

**Karriyikarmerren rowk – everyone working together:
Towards an intercultural approach to community safety in
Gunbalanya, West Arnhem Land**

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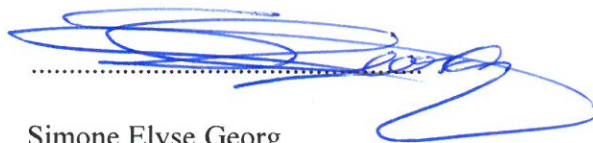
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Statement of Authorship

Except as acknowledged in the text, the work I present in this thesis is my own original research. Some parts of this thesis contain excerpts from co-authored publications to which I made an equal contribution and these have been reproduced with permission from the other author(s). This thesis does not exceed 100,000 words in length excluding footnotes, tables, figures, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, positioned above a dotted line.

Simone Elyse Georg

Acknowledgements

To begin this thesis, I want to thank the people of Gunbalanya who have generously shared their lives with me. This research has come about because elders from the Ardjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation see potential in the younger generation to achieve a bright future, acquire a good education and become future leaders of the West Arnhem homelands. While there are many bright young people who are on that path, there are others who do not realise their own potential. These elders are visionaries for whom I have the utmost respect. I offer my sincere gratitude to the Corporation's support of this project during its various stages.

With this study, I hope to give non-Indigenous people a critical lens to understand why current interventions in the areas of community safety, including crime and violence prevention, may not be realising their intended outcomes and how Kunwinjku Aboriginal people would like changes in this area. This study only begins to touch on the impediments to success. The underlying causes of safety issues are complex and traverse our troubling colonial history. This study supports the existing Aboriginal expertise that has informed the campaign for self-determined change for many decades and the current research that has explored these issues over the past 50 years.

There are many people in Gunbalanya and beyond who have made the extensive ground-up fieldwork possible. I would like to thank Donna Nadjamerrek who adopted me and with whom I share many fond memories in Manmoyi and on other trips out bush. My aunties, June, Lois and Hagar, who have given me hope that there is a bright future for young people. You all have guided me with your wisdom, kindness, trust and an open heart. My brother, Ron Mangiru, has accompanied me on adventures and always been cheerful. Without Ron this study would not been possible, and he gave me inspiration to keep going.

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Northern Territory Police in this thesis, there were certain individuals who showed me that a positive and proactive police force is possible.

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Abstract

Indigenous people worldwide face complex historical, social and cultural circumstances that impair their ability to live in safety. In Australia, two in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have experienced spousal violence, and Indigenous children are seven times more likely than non-Indigenous children to experience substantiated abuse or neglect. Indigenous community safety is a complex concept that should be based on the self-identified concerns of Indigenous people. Few studies thus far have enquired how Indigenous Australians in rural and remote areas visualise safety in their own neighbourhoods. This study investigates how Kunwinjku Aboriginal people and service providers understand and operationalise community safety in Gunbalanya, Northern Territory. It enquires about the values, behaviours, social norms and controls that influence participants' perceptions and experiences of harm and safety. An intercultural and strengths-based approach is needed to understand these multifaceted issues beyond simply measuring crime and violence.

The study uses social disorganisation and ecological systems theories to understand how community members and service providers manage harmful behaviours and leverage values, attitudes and beliefs which are perceived to enhance safety. This mixed methods research involves long-term fieldwork, undertaken from September 2015 to October 2017 where the majority of residents are Indigenous. Data collection includes 19 semi-structured interviews and 55 questionnaires involving 78 Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. This intercultural concept of Indigenous community safety: 1) identifies neighbourhood problems which need to be addressed for the community to reduce harm and improve safety; 2) embraces the strengths-based elements of kinship, law and ceremonies; and 3) develops a practical approach to understand how services could better enable positive behaviour change in Gunbalanya.

In Gunbalanya, harmful behaviours are multi-layered and intimately interlinked. This concept of community safety has three main dimensions: interpersonal and community harm and the strengths-based values of Aboriginal Law. At the interpersonal level, neighbourhood problems occur amongst close kin relationships where children and elderly persons are most vulnerable. Interpersonal neighbourhood problems include alcohol and substance misuse, interpersonal and family violence, gambling, mental health issues and dangerous driving. These reoccurring patterns of behaviour at the interpersonal level have flow-on effects across the community and articulate in broader social issues. At the community level, distal

neighbourhood problems include youth delinquency and fractured parent-child relationships, collective trauma, and intergenerational transmission of violence.

Findings from this research suggest that future strategies for addressing these challenges need to build on Kunwinjku values as the foundation for enabling healthy and respectful relationships. At the third level, the values and beliefs in Kunwinjku society promote positive relationships through mutual respect including listening, helping and sharing with each other. These values are practiced through Aboriginal dispute resolution strategies and have the potential for use in formal service delivery. However, ongoing patterns of harmful behaviours are fracturing respect and belief in Aboriginal Law as social norms and controls are less able to manage delinquent and other harmful behaviours. Strengths-based solutions are required to engage elders and young people in a process of transgenerational learning according to the practices of Aboriginal Law.

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Abbreviations

AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
AAC	Ardjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANU	Australian National University
BMX	bicycle motorcross
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CEPO	Community Engagement Police Officer
CDP	Community Development Program
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CSAP	Community Safety Action Plan
CM	community members (research participant)
CSAP	Community Safety Action Plan
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CSAP	Community Safety Action Plan
DPMC	Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
DVO	Domestic Violence Order
FDV	family and domestic violence
FN	field note (qualitative data source)

GEC	Government Engagement Coordinator
GSSC	Gunbalanya Sports and Social Club
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAIDOC	National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAAJA	Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
NTER	Northern Territory Emergency Response
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTL	Northern Territory Library
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
Q	questionnaire participants (research participant)
RSAS	Remote School Attendance Strategy
SP	service providers (research participant)
TEAM	Top End Association for Mental (Health)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSA	Volatile Substance Abuse
WARC	West Arnhem Regional Council

Glossary of key phrases

<i>bakki</i>	Kunwinjku term for ‘cigarettes’.
<i>Balanda</i>	Aboriginal term, in Kunwinjku language, for a non-Indigenous person.
<i>bengwar</i>	Aboriginal term, in Kunwinjku language, that translates to ‘crazy person’ where it is often used to describe those affected by alcohol and substance misuse.
<i>Bininj</i>	Aboriginal term, in Kunwinjku language, for an Indigenous person. The word specifically translates to ‘Aboriginal’ or ‘Aboriginal man or boy’.
<i>card games</i>	Refers to card games played to socialise or gamble for money or possessions.
<i>daluk</i>	Kunwinjku term for a woman or girl.
<i>djorra</i>	Kunwinjku term meaning ‘paper’ or document.
<i>dry community</i>	An Aboriginal community where no liquor is permitted to be brought in or sold commercially.
<i>grog running</i>	Refers to illicit liquor being brought into a prescribed community, otherwise referred to as ‘sly grog’.
<i>jamon</i>	Kunwinjku term for ‘police’.
<i>kunapipi</i>	Kunwinjku term for a form of men’s ceremony.
<i>kunbang</i>	Aboriginal term, in Kunwinjku language, for alcohol.
<i>kundalk</i>	Aboriginal term in Kunwinjku language that directly translates to ‘grass’ and is used to refer to marijuana or ganja.
<i>kunwarde</i>	Aboriginal term in Kunwinjku language for ‘money’.
<i>Kunwinjku</i>	Aboriginal language commonly used in Gunbalanya and the West Arnhem region.
<i>humbug</i>	Humbugging is insisting on demands or requests for money or other resources and is common amongst kin relations in remote Indigenous Australia. Humbug refers to a nuisance and

annoyance where this demand becomes overwhelming and attempts to resist humbugging can result in arguments, threats and verbal or physical harassment. In Gunbalanya, participants identified that humbug is different to sharing everyday necessities such as food and power costs.

<i>Old People</i>	A term used to describe elders or ancestors. Old People play a strong role in overseeing Bininj law and managing respectful behaviour in Kunwinjku society.
<i>prescribed community</i>	A discrete Indigenous area prescribed under the Northern Territory Emergency Response which restricted residents from bring in liquor and pornography and engaging in gambling, amongst other measures.
<i>‘sick mind’</i>	A term used by participants to refer to those with mental health issues or impairments.
<i>‘wet canteen’</i>	A term historically used for a licenced venue in remote Australia. Wet canteens were often a shed or informal outlet where clients could purchase food and some liquor for take-away or on-site consumption.
<i>yarn</i>	‘Having a yarn’ is a common Australian term for a casual, unstructured conversation.
<i>woomera</i>	An Aboriginal term for a hunting tool used by men to throw a spear.
<i>wudud</i>	A Kunwinjku term for ‘child’ or ‘children’.

A note about style

I have sought to enhance the voices of participants through a number of means.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim when the interview was voice recorded and, otherwise, written notes were recorded exactly as described by participants, to the best of my ability. This means that local terminology, including Kunwinjku words and English nuances, are included in the transcripts exactly as it occurred in conversation.

Participants' quotes are italicised, indented or quoted in-text with double quotation marks. Colloquial expressions, emphases, clarifications and non-standard English words are also phrased in single quotation marks. Participants' ideas are referenced in-text with their case number – where 'CM' refers to community members, 'SP' refers to service providers, and 'Q' refers to questionnaire participants. Where participants were unable to be referenced directly, a field note (FN) reference is used instead to ensure their anonymity.

Transcripts are sometimes not recorded in perfect English and all expressions are recorded in this thesis as they appear in the data. Where referenced in other publications, I ask that participants are quoted exactly as stated in this thesis, without correction, as participants continue to hold moral copyright for this knowledge.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people please be aware that this thesis contains names and images of people who have passed.

1 Thesis overview and theoretical framework

1.1 Introduction

The ability to live in a safe and secure environment is a fundamental human right from which everyone should benefit. Indigenous people worldwide face complex historical, political, economic and social circumstances which impair their ability to enjoy the right to a safe and secure home, community and country (United Nations, 2008). Indigenous peoples' diverse experiences of colonisation, dispossession and marginalisation from mainstream society contribute to the structural factors, underlying causes and risk factors associated with violence and insecurity (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2013). As a result, they disproportionately experience violence, victimisation and incarceration compared to mainstream populations, internationally and in Australia (UNICEF, 2013; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, Zwi & Lozano, 2002).

A lack of safety and security can be measured with different indicators relating to harm experienced within the family and community, among vulnerable groups. In Australia, in the 2014–15 NATSISS¹, two in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander² women (63%) and one in three Indigenous men (35%) reported having experienced physical violence where the perpetrator was a family member or spouse (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2018c, p. 86). In 2016–17, Indigenous children were seven times more likely to receive a substantiation for child abuse or neglect compared to non-Indigenous children; and children³ from very remote areas also had high rates of substantiations (25.4 per 1,000) (AIHW, 2018a). In very remote areas, Indigenous Australians were also more likely to report neighbourhood problems in comparison to those in major cities and urban areas (82% and 65%). These neighbourhood problems included alcohol misuse, physical assault, sexual assault or rape, neighbourhood conflict and gambling (AIHW, 2018c, p. 86).

¹ Abbreviation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey.

² Referred to as 'Indigenous Australians' here forth.

³ This refers to Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, although noting that the proportion of Indigenous Australians living in remote areas is high. In 2011, 45% of Indigenous people lived in very remote areas and 16% lived in remote areas (AIHW, 2015).

Indigenous Australians are significantly overrepresented in the criminal justice system. Even though offending rates in most states and territories are decreasing⁴, in 2015–16, Indigenous Australians were still nine times more likely than non-Indigenous Australians to commit an offence in the Northern Territory (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2017). In the last 10 years, the number of adult prisoners incarcerated in the Northern Territory has nearly doubled. On 30 June 2015, Indigenous people represented 84% of incarcerated adults in the Northern Territory (Northern Territory of Australia, 2016). Meanwhile, the literature suggests individuals with a criminal history are more likely to experience poorer life outcomes including barriers to education and employment, reliance on welfare, poor mental health outcomes including substance misuse, and intergenerational experiences of incarceration (AIHW, 2015; Weatherburn, 2014; Dodson & Hunter, 2002). A preventative approach is needed that addresses the high rates of Indigenous crime, violence and incarceration where improved community safety is the primary focus.

There is little consensus on how community safety is defined in Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts (Capobianco, 2006; Cuthill, 2016; A. Sutton & Cherney, 2002; Whitzman, 2008). Since the 1970s, community safety has been used by mainstream societies as a partnerships-based approach that has engaged residents and community groups in crime prevention and control. The rationale for a partnerships-based approach is that community safety and crime prevention are complex, multifaceted issues that need to be addressed through building a coordinated, interagency strategy (Cherney, 2003). This policy has had a strong influence on the way governments have engaged with civil society organisations in Western states including Europe, the United States, Australia and New Zealand (P. Homel, 2005; Hughes, 2002; A. Sutton & Cherney, 2002; Whitzman, 2008).

Australian government policies⁵ seek to improve Indigenous community safety through reducing family violence, child neglect and alcohol misuse, increasing police presence in remote areas, and improving the justice system's response to Indigenous crime. These are unquestionably positive endeavours; however, this thesis argues that Australian policies adopt a narrow interpretation of Indigenous community safety that is misaligned with the

⁴ The ABS does not provide police recorded crime rates by Indigenous status for Tasmania and Western Australia. This is because those states do not have an Indigenous identification process that is compatible with ABS standards (ABS, 2017b).

⁵ Refer to the Closing the Gap Strategy in Indigenous Affairs, the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2009-2020*, and the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* (COAG, 2009a, 2009b 2010).

neighbourhood problems that occur on-the-ground in Indigenous areas. In contrast, community safety issues in remote Northern Territory contexts are diverse and complex. These issues include interpersonal violence (i.e. perpetration and experiences of physical conflict), family and sexual violence, alcohol and substance misuse, youth crime and dysfunctional behaviour (including dangerous driving, theft and vandalism) and environmental dangers (e.g. snakes and crocodiles) (Putt, Middleton, Yamaguchi & Turner, 2011; Shaw & D'Abbs, 2011; Willis, 2010). Yet, there is a near absence of research that explores how community safety is understood and experienced by Indigenous Australians, beyond simply focusing on violence and crime (Capobianco, 2006; Capobianco, Shaw & Sagant, 2009; Willis, 2010).

A holistic concept of community safety is needed that develops strengths-based approaches to harm prevention in Indigenous communities. A holistic concept must recognise that social conditions relating to socioeconomic disadvantage impact on community safety outcomes. These social conditions include overcrowded and inadequate housing, poor education, vocational training and employment outcomes, impaired parental abilities, and poor social and cultural wellbeing. Initiatives that tackle these deep systemic issues must sustain partnerships that build on the expertise of local Indigenous leaders and their ambition to achieve self-determined change (Capobianco, et al., 2009).

This thesis analyses how these multifaceted social issues are connected, and the research adopts a collaborative and locally grounded approach to working with Aboriginal people and their communities. This research draws upon harm prevention and strengths-based approaches to understand how Aboriginal participants understand the issues that affect their family and community. Hillyard, Gordon, Pantazis and Tombs (2004) define social harms to include interpersonal or *physical harms* which include negative effects on physical health, injury or safety; *financial/economic harms* which comprise losses to financial status (including cash, property or other assets), increased poverty and loss of income through employment or government pensions; and *cultural safety* which recognises that harms may impact on autonomy, development and growth. While some social harms are universally recognised as 'harmful' such as child abuse, I furthermore suggest that different social groups can also perceive 'social harm' differently. A locally grounded perspective on what constitutes 'harmful behaviours' is crucial to understanding the needs of Aboriginal people and to improve local responses to these issues.

The thesis proposes a holistic concept of community safety that explores the relationships between physical, social and emotional harm from the perspective of Aboriginal people in a remote area of the Northern Territory. The thesis argues community safety strategies need to move beyond risk-based interventions to understand the complexity and fluidity of interpersonal and neighbourhood harms in Aboriginal contexts (France, Freiberg & Homel, 2010). Alongside this, a culturally integrated and holistic response is needed to address the underlying causes of harm in remote areas.

1.2 Research aims

This interdisciplinary research seeks to understand how community safety is understood, operationalised and can be improved in Gunbalanya, a remote Aboriginal community in West Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. The four questions that shape this research are:

- 1) How do Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, as community members and service providers, understand the term ‘community safety’ in Gunbalanya?
- 2) What physical, social and emotional harms impair community safety in Gunbalanya and how are these unsafe or harmful behaviours connected and influence each other?
- 3) How are Kunwinjku values, behaviours, social norms and controls influencing people’s experiences and perceptions of safety in Gunbalanya?
- 4) Are service providers enabling these Aboriginal values, attitudes, behaviours and social norms and controls to improve community safety? How could this be achieved to actualise a community-driven notion of community safety?

This thesis seeks to define and conceptualise community safety by exploring aspects of interpersonal safety. The definition of ‘community safety’ used is based on how participants defined the concept themselves. While I asked participants about environmental safety (including snakes and crocodiles), these issues were not among participants’ primary concerns. Other issues related to community safety (such as state security, environmental safety and cultural safety) are areas that could be explored in further research on Aboriginal-centred concepts of harm minimisation and security. But these aspects of safety are outside of the scope of this thesis.

The purpose of this study is to develop an intercultural concept of community safety to understand how Aboriginal participants in Gunbalanya understand different expressions of harm, including physical, social and emotional harm, at the interpersonal and community levels. The findings use a locally grounded definition of ‘harm’ by focusing on the issues that participants considered unsafe. Issues participants considered harmful and unsafe commonly related to Western concepts of crime, delinquency and antisocial behaviour. The findings draw upon the breadth of knowledge that already exists in this field, while recognising that participants may not frame their own experiences by using these terms. This research explores relationships between physical, social and emotional harms and how they articulate in unsafe behaviours at multiple levels – in interpersonal interactions, amongst family relationships and at the community level.

Aboriginal perceptions of being safe and feeling safe are used as building blocks for this concept of community safety. This research articulates strength-based aspects of family and community life in Gunbalanya that participants identified help them feel stronger and safer. The findings delve into the positive values, attitudes, behaviours and social norms and controls that participants associate with building respectful relationships in the family and community, and how these ideas can translate into improved community safety. The thesis explores how traditional practices used in contemporary Kunwinjku society continue to be a mechanism for enabling respectful behaviour among young people and whether these mechanisms are a potential strengths-based solution for transgenerational change. ‘Strengths-based’ refers to research, ideas, approaches and strategies which seek to understand the positive values, beliefs and attributes that people offer. Strengths-based approaches have been used to understand the value that Indigenous culture offers in enhancing for example mental health and wellbeing (Dudgeon, Wright, Paradies, Garney & Walker, 2010) and offer an alternative to a traditional problem-based paradigm (Fogarty, Lovell, Langenberg & Heron, 2017).

Finally, the thesis investigates how community safety policy and service delivery are responding to the range of safety issues identified by participants in Gunbalanya, in order to understand if their safety needs are being addressed. Inter-agency collaboration and partnership-based approaches to improving community safety continue to feature prominently in public policy and the literature⁶; meanwhile many participants held the view that service providers needed to work together to support the community in improving safety. This research

⁶ Refer to chapter four for an extensive review of the literature.

seeks to understand how well these collaborative relationships are working to improve safety, where their effectiveness is assessed using the views and perspectives of service providers and Aboriginal community members. The study also enquires what types of programs or services could better address the range of physical, social, and emotional harms identified by participants.

1.3 Fieldwork

Findings from this mixed methods study are based on data collected in Gunbalanya⁷, in West Arnhem Land, Northern Territory (see Fig. 1.1). The research fieldwork was undertaken between September 2015 and October 2017 when I spent nearly 12 months consulting and engaging Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in the research process.⁸ The research was undertaken with permission from traditional owners and community leaders from the Ardjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation (AAC).⁹ The AAC is the community's largest representative body with over 350 members from the three camps or neighbourhoods in Gunbalanya. The AAC's Board of Directors is composed of traditional owners and community leaders from homelands across the West Arnhem Land region.

Data collection was undertaken during long-term fieldwork from April to November 2016. I sought to immerse myself in community life wherever possible to build relationships, understand issues from an alternate perspective and critically engage with my own unconscious bias. As part of this process, I spent the first three months of the fieldwork in 2016 building relationships, spending time on country and working for the ABS in the 2016 Census Enumeration team for the West Arnhem region. This was pivotal to my learning how to ask questions, which were often sensitive and complex, and triangulating what participants said during interviews with my own personal observations and experiences. Later in September to October 2016, I spent three weeks immersed in archival records, undertaking document

⁷ Gunbalanya is also commonly referred to as 'Oenpelli', see Fig. 1.1.

⁸ I initially approached the elders in Gunbalanya to participate in the research because I had existing relationships with them. I had visited Gunbalanya previously in a professional work capacity and I knew other researchers who had worked with the elders.

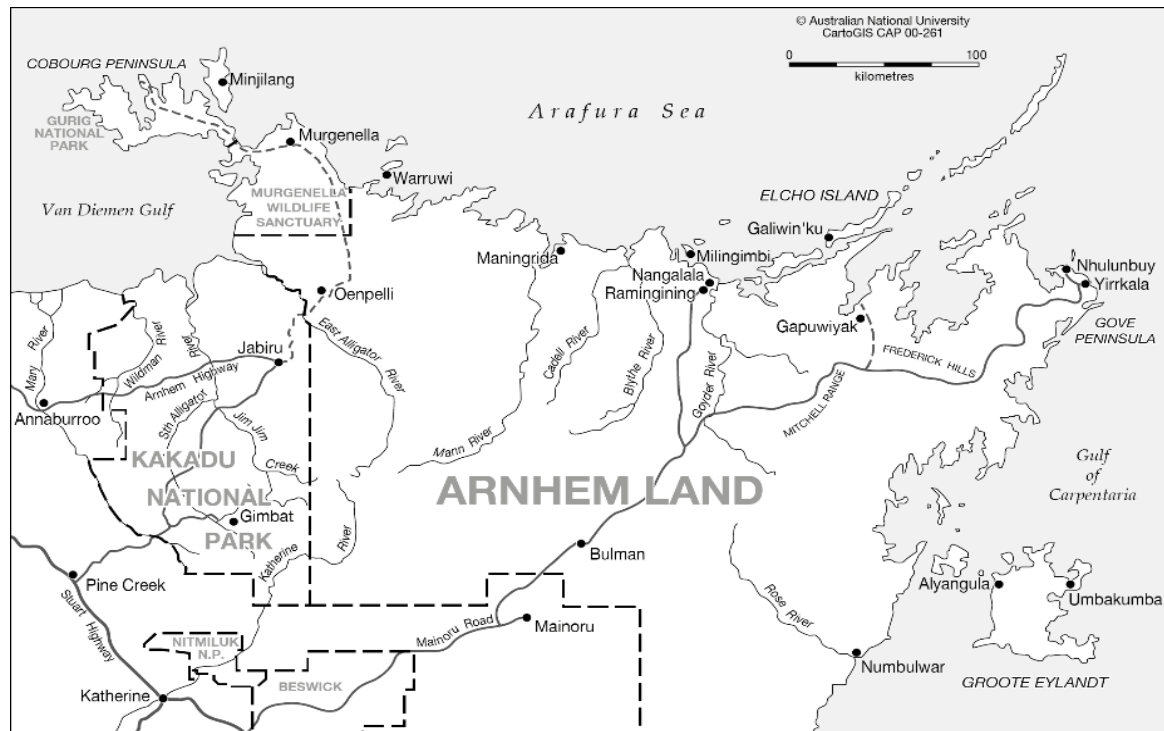
⁹ The study was approved by the ANU's Human Research Ethics Committee, protocol number 2016/655. In addition, I gained written permission from the AAC and engaged the elders in ongoing consultation and feedback during the three field visits between September 2015 to October 2017 and beyond. The AAC's written permission was used to gain approval from the Northern Land Council to undertake research on Aboriginal Land.

analysis at the Northern Territory Archives Service, to understand the socio-historical context of community safety issues in Gunbalanya.

A total of 78 participants – 95 percent Indigenous and 5 percent non-Indigenous participants – were involved in this study where a mix of semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used. Semi-structured interviews often reflected the spontaneous and fluid nature of social interactions in Aboriginal communities, where they sometimes evolved from casual conversations to become group discussions¹⁰. Data from the semi-structured interviews was used to develop a locally grounded approach to building the core concept of community safety. These data were then used to design questionnaires which gathered mixed methods data from a more diverse sample across the community. Participants in the questionnaires and some semi-structured interviews were recruited with the assistance of two Aboriginal facilitators (one male and one female) from different family groups. Both facilitators were well-respected cultural leaders in the community with extensive social networks. Further detail on the methodology and fieldwork is provided in chapter three.

¹⁰ Group discussions are indicated by multiple participant codes next to a single quote, for example [SP02 and SP03].

Fig. 1.1. Map of the Arnhem Land region



Source: CartoGIS (2017)

Note: The map marks the location of Gunbalanya using the community's former name 'Oenpelli'.

1.4 Theoretical framework

This thesis is grounded in the field of southern criminology which draws upon southern theory and Indigenous criminology. As part of this, I use a decolonising framework which seeks to understand physical, social and emotional harm from a perspective that is grounded in Indigenous knowledge, meanwhile recognising the strengths of Indigenous kinship, customary practices and sense of connectedness. Two theories are used to provide structure to the analysis – social disorganisation and ecological systems theory.

1.4.1 Southern criminology

In this thesis, I build upon criminology and social science scholarship to highlight how community safety and crime prevention concepts need to be informed by and grounded in the perspectives of those affected by these policies. I draw upon scholars in southern criminology

(Carrington, Hogg & Sozzo, 2016), Indigenous criminology (Cunneen, 2016; Cunneen & Tauri, 2016) and decolonising theory (Blagg, 2016; Connell, 2007, 2014; L. T. Smith, 2012) to critically engage with policy constructs and provide an opportunity for voices at the periphery to influence criminological thoughts and its influence on social policy.

The use of ‘community safety’ in Indigenous policy is an example of what several scholars have referred to as the transfer of policy ideas, knowledge and theory from a politically influential group to subjects on the periphery (Blagg, 2016; Carrington, et al., 2016; Connell, 2007). Theoretical concepts of crime prevention have fundamentally been driven by the interests of those located at hegemonic centres in the Global North. Those at the periphery, the Global South, are subjected to top-down enforcement of these policy experiments (Carrington, et al., 2016). People located at the periphery often have an abundance of ideas on how to address crime and safety problems but are not enabled with the power to influence crime prevention policy (Carrington, et al., 2016). Power relations embedded in centre-periphery relations are not necessarily confined to the functions of the nation state but are embedded in research praxis and how we, as researchers, enable research participants the power to persuade and influence research ideas and their products. There is a greater need for research to prioritise the Indigenous views and conceptions of community safety and other criminological ideas, where research methodologies are emancipatory and transform research paradigms so that those on the ground can meaningfully participate in the process.

This study was designed in consultation and collaboration with the AAC. From conception, I used an ethical approach by ensuring the traditional owners and community leaders had the opportunity to influence research concepts during the early consultation phase (September 2015), providing feedback on the data collection method (April to November 2016), and making decisions with them on how the information would be used during the knowledge sharing phase (September 2017). By engaging in a reflexive praxis and positioning Indigenous knowledge at the forefront of the research process, I have sought to deconstruct how power and privilege influence research processes and policy constructs. The following sections position the thesis in criminology scholarship and outline how the research aims are addressed in the theoretical framework.

1.4.2 Theories on Indigenous crime

There are several theories that propose an explanation for the higher rates of violence and crime amongst Australian Indigenous people compared to non-Indigenous people. A brief summary of these theories is provided below to show contemporary issues in the literature, noting that detailed explanations have been covered elsewhere (see for example Snowball & Weatherburn, 2008; K. M. Sullivan, 2013; Weatherburn, 2014; Wundersitz, 2010).

- *Cultural theorists* argue that family and intertribal violence was an integral part of traditional Aboriginal life and was considered a socially acceptable way of addressing unlawful behaviour prior to colonisation. Proponents of this theory argue that community violence is widespread because violence is still considered a socially acceptable way to resolve problems (Nowra, 2007; P. Sutton, 2001). This theory has not been substantiated (Snowball & Weatherburn, 2008).
- *Anomie theory* proposes that crime arises from a lack of normal ethical and social standards due to the importation of foreign culture during industrialisation (Durkheim, 1964). In Indigenous criminology, proponents suggest that colonisation and dispossession have destroyed Aboriginal cultural values and social positions to the point that many Aboriginal people no longer have a sense of purpose (Snowball & Weatherburn, 2008).
- Closely linked to anomie theory, *social disorganisation theory* finds that Indigenous formal and informal social controls and norms have become fractured, broken down and less able to regulate antisocial and delinquent behaviours (Memmott, Stacy, Chambers & Keys, 2001).
- *Social deprivation theory* suggests that the broad range of social and economic disadvantages experienced by Indigenous Australians were created by colonisation and generate feelings of anger, frustration and despair. These feelings contribute to the high rates of violence and crime (Commonwealth of Australia, 1991).
- *Lifestyle/routine activity theory* argues that crime is likely to occur when there is a motivated offender, an attractive target and the absence of capable guardianship, including control and supervision (Felson & Cohen, 1979, 2016). In Indigenous criminology, proponents of this theory argue that explanatory reasons cannot be reduced

to underlying causes such as colonisation and dispossession. Alcoholism largely causes endemic patterns of violence, and sedentary lifestyles encourage alcoholism and ongoing disadvantage (Pearson, 2001, 2009).

In addition to these theories of causation, *developmental prevention theory* has contributed significantly to developing crime prevention indicators relevant to Indigenous populations. The theory proposes that investing resources early in an individual's life increases the likelihood of preventing early-onset delinquency (Hamel, Lincoln & Herd, 1999; Tilley, 2005). By managing multiple risk and protective factors during transitions in an individual's life, interventions can prevent delinquency from becoming a repeated pattern (R. Hamel, 2005). As further discussed below in section 1.4.5, risk and protective factors provide a lens through which vulnerabilities and strengths can be understood (Hamel, et al., 1999).

Snowball and Weatherburn (2008) found strong to moderate support for some of the above theories – specifically lifestyle or routine activity, social deprivation and social disorganisation theories. However, I argue alongside Wundersitz (2010) that there is no singular theory that can explain the nature or extent of violence and crime in Indigenous communities compared to non-Indigenous. In this thesis, social disorganisation theory provides a framework to understand how formal and informal mechanisms in Indigenous social networks moderate unsafe behaviours that impair community safety.

1.4.3 Social Disorganisation Theory

Literature using a structural orientation seeks to understand the interaction between crime-related behaviour and neighbourhood or community structures (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Sampson, 1991; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994; Veysey & Messner, 1999). Originally developed by Shaw and MacKay (1949), Robert Sampson and others argue that higher crime rates are associated with: ethnic heterogeneity or diversity, residential instability (i.e. high population turn-over or mobility), low socioeconomic status (including high poverty and unemployment rates) and population characteristics (i.e. size, density and proximity to an urban space) (Sampson, 1991; Sampson & Groves, 1989; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1994).

Theorists suggest that communities become socially disorganised because they lack sufficient informal structures to effectively manage harmful behaviour and crime-related

activity occurring in their neighbourhoods. These informal structures are conceived of as mutually agreeable goals (which is assumed to be low delinquency and crime rates), behavioural norms and controls, and strong social networks, cohesion and supports (Sampson & Groves, 1989). These factors are considered to play a significant role in improving safety.

Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn's (2000) integrative framework classifies the effect of neighbourhood disadvantage on crime rates into three main areas. Firstly, *institutional resources* in disadvantaged areas are commonly poorer where residents are less able to reap the benefits of regular exposure to high quality institutions such as education, health and child care. Secondly, *norms and collective efficacy* are the social organising resources that support the achievement of shared goals and beliefs. Collective efficacy encompasses informal social control (which is defined as residents' willingness to monitor others' behaviour and to intervene when witnessing delinquent or unsafe behaviours); and additionally, social cohesion which is described as the extent to which residents share social values and norms, including how willing they are to cooperate and help each other.

Third, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn's framework (2000) suggests *relationships and social ties* have become fractured where parents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods live under more stressful conditions. Stressful conditions along with ongoing crime-related issues impair parent-child relationships and broader social networks in the family, further contributing to higher rates of delinquency and crime rates amongst youth in disadvantaged areas.

I acknowledge Blagg's critique (2016) that Western criminological theories are often misaligned with the Aboriginal worldviews and these theories are sometimes uncritically superimposed on Aboriginal domains. In recognising this, there are several limitations to using social disorganisation theory in this theoretical framework. Firstly, as social disorganisation has its origins as a Western theory, it is less able to explain how the historical processes of colonisation created dispossession and the fracturing of Aboriginal law and how these issues are continuing occurrences in the modern era. Chapter two adopts a concentrated focus on liquor stores in the 1970s to explore the issues of racism, marginalisation and cultural dispossession. Also, chapter eight highlights how the abuse of police power contributes to the social disorganisation of the community through, for example, a punitive approach to policing and punishing Aboriginal people rather than a focus on healing and rehabilitation. Secondly, this thesis is limited to discussing the informal mechanisms in Bininj law because of restricted

time available in the field. Further research is needed in this field that elaborates on how formal mechanisms, including ceremonies, contribute to reducing harm and improving safety.

The reason why I draw upon social disorganisation theory is because of the way these phenomena have emerged from the interview data. First, this theory enables the research to build a multidimensional concept that recognises the interaction between structures and agency, and second, the theory allows me to position the data within participants' historical, social and cultural worldview which commonly reflected their Indigeneity. Along with the processes of colonisation and acculturation¹¹, a breakdown in traditional social norms and parent-child relationships are examples of key themes to emerge from this research. I use social disorganisation theory as one possible interpretation of participants' experiences and perceptions of neighbourhood problems and community safety. Variations of the social disorganisation theory have been used to describe and understand the high rates of crime in Indigenous communities which have been attributed to the role of colonisation in breaking down Indigenous informal mechanisms of social control (McCausland & Vivian, 2010).

1.4.4 Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological systems theory has been used to explain how risk and protective factors influence the perpetration and experience of crime (Zubrick & Robson, 2003), family violence (Heise, 1998; Wundersitz, 2010) and child maltreatment (Belsky, 1980). Bronfenbrenner (1979) developed ecological systems theory to explain how human development occurs through a person's interaction with their multiple structures and environments. Ecological transitions or changes in a person's role in these environments (such as becoming a parent or transitioning into adolescence) are significant in their impact on developmental processes, because the transition requires a change in the demands and expectations in performing that role. How well one performs these multiple roles depends on other demands, stressors and supports that arise from different environmental settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 6-7).

¹¹ Acculturation is defined as the modification or alteration in the social structure of society (Trimble, 2003). Katz (1974) defines four elements to acculturation: individual changes in personality; gradual changes in the structure of society; rapid change to the structure and organisation of a social system; and cultural change including the attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour that is considered appropriate in that society. In Indigenous societies, historical and contemporary colonisation and cultural dispossession is said to alienate traditionally-oriented Indigenous cultures and contribute to the erosion of the cultural integrity, thereby further enabling acculturation (Brady, 1995).

My research uses a social ecological framework to explore the interrelatedness of risk factors that influence different aspects of social organisation. The theory holds that risk and protective factors are not unidirectional but are multi-layered, relational and change with different life experiences (Wundersitz, 2010). Bronfenbrenner (1979) theorises that child development is influenced by an individual's perception¹² of their surrounding environment at four different levels: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem. Risk factors located close to the individual are labelled as 'proximal' and those located in the broader environment are 'distal'. How an individual experiences personal development in relation to these four spheres changes over time, and this process is referred to as the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These four levels can be visualised using four concentric circles radiating out from the individual. Below I describe the five main dimensions of ecological systems theory.

- The *microsystem*, the first sphere, is closest to the individual and the one in which s(he) has direct contact. It includes the individual's family, friends, caregivers, school or work. Relationships are multidirectional which means that how an individual engages with other people in the microsystem will affect how s(he) is treated in return.
- The *mesosystem* is composed of the interactions and relationships between the different parts of the microsystem. It is where aspects of the individual's microsystem do not function independently but are interconnected and assert influence on one another. The interaction between the microsystem and the mesosystem are analysed in chapter five in relation to neighbourhood problems.
- The *exosystem* is the setting that does not involve the person as an active participant but still affects the person. It includes decisions that the person does not have direct involvement in but that have residual influences in the person's life. This aspect of the social system is analysed in chapter six where structural factors in the neighbourhood influence experiences of youth delinquency, including fractured social controls, and intergenerational trauma and violence.

¹² Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 5) theorised that it is more important to analyse a person's perception and interaction with his or her surrounding environment, rather than an "objective" reality tested in laboratory conditions. The reason for this is that the focus should be how an individual engages with their social setting, the various meanings of those settings and how their social background influences these engagements and meanings.

- The *macrosystem* is the sphere most distant from the individual which encompasses the person's cultural values, beliefs and ideas, as well as the broader political and economic system. This study analyses the macrosystem in two different aspects: the informal mechanisms which individuals leverage to encourage positive behaviour change in chapter seven, and the formal regulatory environment governing local services in chapter eight.
- The *chronosystem* adds a socio-historical perspective to understand changes over time in a person's development. While Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979) focused on important transitions or phases throughout personal development, this study incorporates an aspect of the chronosystem by providing a historical context in chapter two to understand how the processes of colonisation and missionary settlement have impacted on alcohol consumption patterns in Gunbalanya.

As detailed further in chapter five, this thesis uses an adaptation of ecological systems theory. In the original theory, Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 4) proposed that his ecological model is one variation among different possibilities which may exist among distinct subcultures, where he states "the blueprint can be changed, with the result that the structure of the settings in a society can become markedly altered and produce corresponding changes in behaviour and development." Bronfenbrenner's model uses a Western notion of individuals in social networks which is substantially different compared to the Indigenous notions of rationality, connectedness and autonomy that arose in my research findings.

This thesis uses the theory as an organising framework to understand the interrelatedness of violence, crime and harmful behaviours, as well as the values, attitudes and beliefs that can enable healthier and respectful relationships in Gunbalanya. The adapted theory explains how formal and informal social controls, behaviours and actions contribute to safe and unsafe incidents in participants' interpersonal, neighbourhood and community environments. Personal attributes, shared socio-cultural values and beliefs, and situational aspects of the social system interact to influence the likelihood of an unsafe incident occurring (Memmott, et al., 2001; Wundersitz, 2010). The analysis focuses on developing an understanding of how interpersonal interactions create broader neighbourhood problems; how repeated patterns of behaviour and actions contribute to harm at the community-level; and how values and beliefs operate in the broader social system to deter or enable unsafe incidents. The next section locates this study within the existing literature on the correlates of crime and violence.

1.4.5 Risk-based analyses in crime prevention

There is a substantial body of literature that measures and analyses risk factors associated with violence victimisation and the perpetration of crime and violence in Indigenous populations, see Table 1.1 below (Bryant & Willis, 2008; Stevens & Paradies, 2014; Wundersitz, 2010). These risk factors are not distinctly unique to Indigenous Australians, however are similar across other vulnerable or disadvantaged populations (Farrington, Ttofi & Piquero, 2016; Shader, 2001). Risk-based analyses in the literature tend to focus on one predominant safety issue which is commonly then measured against how this issue is associated with alcohol misuse, mental health issues, gambling, housing instability, childhood abuse and trauma (Cunneen, 2016; Behrendt, Porter & Vivian, 2016; Putt, Payne & Milner, 2005; Stevens & Paradies, 2014). Rather, this thesis proposes that community safety is affected by numerous interrelated risk factors that enable repeated patterns of harmful behaviours in Gunbalanya.

There is little research available which examines in-depth how these risk factors operate in an everyday context or in specific location (Homel, et al., 1999; Wundersitz, 2010). This thesis argues that research on risk factors has significantly enhanced our understanding of the correlates of crime and violence and, while recognising this, risk-based analyses represent an imperfect model which restricts our ability to see these issues from an Indigenous community-centred perspective. This thesis seeks to understand how behaviours, attitudes and beliefs influence the perpetration and experience of harmful behaviours in a remote Aboriginal community. This study develops an understanding of the interconnectedness of behaviours, attitudes and actions which contribute to unsafe incidents, where these social factors intersect and overlap to create a complexity of community safety issues.

Conversely, little is known about how protective factors could deter Indigenous youth, adolescents or adults from engaging in delinquent or antisocial behaviour (Bryant & Willis, 2008; Homel, et al., 1999; Willis, 2010; Wundersitz, 2010). Some studies suggest that Indigenous languages, culture and traditional social mechanisms strengthen resilience against young people engaging in delinquent behaviour (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Homel, et al., 1999; Hopkins, Zubrick & Taylor, 2014; Stojanovski, 2010). Other scholars suggest that Indigenous attributes such as living in a remote area, speaking an Indigenous language and identifying with a clan group further contribute to their increased risk of interacting with the criminal justice system (Snowball & Weatherburn, 2008).

Table 1.1. Summary of risk factors identified in literature on Australian Indigenous crime and violence perpetration that are relevant to this study

Microsystem	Mesosystem
• Being male and aged between 14 to 35 years old • Alcohol and illicit drug use* • Frequent participation in gambling activities, including card games* • Pre-existing interactions with the criminal justice system • Gang membership* • Experiences of child neglect and abuse* • Exposure to violence* and pornography during childhood • Poor physical and mental health* • Lack of sense of purpose and boredom* • Few job-ready skills • High levels of stress and anxiety* • Unresolved aggression and antisocial behaviour* • Low resilience levels and coping skills* • Psychological problems including, for example: a lack of self-esteem, and feelings of powerlessness, frustration, or shame and apathy • Intellectual disabilities, neurological impairment or brain damage caused by petrol sniffing and alcohol use	• Overcrowded and poorly maintained living conditions* • Low socioeconomic status* • Low levels of family cohesiveness* • High levels of intra-family conflict and dysfunctional behaviour* • Low levels of family resilience and social capital • Lack of parenting and child rearing skills, including supervision* • Low levels of parental involvement in a child's life* • Weak connection and involvement in traditional livelihoods, ceremonies and events* • Lack of functional role models to teach young people* • Lack of involvement in community affairs, issues and governance* • Broken home, including separated parents* • Peer pressure and humbugging¹³* • Payback or retribution from kin or friends* • Jealousy over relationships or material goods* • Household financial stress*, including the inability to repay debt

¹³ As explained later in chapter six, humbugging is a behaviour common in remote Indigenous Australia where kinship relations practice demand sharing. In some circumstances, demand sharing can be reciprocal practice where kin relations share resources amongst their social networks (Peterson, 2013). Humbugging can also refer to a nuisance and annoyance when this demand becomes overwhelming and attempts to resist humbugging can result in arguments, threats and verbal or physical harassment.

