics, Methods, and Relationships* (Howitt & Stevens, 2005) was reviewed as the project evolved.

As the project evolved and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people became aware of it, information about Markers, principally their location, was provided by them voluntarily. No formal interviews were conducted. They all became casual informants<sup>7</sup> who were interested in the project but were not the subjects of the project. The information was often provided in informal discussions in social situations, at cultural or community events or in my collaborations on other projects. It was not practicable to separate my research activity from a broader social and professional engagement and it is this engagement that has ultimately enabled the project.

## **Research Data Collection**

### **Data collected about each Marker**

Several photographs were taken of each Marker to provide location context and details of the work. All Markers were GPS located when visited. In combination with the archival images located, these (more than one thousand) photographs provide an extensive historical record (some Markers documented by me have since been destroyed) (see Chapter 11). Photographic images presented in this thesis are by me unless otherwise acknowledged.

Historical research was undertaken through federal, state and local government records and archives, newspapers and magazines dating back to the 1960s, supported by data recorded on-site on dedication plaques or similar, and information provided to me by artists and others involved in a number of Markers. Data was maintained in a spreadsheet format and taxonomy and criteria to assess and record Markers was developed by me to assist an understanding of the styles, types and locations of Markers. The combination of the GPS location and taxonomy enables a range of physical, historical and social mapping to be produced. Spreadsheet data is supported by individual files on all Markers containing the paper based information located.

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<sup>7</sup> Where people have provided information or commentary, it has been recorded as a personal communication.



Field research to locate Markers was ongoing during the period late 2004 to December 2009. It was staggered during that time with activity occurring in response to leads obtained through various sources, as outlined in the following discussion. At the conclusion of field research 143 Markers had been located.

### **First cycle of data collection**

The task of documenting the Markers known to me at the start of the research, which numbered about twenty, was reasonably straightforward, involving site visits, photo documentation, recording GPS location and researching the history of the Marker. I suspected there would be several more but locating what proved to be a vastly expanded number turned out to be far more circuitous (and rewarding) than expected; it required ground level 'detective' work, following up leads in the parks, gardens and back streets of greater Adelaide, and happenstance, noticing works from the bus or driving around, a chance conversation and so on.

In late 2004, when developing the initial research parameters (proposed Participatory Action Research (PAR) with Kaurna), I sent letters to several councils (local governments) to enquire as to what Markers were known to exist in their council areas and to gain an idea of the level of knowledge or involvement of councils in Aboriginal public space inclusion. The councils I chose to send letters to were representative of a cross section of councils in terms of size (small to large) and location (inner to outer suburban). I chose to approach local governments first because they have the primary responsibility for the governance of the public space, manage many public reserves and roadways and administer the development approval process which applies to some public artworks. Many councils also have cultural or community development officers who provide an interface with local communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, including the arts community, and their function may include commissioning and maintaining public artworks and other interpretive or commemorative projects.

The responses from councils varied, ranging from no response, to very helpful. Some councils were also curious about the research and its potential outcomes. Several Markers were located this way. Research through local government was not continued until late 2006 after research parameters had been redefined. At that time, I made follow-up phone calls to the councils which allowed me to identify individual council staff to liaise with. This proved far more effective than the initial letters and was the first step in establishing personal working relationships with several councils, so I pursued this approach with other councils as well. Personal liaison also proved useful later in terms of research outreach to the community and social inclusion outcomes. There was genuine interest and co-operation when council officers became more aware of the research work, and also a sense of embarrassment of some when they realised that they had little or no public space Aboriginal representation. As the research progressed I was also able to identify numerous Markers that were unknown to the councils, some of which they owned, about which data had not been centralised, or had been lost, as councils had amalgamated and personnel had changed over time.

A methodological decision was made to record and organise primary data by council area (seventeen councils) as council areas provide geographical, public space governance (councils manage much of the public space) and socio-economic contexts (Australian Bureau of Statistics data on personal income, Aboriginal population etc. is available by council area).

### **Second cycle of data collection**

After the initial approach to councils I consulted the records of Arts SA, the state government department which includes the Public Art and Design Section. This Section facilitates and promotes a broad range of public art and design projects. I consulted their records of involvement in well over two hundred public space projects. This revealed several minor relevant projects. Consideration was then given as to what other state government agencies may have also commissioned Markers. Agencies involved in health, education and housing have contact with Aboriginal communities through the services they provide. I found that a suburban Health Service Centre had an Aboriginal wall mural in its foyer and contact with that agency led to several other Markers being located in regional health care agencies. This characterised the way Markers were located.