Exosystem	Macrosystem
• History of removal centres or missions operating in the community • Breakdown in traditional laws and governance* • Loss of traditional social structures and controls, including child rearing practices* • Poor educational levels including attendance rates* • High rates of under-employment* or over-saturated job market in the community • Non-local people employed in the available employment positions instead of local residents* • Geographic location, including remoteness • Availability and appropriateness of services* • High levels of reported social stress, worry and trauma* • High rates of unreported neighbourhood problems*	• Demographic variables of gender and age • Socioeconomic disadvantage* • Historically reoccurring racial and gender discrimination • Institutional racism • Social, land and economic dispossession • High imprisonment and reoffending rates • Inter- and transgenerational trauma* • Reliance on welfare supports* • Over-reliance on policing to control crime and violence • Lack of culturally appropriate responses to mental health issues and family mediation* • Breakdown in traditional laws and systems of governance* • Short life expectancy, including high rates of preventable deaths

Note:

* Marks risk factors discussed as part of the findings in this thesis.

Source:

Adapted from Broadhurst (2002); Bryant & Willis (2008); Homel, et al. (1999); Snowball & Weatherburn (2008); Weatherburn (2014); Weatherburn, Snowball & Hunter (2008); Wundersitz (2010).

These mixed results in quantitative findings suggest that the relationships between cultural identity, Indigenous notions of connectedness and language in providing protective and resilient social effects are complex, and perhaps beyond quantitative empirical measurement (Hopkins, et al., 2014). This is one reason amongst many that non-Indigenous researchers and policy thinkers need to understand these complex phenomena from a relational Indigenous worldview rather than through Western linear thinking that guides risk-based analyses and policy design (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). This thesis contributes to this discussion by providing an in-depth account of Aboriginal perspectives on how community strengths or protective factors can deter young people from engaging in delinquent behaviour.

1.4.6 Indigenous relationality and child autonomy

Academic authors critique the use of the term ‘community’ in Indigenous societies because it evokes idealised imagery of social cohesion and solidarity that is often based on a racial identifier (Cooper, 2008; Etzioni, 1995; Maddison, 2009; Peters-Little, 2004; B. Smith, 1989). Government policies often engage with static and unrealistic notions of what constitutes a community and rely upon community identifiers that are place-based rather than language or relationship bound (Peters-Little, 2004; B. Smith, 1989). As such, community safety policies which target Aboriginal ‘communities’ use a simplified strategy to target a racially and geographically identifiable group, without grappling with the challenges of engaging with linguistically, culturally and socially diverse peoples (Maddison, 2009).

In contrast, Indigenous and anthropological research recognises that increasing social and physical mobility has enabled a more transient relationship between collective identity, place, social relations, language and traditional practices in the modern era. This marks a shift away from a notion of culture that is bounded by locality, and towards a notion that is cognisant of the social, linguistic and cultural shifts that influence how people define their own sense of community (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Holcombe, 2004; Olwig & Hastrup, 1997; Peters-Little, 2004). Peters-Little (2004) argues that Aboriginal community leaders have the right to decide how their sense of community is defined in the local context. In the West Arnhem region, Kunwinjku-speaking people have strong socio-linguistic connections rather than sentimental connections to Gunbalanya as a geographical place (Garde, 2013; Holcombe, 2004). The AAC is composed of elders and traditional owners from homelands across the West Arnhem region to enable collective decision-making on behalf of the community of Gunbalanya.

Indigenous research theorises that Indigenous worldviews are based on a relational conception of being, knowing and doing. This means that Indigenous participants often position their own experiences in the context of their relationship with each other and their connection to spirituality, land and customary law (Chilisa, 2012; K. Martin, 2003; L. T. Smith, 2012). Social, political and spiritual life is inextricably bound to Aboriginal kin relationships and to the land to which they belong (Chilisa, 2012; K. Martin, 2003). Kinship is the foundation or a core structuring principle of Indigenous sociality and customary practices particularly amongst Kunwinjku Aboriginal people (Etherington, 2006). Like many Aboriginal groups, the need to nurture kin relationships and fulfil obligations within the complex kin arrangements is an inescapable aspect of Kunwinjku society, both for those born and adopted into an Aboriginal family (Etherington, 2006; Maddison, 2009).

Bininj customary law¹⁴ and practices form the basis of how participants have contextualised their experiences of harm, respect and interpersonal safety. Bininj law provides the founding principles and guidelines on what it means to be a responsible Kunwinjku adult, how to relate to each other in Kunwinjku society and how to live well (Etherington, 2006); this is further detailed in chapter seven.¹⁵ Etherington (2006) argues that Bininj law is a mechanism of regulating behaviour in Kunwinjku society that socialises children into behaving with discipline and respect. Accompanied by this notion of relatedness, Bininj children¹⁶ develop independence and self-reliance through autonomous explorations of their physical and social environments. As the legitimacy and practices of Bininj law become increasingly fragmented, the choices available to Bininj children and adults on how to behave in Kunwinjku society are more open and occur with fewer immediate consequences. Children and youths feature prominently in participants' descriptions of unsafe incidents in this study.

This thesis argues that Western systems of governing and regulating respectful behaviours do not account for the complexity of interpersonal harms created through this cultural clash. Western systems of governance rely upon an individualistic model that merely seeks to deter harmful situations and does not seek long-term sustained behavioural change.

¹⁴ This refers to Aboriginal customary law that is practiced by Kunwinjku speakers in West Arnhem Land.

¹⁵ Social norms, practices and behaviours continually undergo change throughout history. Merlan (2015) writes that Aboriginal culture, law and society is incredibly complex and constantly undergoes change, continuity and transformation as they exchange with mainstream society through time. While I do not seek to romanticise or idealise 'traditional' Aboriginal culture in this thesis, Aboriginal people themselves often do romanticise ceremony, missionary times and customary practices. My intention in this thesis is to analyse and present participants' views and perceptions, as participants originally intended them.

¹⁶ 'Bininj' is a Kunwinjku term meaning 'Aboriginal' and is commonly used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Gunbalanya. 'Bininj' can also refer to a boy.

To transform the reoccurring, intergenerational problems of dysfunction, violence and trauma, Indigenous community safety policy and services need to further Aboriginal aspirations for building healthy and respectful relationships according to the values and practices of customary law. Without this, the contemporary patterns of social and cultural dislocation could continue to fragment social norms and relationships. This thesis endeavours to show how a culturally inclusive and integrated approach to addressing the underlying problems offers a hopeful alternative for future generations.

1.5 Thesis outline

Chapter one of this thesis outlines the rationale for this research and how it seeks to make an original contribution to knowledge in the field of Indigenous criminology. The following eight chapters delve into the historical and contemporary issues affecting Indigenous community safety in Gunbalanya and more broadly.

Chapter two provides an archival analysis of how colonial discourse shaped liquor supply and availability at the Border Store, near Gunbalanya in West Arnhem Land, from 1969 until 1978. The Border Store operated at a time when self-determination discourse was prominent in the public representation of Indigenous Australians. This chapter questions whether Kunwinjku people were allowed the political autonomy to self-determine the conditions under which liquor was distributed in West Arnhem Land.

Chapter three outlines the mixed methods approach that underpins the method employed. The chapter provides contemporary context to the field site and explains how data was collected, analysed and shared with community leaders and service providers in Gunbalanya.

Chapter four examines how community safety is conceptualised in public policy in Australia and internationally. It explores the principles used in crime prevention frameworks internationally, including what it means to live in a safe and secure community. The chapter then contrasts these notions of community safety with the concepts used in Australian Indigenous policy, and finally draws on best-practice examples from First Nations peoples internationally.

Chapters five to eight present empirical findings to offer an alternative concept of community safety. *Chapter five* defines how community safety is understood by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in Gunbalanya. It presents a locally-grounded ecological

framework for understanding community safety based on Kunwinjku and Western perspectives. This intercultural framework shows how neighbourhood problems – alcohol and substance misuse, gambling and card games, interpersonal and family violence, personal and property theft, mental health and suicide – have a significant impact on people’s experiences and perceptions of safety. The results reveal that neighbourhood problems do not occur in isolation and must be understood within the broader social and cultural system in which they occur.

Chapter six shows how neighbourhood problems impact on the whole community to create broader social problems, including attitudes, behaviours and social norms which compromise family and community safety. Interactions between people engaging in unsafe behaviours and those within the broader social system create a flow-on effect where young people, parents and elders become victims or perpetrators of harmful behaviours, delinquency or crime. Examples of these social problems can range from undesirable behaviours, such as school absenteeism, to serious social problems, such as normalisation of violence. This broad range of social problems needs to be understood in their complexity and multiplicity.

Chapter seven explores how informal social controls, behaviours, values and beliefs moderate ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ behaviours that contribute to community safety. The chapter draws upon a strengths-based notion of community safety to show the informal strategies which Kunwinjku people use to enable healthy and respectful relationships in their kin networks. These informal strategies used to regulate and manage social norms and expectations form part of the macrosystem and could be seen as strengths or protective factors. The chapter draws on positive criminological perspectives to understand how culturally-informed approaches could better leverage protective factors and prevent delinquent behaviour.

Chapter eight examines the governance and delivery of community locally-based safety services that address the range of complex issues affecting interpersonal, family and community safety in Gunbalanya. While individual service providers endeavour to reduce crime and improve community safety, the dominance of policing as a reactive intervention operates in strong opposition to Indigenous values and aspirations for a safer community. Some scholars argue that Aboriginal patrols offer an approach akin to decolonised policing or Indigenous security (Porter, 2016); although in Gunbalanya the Night Patrol’s funding arrangements with government impairs the service’s perceived legitimacy. The Night Patrol

requires a community-oriented approach to state policing to enhance its effectiveness in responding to serious crime and violence.

Finally, *chapter nine* concludes by outlining the culturally inclusive model of community safety in Gunbalanya. Based on findings from the thesis, the chapter suggests ways strengths-based behaviour change programs could leverage the values and beliefs practiced through Bininj law within the modern service delivery framework. This shows how a culturally inclusive approach to enabling healthy and respectful relationships amongst kin and within the community can be achieved.

2 Historical perspectives on liquor licencing in the West Arnhem region

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter explores how competing interests over liquor supply and controls influenced the community's decision to establish a social club in Oenpelli¹⁷. The case study presented in this chapter offers an in-depth account of how competing interests that were shaped by racialised discourse on Aboriginal drinking further enabled the community's decision to transfer the Border Store's liquor licence to Gunbalanya. This occurred despite the community's initial attempts to close down the Border Store's liquor trade entirely. Bininj people attempted to challenge the Border Store's licence on four separate occasions: in 1969, 1973, 1975 and 1977 by appealing to the Magistrate of the Liquor Licence court. Through these actions, Bininj people worked with the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and appealed to people of influence who variably supported or challenged their right to decide over if and how liquor would be supplied near their community.

Academics, missionaries, mining corporations and state actors all became power brokers in mediating the assimilationist discourse on Aboriginal drinking. This discourse suggested Aboriginal people would assimilate into European society by learning to drink in a way that complied with the 'civilised' behaviours and manners of a Commonwealth citizen (Brady, 2004a, 2017). This chapter uses unpublished archival records¹⁸ to argue that this assimilationist discourse was a key driver in these debates over liquor licencing at the Border Store. Section 2.2 provides a brief political and historical background to the Oenpelli mission's establishment in the early 1900s and then how liquor became a serious concern in the region. Section 2.3 explores in-depth how the Border Store, from 1966 to 1971, became entangled in controversy after the proprietor established a liquor licence near the Aboriginal Reserve which contributed to unsafe neighbourhoods in the mission settlement. Section 2.4 examines how Kunwinjku

¹⁷ Gunbalanya was formerly known as 'Oenpelli', as this was the original name given to the settlement in the early 1900s by European settlers. In this chapter, I refer to the mission settlement as 'Oenpelli' to ensure clarity between quoted material and my writing.

¹⁸ This chapter is based on 41 archival entries that I collected on alcohol-related problems in West Arnhem Land from the Northern Territory Archives Service. The archival material includes letters, reports, telegrams, newspaper clippings and parliamentary records collected by the CMS. To the best of my knowledge, this material has not been published to date. A full list of archival records is provided at Appendix A.

people from Oenpelli formed alliances with CMS employees and a mining corporation to revoke the Border Store's liquor licence.

These historical precedents eventuated in Bininj people transferring the liquor licence from the Border Store to Gunbalanya, where it currently runs as the Gunbalanya Sports and Social Club (GSSC). Controversially, the GSSC was viewed by participants as a symbol of community leadership as the Bininj elders demonstrated autonomy in challenging Western authoritative figures. At the same time, alcohol-related harm is an ongoing problem affecting community safety in Gunbalanya and is a problem discussed throughout this thesis. For this reason, this chapter sets the scene for the field site by exploring the historical precedents which led the Kunwinjku Aboriginal people to establish a liquor licence in Oenpelli.

2.2 A historical background

The first settlement near Oenpelli began when Paddy Cahill commenced shooting buffaloes in the region in the early 1880s (Cole, 1972). Buffaloes were imported to Melville Island, Raffles Bay and Port Essington and, when these settlements were abandoned, the buffalo began to thrive (Cole, 1972, p. 49). Around 1906, Cahill established a pastoral lease and a dairy herd in the area where the Oenpelli settlement formed over the proceeding decades (Cole, 1972).¹⁹ Amongst other buffalo hunters, Cahill worked with Aboriginal people to hunt and prepare buffalo hides for sale. This trade stimulated a trend in Aboriginal clans migrating towards the shooters' camps to trade their skills in hunting and material items, including wild honey and paperbark, for other items including medical assistance, tobacco, pipes and blankets. This place of trade became known as 'Oenpelli' (Mulvaney, 2004, p. 37).²⁰

In 1911 the Commonwealth Government took over the administration of the Northern Territory from South Australia, then later purchased Paddy Cahill's enterprise at Oenpelli in 1916 (Cole, 1972). This administrative change was accompanied by a new era of protectionist policy for Indigenous social and economic development. The *Northern Territory Aboriginals Act 1910* allowed the Commonwealth Government institutional power over the control and

¹⁹ The legacy of this buffalo station is present today in Gunbalanya in the form of a cattle station and a meat works. This provides training and employment opportunities for Bininj people.

²⁰ This place where the station was located became known as 'Oenpelli' because it was the first attempt by Cahill to say 'Unbalanj' and 'Awunbelenja' – the names Kunwinjku people had traditionally used to refer to the sacred sites of Injalak, Arrguluk and Nambabirr. This is where the Gunbalanya community is located at present time.

welfare of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory (Cole, 1971, 1975).²¹ Soon after these policies were erected, Cahill was appointed as Protector of Aborigines and manager of the government station which was to be established in Oenpelli (Cole, 1971, 1972).

From 1920 onwards, Aboriginal Reserves were established in the Northern Territory. The Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve (37,167 square miles) was officially declared in 1931. The Methodist and Anglican Church officials established these permanent settlements for the purpose of carrying out the government policies (Berndt & Berndt, 1988, p. 496). The General Secretary of the CMS began administering the Oenpelli Reserve²² in 1925, an area which was 2,000 square miles and contained a fluctuating population of around 500 Kunwinjku people (Cole, 1972, p. 50). The Oenpelli mission was situated in the north-western corner of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve and was surrounded by three sacred sites: Injalak, Arrguluk and Nambambirr hills which overlooked the mission (Cole, 1971, p. 197) (see Fig. 2.1).

By 1939, government policy had officially shifted from a strategy of Aboriginal ‘protection’ to ‘assimilation’, which was accompanied by a shift in language that focused on equality, the rights of citizens, and the responsibility to fulfil one’s citizen obligations (Brady, 1990). At the time, establishing the Aboriginal Reserves was hoped to protect Aboriginal people against cultural contamination and introduced diseases that were believed to be resulting in declining Aboriginal populations and “detribalisation” (Berndt & Berndt, 1954; P. Forrest, 1985).

During the 1950s and the 1960s, new waves of rights-based activism changed the way the public conceived citizenship rights, in terms of who should be included and who had the right to drink. The self-determination movement, demonstrated by events such as Charlie Perkin’s Freedom Ride²³, created a political environment where it became unacceptable to impose race-based restrictions on access to liquor outlets (Brady, 2014). Over those two decades, prohibition laws affecting Aboriginal people were repealed by states and territories on an individual basis until the Referendum removed all legal barriers for discrimination (Brady, 2014, pp. 8-10). However, this era of prohibition had already created a sense of

²¹ This is the same legislation commonly known to have institutionalised children into residential homes (Briskman & Libesman, 2008). Fortunately, I have found no evidence that children were removed from outstations or homes in the West Arnhem region, either through my personal communication with Bininj people or through archival research.

²² The Oenpelli Aboriginal Reserve is also known as the Alligator River Aboriginal Reserve.

²³ Charlie Perkin’s Freedom Ride is an important historic event in Australia that symbolised Aboriginal resistance to racism and segregation in Australia in the 1960s (Foley, 2000).

resentment among Aboriginal people towards measures of control on liquor availability and supply (Brady, 2000, p. 443); this further polarised the ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ perspectives in alcohol policy discourse.

Fig. 2.1. Oenpelli mission, 1966



Source: National Archives of Australia (NAA): A1200, L54975 (reproduced with permission)

On 27 May 1967, a positive result at the constitutional referendum officially allowed the Commonwealth to enact laws on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Brady, 1990). What became evident over the following decade is that Aborigines all over Australia interpreted the right to vote at the federal election (conceded in 1962) and the right to Australian citizenship as exercised through and demonstrated by the right to drink open in public (Brady, 1990, p. 201; 2004a). Drinking liquor became a symbol of emancipation where the legal right to citizenship was “activated” by having a drink (Brady, 2004a).

By the 1970s, the patterns and levels of alcohol consumption sparked widespread concern at the possibility of unlimited liquor being brought into Aboriginal communities (Brady, 2004a). The events that shaped the controversy over Oenpelli and the Border Store intensified

a localised debate over whether there should be special liquor licensing laws that discriminated based on race and who should decide how these laws were applied in practice. Brady (2017, p. 68) proposes that racialised discourse on Aboriginal drinking was essentially assimilationist in nature where discourse involved the promotion of “Western middle-class notions of individual responsibility and inner discipline” and where behavioural standards for ‘proper drinking’ were based on civility. These standards called for Aboriginal people to drink in moderation, learn about the effects of liquor and use tables and chairs appropriately (Brady, 2017). Brady (2017) also suggests that parts of this debate reflected a self-determination discourse where Aboriginal people would shape decisions over liquor licencing issues and design an environment that would help teach other Aboriginal people how to drink in moderation.

The Border Store’s history is an example of this type of debate, and the view that, by having access to a ‘wet canteen’, Aboriginal people from Oenpelli would learn to drink in moderation, control behaviour amongst kin and behave in a manner that reflects those of a Commonwealth citizen. The events explored in this chapter demonstrate Brady’s (2017, p. 68) argument about how these debates blurred the lines between the assimilationist and self-determination discourse. Kunwinjku people from Oenpelli were initially against the establishment of a liquor venue near the mission however, the broader political support for ‘wet canteens’ facilitated Aboriginal decision-making on liquor controls and led them to establish their own liquor outlet in the mission. The next section explores debates on Aboriginal drinking association with the Border Store.

2.3 Mr Terry Robinson and the Border Store, East Alligator River

This section begins by providing a historical overview of the Border Store, and then explores how the Border Store became embedded in political discourse on how Aboriginal people would become ‘civilised’ by learning to drink in a citizen-like manner (Brady, 2004a, 2017). By 1971, alcohol-related problems had already begun to emerge in Oenpelli. An alliance between the missionaries, a small group of Aboriginal people from Oenpelli, and two anthropologists aroused controversy over how the Border Store’s trade near an Aboriginal Reserve affected Aboriginal people. Later, Mr Terry Robinson, the Border Store’s proprietor, and Aboriginal community leaders negotiated the conditions whereby liquor-problems would be managed.

2.3.1 The early days, 1966 to 1971

The Border Store was located in a remote segment of the Australian bush and was situated along the East Alligator River. The East Alligator River forms the western border of the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve and the store was adjacent to the Cahill's Crossing causeway, which is the only accessible crossing along the East Alligator River. The river is tidal and fluctuates to extremes twice per day in the wet season and dry season, when it is potentially a raging torrent or a trickle of mud swarming with salt-water crocodiles (Allen, 1980).

The Border Store was established by Mr Terry Robinson in 1966 on a mining permit to cater for the needs of tourists who flocked to the Kakadu area, and later it began to attract considerable numbers of Aboriginal people from the Oenpelli mission (Allen, 1980) (see Fig. 2.2). Mr Robinson claimed to be the co-founder of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Rights Council and tribally initiated at a Kunapipi ceremony²⁴. After living in the Territory for over 27 years, Mr Robinson described himself as "having a deep affection for Aborigines", some of whom were his "blood brothers" (Dearn, 1971b).

In 1969, Mr Terry Robinson applied for a Storekeeper's Licence which allowed the proprietor to sell liquor as an ancillary to the sale of non-alcoholic products (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977). The application was opposed by Aboriginal people living in Oenpelli because they believed that the sale of liquor would disrupt the community. The Magistrate overruled their objection and granted Mr Robinson a licence that allowed him to sell liquor on the premises and to sell take-away (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977). The store had permission to only sell beer but Allen (1980) alleged that spirits were often handed around on the side. Harry Allen (1980, p. 88) described how the Border Store's presence in a harsh portion of Australian bush was "... A monument to the Australian spirit which demands pies and cold beer no matter what the circumstances and to Terry's ability to cater to that determination in one of the most isolated portions of the Australian bush."

²⁴ Kunapipi is a significant men's initiation ceremony practiced in Arnhem Land.

Fig. 2.2. The Border Store on the East Alligator River, 1980



Note: This image shows the Border Store in 1978 once its liquor licence was revoked. The Border Store still exists today in the same unlicensed venue, next to a rusty pile of beer cans from the 1970s that dwarfs the size of the nearby buildings.

Source: Northern Territory Library (NTL): NTG Photographer Collection, PH0095/0084 (reproduced with permission)

At the time, there were limited licenced premises in the nearby area. In the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve, there were six Aboriginal settlements that had been issued with permits to sell liquor. These licenced venues were ‘wet canteens’ and permitted to sell each Aboriginal adult a daily limit of three cans of beer.²⁵ Outside the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Reserve, there were liquor stores at Pine Creek, approximately 250 kilometres from Cahill’s Crossing, or at Jim Jim²⁶, approximately 92 kilometres away. Prior to the Border Store trading as a licenced premise, the Pine Creek and Jim Jim hotels were popular destinations for Oenpelli people who wanted a drink.

²⁵ This restriction on liquor supply did not apply to the sales at the Border Store.

²⁶ Jim Jim has now become the Cooinda Lodge, a popular tourist destination in Kakadu National Park.

By 1971, employees from CMS had become significantly concerned about the safety and welfare of Aboriginal people living in Oenpelli because of the problems caused by excessive intoxication. Mr Percy Lesky, the Field Superintendent at CMS, was concerned that Kunwinjku Aboriginal people did not feel accepted by wider society, and mining explorations on Aboriginal land were enabling already damaging drinking habits (Leske, 1971c). CMS employees invited two prominent anthropologists, Professor Ronald Berndt and Dr Catherine Berndt to visit Oenpelli and assess the depth of the problem.

Professor Berndt and Dr Berndt both had long-standing relationships with Kunwinjku Aboriginal people and had been undertaking research in the area since the mid-1940s.²⁷ On Sunday 5 September 1971, Professor and Dr Berndt and Mr Lesky arrived at Cahill's Crossing around 4.30pm to witness the state of public intoxication that had become commonplace at that time of the week. Mr Leske described:

Most people were beyond sensible coherent speech... A young woman was partly undressed and too drunk to know what she was doing. In all, we estimate that there were about 100 Aboriginal people and a few groups of men from mining camps. The latter did not appear to be causing any trouble and were in drinking groups around their vehicles.
(Leske, 1971b)

Mr Leske further guessed that nearly half the adult male population of Gunbalanya was present, in various states of 'drunkenness', at the Border Store. Together with women and children, these men were staggering, lying inert, yelling and fighting (Leske, 1971b). While this portrayal was coloured with biased perceptions of Aboriginal drinking at the time, these three actors were genuinely concerned for the welfare of 'drinkers' and 'non-drinkers' living in Gunbalanya and the long-term effect this would have for families and their children.

In a report titled "Destruction of an Aboriginal community", R. Berndt and C. Berndt (1971a) described how these types of incidents had become regular occurrences near the East Alligator River and were quick to spill over into community affairs. An Aboriginal-owned vehicle provided a shuttle service to and from Gunbalanya. While the shuttle service protected patrons from other potential harms, the service also meant that the patrons did not have the 17

²⁷ By this time, Professor Ronald Berndt and Dr Catherine Berndt had already written extensively on Kunwinjku social organisation, religion and spirituality. See e.g. R. M. Berndt (1951, 1969) and R. M. Berndt and C. H. Berndt (1951, 1954).

kilometres to walk and ‘sober them up’ (Berndt & Berndt, 1971a); this created other harms for people in Oenpelli.

Over the weekend, night time disturbances had regularly flared into physical fights and serious violent incidents. Professor and Dr Berndt (1971a) claimed that almost half of Aboriginal wages, pensions, endowments and trainee payments wound up in the hand of the store’s proprietor. This made regular employment unreliable and the diminishing financial resources within the household were further contributing to child malnourishment where children were said to be “neglected” (Berndt & Berndt, 1971a). Professor and Dr Berndt (1971a, pp. 2-3) perceived that the regular intoxication created an “emotional vacuum” while “many adults were on their way to becoming alcoholics”.

Professor and Dr Berndt argued that this state of affairs was a form of “genocide” as though a generation of people were being murdered:

If a European shot down an Aboriginal without cause, he would be brought to stand trial. Here at Oenpelli, 500-odd persons are involved, and unless action is taken immediately 500-odd Aborigines will be destroyed. Which is the greater crime? Many of us have fought for Aborigines to have the right to drink – to have the same rights as other Australians. What we have at Oenpelli is not this – it is the subversion of a total community. (Berndt & Berndt, 1971a, pp. 6-7)

In the three years since their last visit, the anthropologists found that the prospects of the Kunwinjku people in Oenpelli had deteriorated significantly. Professor and Dr Berndt (1971a, pp. 6-7) described how the reality of Oenpelli had transformed: from a future where elders could navigate the complexities of existing in Aboriginal Law and the Western world, compared to the contemporary reality in which Kunwinjku people appeared “apathetic and disillusioned”. The anthropologists provided their report to CMS and media outlets to garner public sympathy and challenge the liquor licence at the Border Store. The following section examines how the unpublished manuscript created a whirlwind of media and government action.

2.3.2 Media attention from September to October 1971

Several newspapers reported nationally and locally on the controversy that Professor and Dr Berndt aroused over the Border Store in collaboration with the CMS. This media attention was crucial to supporting their perspective that: firstly, the liquor licence for the Border Store should be revoked by the Magistrate of the Liquor Licensing court, and secondly, there was a need to provide evidence that a regular police presence at the Border Store was necessary to protect the welfare of Aboriginal people in the area (Giltrap, 1971). The newspaper played on assimilationist notions of Aboriginal drinking, including the need for Aboriginal people to behave in a civil manner, and demonstrate ‘appropriate’ behaviours of a Commonwealth citizen through drinking etiquette.

On 24 September 1971, the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper article titled “Excess drinking charge denied” presented the report in which R. Berndt and C. Berndt condemned the liquor sales at the Border Store as a “massacre” or “genocide” of Aboriginal people (Unknown, 1971a). This was similarly reported in the *Canberra Times* on 20 September, where the article further emphasised that a licensed store near an Aboriginal Reserve was not part of the solution to Aboriginal drinking because this example showed “disastrous results”. On 13 October, in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, R. Berndt said that Aboriginal welfare and mission programs for economic and social advancement had become “a farce” because allowing the Border Store to trade is “culturally destroying” Aboriginal people (Dearn, 1971b).

Several newspapers reported that Mr Robinson denied these claims as “utter nonsense” (Unknown, 1971a). In the *Sydney Morning Herald*, on 24 September, Mr Robinson suggested, by drinking at the Border Store, Aboriginal people have developed a broader outlook on Western life, and learnt to integrate into white society by fraternising with tourists and European mining workers (Unknown, 1971a). He remarked:

... The Aborigines taste the dangers of western society but earn the benefits of learning to mix with Europeans and develop a free-mind attitude. (Robinson in Unknown 1971)

He supported Aboriginal people having the right to drink anywhere outside the Reserve and said it should not be any different in remote areas compared to any Darwin hotel. Later, on Saturday 9 October, in the *Telegraph*, Mr Robinson commented:

They [Aboriginal people] are going to have to learn to live with the dangers of white man's liquor and I believe I am helping toward this end. (Robinson in Dearn 1971a)

In a responding press statement, Professor and Dr Berndt (1971b) questioned whether the Border Store is the most appropriate place for Oenpelli people to “learn to drink” in this broader quest for achieving equal rights, integration and assimilation into the wider Australian society. This was particularly so when the worst aspect of Darwin drinking culture was being brought into the Oenpelli neighbourhood, they remarked.

In an article in the *Telegraph*, on 9 October, some Kunwinjku people supported keeping the Border Store open, such as Frank ‘Short Legged’ Nalowed (62 years) and Robbie Nululbi (25 years) who operated the transportation vehicles to the store, charging passengers \$2 per head (Dearn, 1971a). At the same time, some drinkers and non-drinkers wanted the Border Store closed down. Arthur Hunter Nallim (24 years), who was a meat worker at the Oenpelli abattoir and formerly a police tracker, held the opinion that the store was too close to Oenpelli and should be shut down (Dearn, 1971a). Nallim commented:

I have nothing against Terry Robinson. He helps my people in many ways with advice. But it is my own people – they come here and spend all their money guzzling beer. Few of them ever buy soft drink or something to eat. I am appalled at the way my people don't eat the food which is on sale while they are enjoying a few beers. I keep telling them, but it's no use. (Nallim in Dearn 1971a)

The media spotlight on this example of Aboriginal drinking exposed and raised the profile of these social issues to a wider audience, including the federal government and the Northern Territory Police. It is questionable whether the national impact of this media attention assisted the small group of Kunwinjku people and CMS employees in their quest to have the Border Store's liquor licence revoked. Nonetheless, the publicity was conducive to negotiations on liquor control, which is the focus of the following section.

2.3.3 Kunwinjku people and Mr Robinson negotiate on a resolution

CMS employees and the anthropologists were seriously concerned about how to help Aboriginal elders manage the social problems caused by drinking in the area. A similar question was being asked in many parts of Australia about appropriate ways to assist Aboriginal people to learn to manage the effects of alcohol. Present within these discussions was a dialogue which Brady (2004a) refers to as the ‘wet’ and the ‘dry’ perspectives. These represent broader Australian debates between advocates for ‘wet canteens’ who saw that the availability of alcohol would aid people to learn to drink in moderation, and those advocates who argued that prohibition and abstinence from liquor would remedy Aboriginal drinking problems (Brady, 2004a). The following scenario reflects this debate.

Professor Berndt and Mr Leske were initially opposed to the idea of accommodating a wet canteen in the Oenpelli mission, however after seeing the effects of excess drinking the idea resurfaced as a possibility (Berndt & Berndt, 1971b; Leske, 1971c). One of the reasons was that they were aware that if the Border Store closed it might aid the situation for a short period of time but would not be a viable long-term solution. Prior to the store opening, Kunwinjku men would travel more than 125 kilometres to the Jim Jim Hotel for ‘flagon runs’²⁸ to bring hard liquor into the mission (Leske, 1971c; Wilson, 1971a). The Kunwinjku women in Oenpelli made a firm stance that ‘flagon runs’ and, generally, bringing liquor into the Oenpelli Reserve was unacceptable (Wilson, 1971a).

Mr Percy Leske and, another CMS employee, Mr Alf Wilson were of the opinion that a wet canteen at the Oenpelli mission would be a mere drop-off for Aboriginal people travelling to Jim Jim Hotel and this would undermine the confidence that Kunwinjku people had in the mission (Wilson, 1971a). In earlier letters, Mr Wilson and Mr Leske favoured a prohibitionist approach where the idea of having a canteen was “repugnant”, but later in changing their opinion they admitted that drinking itself was not the core issue – it was drinking to excess (Leske, 1971c; Wilson, 1971a). If a wet canteen were established in Oenpelli, these CMS employees felt that Kunwinjku people would have to make decisions for themselves, take over running the establishment and disciplining unacceptable behaviour (Leske, 1971c; Wilson, 1971a).

²⁸ ‘Flagon’ is an Australian term for a large bottle of cheap liquor. This issue of Bininj people travelling to far away localities to purchase hard-liquor with the intent to bring it into the community is an issue that arose in the data collection. This is discussed in section 5.4.

In October 1971, interviews and community meetings were held with Kunwinjku people living in Arrguluk and Banyan camps where the majority supported the availability of a licensed premises near the mission. From these meetings, it was almost unanimous that a licensed store should not be at Oenpelli and the Border Store's location was considered acceptable by a vocal majority of Kunwinjku people (P. Carroll, 1971). However, there was a strong minority opinion that there should be no liquor store between Oenpelli and Jim Jim Creek (P. Carroll, 1971).

At the meeting, Kunwinjku people made their opinions clear – that a licensed premises should exercise the appropriate controls on the sale of liquor, including that: there should be variation in the operating hours, no take-away liquor should be sold, no excessive quantities should be sold, and better facilities should be provided for patrons, such as tables and chairs (P. Carroll, 1971). This last point was considered important to encourage patrons to behave sensibly. Kunwinjku people were happy that the store provided beer and did not want spirits sold on the premises (P. Carroll, 1971; Leske, 1971c). After this was agreed, CMS employees invited Mr Robinson to the mission to discuss these options with Kunwinjku people.

The media attention not only agitated the debate on the appropriateness of wet canteens, it also positively encouraged cooperation from the Border Store's proprietor. On 13 October, Mr Robinson met with the Village Council to discuss the various issues with them. He agreed that "sensible drinking in a citizen-like manner" was a necessity and that he would be "ruthless in weeding out trouble-makers" (Unknown, 1971b). He expressed full agreement with the Village Council by committing to improve the facilities available at the Border Store, by providing tables and chairs for better social drinking, and he further emphasised that no hard spirits or wine would be sold in the future (Wilson, 1971b). The CMS employees and Mr Robinson also agreed that a police officer needed to be stationed in the area that the CMS would continue to apply pressure on this issue (CMS, 1971). Mr Robinson agreed to manage drinking behaviour near the premises (Unknown, 1971b).

Several weeks later, Mr Wilson reported back to the Regional Secretary of CMS, Reverend Stanley Giltrap, that the attempt to reach out to the police had been successful (Wilson, 1971a). CMS employees reported that the first visit from the police at the Border Store occurred on the Saturday and Sunday of that pay-week. Several people were intercepted whilst carrying grog into the Reserve and Wilson (1971a) wrote that, as a result, the mission was quiet and free from disturbance.

A few months later, on 9 and 10 December 1971, the Commonwealth Minister for the Interior provided a statement to the federal parliament advocating for education for Aboriginal people on the dangers of alcohol and the social programs for rehabilitation (Commonwealth of Australia, 1971). He reassured the Parliament that there had been increases in police visits to the Border Store and that the federal government was prepared to subsidise the salary of a social worker to provide education programs on drinking and family counselling services (Commonwealth of Australia, 1971). This suggestion – that a program of rehabilitation provide training on drinking in moderation, and education about the social and physiological consequences of intoxication – was a recommendation provided by R. Berndt and C. Berndt (1971a) and supported by CMS employees.

By this time, the media coverage gained the attention of various interest groups. The Minister committed to providing support for alcohol rehabilitation for Kunwinjku people at the Oenpelli Mission and the police stationed at Pine Creek made regular trips to monitor behaviour at the Border Store (Commonwealth of Australia, 1971; Leske, 1971a). The situation at Border Store and Oenpelli had calmed down, with fewer people harmed or causing trouble while intoxicated (Leske, 1971a). While circumstances were improving, the problem of liquor availability near the Reserve had not been resolved entirely. Mr Robinson continued to hold his liquor licence, despite some Kunwinjku people objecting to its renewal in 1973 (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977). In later years, there were several more incidents which encouraged the Village Council to further push for the Border Store's closure.

2.4 Closing down the Border Store

From 1969 onwards, a vocal group of Kunwinjku elders opposed the renewal of the Border Store's liquor licence on four occasions. On three of these occasions, the application was either withdrawn or the Magistrate found there was insufficient evidence to deny a renewal of the licence.²⁹ The next section examines the Magistrate's judgement to understand why, in 1973, Kunwinjku people were unsuccessful in their objection to the liquor licence renewal despite the Border Store's sale of liquor contributing to physical and social harm in Oenpelli. Following this, section 2.4.2 explores the events which led Kunwinjku people to persevere with

²⁹ Early in 1973, the Northern Territory Police lodged a notice of intent to challenge the storekeeper's licence at the Border Store however this notice was later withdrawn because the evidence was destroyed in the wet season's floods. In October 1976, a Kunwinjku elder lodged an application to contest the licence, but again, withdrew the application because he believed there was insufficient evidence.

their goal to shut down the Border Store in 1976, and section 2.4.3 highlights how these events are ongoing themes in the modern era.

2.4.1 The Village Council objects to the Border Store's licence

In 1973, Mr Silas Maralngurra, Chief of the Oenpelli Village Council, appeared before the Magistrate with his legal representative to object to the renewal of the Border Store's liquor licence (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977). Mr Maralngurra objected on three main grounds: the management of the licensed premises had not been satisfactory, the public's needs were not sufficiently catered for and, in the preceding 12 months, the premises had not been used for the purposes defined by the licence conditions (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977). This section argues that the Magistrate's judgement is another example of the racialised discourse that favoured assimilationist discourse on Aboriginal drinking; in that Aboriginal people would learn to drink alike other Australian citizens through the availability of liquor.

On 3 April 1973, an article in the *Northern Territory News* presented the case that was soon to be heard by the Magistrate (Unknown, 1973). The article stated that Mr Maralngurra's cousin had drowned in the river near the store as a result of being intoxicated and, the week prior, a man was stabbed in the neck during a brawl (Unknown, 1973). These were two examples of incidents presented in the article which clearly showed how intoxication, in part from drinking at the Border Store, was causing physical harm in Oenpelli. Mr Maralngurra said:

*The children at the mission were going hungry because their parents spent all their money at the store getting drunk.*³⁰ (Maralngurra in Unknown 1973)

Mr Maralngurra explained that the Village Council had decided they would like to open a wet canteen at the mission as part of a social club. The Village Council wanted to provide the Oenpelli community with entertainment services, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, as well as maintain social order through their own night patrol and collaboration with law enforcement (Unknown, 1973).

³⁰ As discussed later in section 6.3, financial stress and material deprivation were issues that emerged in this thesis, particularly in terms of how these issues influence aspects of child neglect. Furthermore, child neglect is a factor related to youth delinquency, as indicated in section 6.4.

The Magistrate's judgement found that Mr Maralngurra's reasons for objecting to the storekeeper's licence were insufficient and the licensee, Mr Terry Robinson, exercised the appropriate measures in providing for the needs of nearby residents. The Magistrate found that, during the preceding 12 months, the Border Store sold liquor as an auxiliary to the sale of non-alcoholic products, and the licensee had exceeded the expectations of the licence conditions by providing additional facilities including tables and chairs (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977).

The Magistrate found that Mr Robinson was an "honest and straightforward" person who made additional efforts to maintain a clean and tidy premise and to exercise the appropriate controls over drunkenness near his establishment. He congratulated Mr Robinson on providing an outstanding service and commended his efforts to reduce liquor entering the Reserve. The Magistrate commented: "Certainly I think they sprang from an appreciation of his responsibilities as citizen" (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977, pp. 99-101).

Mr Maralngurra wanted the Border Store closed because having liquor available close to the mission caused considerable disturbance and social harm to residents. However, at the time in 1973, there was no clause in the Liquor Ordinance that allowed the Magistrate to deny a storekeeper's licence on the grounds that the sale of liquor disturbed residents in a nearby neighbourhood. Even though the Oenpelli people had a strong argument to suggest that the availability and sale of liquor was causing social and physical harm, including death in some circumstances; there was no law available that the community could leverage to soundly argue that the licence should be revoked (Wilson, 1976b).

In the case of the Roper Bar³¹ Trading Company in April 1976, the Magistrate refused the licence renewal on the grounds that the licensee was selling liquor without regard to the nearby Aboriginal community, (s)he had sold liquor to intoxicated persons, and because the sale of liquor disrupted the peace and order of nearby neighbourhoods (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977). The alcohol-related incidents that occurred in Oenpelli in the mid-1970s were also causing considerable harm and disruption to the peace in the mission³², however these incidents may not have been documented in the way that the legal system required. It is difficult to speculate on the reasons why a Magistrate would allow alcohol-related violence, child neglect and social harm to continue in Oenpelli but not Roper Bar. But, as Brady (2004a) explains in her book, there was an ideological bias towards this 'wet' perspective at the time

³¹ Roper Bar is now referred to as Ngukurr and is located in East Arnhem Land.

³² In addition to this, section 2.3.1 of this thesis indicated that liquor was being sold to intoxicated persons.

which was evident in the Magistrate's statement when he claimed that responsibility for drinking behaviour rested with individual citizens.

There were further reasons why the Magistrate overruled Mr Maralngurra's objection, which is indicated by politically motivated sentiment behind the Magistrate's decision. He found that the licensee was not to be held accountable for controlling drinking behaviour or exercising controls over excess drinking in the area. Rather, Aboriginal people themselves were responsible for behaving and drinking in a responsible manner that complied with the values of mainstream society. From his perspective, Aboriginal people have the right to consume alcohol on a premise close to their home, without discrimination, which they did as citizens of the Commonwealth; however, some individuals chose to drink in a way that harmed community wellbeing (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977). The Magistrate said:

Now the fact that certain of the persons who resort to his premises to obtain liquor, which they may do perfectly lawfully, appear to abuse the right given to them to drink lawfully close to their home, but it is not for the licensee to control these persons. As I saw I do not think that Aborigines should have, nor I feel should they properly want to be treated in any way other than ordinary citizens of this Commonwealth and the surest way surely of avoiding dislocation of their community life as a result of liquor is not to attend the Border Store or to persuade their people not to attend it. We all have choices in life and if it is the choice of the community to drink at the store at the expense of their family and wellbeing, surely that is an adult decision which is made by an adult person and to saddle the applicant with a social role which is not contemplated by the Ordinance is, I think, asking too much.
(Commonwealth of Australia, 1977, p. 100)

The Magistrate's emphasis on 'choice' in the post-sale, post-consumption effect of the liquor sales resembles what Brady (2004a, p. 63) described as a product of the self-determination discourse associated with alcohol policy.

Self-determination policies, as Brady (2004a) explained, implied that Aboriginal communities should be responsible for self-managing the access to alcohol and social issues associated with drinking. Those in support of the 'wet' perspective believed that, if the appropriate measures were in place, then Aboriginal leaders would be able to encourage

‘sensible’ drinking behaviours at a nearby premises (Brady, 2004a, p. 66). This politically-driven perspective was evident in the Magistrate’s judgement when he emphasised that drinking was an individual’s ‘choice’, and the licensee was not responsible for supervising intoxicated behaviour.³³ At the same time, this discourse also reflected assimilationist debates as it was expected that Aboriginal people would choose to assimilate by learning to drink in the manner and quantity like ‘ordinary citizens of the Commonwealth’. This judgement was accompanied by the Magistrate’s personal bias when he scrutinised the witness’s character which he described as ‘unsatisfactory’ and ‘unsuitable’ to appear in court (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977).

The Magistrate’s personal and ideological bias reflected debates occurring more broadly on ‘wet’ versus ‘dry’ perspectives on Aboriginal drinking in Australia. The Magistrate positioned the problem of Aboriginal drinking at the Border Store as a matter of individual choice and, from the ‘wet’ perspective, drinking in moderation would enable Aboriginal people to drink responsibly and learn how to behave in a civil manner that reflected the values of a citizen. This political bias was a driver in the Magistrate’s decision to renew the Border Store’s liquor licence. As Brady (2017) pointed out, this broader discourse on wet canteens influenced decisions to establish other Aboriginal hotels and social clubs in the Northern Territory, such as the Walkabout Hotel in Yirrkala³⁴.

It is clear that the judgement allowing the Border Store’s liquor licence to continue was influenced by the politically-driven debates at the time. This trend was observed in Yirrkala, another Arnhem Land mission where the Yolngu people objected to the establishment of the liquor licence at the Walkabout Hotel and, similar to Gunbalanya, their objection was overruled (Unknown, 1970). The Border Store’s liquor licence continued, and in September 1976, the store was sold to Mr and Mrs Hill. The next section shows how, after the transfer of ownership, trouble escalated, and this significantly contributed to the demise of the Border Store.

³³ This reference to responsibility of the licensee became significant later when Mr and Mrs Hill denied responsibility for Aboriginal people’s intoxication and related behaviour.

³⁴ Yolngu Aboriginal people living at the Yirrkala Mission objected to the establishment of the liquor licence at the Walkabout Hotel in 1970. The licence’s application was supported by a large mining corporation and the Yolngu people’s application was rejected. The decision to establish the liquor licence was influenced by powerful mining interests, the ideological trend in establishing ‘wet canteens’ and the development of the Nabalco Bauxite mine in Nhulunbuy (Brady, 1999, 2004b).

2.4.2 Mr and Mrs Hill and the 1976 firearms incident

On 22 April 1977, Gunbalanya Town Council Inc.³⁵ notified the Liquor Licensing court that their legal representatives intended to object to the renewal of Mr Kelvin Stuart Hill's storekeeper's licence. This objection was filed on several grounds, including that the applicant had previously been denied a licence within six months and that the quiet and good order of the neighbourhood would be disturbed (Unknown, 1977b). On this occasion, the Gunbalanya Town Council Inc. mobilised the support of influential groups to object to the storekeeper's licence. With the assistance of Pancontinental Limited³⁶, the Oenpelli residents persevered with another attempt to close the Border Store (Unknown, 1977b). There were several incidents leading up to these events that significantly compromised the proprietor's liquor licence.

The final battle for the Border Store began with an incident in 1976 that intensified the conflict between Mr and Mrs Hill and Kunwinjku people. The written statements of nine Kunwinjku people, some of whom appeared before the Magistrate in the Liquor Licensing court, were used as evidence objecting to the licence renewal. Five witness statements described the incident on Saturday 11 December 1976³⁷ (Balmana, 1976; Banggalen, 1976; Gananggu, 1976; Girrabul, 1976; Maralngurra, 1976).

Around 7.30pm in the evening, Lydia Maralngurra joined Paddy and Priscilla Girrabul, Frank Ganangu, Elsie Banggalen, and Dolly at the Border Store. Lydia admitted in her statement that Priscilla was intoxicated that evening because she had been drinking all afternoon. Priscilla bought a few cans from the store and, soon after, fell asleep outside the shopfront (Maralngurra, 1976). Mr Hill was fraternising with other European Australians when a non-Aboriginal worker from the Oenpelli hospital called his dog to chase Lydia's dogs away, but the dogs would not move. Lydia described what happened next:

... Then Mr Hill came out with a shotgun. He pointed the shotgun at my dogs... I put my hand on the barrel to push it away... Mr Hill tried to hit that dog with the butt of the shotgun and missed it and broke the gun... I looked round to see if Mr Hill was coming because I was

³⁵ In 1975, CMS ceased official responsibility for the Oenpelli mission and administration was transferred to the Aboriginal town council, also referred to as Gunbalanya Town Council Incorporated (Inc.). The community's name was also changed from Oenpelli to Gunbalanya (Mulaney, 2004). In this chapter, the community continues to be referred to as 'Oenpelli'.

³⁶ Pancontinental Limited was a large mining corporation that was active in the East Alligator Region.

³⁷ These witness statements were made by Linda Maralngurra, Paddy Girrabul, Frank Gananggu, Elsie Banggalen and Albert Balmana.

frightened that he would bring another gun. I saw him standing at the gate pointing a rifle in my direction. I knew he was full drunk and I was frightened. As I looked back again I felt a sharp pain in my right side and I fell down. Albert lifted me into the front of the Toyota and sat beside me while Robin drove to Oenpelli. (Maralngurra, 1976)

Alf Wilson arrived at the Oenpelli hospital after 11pm that evening. Lydia was lying on a bed with two holes above her hip. The holes went clean through her right side and were approximately 4 inches apart. The following morning Lydia was evacuated to Darwin hospital (Wilson, 1976a).

A few minutes before Lydia was shot, Frank Gananggu had tried to wake Priscilla because she was intoxicated and sleeping outside the premises. He approached Mr Hill for his assistance, who responded:

That's not my licenced premises – that's up to you people to wake her up and take her home. (Gananggu, 1976)

This was not the first time that the Hills had threatened Lydia. Two days before the shooting, Jacob Nayinggul (1976a, 1976b) recalled in his statement that Mrs Hill came out of the Border Store, put her hand on Lydia's arm and twisted it behind her back. Then Mrs Hill pushed Lydia out of the premises. Several days after the incident, whilst at the Border store, Mrs Hill had called out "Lydia, if you don't go out I'll take you out to the back and I'll do you up" (Nayinggul, 1976a).

It is clear from these incidents that both Mr and Mrs Hills behaved aggressively towards some Kunwinjku patrons. It is not clear whether Mr Hill actually intended to shoot Lydia but, while intoxicated, he pointed the firearm in her direction and he refused to take responsibility for controlling liquor sales, even when patrons were demonstrably intoxicated. The following year, in May 1977, Mr and Mrs Hill notified the Town Clerk of the Gunbalanya Town Council Inc. that all of Oenpelli's Aboriginal people were banned from the Border Store and that Aboriginal people from Oenpelli were responsible for patrolling their own conduct – that was not the responsibility of the Border Store licensee (Hill, 1977).

In June 1977, members of the Gunbalanya Town Council Inc. and the community mobilised their political networks to seek support from Pancontinental Mining in their objection to the renewal of the Border Store's liquor licence (Unknown, 1977a). On Friday 3

June, Mr Eugene Semeninkow, the manager of Pancontinental Mining, requested a meeting with a representative body of Kunwinjku people. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain if the Kunwinjku people wanted support from the executives of Pancontinental Mining, to object to the renewal of the storekeeper's licence (Cooke, 1977). On Thursday 9 June, around 70 adult Aboriginal people unanimously voted that Pancontinental Mining should continue with their objection to the licence (Cooke, 1977). The Town Clerk (1977) noted that a large portion of those gathering for the meeting were seasoned drinkers. This showed that a significant portion of Kunwinjku people had mobilised against the Border Store's proprietors and Mr and Mrs Hill no longer had the support of those who frequented the store.

2.4.3 Transferring the licence to Gunbalanya

Following the release of the report from the 1977 federal parliamentary inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia, 1977), the Border Store's liquor licence was not renewed. The licensee breached the licence conditions on a number of occasions: non-alcoholic products were a prominent feature of the storekeeper's trade, cartons of beer were sold in considerable volume, and hard spirits were sold on the site (Unknown, 1977b). Furthermore, the Hills contributed to physical and social harm created by alcohol-related violence and were abusive towards Kunwinjku people from Oenpelli. Allen (1980) described the Border Store as a profitable investment for the Hills who became profiteering exploiters capitalising on the unhappiness of Aboriginal people and who "cashed the welfare cheques, inflated the price of tinned food and swapped beer for Aboriginal artefacts and craft ware". (Allen, 1980, p. 98).

Eventually, the Gunbalanya Town Council Inc. was successful in establishing a wet canteen in Oenpelli around 1981 and it continues to operate today as the GSSC. Community imposed liquor controls have continued with varying degrees of success, and various government reports³⁸ demonstrate the ongoing problems caused by excessive alcohol consumption in the West Arnhem and Kakadu regions. In 1997, D'Abbs and Jones (1997, p. 14) wrote that alcohol dependence occurred most prominently at the community-level where the GSSC represented a controversial power base which implicitly exerts control over people's whereabouts and decisions over community affairs. At the time of fieldwork, the GSSC was managed and controlled by a non-Aboriginal person and community leaders were significantly

³⁸ These reports include the report to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on the social impact of uranium mining (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1982), and research undertaken by d'Abbs and Jones (1997) titled "Gunbang... or ceremonies? Combating alcohol misuse in the Kakadu/West Arnhem region".

unhappy with the lack of transparency and accountability over how the premise was run and whether profits contributed to improving community outcomes.

The events described in this chapter, which occurred from 1969 until 1977, are still relevant to Kunwinjku peoples' lives. During my fieldwork, I found that Kunwinjku people expressed a strong sense of ownership and pride because their elders fought to establish the GSSC in their community. The GSSC provides a social base for people to relax and entertain each other with stories and fond memories after a long day. Many older people recall their childhood memories of when the Border Store was running as a licenced venue:

We wanted to bring the Club to Gunbalanya because people were dying there at the River, near the Border Store. That's why we have the Club here in Gunbalanya. [CM10]

Over the years, Aboriginal people in Oenpelli have administered their own controls over liquor supply and availability and they continue to do this by restricting sales to certain individuals and controlling availability by determining the dates and times of trade where necessary.³⁹

2.5 Discussion

This chapter examined how Kunwinjku people's experiences of challenging the Border Store's liquor licence, and eventually transferring this licence to the GSSC, was embedded in assimilationist notions of 'responsible' liquor consumption. These debates on Aboriginal drinking leveraged early sentiments about self-determination by suggesting that Kunwinjku people have the right to choose to drink. Controversially, powerbrokers in this discourse, such as the Magistrate, media outlets and Mr Terry Robinson, called upon Aboriginal people to drink in a manner that complied with the values of a Commonwealth citizen. These debates were influential in the Oenpelli Village Council choosing to transfer the liquor licence to the mission. If earlier attempts to challenge the liquor licence's renewal were successful, then perhaps Kunwinjku people would have chosen not to take on the liquor licence and the GSSC would not exist today. Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal decision-making over liquor control, including opening hours and behavioural interventions, are ongoing issues today that are further discussed in chapter eight.

³⁹ Section 7.5.5 provides further detail on how liquor supply and availability is managed through cross-agency coordination.

A second theme to arise from this historical analysis centres on social harm. From 1966 to 1971, Mr Terry Robinson's management of the Border Store appeared to run with minimal friction between those in support of and those who opposed the sale of liquor near Oenpelli. Mr Robinson seemingly managed these competing interests with his sense of comradery and willingness to negotiate on liquor controls. In comparison, the Hills exploited the vulnerability of Aboriginal people and leveraged their position of power to enforce notions of individual responsibility over drinking behaviour, including the manner in which people might behave. Similarly, the Magistrate in 1973 claimed that Aboriginal people had the responsibility to self-manage their own behaviour, expecting that this behaviour should comply with mainstream Western values. These political processes are examples of how debates blurred the lines between assimilation and self-determination, and as these actors denied responsibility they further contributed to drinking-related harm inflicted on Kunwinjku people. Before exploring this in-depth, the next chapter describes the field site and method for data collection.

3 The field site and methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the mixed method approach used for this thesis. The field research was undertaken from September 2015 until October 2017 in Gunbalanya in West Arnhem Land, the Northern Territory. I visited the community on three occasions throughout this period and spent a total of nearly 12 months in the community. Throughout the chapter, I explain how my experiences ‘in the field’, the theoretical framework, and the method together inform how evidence is constructed and how the data informs the research findings.

Section 3.2 describes my approach to undertaking this research and section 3.3 explains how a mixed methods approach addresses the research questions and aims. The method draws upon ethnography to develop a locally-grounded understanding of ‘community safety’ by using semi-structured interviews, a reflexive listening and learning approach to participant observation and being immersed in the field. In the later part of the fieldwork, I used questionnaires to reach a wider participant group.

Section 3.4 locates the field site as a geographic location, a community of people and a dispersed language group. Here I elaborate on how my interactions with dispersed people, places and culture have informed my research. This section provides an overview of the services located in Gunbalanya, then presents data on police recorded offences in West Arnhem Land and compares this with participants’ perceptions of safety in their neighbourhood.

3.2 My approach to research

This thesis presents on outsider’s view on community safety issues in Gunbalanya. As a non-Indigenous person working in this space, I have undertaken this research to the best of my ability in trying to see these issues from the perspective of Kunwinjku Aboriginal people⁴⁰. This research involved extensive consultation throughout the three field visits to develop a ground-up approach to research, enabling me to develop a perspective that came from

⁴⁰ I refer to Kunwinjku Aboriginal culture and people throughout the thesis to denote people who are born and live in Gunbalanya; however, I acknowledge that this group of people come from diverse language and land groups including Yolngu-speakers, amongst others.

participants' ideas. As an example, the consultation phase of the research enabled me to develop research questions that genuinely reflected issues that Bininj⁴¹ and Balanda⁴² people were grappling with at the time. The semi-structured interviews were then used as an exploratory approach to understand the issues and to develop indicators for safety which were used in the questionnaires.

This research shows in depth how community safety issues are affecting family and community wellbeing in Gunbalanya, and the challenges experienced with service delivery and regulation. This was made possible because a Bininj family welcomed me into their lives to learn from them about Bininj law and their everyday lives, including what respect means and how this is practiced through building strong family relationships. These strong women were advocates for me and this research was only possible because they supported it. Because of my connection with these strong women, participants were willing to talk to me, they shared personal problems that outsiders would often not be privy to and we spent time together fishing, yarnning and sharing stories. This is one way in which Bininj community leaders asserted their own autonomy and decision-making power over the research process. These community leaders chose me, which shows that the power within the research domain is not always controlled by the researcher. Those who are part of the identifiable group being researched are also negotiating the power dynamics in their own way.

Prior to undertaking the data collection for this thesis, I did not intend to uncover the issues that emerge in this thesis, some of which include child neglect and youth delinquency. Going into the field, I expected that I would mostly conduct interviews with service providers and some with community members. However, undertaking research with service providers was more challenging for administrative reasons and issues relating to power and access. Comparatively, many Bininj people were happy to discuss community safety, what it means and the daily challenges they experience in their neighbourhoods. For the most part, I imagine that participants told these stories to me because they want a better future for their children and families and, often, they desire increased attention through services and funding to address the causes of these issues. These stories were shared with the hope that the message would be

⁴¹ Bininj is the commonly used Kunwinjku term for Aboriginal people in Gunbalanya. The term is mostly used to refer to Kunwinjku-speakers from Arnhem Land and, for example, Yolngu is used to refer to Yolngu speakers from other parts of Arnhem Land. The term 'bininj' can be used to refer to Aboriginal people from elsewhere although there is an underlying assumption that it refers to a Kunwinjku-speaker. Additionally, 'bininj' also means an Aboriginal boy.

⁴² Balanda is the Kunwinjku term for non-Aboriginal people in Gunbalanya.

shared with people of influence, in government and academia, who can help deliver programs that address problems contributing to impaired community safety.

3.3 The field site

Ethnographic research relies upon knowledge gained through interactions between the researcher, participants and the field. ‘The field’ is not strictly a geographic place but a socially constructed space which is formed through experiences shared between the researcher and the people, place and culture that are constitutive of the field (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). Knowledge is constructed through the relationships formed within the field and the researcher’s deep immersion in these complex interactions that occur in this social, cultural, political and geographical space (Amit, 2000). This section considers how the field site influenced this study. The study was primarily undertaken in the geographical place that is commonly referred to as Gunbalanya, an Aboriginal community. This section describes the field site as a geographical place, groups of people and a socio-linguistic community.

3.3.1 Gunbalanya

Data collected for this research was primarily gathered while I was located in Gunbalanya, West Arnhem Land. Gunbalanya is a large remote town located approximately 300 kilometres east of Darwin and 60 kilometres north east of Jabiru. Cahill’s Crossing is located on the East Alligator River, which forms the border between Kakadu National Park and Arnhem Land. This is the only point along the East Alligator River that is accessible with a land-based vehicle. Gunbalanya’s close proximity to Cahill’s Crossing and location along the Arnhem Land highway means that it is the gateway to numerous communities and outstations in the western and central Arnhem Land regions. It is possible to travel this relatively short stretch (30 kilometres) of highly corrugated dirt road in a two-wheel drive during the latter months of the dry season (approx. August to October) although vehicular access is dependent on the tidal fluctuations and weather conditions. The roads are prone to flooding during other periods (see Fig. 3.1).

Gunbalanya’s geographical location and tropical monsoonal climate have a significant impact on population mobility as well as accessibility of services during different times of the year. The Top End of the Northern Territory has two distinct tropical seasons: the ‘wet’ season

from November to April, and the ‘dry’ season from May to October. The monsoonal rains, beginning during the ‘build up’ season from September to December, cause seasonal flooding across the open grassy plains and in the East Alligator River. The ‘build-up’ season is characterised by increasing humidity and high temperatures. At the beginning of the wet season, in December each year, the East Alligator River becomes inaccessible via Cahill’s Crossing for vehicular transport for around six months. Peak population movements occur from July to October because, during these months, motor vehicle access is easiest. This can influence community safety issues most prominent during certain times of the year.⁴³

Fig. 3.1. The wet season in West Arnhem Land, 2016



Description: Cahill’s Crossing (1.6m high) after an early wet season flood in September 2016

Source: Simone Georg



Description: Oenpelli road after an early wet season flood in September 2016

Source: Simone Georg

⁴³ As an example, participants identified that illicit alcohol and other substances being brought into the community was a more prominent issue during the dry season, refer to sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2.

In the West Arnhem region⁴⁴, the ABS (2017b) Census states that 4,773 Indigenous people live in the area, which includes Gunbalanya, Goulburn Island, Croker Island and remaining outstations in the region. According to the 2016 Census, of the 1,117 Gunbalanya residents, 88.6 per cent were Indigenous-identified. In Gunbalanya, Indigenous-identified persons⁴⁵ live in 168 houses and 11 semi-detached residences. In these households, there are on average 4.9 persons per household (ABS, 2017b). Of the 986 residents who identified as Indigenous, approximately 35 per cent of males and females were aged 19 years or younger (ABS, 2017b). The proportion of males and females in the community was relatively equal. For ethical reasons, participants in this study were all 18 years or older. The potential participant pool of those Indigenous people who were born in Arnhem Land and living in Gunbalanya was roughly 650 individuals.

3.3.2 Service providers

The West Arnhem Regional Council (WARC), community organisations, privately owned businesses and the Northern Territory Government provide a range of locally-based safety-related services⁴⁶ in Gunbalanya. This section provides an overview of the local safety services available in Gunbalanya.

There is an extensive range of services related to community safety in remote Northern Territory communities, including but not limited to, child safety, youth justice and diversion, the courts system, suicide and self-harm prevention, and elder abuse and safety. To refine the scope of this thesis, I decided that data collection should prioritise the voices of Bininj community members rather than service providers. For this reason, a few service providers were included in the interviews and, with limited time available, I decided to focus on service providers that had ongoing relationships with Gunbalanya's residents, rather than those which

⁴⁴ For the statistical overview, the definition of West Arnhem Land is defined by the ABS Statistical Area Level 2 which includes the three Aboriginal communities of Gunbalanya, Minjilang and Warruwi in addition to numerous outstations. The eastern border of West Arnhem Land is defined by the Liverpool River where the outstations of Marrkolidjban, Mandedjkadjang, Kumurrulu and Gummuringbang are included in West Arnhem Land. Any outstations east or south of this location is not included in West Arnhem Land. The western border of West Arnhem Land is defined by the East Alligator River.

⁴⁵ This comprises of households where at least one person identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, including people not born in Arnhem Land and living in Gunbalanya to work in local service provision.

⁴⁶ In the thesis, I refer to 'locally-based safety-related services' or sometimes briefly 'safety services'. Note that all references to 'safety services' imply that these services are permanently located safety services available in Gunbalanya.

drive in or fly in on a regular or occasional basis. Only service providers with a permanent presence were invited to participate in interviews.⁴⁷

3.3.2.1 *West Arnhem Regional Council (WARC)*

WARC delivers a range of services that enhance community safety, and are as follows:

- *The Night Patrol* is a primary prevention service that aims to intervene in antisocial or crime-related incidents before they become a problem for the police. Funded by the federal government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the service runs six days per week, Monday to Saturday, and employs seven Aboriginal workers and one non-Aboriginal worker (WARC, 2017b). Night Patrol do not officially have a policing or security function.
- *The Women's Safe House* operates six days per week, Monday to Saturday, to provide a safe place for women and children who are at risk of or who have experienced family and domestic violence (FDV). It provides emergency accommodation and counselling for women and children. This is funded through the Northern Territory Department of Child and Family Services (WARC, 2017b).
- *The Community Care Centre* provides a meal delivery service for the elderly and disabled. The team provides a range of assistance including shopping trips, personal care, laundry and cultural outings. This service employs a non-Aboriginal coordinator and around four Aboriginal workers.
- *The Youth Program* provides an after-school program for children, sports and mental health education, and a holiday program to keep children engaged. This is funded through DPMC and the federal government Department of Social Services (WARC, 2017b).

3.3.2.2 *Health Clinic*

At the *Health Clinic*, doctors, nurses and emergency health services are available. They provide transport services and cost-free health care (Northern Territory Department of Health, 2017). *The Alcohol and Other Drugs Program* (AOD Program) is co-located at the Health Clinic. The

⁴⁷ To maintain anonymity and confidentiality to participants, I cannot specify if the police or other specific service providers participated in the interviews.

AOD Program provides counselling, education and client care for people affected by alcohol and other drugs in 40 health clinics across the Northern Territory. The service is funded by the Northern Territory Department of Health and one person is employed in Gunbalanya to run this program.

3.3.2.3 Top End Association for Mental (TEAM) Health

TEAM Health provides early support for children, young people and their families who may be at risk of or affected by mental health problems. Funded by the Department of Social Services, it works with families in a strengths-based wellbeing program (TEAM Health, 2017).

3.3.2.4 Northern Territory Police and Justice Services⁴⁸

The Northern Territory Police provide a 24-hour police emergency service available via a central telephone line that is relayed through Darwin. I was informed there are five positions allocated at the permanent police station, but the police station was only filled to half capacity at the time I was conducting fieldwork. The police have a distinctly separate role from the Night Patrol (operated through WARC) and they do not run patrols together.

3.3.2.5 Gunbalanya Sports and Social Club (GSSC)

The GSSC is open four nights per week on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 4.30pm to 7.30pm and Fridays and Saturdays from 5.30pm to 8.30pm, also selling hamburgers and steaks on the weekend. It is closed on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays. GSSC sells mid-strength and light beers, soft drinks, juices and water. It provides accommodation in self-contained units.

⁴⁸ In addition, there are several services not locally-based (i.e. not permanently located in Gunbalanya) worth mentioning. There is one Community Engagement Police Officer (CEPO) who visits Gunbalanya on a regular basis. The CEPO does not perform a 'policing function' but rather focuses on community liaison and education. A corrections officer from the Northern Territory Government also visits the community. The regularity of his visits is based on operational need. But they both appear to have a positive and ongoing relationship with Bininj people. Also, the Northern Circuit Court holds justice proceedings for several days every month or two in Gunbalanya.

3.4 Research method

The mixed methods research design is a product of my reflexive engagement with the field site, participants and the fluidity of ideas that were flowing in the earlier months of data collection. As I explain below, this approach came about because, while the academic institution suggested that a flexible, unstructured approach to the research was more culturally sensitive, the research participants subtly indicated that a more formal, structured approach would yield better engagement among participants. The following section explains how each phase of the research design, method and analysis was undertaken. This includes the challenges I encountered throughout the process, how this affected the research findings, and how I addressed these various situations as they arose.

3.4.1 Initial consultation, September 2015

Early discussions with the Ardjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation (AAC) and key service providers helped shape the research proposal. In September 2015, I presented a research proposal to the AAC and several other service providers and government representatives. The AAC's Board of Directors continued to be important formal and informal contacts throughout the research who actively provided feedback and engaged in a mutual learning process.

Informal conversations with service providers and community elders early in the research were influential in helping me understand the contradictions between policy objectives and the everyday lived reality of safety on the ground. From these discussions, it became clear that policy discourse on community safety did not align with how the concept was viewed at a local level. Elders and service providers were in the process of visualising how their own experiences of community safety could be contained within certain parameters: what fits within the boundaries of 'safety' in both the Kunwinjku and Western worlds. For them, many issues were encompassed by the term 'community safety' including, but not limited to, jealousy and family fighting, alcohol and volatile substances abuse, sorcery, grass fires, petty and serious crime, and broken cars around the home.

During this time, I witnessed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service providers grappling with the concept itself, by attempting to re-articulate and contextualise it in a way that was relevant to local social dynamics in a specific time and space. From these early experiences, I understood that safety issues occurred within a kinship-based network where every person in

the community is connected to each other through a moiety system. Unsafe behaviour performed by an individual unavoidably has ripple effects throughout the social network. Understanding what it means to be and feel safe from the perspective of Kunwinjku people requires the researcher to understand social phenomena from the everyday lived perspective, from that of a Kunwinjku person. The research design was later shaped based on these discussions and experiences.

3.4.2 Data collection, April to November 2016

This thesis draws insights from critical realism to understand participants' perceptions and experiences of harm, unsafe behaviour or circumstances and safety. To integrate qualitative and quantitative methods in the research design and analysis, this thesis uses constructivism and realism, to understand how aspects of the empirical reality are constructed from physical interactions and social experiences (Bazeley, 2013; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). In this philosophical stance, there is a physical reality with which we interact every day, but our perceptions and experiences of this reality are subjective.

For participants, their perspective on the concept of 'safety' is constructed based on their physical interactions with their home, family, school, work and community environments. It is also constructed based on their mental properties: their social and emotional experiences which influence their goals, attitudes and intentions (Bazeley, 2013). Critical realists argue that there is no possibility of gaining data that provides an objective or distanced perspective of social phenomena (Bazeley, 2013; Houston, 2001; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Aligned with this philosophical stance, the mixed methods data was collected in two distinct stages: semi-structured interviews and then questionnaires. This thesis integrates these methods and types of data to gain insight into the contextually rich descriptions of harm and safety. The following sections explain the data collection methods used in this study and then elaborate on fieldwork challenges and data analysis techniques.

3.4.2.1 *Ethnographical approach*

Ethnography is a flexible approach to data collection that employs multiple techniques. It involves a reflexive process of observation, immersion, 'hanging out', casual conversations and structured or semi-structured interviews. In ethnographic methods, data emerges from the interactive, reflexive and abductive engagement between the researcher, participants and the

field site (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; D. E. Smith, 2005; Wolcott, 1985).

An informal approach to the early months of fieldwork was essential for me to learn some Kunwinjku language, understand kinship networks and how family groups are connected to homelands. I spent considerable time building relationships across the community, attending cultural activities with my adopted family and working with community members on the 2016 Census enumeration. This later opportunity was pivotal for me to expand my social networks and learn how family groups were spatially and socially distributed across the West Arnhem region.

‘Hanging out’ was an important aspect of the ethnographic approach in the early months of the research. Hanging out happens when the researcher learns to become a family member and a part of the community (Aveling, 2013). I spent many hours talking to people, telling stories with each other and listening to elders while on camping trips, hunting or fishing on the weekends and sometimes just sitting around. In July 2016, I attended a culture camp held at the Manmoyi outstation⁴⁹ which was co-organised by the outstation’s elders and traditional owners and the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, based in Maningrida. I participated in the event because the traditional owners at Manmoyi outstation are related to my adopted family. This experience immersed me in an education program for children that explained the basic principles of Kunwinjku spirituality and law. This was the beginning of my attempt to understand strengths-based notions of community safety in terms of rebuilding and repairing the social, cultural and spiritual fabric of Kunwinjku society.

Over six weeks in July to September, I was employed by the ABS to recruit, train and supervise 12 field interviewers to conduct the 2016 Census. Field interviewers were Aboriginal people who lived in Gunbalanya. This experience was an important part of my research methodology in that it gave me a legitimate space to work with and become familiar with the Bininj community⁵⁰, in addition to travelling to the outstations in the West Arnhem region. I coordinated and managed the 2016 Census operations for 16 outstations located between the

⁴⁹ Manmoyi outstation is located approx. 3.5 hours’ drive east of Gunbalanya and is situated on the Mann River.

⁵⁰ One of the crucial elements to this process was learning to be comfortable with approaching people’s houses, sitting on their doorsteps and simply being in a place that was radically different to that which I was accustomed. The apparent racial and socioeconomic difference was even more stark as they offered me a chair to sit down. Without wanting to offend, I always refused to sit on a chair in an attempt to lessen the power difference between us. This is an example of how my research ethic attempted to symbolically bridge the divide between researcher and participants.

Mann River and the East Alligator River. Through this experience, I had a legitimate reason to enquire about people's familial connections within Gunbalanya and to homelands across the region, and I was able to learn about spiritual and cultural practices. In fact, it was important that I became quickly familiar with these practices to learn avoidance practices and etiquette when approaching people's physical space for the first time. This became important later in my research when conducting the questionnaires at people's homes.

An important role of the ethnographer is to embed oneself within a web of relationships, interactions and ways of working. Some authors promote that 'yarning' is a culturally safe way for Western researchers to deploy Indigenous methodologies (Aveling, 2013; Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010; Geia, Hayes & Usher, 2013). Yarning is a way for researchers to develop and build relationships through unstructured conversations, thereby enabling the participant the power to shape what gets said within conversation, what remains unspoken but subtly gestured and that which remains silenced (Aveling, 2013; Geia, et al., 2013). Over time, the researcher then makes decisions on what parts get included in the continuing stages of the research and which points are further drawn on in later conversations (Aveling, 2013).

This process of 'hanging out' was an important experience in my being, learning and doing whilst experiencing life in a Kunwinjku community. Simply, hanging out and yarning is a way of life that is shared while fishing, camping in the homelands, during long drives or while having a cup of tea. This combined range of experiences allowed me to understand sensitive issues that participants gradually revealed to me in their own terms. Furthermore, 'hanging out' enables the researcher to embed oneself in reciprocal relationships and develop mutual trust with participants over time. In some instances, the sharing of company, knowledge and companionship through yarning is the basis of the relationship. This becomes a relationship of mutual trust, reciprocity and exchange that is only shared with close adopted family members. Some of the research's information was gathered in this way, after informed consent was clearly established. In other instances, the participant provides the researcher with knowledge in-lieu of a 'favour' or in-kind help.⁵¹

Through the process of negotiating the researcher terms, Bininj often use their kinship obligations with the researcher to negotiate how they can benefit from the exchange. Exchanging knowledge for driving around, fishing trips, cigarettes, money or other in-kind

⁵¹ This exchange can be referred to as 'humbug' which can be described as an annoyance or persistent request or demand (Macquarie Dictionary, 2017); however, as I further articulate in this thesis, what is considered humbug is often subjective according to local culture and personal interpretations.

help are a frequent part of the experience. In these contexts, Bininj people are negotiating the demands of the Western world and exercising their own sense of agency by exchanging one service for another. These are some ways in which my approach to fieldwork practiced an ethical and meaningful engagement when working with Kunwinjku people.

3.4.2.2 *Semi-structured interviews*

From May to November 2016⁵², I undertook 16 semi-structured interviews including with 6 service providers and 17 community members.⁵³ Interviews, were approximately 30 minutes to 1.5 hours in duration. With community members, some interviews were completed in multiple sessions of 30 minutes. These semi-structured interviews began with open-ended questions about the aspects of community life that Kunwinjku people saw as problematic, what strategies they viewed as appropriate in addressing these community safety issues and aspects of family and community life that these Kunwinjku people believed helped created safer and stronger environments (refer to Appendix B). After participants identified the community safety issues that they were most concerned about, in the interview I followed-up with more direct questioning to encourage further discussion about these issues.

After seeking advice from the AAC, I invited certain community members to participate. They were selected because we already knew each other, they had a reputation⁵⁴ for being a strong person and they were able to talk comfortably about sensitive issues or community affairs. I used purposive sampling for these interviews – that is, selective sampling of participants based on certain characteristics (non-probability sampling). Some participants were selected based on their comfort and ability to talk about sensitive issues, including family violence, theft, humbugging and addiction. For some people, a participant's potential safety could be compromised for the mere suspicion of discussing family violence in public.⁵⁵ I allowed participants the choice to decide for themselves when and where it was safe, and what they were prepared to talk about.

⁵² Most of these 16 semi-structured interviews were undertaken between April and September 2016. Only three interviews with non-Indigenous service providers were undertaken during October and November. The reasons for this delay was due to the challenges of fieldwork discussed in section 3.4.3.

⁵³ Some of these semi-structured interviews were undertaken with multiple persons present, in groups of two or three people. During the interview process, I remained flexible to the requests of participants. Interviews were undertaken in group format upon request from the participant. Participants selected who they wanted to be included in the group.

⁵⁴ This was based on the initial advice I received from some members of the AAC.

⁵⁵ This is an example of retaliation or payback discussed later in this thesis.

No translator was required to interview these participants and, where necessary, I used the facilitator to initiate contact with the participant. The interviews were used to develop the baseline data on neighbourhood problems, social stress and cultural safety, which were then used to compile the questionnaires. Based on the interview data, I found 71 indicators for interpersonal, neighbourhood and community safety (refer to Appendix H). The questionnaires allowed me to reach a larger sample population and several questions were used as conversation starters to gather more in-depth qualitative data. The following section provides further detail including the questionnaire structure and purpose, recruitment method and process I used to negotiate consent.

3.4.2.3 Structured interviews with questionnaires

From September to October 2017, I worked with two facilitators, one male and one female, who have a reputation as cultural leaders within their communities. Both facilitators could translate conversations through their knowledge of Yolngu, Kunwinjku, or Creole. The facilitators were employed for three weeks to initiate contact with community members and introduce potential participants to me. We completed 55 questionnaires with Bininj participants from different genders, age groups and family groups. Questionnaire participants were recruited using convenience and purposive sampling. Participants were mostly recruited via door-to-door visits where individuals happened to be available at the time. A smaller portion were selected because they were influential community leaders or traditional owners.

Based on data from the semi-structured interviews undertaken from April to September 2016, 71 variables were identified as indicators of interpersonal safety, social stress and cultural fragmentation. These variables were initially tested with 2 participants; following this, an additional 53 community members participated in structured interviews using the questionnaires. The questionnaires used Likert Scale responses, multiple response questions and open-ended questions (provided at Appendix C). The questionnaires were a way of “quantitizing” qualitative data (Bazeley, 2012, 2015), where the questions asked participants about their perceptions⁵⁶ of neighbourhood problems and service delivery. All participants in this study are anonymous which allowed them to feel confident in talking about sensitive

⁵⁶ Participants were not asked directly about their experiences of community safety issues although, as detailed in the philosophical standpoint, participants’ perceptions of interpersonal, household and community safety are grounded in everyday events that participants see and hear. This is detailed in the questionnaire at Appendix C.

issues, and this was specifically requested by the elders⁵⁷ in the community. Codes⁵⁸ are preferred over pseudonyms because of the large number of participants; however, when the code reference could indicate a participant's identity then an interview or field note date is used instead.

The structured interview was designed to take approximately 40 minutes, however in practice the interviews often took 1 hour to 1.5 hours to complete. Often respondents provided further explanation and clarification on key issues rather than just answering the structured questions. Participants voluntarily elaborated on their views of how unsafe behaviours occur, how social stressors influence each other and whether local services were perceived to improve interpersonal safety. This provided rich, descriptive qualitative data to accompany the quantified values, designed to assess the magnitude of the problem through individual experiences and perceptions. As a result, we collected 28 typed pages of quotations and comments that accompanied the questionnaires.

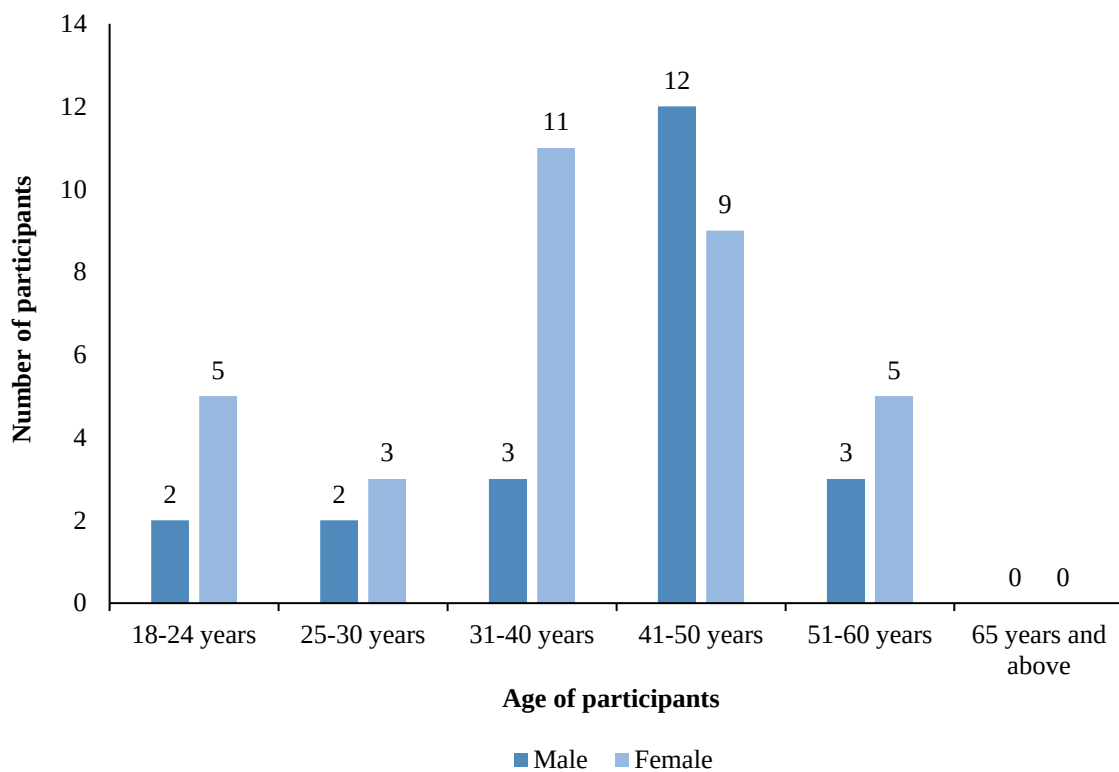
A total of 55 people completed the questionnaires including 22 males and 33 females and most of these participants⁵⁹ were aged from 31 to 50 years old (see Fig. 3.2). Overall, there were a total of 78 participants in the study, including 50 females and 28 males, of whom 94 per cent were Kunwinjku Aboriginal people.

⁵⁷ Specifically, the elders requested that no names, gender, age or other identifying information be associated with the quotes in the thesis or other publications.

⁵⁸ As an example, CM01 and SP01 indicates a community member or service provider (respectively) who participated via semi-structured interview and Q01 indicates an Indigenous participant who completed a questionnaire. Each participant was allocated a unique number and code. In the thesis, where the content or the code could potential compromise a participant's anonymity then the date of the interview or field note is used instead of the participant code.

⁵⁹ All of the questionnaire participants were Kunwinjku Aboriginal people.