These research activities provided a database of approximately forty Markers, all of which were visited, photographed and their geographic coordinates recorded. It was however from this point on that the project rapidly expanded and evolved.

### **Third cycle of data collection**

The third cycle of data collection was facilitated by research dissemination and outreach to the community. In October 2006 Reconciliation South Australia approached me for ideas for events or activities to commemorate the forthcoming 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1967 constitutional referendum on Aboriginal issues in Australia. I put forward three ideas. Of these, a proposal for a visual art/interpretive exhibition on my research findings to date was endorsed and became a fundamental part of both research dissemination and further data collection.

### **Photo Documentary Exhibition**

The photo documentary exhibition *Ways of Belonging: Reconciliation and the Symbolic Value of the Public Space in Adelaide* comprised photo documentation of all the Markers located to May 2007, supported by other interpretive material about the symbolic value of the public space, data on Markers by council areas and a chronology of their implementation. The exhibition was presented in partnership with Reconciliation SA, which provided production funding, and Tandanya: The National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, which provided the exhibition venue and other support. Tandanya is managed by Aboriginal people and the majority of staff is also Aboriginal so this was the most appropriate venue to present such an exhibition, and to interact with both an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audience. The Adelaide Festival Centre was also offered as a potential venue but Tandanya was chosen for the reasons outlined. The Adelaide Festival Centre assisted by hosting a promotional display for the exhibition in the main foyer during Reconciliation Week, 2007.

The exhibition was intended to be both a celebration of the achievements and recognition of Aboriginal people as reflected through the public space, and also to point out the absences in some geographic areas, which reflects socio-economic and political positions. The exhibition was displayed from 25 May to 22 July 2007 and was a significant event in the South Australian official commemorative program.

Tandanya attracts a broad range of visitors, including the education sector as well as local, national and international tourists. During the two-month period on display, attendance was estimated at over 4000 people and, as recorded in the visitor book, they were from literally all over the world. This exposed a broad audience to the issues of Aboriginal representation in the public space. Whilst the impact of this is

unquantifiable I am aware of one private and one public organisation commissioning Kurna acknowledgements as a result of exhibition attendance. The exhibition was reviewed in the local daily newspaper *Reconciling with the Past* (Megaw & Megaw, 2007) and written about by Dr Christine Nicholls, writer, academic and curator in two major international arts magazines, 'Contested Spaces', *World Sculpture News* (2007a, 41-52), and 'Response and Reconciliation', *Asian Art News* (2007b, 74-80), further extending its dissemination and outreach.

The exhibition was structured to reflect the phases of Aboriginal inclusion developed by me (see Chapter 4). The display included sculptural works, by me, referencing an indigenous sense of place including other forms of 'statuary' or commemoration (Figure 3-2). An Exhibition Introduction by me and an Exhibition Essay by Georgina Williams and Dr Nicholls, accompanied the exhibition (see Appendix A). At the time of the exhibition proposal it had been envisaged that approximately forty Markers would be included. However, by the time the exhibition opened, six months later, over seventy Markers had been located and were included, with Tandanya increasing the gallery space available to me. Reconciliation SA had asked me to participate in community events prior to the exhibition which contributed to locating Markers (discussed below) in addition to my ongoing research to locate Markers.



Figure 3-2 Exhibition *Ways of Belonging* Tandanya, 2007

The exhibition proved to be critical in providing an unexpected opportunity for public presentation of the research and public input and comment. Visitors were invited to advise me of the location of further Markers or make comment about the research by email contact or speaking with me when I was in attendance. An effective methodology of presenting research results and locating further Markers was created.

### **Exhibition Touring**

Reconciliation SA was keen for the exhibition to reach a wider audience by touring it to other venues. Given its capacity to present research results in an informal way and provide additional data input, I have made it available to local government and other interested organisations. The exhibition is not owned or managed by Reconciliation SA, it belongs to me, and all work in negotiating display, and maintaining and presenting the exhibition is a personal responsibility. This is unusual in that culturally based interpretive exhibitions are usually vested with cultural institutions or bodies. Whilst this arrangement has its limitations in what can be achieved in

terms of touring and promotion, it also provides flexibility and ready response to opportunities. To May 2010 three councils, the cities of Onkaparinga, Charles Sturt and Unley, have hosted the exhibition and two others have expressed interest. Edited versions of the exhibition have been used for several other events.