Fig. 3.2. Questionnaire participants by age and gender (number)



3.4.2.4 Recruiting questionnaire participants

Questionnaire participants were recruited over a period of four weeks, during which I accompanied two facilitators and we walked door-to-door inviting people to participate. Prior to this, I sought advice from members of the AAC to ensure they were satisfied with the research process and that I was welcome to approach community members in this way. As described in this section, my approach to recruiting participants and negotiating consent, required me to be continually sensitive and responsive to the participant's needs. In doing this, I ensured my conduct was respectful and courteous towards local customs and social norms.

In the process of negotiating consent, I approached the participant's home with the facilitator and the facilitator introduced me to the participant, in Kunwinjku. In this project, the facilitator and I approached the participant's home, then I explained how and why we were collecting information on community safety, as follows:

My name is Simone and I come from Canberra. My skin name is 'ngalkamarrang'. My adopted mother is Donna Nadjamerrek. I am

working with the Ardjumarllarl Aboriginal Corporation on community safety – ‘kunwok karninnaarre’ or ‘kunwok karibidyikarmerren’. We are talking to all the strong people in the community about things they have seen or heard that they think are ‘unsafe’ and good things about the community that they feel make them stronger. We are collecting this information to make a book. Ardjumarllarl mob can then use the book to talk to police, service providers and government mob about making a stronger community. Can we sit with you and talk? It will take around 40 minutes.

In explaining myself and the project, I remained outside the fence line of participant’s property. The process of negotiation often continued between the facilitator, myself and the respondent over access to personal and physical space. In this way, I respected Kunwinjku etiquette by locating myself within their kinship networks and explaining how the research furthered the vision of Bininj elders.

Although the interviews engaged with highly sensitive issues, the questionnaire and the process was embraced positively by elders and community members. One elder commented:

This is kamak⁶⁰ – it’s a really good djourra⁶¹. It’s exactly what we need here in Gunbalanya. I am very happy that you are going out to talk to people in the community. I want you to talk to as many people as possible. This will really help us plan for the future.

When completing the questionnaire, a female participant told us:

This djourra is kamak. All the answers are here before I think of them. All these things we talked about are really important for the community.

Conducting structured interviews, based on written questionnaires, created a sense of transparency that enabled participants to choose what they divulged, how much and when. The facilitators worked with me to conduct the interviews with participants while I wrote down extra comments, information and stories that participants shared.

⁶⁰ Kunwinjku term for agreeable or good.

⁶¹ Djourra means paper or document in Kunwinjku.

Writing these additional comments or stories down necessitated a continual process of negotiating consent which was initially overt and sometimes subtle during the conversation. For example, after seeking consent using the participant information sheet attached to the questionnaire⁶², the participant often divulged extra information about relationships between different safety issues. In circumstances where participants provided information that was de-identified, I would then ask: “Is it okay with you that I write that down?” Then, in one specific interview with a known confidant, the individual raised a story that could potentially identify a person. I started writing it down and, after further considering the issue, I sought advice from the participants on whether to include the information. Then she asked: “Can you please remove that one? It is better, just in case, because its family you know.”

Contrary to Western ethical standards, negotiating consent can be a continual process that requires the researcher to be sensitive to participant’s needs and adapt to the changing circumstances. When discussing sensitive issues, such as an individual’s experience of family violence, participants express individual choice and agency to take action by divulging their own personal stories to a researcher. In my own research, participants shared their stories for the benefit of their community with the knowledge that I will take these stories back to Canberra and share them with government agencies and other academics. Individuals hoped that, by sharing these stories, it would contribute to building better programs to address family violence and policing in the community. I was careful not to raise expectations that I, as an individual, would provide funding for programs or resolve community problems. When initially seeking consent, I explained that: “The Ardjumarllal Corporation can talk to police, service providers and government mob to take action on community safety.” However, undoubtedly my privileged position as a non-Indigenous person from a university in Canberra brings with it a certain sense of hope.

3.4.3 Fieldwork challenges

Undertaking fieldwork can become a complex and difficult exercise where the research process and the outcomes achieved are incredibly dependent on the relationships the researcher forms and potentially excludes at the same time. The researcher ‘enters’ the community by forming relationships with significant or influential local Aboriginal community member(s), who then invite the researcher to stay in the community for an extended time. Who this person is, who

⁶² This written consent form was provided to participants after access was negotiated and consent was sought.

they are connected to and which country they belong to are important aspects of everyday social life that define the relationships the researcher develops along the way. These relationships, as well as the opportunities gifted to the researcher through kin relations, shape how knowledge is constructed within these intersectional social phenomena that is commonly referred to as ‘the field’.

My association with the AAC was influential in shaping my relationships across the community. I was careful to promote my own position as an independent researcher who is not aligned and not concerned with community politics, yet despite this I was unintentionally entangled in local affairs. Further to this, as a less experienced researcher it is more difficult to avoid something one is not aware of. In this case, I was not aware of the detailed historical and political tensions between white bureaucracy and particular Bininj families, until I was immersed in them.

In the process of seeking agreement with the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee, the Committee requested that I seek consent from several organisations within the community:

You have indicated that you have already visited Gunbalanya on a scoping visit and commenced the process of consultation with that community. The National Statement requires evidence of this consultation – please provide such evidence (e.g. support letters, from the Arrguluk Reference Group, etc.) to the Ethics Office. Please also provide Northern Land Council approval for you to travel to Gunbalanya. Please also provide endorsements from the various service providers (e.g. Women’s Night Patrol, Community Safety Committees and Local Government, etc.).

As Nado Aveling points out (2013, p. 207), an ethics committee’s decisions are commonly grounded in white, Western paradigms and thus have their own interpretation of what constitutes informed consent, meaningful engagement and ways of interpreting the directive that Indigenous knowledge must be respected. Prior to undertaking research, I had already gained written and verbal consent from the traditional owners and community leaders from the AAC’s Board of Directions, who in their own words provided consent “on behalf of the people of Gunbalanya” and I gained permission from the Northern Land Council to be on Aboriginal Land. However, as indicated in the above quote, the Ethics Committee required written endorsements from WARC and anyone else who would be involved in the research.

To an outsider this might seem like a simple process, however, this additional layer of seeking bureaucratic Western interpretations of ‘consent’ entangled me in community politics and compromised my attempt to be politically neutral as an independent researcher. Gatekeepers within the whitefella bureaucracy⁶³ restricted the flow of my requests to the relevant place within their organisation, doctored the information I provided, and then shared it with partnered institutions.⁶⁴ In the process of seeking consent from the WARC, I was required to undertake a National Police Check, seek consent from all the various funding bodies that oversee the services, and seek permission from the Local Authority Board. These processes commenced an entangled six-month process of delays that obstructed the research process.⁶⁵ As an indirect but correlated aspect of this process, I was verbally accused of exploiting a person’s name and reputation to seek my own advantage. These events were significant for two reasons.

First, the request from the ethics committee created delays in me gaining access to certain service providers who were key informants in the research on community safety. I already had strong relationships with these people, and although they had already provided consent in principle, the extra layer of bureaucracy prevented them from expressing their own voice at the critical stages of the research. Eventually, after I gained written consent from WARC, I interviewed three service providers, although at this stage I had already completed most of the questionnaires. Whitefella bureaucracy denied Aboriginal service providers the opportunity to express their voice at the time it was most influential and powerful in the research’s development.

Second, the challenges that I experienced because of whitefella bureaucracy exposed a raft of community tensions that existed between mainstream institutions and community members. When I was exposed to local politics, I sought the strength, security and leadership from a group of elders who I consider my adopted family. From this experience, I felt the

⁶³ I use this colloquialism to draw attention to the distinction between Bininj, a local Aboriginal approach to negotiating and providing consent, in comparison to the formalised, administrative Western approach which increasingly relies upon a rigid, risk-based approach.

⁶⁴ I know this because a key informant witnessed the document provided to two powerbrokers who often acted as gatekeepers in the community. The information witnessed by my informant was radically different to that which I provided to the local council.

⁶⁵ Prior to this meeting, I approached an influential traditional owner and sought this individual’s permission to undertake this research. Even though I already had permission from two other traditional owners, I acted upon local advice in seeking this third person’s permission. At the Local Authority Board’s meeting, the third traditional owner supported WARC’s participation in the research. I believe that without support from this individual at that time I would not have been able to allow Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service providers working for WARC to participate.

strength to talk about my difficulties with selected individuals who were sympathetic to my circumstance. That knowledge and experience allowed me to (in conversation) verbally challenge the authority of gatekeepers and institutions, in circumstances where participants were of the view that these gatekeepers were abusing their authority.

Informal conversations with community members allowed me to see how this abuse of power occurred on a regular basis and how many people felt disempowered in terms of challenging the way institutions were run. Others were waiting for the appropriate moment to exercise their authority in a manner considered legally and culturally legitimate.⁶⁶ I began to see circumstances in which some mainstream institutions selectively supported Aboriginal-led development when it corresponded with their personal visions and politics. This created a prominent top-down hierarchy that marginalised the interests of Bininj people and service providers, and where Kunwinjku social norms and values were disrespected by certain visiting whitefellas.

While the delay in gaining unconditional approval from the ethics committee created its own challenges in undertaking the research, these challenges presented a version of the truth that I would not have accessed otherwise. This is important to recognise from a methodological perspective and meanwhile tell a story about the clashes between whitefella bureaucracy and the endeavour to undertake genuinely ethical research. In presenting this story, I have sought to expose how power dynamics that exist in Indigenous communities, more broadly, often unintentionally influence the research process. In exploring these events, however, I seek to decolonise the research process by acknowledging these influences and my position within that process.

At the same time, I argue that ethics committees in Australian universities should realise that imposing a legalistic, risk management approach to research projects can jeopardise the quality of the research product and create unsafe, unethical environments in which to conduct research. There is a difference between ‘entering a community’, which involves seeking cultural and legal permission to be on Aboriginal land, and ‘seeking consent’ during the research process. When working with Indigenous communities ‘seeking consent’ occurs as a continual, reflexive process of being part of the community, expanding your social and familial networks as wide as possible, and continually checking with participants what information can

⁶⁶ This point is explored through the example provided in section 8.2.

be included or excluded based on potential sensitivities and the nature of the content. It is not a one-off process that ‘ticks a box’ on a piece of paper.

Often a university’s administrative procedures can inhibit with whom and how researchers conduct interviews on these personal issues because of the potential harm to participants or the university. While it is important that we thoughtfully consider how individuals are affected by researchers’ actions, we also need to consider the agency and choice participants have in negotiating consent themselves. By denying them the opportunity to negotiate consent, we are unintentionally reasserting the power of Western administration over a post-colonial subject. Here, a benevolent actor recolonises the ‘power over’ minorities who often do not have the opportunity to share their voice. Giving a person a voice, the opportunity to choose to express that voice or to deny participation, is a fundamental right in asserting citizenship in participatory research.

3.4.4 Data analysis, January to August 2017

Blending qualitative and quantitative data allowed me to develop a perspective on community safety that was grounded in Aboriginal knowledge as well as informed by service providers’ expertise in engaging in these issues in their everyday work. Qualitative data provides an in-depth account of how social strengths and neighbourhood problems influence community safety, and quantitative analysis provides an insight into the perceived magnitude or frequency of these issues. I drew upon Bazeley (2010, 2012, 2015) to combine qualitative and quantitative data that is inherently mixed and integrated throughout data collection, analysis and writing.

Aligned with the grounded-theory approach, the data was coded using In-Vivo coding techniques in Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (NVIVO). Coding In-Vivo involves creating nodes which contain phrases, ideas and words exactly as stated by participants during the interviews (Saldana, 2009). After this, I explored the data contained in the nodes to draw out key themes and categories for analysis. This involved a continual reflexive process of switching between inductive analysis, which initially allow key themes to emerge from the data, and then deductive analysis where I used the coding process to refine the themes and relationships within the data (Charmaz, 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2010). Once this pattern emerged from the data, I used thematic network analysis to map the relationship patterns.

Using NVIVO, I used thematic network analysis to code for themes and relationships between safety issues at the interpersonal level, in the household and across family groups (Attride-Stirling, 2003). Attride-Stirling (2003, p. 386) defines Thematic Network Analysis is a form of textual analysis where “web-like illustrations (networks) that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text”. I presented these thematic networks as a series of nodes and relationships⁶⁷ which were coded using NVIVO. These network maps were used throughout the analysis to compare the quantitative results of statistical significance with qualitative relationships. Data visualisation through thematic maps further demonstrates the complexity of these interrelated issues or nodes (see Appendix F).

Alongside the qualitative analysis, I analysed the questionnaire data using SPSS Statistics Software. The Likert Scale responses in the questionnaires were treated as categorical data and analysed using non-parametric and interdependence tests. Chi-Squared and Spearman’s Correlation tests were used to understand the significance and strength (i.e. linearity) of the statistical relationships in the sample population (n=55), refer to results in Appendix E. These tests of significance and linearity were a method of summarising qualitative data (Bazeley 2012, 2015). Other closed ended questions (e.g. multiple response) in the questionnaires were simply summarised using cross-tabulations. Combining different methods and data sources allows for a thorough and in-depth analysis of the relationships between community safety issues, including a historical and contemporary analysis. The mixed methods approaches were interwoven throughout the text as an integrated approach to data analysis and writing.

3.4.5 Knowledge sharing, September to October 2017

L. T. Smith (2012) writes that sharing research findings with Aboriginal communities is a fundamental part of ethical research where the research ideas, knowledge and findings contribute to the community’s social justice goals. This process of knowledge sharing is not simply a fleeting visit but, in my own research, I returned for four weeks in Gunbalanya holding extensive meetings with the AAC’s Board of Directors and relevant service providers⁶⁸. When

⁶⁷ I coded qualitative data for a relationship where there were 2 or more participants who mentioned the intersection between two themes (i.e. nodes).

⁶⁸ High staff turnover is a problem in Gunbalanya. By the time I had returned, only one service provider I had interviewed was still working in the community. This is further discussed in relation to service delivery in chapter eight.

I first arrived in Gunbalanya to share my research findings, I recontacted my kin relations and made an appointment at the upcoming AAC board meeting.

At the meeting, I sought the AAC's permission to share the research outcomes with service providers and community elders. In these discussions, I engaged the AAC and service providers in a dialogue about how the findings of this research could be used to shape future community development initiatives. I commenced these discussions by circulating a draft of the community report and sought feedback on my interpretation of community safety issues that I found in the data analysis. To verify the findings, I recontacted and met with service providers⁶⁹ from agencies involved in the research and I sought feedback from the AAC.

This initial meeting with the AAC was important for me to verify that I had permission⁷⁰ from traditional owners and community leaders, first, to be on Aboriginal Land during that visit, and second, that I had their permission to communicate the research findings with service providers, community members and other interested persons. Through this process, I ensured that my interpretation of the findings was an accurate reflection of how participants and community elders viewed key concepts in their own neighbourhoods and communities. This was part of the process of triangulation and verification that I used to ensure the integrity of the research, and further to this, the process also verified that the occurrence of these neighbourhood problems had not changed significantly in the previous year.

After this, I amended the draft report according to the feedback I received and had the report professionally printed. At the end of the visit, I held a community workshop in Gunbalanya to officially present the community report to the Board of Directors of the AAC and other service providers⁷¹ interested in the research findings. This was followed-up with a seminar held in Darwin at ANU's Northern Australian Research Unit where the audience

⁶⁹ During these consultations, I met with staff from the Red Lily Health Board, the Night Patrol and Safe House Coordinators, the mental health service provider, the Northern Territory Government's Aboriginal Justice Agreement consultation team, the Northern Territory Police middle management staff, community education officers from the Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and the federal government's community engagement team.

⁷⁰ I already had NLC approval to be on Aboriginal Land in Gunbalanya but this was my way of showing respect for Aboriginal sovereignty.

⁷¹ Other service providers who attended this meeting were from the Northern Territory Department of Corrections, Anglicare's Youth Justice team, federal government's community engagement staff, and Northern Territory police staff.

included over 40 representatives from government and non-government agencies, academic staff and individuals⁷² with personal connections to Biniŋ people in Gunbalanya.

These consultation and engagement processes occurred when the Aboriginal Justice Agreement was being discussed with Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. Gunbalanya and the nearby community of Jabiru⁷³ participated in these consultations, which further encouraged Gunbalanya's community leaders to commence a dialogue with other Aboriginal groups in the Northern Territory about how to commence their own community safety and justice council. These community leaders envisioned that the council would be responsible for making decisions on how to prevent and manage ongoing neighbourhood problems (such as youth delinquency), provide advice to service providers on behaviour change programs (such as addressing interpersonal and family violence and alcohol and substance dependency), and assist with alternative arrangements sentencing for offenders. The discussions I had with community leaders over the findings in the community report hopefully informed these processes and occurred as part of a broader dialogue amongst community leaders and residents about the importance of building healthy and respectful relationships in Gunbalanya.

3.5 Available statistics on neighbourhood problems and safety

This section briefly presents summary statistics on police recorded offences⁷⁴ in the West Arnhem region and then community members' perceptions⁷⁵ of how safe neighbourhoods are in Gunbalanya. These statistics show an indication of crime-related issues in Gunbalanya and whether participants in this study considered Gunbalanya to be safe, including times of the day when the community was unsafe.

⁷² Three Biniŋ women attended the seminar along with students and staff working on the Biniŋ Gunwok Language Project. After the seminar, we recorded a video that explained the community report's findings to community members in Kunwinjku.

⁷³ I participated in the consultation meeting held in Jabiru in September 2017 along with other service providers from Gunbalanya. At this meeting, I shared key findings from the community report and the report itself with the Director of the team responsible for the Aboriginal Justice Agreement consultations.

⁷⁴ Sourced from the Northern Territory Government's Department of Attorney General and Justice.

⁷⁵ This data was collected using the questionnaires as part of this research.

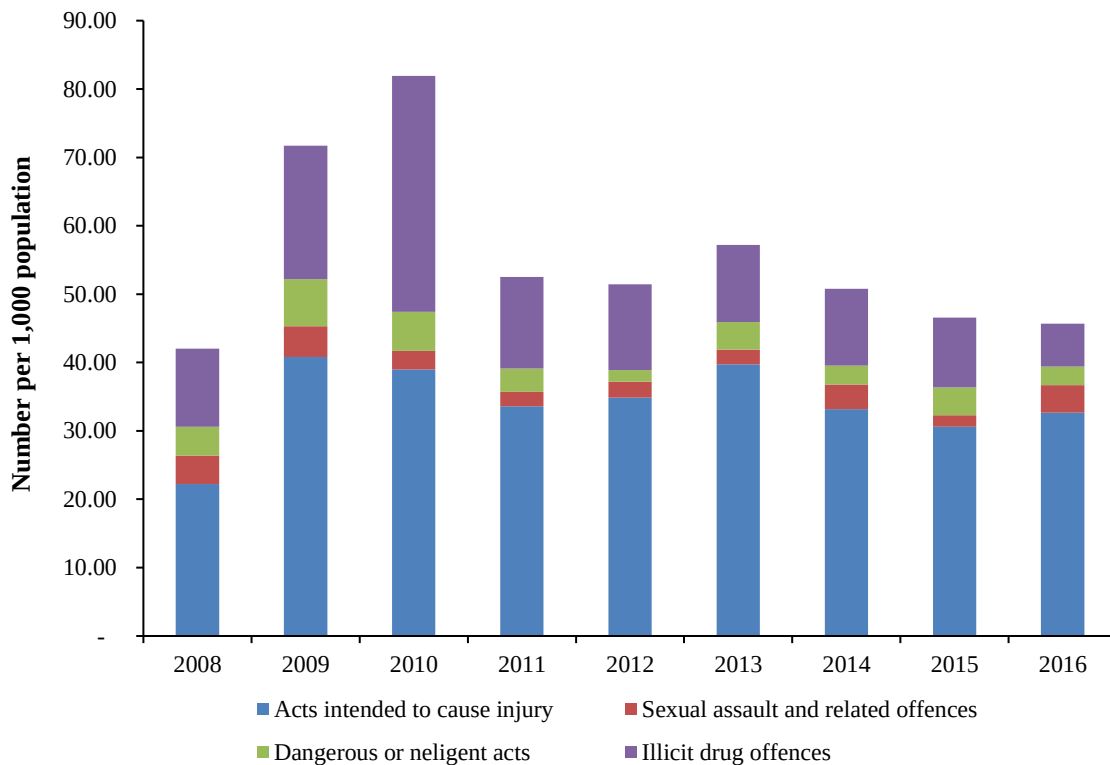
3.5.1 Police recorded offences

Over a nine-year period, from January 2008 to December 2016, the total number of police recorded offences in the West Arnhem region⁷⁶ has increased gradually each year. On average, the number of recorded offences has increased by 2.71 offences per year over nine years. The most common offences were acts intended to cause injury, illicit drug offences, unlawful entry and property damage (NTG, 2017b). This contrasts with the broader trends in the Northern Territory more generally where offender rates (per 100,000 population) have decreased for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, the non-Indigenous population and for the whole territory population (ABS, 2017c).

During the 2008-16 period, the offence rate for acts intended to cause injury has increased gradually over time and remains the most prevalent offence type in the region (see Fig. 3.3) (NTG, 2017b). Acts intended to cause injury includes serious and common assault, intentional reckless behaviour that causes harm or inflicting injury where there is no intent to cause death (ABS, 2011). The number of recorded offences peaked in 2013 with 187 (or 39.7 per 1,000 population) acts intended to cause injury and was the lowest in 2008 with 74 (22.2 per 1,000 population) incidents across the nine years. On average, there were 58.22 recorded illicit drug offences per year over the nine years. The yearly number of offences peaked in 2010 with 115 offences (or 34.5 per 1,000 population) and declined to 30 offences (6.3 per 1,000 population) in 2016 (NTG, 2017b). Illicit drug offences include offences for dealing, trafficking, cultivating or possessing and/or using illicit drugs (ABS, 2011).

⁷⁶ Defined by the ABS as statistical level 2.

Fig. 3.3. Offences against a person in the West Arnhem region¹ (SA2) 2008–16, per 1,000 population (rate)



Note:

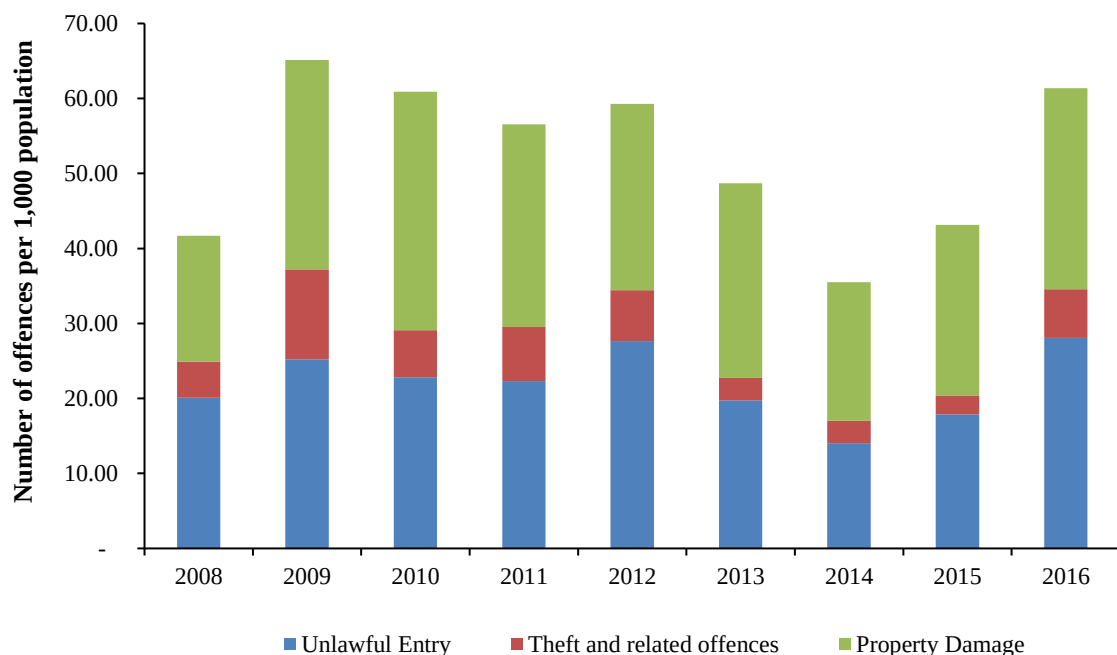
¹ Population rates were calculated based on the 2006, 2011 and 2016 West Arnhem populations due to the unavailability of population estimates for other years.

Source:

NTG (2017). *Northern Territory Police Unpublished Offence Statistics: 1 January 2008 to 31 January 2017*. Unpublished Statistics. Prepared by the Northern Territory Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. Data as at 1 June 2017.

As shown in Fig. 3.4, the most frequent offence against property in the West Arnhem region during the 2008–16 period was property damage with an approximate average of 105 offences per year and then unlawful entry offences with an approximate average of 93 offences per year during the period (NTG, 2017b). There were approximately 24 offences for theft and related incidents on average per year for the same period. The rate of unlawful entry in the West Arnhem region increased by approximately 2.5 offences per year, each year. Additionally, the rate of property damage offences increased by approximately four offences per year, each year for the same time period (NTG, 2017b). In 2016, the number of unlawful entry offences peaked at 134 (or 28.1 per 1,000 population), and property damage offences also peaked in the same year with 128 offences (or 26.8 per 1,000 population). Theft and related offences were highest in 2009 with 40 offences (or 12.0 per 1,000 population) and, in 2016, there were 31 acts of theft (or 6.5 per 1,000 population).

Fig 3.4. Offences against property in the West Arnhem Region¹ (SA2) 2008–16, per 1,000 population (rate)



Note:

¹ Population rates were calculated based on the 2006, 2011 and 2016 West Arnhem populations due to the unavailability of population estimates for other years.

Source:

NTG (2017). Northern Territory Police Unpublished Offence Statistics: 1 January 2008 to 31 January 2017. Unpublished Statistics. Prepared by the Northern Territory Department of the Attorney-General and Justice. Data as at 1 June 2017.

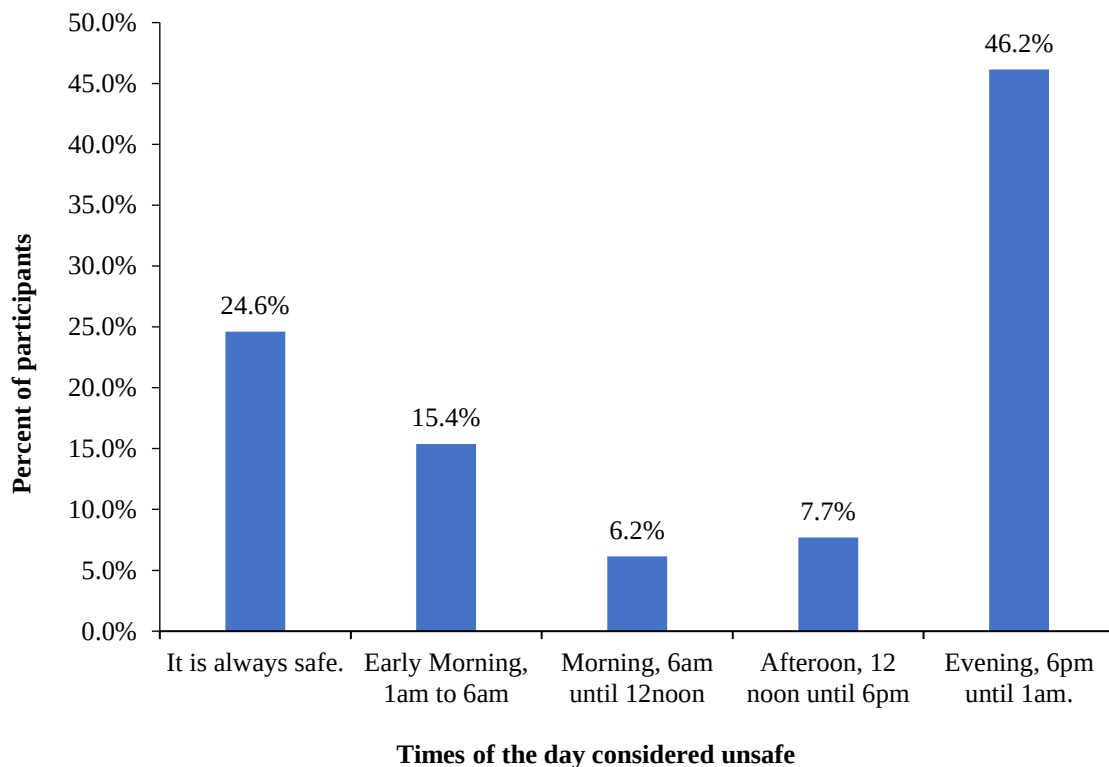
3.5.2 Participants' perceptions of safe places in Gunbalanya

In this study, the questionnaires enquired about participants' perceptions of whether Gunbalanya is a safe place. In this context, perceptions of safety were assessed with regard to participants' propensity to avoid places at night or during the day as well as their perceptions of times of the day which might be considered unsafe. Of the 50 participants who responded to these questions, 56.8 per cent stated that they avoid leaving home during the night and 43.2 per cent stated they avoid leaving the home during the day because they feel that their neighbourhood is unsafe. In both cases, female participants were more likely to report having avoided leaving their home during the night (37.8 per cent) or day (29.7 per cent) as a result of feeling unsafe, in comparison to 18.9 per cent and 13.5 per cent of male participants.

Graphical data on participants' reported avoidance of unsafe times in Gunbalanya in the previous 12 months is displayed in Fig. 3.5. Based on these results, the most commonly avoided time of the day was the evening, from 6pm until 1am. This is the time of the day or evening when participants considered being in public most unsafe either in the neighbourhood or near the shop. 29.2 per cent of female participants felt that the evening was generally an unsafe time in the neighbourhood, compared to 16.9 per cent of male participants. Notably, 24.6 per cent of participants considered that Gunbalanya was a safe place at all times of the day and evening, where there was no gendered difference in responses.

A limitation of this question is that participants may not perceive certain times of the day or evening unsafe if they are not active during those hours (e.g. early morning from 1am to 6am) or if they have never attempted to visit public places during certain hours. Irrespective of this limitation, these results provide general information on participants' perceptions of safety in their nearby neighbourhood. First, a considerable portion of participants perceived that their local neighbourhood can be unsafe during the evening and their propensity to avoid leaving the house was attributable to this. Second, irrespective of the fact that police recorded offences in the West Arnhem region were increasing in comparison to the Northern Territory more broadly, which showed decreases, a considerable portion of participants perceived Gunbalanya to be a safe place.

Fig. 3.5. Questionnaire participants' reported avoidance of unsafe times in Gunbalanya in the previous 12 months (%)



Source: Q7 from the questionnaire results.

These types of analyses are common in criminology literature on fear or perceptions of crime, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (2017a) provides broad jurisdiction data on similar aspects of neighbourhood problems and safety. I have not provided an analysis of this dataset because statistical overviews at the state/territory and national levels tell us little about the occurrence and nature of crime and safety, including Aboriginal people's own perceptions and experiences in their own neighbourhoods. This latter point is crucial to the focus of this thesis, namely to develop an intercultural concept of Indigenous community safety that is grounded in Indigenous knowledge, experiences and perceptions of harm and strengths-based notions of safety. The next chapter examines how participants framed their understandings of community safety by focusing on how neighbourhood problems contribute to interpersonal harm.

4 A critique of community safety policy in Australia and internationally

4.1 Chapter overview

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse how the concept of community safety is conceptualised in public policy in Australia and abroad, particularly where Indigenous people are directly affected. The chapter shows Australia's community safety model was adapted from European notions of safer communities and, based on this, the chapter further argues that Australian community safety frameworks are inappropriate for the diverse socio-cultural needs of Indigenous communities. These policies are founded on mainstream Western values and discourses with little consideration for how Indigenous Australians, particularly those who are affected by these policies, conceive of safety at home and in the broader community. This approach to understanding community safety in Australia has largely evaded critique in criminology literature, and similarly few authors in Indigenous studies have analysed the intersecting policy problems between violence, crime and safety.

Section 4.2 shows the historical trends that led to the development of community safety and community-based crime prevention in Europe, and then compares this with Australian approaches. This section argues that the European approaches to community safety have largely informed Australian policy in this area. Australian governments adopted neoliberal interpretations of partnerships-based approaches to crime prevention which undermine Indigenous values and contributions to informing this policy approach. This section offers a critical perspective of this model by reinforcing how neoliberal ideology undermines the role of Indigenous people and communities and their ability to influence decisions on government policy.

Section 4.3 explains how contemporary Australian Indigenous policies – particularly the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and the Closing the Gap Strategy – define and contextualise community safety. Definitions used in these policies narrowly view the range and types of problems experienced in many rural or remote Indigenous communities. Finally, the partnerships-based approach to improving engagement between citizens, community and the state presents opportunities and challenges in genuinely creating an environment where

people are enabled to make decisions about positive behavioural change. The contemporary neoliberal approach to governing ‘responsible’ behaviours in Indigenous communities is example of governance that undermines Indigenous autonomy and empowerment.

Section 4.4 explores how the principles of Indigenous community safety and crime prevention are envisioned in international policy instruments. Section 4.4.1 highlights how international policy, such as at the United Nations, interpret Indigenous people’s right to live in safety and free from violence and crime. Then section 4.4.2 draws upon an example of a community safety framework from Canada, which shows one approach to understanding the concept holistically and based on a positive behaviour change model. Overall, this chapter discusses different models of community safety, both Indigenous specific approaches and mainstream, to improve our understanding of the social and cultural issues that influence safety in urban and remote areas. This thesis later draws on different elements of these models to understand how these policy concepts influence community local safety services in Gunbalanya. With an improved understanding of the social and cultural issues that influence remote-living Indigenous peoples’ feelings of ‘being safe’, public investments will be better able to target behaviours that are causing social harm and foster those behaviours that are creating harmonious and respectful relationships.

4.2 Historical background on community safety policy

Australian approaches to community safety are fundamentally based on Western visions of what it means to be safe at home and in neighbouring areas. Australian variations of community-based crime prevention and community safety commonly use a model that has not been analysed for its appropriateness and effectiveness for addressing safety issues in remote Aboriginal communities. This section argues that neoliberal approaches to “responsibilizing”, activating and incentivising behaviours⁷⁷ have been a prominent feature of crime prevention policy in Australia and internationally. In Indigenous policy contexts, researchers need to be critical of what this approach might mean for a genuine engagement between governments and Indigenous communities when discussing strategies that impact on the rights of Indigenous people.

⁷⁷ Garland’s theory of “responsibilization” (1996, 1997) is elaborated on later in this chapter.

4.2.1 The Global North shapes community safety policy

Since the late 1970s, crime prevention⁷⁸ has emerged as a major strategy for crime control in modern Western states. Over the past 30 years, criminology has undergone a significant shift from its strong focus on crime prevention towards building strategies to improve community safety (Hughes, 2002). With this trend emerged alternative approaches to community-based crime prevention which were widespread amongst Western democracies. As such, Sweden was an early pioneer in developing alternative approaches to crime prevention in 1974. Then later in the 1990s, the National Council for Crime Prevention turned to a partnership-based model that sought to connect civil society with public institutions to monitor and respond to crime (A. Sutton & Cherney, 2002). Prior to this, Western governments primarily focused on situational prevention.

Early pioneers of crime prevention strategies were focused on situational prevention. Situational techniques aimed to reduce crime opportunities by manipulating an object's or a person's physical environment to reduce risk factors. There are 25 situational techniques which aim to increase the effort and risks of committing a crime, reduce the rewards and provocations to commit a crime, as well as remove the excuses (Clarke, 2013; Cornish & Clarke, 2003). The calculation of risk relies upon actuarial calculations of probability and predictability of crime occurring. The situational discourse, according to Kevin Stenson (2000), transformed criminological theory through its practical application of a technical, administrative approach to governing crime management and prevention. This approach dramatically changed how governments conceived of their role in managing risk and crime (Hughes, 2002).

Community safety as a crime prevention strategy was developed in the 1980s, by European cities, in response to the growing public concerns about crime in urban areas (Hughes, 2002; Cooper, 2008). As governments moved towards a focus on community safety, strategies increasingly sought to leverage relationships between police, individual citizens and urbanised neighbourhoods or communities as a strategy for reducing crime. This trend was accompanied by increasing recognition that communities and individual citizens needed to take

⁷⁸ The United Nations (2002) defines crime prevention strategies as "Measures that seek to reduce the risk of crimes occurring, and their potential harmful effects on individuals and society, including fear of crime, by intervening to influence their multiple causes."

greater responsibility for responding to crime in their own neighbourhoods (Cooper, 2008; Garland, 1996; Hughes, McLaughlin & Muncie, 2002; Tilley, 2005).

Mazerolle and Ransley (2004, p. 62) refer to this strategy as third-party policing where the police, and other state actors involved in law enforcement, persuade or coerce other regulators or non-offending persons to become “crime control guardians in locations or situations where a crime control actor was previously absent or ineffective”. While third-party policing can take on different configurations, a key defining feature of this strategy is that statutory regulation provides a legal basis for individual citizens, business owners and local councils to act on behalf of the state in monitoring and reporting crime-related behaviour (Buerger & Mazerolle, 1998; Mazerolle & Ransley, 2004, 2006). Mazerolle and Ransley (2004) highlight that unintended consequences of third-party policing could include negative side effects such as retaliation from FDV perpetrators, retaliation from accused or apprehended drug dealers, and strained relations between service providers. Examples of third-party policing, and its unintended consequences, are explored throughout the thesis and particularly in chapter 8.

In the United Kingdom (UK), this new trend in crime prevention took a radical turn in 1990s when the state enacted a new way of governing crime through the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*. A few years earlier, the UK government released The Morgan Report⁷⁹ (1991) which dramatically changed how crime prevention initiatives were conceived and governed. The report promoted a multi-agency partnership approach to linking citizens, communities and the state. The focus was on local solutions to complex and multi-faceted problems. These problems were no longer viewed, in the eyes of the government, as the sole responsibility of the state. This policy approach focused on increasing the capacity of civil service organisations and individual citizens to respond to crime prevention needs. State actors viewed that these problems could not be prevented by law enforcement alone and a coordinated approach was needed. These ideas remain ingrained in the dominant discourse on ‘community safety’ which continues in contemporary public policies.

This policy change in the UK was accompanied by a broader crime prevention trend in Europe and in other liberal Western states. This transition in criminological theory, from situational prevention to community-based prevention, was part of a pro-social political trend

⁷⁹ Officially titled *Safe Communities: The Local Delivery of Crime Prevention through the Partnership Approach*.

that occurred across many liberal Western states. It transitioned from a focus on situational prevention strategies towards a whole-of-community approach to reducing crime (Hughes, 2002; Squires, 2006). Community safety strategies were implemented in numerous European countries including France, Great Britain and the Netherlands (Andersson, 2005; A. Sutton & Cherney, 2002). These occurred in response to a growing fear of crime and perceived need for communities to be involved in identifying and responding to crime. Meanwhile, policies were geared towards building community capability and proactive ways of addressing crime and preventing harm (Hughes, 2002; Squires, 2006).

4.2.2 Australia's historical role in community safety policy

Contemporary crime prevention initiatives in settler colonies continue to be influenced by anglicised experiences of what it means to be safe and how this might be achieved in urban environments. The movement from crime prevention strategies to community safety was borrowed from Europe and trialled in New World countries, such as Canada, New Zealand and Australia. In Australia, most states and territories adopted similar partnership-based safety strategies at various stages in the concept's development (Cherney, 2003; Whitzman, 2008). The central aim of these strategies was to build partnerships between citizens, communities and law enforcement agencies: such as the police, courts, prisons and social workers amongst others (Garland, 1996). These policy trends also influenced our national objectives in managing crime.

Peter Homel (2005) suggests that, compared to other nation states internationally, Australia was a late adopter of multi-agency partnerships in crime prevention when it enacted the *Safer Australia* initiative as a national strategy in 1995. *Safer Australia* was the country's first attempt to define national crime prevention priorities through the involvement of crime, business and community expertise (P. Homel, 2005). Although there were earlier localised examples of community prevention in, for example, Victoria's *Good Neighbourhood Programme* in 1988, the *Safer Australia* initiative signified the beginning of a new era where the responsibility for crime prevention no longer solely rested in the domain of the states and territories (Cherney, 2003; Cherney & Sutton, 2004; P. Homel, 2005). Australia appears to have transposed and adopted a Western model of governing crime without consideration of how this strategy might be inappropriate for Indigenous communities in Australia (Blagg, 2016; Carrington, et al., 2016; Connell, 2007; Cunneen & Tauri, 2016).

Building private-public partnerships reconfigured how responsibility for responding to crime-related incidents was managed. Responsibility for responding to crime was previously considered the sole responsibility of states and territories, as the second tier of government. With this evolving political agenda, the responsibility increasingly shifted towards the role of citizens and citizen-action groups in becoming the ‘eyes and ears’ of the police (P. Homel, 2005; Hughes, 2002). This is evident in the evolution of Aboriginal patrols⁸⁰. Although many Aboriginal patrols evolved as community-driven initiatives, where elders patrolled their community in response to locally identified needs to manage antisocial behaviour, they have more recently needed to respond to the demands of the state (AIHW, 2013). Many patrols are now managed by bureaucrats afar, because they need state funding to remain viable. Funding is needed for staffing, to maintain vehicle costs and for general operation of the patrols and, as a result of this, they are governed by risk-management frameworks that are far removed from the local context (Blagg & Anthony, 2014). These are issues that are further discussed in chapters seven and eight.

Community safety and crime prevention remain important aspects of Australia’s national approach to addressing community issues. Discourse on integrated services and partnership-based approaches to improving safety have become embedded within a normative framework for achieving policy outcomes in different areas of safety: from FDV to addressing the origins of crime. As an example, the federal government, through the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (COAG, 2009b), the Australian National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) (2014), and the NTG (2017a), promotes multi-agency and partnership-based approaches to reduce family violence and crime. In theory, this approach offers opportunities for Indigenous leaders in community to genuinely influence locally based interventions and service delivery (Breckenridge, Rees, Valentine & Murray, 2015). An aspect of this thesis is to examine if and how a partnership-based approach seeks to improve safety in practice. This thesis questions whether the contemporary service delivery framework allows Indigenous community members the space to: firstly, influence the values and practices that community safety priorities in remote areas, and secondly, how these services are coordinated between government and non-government organisations including the nature of service partnerships.