### **City of Onkaparinga, 2007**

The first host was the City of Onkaparinga (Council 9, Fig. 3-1 above), a rapidly expanding council in the outer southern suburbs with a population of 155,000. The exhibition was displayed in the council chamber and the foyer of the civic centre for three months, mid September to mid December 2007. In addition to the public audience reached, being located in the council chambers meant that for three months the elected councillors were surrounded by the images of Aboriginal Cultural Markers during their council deliberations. Although no direct outcomes are known, councillors and staff would have become very familiar with the concept, style and forms of Aboriginal public space representation.

### **City of Charles Sturt, 2008**

The next host was the City of Charles Sturt (Council 4), a western suburbs council with a population of 100,000. The exhibition was displayed in the atrium of the civic centre from January to November 2008 (Figure 3-3). It was intended that it be on display for two months but the display period was extended by nine months. The council's Diversity Officer initiated its display in conjunction with an initiative by council to be more proactive in the inclusion and support of Aboriginal people and culture in its programs. In late 2007 the council's Chief Executive and the Mayor held a series of informal discussions with representatives of the Kaurna community to develop working relationships and gain their perspectives on council's programs.



Figure 3-3 Exhibition *Ways of Belonging* City of Charles Sturt, 2008

A celebration of the exhibition was held on 5 March 2008. Conducted in the council chamber, the Mayor, on behalf of Council, endorsed the Australian Prime Minister's recent formal statement of apology (Sorry Statement) which had been made on behalf of the nation to Aboriginal people for past and continuing wrongs and injustices. Two senior Kaurna political and cultural representatives also spoke, the first time a Kaurna person had spoken formally on the floor of the council chamber. The council invited a broad range of community representatives, local educational institutions and the broader Aboriginal community to the ceremony.



### **City of Unley, 2010**

The City of Unley (Council 15), an inner city council with a population of 40,000, hosted the exhibition from 12 May to 5 June 2010 in the Fullarton Community Centre (Figure 3-4) as part of its Reconciliation Week activities. The Cultural Development Officer saw this as an opportunity to inform elected council members, council staff and residents about Aboriginal civic inclusion.



Figure 3-4 Exhibition *Ways of Belonging* City of Unley, 2010

### **State History Conference, 2008**

At the invitation of the conference coordinator (who had seen the exhibition at Tandanya), a scaled down exhibition (Figure 3-5) was prepared for the 17<sup>th</sup> South Australian State History Conference, *Changing Places Changing Lives*, 1-3 August 2008. This introduced the work to a wide range of history and museum professionals. A paper on research results was also presented at the conference in the session *Shared spaces: acknowledging Indigenous history*. This led to another conference invitation and presentation, at the Interpretation Australia National Conference, *Hearts and Minds*, Adelaide, October 2008.



Figure 3-5 Exhibition *Ways of Belonging* State History Conference, 2008

### **Participation in Community Events**

In the lead up to and immediately following the Tandanya exhibition, I received invitations to participate in four community events which had strong Aboriginal

involvement and outreach. These events provided the opportunity to present an informal outline of the research, photographic documentation of Markers and seek further information on other Markers.

#### **The Port Festival, Conversations Café, April, 2007**

As part of the Port Festival, Tauondi College, a tertiary education institution for Aboriginals, hosted a series of informal public ‘conversations’ titled *Aboriginal Cultural Pathways and Natural Resource Management Engagement: So What’s The Story Around Here?* The intention was to explore ‘the stories of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, cultures, histories, places, influences and natural resources around the Port’ (Tauondi College, 2007). A small display on the research was presented and I ‘had a yarn’ with anyone interested. This provided information on several potential other Markers, which were investigated and included in the research data as appropriate. One was the earliest public mural in Adelaide by Aboriginal people, dating from 1978. It had been destroyed some time ago.

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Expo, May 2007**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Expo is a cultural education, health, and career opportunity day for Aboriginal youth. Organised by the Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (South Australia) it attracts a wide range of displays, including police and emergency services, health and youth services, and career opportunities. Participation not only provided information to the community but also resulted in the location of new Markers. To my great surprise this included one of the largest murals in Adelaide, painted in 1993, the International Year of Indigenous People, which contained a large component of Aboriginal imagery by an Aboriginal artist.

#### **Workshop, City of Onkaparinga, June 2007**

I was invited to conduct a *Public Space Recognition of Aboriginal Culture Workshop* with the City of Onkaparinga Aboriginal community, Kurna and non-Kurna, to develop ideas for further Aboriginal public space inclusion. This again provided the opportunity to outline the research and provided the participants, including Georgina Williams, with exemplars of the various types and themes of public space art. Two projects were proposed for council consideration, one recognising Kurna people and culture and the other, the broader Aboriginal community.

#### **Conversation Café, City of Port Adelaide Enfield, August 2007**

The City of Port Adelaide Enfield utilised the successful format of the Tauondi Conversations Café as part of an Aboriginal community consultation program for the review of its Arts and Cultural Plan, 2007–2012. I was invited by council to participate in two community ‘conversations’ aimed at further developing Aboriginal and other Indigenous peoples inclusion in the city’s Arts and Cultural Plan. The venues were: Take Two Icecreamery, Semaphore, Sunday 12 August 2007 (Figure 3-6); and Enfield Community Centre, Enfield, Saturday 18 August 2007. The structure of the consultation was informal and residents could drop in at any time. Again it was an opportunity to outline my research intent and findings, generate further interest and provide greater outreach to the urban Aboriginal community, Kurna and non-Kurna. Lewis O’Brien was amongst the attendees.



Figure 3-6 Conversations Café, Semaphore (Photo Fernando Goncalves)

### **Public Forum Ways of Belonging NAIDOC Week, 2007**

In conjunction with the Tandanya exhibition I organised a half-day public forum on Aboriginal public space inclusion, held at Tandanya. The forum was to raise the level of awareness and discourse on Aboriginal public space inclusion; the achievements, problems and opportunities, and discuss the theme of the exhibition (and thus the research). It took place on 12 July 2007 as part of NAIDOC Week (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Commemoration. What commenced some time ago as a day of commemoration has extended to a week). The forum was organised with support from Tandanya, Reconciliation SA and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (SA Branch). Landscape architects, by the nature of their profession, have a strong interaction with Aboriginal people in public space design projects. I had spoken at a previous Institute forum and collaborate with Landscape Architects.

The forum panel comprised myself and six other speakers, representing a broad interest and experience in public space art and design, and Kurna cultural custodians. It was chaired by Dr Nicholls. The speakers were:

- Cath Cantlon, Artist and Public Art Officer, City of Adelaide
- Lisa Philip-Harbutt, Director, Community Arts Network SA
- Paul Herzich<sup>8</sup>, Landscape Architect, Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI)
- Graeme Hopkins, Principal Urban Designer, Planning SA
- Karl Winda Telfer, Kurna Traditional Owner and Artist
- Georgina Williams, Nangke burka, Senior Woman, Kurna

The perspectives of the three Aboriginal speakers provided the attendees with an insightful and personal view on the value of inclusion of Aboriginal culture in the public space. An open discussion with, and questions from, the audience was part of the program. Approximately seventy people attended; artists, landscape architects, state and local government representatives (including elected members), academics, community activists and interested community members. The forum was not intended to produce any specific outcome but has reverberated amongst the attendees. Since the forum I have had several conversations with attendees who have affirmed a better appreciation of the issues and a desire to take action. The forum has

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Herzich is a Ramindjeri/Kurna descendant.

been influential in bringing about further public space inclusion activities, in particular in the City of Charles Sturt, as well as helping me to locate additional Markers.

The exhibition and related events proved to be critical in providing an opportunity for public presentation of the research and public input and comment. The interest generated provided information from visitors on the location of further Markers. This provided data on types of spaces and institutions hosting Markers that assisted the development of the data collection methodology for future research. Thus, an effective methodology of locating Markers was created through the creation of an informal feedback loop with the community; display what has been found, find more Markers from information received, and then display again. This method was a blend of using non-traditional reporting forms for academic research (Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006), incorporating the use of the creative arts to collect data (Kesby et al 2005:147) and an iterative, cyclical, approach akin to the originally proposed participatory action research method.