⁸⁰ Otherwise referred to as Aboriginal foot-patrols or night patrols.

4.2.3 Neoliberal perspectives on crime prevention

In Australia and abroad, the emergence of community-based forms of crime control and safety occur as part of neoliberal strategies for privatising the responsibility for crime management (Cooper, 2008; Hughes, 2002). Increasingly since the 1980s, community safety strategies have been characterised by formal and informal partnerships between the state and its citizens where strategies have sought to ‘activate’ citizens by encouraging individuals to take greater responsibility for crime control through a number of means (Cooper, 2008). Neoliberal political influences have often taken the form of depoliticised, technical bureaucratic approaches to managing risk-based interventions (Hughes, 2002; O’Malley, 2008b). These political trends have a profound influence on how a society conceives of ‘risk’ in assessing the fear of crime and how the risk of crime occurring should be managed (O’Malley, 2008a). This raises the question of *who* is capable of identifying and responding to crime risk, and therefore, who is endowed with the responsibility for preventing crime and changing the underlying behaviours that cause crime.

In the early 1990s, criminologists began to illuminate how changes to the governance of crime control utilised neoliberal attitudes and techniques. O’Malley (2008b) states that it would be naïve to assume that neoliberal techniques are conceived, applied and experienced similarly across different countries. In an increasingly globalised society with rapidly expanding technological and social networks, these techniques in governance continuously differ in their application, including through their policy design, and how they affect people at the local level (Ferguson, 2010; O’Malley, 2008b). In the context of crime prevention policies, some neoliberal techniques observed are: the framing of the welfare state as a site of dependence rather than activity and independence; advocacy that the market and business expertise will regulate social order and individual activity; and, reaffirming individual and family responsibility for governing their own affairs including the role of individual choice as a primary indicator of behaviour (O’Malley, 2008b, p. 3).

A key aspect of this political trend is the way in which states attempt to redefine how responsibilities and civic duties for crime prevention are attributed to individual citizens and society. A significant difference between the objectives of community safety policies, compared to specific focuses on crime prevention, is that the former approach seeks to ‘de-monopolise’ crime prevention as a state responsibility and attempts to promote greater shared responsibility between public, private and the voluntary sectors (Follett, 2006; Garland, 2001).

This negotiation of the responsibility for crime, and greater trend for non-state actors to accept responsibility for behaviour change, is a process that Garland (1996, 1997) calls the “responsibilization” strategy.

Drawing on Michael Foucault’s work on governmentality, Garland (1996, p. 452) argues that crime control has become a dispersed mechanism of government where the state no longer acts directly through state agencies formerly responsible for criminal justice, including the police, courts, prisons and social workers. Rather, through the ‘responsibilization’ strategy, the state acts indirectly to manage the fear of crime and crime risk by ‘activating’ non-state agencies and private voluntary groups to take action. The primary message promoted through this strategy is that the state is not and cannot effectively identify, control and manage crime alone. All members of society need to play a greater role in changing their practices to reduce the opportunities for crime⁸¹ (Garland, 1996, 1997).

The ‘responsibilization’ strategy involves a range of knowledge, techniques and methods where the state seeks to induce desired or appropriate behaviours through external agencies or individuals. These techniques are composed of cognate theoretical frameworks that view crime as rational choices⁸² made by individuals (Garland, 1996). This strategy depoliticises the historical and social factors that cause high incidence of crime among marginalised groups because it reduces these complex factors to individual choices and behaviours (Garland, 1996, 1997). Within this logic, the incidence of crime can be reduced by convincing individuals to change their behaviour.

Practically, this can be observed through individualised responsibility for situational crime prevention (e.g. car and home surveillance systems); a proliferation of partnership-based strategies for engaging non-state actors in crime prevention (e.g. citizen action groups through Neighbourhood Watch Australasia); and, welfare-to-work programs which incentivise ‘rational’ economic behaviour (Garland, 1996; Hinds & Grabosky, 2010; Follett, 2006;

⁸¹ To a degree this is true. To manage antisocial behaviour and neighbourhood problems, community networks need to play a role in managing the problem through intervening themselves or reporting the behaviour to state agencies, as examples. However, problems emerged during my research in Gunbalanya when the police (allegedly) did not actively manage neighbourhood problems through proactive community-oriented policing nor did they quickly respond to emergencies when incidents are reported, such as FDV. This lack of responsiveness delegitimised the trust community members had in police.

⁸² The neoliberal approach to incentivising individual behaviours is based on the premise that high rates of crime in the modern era are everyday phenomena that are born from individual choices and rational behaviour (see e.g. Garland, 1996; Clarke & Cornish, 2014). Its theoretical foundations lie in rational choice theory, routine activity theory and situational crime prevention.

Hughes, et al., 2002; Squires, 2006). Aspects of this strategy are evident in Australia through the suspension of welfare payments for Indigenous people, whose payments are managed by government agencies (Altman, 2007; Klein, 2016; D. R. Taylor, Gray & Stanton, 2016); an issue explored later in this chapter.

In Australia and internationally, this approach to crime prevention in partnership with communities has not been without criticism. Critiques focused on the lack of focus on building capability for communities who shoulder the responsibility for crime prevention (Squires, 2006); that power imbalances are sustained through collaboration between service providers, community members and law enforcement agencies, and this impairs the capacity of individuals to truly address crime themselves (Hughes, 2002); and, that privatising crime prevention places increasing onus on individual citizens and groups who may not have the resources necessary to address the underlying problems (Garland, 1996, 1997). These criticisms are particularly relevant when considering the role partnership-based approaches should have in improving Indigenous community safety in Australia

Literature on Australian Indigenous policy argues that the principles of self-determination and community-centred decision-making must be at the forefront of policy design (Hunt, 2013). For partnerships between government and Indigenous organisations to enhance community development, the relationship must be based on mutual trust and integrity where there are shared goals (Hunt, 2013). Services need to address the interconnected nature of violence and crime and not seek to minimise risks through siloed interventions (Breckenridge, et al., 2015). Local interventions can seek collaborations with Indigenous community members and non-Indigenous ‘outsiders’⁸³ to enhance behaviour change that is culturally informed (Holder, Putt & O’Leary, 2015). These perspectives radically contrast with how the Australian Government has historically designed policies that target safety improvements in Aboriginal communities.

⁸³ ‘Outsiders’ refers to people who owe no cultural obligation within kinship practices (Holder, Putt, & O’Leary, 2015).

4.3 Australian Indigenous community safety policy

Indigenous community safety policies have been fraught with politically motivated interventions that, in the past, have damaged relationships between the nation state and Australian Aboriginal people. Over the past 10 years, community safety has remained a strong theme in the Indigenous policy through the NTER, the Stronger Futures Program⁸⁴, the Closing the Gap Strategy, and the Indigenous Advancement Strategy⁸⁵. This section critiques discourse on Indigenous community safety for lacking focus and placing the onus of responsibility for managing crime problems on Aboriginal people and their communities, without attempting to change unsafe or unruly behaviours using a strengths-based approach. It then moves on to analyse two policies in further depth: welfare conditionality and income management, and second, community-oriented policing in the Northern Territory.

4.3.1 Indigenous community safety as political discourse

For several decades, Aboriginal women and academic researchers had called for government attention to address the profound experiences of violence, abuse and neglect in Aboriginal communities across Australia (Howard-Wagner, 2007; Partridge, 2013). Indigenous spokespeople overwhelmingly call for family violence and child protection initiatives to work with Aboriginal elders⁸⁶, and their communities, rather than adopt a state-centric approach where government actors steer the operational agenda. Irrespective, over the past 10 years, Australian Government strategies for improving safety in Australian Indigenous communities has been criticised for lacking community consultation and for being politically motivated rather than evidence-based (Altman & Hinkson, 2007; Howard-Wagner, 2012a; Partridge, 2013; Watson, 2011).

⁸⁴ The Stronger Futures Program was the succession to the NTER with few minor changes. Discourse during the Stronger Futures Program promoted 'a new way of engaging' with remote Indigenous communities to possibly reduce the stigma created through the NTER. Although this focus on partnership-based approaches during the Stronger Futures Program also focused on 'shared responsibility' for achieving outcomes (COAG, 2012; Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 2011).

⁸⁵ The Indigenous Advancement Strategy focused on transactional policy whereby the government wanted to be seen delivering on a policy outcome by spending money in different areas. Part of the focus was on safety and wellbeing, which largely followed the lead of the Closing the Gap Strategy.

⁸⁶ Some Indigenous spokespeople such as Behrendt (2007) and Marcia Langton (2008) were supportive of some elements of the Northern Territory Intervention but they argued that intervention was required that worked with communities and elders in addressing the problem.

Indigenous community safety became a prominent policy issue through the NTER. The federal government commissioned Rex Wild QC and Pat Anderson to examine the extent and nature of factors contributing to the sexual abuse of Aboriginal children, and the service barriers to Aboriginal children receiving protection and assistance.⁸⁷ In 2007, the Government responded to the Northern Territory Board of Inquiry's report *The Little Children are Sacred* (Wild & Anderson, 2007). The report called for Commonwealth and Northern Territory government attention to the issues of Aboriginal child and sexual abuse as an immediate national priority, and to establish initiatives in a collaborative approach involving extensive community consultation. Instead, the Australian Government implemented few of the 97 recommendations made in the report (Altman, 2007; Altman & Hinkson, 2007; Cripps, 2007; Howard-Wagner, 2007; Watson, 2011).

In response to the report's release, the Government suspended the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)⁸⁸ and in practice exercised political, legislative and ideological control over 73 Aboriginal 'prescribed' towns and many more outstations. The introduced measures⁸⁹ included alcohol and pornography controls; income management of welfare payments, linking welfare payments to school attendance, and reintroducing work-for-the-dole measures; and increased police presence, and government surveillance and acquisition of Aboriginal land (Altman & Hinkson, 2007; Partridge, 2013; Cripps, 2007). Many of these strategies continue today through the Stronger Future and Closing the Gap strategies.

In 2009, the federal Labor government announced a new legislative package that was designed to improve outcomes in Indigenous communities over a span of 20 years. The Closing the Gap Strategy, outlined in the National Indigenous Reform Agreement, was designed to create measurable targets to improve socioeconomic conditions of Indigenous people (Council of Australian Governments (COAG), 2009b). The Agreement targets the areas of early childhood education, school performance, health outcomes, economic participation, home ownership, community safety, and leadership and governance. But no accountable measures or targets were identified for community safety, justice or leadership and governance (COAG,

⁸⁷ The full terms of reference can be found in the NTER Taskforce's Final Report to Government (NTER Taskforce, 2008).

⁸⁸ Details of the process are documented by the Australian Human Rights Commission (2011).

⁸⁹ The Northern Territory Intervention and subsequent policies undoubtedly brought a national focus to FDV interventions and the protection of Aboriginal children's wellbeing (Cripps, 2007). This was accompanied by a significant increase in funding and initiatives that had a positive impact on improving community wellbeing (Shaw & d'Abbs, 2011). But it was the racially biased and discriminatory practices that led academics to argue that these policies were paternalistic (Altman & Hinkson, 2007; Watson, 2011).

2009b; P. Sullivan, 2011). The strategy does not articulate how the government intends to reduce Indigenous incarceration rates, reduce the transgenerational impact of family violence and trauma, or prevent Indigenous youth's interaction with the criminal justice system.

The Australian Government adopts a narrow reading of the concept of community safety and meanwhile does not engage with the need to develop partnerships with Indigenous communities and act upon their self-identified needs. Released in November 2009, National Indigenous Reform Agreement outlines that safer communities are those where:

Indigenous people (men, women and children) need to be safe from violence, abuse and neglect. Fulfilling this need involves improving family and community safety through law and justice responses (including accessible and effective policing and an accessible justice system), victim support (including safe houses and counselling), child protection and also preventative approaches. Addressing related factors such as alcohol and substance abuse will be critical to improving community safety, along with improved health benefits to be obtained. (COAG, 2009b)

Since the NTER, Indigenous community safety strategies have continued to focus on four areas of intervention: reducing alcohol and substance misuse, reducing FDV, increasing police presence, and improving the criminal justice responses to these issues. While interventions in these areas are welcomed by many Indigenous academics and spokespeople (Cripps & McGlade, 2008; Langton, 2008; Lloyd, 2014), many argue that tackling these issues without consideration for the broader historical, social and economic issues will not address the underlying problems⁹⁰ (Blagg, 2002; Cripps & McGlade, 2008; Memmott, et al., 2001).

Academics criticise the Closing the Gap Strategy because these targets⁹¹ are perceived to address 'gaps' which are constructed as deficiencies, inadequacies and deficits (Fforde,

⁹⁰ As discussed in section 1.4.2, there are various theories that seek to explain the underlying problems that contribute to the high rates of violence and crime in Australian Indigenous communities. This research does not claim to have solved this long-standing debate; however chapters five, six and seven propose the underlying neighbourhood problems and behaviours that contribute to harmful situations in Gunbalanya.

⁹¹ The ability to measure a policy's effectiveness is critical for an evidence-based approach. This debate reflected how the Closing the Gap Strategy attempted to create a simplified and memorable message that the public our engage with. Instead, the short-falls of this was the highly critical response by academics. AIHW's report (2018c) shows the complexity of measuring the disparity in outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians where the report highlights the intergenerational problems (e.g. Indigenous incarceration, delinquency and child

Bamblett, Lovett, Gorringer & Fogarty, 2013); rather than drawing on an empowerment or capacity building approach that would inspire Indigenous-led development (Howard-Wagner 2012b; Hunt, 2010). Patrick Sullivan (2011) refers to this approach as the bureaucracy of “normalisation” because it aims to bring remote Aboriginal peoples’ living conditions to a standard comparable with mainstream Australia. The National Indigenous Reform Agreement states that Indigenous people living in remote areas have the right to: “standards of service and infrastructure that are broadly comparable with that of non-Indigenous communities of a similar size, location and need elsewhere” (COAG, 2009b, pp. A-23). As Sullivan (2011) identifies, Indigenous Australians are expected to aspire to the standardised and normalised development goals of mainstream Australia.

The unintended effect of not having a nationally coordinated approach on Indigenous community safety has meant that current strategies have been inconsistently applied within the Indigenous Affairs portfolio⁹². An example of this has been the varying approaches taken by the Australian Government to articulate its agenda in making progress on Indigenous community safety through the Prime Minister’s Closing the Gap Reports. These reports show a changing rhetoric that is potentially susceptible to current political attitudes. To briefly illustrate, former Prime Minister Tony Abbot, in the 2014 and 2015 Closing the Gap reports, defers the federal government’s responsibility for improving safety to state and territory governments. The 2014 Report states:

All Australians have the right to live in a community where the ordinary law of the land is observed. We will continue to support the efforts of Indigenous communities to tackle alcohol fuelled violence through alcohol regulations... (Commonwealth of Australia, 2014, p. 14)

A year later in 2015, the Closing the Gap Report states:

abuse) are multifactorial and sometimes due to difficult to measure concepts (e.g. colonisation, loss of traditional lifestyle and social marginalisation).

⁹² Use of the term ‘community safety’ is actually inconsistent across federal government portfolios too. As an example, the Third Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–22* outlines the federal government’s most recent attempt to tackle family violence and build safer communities. This approach identifies the need for community driven trauma-informed care, wrap-around services for victim support, placed-based and culturally informed services (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016). This plan recognises the complexity of family violence in all societies, not just Indigenous communities, and that violence needs to be addressed holistically with a culturally relevant approach that addresses the historical effects of colonialism (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016). This contrasts with the featured statements made in the Closing the Gap reports.

Responsibility for ensuring community safety primarily rests with the states and territories, and the Commonwealth is committed to working with them and holding them to account in making Indigenous communities safer... (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, p. 25)

In comparison, the Closing the Gap Report in 2017, released under Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, presents a radically contrasting picture. It recognises that there are many layers to “building safe and resilient communities, including adequate infrastructure and access to services” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017a, p. 95). The report recognises that there are links between risk factors, such as overcrowded housing, substance misuse and violence and incarceration, which must be addressed, and solutions developed, in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Furthermore, there is a recognition that poor education outcomes and few employment opportunities contribute to Indigenous people being over-represented in the criminal justice system (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017a). To date, the Closing the Gap initiatives have used political rhetoric to justify their responses to these complex, ‘wicked’ problems⁹³ in Indigenous policy rather than building tangible, evidence-informed responses to reducing crime, violence and delinquency.

Evidence from various government and non-government sources suggests that the broad range of community safety issues affecting remote Indigenous communities could be better explained with terms such as ‘neighbourhood problems’. This range of issues includes alcohol and substance misuse, housing instability and overcrowding, lack of employment and culturally appropriate education, gambling and card games, sorcery, and family violence amongst others (Putt, et al., 2011; Shaw & D’Abbs, 2011; Willis, 2010). The relationship between neighbourhood problems and community safety is analysed in chapter five.

4.3.2 Programs that aim to improve interpersonal safety

In a practical sense, Indigenous community safety policies have taken shape in a range of different programs and funding initiatives, but they have not clearly and consistently been formulated in a strategic framework. These policies have been implemented by, for example, funding Aboriginal patrols, alcohol management programs, permanent police stations and

⁹³ See Head (2008) and Hunter (2007) for a discussion on ‘wicked problems’ in Indigenous affairs and Hunter (2007) for a discussion on the complexity of community safety issues as a ‘wicked problem’, specifically in relation to the NTER.

CEPO, and Aboriginal legal aid services, amongst others.⁹⁴ Community safety has also been used by the federal government to justify programs that have no clear link between program objectives and either reducing violence and crime or improving safety. As discussed below, the various approaches to income management and conditional welfare have been justified on the basis that they will reduce alcohol-related violence and other unsafe behaviours (Hunt, 2017; Klein, 2016; Puszka, Grotorex & Williams, 2013), even though the evidence supporting this claim is questionable (Hunt, 2017).

Welfare conditionality and policing are examples of government strategies whose effects continue to marginalise and fragment Aboriginal people's livelihoods. As explored later, welfare conditionality and culturally inappropriate policing often have disabling effects that increase social disorganisation including poor community functioning. In Gunbalanya, a punitive approach to welfare increases poverty, Aboriginal people's reliance on welfare supports and increases harmful behaviour such as theft and gambling (refer to section 6.3). Similarly, police officers' mistrust in Aboriginal people and police inaction to violent events further enable social disorganisation. Without operational police being out in the community and focusing on liaison, engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal community members, then policing will continue to fragment Aboriginal leadership and locally driven solutions (refer to section 8.4).

4.3.2.1 *Welfare conditionality and income management*

Income Management was originally introduced in Australia as part of the NTER in 2007, under the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Welfare Payment Reform) Act 2007* (Cth). Income Management was accompanied by numerous other racially targeted interventions which were questionably justified on the basis that Aboriginal people are incapable of spending welfare money responsibly, and therefore required state supervision (Partridge, 2013; Watson, 2011). Quarantining Aboriginal peoples' welfare payments was compulsory for all welfare recipients who lived in prescribed areas whether they had children or not (Altman, 2007; Klein, 2016). The logic behind state quarantined funds was that there would be less cash available in communities to spend on undesirable consumptions, such as liquor, pornography and gambling, and this would lead to a decrease in violence and crime. By

⁹⁴ For evidence of the unclear and inconsistent approaches, refer to the various Closing the Gap reports (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017a), media releases (Minister for Indigenous Affairs, 2008, 2011, 2013), and government reports (Arbib et al., 2010; Commonwealth of Australia, 2008).

restricting the purchase of these items, individuals would be encouraged to make ‘responsible’ financial decisions (Altman, 2007; Klein, 2016). This was irrespective of the fact that engaging in these recreational pursuits is not illegal in the Northern Territory (Mendes, 2013).

Since their introduction during the NTER, income management policies have taken on a number of reforms. In 2008, income management became New Income Management, under the Stronger Futures legislation, with the next phase of the policy being the Cashless Debit Card (Klein, 2016).⁹⁵ New Income Management overall broadened the population being affected by the policy to non-Indigenous people as well, although Indigenous people were predominantly affected with an inclusion rate of over 90 per cent (Bray, 2016). Through the Cashless Debit Card, the trials involved the quarantining of 80 per cent of state welfare for all adult recipients in Ceduna, Wyndham and Kununurra (Hunt, 2017). The government’s administration of income management allows greater control over the conditions in which welfare is spent.

Different forms of state paternalism are used in contemporary Indigenous policy to incentivise ‘responsible’ behaviour by linking welfare payments with school attendance and work-for-the-dole schemes. These forms of welfare conditionality borrow some of their ideas from behavioural economics or ‘nudge’ theories⁹⁶ that seek to predict and mould human behaviour towards economic efficiency (Klein, 2016). These programs extend the neoliberal rationalities of what constitutes rational economic behaviour by incentivising individuals’ behaviours, and are examples of what Garland (1996, 1997) refers to as the “responsibilization strategy”. The School Enrolment and Attendance Measures attempt to foster parental ‘responsibility’ for their children’s school attendance by leveraging behavioural reform (D. R. Taylor, et al., 2016). Similarly, welfare recipients’ receipt of unemployment benefits through the Community Development Program (CDP), and other similar versions of this policy, have become tied to the participants’ attendance at work-like activities. Mutual obligation agreements require the recipient to attend work-like activities, otherwise a significant portion of the recipient’s welfare benefits are suspended (Jordan & Fowkes, 2016).

⁹⁵ New Income Management included a voluntary component where recipients could self-nominate for the program. Klein (2016) provides a comprehensive review of the differences between the various approaches to income management used by the Australian Government.

⁹⁶ Refer to Halpern (2015) and Whitehead, Jones, Pykett and Welsh (2012) for a comprehensive review of ‘nudge’ theory in behavioural economics.

4.3.2.2 *Policing remote Northern Territory communities*

Increasing the permanent police presence and community-oriented policing in remote Northern Territory communities was a core element of the Closing the Gap strategy's community safety objectives. The Report on Government Services (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018b, p. 6.24) states that the recurrent expenditure on police services across Australia was \$459 per person in 2015–16, with an average annual increase of 2.4 per cent from 2008–09; in comparison, the Northern Territory's police service expenditure per person was nearly triple the national average, at approx. \$1,250. The Report also finds that police integrity and efficiency in the Northern Territory was rated comparable with the national average; and in the Territory, the number of operational police staff per 100,000 population was approximately double the national average, as well as in comparison to all other states and territories (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018b). These figures suggest that increasing the numbers of police are not the only solution to improving community safety as over-policing is a serious concern; however, police administration needs to consider the ways in which police engage with remote Aboriginal people with a community-oriented way of preventing crime and harmful behaviour.

Pilkington (2009) highlights that a culturally appropriate and respectful manner of policing remote Aboriginal communities would incorporate practical aspects of Aboriginal dispute resolution mechanisms, effective communication with elders to resolve problems, recognising that Aboriginal people have different understandings of violence and retribution that need addressing, and respecting Aboriginal people's ownership of property. These are a few of the many ways that a culturally respectful manner of policing needs to be incorporated into the Northern Territory justice system in order to promote justice diversion and reduce the focus on incarceration, infringements and punishment. As explored in chapter eight, the contemporary approach to punitive policing often creates greater harm and little rehabilitation.

As part of the Closing the Gap framework, a trial of sworn CEPOs in eight remote Aboriginal communities was funded by the federal government (J. Young, Putt, Dunnett, Spicer & Marshall, 2013). The CEPO program aims to promote crime prevention and community engagement through active collaboration with service providers and community members. Initiatives of this program include promoting awareness about social harms including dangerous driving, alcohol and substance misuse and gambling amongst others (NTG, 2018). This is accompanied by each CEPO staff promoting positive relationships with

youth and other community members by being a positive role model and mentor, and by increasing youth participation in school attendance and recreational activities (NTG, 2018).

In the Northern Territory, the roles of the CEPO staff and general duties police staff are separate and distinct. In the Northern Territory, policing remote Aboriginal communities involves operational staff who are responsible for administering firearm and liquor permits and driver licenses as well as responding to incidents. Emergency calls are coordinated through the '000' phone line and decisions on whether and how remotely-located police staff respond are made by a senior officer located in Darwin (NTG, 2018). A public statement made on the CEPO program states that general duties staff "primarily perform a reactive policing role responding to the needs and expectations of the public" and, while there is an endeavour to deliver for general duties officers to perform preventative measures, general duties staff "do not have a great deal of time for the proactive policing activities performed by a CEPO" (NTG, 2018, p. 6). While the CEPO works with general duties staff and Officers in Charge on a range of preventative activities⁹⁷, their roles and functions are considered separate and, based on my experience in Gunbalanya, a community-oriented approach to policing is often not delivered through routine policing.

The evaluation of the CEPO program found that CEPOs were effective in achieving their intended outcomes.⁹⁸ The evaluation aimed to assess whether CEPOs were effective in: facilitating improved relationships between remote Aboriginal community members and the locally stationed police; improving the overall felt sense of safety and security in those communities; improving coordination between government and non-government organisations; and improving social norms and behaviours which impact on community safety (e.g. school attendance and reduce alcohol misuse) (J. Young, et al., 2013). CEPOs were found to be successful by improving relationships between community members and the police through intensive community engagement; reducing the fear of crime through increased community education about safety and the constraints of police operations; and helping

⁹⁷ The NTG (2018, p. 4-5) states that CEPOs work with Officers in Charge to: effectively engage in a culturally sensitive manner with local community members and service providers; progress the Community Safety Action Plans (CSAPs) and the associated committee in the community; and promote stakeholder engagement with the local Night Patrol.

⁹⁸ A complete list of program outcomes of the CEPO trial are outlined in the National Partnership Agreement on Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory (COAG 2012).

improve partnerships between service providers and the police in remote communities (J. Young, et al., 2013).

The evaluation's recommendations included the need to: reduce the role divisions⁹⁹ of CEPO staff compared to general duties staff in order improve relationships between all police staff and community members; include community engagement as a performance indicator in every Officer in Charge's work plan to further reduce this separation of duties; and develop locally-based community development plans to prevent community safety problems, particularly concerning alcohol and substance misuse, road safety, and interpersonal and domestic violence (J. Young, et al., 2013). Findings in chapter eight in this thesis show how these recommendations are still relevant and, in Gunbalanya, the relationship between police officers and remote Aboriginal community members is a major impediment to improved community safety. I suggest that one reason for this is the lack of involvement of general duties staff and the Officer in Charge in building positive relationships across the community, in progressing the Community Safety Action Plans, and in developing a preventative community-oriented approach to managing crime and delinquency.

4.4 International principles for safe and secure communities

This section uses examples from international Indigenous policies to provide an alternative view on what it means to 'feel safe' and live in a secure environment for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. These examples show how a more holistic and socially appropriate approach could be used in Indigenous contexts. While safety and security have distinct meanings in Western contexts, one cannot assume that these concepts are applicable and transferable to contexts where different histories and socio-cultural patterns are prominent. Western criminological theories continue to influence community safety policies worldwide (Carrington, et al., 2016; Connell, 2007; Hughes, 2002), yet little is known about the appropriateness of these approaches in meeting the needs of Indigenous communities in Australia or internationally (Capobianco, et al., 2009).

⁹⁹ The purpose of this recommendation was to incorporate community engagement activities in every remotely-located police officer's work plans, in order to reduce the perception that 'community engagement' was an activity that the CEPOs coordinate and that operational police officers were not required to engage positively with the community in which they are stationed.

4.4.1 United Nations and other international approaches

International approaches to building safer community encompass a broad range of issues relating to personal safety, security and human development. Community safety definitions vary according to the institutional framework in which the concept is used, in addition to the language, geography and social development needs of the targeted population (Sagant & Shaw, 2010). There is little consensus on how to define community safety and the identified outcomes and applications of the concept often vary (Capobianco, et al., 2009; Whitzman, 2008).

The public vision of creating safe and secure environments is an internationally recognised development goal. The United Nations' *Safer Cities* programme recognises that informal and formal crime hinders a state's social and economic development, particularly given that people living in poverty are increasingly vulnerable to violence, insecurity, crime and poor urban governance (United Nations, 2012). This principle is further supported in other United Nations conventions such as the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Adopted by Australia on 13 September 2007, the Declaration identifies that Indigenous people worldwide have the "collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples" (United Nations, 2008). At the forefront of this policy, Indigenous people have the right to protection from violence, discrimination and coercive or punitive government policies that impinge on Indigenous peoples' practice of self-determination. Articles 7 and 21 identify that liberty, peace and security should be a fundamental principle (United Nations, 2008, pp. 5,9). In implementing the declaration, public policy needs to enhance the social, emotional and economic development of Indigenous men and women, including the elders, youth, children and persons with disabilities (articles 21 and 22 in United Nations (2008, p. 9)). These policy ideas are important when considering what values currently guide international crime prevention frameworks.

4.4.2 International Centre for Crime Prevention, Canada

The International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, established in 1994 in Canada, is a non-government organisation that focuses exclusively on crime prevention. It identifies Indigenous community safety as a holistic approach to crime prevention that addresses broader influences across the community including economic development, social and emotional wellbeing, and crime and justice intervention (Capobianco, 2006; Capobianco, et al., 2009).

Capobianco (2006) specifically states that a community safety concept focusing exclusively on crime prevention in Indigenous communities is too narrowly focused and restrictive.¹⁰⁰ Such an approach would miss the strengths-based initiatives that are occurring in other disciplines such as health, community development and Indigenous studies.

Capobianco, et al. (2009, p. 4) developed a working definition of Indigenous community safety as “strategies, initiatives, practices and tools developed by and with indigenous peoples to improve the wellbeing of communities”. The framework recognises the effect that colonisation, dispossession and assimilation have had on Indigenous communities including the present reality in which people experience racism, discrimination, marginalisation and inequality. It also acknowledges that mainstream society needs to value and respect different traditional knowledge systems, as well as the importance of community contributions in the co-production of safety including elders, youth, children, women and men (Capobianco, et al., 2009). From this perspective, safety for Indigenous peoples needs to include measures beyond reductions in the rates of crime and violence. This example shows that definitions of ‘safety’ must be based on the self-identified needs of the community where the strategy is being implemented, as has been identified in other research (Capobianco, et al., 2009). Although the focus of this thesis is on crime and crime prevention, there are limitations and opportunities in relying too heavily on standard definitions of ‘crime’ when considering the needs of Aboriginal communities.

Capobianco (2006) further identifies that positive indicators of safety include increased school retention rates, literacy, meaningful employment opportunities, strong parental abilities, vocational skills and protection of livelihoods. I suggest that this definition delves into important aspects of safety that interact with broader aspects of an individual and family’s experience of social, emotional and physical wellbeing. However, this concept may be too broad as it does not distinguish between aspects of social life that impact on wellbeing and those that impact on safety.

To truly understand what being and feeling safe means for Aboriginal people in Australia, further research is needed to develop a locally-grounded, strengths-based approach to

¹⁰⁰ To elaborate on this point, community safety in Gunbalanya was envisioned by participants as a holistic concept that needs to consider issues beyond criminal behaviour. As such, gambling at card games is a major concern for participants in this study and is an example of an issue that is not a crime. Gambling at card games needs to be managed through collaborative efforts between community elders, service providers and the police. This issue is further examined in chapters five and eight.

understanding physical and social safety from their perspectives. This thesis addresses this gap by using an in-depth case study to understand what community safety means, and how a culturally inclusive approach could be operationalised in one remote Aboriginal community in Arnhem Land. Chapters five, six and seven present this intercultural concept of community safety based on the research I undertook in Gunbalanya. This multilayered concept details how indicators of social harm are interlinked and influence each other. Chapter seven and eight examine whether a partnership-based approach to community safety is practiced in Gunbalanya's service delivery environment.

4.5 Discussion

This chapter highlights the gaps and opportunities in the Australian Government's conceptualisation and utilisation of the community safety concept. Future approaches to improving partnerships between Indigenous communities and government must be built on capacity building and empowering strategies that are locally grounded in Indigenous knowledge. This model for community safety cannot be driven by the political ideologies that fuel government interventions, particularly those which have in the past been detrimental to rebuilding trust between Indigenous peoples and the state. In this vein, the following chapter begins to define and contextualise how the Kunwinjku people understand and visualise safety in their own communities. These perspectives are presented to show a counter discourse to the paternalistic and harmful policies that dominate the narrow policy vision today.

5 Community safety and neighbourhood problems in Gunbalanya

5.1 Chapter overview

The purpose of this chapter is to define how community safety is understood and conceptualised by the Indigenous and non-Indigenous research participants in this study. The chapter has three main sections where I begin to explore the locally grounded notion of community safety that has emerged from the mixed methods data.

Section 5.2 outlines how participants, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have articulated their own definition of community safety including how these issues are represented in their social networks and the Western systems of governance. By exploring qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews, I articulate how these two perspectives intersect but, at the same time, represent distinct intellectual paradigms which provide the foundations for an intercultural framework on community safety in Gunbalanya. This qualitative data also provides clarity on how social and physical harms were defined by participants and then used for further analysis in the questionnaires.

Section 5.3 explains how this concept of community safety can be represented using a social ecological approach to understanding unsafe behaviours as part of the broader concept of community safety. It furthermore outlines the four overarching themes that emerged from the data analysis which are: 1) neighbourhood problems, 2) behavioural factors, 3) social and cultural factors, and 4) regulation and service delivery. I describe these themes in brief and how they provide the basis of later chapters.

Section 5.4 explains how alcohol, substance misuse and gambling at card games are three core problems affecting community safety, which emanate from the microsystem. I explore how these core problems produce flow-on effects to broader neighbourhood problems which include interpersonal, FDV, mental health and suicide risk, and dangerous driving and road safety. These issues are largely unsafe behaviours and actions which individuals engage in and affect community safety through the interaction between the micro- and mesosystems.

Overall, this chapter argues that ‘community safety’ as a concept is far more complex than simply a measurement of crime, delinquency and antisocial behaviour. I argue that, for participants, community safety is a core concept on its own, including what it means to be and feel safe. While these other concepts – crime, delinquency and antisocial behaviour – intersect with safety issues, they cannot explain the complexity of Indigenous community safety in its entirety. This chapter’s analysis of neighbourhood problems, and how behavioural factors contribute to social and physical harm, shows a holistic understanding which reflects the everyday lived experience of safety in Gunbalanya.

5.2 An intercultural approach to understanding community safety

This section draws upon the semi-structured interviews undertaken in the first months of fieldwork to introduce key themes in this study. These themes explore how Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants understood and defined community safety in their own words, in Kunwinjku or English. Section 5.2.1 explores what a ‘culturally-informed’ approach might be and how participants envision this approach working in the complex intercultural space between the Kunwinjku and Western systems of governance. Section 5.2.2 draws upon non-Indigenous participants’ perspectives in this study to understand community safety issues from a different viewpoint. This is important because Indigenous participants firmly stated that community safety issues affect everyone and that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people need to be actively involved. Section 5.2.3 introduces the social issues which participants considered ‘problematic’ in that, from their perspective, those issues contribute to unsafe behaviours and neighbourhood problems.

5.2.1 A culturally informed definition of community safety

Aboriginal participants understood the concept of community safety from a somewhat different perspective compared to non-Indigenous participants in this study. In an interview with a Bininj elder, I was sitting under the mango tree in front of Injalak Arts Centre with a facilitator who knew this elder well. The elder had paused her social card game to speak to us about community safety. I asked her how she would define ‘community safety’ in Kunwinjku. She responded:

*We use different words to talk about community safety.
Karriwokbekarren means ‘listening to one another’. Karrinahnarren*

means 'looking after one another'. Karribidyidkarmarren means 'working together' or 'helping each other'. [CM09]

The participant described the Kunwinjku values that underpin this culturally-informed approach to defining community safety: these values were listening to each other, helping each other and respecting and looking after each other. These values represent the aspirations that Bininj families work towards in improving interpersonal relationships and developing a respectful and healthy environment for those relationships to thrive. These values discussed during this interview were not isolated to one case but were a key theme to arise from semi-structured interviews [e.g. CM09, CM14] and questionnaire results [e.g. Q26 and Q31].

In a separate interview, with a participant who had expertise in linguistics and Kunwinjku language, I asked the participant if she thought that the three words – *karriwokbekarren*, *karrinahnarren* and *karribidyidkarmarren* – were an accurate interpretation of the term ‘community safety’. She stated:

There is one more word we use to talk about community safety. We use 'karryikarmarren rowk' to talk about 'everyone coming together', Bininj and Balanda, working together on these issues. The word is important because it includes everyone, community representation and service providers working together. [CM10]

We further discussed the linguistic differences between the two words ‘karribidyidkarmarren’ and ‘karryikarmarren’. The participant explained that the former word actually means ‘walking together’ where ‘yid’ refers to two people holding hands. This can be interpreted as a variation of people ‘working together’ whereas ‘karryikarmarren’ is more accurately translated to ‘community representation working together’ which could include Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.¹⁰¹

Based on my observations, the emphasis these participants imparted on these terms – ‘working together’ – was symbolic of the way in which community leaders emphasised two-ways of working on community affairs, which involved both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worldviews. These Indigenous participants imparted their knowledge of safety

¹⁰¹ After this discussion, we both decided that ‘karryikarmarren’ would be the most appropriate word to use for the title of the community report and for the title of this PhD thesis.

issues from a different social and cultural value system and a relational perspective that recognised the complex interactions between the Western and Aboriginal worldviews.

5.2.2 Exploring service providers' perspectives on community safety

Service providers¹⁰² offer an alternate perspective on community safety issues which is informed in part by their role in working in this area as well as their 'outsider' perspective. All service providers involved in this study had many years' experience working in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory and were well accustomed to the breadth and complexity of issues in Gunbalanya. At the same time, their 'outsider' perspective is informed by their social positioning and upbringing in urban or regional areas in Australia or elsewhere. I asked service providers what community safety issues they consider most prominent in Gunbalanya. One respondent considered alcohol and substance misuse the most prominent issue because of how it is interlinked with interpersonal conflict:

I would say alcohol and other drugs because people are drinking – especially club nights. There are a lot of arguments and there is a different feeling within some of the families. The other drug side of it is that yesterday this man was cut on the cheek in the clinic because his son wanted money to buy dope and he wouldn't give it to him. So he hit his father. That all ties in with community safety because it can be quite a harrowing experience for people. I would say that alcohol and other drugs could be one of the most important issues. But the billabong is also a community safety issue because of the crocodiles. [SP04]

Participant SP04 described a scenario when a community member, who is a frequent user of alcohol and marijuana, exhibited troublesome behaviour when he was looking to 'buy dope'. In this example, the young man behaved in an unsafe manner when his father refused to provide

¹⁰² I have defined this group of participants as service providers because, through the course of their work, they are involved in service delivery in some way and this broad classification protects their anonymity. One participant identifies as 'Indigenous', however did not grow up in and did not identify with homelands in Arnhem Land. Two other service providers identified as Indigenous from homelands in Arnhem Land however their data was not included in this section. All other service providers identified as non-Indigenous. One participant was allocated the code starting with 'CM' because, although he does not identify as Indigenous he was interviewed in relation to his experience as someone who has lived in Aboriginal communities for a long period. However, I was not able to interview him about his work on community safety because the process of acquiring organisational permissions to interview the individual were arduous. His data was included in this section.

money to meet his substance needs. Alcohol and substance misuse is strongly linked to humbug and family violence, particularly when someone refuses to provide money in response to this request for money (i.e. humbug). Additionally, this participant identified, along with other participants [CM17], that environmental safety is also a concern because of crocodiles in the nearby waterways.

In separate interviews, multiple service providers mentioned the vulnerability of children was an important consideration for what it means to be safe in Gunbalanya. One participant expressed it this way:

You know, there are a lot of people out late in the evening – especially kids. And I’m talking about kids under 12 years old. And not just here, it’s the same in Warruwi and Minjilang¹⁰³ too. In some cases, there are girls who are alone and that’s a very big concern. In most cases they are in groups but still ages between eight and 13 years old. They are supposed to go to school from five years old. In some cases we give them a lift and others they do not want to come. And that’s at 10 or 11 o’clock in the evening, at dark places we have seen them. That’s a major safety concern for us. [SP01]

Children or young people walking around at night was a strong theme that arose from the semi-structured interviews. In this case, participant SP01 described times and situations which increase the vulnerability of children: specifically, young girls were considered more vulnerable when they walk around the community in the evening and at night time. He also mentioned that this behaviour has further implications for school attendance next day.

In an interview with a different service provider, one participant was of the view that the two biggest issues affecting community safety were children staying up late and FDV. The participant described how, during the evening, Gunbalanya’s streets are thriving with nightlife:

Being a very nocturnal culture, because it is so hot during the day, at night time it is thriving. So you drive around here at night and you see kids, little kids. I wouldn’t say ‘toddlers’ but you get four, five, six,

¹⁰³ Warruwi and Minjilang are both remote Aboriginal communities located on Goulburn Island and Croker Island, respectively, in the West Arnhem region and they are serviced by WARC.

seven, or eight year olds still walking around at night in groups of two or three... So it is a concern but at the same time, culturally, it's fine because there isn't that sort of discipline within the family, the direct family. And with extended family, you know, the upbringing of the kid is shared, which is a beautiful thing... but it also has a negative effect I think because the parent might think the child is at the aunty's or the other mother's or father's place but they may be somewhere else.
[SP06]

This participant recognised that Bininj children are raised by the extended family and this is a social strength but, from his perspective as a non-Indigenous person, he was concerned that children's lack of direct parental supervision was creating vulnerable environments for children. He raised the point, later in this interview, that leaving children unsupervised creates the risk of child sexual assault by adult men. This concern was further identified in other interviews by Indigenous participants [CM04] and service providers [SP01, SP05].

The service provider quoted above [SP06] also raised his concerns that, from his observations working in the community, the normalisation of interpersonal and domestic violence were significant issues affecting safety. He reflected:

... On a daily basis there's always fighting and it is the norm within a community like this, unfortunately. Whether it be through young boys fighting over daluk¹⁰⁴ – girls – or, probably more often than not, is a couple – male or female. That's the issues that I think is one of the biggest, as it is the norm, and there is no intervention from anyone.
[SP06]

Participant SP06 was concerned that despite FDV being a significant problem, where it is almost 'normalised', there are insufficient interventions in this area that respond to an emergency and address the problem's deeper origins. Later in the interview, the participant further claimed that police response is frequently slow and the process of calling the police in an emergency is an impediment to service providers' capabilities in responding to safety incidents:

¹⁰⁴ 'Daluk' means 'girl' in Kunwinjku.

I think there is a very slow police response. Like we have had a couple of issues here where there's been fights, it has been quite violent, and to get through to the police there is no direct number here. So you always have to go through '000'. They always ask you... "What's happening: is it still going on?" And then by the time it's gone through that whole '000' process it is quite frustrating that it takes such a long time until there is a [police] presence here. [SP06]

Participant SP06 offered a scenario where serious assaults occurred at public sporting events, and a single conflict escalated to large crowds involved in the brawl. On that day, he was umpiring the football and a member of his team called '000' but, by the time the police turned up, the fighting had been subdued. He described *"people were hurt, there was blood and that sort of thing"* [SP01]. He was frustrated at the functioning of emergency services because the police were often too busy to respond to incidents [SP01], which was a major issue that arose from the interviews. This pointed to a mismatch between the governance of community safety services and community needs and expectations, which were identified as barriers to safety in Gunbalanya.¹⁰⁵

I interviewed a non-Indigenous participant living in Gunbalanya who was not involved in service delivery. This person had spent nearly 10 years working in remote Northern Territory communities. I asked him to define community safety from his experience living and working in remote areas. He pointed to the need to understand an individual's immediate home environment as well as the broader regulatory and service delivery environments:

Community safety, to me, means all the obvious things which is having a safe place to sleep and a safe environment. So that includes your family life, the people who live near and it includes whether the community is policed. This community is policed permanently but only to half capacity. But less obvious aspects of community safety include education, employment and rules, restrictions etc. All those things fit into community safety. Access to proper food which is balanced and nutritious – not too much rubbish. I suppose, those are the things I would put into 'community safety'. [CM16]

¹⁰⁵ Section 8.4 continues to analyse the depth of policing issues in Gunbalanya.

Participant CM16 argued that a safe home and neighbourhood are important in improving individuals' sense of security along with positive health and wellbeing. Education, employment and physical security, including policing, are essential elements in improving safety. The same participant was then asked about what he meant by 'rules and restrictions'. He responded:

I believe in having sensible controls. I actually think the [Gunbalanya Sports and Social] Club is not open enough. I know that following the [Northern Territory] Intervention there were blanket rules put in place. But, is the community safer when you've got people leaving the community, getting inebriated and then driving back, however many hundreds of kilometres away depending on where they have gone? So that's not making the community safer. That is in fact, in one argument, spreading the harm. [CM16]

To the participant, rules and restrictions were seen as important in preventing unintended consequences from occurring when standard regulatory frameworks are applied. Since the 1960s, elders in the community have campaigned for their own autonomy and decision-making on liquor licensing matters in the region.¹⁰⁶ Community leaders were granted a liquor licence in 1978 and have managed to retain this licence despite the federal government's liquor regulations imposed on Aboriginal communities as part of the NTER¹⁰⁷.

After the NTER, various restrictions were imposed to regulate safe drinking behaviour in social clubs across the Northern Territory (Brady, 2017). Community clubs were restricted to only selling mid-strength or low-alcohol beer (3% or less) in cans, not kegs. Clubs were only allowed to open four evenings per week and hot food must be available (Brady, 2017, p. 95). These restrictions are still in place in Gunbalanya. The community's ability to retain the liquor licence at the GSSC is considered important by elders and service providers to the safety and welfare of residents [SP01, SP02 and SP03].

¹⁰⁶ Previously discussed in chapter two.

¹⁰⁷ The NTER, otherwise known as the Northern Territory Intervention, was previously explained in section 4.3.

5.2.3 Intercultural approaches to improving community safety

In semi-structured interviews, several participants were asked about what issues they considered important under the umbrella term of community safety. These participants included Indigenous community members and non-Indigenous participants who were service providers. An Indigenous participant responded:

We need to be able to work together to make the community safer. This could be with domestic violence, grog running, kundalk¹⁰⁸, robbing people and making sure our kids are safe. They need to go to school too. [CM15]

Participant CM15 highlighted that there are a range of issues that occur which can impair family wellbeing, which include issues such as FDV, unregulated liquor being brought into the community (i.e. ‘grog running’), marijuana use (i.e. ‘kundalk’), personal and property theft (i.e. ‘robbing people’) and ensuring that children attend school. These social problems were all intimately connected with this notion of safety.

In the semi-structured interviews, participants such as CM15 identified a raft of physical and social harms which allowed me to become quickly accustomed to the broad range of community safety issues in Gunbalanya. To briefly elaborate, the following issues were also identified as important to participants: gambling and card games¹⁰⁹ [e.g. CM12, CM13 and CM14]; mental illness and suicide risk [e.g. CM14]; dangerous driving including intoxicated or underage driving [e.g. CM10]; peer pressure, ‘humbugging’ and the inability to meet one’s financial needs (i.e. poverty and lack of employment opportunities) [e.g. CM12 and CM13]; youth disobedience and delinquency [e.g. CM09]; prowling¹¹⁰ or ‘young people walking around at night’ [e.g. CM04]; underage promiscuity [e.g. CM17]; and social media including

¹⁰⁸ Kunwinjku word for ‘marijuana’.

¹⁰⁹ In this thesis, ‘card games’ refers to unregulated gambling at card games. The card games played in Arnhem Land are different to those played in other parts of Australia and high-stakes card games played over long periods are most associated with interpersonal harm (M. A. Fogarty, 2013). In academia, most of the literature has focused on the social regulation of card games and there is a lack of recognition that unregulated gambling at card games is problematic and harmful to community safety.

¹¹⁰ Prowling is locally used terminology to describe young people walking around the community with the intent of being promiscuous or having intercourse particularly where the two people are not in an existing relationship. The term can be used to describe when two people ‘hook-up’ via social media then meet up in the community [CM08], which I describe in greater detail in section 5.4.4.

Facebook and Diva Chat¹¹¹ [e.g. CM04]. In this thesis, the community safety issues listed above are referred to as ‘neighbourhood problems’ because this is how these problems are described in the literature (ABS, 2017a; Putt, et al., 2011; Willis, 2010).

Other participants mentioned that adequately addressing community safety issues requires a coordinated effort, involving traditional owners and community leaders, working with external agencies on mandating rules and enforcing them:

Parents are playing card games all night. It's not right – they need to send those children to bed. They have to go to school in the morning. We should get the police and the teachers to talk to the parents. They should play cards between 4 o'clock and 9 o'clock – not playing all night like they do now. Then children will not be out late and they can go to school. [CM17]

Participant CM17 indicated that addressing community safety problems requires a coordinated effort across all sectors of the community: education, law enforcement, and community governance and leadership. These ‘outside’ agencies are seen as legitimate when acting on Bininj collective decision-making by traditional owners and community leaders. Additionally, parents need to accept and act on their responsibilities in preparing for and sending their children to school.

To delve deeper into these issues, participants were asked how services might be important in improving community safety. Two female participants, in separate interviews, stated:

All stakeholders are important. School is important with Night Patrol, police, clinic. Local people respecting each other, helping each other. Respecting the elderly too. But, services are not working. People are not getting together, Bininj and Balanda. Stakeholders are not working together, partnerships. [CM09]

¹¹¹ Diva Chat is a mobile phone application, restricted to users on the Telstra network, which people use to send messages. Further description is provided in section 5.4.4.

Respect goes two-ways: the police need to respect Bininj and Bininj need to respect the police and the law. We need to all work together.

[CM10]

These two participants amongst others explained that mutual respect between Bininj (i.e. Aboriginal) and Balanda (i.e. non-Aboriginal) people involves everyone working together across sectors within the service delivery framework: policing and corrections, primary and secondary education, health and wellbeing services, as well as community initiatives which deter young people from the justice system (e.g. Night Patrols). Community safety must be based on mutual respect among Aboriginal families and between Bininj and Balanda people.

The need for mutual respect and positive working relationships between the locally stationed police officers and community members was a strong theme to arise from the interview data. Many people stated that a positive relationship with the police was absent and this increased tension in the community. In an interview, I asked an Indigenous participant [CM08] about the issues he considered important for improving community safety. He reinforced the need to be able to contact the police and rely upon them arriving at the scene quickly.

Participant CM08 explained that his son was at risk of suicide because his son's children were removed through family members intervening in his domestic situation. He missed his children, which further contributed to his mental health issues and alcohol and substance problems. In some circumstances, the son's alcohol and substance abuse problems have led him to humbug for money and, when his humbug is refused by family members, the person(s) have often been assaulted.¹¹² As part of this broader context, participant CM08 explained that although community members need to be able to rely upon police assistance, the relationship some police officers have with community members is highly problematic. Community members feel there is a lack of trust between police officers and the community, and residents feel they are unable to access a responsive service that is timely and effective. This problem is not isolated to community members; service providers who participated in this study also expressed concerns about police responsiveness [e.g. SP05 and SP06].

To sum up, the transcripts from these interviews show there are several dimensions to the concept of community safety, which is a blend of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

¹¹² This is the same incident referred to by participant SP04 in the previous section.

perspectives on what is considered safe. These comparable perspectives on community safety complemented each other in how they overlapped on issues such as alcohol and substance misuse and the challenges of remote policing. Each perspective provided greater depth and clarity to the safety problems raised and how to address them. The four main issues raised were: (1) Kunwinjku values and aspirations need to be the basis for defining ‘community safety’ (2) alcohol and substance misuse and card games affect the vulnerability of children, (3) these issues contribute to broader social problems including school attendance and mental health issues, (4) the governance of service delivery does not consistently address the needs and concerns of community members.

Achieving safety requires Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to respect each other, listen to each other and help each other as part of the broader ambition of building collaborative community efforts. Community collaboration must be achieved across all aspects of service delivery including policing and corrections, education and employment, and health and wellbeing services. Additionally, the manner in which these services are regulated, as well as the desired outcomes of this regulation, must be based on the needs and circumstances of the local community. In essence, community leaders must be actively involved in designing and shaping community governance and regulation over these issues concerning liquor supply and availability. The neighbourhood problems identified in this opening section provided an overview of the broad range of issues considered important by participants, and these issues feature as ongoing themes in the thesis. Next, section 5.3 provides an overall summary of community safety issues in Gunbalanya with the aim of providing structure to the remainder of the thesis. Then, section 5.4 details how neighbourhood problems impact on community safety.

5.3 An intercultural concept of community safety: an overview

This section begins to outline the intercultural framework for community safety in West Arnhem Land which is the core concept developed as part of this thesis. Four key themes arose from the mixed methods data analysis which I use to conceptualise how participants envision ‘being safe’ and ‘feeling safe’. These themes are neighbourhood problems, behavioural factors, social and cultural factors, and governance and service delivery. These analytic themes are described below to give a broad overview of the findings from this thesis, and indicate how the remaining empirical chapters build on aspects of this concept of community safety .

5.3.1 A social ecological model

A social ecological model is useful in providing structure and organisation to a concept that is complex with interactions and relationships between indicators. The model used in this thesis is an adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theory (1979). It was necessary to adapt the original theory because the theory relied upon an individualistic notion of child development which is based on traditional Western family structures where children have little decision-making autonomy over their behaviour. In the adapted model, the microsystem does not exist because the microsystem places the individual child at the centre of the ecological system and this does not accurately portray child development in Aboriginal families, which is holistic. The adapted model is designed to provide a holistic theoretical view of community safety in Gunbalanya.

As discussed in chapter one, this interpretation of child development contrasts with Aboriginal notions of autonomy and relatedness that are integrated with Aboriginal worldviews and belief systems. In this study, participants explained their own interpretation of interpersonal harm and safety based on their perspectives of being connected and relating to each other. Commonly, in Aboriginal families, parents play a strong role in the child's development as well as the whole family including aunts, siblings, cousins and grandparents. This is observed in quotes where harmful behaviour occurs in the interaction between persons and the overlapping and infinite connections between indicators of harmful behaviour.

This thesis is primarily concerned with the intersection of neighbourhood problems and harmful behaviours. Similar to the mesosystem in Bronfenbrenner's model (1979), the interpersonal sphere occurs in the centremost circle of the social ecological framework used in this thesis. The interpersonal sphere includes both the person who repeatedly engages in harmful or unsafe activities (e.g. alcohol misuse or gambling) and the effects this has for other people connected to this person. These relationships often involve parents, siblings and related kin and peer groups. The interpersonal sphere involves direct interactions¹¹³ (e.g. parents gambling for extensive periods and consequentially children walking around at night). These direct interactions have ongoing implications that are indirectly correlated with broader issues¹¹⁴ (e.g. children's school absenteeism because of nocturnal behaviour).

¹¹³ This is similar to what Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to as 'distal factors'.

¹¹⁴ This is similar to what Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to as 'proximal factors'.

Participants' perceptions of harm and community safety issues are influenced by their interaction with the physical environment in which harmful or healthy behaviours occur and how this is experienced (e.g. seeing, hearing and feeling) through their physical, social and emotional reaction to the situation. Their interaction with their immediate surrounding environment (e.g. household), and with their indirect interaction with their structural environment (e.g. broader neighbourhood and community characteristics), influences their interpretation and perceptions of crime, harm and safety. The literature suggests that a person's perception of crime is generally greater than the actual occurrence of crime, where perceptions or 'fear of crime' is mostly influenced by an individual's social networks, neighbourhood characteristics (i.e. built environment) and psychology (i.e. emotional responses to crime and perceptions of crime) (Lorenc, Petticrew, Whitehead, Neary, Clayton, Wright & Renton 2014; Ambrey, Fleming & Manning, 2014). In addition, women, older people and less educated people are more likely to perceive higher rates of crime compared to actual rates (Ambrey, et al., 2014; Indermaur & Roberts, 2005).

5.3.2 Neighbourhood problems

The term 'neighbourhood problems' is used to describe the majority of interpersonal, intra-family and community-wide harms. In this concept of community safety, neighbourhood problems are physical and social issues which most prominently affect community safety and they are organised into two layers: interpersonal and community-wide neighbourhood problems.

5.3.2.1 *Interpersonal aspects of neighbourhood problems*

At the interpersonal level, the core problems are interpersonal violence¹¹⁵, FDV, alcohol and substance misuse, and gambling at card games. These problems contribute to the bulk of neighbourhood problems at the interpersonal level. Other interpersonal problems include: crime-related activities including personal and property theft; dangerous driving and other aspects of road safety; young people loitering at night including prowling; social media including online bullying and harrassment; and mental health, substance dependency and suicide-risk. Individual problems or a combination of multiple neighbourhood problems at the

¹¹⁵ Interpersonal violence refers to conflict, anger and fighting between individuals and/or groups who do not have to be direct kin or in a relationship (Krug et al., 2002).

interpersonal level multiply the possibility of a significantly harmful event occurring.¹¹⁶ These ongoing patterns of associated behaviours have ongoing implications socially, emotionally and financially at the community level.

The broad range of neighbourhood problems identified by participants shows the limitations of solely focusing on crime or risk factors to measure community safety in Gunbalanya. Descriptive statistics from the questionnaire results are presented in Fig. 5.1. The values on the y-axis are scaled from 0-5 where a higher value¹¹⁷ denotes that the variable is perceived by respondents, at the time of interview, to be causing a reduction in personal safety in their community. The most significant neighbourhood problems were card games, dangerous driving, illicit alcohol being brought into the community, suicide and mental health issues, and social media. These variables scored mean values above 4, which indicates the problem is perceived to occur regularly. Other major problems were marijuana use, young people loitering, public intoxication, FDV and interpersonal violence¹¹⁸ and theft.

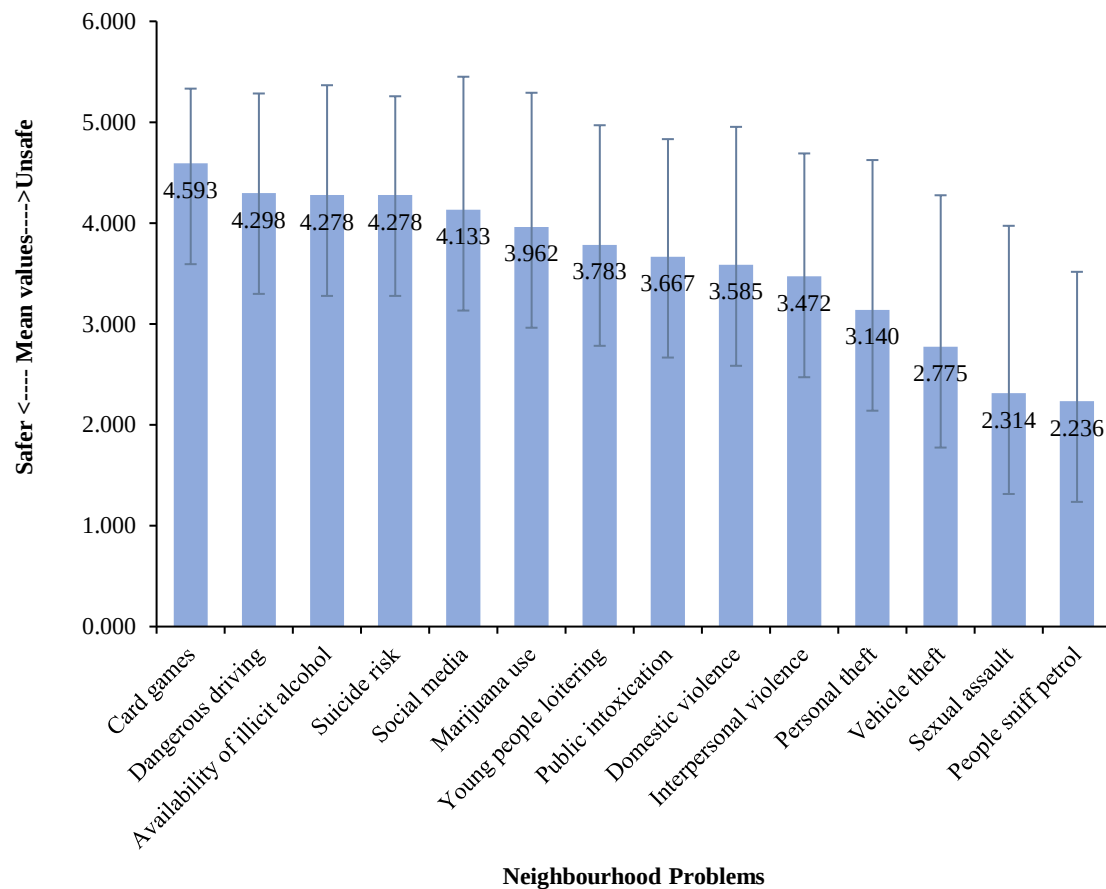
Some interpersonal harms, including card games, mental health issues, and young people loitering or using social media, are not crimes nor are they necessarily ‘risk factors’ for violent victimisation (see Table 1.1). While community safety strategies tend to focus on preventing crime, these results show that strategies which seek to improve safety outcomes need to understand neighbourhood problems and their flow-on effects more broadly. A harm prevention and safety promotion approach would be more appropriate in this context. Neighbourhood problems are not isolated incidents solely related to this case study on Gunbalanya, but have also been identified as affecting other remote Australian Indigenous communities (Putt, et al., 2011; Shaw & D’Abbs, 2011; Willis, 2010).

¹¹⁶ Participants often raised the issue that when two or more factors are combined (e.g. sly grog and the underlying patterns of community violence) then the problem escalates and there’s a ‘big problem’ (e.g. intra-family conflict). This is similar to literature on development prevention which indicates that multiple risk factors significantly increase the likelihood that delinquent or crime-related behaviour will develop.

¹¹⁷ The value 0 indicates the variable is not a problem, 2.5 indicates the problem occurs sometimes and 5 indicates the variable is a significant problem.

¹¹⁸ The variables ‘domestic violence’ and ‘sexual assault’ had 8 and 20 missing values respectively. Missing values, in this case, were either the participant did not answer the question or responded, “I don’t know”. These values have been excluded from the test results. The high numbers of missing values, compared to other variables, possibly indicates that these issues were underreported due to the sensitive nature of the subject. Based on my observations, for some people the discussion of issues relating to FDV in public is thought to bring feelings of ‘shame’ on that individual and his or her family.

Fig. 5.1. Questionnaire results on how neighbourhood problems affect community safety in Gunbalanya (mean value)



Note: (1) Mean values on the y-axis with a highest value denote the variable is perceived to be a significant problem. 5 indicates the problem is perceived to occur regularly, 2.5 indicates the variable is sometimes a problem, and 0 value indicates the issue is perceived not to be a problem. (2) Variables are ordered from highest value to lowest.

Source: Results from Q8 in the questionnaire results.

Although crime indicators should not be the sole focus, there is value in comparing police recorded offences with perceptions of neighbourhood problems. Earlier data presented in section 3.4.4 showed police recorded offences confirmed that some crimes and perceptions of neighbourhood problems overlap. The police recorded offences for the West Arnhem region indicated that FDV and interpersonal violence (i.e. acts intended to cause injury) and illicit drug offences have been consistent problems over the past eight years. This was similarly indicated in Fig. 5.1 as participants perceived that the availability of illicit alcohol and marijuana were significantly impairing community safety. At the same time, there are other influential factors which influence neighbourhood residents' perceptions of community safety.

As mentioned earlier, emotional responses to crime-risk influence residents' perceptions of crime in their neighbourhood. I suggest that is evident with variables in Fig. 5.1, specifically suicide-risk and sexual assault. Suicide-risk and mental health issues are considerable issues impacting on the community. Participants' heightened perceptions (i.e. 4.278 mean value) that suicide attempts are a significant issue in Gunbalanya should not be interpreted to mean that this occurs regularly. According to participants, several months had passed since the previous suicide attempt [Q41] and two years had passed since the last missing persons case [SP01]; however, these results inform us that this is an issue that participants were significantly concerned about and that they wanted addressed through community safety interventions.

Similarly, Fig. 5.1 indicates that participants perceived that sexual assault was a significant issue in Gunbalanya (with a mean value of 2.314). Comparatively, sexual assault and related offences comprised only a small portion of police recorded offences in the West Arnhem Region over the past eight years. In 2016, there were a total of 4 per 1,000 offences involving sexual assault in the West Arnhem region (refer to section 3.4.4). The qualitative data in this study provides only a small insight into events surrounding sexual assault that might have influenced respondents', which is likely due to the highly sensitive nature of this issue.

5.3.2.2 Community-level aspects of neighbourhood problems

These broader themes occur at the second level of neighbourhood problems where a range of factors indirectly contribute to physical and social harm. These ongoing community-level problems include: structural factors, such as housing instability and overcrowding; under or unemployment and reliance on welfare; youth boredom and delinquency; substance and behavioural dependencies such as on alcohol and substances or gambling; school absenteeism,

child detachment¹¹⁹, and a lack of parental role models; and finally, intergenerational trauma and violence.

There is ongoing interaction between the interpersonal and community levels, as indicated by Bronfenbrenner's model (1979). These indicators of 'neighbourhood problems' are not mutually exclusive variables but are dynamic and interactive problems where their ongoing perpetration contributes to behavioural patterns. The effect of these patterns of behaviour have long-term implications for informal structures (e.g. family relationships, collective efficacy and cultural survival) and their potential impairment or fracture. At the community-level, broader themes arise through the interaction of harmful behaviours, which points to the need to consider how behaviours contribute to neighbourhood problems in the ecological system.

5.3.3 Behavioural factors

Behavioural factors are attitudes, behaviours, actions, social controls and norms that contribute to an individual's sense of safety. These could be: (1) behaviours associated with the flow-on effect of neighbourhood problems; or (2) underlying attitudes or behaviours which contribute to safe or unsafe environments. Behavioural factors comprise a range of behaviours and actions which interact between the individuals closest to these problems and family, friends and peers in their social networks. This focus on 'behaviours' arose from the earlier semi-structured interviews where Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants related behaviours and choices as reasons why people engage in antisocial behaviour. Indigenous participants explained that some people 'make the wrong choices':

Being on country at the outstation, this helps them make the right or better choices in the future. If they don't make right choices, they get a flogging, are sent away as punishment and the next step is going to jail. Then they have to learn their lesson. [CM09]

¹¹⁹ As discussed in section 6.4.4, child detachment refers to an impaired emotional bond between a parent and child and, potentially, a child's further disengagement from other aspects of family and community life. While the literature refers to poor child attachment, in this study I discuss the findings in relation to child detachment from family life, or sometimes community life or school, because this is how participants have framed their own observations and experiences.

Another Indigenous participant explained how her family remained strong amongst alcohol problems in community while she was growing up:

When we saw grog, we didn't copy them. It wasn't safe, and it was not a good choice. I used to help explain to them that it's a bad choice and it's hurting people. [CM10]

Finally, a non-Indigenous participant explained that people need to take responsibility for the actions they take when affected by alcohol and other drugs:

There are behaviour issues with grog. Alcohol is not an excuse to hit your wife or abuse your aunties. It's the behaviour that causes and commits violence – that's the problem – and if we don't address the behaviour then the problems are not going to change. Ganja¹²⁰ probably causes more issues than grog¹²¹, but it's the behaviour that's a problem. [SP05]

Participant SP05 explained that in order to address the source of these problems including FDV, people's behaviours need to change. Incapacity through intoxication is not an excuse to harm others. This position was similar to other participants who explained that the focus of improving safety needs to be on behaviour change through mentoring and counselling [CM15]; where ceremonies and traditional law can be used to help people make the right choices [CM10]; and trauma and healing needs to be a substantial component in addressing underlying issues and engaging in a process of behaviour change [CM15].

Some individuals observe and learn these behaviours from parents or peers early in life which increases the likelihood that these children will engage in these risky or dangerous activities during adolescence [e.g. CM04 and Q27]. Behavioural factors at the interpersonal and community levels include chemical and process addiction¹²² and addiction-related behaviours [e.g. SP04 and Q18], humbugging and peer pressure [e.g. Q18 and CM10], internalised anger and frustrations including the inability to deal with adverse circumstances

¹²⁰ A colloquial Australian term for 'marijuana'.

¹²¹ A colloquial Australian term for 'alcohol'.

¹²² Chemical addictions are those where a person is dependent on a drug, substance or chemical, such as alcohol, marijuana or tobacco (Alavi, Ferdosi, Jannatifard, Eslami, Alaghemandan & Setare, 2012). Process or behavioural addictions are those where a person is dependent on a passive or active engagement with an activity, and the feelings associated with that activity. Examples include sexual intercourse, promiscuity, gambling and card games (Alavi, et al., 2012; Goreng Goreng, 2012; Mann, Fauth-Bühler, Higuchi, Potenza, & Saunders, 2016).

[e.g. Q08 and Q23], disempowerment and lack of self-belief [e.g. Q18], and acceptance of high rates of non-attendance at employment and education opportunities [e.g. CM16 and Q26].

In academic literature, Indigenous criminologists argue that the criminal justice system needs to move beyond a risk-management approach to managing crime and social disorder (Cunneen & Tauri, 2016). Justice interventions would benefit from an improved understanding of the broader impact that events, acts, and behaviours contribute to the social harms experienced and perpetrated by groups and individuals. In-lieu of a crime prevention approach, the concept of ‘social harm’ is used in this thesis to advocate for a harm prevention approach to reducing crime and improving safety. A harm prevention approach recognises physical, financial, social and cultural harms while there is no universal definition of these concepts (Hillyard, et al., 2004; Langham Thorne, Browne, Donaldson, Rose & Rockloff, 2015). This thesis explores how participants in Gunbalanya perceived harmful or unsafe behaviours in their neighbourhoods.¹²³

5.3.4 Social and cultural factors

Social and cultural factors are strengths-based aspects of Bininj law which help keep men, women and children safe and secure. As referenced earlier, these are the family values which are currently practiced and aspired to in promoting respectful relationships through listening, learning, helping and respecting each other. These are examples of values and beliefs which operate in a person’s broader (i.e. distal) ecological environment. In Fig. 5.1, social and cultural factors are labelled as societal factors that arise from Aboriginal customary beliefs and these interact with protective factors at the community-level.

Results of the semi-structured interviews revealed that these values are important in fostering healthy and respectful relationships between vulnerable groups (e.g. young people, parents and the elderly) and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. In practice, participants identified that cultural practices, such as passing on ceremonies, dreamtime stories and kinship to the next generation [e.g. Q11, Q19, Q25 and Q27] help promote safe and secure environments across related language and tribal groups. Continuing connection to homelands

¹²³ By engaging with a harm prevention and safety promotion framework, I also seek to move away from traditional criminological concepts such as ‘antisocial behaviour’ which rely upon Western interpretations of behaviours which are considered unacceptable, unruly or ‘antisocial’. In this process, I am seeking a locally grounded interpretation of social harm and unsafe behaviours wherever possible.

outstations, traditional practices on homelands and through arts centres were also seen as pivotal to facilitating this positive sense of identity and belonging [e.g. Q10, Q23, Q36 and Q41]. These strengths-based concepts are explored in chapter seven.

5.3.5 Governance, policy and service delivery

Governance, policy and service delivery encompasses a range of legislative, regulatory controls¹²⁴ and policy infrastructure which govern the area of community safety. As explored in chapter four, community safety policies have an indirect influence on the breadth and availability of government interventions, which seek to prevent violence and crime, in remote areas. In Gunbalanya, there are locally driven initiatives (e.g. Night Patrols or local liquor licence premises) or government-led initiatives (e.g. FDV prevention through locally-based safe houses). Overall, findings suggest that services are generally supporting community needs in Gunbalanya by addressing some safety issues; however, a considerable service gap exists in when and how emergency services seek to prevent and respond to incidents.

Community members were generally supportive of police assistance, however participants mostly perceived that the local police were not effective in addressing prominent safety issues (such as responding to FDV in a timely manner and preventing illicit substances from entering the community). The qualitative responses from these questionnaires point to the need for more collaborative services which are integrated into community life. Proactive, preventative policing, including the everyday visibility of the police in patrolling the neighbourhood and collaborating with service providers [Q26 and Q33], appeared to be important to their perceived legitimacy in the community [Q18, Q23 and Q34]. As part of this, the attitudes of individual police officers were considered important in developing mutual respect and trust. Without this, community members are less likely to report incidents. This reinforces the limitations of the police in reacting to physical harms and crimes which occur in the ‘public’ domain; meanwhile much larger issues, which underlie these problems, continue

¹²⁴ I draw upon Garland (1996), Braithwaite (2000) and Mazerolle and Ransley (2004) to understand how neoliberal approaches to regulating crime and social behaviours are a new form of state regulation at a distance, which affects the policing of crime and social order. Garland (1997) suggests that contemporary governments have placed the onus of responsibility for crime control on non-state actors. This has given rise to the enforced self-regulation of crime control (Braithwaite, 2000) where third-party policing produces a decentralised network of individuals and agencies who are increasingly involved in crime control and prevention (Mazerolle & Ransley, 2004). This has formalised and rationalised crime prevention partnerships for improved community safety (Mazerolle & Ransley, 2004), even in remote parts of Australia.

to happen in the ‘private’¹²⁵ domain which is outside the purview of service providers. These issues are further examined in chapter eight.

5.4 Neighbourhood problems at the interpersonal level

This section presents mixed methods data while endeavouring to identity the correlates of neighbourhood problems and harmful behaviours at the interpersonal level. Interpersonal neighbourhood problems are harmful events or behaviours which occur within the interactions between perpetrators and their respective kin or peer groups. The interaction between neighbourhood problems and behavioural factors occur via a flow-on or ripple effect through these social networks. This section clarifies how these complex and interlinked relationships operate in everyday contexts and how these relationships impact on community members’ experiences and perceptions of safety.

5.4.1 Alcohol misuse

Harmful experiences associated with the uses of liquor were among the most frequently raised issues among participants in this study. Results from the quantitative data¹²⁶ show that the availability of illicit alcohol was significantly associated with the following neighbourhood problems: marijuana use ($p=0.000$, $r=0.573$), interpersonal violence ($p=0.000$, $r=0.403$) and domestic violence ($p=0.007$, $r=0.386$), social media ($p=0.033$, $r=0.320$), dangerous driving ($p=0.000$, $r=0.275$) and personal theft ($p=0.015$, $r=0.323$). Appendix F, Map 2¹²⁷ provides a visual model of the qualitative relationships between problems associated with alcohol misuse in the data. The following section draws upon three themes (1) the availability of illicit alcohol,

¹²⁵ Drawing upon Hamilton (1981), D. Martin (1993) argues that Wik people in Cape York Peninsula (in Queensland, Australia) distinguish between ‘private’ and ‘public’ domains in an elaborate system of restricted and unrestricted (respectively) physical spaces where each clan has the right to control material and ritual resources in its own state. He refers to how clan, language and kinship affiliations shape ritual importance of physical spaces among other complex factors. In contrast, I occasionally refer to ‘public’ and ‘private’ issues to show how Bininj people negotiate power over knowledge, particularly when individuals decide how can give and deny access to certain information about sensitive social phenomena. Similar to Martin (1993), an individual’s ability to speak about ‘private’ issues that are sensitive may be influenced in part by the cultural seniority of particular participants amongst their kin relations.

¹²⁶ Standard deviation and other descriptive statistics are provided at Appendix E.

¹²⁷ In NVIVO, I coded for nodes and relationships between nodes then I used thematic network analysis to explore these relationships using the project map feature. I coded for relationships when there was more than one example of the relationship between two nodes. The maps do not show statistical significance or linearity.

(2) the relationships between marijuana use and illicit alcohol, (3) FDV and interpersonal violence, and (4) the interaction between theft and dangerous driving, to explore the data.

Many participants explained that liquor being brought into the community, which is more commonly referred to as ‘grog running’ or ‘sly grog’, was the main problem affecting community safety in Gunbalanya. Grog running was identified as a problem during the dry season because of the accessibility of the community via land. Some participants were of the opinion that increased police patrols near Cahill’s Crossing¹²⁸, would prevent many of the problems in the community:

Mornings the drunks come about 4am and bringing grogs from wherever they go for grog run – Darwin or other places... [The police] need to wait at the crossing¹²⁹ over night to stop those grog runs. Those people they drive to Gunbalanya late at night when everyone is sleeping. They bring ganja too. [CM04]

Participant CM04 subtly identified the relationship between the availability of illicit alcohol and marijuana use. Marijuana use and illicit substances available in the community are correlated problems; and, as described by the participant above, when people bring grog into the community they bring ganja too. Participant CM04 also argues that police patrols are required to prevent illicit grog from entering the community, an issue further discussed in section 8.4.2.

Among participants, interpersonal violence was associated with the consumption of high-alcoholic products when they are brought into the community via ‘grog runs’. Several participants highlighted this point:

There is too much violence, ganja and grog coming into this community. Grog comes in from the outside and then they fight. [CM14]

¹²⁸ Cahill’s Crossing is located on the East Alligator River at the border between Kakadu National Park and West Arnhem Land. The crossing is the only direct way to enter West Arnhem Land via land.

¹²⁹ Burbank (2011, p. 89) argues that the reason why alcohol, marijuana and petrol are the drugs of choice in many remote Australian Indigenous communities is because they have a similar effect on the nervous system and enable “disconnection of meaning and experience”.

Trouble is buried from before. When the outside grog comes, the people start drinking and then the problem comes up again. It's a peaceful community but when the grog comes the trouble starts. [Q18]

Each of the participants quoted above indicated that grog running enables conflicts to occur. Participants described that 'trouble is buried from before' and, when people drink heavy grog, then FDV and interpersonal violence 'blows up' or becomes a problem again. This provides a deeper depiction of the statistical correlation between illicit grog and interpersonal violence, and FDV.

Strong alcohol is seen to exacerbate social stress and other 'trouble' that simmers at the surface or is buried within people's social networks. Trouble is sometimes used as a euphemism for quarrels, fights, brawls, swearing and other disruptive behaviour. A wide range of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants affirmed that the GSSC was well managed and upheld rules¹³⁰ to address unsafe behaviours associated with drinking and humbug on the premises [e.g. CM12, CM13, CM16, SP05, and Q37]. Few participants said that the sale of light or mid-strength alcohol at the GSSC was a problem in the community although, undeniably, the availability of any liquor in the community contributes to the underlying problems with intoxication and FDV and interpersonal violence. One participant highlighted this complexity:

Some people come from the club in a quiet way. Other people make trouble. They can't control their mind. They make trouble. The main problem is outside grog. They can't be fighting in front of children – that's not good. [Q37]

Participant Q37 suggested that not everyone who drinks alcohol at the GSSC causes 'trouble' but there are some people who behave in an unsafe and potentially harmful manner. This reinforces a point made earlier that people's behaviours are the problem, not the availability of liquor itself.¹³¹ Furthermore, participant Q37 indicated that alcohol-related conflict can have

¹³⁰ The GSSC only sells light and mid-strength beer (no spirits and no wines) with a maximum of 10 cans per person. Humbugging or asking for cigarettes, money or beer is not tolerated on the premises. The police can refer names of persons to Management on people who are banned from the GSSC for anywhere between 6 to 24 months if they have been found to have committed interpersonal or FDV.

¹³¹ This perhaps also suggests that participants were in denial about the adverse effects and underlying problems people in Gunbalanya had with alcohol dependency. Most participants identified that drinking behaviour in the community was problematic however few recognised that liquor consumption, generally, could also be

adverse effects for children who might be exposed to violence at home; an issue also raised by other participants [CM01 and CM14].

One participant explained how alcohol-related behaviours can contribute to violence in the home when men return from the GSSC:

There have been times when the men come back from the social club, they've been drinking too much, and they get violent. You can call the night patrol but not everyone trusts them because they will not intervene if it's domestic violence. You have to call the police, but it takes too long for them to come... [CM01]

The availability of liquor in the community has an undeniable influence on people's perceptions of safety, particularly through witnessing and experiencing FDV and interpersonal violence. This has significant impact on the wellbeing of children where participants mentioned that children learn aggressive and violent behaviour from witnessing these types of incidents at home or in their neighbourhood [CM14 and Q37]. Children who witness violent behaviours in their home or neighbourhood have been reported to reproduce these behaviours in the school yard [CM01] or become detached from family life and school [SP06]. The intergenerational learning of alcohol and substance misuse and violence are issues further analysed in the next chapter.

Based on the qualitative data, there appears to be a dynamic association between people who are intoxicated from illicit alcohol, theft and dangerous driving. Participants comment that, when some people do not have money to buy alcohol or marijuana, they go to extreme lengths to find substances. Participants described the problem of people 'taking money from old people' and situations where family members have attempted to refuse humbug:

It's sad when people taking money from old people or sometimes people under medical care. There's too much humbug for grog or kundalk¹³². [Q23]

contributing to these broader problems. Participant [SP04] mentioned that "getting the community to realise there's an alcohol problem" can be difficult.

¹³² A Kunwinjku term for 'marijuana'.

People taking money from old people for kunbang¹³³ and drugs. They take it and use it wrong way – gambling, drugs or kunbang. Even though they got money from family payment. [Q27]

Participants Q23 and Q27 were concerned about the vulnerability of elderly persons to humbug and financial abuse. Participants generally indicated a concern for elderly persons and ‘sick people’ because they were vulnerable to financial and physical abuse particularly in relation to people seeking money for alcohol and substances and gambling at card games [CM12]. This concern arose because participants were cognisant that people’s attempts to ‘say no’ or refuse humbug (i.e. requests for money) would be met with potential conflict including verbal and physical assault. Irrespective, some individuals attempted to reject payback¹³⁴ threats from family members because they viewed this as unacceptable behaviour¹³⁵ when money was spent on alcohol and other substances.

The statistical data analysis showed there is a correlation between illicit alcohol and dangerous driving, and personal theft. When compared with the qualitative data, participants indicated there are two main reasons for this: vehicle theft is sometimes attributable to payback, and second, people sometimes engage in dangerous driving when intoxicated with illicit grog. As explained in section 5.4.6, participants Q18 and Q33 described how illicit alcohol available in the community contributes to humbug and, when attempts to humbug are refused, some individuals engage in vehicle theft as a form of ‘payback’. Meanwhile, dangerous driving can also occur as a result of intoxicated behaviour. Two participants explained:

The problems start with sly grog then the people start drink driving and speeding. [Q41]

Families are fighting from ganja and grog. Ganja wasn’t here 10 years ago, nothing. Now it’s happening. Now its danger here. And people are speeding – that’s really the danger when children and families are

¹³³ A Kunwinjku term for ‘alcohol’.

¹³⁴ The term ‘payback’ is used in this thesis to refer to intimidation, threats or acts of violence perpetrated between family members. These behaviours were often used by family members as a form of retribution when one believed that their kin had, for example, reporting an incident to the police or otherwise attracted unwanted attention from authorities. In this context, payback is not punishment culturally sanctioned through Bininj Law. While I acknowledge that the use of the term ‘payback’ is contested by some Indigenous Australian groups (Clark, 2006), I use the term because this is how Bininj participants described their genuine fear of reprisal or acts of retribution from kin (irrespective of whether they were actually guilty of the accused act).

¹³⁵ The concept of ‘humbug’ is complex and further analysed in section 6.3.3.

walking on the road... Driving car and playing loud music late at night.
Sometimes drinking at home and playing loud music. [Q47]

Participants Q41 and Q47 indicated that illicit grog contributes to dangerous driving while intoxicated. Along with others, participants further described dangerous driving can include speeding, ‘burn outs’ and hooning around the neighbourhood¹³⁶. Dangerous driving influences people’s perception of safety in their nearby neighbourhood because the children are felt to be less safe playing in the yard; meanwhile, neighbours playing music late disturbs the peace and individuals’ ability to sleep at night [Q47]. These are examples of the problems associated with youth delinquency¹³⁷. The issue of dangerous driving is detailed later in this chapter.