Keen and Todres (2007:1) have pointed out that ‘few authors of qualitative studies move beyond the dissemination of their work in the ubiquitous journal article’ and that ‘[t]hrough the number of qualitative projects increases year on year, the implications of this work appear to remain on shelves and have little impact on practice, research, policy or citizens’. They question why this may occur and suggest that ‘the *active* task of applying research to practice, policy or people is often seen as lying beyond the research process’. They suggested that this active dissemination implies the use of tailored materials that have been transformed, beyond the journal article or conference paper, for targeted audiences, where discussion of the meaning and application of findings is facilitated. In their review of 1094 abstracts that had the key words of ‘qualitative’ and ‘dissemination’, fifty-one relevant examples of authors paying attention to the communication of qualitative research findings were located. The formats used ‘include drama, dance, poetry, song, painting and evocative forms of writing, as well as animation, diagrams, metaphors, electronic user groups, websites, health education messages, films photographs, videos, CDs, DVDs and other uses of electronic technology and popular media’. This is an extensive suite of possibilities to choose from.

The easily read visual narrative of the photo documentary art exhibition was the most appropriate for my purposes as well as its adaptability in being able to be presented in various forms and locations, reaching an audience unattainable through publication. This has led to direct actions by some of the viewers in acknowledging Aboriginal culture. The use of metaphor to describe some of my phases, i.e. The Silence (see Chapter 4), enabled me to engage a respected Australian metaphor for the exclusion of Aboriginal people.

## **Research Actions and Outcomes**

The question of ownership and dissemination of research results was an active consideration for me. It was clear to me that the research results would need to be of direct interest and benefit to the Kaurna and broader Aboriginal community, and others with an interest in public space commemorations and public art. Whilst the lack of a formal Participatory Action Research approach could arguably have denied the ability for Aboriginal participants to develop their research capabilities, directly express their views and present research results in a manner seen as appropriate to them, the structure, accessibility and usefulness of the research results to them has



been a guiding factor for me. As the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies outlined (2000:1) ‘... research with and about Indigenous peoples must be founded on a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the researcher and the Indigenous people’. Whilst the research was not carried out on behalf of an Aboriginal group or organisation it is intended to be of use to them, particularly Kaurna, in having available an historical record of what has occurred to date. The research outcomes in terms of the location of Markers, grouping of Markers into the phases, and their provenance, as discussed in following chapters, will be provided to the appropriate Kaurna representative organisation in a similar structure to that presented in this thesis. I am mindful of presenting cross-cultural research outcomes in an appropriate and accessible format (Gonzalez & Lincoln, 2006).

Although specific actions or outcomes could not be developed with Kaurna representatives as an agreed Participatory Action Research project, my underlying approach was that there be some specific actions or social outcomes emanating from the research. Whilst long term this is unknown there have been immediate responses. The staff in the three councils who organised the hosting of the *Ways of Belonging* exhibition, which included the statistical data, saw it as a strong educational resource and advocacy tool for further Aboriginal inclusion in their council areas as part of their ongoing reconciliation processes. The City of Charles Sturt subsequently commissioned the inclusion of Kaurna in an existing 1988 (Bicentennial) Marker and also a report on how Kaurna can be comprehensively included in the public space in its council area, both projects undertaken by Karl Telfer and me. The report is to be used council-wide to facilitate a broad range of civic and social inclusion ranging from potential inclusion in development plan reviews and infrastructure development to community programs.

The photo documentation has also developed as the basis for public talks, conference presentations and University guest lectures in the fields of architecture, social planning, geography, cultural tourism and environmental management. This includes joint lectures with Karl Telfer. In these talks the Markers are used as the mnemonic for ‘story telling’ of both the colonisation and urban history of the Kaurna people. The Markers embody many aspects of history and the audiences have responded positively both to the public space narrative of the Markers and an oral tradition style used for the presentations.

### **The Markers: Descriptive Categories**

In documenting and critiquing the development of Aboriginal Cultural Markers, in addition to the phases into which they can be grouped, it is pertinent to understand their styles, types, locations and significance to better appreciate what has occurred across the phases. To state that there are 143 Markers occurring within the phases reflects a previously unknown but now quantified achievement, but if the Markers were all to be small-scale and located in low visibility spaces, the overall social significance and achievement would be diminished.

There are a number of descriptors for public art; functional, decorative, iconic, integrated, site specific, interpretive and commemorative (Arts SA, 2009) but these are used mostly to describe a type of art and do not apply adequately to a categorisation and analysis of the Markers as part of a process of cross-cultural reconciliation and Aboriginal public space inclusion. The Markers are not only part of public space inclusion by the dominant culture; they are part of Aboriginal groups

reinventing their cultures, their public space cultural presentation and their broader cultural production, and making claim to the public space. It is one thing for the dominant culture to allow or commission Markers, which can be seen as an apology for previous neglect, it is another thing for Aboriginal people to make claim to the public space itself.