Emerging from this data on alcohol misuse are the unsafe behaviours that occur in the interactions between a person engaging in this behaviour and his or her immediate kin, peers and neighbours. The issues explored in this section drew out how these interactions occur within close interpersonal relationships to create vulnerabilities for children and the elderly especially. Financial abuse, through humbugging for ‘grog money’, often resulted in payback when requests were refused. Payback commonly contributed to interpersonal violence and conflict in the family. Children were particularly vulnerable to these issues if they had witnessed or experienced ‘fighting’ or violence in the home and were susceptible to learning this behaviour. This is similar to when individuals with substance dependency issues use harmful behaviour, such as humbugging and peer pressure, to coerce or intimidate the elderly into giving the individual money.

5.4.2 Marijuana misuse

The results from the quantitative data analysis show marijuana use was found to be most significantly associated with theft from the elderly ($p=0.000$, $r=0.614$), the availability of illicit alcohol ($p=0.000$, $r=0.578$), interpersonal ($p=0.016$, $r=0.436$) and domestic violence ($p=0.002$, $r=0.441$), addiction-related behaviours ($p=0.000$, $r=0.445$) and suicide risk ($p=0.007$, $r=0.304$).

¹³⁶ Further detail is provided in section 5.4.6.

¹³⁷ Broadly, youth delinquency refers to non-adults who engage in crime-related behaviour and behaviour that violates social and cultural norms of society (Dussich, 1989). Chapter six provides a thorough analysis of issues relating to youth delinquency in this study, including an Aboriginal-centred definition of harmful behaviour that youth engage with in Gunbalanya.

Several of these problems listed are not uniquely associated with marijuana use and, to avoid repetition, this section focuses on the relationship between marijuana use and (1) mental health and suicide risk, (2) addiction-related behaviours, and (3) the intergenerational impact of marijuana use and other problems. In Appendix F, Map 3 provides a visual diagram of the qualitative relationships with the node ‘marijuana use’. The relationships between marijuana use and elder abuse and theft is discussed in section 5.4.3; while the presence of FDV and interpersonal violence were cross cutting issues across several neighbourhood problems and are further explored in section 5.5.2.

There appears a strong relationship between alcohol and substance misuse and mental health issues including suicide risk. One participant [CM14] suggested that the activity of smoking marijuana was not directly associated with people ‘feeling unsafe’ however this behaviour had flow-on effects which were considered unsafe and undesirable.¹³⁸ Participants discussed problems that arise when people do not have the resources to procure ‘kundalk’ or marijuana:

We are worried that young people might do something crazy if they don't find this one [gestures smoking], you know kundalk. Maybe one day, they will try swim across the river or go for a walk because they don't find that stuff here. Before they used to do that a long time ago. People used to swim across the river to get grog. Now there's too many ginga [crocodiles]. [CM17]

Too much worry is a very big problem. When some people don't have money for kundalk or kunbang they go bengwar¹³⁹. They walk around talking like crazy person saying they want to hang themselves or other time they climb up the [power] pole. [Q23]

These participants explained that serious problems exist where people ‘cannot find kundalk’ and some people will go to extreme lengths to acquire the substance, which might include swimming across crocodile infested rivers¹⁴⁰. Similarly, participant Q23 states that some

¹³⁸ Based on my personal observations, CM14 could have taken this perspective because she sometimes smokes marijuana herself. However, I have often seen people affected by the substance and those around me did not seem to be worried or concerned for their safety.

¹³⁹ Participants informed me that ‘bengwar’ means ‘crazy’ in Kunwinjku.

¹⁴⁰ Here the participant refers to the East Alligator River, where people might swim across when the river is flooded. Crossing this river is the only way to access Jabiru or Darwin.

people ‘go walking around in the hot sun’ and they go “*bengwar*” or ‘crazy’ when they do not have the means to acquire the substance. Both of these examples show the behaviours participants associate with substance dependency including (and are not limited to) anxiety and suicide risk. This provides a vivid depiction of how participants phrased ‘addiction-related’ behaviour in their own words.

At the same time, mental health and addiction-related behaviours did not seem to be well understood, where participants explained that these issues caused social stress, anxiety or anger-management problems:

Mental health is a big problem. They take that stuff – kunbang or kundalk – and they don’t realise that it makes their problems bigger.

[CM11]

Participant CM11 explained that mental health issues are prominent in the community particularly where parents and family members are not present to support young people by counselling them on their concerns. This participant further reported that counselling and family therapy programs are needed in the community for family members to understand about the triggers of social stress, anxiety and depression, amongst other conditions.

In Gunbalanya, a community-based organisation delivered culturally appropriate mental health and wellbeing services which involved taking at-risk young people on country and engaging them in activities such as hunting, fishing and sports. Although these types of programs were seen, by participants, as culturally appropriate and generally working well, some participants further requested that counselling and family therapy programs help people with addiction and mental health issues [e.g. CM15, CM10 and Q25].

There are additional reasons why marijuana use is a serious problem. Children are learning to smoke marijuana because often their siblings and parents are smoking in the presence of children. In an environment where there is inadequate or infrequent parental supervision, children are free to walk the streets at night, smoke marijuana and play cards. Two participants highlighted these points:

Those young kids, their parents are drinking and smoking all night and they don’t look after the children. [CM04]

Young people, children, are smoking ganja – even small ones like 10 years old. The young ones want to be adults and they are copying them. Then they don't go to school because they are up all night with the parents and smoking ganja. It's happening everywhere. [CM14]

Participants CM04 and CM14 illustrated that alcohol and marijuana misuse among parents is having a broader impact on child development and wellbeing. Participant CM04 stated 'they don't look after the children' which suggests that parents are inadequately accounting for children's needs and are not providing sufficient parental supervision. Furthermore, participant CM14 affirmed that children are learning unsafe behaviours from the parents, including marijuana use. This is furthermore impacting on children's willingness and ability to participate in school the next day, child detachment and propensity for child delinquent behaviour.

Marijuana use in the household or neighbourhood contributes to several unsafe or potentially harmful behaviours. Marijuana use is problematic for the individual user because its use is associated mental health issues and suicide risk.¹⁴¹ Dependency on marijuana also has flow-on effects to others in the neighbourhood, where children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable. If some persons are unable to procure marijuana, they may go to extreme lengths to acquire the substance which could include humbugging elderly persons for money and could result in interpersonal conflict. Furthermore, children learn behaviours in nearby households, such as marijuana use, by observing and possibly copying those behaviours. This increases the likelihood that children develop youth delinquent behaviours such as walking the streets at night, substance misuse and dependency, and theft and unlawful entry. This highlights how youth delinquency is affecting child wellbeing in other parts of the social ecological system, further discussed in see chapter six.

5.4.3 Gambling at card games

Based on the quantitative results, adults gambling at card games was significantly associated with 15 social issues. These social issues were children playing card games ($p=0.000$, $r=0.607$); and school absenteeism ($p=0.004$, $r=0.158$); marijuana misuse ($p=0.049$, $r=0.246$); mental

¹⁴¹ There is strong evidence to suggest that marijuana use among adolescence is associated mental health issues such as: depression, anxiety and suicide risk; poor behavioural conduct including externalising problems; and social and emotional problems including internalising anger (Moore Zammit, Lingford-Hughes, Barnes, Jones, Burke & Lewis, 2007; Rey, Sawyer, Raphael, Patton, & Lynskey, 2002). Marijuana use is commonly part of wider substance use including alcohol and cigarettes (Rey, et al., 2002).

health problems ($p=0.000$, $r=0.231$), suicide-risk ($p=0.000$, $r=0.477$) and addiction problems ($p=0.008$, $r=0.447$); cheating ($p=0.000$, $r=0.342$), jealousy ($p=0.000$, $r=0.312$) and payback ($p=0.001$, $r=0.255$); people stealing from and hurting the elderly ($p=0.037$, $r=0.252$); humbugging ($p=0.032$, $r=0.213$); public interpersonal violence ($p=0.022$, $r=0.173$); and a lack of parental supervision ($p=0.038$, $r=0.140$). This section explores the qualitative relationships¹⁴² between gambling at card games and (1) children learning to play cards and school absenteeism, (2) lack of parental supervision and children walking around at night, (3) humbug, interpersonal violence and payback, and (3) personal theft particularly amongst the elderly.

Amongst participants, card games were not always perceived to be a problem [CM15, CM17 and SP01]. One participant highlighted that card games can be social activities, however problems can arise when people gamble excessively:

Some people think that card games is a hobby for those that don't work. Gambling is a way to catch up, yarning and that's the only way to see people. Otherwise, they think people won't come to your house for a cuppa. But addiction is a problem too. Maybe some people are playing cards too much. Card games have an effect on children: they like playing cards too. It is a social thing too. Sometimes I like to try my luck, but not often, only sometimes. [CM15]

Participant CM15 reported that card games are a way of yarning and catching up with people. This is similar to Fogarty (2013) who explains that discussions around card games in Maningrida, an Arnhem Land community near Gunbalanya, commonly involve gossip and sharing news about newly formed relationships. At the same time, participant CM15 also acknowledges that problem gambling exists in Gunbalanya and this has an effect on children who learn to play cards.

The effect card games have on children is a strong theme that arises from the findings. Participants have mentioned that children want to win money to give to their parents and some children play cards because they learn this behaviour from their peers and parents. When

¹⁴² Map 4 in Appendix F provides a comprehensive map of the qualitative associations with adults gambling at card games and other social issues.

parents are immersed in card games, children are often left unattended [CM14] and this leaves opportunities for them to walk around the street at night and engage in other unsafe behaviours.

Two participants reported that a lack of parental supervision and responsibility over their children's whereabouts is contributing to poor school attendance and children loitering at night:

Children not going to school. They are playing cards, their parents don't stop, go all night. Then [the kids] are walking around all night. Young ones – like 10, 12, 13 [years old]. That's why they are not getting up early for school. Parents are not telling them to sleep, have shower and get ready. [Q23]

Participant Q23 described a scenario where the children are reluctant to attend school because they have been walking around all night. The participants placed responsibility back on the parents because, she claimed, the parents should be 'telling them to sleep, have shower and get ready' for school. Another participant highlighted a similar issue:

I work as a school attendance officer. When we go up to their house, stand there and knock on the door. We call out: "okay, wake all your kids up. It's time for all your kids to go to school. Wake up. We got breakfast over there and everything for the kids." Then they say: "Oh later, later. We are tired." I say: "but, why are you tired?" "Oh, I was playing cards all night." That's what they say. Some people would prefer to play cards all night and let their kids go prowling. [CM08]

Participant CM08 described a scenario when he was a school attendance officer in the Remote Schools Attendance Strategy¹⁴³ and a child was reluctant to attend school. Among participants, commonly stated reasons why children did not attend school was because children were awake all night, either playing card games [e.g. Q31 and Q33], prowling or 'walking around at night' [e.g. SP06 and Q23], or they were intoxicated from marijuana [CM14 and Q18]. Fourteen of 78 participants referred to 'children playing card games' as a problem in the qualitative data.

¹⁴³ The Remote Schools and Attendance Strategy was administered by the federal government's DPMC. The strategy was designed to increase school attendance rates in remote Australian Aboriginal communities. In the case study, this involved a group of community members visiting parents' houses to collect the children and send them to school on the bus. This was often accompanied by employees from DPMC and sometimes accompanied by officers from the Northern Territory Police.

Participants said children ‘like to win big money’ as a strong reason why children like to play card games where, according to two participants, the winnings are intended to give to their parents [Q15] or spent on drinks or at the disco [Q31]:

Children are having big money, maybe \$50 or \$100. They want to win money to give to mum and dad. They have luck to win. [Q15]

Participant Q15 indicates that children are drawn to card games because of the attractiveness of financial gain where participants perceived children to ‘have luck to win’. Another participant similarly highlighted that children want to play cards to ‘make money’:

Yes, card games is a problem. The kids want to play and make money, they don't want to go to school. People fight because the family want to share the money when he wins money and says: "But it's my luck. I want to keep it." Then there's a punch up and fighting because he won't give money. [CM10]

Participant CM10 described how children playing card games has flow-on effects for a range of other unsafe behaviours: including poor school attendance and interpersonal conflict associated with payback. In this scenario, card games contributed to interpersonal conflict when a person refused to concede to humbug.

Participants claimed that people playing card games is partially attributable to already existing financial stress, where people attempt to win money to purchase everyday household necessities or to meet their substance needs. Participants CM12 and CM13 reported that Centrelink money is insufficient to provide for a family's needs including clothes, food and power and people in Gunbalanya often use the welfare payments in an attempt to win money at card games. On the other hand, substance dependency and losses at card games is diminishing the household income. One participant indicated that card games contribute to family stress:

Card games cause stress on family. People are trying to win money for other things. When they don't have grog or ganja, it makes them stressed. It's a big problem. [CM14]

CM14 eluded to the relationship between card games and substance dependency by mentioning that some people ‘try to win money for other things’ such as alcohol or marijuana; thereby highlighting another expression of substance-dependent behaviours. Meanwhile, vulnerable people such as the elderly feel the desperate attempts to acquire money for card games and substances.

Social issues surrounding card games seem to have a considerable impact on the welfare of the elderly. Elder abuse¹⁴⁴ was an issue also discussed among participants:

People are ripping off money from the old people. They take their basics card or key card and do with it what they want. [Q50]

Sometimes they push old people around. Talk bad words, take their key card. These elders need to sit with them down and talk. [Q19]

People are hurting older people at the card place. They’re humbugging them for money and taking their card. [Q49]

These three participants identified that financial and verbal abuse of elders is an issue in Gunbalanya when some people are looking for money. This can involve the theft of an elderly person’s key card or Basics Card¹⁴⁵. Personal theft can occur where the perpetrator already used his or her financial resources on card games, alcohol consumption at the GSSC or on sly grog or marijuana use. Personal theft or ‘taking things without asking’ was a problem associated with a general pattern of substance dependency and delinquency where the social norms and controls within certain families had broken down. Reflecting upon this issue, one participant was concerned about how traditional notions of respect are being forgotten and people are not taking care of elderly persons:

Old people getting robbed all the time – people looking for money. It makes me sad when people disrespect old people. Some people go into their houses at night and take things – money. I like taking care of older

¹⁴⁴ In the literature, there are six types of elder abuse – physical, social, psychological, sexual, financial or material, and neglect. Physical abuse involves intentional infliction of pain, injury or discomfort. Financial abuse involves the illegal or improper exploitation of older people or the deprivation or use of their financial resources (Boldy, Horner, Crouchley, Davey & Boylen, 2005, p. 3).

¹⁴⁵ A Basics Card, similar to a key card, is where welfare payments are deposited and recipients are unable to use the card on prohibited items such as gambling, alcohol and pornography. The card can be used at the local store or fuel station.

ones. My father-in-law, I used to care for him: wash him, clothe him and carry him. I did all that and soon I will do that for my mum.

[CM14]

Participant CM14 described the vulnerability of the elderly when left by themselves. When alone, elderly persons are more vulnerable to personal theft and different types of abuse. Participants' requests for increased services and amenities for the elderly show the value which many Kunwinjku people place on caring for their elderly persons' needs [e.g. Q15 and Q38].

Unregulated gambling at card games was a main community safety issue¹⁴⁶ and is associated with a range of other neighbourhood problems, including marijuana misuse, mental health problems and suicide, personal and property theft, and FDV and interpersonal violence. Card games furthermore contributed other unsafe behaviours including school absenteeism, lack of parental supervision, addiction problems, jealousy and payback, and humbugging. The high perception amongst participants that card games are considered problematic among adults and children, and the intergenerational transfer of these problems, demonstrates how gambling overlaps with a range of physical and social harm in Gunbalanya.

5.4.4 Interpersonal and domestic violence

The questionnaire results showed a statistically significant relationship between FDV and five neighbourhood problems: the availability of illicit grog ($p=0.007$, $r=0.386$), marijuana use ($r=0.002$, $r=0.441$), young people using social media ($p=0.001$, $r=0.377$), prowling or 'walking around at night' ($p=0.000$, $r=0.520$), and theft from homes ($p=0.001$, $r=0.313$). Compared to the qualitative data (refer to Map 5, Appendix F), there appeared to be clear links between most of these statistical relationships and participants' in-depth experiences; although there were selected variables that did not neatly align – these were payback, jealousy and cheating.

¹⁴⁶ There is little evidence in the literature that explores the harms associated with card games in remote Aboriginal communities, with a few exceptions (Stevens & Bailie, 2012; Hing & Breen, 2014). Gambling related harms in Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations include personal harms (e.g. mental health issues including anxiety, depression and suicide), interpersonal harms (e.g. family conflict, relationships breakdown, and unintentional child neglect including school absenteeism and deprivation of basic needs), health-related harms (e.g. increasing smoking and alcohol consumption, poor diet, and non-compliance with medical interventions), financial harm (e.g. diminished household financial resources, increased debt and poverty) (Hing, Breen, Gordon, & Russell, 2014; Langham, et al., 2015; Stevens & Bailie, 2012).

Based on the quantitative analysis, the variables payback, jealousy and cheating did not show a statistically significant relationship with FDV, despite the clear relationships between these issues in the qualitative data analysis. Based on the qualitative results, expressions of anger, interpersonal violence (i.e. ‘fighting’) and FDV (i.e. ‘husband and wife fighting’) were often underlying problems that were often triggered by the three core neighbourhood problems – alcohol and substance misuse and gambling at card games.¹⁴⁷ This difference in the results suggests that FDV is a complex social phenomenon that is difficult to measure. There are still incredible amounts of shame in discussing issues concerning payback and family violence that could have contributed to an underreporting of these issues. An extensive body of literature covers these issues (Cripps, 2008; Cuneen, 2008; Willis, 2011).

Based on the mixed methods analysis, social media and prowling are issues central to this concept of community safety and which exacerbate existing social stress. I first became aware of these complex issues in the semi-structured interviews when an older participant commented:

Big problem here that young people going off, getting married and having babies too young. They are still going to school together and then who is going to look after the child? They’re too young to be parents. And they marry who they want, they don’t care for right-skin, wrong-skin¹⁴⁸. [CM17]

Participant CM17 expressed her concerns about how young people ‘marrying too quickly’ (a euphemism for sexual intercourse or promiscuity) is jeopardising traditional family values and customary marriage arrangements in Bininj law. Here, the participant refers to a young girl still in primary school who recently gave birth to her first child, where the father was a similar age. This presents a generational perspective on social issues which are contributing to social and cultural harm.

¹⁴⁷ Map 5 in Appendix A shows the thematic network analysis of the qualitative relationships for FDV and interpersonal violence.

¹⁴⁸ ‘Right-skin’ refers to the marriagable kinship relations based on the moieties, referred to as Duwa or Yirridja, system. Each person has eight different marriage possibilities based on the potential partner’s moiety. ‘Wrong skin’ refers to the non-marriageable moieties often referred to as ‘poison cousin’.

In contrast, two other participants provided a younger view on related issues:

Diva Chat is an online dating app. The little girls put their age up to 18 when they're only just budding – maybe 11 or 12 years old. Then they go prowling and looking for men – they are too young, they need to wait 'til they're older. You have to be 18 years or older to go on Diva Chat. And you don't know how old the man is that you're talking to. He could say that he's 18 or 20 when he's really 40 years old. [CM04]

Participant CM04 held the view that 'prowling' is problematic for young girls because often these girls are around the age of puberty, but they do not know 'how old the man is that you're talking to'. Participant CM04 was of the opinion that they should wait until they are older to look for a man. Whereas, the following two participants were unapproving of young girls meeting a man online:

Young girls on social media. They are on there looking for a man but they don't know what kind of man they meet online. Sometimes they think it's a young one and then they go meet him and he's like 40 years old. My sisters ask for my phone and I ask them "What you using that phone for... are you using that social media?" They say: "No, we're not on that social media because we may catch an old one." They say that they want to look at videos on YouTube and all that. [CM12, CM13]

These young women were of the opinion that spending time on social media website to 'look for a man' is unacceptable behaviour because they 'don't know what kind of man they meet online' and they 'may catch an old one'. In a later part of the interview, these participants positioned their disapproval for promiscuous behaviour based on the principles of Bininj culture:

These young girls are wearing small clothes – short skirts and small shirts. That's not our culture. The old people always taught us to wear big shirt and long skirts because cousin-brothers don't want to be looking at you. It's shaming us because we have our culture. [CM12, CM13]

These contrasting intergenerational perspectives show changes in behaviours that are considered either socially acceptable or deviant in Kunwinjku culture. This change illustrates the fractured influence Bininj law has amongst the dominant influence of Western law and culture, where the participants state that wearing short skirts is ‘not our culture’ because ‘the old people taught us’ that ‘cousin-brothers don’t want to be looking at you’ in those clothes. These cultural conflicts occur amongst a range of underlying community safety issues prone to flare up when minor issues trigger deeper systemic problems. These issues – prowling, cheating and jealousy – are strongly linked to interpersonal conflict and family violence.

Social media, prowling, jealousy¹⁴⁹ and cheating¹⁵⁰ are four intermixed problems which contribute to family violence. As described in the literature (Blagg, et al., 2018; Memmott, et al., 2001), family violence in many remote Indigenous communities can involve verbal or physical conflicts between a husband and wife and can often involve the broader family network.¹⁵¹ There were six references in the qualitative data that referred to family violence related to prowling and social media. Some participants explained:

Fighting with that Diva Chat. Because of jealousy and cheating around young people, then it makes the elders get into an argument too. We encourage kids to do the right thing, not fighting. [Q37, Q40]

Yeah, the young people sometimes rush and have wrong skin boyfriend. Then the promised skin comes and it starts fights. [Q26, Q33]

¹⁴⁹ Blagg (2016, p. 125) explains that ‘jealousing’ in the West Kimberley region of Western Australia is mechanism of young people “regulating social behaviours by ensuring people don’t become more successful, beautiful and desirable than others around them”. It involves inciting jealous fighting between partners and rivals across family groups could involve spreading rumours, attention seeking behaviours through self-harming, flirting to incite anger by one’s partner, and fear, intimidation and physical acts of partner violence.

¹⁵⁰ In this study, cheating involves actual or perceived sexual relationships, where one or more of those persons already have a significant other. In a study in northern Australia, Senior, Helmer & Chenhall (2017, pp. 208-9) find that young Indigenous women commonly accept that a boyfriend is likely to commit sexual infidelity and has more power to have sexual relationships with another woman. These young women made significant “efforts to ‘hold on to their boyfriends’” which required “careful planning, cooperation and determination”. Once this was achieved, girls would tolerate and accept a degree of violence in the relationship (Senior, Helmer & Chenhall, 2017, pp. 208-9).

¹⁵¹ Olsen and Lovett (2016) found, in a meta-analysis of the literature, there is no universal definition of Indigenous family violence. Family violence includes physical, emotional and psychological attempts and acts to control another person within the extended family which can result in fear, aggression, assault or harm on another relative, spouse, elderly or children. Olsen and Lovett (2016) state that the literature stresses the importance of a holistic definition that encompasses a range of interpersonal harms and includes men’s violence against women in the broader kinship system.

Young people walking round at night, diva chat, prowling. These are all the same problem. When they are walking around at night, the mobile don't sleep. The boy walking around to find girlfriend but sometimes he find the girlfriend have another boyfriend. Then the next day it's a very big problem. [Q23]

These participants explained that jealousy, cheating and prowling are interrelated problems that contribute to 'fighting', 'big problems' and family violence. Participants used the term 'marriage' and 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend' to refer to promiscuity and courtship that do not necessarily involve an ongoing relationship and are often euphemisms for sexual intercourse outside an ongoing relationship. Participants Q37 and Q40 show how conflict arising from jealousy and cheating can often involve the broader family perhaps when the elderly attempt to resolve the situation between families. Then participants Q26 and Q33 identify that sometimes young people already have a promised partner based on a pre-existing arrangement made by the elders under Bininj law; however, when the young people engage in a relationship that is not condoned by Bininj law then this causes intra-family conflict. Thirdly, participant Q23 explained that cheating is a problem when one of the persons is already engaged in a relationship and, the next day, this becomes 'a very big problem'.

During the interviews and questionnaires, many participants did not distinguish between interpersonal violence (i.e. fighting) and FDV¹⁵². From my understanding, the first reason for this is because of how the Kunwinjku language uses the term 'fighting'. There is no direct word for family or domestic violence in Kunwinjku as these concepts are used in English. In English, the concept of FDV captures a broad spectrum of issues such as physical, emotional, social, financial and spiritual abuse, exclusion, intimidation or alienation (Holder, et al., 2015; Olsen & Lovett, 2016). In Kunwinjku language, speakers use multiple different words to engage with the term 'domestic violence' in a way that is meaningful. To demonstrate this, upon returning to Gunbalanya in 2017 I asked a knowledgeable Kunwinjku speaker about how to translate the term 'domestic violence'. She had helped create a poster to teach people that fighting is unacceptable behaviour and the closest phrase they came up with was: *karrinahnarrenkenh bu*

¹⁵² Another reason for fewer mentions of the term 'domestic violence' and a generally higher number of missing values in the questionnaire results is likely due to the shame and stigma surrounding FDV; there is also a lack of awareness about what 'domestic violence' means in the Western context.

yiya karrini kore karriwern karrihdjare. The participant stated the closest meaning is for this phrase is ‘everyone looking after each other so there’s no trouble, no excuses’ (see Fig. 5.2).

In Gunbalanya, FDV and interpersonal violence occur within complex social and cultural systems that are continuously changing with time. Social issues, such as jealousy, cheating and payback, play out as part of the changing nature of social controls and norms in Kunwinjku society. Despite the fact that Kunwinjku social controls appear to be changing, Western cultural values are not providing the structure or control in their place. Meantime, young people’s behaviours (including promiscuity) are further weakening their social networks and personal relationships through jealousy, cheating, payback and family violence. The broader implications of behaviours, including their intergenerational impact, associated with interpersonal and family violence is further discussed in chapter six.

Fig. 5.2. Domestic violence poster in Kunwinjku



Source: Simone Georg, a publically displayed document.

5.4.5 Mental health and suicide risk

There are several issues impacting on mental health and suicide risk in Gunbalanya. The variable used to assess relationships with mental health was 'suicide risk'. Based on the quantitative results, findings suggest that there is a significant relationship with eight variables: social media ($p=0.021$, $r=0.480$), the availability of illicit grog ($p=0.000$, $r=0.236$), marijuana use ($p=0.003$, $r=0.349$), domestic violence ($p=0.011$, $r=0.536$), elder abuse ($p=0.000$, $r=0.452$), addiction-related behaviour ($p=0.000$, $r=0.600$), poor mental health ($p=0.000$, $r=0.685$) and young people walking around at night ($p=0.014$, $r=0.366$). To compare, Map 6 in Appendix F provides a thematic network analysis of the qualitative relationships that presented for the theme 'mental health issues'.

There are several euphemisms which participants used to indirectly refer to mental health issues which sometimes culminated in 'doing something bad' or 'crazy'. The issue of suicide was explained to participants with the phrase 'worry that a person might do something bad' where a brief and subtle reference was made to 'climbing a power pole' or 'walk into the bush and never come back'. These were common euphemisms used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to refer to suicide attempts or contemplations about suicide. Two participants explained how this issue was deeply felt in the community:

We have had some serious problems about suicide. A couple of months ago, we had to turn off the power because a young girl climbed up the pole. She was trying to get away from the drug dealers. [Q41]

The young ones smoking kundalk are stressing out. There was a young girl who climbed up the pole. She tried to suicide. They had to turn off the mains [electricity]. Sometimes they owe the dealer money, asking for more time but the dealer want more cash straight away. [Q37]

Participant Q37 referred to young people smoking marijuana as being 'stressed out'. Social stress and worry was a strong theme which emerged from the qualitative data and intersected with a range of different social issues where marijuana use and addiction-related behaviour were the main themes. Both the quantitative results and the above examples show how mental health issues, addiction and substance misuse are intimately linked social harms. This not only applies to marijuana use but also to alcohol consumption:

Sometimes in the evenings they want to commit suicide... People who have come back from the club and think “No I’m going to doing silly things” like commit suicide. And they disappear out into the bush...
[SP01]

Participant SP01 reported that alcohol consumption in general brings out mental health issues among some people who might ‘do silly things’ or have suicidal thoughts. Both alcohol consumption and marijuana use are associated with mental health issues and suicide risk.

As discussed earlier¹⁵³, participants used the term ‘when they don’t have kundalk, they go bengwar’ to describe that some people with substance dependency issues ‘go crazy’ when they are unable to find or purchase the substance. Three participants explained how users behave when they are unable to acquire the substance:

When people can’t find kundalk they get really stressed out. They bang on the house and the fence, causing problems. [Q49]

Too much worry is a very big problem. When some people don’t have money for kundalk or kunbang they go bengwar. They walk around talking like crazy person saying they want to hang themselves or other time they climb up the [power] pole. [Q23]

When there’s a bengwar man who comes and asks for money, I just give it to him. I say: “Here take it, it’s your money. Make your own choice how to spend it.” That’s because I don’t want him to hang himself over drugs. [Q50]

Participants Q49, Q23 and Q50 described the range of behaviours that they associate with substance dependency, which include ‘getting stressed out’, ‘they go bengwar’ which means ‘crazy’ in Kunwinjku, and they ‘walk around talking like crazy person’ which indicates potential suicidal behaviour. Furthermore, two other participants used a different phrase to describe how people get stressed in the absence of marijuana:

¹⁵³ Already this chapter showed the relationship between marijuana use and the range of correlated unsafe behaviours, and this section specifically delves into how mental health issues are correlated with marijuana use.

We want to help with mental health. Otherwise, they come looking for bakki¹⁵⁴, walking around in the hot sun. Even older people too. Sometimes the older people don't go outside for fresh wind, clean air. They need to spend more time in the bush. [SP02, SP03]

In a group discussion, participants SP02 and SP03 stated that sometimes a person 'walks around in the hot sun' because he or she is stressed out when the person does not have cigarettes or marijuana. These behaviours portray a scenario where a person is struggling to meet the needs of their dependency and is contemplating 'doing something silly' or 'something bad'.

In a different interview, I asked a participant why there are people who 'walk around the in hot sun'. Throughout the interview, this participant emphasised the problems young people face in managing "big problems with grog, kundalk and thinking bad things". As already mentioned, participant CM04 was of the view that marijuana use alone is not a big problem, however it causes significant problems when people are unable to acquire marijuana including family fighting and mental health issues. She further explained 'young people getting stressed' was a big issue and why:

Maybe they are thinking about finding a boyfriend. I sometimes say to them "sit down, calm down and let the thing go away." This is important for young girls because otherwise they may do something bad¹⁵⁵. They need someone to talk to, just like I talk to my girls. [CM44]

What participant CM14 explained above is further supported by the quantitative results. The results show there is a significant relationship between suicide risk, young people using social media, and young people walking around at night. CM14 suggested that young girls might experience mental health problems because they are 'thinking about finding a boyfriend', which provides an alternate view on the issue.

Based on the qualitative data, euphemisms may also be a way of indirectly referring to a sensitive matter which is socially stigmatised. This was evident in the qualitative data in how people use different euphemisms to refer to substance dependency behaviour, mental health issues and suicide, for example. At the same time, participant SP06 suggested that there is a

¹⁵⁴ 'Bakki' means cigarettes in Kunwinjku.

¹⁵⁵ Reference to suicide-risk.

lack of awareness amongst community members about what constitutes ‘poor mental health’, which could be another reason why people use euphemisms – to make sense of their external physical experiences using a different form of social expression.

Similar to other Aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land (Burbank, 2011) and elsewhere (Phillips, 2003), these findings showed how the accumulation of different forms of social stress places great strain on participants’ relationships and many experience considerable anxiety. In addition, participants discussed other issues occurring within their family networks that place greater strain on participants’ daily lives: financial constraints and poverty, humbug, death and funerals, family separation, and a lack of parental support or guidance. The accumulation of these different financial, physical and social problems contributes to broader experience of collective stress and worry. The broader problems of community-wide trauma, social stress and worry, as part of underlying mental health issues, are further analysed in section 6.5.

5.4.6 Dangerous driving and road safety

Dangerous driving was a theme that emerged from the semi-structured interviews and from my own personal experiences. On two occasions, I was walking around in my neighbourhood when I witnessed young children, who could barely see over the steering wheel, hooning around on the dirt road which backed onto the billabong. Both incidents occurred at times of the day when the Night Patrol did not operate: one time in the early evening when I knew the staff would be getting ready for work and, a second time, on a Sunday afternoon when I was taking care of an elderly lady walking around in the peak of the day’s heat. I then enquired about this issue using the questionnaires and found that, based on the mean results referred to in Fig. 5.1, dangerous driving was one of the main issues perceived to be a problem amongst participants in Gunbalanya.

Based on the quantitative analysis, the variable ‘dangerous driving’ has a statistically significant relationship with six variables: the availability of illicit alcohol ($p=0.000$, $r=0.275$), public intoxication ($p=0.015$, $r=0.164$), young people using social media ($p=0.044$, $r=0.369$) and young people walking around at night ($p=0.022$, $r=0.326$), theft from homes ($p=0.000$, $r=0.260$), and a lack of parental supervision ($p=0.002$, $r=0.446$). Map 7 in Appendix F shows the qualitative relationships associated with dangerous driving and road safety. Comparing the

mixed methods results suggests that dangerous driving (1) is a feature of youth delinquency and ‘trouble-making’, and (2) sometimes occurs because of theft associated with alcohol misuse and payback.

There were 19 different references in the qualitative data where participants referred to dangerous driving as a public safety issue:

The other week someone was dangerous driving. They nearly missed the pole over there and nearly missed our fence. My little boy was shaking, really scared. I told him: “Don’t worry. We sit down and pray, it’ll be alright. The Lord Jesus will help us.” [Q18]

Participants commonly mentioned that dangerous driving is a problem because children could be playing on the road or an elderly person could be crossing the road. On one occasion, a participant mentioned the people playing card games should not engage in that activity on the street because someone could be dangerous driving. Meanwhile, four participants [CM03, CM04, CM12, CM13] highlighted that basic situational prevention techniques could easily address the problem, these being speed bumps and speed limit signs. Two participants [CM03, CM04] requested that the police assist by checking license and registration details.

Some suggested that dangerous driving occurs as part of socially disruptive behaviour amongst young men:

When the river is down, outside grog comes in and it disrupts our sleep. There’s too much drinking, partying and loud music, hooning. It’s not good for our children’s health. We should have respect for our elderly as well. [Q38]

Participant Q38 associated dangerous driving with ‘too much drinking and partying’ in the evening. For the participant, the inability to get adequate sleep impacted on one’s health with children and the elderly being particularly affected. The participant’s reference to ‘respect for our elderly’ is significant here. On numerous occasions, my acquaintances in Gunbalanya made references to not being able to sleep because there was sly grog around and people are partying all night. I asked several people “why do they do this?” and the response was “*because they have no respect*” [CM10, CM15 and CM08]. What constitutes ‘respectful behaviour’ is explored in chapter seven.

Below, these participants described ‘dangerous driving’ in relation to a range of other road safety issues including hooning, ‘doing doughnuts’ and ‘wheelies’:

Driving car and playing loud music late at night. Sometimes drinking at home and playing loud music. [Q47]

It’s unsafe when people are driving fast, doing doughnuts and there are drunks around, especially these young boys. [Q51]

Always there’s people driving fast – speeding – and people driving without a license. They’re thinking it’s a game, doing wheelies and burnouts. But they’re not listening to us. [Q37]

Participants Q47 and Q52 associated dangerous driving with other public disturbances, such as loud music and times when there are ‘drunks around’. Participant Q37 found that speeding vehicles and unlicensed driving was problematic for community safety, as well as other types of dangerous driving such as ‘doing wheelies and burnouts’.

Two participants [CM12, CM13] mentioned that ‘dangerous driving’ happens irrespective of whether people are drunk or sober, while nine participants associated dangerous driving with intoxication, drug use and a range of public disturbances. Of the later view, these participants commented:

Drinking and drug driving is a big problem. [Q27]

Driving car and playing loud music late at night. Sometimes drinking at home and playing loud music. [Q47]

I don’t want my people getting hurt. But they’re getting outside grog, you know – cutting grog from outside. Then they drink and drive without thinking that they might get accident. We want to save them. Be strong together and help each other. [Q37]

These participants indicated that illicit grog and other drugs are the issues that contribute to dangerous driving, and this is a likely contributor to ‘playing loud music at night’ as well.

Two participants highlighted incidents when individuals described scenarios where dangerous driving was connected with vehicle theft and payback:

Sometimes if the person is drunk and they humbug for money. The person doesn't want to give grog money so the other one gets angry. They take the car and go driving around, because of payback. Sometimes with no license too. [Q18]

Sometimes they don't have license. Or when they're drunk, they just take the keys and go driving. [Q19]

Participants Q18 and Q19 clearly described how intoxication from illicit grog can have significant flow-on effects including humbug and consequent theft and payback. In addition, participant Q33 stated that *“people stealing cars for grog running is a big problem”*. Consuming alcohol in a prescribed community is not a legal offence, although these examples show how this behaviour can quickly lead to an individual becoming involved with illegal acts such as property theft, driving without a licence, driving while intoxicated and transporting liquor into a prescribed area. This shows how unsafe behaviours, which might be considered antisocial behaviours in a Western context, can quickly lead to early engagement in crime and interaction with the criminal justice system for petty offences.¹⁵⁶

Dangerous driving was a neighbourhood problem associated with the availability of illicit alcohol and intoxication in Gunbalanya. The act of dangerous driving influenced several other variables, including public disturbances, peer pressure and theft, which suggested that these unsafe behaviours are a symptom of broader patterns of youth delinquency. These reoccurring patterns of behaviour, and their interactions with others at the interpersonal level in the social ecological system, can have broader implications and ongoing effects for those involved. Dangerous driving notably affects the perceived interpersonal safety of children and elderly persons. Broader patterns in youth behaviour, and their interaction with formal and informal structures at the community-level, are analysed in the following chapter.

¹⁵⁶ Anthony and Blagg (2013, p. 51) argue that, since the Northern Territory Intervention, driving-related offences (specifically, driving an uninsured vehicle, driving an unregistered vehicle, and driving unlicensed) have become increasingly policed and have “consumed the resources of the criminal justice system without positive impacts on deterrence or driver safety”.

5.5 Discussion

This chapter undoubtedly shows the complexity of relationships between social, behavioural and physical problems that are involved in defining and conceptualising community safety in Gunbalanya. The core problems at the interpersonal-level are: FDV and interpersonal violence; adults gambling at card games; and alcohol and substance misuse. These are considered ‘core problems’ due to their large range of statistical and qualitative associations with other indicators of social harm at the interpersonal and community levels. Social harms at the interpersonal level have flow-on effects for broader neighbourhood problems. These broader issues include public intoxication; mental health issues, suicide risk and addiction-related behaviours; young people loitering at night, engaging in other social disruptive behaviour and poor school attendance; promiscuity, jealousy, cheating and payback; theft and dangerous driving. There were similarities between the issues raised in this chapter and other studies conducted in the Northern Territory (Shaw & d’Abbs, 2011; Putt, et al., 2011; Willis, 2010) and Queensland (Phillips, 2003).

The complex and dynamic interaction between these social harms further demonstrates an issue raised earlier that, for community safety strategies to be effective, these strategies need to address the multiple underlying problems causing impaired safety in remote Aboriginal communities. Some of the underlying problems discussed in this chapter are alcohol and substance dependency; compulsive behaviours such as gambling; mental health issues including stress and anxiety; attitudes and behaviours towards violence; sexualised behaviour among young people; and family relationships with a lack of respect including those that allow elder abuse to occur. The social ecological framework developed in this chapter shows that strategies need to deal with the multifaceted issues by addressing both the symptomatic behaviour at the interpersonal level but also the deeply embedded behaviours at the community-level.

At the interpersonal level, the person experiencing a harmful event and the person perpetrating a harmful action have multi-directional relationships with their family members, peers and friends and people close by in their neighbourhood and household. Those actions and behaviours have broader implications for peoples’ perceptions and experience of safety. Behaviour change programs and community safety services need to tackle and address these behaviours through culturally sensitive and appropriate programs that draw on Kunwinjku

values and aspirations for enabling respectful and safe behaviours. This involves Bininj and Balanda listening to each other, helping each other, and working together on community safety issues.

There are some structural factors that enabled harmful behaviours and further contributed to ongoing neighbourhood problems. Money and financial stress emerged as themes that contributed to impaired community safety. This chapter provided examples where: (1) people financially abused the elderly to acquire their key card or money, and (2) family members were humbugged for money so individuals could purchase alcohol, marijuana or gamble. If these requests or demands for money were refused, this could result in retaliation or payback (e.g. vehicle theft or violence). The money acquired was often used to gamble and/or acquire alcohol and other drugs. But, how do broader structural conditions across the community facilitate people's engagement with harmful activities? The following chapter shows that structural factors and repeated patterns in harmful behaviour have broader implications for children's wellbeing.

6 Structural factors and harmful behaviours at the community-level

6.1 Chapter overview

The purpose of this chapter is to gain a deeper insight into how formal and informal structures influence an individual's propensity to engage in unsafe behaviours at the community-level. This is achieved by examining the neighbourhood patterns¹⁵⁷ in behaviour and structural factors which contribute to social norms and controls becoming fractured. In this chapter, formal structures are characteristics of the neighbourhood that participants report as impairing interpersonal safety; and informal structures are values, attitudes and beliefs that solidify social norms and controls. Drawing upon qualitative data, this chapter delves into the social problems underlying community safety problems in Gunbalanya which operate as distal factors in individuals' social ecological environment.