I have therefore developed categories to enable grouping, analysis and summarising of the data by various classifications in addition to the phases. Here I present the categories which I use to discuss Markers in the forthcoming chapters on the phases. To describe the works, I have used the categories of Major Civic/Public Artwork, Secondary Artwork, Community Artwork, Commemorative Marker, Interpretive Marker, Inclusion of Kaurna Language, and Public Space Design. The last five categories describe a particular function or style of work which are quite specific in intent and therefore appropriate to understanding an objective of the Marker, i.e. to interpret or commemorate. The first two categories, major or secondary artworks, give an evaluation of the importance of works and I have evolved the following criteria.

### **Major Artworks - Criteria**

1. Location
  - . Prominent or culturally significant location
  - . High visibility
2. Scale
  - . Size and form of work
3. Style
  - . Stand-alone
  - . Site integrated or site specific
4. Materials
  - . Longevity
  - . Appropriateness for cultural intent and meaning
5. Cost
  - . Significant cost of work
6. Artist
  - . Notable artist/s

There is no weighting given to any particular criterion: it is not appropriate to apply precise empirical quantification to each of the criteria as assessment is in some ways subjective and based on a combination of all factors. If a public determination was to be made, the evaluation would most likely be made by a panel of appropriate persons experienced in the field of art and cultural evaluation. For the purposes classifying works for this research, the Markers I present as major have been assessed by me against these criteria.

I distinguish between a major work and a significant work. A major work is not necessarily a significant work. Significance implies that something is important and of consequence (Macquarie Dictionary). Whilst a major work may be large in size or cost and have a high profile location, it is not necessarily a culturally significant work either in the short or long term. Just as a building development, for instance a suburban shopping mall, may be a major development and have high visibility, scale and cost, it does not necessarily follow that it will have cultural or built heritage significance either in the short or long term. Many major buildings are demolished as they do not meet criteria of significance. I would not argue for the long term

retention of some of the Markers I classify as major as I do not believe they will be seen as significant, either now or in the long term<sup>9</sup>. In addition, a significant work may not necessarily qualify as being a major work, it can be a small-scale, local work but have real significance when assessed against that particular criteria. In Chapter 11, where I review what has occurred across the phases, I present criteria to determine the significance of Markers as well as other categories to further analyse the Markers as a collection.

### **Secondary Artworks**

Secondary, or minor, artworks are those which do not fall within the other specific categories. They are smaller scale works of various styles, the majority being murals, and located in a variety of spaces, from building foyers and walls to public parks and incorporate a broad range of art styles and themes. They are not usually highly visible works and are mostly presented to a local community.

### **Community Artworks**

Community artworks are created through collaborative processes involving members of a community and, usually, a skilled arts worker as the key facilitator in the process (Community Arts Network SA, n.d.). The process is designed to ensure a sense of connection to and ownership of the artwork. With community based art, the process is often as important as the product for bringing a community together to explore both its differences and its similarities, tell stories, express identity and create a sense of place and belonging. Outcomes include increased community participation and engagement, opportunities for creative and practical skills development and increased social capital (Arts SA, n.d:5). Community arts are arts of all forms by and for the community and are of varying scale and complexity ranging from quite small and 'amateurish' works to large scale and well developed execution. The work is determined by the needs and abilities of any particular community.

### **Commemorative Markers**

Commemorative Markers are those where the primary purpose is to acknowledge and recall an event, activity or person important to the local community and its visitors (Arts SA, n.d:5). They often use the traditional format of plaques and cairns.

### **Interpretive Markers**

Interpretive Markers are those where the primary purpose is to describe, educate and comment on issues events or situations (Arts SA, n.d:4). They speak of the cultural significance or utilisation of a place often through signage utilising text and images.

### **Public Space Design**

Public space design is the collaborative design of public spaces usually by landscape architects, artists and Aboriginal representatives. This provides a much broader scope and scale of opportunities for Aboriginal inclusion. Such projects usually incorporate landscape design and functional elements (seats etc.), sculptural forms, indigenous vegetation and interpretive components about Aboriginal culture either integrated into the design elements or stand alone. It is a form of Aboriginal recognition and cultural presentation that has only emerged in the last several years, mainly during the period of this research.

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<sup>9</sup> I am aware of the proposed redevelopment of the site of one Marker I have classified as major where the long-term retention of that Marker is not seen as being of priority. There has not yet been a public debate on the issue.

## **Application of this Research Methodology in Other Places**

The methodology to locate Markers evolved as the research progressed. As no similar survey had been conducted, it was difficult to anticipate the variety of institutions or persons that have sponsored Markers or the places they are located. Discovering this was dependent on a range of formal and informal networks. Locating the Markers has been facilitated by a wide range of people and professions; artists, architects, landscape architects, educators, health workers, local government officers, and Aboriginal community members. Methodologically it would not have been possible to anticipate or plan the interactions that occurred.

As this research appears to be the first in Australia to comprehensively locate, document and record the provenance of Aboriginal Cultural Markers in a capital city, I have given thought as to how data collection may be conducted in another capital city to enable comparable research. Analysis of data from elsewhere to establish how Aboriginal public space inclusion evolved, and if the phases and other categories I have identified are corroborated, would be most interesting. It would provide indicators as to whether change has been uniform across the nation or whether particular cities or places have comparable or different characteristics. Using the categories and methodology I have developed would assist researchers who are external to the field of public space arts practice to conduct studies.

To locate Aboriginal Cultural Markers a formal survey of the following people, institutions and organisations is suggested:

- . Artists – Public space practitioners. Contacted through arts organisations or artist registers
- . Art schools
- . State government public art programs
- . State government general art programs
- . State government agencies with particular service delivery to Aboriginal peoples, i.e. Aboriginal health care, Aboriginal housing
- . State government heritage authorities
- . Local government–cultural development and public art programs
- . Aboriginal community and representative groups
- . Reconciliation groups
- . Educational institutions–primary, secondary and tertiary
- . Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
- . Australian Institute of Architects

Survey design would be dependent on the researcher and local circumstances. Although some Markers may still fall through the net, my experience from this research suggests that such a survey ought to flush out the vast majority. It would be an interesting exercise to now formally survey these groups in Adelaide to see how that data collection method may corroborate or expand that already collected in the less structured way that evolved during my research. I remain confident that the structure by which my research findings are presented can accommodate any new Markers coming to light but am open to the unknown. Time is also an integral ingredient. After the first approach was made to people in some of the above networks, they became more aware of the concept and more alert to subsequently recalling or recognising Markers and providing me with the information.

## Summary

Research methodology and knowledge in relation to Aboriginal people is evolving with experience and will continue to do so (Hart & Whatman, 1998). In this research unexpected events and happenstance were accommodated and, in hindsight, embraced. These events, in particular the photo documentary exhibition, which could not have been anticipated in the initial phase of the research, guided the shape and outcomes of the thesis. Had not the external influences intruded, the focus of the research would have been different. It would have concentrated less on documenting the extent of (the large number of) Markers and more on analysis of the processes of commissioning public art and public space governance structures that contribute to public space outcomes. These latter issues are still part of the thesis but not to the depth that may have otherwise been pursued. Being open to variables and taking advantage of unforeseeable circumstances has enabled a different but rich and rewarding outcome.

The use of the photo documentary exhibition, a visual communication format, has provided an effective community outreach tool and simultaneously a vehicle for data gathering as compared to published research articles only. Presenting the exhibition to a broad public helped refine the focus and structure of the research and the methods of presentation of research results outside of the normal academic process of publication. This thesis presentation includes the photo-documentary record and images of all Markers are presented in the following chapters. The exhibition, forum and community events established an outreach and feedback loop which continually reinforced and expanded the research. As Lewis O'Brien succinctly stated (2006: 24) 'If the reality of sharing the space is to be achieved it must move beyond the border of universities and into community forums'.

Of importance to the success of my research has been my informal interaction with Adelaide's urban Aboriginal community, which is diverse in geography, and social and cultural groupings. The ability to both gain and disseminate information within the community has been through informal rather than structured networks. From personal feedback I have received, my activities have not been seen as an external research project that may be remote from the community, rather I believe that it is seen as working for the interests of the community, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, in elaborating a history as expressed through the public space. Aboriginal people especially have enjoyed seeing the photos and narrative presented, the range and style of Markers, what has been achieved by, with and on behalf of their people. The main response has been 'Deadly', a very positive affirmation in the Aboriginal vernacular with a meaning along the lines of 'fantastic, great, well done'.

These factors combined underpin a case for flexibility and fluidity in methodology and research aims for this type of research.