Section 6.2 provides the theoretical background, and then section 6.3 analyses how structural factors contribute to impaired community safety in Gunbalanya. The structural factors investigated are aspects of the neighbourhood environment (e.g. infrastructure, regulation or socioeconomic characteristics) that affect financial stress, employment and housing. By examining these structural factors, I seek to understand how risk factors affect individuals' abilities to navigate the adverse challenges in their lives. These risk factors, in combination with other social pressures, compound the potential for unsafe incidents to occur. Some of the interlinked behavioural issues explored are: humbugging and conflict associated with financial stress, boredom and apathy associated with unemployment, and children learning unsafe behaviours in overcrowded or transient living situations. Structural conditions foster an environment in which disengaged behaviours, such as resentment, lack of self-belief and dependency, are present amongst people reported in this study.

Harmful behaviours associated with interpersonal neighbourhood problems including youth delinquency were strong themes that arose in the previous chapter. Section 6.4 undertakes a further analysis of these concepts to explore how fractured family connections are

¹⁵⁷ By 'neighbourhood patterns', I intend to explore distal relationships that go beyond interpersonal interactions in the mesosystem. These distal patterns are factors which operate in the broader social and regulatory environments which occur independently of individual action.

enabling youth disengagement in Gunbalanya. I analyse how tensions in parent-child relationships are amplified by parents' engagement in gambling, alcohol and marijuana consumption. Additionally, potential cheating¹⁵⁸ and the related jealousy are contributing to domestic relationships breaking up, leaving a greater need for grandparents to care for their grandchildren. These two social problems are contributing to youth disengagement, a disrespect for parental and other authoritative figures amongst youth, and early-onset delinquency or propensity to engage in crime-related activities.

Section 6.5 explores how the cyclic nature of these behavioural problems has implications that are not isolated to these individuals involved. Community violence¹⁵⁹, intergenerational transfer and trauma, including social stress and worry, are underlying conditions that affect community members, those not directly involved in perpetrating neighbourhood problems, as well as those affected by substance and behavioural dependency. The ongoing nature of these problems is having an intergenerational transfer or effect on the normalisation of community violence and addiction in Gunbalanya. These conditions further contribute to the fracturing of family relationships as social norms and controls are less able to manage disorderly behaviour. These are ongoing challenges for community safety where the literature suggests that, for interventions to be effective, a whole-of-community strategy is needed that grapples with the deeply embedded and multifaceted issues that have been passed down through generations (Libesman, 2004; Stanley, Tomison & Pocock, 2003; Atkinson et al., 2010; Purdie, Dudgeon & Walker, 2010; Capobianco, 2006).

6.2 Theoretical background

Social disorganisation theory directly links perpetration and experience of crime to a neighbourhood's ecological characteristics. An individual's neighbourhood environment is a substantial factor in shaping the likelihood that a person will engage in harmful or crime-related

¹⁵⁸ Based on the interview data, the transcripts were not clear how often the alleged cheating actually occurred in reality. Certainly, there were occasions when cheating occurred, and this exacerbated tensions and conflict between families; however, there were occasions where participants raised the issue that allegations of cheating and jealousy equally created their own tensions and conflict.

¹⁵⁹ The 'normalisation of violence' refers to situations where intimidations, threats, arousing fear or acts of violence become a regular expression of human behaviour, to the extent that the persons involved do not distinguish this behaviour as irregular, unwanted and unacceptable (Cripps & Adams, 2014). I recognise that 'family violence' is the most appropriate term to use for violence that occurs amongst spouses and kin in Aboriginal family networks (Olsen & Lovett, 2016). I use the term 'community violence' to emphasise that findings suggest that anger, aggression, intimation and conflict appear to be widespread and normalised across the community, and often involve intra-family conflict.

behaviour. Central to this theory, social disorganisation refers to the fracturing of informal structures – including social norms and relationships as well as shared values, beliefs and goals – which communities need to maintain effective social controls (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Literature on social disorganisation theory is primarily based on large-scale quantitative studies that are predominantly Western and urban-focused (Kaylen & Pridemore, 2013).

Rural, intra-rural and remote experiences of crime, and the correlations between structural characteristics in these types of areas and high crime rates, is a small but growing area of interest in academic literature (Donnermeyer, 2016; Jobes, Barclay, Donnermeyer & Weinand, 2000; Jobes, Donnermeyer & Barclay, 2005). Only a few notable studies have examined Indigenous experiences and perceptions of crime in rural or remote areas (Behrendt, et al., 2016; Cunneen, 2016). Little is known about the relationship between structural conditions in Indigenous communities, social disorganisation (including the fragmentation and breakdown in social controls), and Indigenous peoples' experiences and perceptions of harm, violence and crime.

In Indigenous societies, colonisation is widely recognised to have created the structures of disadvantage which foster experiences and opportunities for crime and violence (Blagg, 2016; Cunneen, 2018; Atkinson et al., 2010; Cripps & Adams, 2010). There is a feasible rationale for utilising a structural oriented theory as, generally, Indigenous societies are found to have similar socio-demographic characteristics compared to other disadvantaged communities. These characteristics include high poverty rates, residential instability due to overcrowded housing, high unemployment rates due to lack of opportunities in rural and remote areas, and a reliance on welfare (Cunneen, 2016; McCausland & Vivian, 2010; Behrendt, et al., 2016). Jobes et al. (2005) suggest that high rates of social disorganisation have much more to do with the structural characteristics of a neighbourhood than the population characteristics (i.e. Indigeneity). They argue that social cohesion and integration are more important factors, compared to Indigeneity, when considering crime rates and community functioning in rural Australian communities (Jobes et al., 2005).

This chapter extends the literature in this field by exploring the formal and informal structural characteristics that contribute to the perpetration of harmful behaviours in Gunbalanya; which in turn, impair the community's capability to realise common goals and mobilise the controls needed to reduce delinquent behaviour and improve safety. The findings show that the structural characteristics of the Gunbalanya community create opportunities for

youth delinquency and other harmful behaviours to occur, and the perpetuation of crime and harmful behaviour contributes to social fragmentation and disintegration of social norms and controls. The reoccurring nature of crime and harmful behaviour erodes informal structures, particularly parental responsibilities, social networks and family cohesion, which is further exacerbated by the disadvantaged structural conditions in this community.

This chapter draws on literature on risk factors to show that many of the experiences depicted by participants are also evident in broader trends in Australian populations. Risk factors are traditionally used in areas of developmental prevention to assess and predict the probability that individuals will engage in violent and crime-related behaviour, based on a range of pre-existing social conditions (France, et al., 2010; R. Homel, 2005). This chapter is not concerned with the predictability of ‘risk’, but rather what this body of literature says about the social conditions that lead individuals to engage in violent and crime-related behaviour.

This chapter demonstrates that the neighbourhood and social problems identified are not distinctly ‘Aboriginal’ but more broadly part of the community’s experience in being socially, financially and economically disadvantaged. This chapter uses indicators of social disorganisation to relate Aboriginal perspectives on harmful and unsafe behaviour to the broader literature. In doing this, the findings demonstrate that informal and formal structures of Indigenous societies are more important in understanding criminal behaviour than racial and geographic identifiers. The chapter shows that, when proximal factors are ongoing patterns in harmful behaviour, these contribute to social fragmentation at the community-level (i.e. distal factors) in the social ecological framework. Overall these findings show that, to reduce interpersonal and community-level harm in Gunbalanya, interventions also need to focus on improving the socioeconomic conditions in the community (e.g. through increased engagement in employment and education) and work with the community to repair the social fabric of Kunwinjku society.

6.3 Structural conditions contributing to unsafe and harmful behaviours

This section examines how some formal structural conditions create opportunities for unsafe incidents to occur. The formal structural conditions examined are: (1) a lack of employment opportunities and dependence on welfare payments, and the implications this has for (2) youth

boredom, (3) financial stress and poverty, and (4) overcrowded housing. These structural conditions, combined with associated behavioural factors including boredom and apathy, transient living spaces and humbugging, create compounding conditions in which unsafe incidents can occur.

6.3.1 Lack of employment opportunities

A lack of employment opportunities, poverty and individuals' reliance on income support are ongoing issues for remote Indigenous Australia which undeniably influence interpersonal safety. Based on their analysis of the 2010 and 2016 Census results, Markham and Biddle (2018) found that median household incomes for Indigenous Australians living in remote areas have declined since the 2010 Census, while median incomes amongst urban Indigenous Australians have increased. At the 2016 Census, Indigenous residents in very remote areas earned a median household income of \$389 per week in very remote areas and those living in urban areas earned a median income of \$647 (Markham & Biddle, 2018, pp. 21-22). In the Jabiru-Tiwi area (SA3), where Gunbalanya is located, the median household income has fallen by \$32 dollars since 2010. In 2016, 67.7 per cent of residents in this area earned below the 'cash poverty' rate¹⁶⁰ (Markham & Biddle, 2018, pp. 21-31).

Although the exact reasons for these findings are not clear, Markham and Biddle (2018) suggest one reason could be the increasing penalisation of welfare recipients in remote areas who are found to be non-compliant with conditional welfare requirements. Furthermore, I suggest that another reason for the decrease in average income in remote regions could be because, under the former Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) recipients received 'top-up' money when they completed additional activities, and now under the recent change to CDP¹⁶¹ this is no longer offered. Other authors have similarly noted that the CDP is increasing financial hardship in other remote areas of the Northern Territory (Jordan & Fowkes, 2016; Kral, 2016). In this study, participants reported that suspension of welfare payments, as

¹⁶⁰ 'Cash poverty' rate refers to an income-based approach to defining poverty rather than one that encompasses material need, economic circumstances and social relationships (Markham & Biddle, 2018, p. 27).

¹⁶¹ The CDP program commenced on 1 July 2015 and aims to provide remote Indigenous Australians with flexible activities with the aim of reducing welfare dependency. CDP participants are required to undertake work-like activities for 25 hours per week. If those requirements are not met, then their welfare payments are suspended (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018a). Recent literature on the CDP program found that, since implementation, the program has not offered flexible approaches to engaging welfare recipients, it has contributed to social and financial stress and has not offered participants pathways into ongoing employment (Jordan, 2016; Jordan & Fowkes, 2016).

part of the CDP's administration process, contributed to increased financial and social stress in the household [CM10, Q18], and some people worried that welfare suspensions were contributing to suicide-risk amongst their family members.

Unemployment, including CDP employment, welfare dependency and financial stress are known risk factors for Indigenous perpetration of crime (Weatherburn, 2014; Weatherburn, et al., 2008; Wundersitz, 2010). Unsurprisingly, an individual's previous interaction with the criminal justice system is also a barrier to gaining ongoing employment and those who have been incarcerated previously are more likely to be unemployed or CDEP¹⁶² employed (Dodson & Hunter, 2002). Low socioeconomic status, a lack of employment opportunities and boredom were intertwined themes which emerged from the qualitative data in this study. One service provider identified that, from his perspective, low socioeconomic status can be a risk factor in an already complex social and behavioural environment. I asked the participant which 'risk factors' he thought contributed to 'community safety' in Gunbalanya¹⁶³, and he responded:

It comes down to the socioeconomic component of a remote Indigenous community. The risk factors increase because of boredom and unemployment are obviously the big ones. Then you have the roll-on effect of that with card games and parents staying up late... [SP06]

Participant SP06 stated that in his opinion unemployment, and consequently boredom, are risk factors which drive people to gamble with the hope of being 'lucky' and enhancing their household income. Further to this, in a different interview, participant CM13 mentioned that welfare payments are "*not enough so people want to win money for kids' food and school*", which provides deeper insight into participant SP06's remarks about card games. Participant SP06 went on to explain that card games have roll-on effects across the community:

... There's the alcohol and the domestic violence that we were talking about before and the roll-on effect that has with probably the mental state with kids, you know becoming detached because of families fighting or they have no money. A lot of the break-ins here in community at the houses or the shop aren't for money or for phones or

¹⁶² CDEP was a government sponsored part-time employment program where participants were paid a wage for the minimum of 15 hours' work, which was roughly equivalent to the hourly rate for the minimum award. Participants had the option to undertake additional hours of work for 'top-up' money, which was added to their wage. This program run until 2011 in remote areas of Australia.

¹⁶³ I asked participant SP06 about 'risk factors' because the individual stated that their organisation's program aimed to reduce risk factors among young people.

anything like that – it's for the food – because of the roll-on effect of card games. [SP06]

The participant described how living without basic daily needs, such as food, impacts on the mental health of children. In this example, gambling diminishes the meagre financial resources available in the household and can deprive children of these basic daily needs.¹⁶⁴ This occurs in households experiencing other complex issues, including where children witness FDV and intoxication around the home. This is one example of how children can become 'detached' from family life and engage in youth delinquency¹⁶⁵; and furthermore it highlights how poverty can provide the structural conditions which lead an individual to engage in crime.

A different participant added another element to this link between detachment and risk factors for youth delinquency:

Parents are spending the kids' money on card games. Money from job payment or Newstart – same thing – is used for cards. Then there is no money for food. Kids are worried for food and they don't want to go to school. [Q23]

Participant Q23 identified that some parents prioritise spending their welfare payments on gambling at card games instead of purchasing adequate food and household resources for the family. Because of this behaviour, children experience hunger when there is insufficient food, which creates 'worry' and social stress, thereby creating another barrier for school attendance among children.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Deprivations of a child's basic needs indicate that child abuse and neglect are present to some degree. According to Stanley, Tomison, and Pocock (2003), the Western definition of child abuse and neglect encompasses: (1) **sexual abuse** where a child is exposed to sexual processes beyond his or her understanding, (2) **physical abuse** where a carer inflicts any non-accidental injury upon a child, (3) **emotional abuse** where an act by a carer results in the child suffering a significant emotional deprivation or trauma, and (4) **neglect** where a carer fails to provide the appropriate and necessary conditions that are essential for a child's healthy physical and emotional development. In contrast, Indigenous authors on child abuse and neglect assert that child neglect needs to be considered from an Indigenous standpoint, and within the frame of historical trauma and Indigenous family violence which need to encompass a whole-of-family perspective (Atkinson, Nelson, & Atkinson, 2010; Cripps & McGlade, 2008).

¹⁶⁵ Section 6.4 provides a deeper insight into issues surrounding youth delinquency, however for now I draw upon how the formal structural conditions in neighbourhoods are contributing to children becoming 'detached' and engaging in delinquent behaviour.

¹⁶⁶ The local school provides breakfast and lunch on each school day, which one would think is a 'pull factor' for children to attend school. But, in an environment where the children witness compounding social harms including violence, gambling and material deprivation, these compounding risk factors possibly overwhelm the 'pull factors'.

A lack of employment opportunities was identified as a problem by some participants. Bininj residents experience barriers to gaining employment in the few positions available, including the inability to gain a ‘working with vulnerable people card’¹⁶⁷ or a driver’s licence and inadequate literacy or numeracy skills. In addition, participants reported that Bininj residents perceive themselves to be further disadvantaged in the limited employment markets when opportunities were outsourced to ‘outsiders’ or Balanda. Aboriginal participants were sometimes reluctant to talk about this directly, which was undoubtedly influenced by my position as a ‘whitefella’ who was seen to be ‘working’ in the community. Of the two participants who talked about this problem, the first one declared:

There are too many balanda councillors running the council here and too many Balanda that are contractors here and employees. We are giving them accommodation and opportunities that should be going to Bininj mob. [CM06]

Participant CM06 declared his frustrations with the lack of community ownership over local governance administration, including the council and contracted services. Not only was he frustrated that non-Indigenous people were being favoured in terms of employment but contracting ‘outsiders’, as tradespeople and builders, was occupying accommodation that could be given to Bininj people. This is something that I also witnessed as, on any given day, there is a constant flurry of contractors and fly-in fly-out service providers who are employed from elsewhere. Meanwhile, there is a large portion of the Aboriginal population who are either underemployed or without the opportunity to transition to long-term employment.

A second participant raised further questions about the same problem, specifically the perceived lack of employment opportunities for Bininj people compared to ‘outsiders’. The participant said:

There’s not enough jobs here. There’s a problem somewhere because people are still on Newstart¹⁶⁸. They go to JobFind¹⁶⁹ and they’re doing

¹⁶⁷ In the Northern Territory, as in other states and territories in Australia, all persons involved in voluntary or paid employment involving children are required to pass a ‘Working with Children Clearance’ check, in accordance with the *Care and Protection of Children Act* (Northern Territory of Australia, 2011). If an individual has been charged with a violence-related offence, this is an obvious impediment to gaining a ‘Working with Children Clearance’ check.

¹⁶⁸ This is a reference to a welfare payment for a recipient who is unemployed and looking for work.

¹⁶⁹ JobFind is the service provider who administers the federal government’s employment program in Gunbalanya.

those activities. And there are many Balanda working in this community. There's a problem somewhere there. [Q27]

Participant Q27 was concerned that too Bininj people are reliant upon welfare supports. The participant aptly pointed out that there are many young people searching for employment, are attending activities as part of their conditional access to welfare¹⁷⁰, but cannot find employment. This comment points to the potential lack of emphasis that the CDP system places on matching applicants with genuine employment and their lack of capacity to transition people from CDP activities, which is essentially a form of welfare, to ongoing employment. This is a problem also highlighted in recent scholarship focusing on the CDP program's effects on Indigenous people in Australian states and territories (Jordan & Fowkes, 2016). Earlier, participant SP06 referred to boredom as being a risk factor which will now be examined in further detail.

6.3.2 Boredom and a lack of motivation

Boredom is a known risk factor for offending in Indigenous populations (Wundersitz, 2010). In this study, the qualitative findings show that a lack of employment opportunities further contribute to boredom, a lack of motivation and apathy. Two participants phrased their concerns over youth boredom in terms of their positive aspirations for young people:

Stay here for a better life and younger people playing sports. They can wake up and play games. Instead of staying home bored and then going to the Club. [Q56]

Kids have nothing to do, they're just sitting around. They could go fishing or bush walking. More sports and gym-exercise, like they have in the city. They need to open the swimming pool seven days per week. Keep the kids busy. [Q42]

Participants [Q56 and Q42] described situations where young people or kids could be engaging in positively reinforcing activities such as playing sports including swimming or other games, and fishing and bush walking¹⁷¹; whereas some youth choose to engage in negatively

¹⁷⁰ Policy and administration issues concerning welfare conditionality were discussed in chapter four.

¹⁷¹ Activities such as fishing and hunting are furthermore made difficult by the sedentary nature of community life (which is a product of colonisation and the missionary era). The lack of employment opportunities constrains household income and limits their ability to acquire a vehicle and afford the vehicle's ongoing maintenance costs.

reinforcing activities, where boredom becomes a risk factor for alcohol misuse (i.e. drinking at the GSSC).¹⁷²

The dysfunctional nature of employment services could reinforce this perceived helplessness and sense of disempowerment to change their own personal circumstances. A third Indigenous participant commented on the association between boredom and neighbourhood problems:

Boredom is a problem too. There are a few jobs and it's difficult with the JobFind appointments, reports and activities... Sometimes they don't believe me that I have back pain. I showed them the medical certificates, but they still want me to do activities. [CM10]

Participant CM10 pointed to the dysfunctional nature of the CDP program and its inadequacy in addressing intractable social harms, including boredom and a lack of employment opportunities. In this example, the participant explained that youth boredom and mental health are issues in the neighbourhood, which is furthermore compounded by the lack of employment opportunities and dysfunctional nature of the CDP program. The system dysfunction is subtly indicated in the participant's phrase 'sometimes they don't believe me' and 'I showed them a medical certificate, but they still want me to do activities'.¹⁷³

To sum up, financial stress and poverty are problematic for community safety because these drive people to wager their meagre household resources on card games in an attempt to 'win money' to provide for their family. A lack of employment opportunities, boredom and apathy are prominent, where system dysfunction reinforces these problems. In the following section, people's experiences of poverty are explored as a structural factor which has behavioural effects. Living in poverty encourages people to engage in unsafe behaviours, such as humbugging and theft; meanwhile these unsafe behaviours impair family wellbeing through financial stress.

¹⁷² Generally, there is no shortage of programs and activities for school-aged children although one service provider [SP06] highlighted that the early adult age group is 'difficult to engage' because, from his perspective, once youth have reached puberty or have undertaken initiation ceremony, they view themselves as adults and therefore are not required to attend school or participate in school-related activities [SP06].

¹⁷³ Here the participant points to a mismatch between how the CDP administrative system conceives of 'compliance failure' compared to the experience of Aboriginal people in remote areas. Based on her research in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands in central Australia, Kral (2016) explains that compliance failures result if "an individual is registered as absent from activities with a 'valid' reason" and, consequently, the welfare recipient's payment will be docked or suspended accordingly. Community members often struggled to manage 'compliance failures' due to limited English-language abilities.

6.3.3 Financial stress and ‘humbug’

‘Humbug’ is a common Australian term used to describe a nuisance or disturbance. In Australian Indigenous contexts, humbug specifically refers to repetitive demands for resources (e.g. cash) or services (e.g. a lift across town) where related-family members make demands of other kin. A person being humbugged is often culturally obligated to meet the demand. In the anthropology literature, Peterson (2013, p. 167) uses the term “demand sharing” to refer to this practice where demand sharing is defined as an “everyday asymmetrical reciprocity” which takes place in response to demands from kin without incurring a debt.

The modern practice of demand sharing is an adaptation of traditional sharing relationships in the hunter-gatherer society, as remote Aboriginal societies adjust to the scarce resources available in the welfare society. In the modern context, the traditional authority system within the kinship system has been fractured, and according to Peterson (2013), through referring to skin-relations anyone can be found to have a skin relationship to anyone else. This notion of ‘demand sharing’ is widely used by anthropologists¹⁷⁴, however their notion of the concept contrasts with how people in Gunbalanya articulated the harmful behaviours associated with humbug.

Twenty-three participants referred to stress and conflict associated with money on 32 different occasions during the interviews. I draw upon this data to demonstrate the relationship between financial stress and humbug. Participants used two separate terms to refer to either ‘sharing’ as a reciprocal exchange of resources to support family members in financial need, or alternatively, they used the term ‘humbug’ to refer to requests for money to purchase grog or ganja or gamble at card games. The latter type of demand (i.e. ‘humbug’) could easily turn into harassment or verbal and physical abuse when family members attempt to refuse humbug, which participants considered problematic for community safety.¹⁷⁵ This section explores how humbug, interpersonal conflict and financial stress are mutually reinforcing behaviours that contribute to structural factors underpinning neighbourhood problems in Gunbalanya.

¹⁷⁴ See e.g., Altman (2011), D. Martin (2011) and Keen (2013).

¹⁷⁵ While I attempt to create a distinction between ‘humbugging’ and ‘sharing’, in reality the difference between the two social processes is complex and an inescapable everyday part of life in Gunbalanya. Distinguishing what is ‘humbug’ is often subjective because what is considered ‘stressful’ and a pestering demand for me would be different for someone who lives in the community. Non-Indigenous people particularly those with ‘adopted’ family are not immune to demands for ‘sharing’ or ‘humbug’. These are simply part of the reciprocal exchange in being part of the community.

People often said that young people are common (but not exclusive) perpetrators of humbug for money to buy substances or gamble. From the 24 participants who mentioned that unsafe incidents arose in relation to money, 11 identified that humbug for alcohol and other substances or card games was the source of conflict. An example, this participant explained:

Young people don't have money, they rely on us and ask us for money. Then they buy the grog at \$200 per bottle sometimes or ganja at \$100, \$150 or sometimes \$200 per piece. Sometimes we don't have money because of our medical needs. We share with each other but everyone else is in the same situation. [Q51]

Participant Q51 explained the desperate lengths that some people go to in order to acquire illicit grog because, in the informal trade, a bottle of hard liquor can cost \$200 per bottle and ganja can cost from \$100 to \$200 per 'piece'. The participant then referred to the need to 'share with each other' as part of a local practice in which family members provide mutual support, which is a social strength.¹⁷⁶ However, the broader impact of financial stress is felt across the community.

Humbug is a safety problem both for the alcohol or drug user and for the broader family network. Attempts to 'say no' was a thread in the qualitative data but this presented opportunities for alcohol or drug users to engage in acts of aggression and physical violence to achieve their desires, which often involved extorting money from family members. In a group interview, two participants detailed their concerns:

When they're drunk, they go humbugging sick people and elderly people. Then they use that money to go to the club. If they say 'no' there's trouble, payback. Fights start happening. We want sick people safe from humbugging. [CM12]

It happens when I go to the club with my son. I buy him sweets and a drink. People ask me for money. I just say: "I only have money for my son." Then they wait outside and start problems with me. [CM13]

Participant CM12 explains that 'drunk people' humbug 'sick people' and elderly persons for money to use on purchasing alcohol and other substances. If this request is denied, the person

¹⁷⁶ Given that humbugging is both an annoyance and part of everyday life for many people in the case study, the term 'sharing' could be a defensive term to deflect the extra attention this could warrant from family members, in the form of payback.

causes an argument or conflict as a form of payback or retaliation, an issue raised previously. There is an implicit meaning behind the participants' words in that, from one perspective, humbugging can also mean coercion or force for a person to hand over the money requested. Yet, at the same time, use of the term 'theft' was rarely (if ever) used by participants to describe 'taking money without asking' or 'humbugging for money'. Other participants described similar incidents.

There are several examples where participants subtly or indirectly referred to threats or coercion associated with 'humbug'. Two of these included the following:

The person comes to us with humbug. We say we don't like that and "go sleep, take a rest". We don't like humbug. Then next minute there's a big problem. [Q37]

High school kids not going to school. They need to learn something for their future. Some of them graduate but I don't know what for. They don't get a job. They're asking Mum and Dad for money sometimes. Then they say no good words when the Mum and Dad doesn't give money. [Q15]

These examples describe the arguments and conflicts that arise from humbugging, including household disturbances, bad language and people creating 'big problems'¹⁷⁷. Participant Q37 subtly referred to humbugging creating conflict, trouble or arguments when this person attempted to refuse demands. In the second example, participant Q15 described a situation where a young person verbal assaulted his or her parents because they refused to provide money when being humbugged. To this participant, both the bad language and the lack of educated behaviour is problematic for building positive social norms which is subtly indicated in the phrase 'they need to learn something for the future'. Other participants [CM12, Q56] also mentioned this association between 'being educated' and positive social norms.

To gain an alternate perspective on problematic behaviours associated with humbug, I asked a non-Indigenous participant about his views on safety problems related to humbug. He identified that poor social controls is part of humbug:

¹⁷⁷ As previously mentioned, 'big problem' and 'trouble' are often-used euphemisms for fighting, arguments or conflict.

I have heard many stories of less controlled people going into auntie or uncle's house, not even asking, and just going into their fridge. That's not an uncommon thing. That is humbug. [CM16]

Participant CM16 described a scenario where a young person 'takes food without asking' which, from a Western perspective, could be considered theft however is not recognised as such in the community. He was of the view that 'humbug' negatively affected employment outcomes when strong social controls are not in place:

... The weight of expectation has negative effects across the board. It has a negative effect on people who have been employed with jobs. So therefore, they have been earning a decent wage and they get descended on when it comes to pay day, and it is truly stressful for a lot of those people. In the end, they probably end up with less than they would have if they just stayed on social security payments, where they wouldn't get humbugged to the extent because they aren't seen as the cash cow. And that leads them with giving up. [CM16]

Sense of obligation and 'weight of expectation' compel individuals to give material possessions upon request. As the participant explained, this has negative consequences for broader aspects of community life where the practice creates social stress and an additional barrier to long-term, sustained employment. This does not happen to all people who are engaged in employment but certainly those who do not have the strong leadership to withstand strong demands and associated threats. In comparison, another non-Indigenous participant explained that employed individuals receive humbug "*quite severely for money to play cards – threatening and fear are felt*" [SP05].

Participants viewed humbug as problematic because it reinforces a sense of distrust in distant kin relations [CM13] and, further contributes to the fracturing of those relationships, when an attempt to refuse humbug is met with harsh language, threats, and conflict. Meanwhile, participants viewed sharing resources, such as money for a pre-paid power card or the profits of a successful hunting trip, to benefit close family members as examples of social strengths. These practices differ between families where collective social norms are established and practiced by those with the authority to enforce their own social expectations. In the words of a participant CM15 "*people don't bring that trouble here because they know who I am*". I

now move on to discuss how overcrowded and transient housing impacts on neighbourhood problems.

6.3.4 Overcrowded housing

Overcrowded housing is a known risk factor for Indigenous and non-Indigenous offending and violent victimisation (Bryant & Willis, 2008; Friedman, 2010; Sampson, Morenoff & Gannon-Rowley, 2002; Wundersitz, 2010). In a study involving surveys with 159 respondents in four Australian states and territories, Willis (2010, pp. 16-17) found that over 90 per cent of participants viewed overcrowded homes as a serious or very serious problem affecting community safety, including interpersonal conflict and violence. Willis (2010) states that there is some evidence linking overcrowded housing (including frequent visitors and transient residential movements) in Indigenous neighbourhoods with child abuse, substance misuse and antisocial behaviour; however, there is a general lack of empirical data in this area. This section contributes to the literature by providing evidence on the link between overcrowded housing as a risk factor when it creates opportunities for unsafe incidents to occur.

The 2016 Census establishes that in Gunbalanya there are a total of 262 private dwellings with an average of 5.6 persons per household (with 2.1 persons per bedroom). This is above the national and Northern Territory averages, but similar to the person-to-bedroom ratio in nearby communities of a similar size on the mainland (ABS, 2017b)¹⁷⁸. In this study, participant CM15 questioned the accuracy of these statistics, based on her knowledge of family sizes in Gunbalanya. She questioned the Census statistics because, from her observations, there are often more than 10 people per household in a three-bedroom house (which usually has 2 toilets and 1 shower), which can fluctuate in festival seasons with Sorry Business and other activities. From my observations of the 2016 Census¹⁷⁹, I suggest that this apparent undercount could be due to the Census enumeration being held in the dry season, when people are often travelling or spending time at their outstation.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ For example, Maningrida, which has twice the population of Gunbalanya, has on average 2.2 children per family (of those with children), and 6.2 people per household (where at least one person was Indigenous identified) where the average number of persons per bedroom was 2.5 (ABS, 2017b).

¹⁷⁹ During fieldwork for this study, I was employed by the ABS in their remote enumeration team to undertake the 2016 Census in West Arnhem Land.

¹⁸⁰ Other researchers have similarly highlighted how creating a statistical ‘snapshot’ of remote Indigenous Australia, at a fixed point in time, does not help assess the resource needs in these areas (J. Taylor, 1998). Numerous scholars have the challenges of the Census methodology in its ability to accurately enumerating the population (J. Taylor, Morhpy, Martin, & Sanders, 2004).

Some participants explained that creating a safe and peaceful home environment is essential to improving community safety, particularly for those who work, the elderly and children [Q31]. Some people retreat to outstations because living in town can be stressful and neighbourhood problems can disturb the peace [CM10]. Overcrowded housing and transient residents in the household were identified as potentially unsafe by some participants:

Sometimes too many people in the house is a problem because there are many people around and you don't know who they are. You don't know their history or where they come from. [CM04]

Too many people in the house makes people stressed too. There are people coming and going, and you don't know them all. There may be older ones smoking ganja in the house then the little ones want to become adult. They smoke too. [CM14]

Participants CM04 and CM14 described situations where there are visitors in the house who are staying with family. Permission is granted for visitors to stay with family as an extension of their cultural obligation and responsibility towards kin. There are various reasons why family might be visiting the community, from semi-permanent relocation, escaping family situations elsewhere, accessing services or because of funerals, amongst other reasons. Participant CM04 identified that 'you don't know their history or where they come from' as being a core concern. This creates vulnerabilities for children, which facilitates situational opportunities for sexual assault to occur, which was a concern raised by two service providers [SP05, SP06]. In a separate interview, participant CM14 elaborated on a similar issue when explaining that 'little ones' are vulnerable to the influence of 'older ones' smoking ganja in the house, and children may learn this behaviour from peers. This highlights that overcrowded housing and transient living situations creates greater opportunities for the teaching and perpetration of unsafe behaviours.

Similarly, another participant highlighted that overcrowded housing can reinforce learned delinquent behaviours amongst youth:

Too many people staying in one house and enforcing each other to do bad things. Smoking, going out and breaking in. There are young boys doing that and sniffing petrol. [CM08]

Participant CM08 explained that ‘too many people staying in one house’ creates an environment in which young boys force each other to do ‘bad things’ which include delinquent behaviours such as smoking, theft and violence. In this example, the structural condition – limited and overcrowded housing – enables an environment where unsafe behaviours are rife amongst delinquent youths. Without the social controls to deter or prevent these behaviours, this can facilitate the intergenerational transfer of neighbourhood problems.¹⁸¹

Overcrowded housing and financial stress are two structural problems which contribute to compounding stressors that can arouse conflict in the home. One participant explained:

Too many people in one house is a big problem. Everyone is sharing manme¹⁸² and children take what they want. Then everyone is fighting for that manme. Maybe [husband and wife] split up because there’s no money for kids. [Q23]

Participant Q23 explained that ‘everyone is fighting for the manme’ because of the limited financial resources in the household to purchase food. Financial stress and the lack of financial resilience contributes to conflict between husband and wife which leads to the family breaking up, particularly as social controls allow children to ‘take what they want’. Financial stress is further compounded by the aforementioned structural issues, including access to full-time employment. The problem of fractured social norms and controls enables unsafe behaviours, including youth delinquency, and is the focus of the next section.

6.4 Fractured social norms and controls: A closer look at family relationships

This section develops a greater understanding of how parents’ engagement in unsafe behaviours can impair parent-child relationships and fracture social norms and controls in the neighbourhood. It draws upon interview data to show how one parent envisions being a positive role model for her children, and then explores how parental behaviours impact on a child’s life and enquires what positive and negative aspects to parenting might look like. Section 6.4.3

¹⁸¹ Intergenerational transfer, as part of the transfer of learned behaviours across generations, is further explored in section 6.5.2.

¹⁸² “Manme” means ‘food’ in Kunwinjku.

shows how parents' engagement in risky and unsafe behaviours can fracture spousal and parent-child relationships, leading to grandparents and service providers needing to provide support for children in place of the parents. Section 6.4.4 looks at the effects fractured social norms and controls have on children becoming 'detached' and how social processes impact on children's early engagement in delinquent behaviours.

6.4.1 Parents who are positive role models

Positive role models and elders are important in developing healthy attitudes, values and behaviours. These principles are not necessarily culturally informed but are an integral aspect of positive child development irrespective of whether a person is Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Numerous participants talked about how they are role models for their children and grandchildren including the manner in which they practice these principles. Below, participant Q18 said that 'being strong' for her children was important for them to receive the 'right' cultural lesson, which included not learning harmful behaviour from others in the neighbourhood. She affirmed:

I don't like it when people are drinking in the street. When I see that I tell my kids not to look and tell them to go to school and get a good education. I take my kids for bush walk to billabong too. [Q18]

Then she went on to explain this further:

When the sun goes down, I call out to the children – tell them to come inside. I don't want them wandering around at night. They go to school in the morning, so they have a good future. I tell them: "You can be anyone but make sure you go to school. The most important person is the teacher, not your friends." [Q18]

For this participant, a mother of two, it was important that her children did not watch or listen to those people drinking in the street. She wanted her children to receive a good two-ways education, in Biniŋ law and in a 'Balanda way'. Later in the interview, participant Q18 explained that she valued her children getting a Western education. But, she said, they must also learn Biniŋ law, such as how to skin and eat file snake and long-neck turtle 'the right way', and then clarified that, not obeying Biniŋ law, can cause the wet season to arrive early.

Participant Q18 associated school attendance with ‘having a good future’ and having positive aspirations for her children:

The problem is they forget about their culture in this community. There’s no roots. They marry and break up because they’re with wrong skin. There’s no more promised marriage and no future wife. My kids will grow up differently though. I tell my son and daughter all the time that they will marry the right way, and not too quick like these other ones. [Q18]

Participant Q18 asserted that her children will have a positive future because they have strong cultural foundations. She stated that ‘they forget about their culture in this community’ because ‘they have no roots’. With this, she points to the ways in which Bininj law has become fragmented and is practiced less among some families. People no longer follow the promised marriage system which the participant finds problematic because young people ‘marry too quickly’. With this euphemism, she protests against promiscuity among young people which involves violating the marriage rules imparted through the kinship system in Bininj law. Young people ‘marrying too quickly’ is commonly related to other neighbourhood problems such as cheating, jealousy and intra-family conflict.

6.4.2 Lack of parental responsibility: a symptom of neglect?

Academic research on Aboriginal parenting practices shows that Indigenous children in Australia and internationally are encouraged to behave with a high level of autonomy. Scholars suggest that Aboriginal children are encouraged to make their own decisions about how to explore their environment, which may involve risk-taking and the possibility of danger, to develop independence and self-reliance when appropriate (Byers, Kulitja, Lowell & Kruske, 2012; Hamilton, 1981; Muir & Bohr, 2014). In Australian Aboriginal communities, children are not expected to follow routines and are allowed to decide when to eat and sleep where needed. This is accompanied by Aboriginal parents’ preference for non-interference which could involve resistance to instruction, correcting and coercion (Byers, et al., 2012; Hamilton, 1981). Parental discipline involves strict (i.e. harsh words) and soft discipline (i.e. affection and praise); whereas physical punishment or other negative consequences as a result of their decision is commonly practiced less among Aboriginal families compared to Western ones

(Muir & Bohr, 2014). Little is known in the literature about how widely these customary practices still operate as a form of social regulation.¹⁸³

With these culturally distinct approaches to child-rearing in mind, absent or distant parents or guardians is also a risk factor for child abuse in the literature (Stanley, et al., 2003). The previous chapter highlighted how parents exhibiting substance and behavioural dependency can be a risk factor for early-onset antisocial behaviour and youth delinquency behaviour.¹⁸⁴ This finding is consistent with the literature which suggests that children are increasingly at-risk of engaging in youth delinquency when they experience multiple risk factors including: poor parent-child relationships, antisocial behaviour among parent(s), harsh or loose discipline, behavioural or substance dependencies, and conflict, violence or neglect in the home (Farrington, et al., 2016; Loeber, 1990; Shader, 2001). This section offers a deeper analysis of how these risk factors affect community safety in Gunbalanya.

Some participants strongly suggested that, in some families, children are not being cared for because their parents are engaging in unsafe behaviours, such as excessive drinking, smoking and gambling. The following example further highlights how many community members in Gunbalanya regard addiction-related behaviours as considerably problematic, and these behaviours could be contributing to child neglect and abuse. A participant commented:

Those young kids their parents are drinking and smoking all night and they don't look after the children... There's a lot of money at card games too. Then the children are alone – no one is looking after them... The other day I was walking by the house and there was a little boy alone in front of the TV. I asked him: "where are your parents little one?" Because he's sitting there all alone without anyone. He said: "my mum's drinking at the club." And no one is taking care of him.
[CM04]

As already discussed, parents' engagement in unsafe activities is contributing to a lack of parental responsibility and absence from family life, and this is creating possibilities for child

¹⁸³ There is little research done in this area; however, Turner and Sanders (2007) illuminate how parenting programs need to be sensitive to a community's social and cultural context by flexibly incorporating cultural practices including working with and training local Indigenous workers to deliver these parenting programs. In addition, community members must recognise the need for these behavioural change programs and take ownership over the process (Turner & Sanders, 2007; Turner, Sanders & Hodge, 2014).

¹⁸⁴ See section 5.4.1 on alcohol misuse, section 5.4.2 on marijuana use and section 5.4.3 on gambling at card games.

neglect to occur. Participant CM04 identified a situation where children are not looked after because their parents are drinking all night and no child-minder had been arranged. This also left the child vulnerable to other opportunistic forms of abuse which could have occurred.

Adults' problematic relationship with alcohol and other substances is creating further social problems. Participants identified that a lack of parental supervision, including care and support, is further fracturing social controls:

Many adults are coming to the club, drinking kunbang and not thinking about their kids. They are going home and not supervising their children. [Q49]

Some parents are not helping their children, not talking to them. The kids do what they want – break in the shop and the club. [Q60]

Participant Q49 remarked that some parents are 'drinking kunbang' at the GSSC, they are 'not thinking about their kids' and not providing parental supervision for these children. In contrast, participant Q60 associated 'helping their children' and 'talking to them' with building a positive parent-child relationship. Participant Q60 suggested that without a conscious attempt to build positive relationships, 'kids do what they want' which includes theft and possibly other delinquent behaviours. Another participant provided further information:

Some boys break into the shop and steal mobile phone. Another day, they bring it back to the police. We don't know why they do that. Maybe it is because they want help from their parents, support, but it's not there. [Q23]

Participant Q23 suggested that, in some instances, 'breaking into the shop' and theft from community resources, such as the store, could be attributable to children seeking the attention and care from their parents. This participant highlights that 'they want help from their parents', in the form of support, which is absent in this particular case.

Some participants were concerned that problematic or disengaged behaviours amongst youths could include petrol sniffing. Two participants identified this as a concern:

Petrol sniffing is sometimes coming up. The parents aren't looking after them and then they break in. Stealing from home, shop or from families. [Q60]

When parents don't supervise their children, just leave them walking around, that's when they go sniff petrol – during the wet season. [Q21]

Participants Q60 and Q21 associated a lack of parental supervision with children walking around at night and petrol sniffing, which may have a flow-on effect to theft from homes or families and the community store. These two quotes link a lack of parental supervision with incidents of crime, and thereby identify this as a risk factor for crime perpetration among youths. However, petrol sniffing was not seen as a major concern by most people¹⁸⁵ (refer to Fig. 5.1); nevertheless, some participants declared that petrol sniffing can become a problem when other substances are not accessible during the wet season [e.g. SP01] and when particular 'sniffers'¹⁸⁶ are around in the community.

Participants used various terms to describe parental distance and absence and a lack of demonstrated responsibility taken on their part to care for their children. These terms include taking care of and looking after their children [e.g. CM04, CM17] including supervising children [e.g. Q21]; thinking about their children [Q49]; and helping, support and talking to their children [CM14, Q60]. These different terms describe one interpretation or aspiration for a positive parent-child relationship which is present in some families but not others. Based on what participants have described in this section, the absence of these behaviours suggests that parents' emotional unavailability is affecting some young people in Gunbalanya. The following sections show that the absence of positive relationships is contributing to a breakdown in family bonds and broader social controls, because the appropriate behavioural expectations are not taught to children.

6.4.3 Parents' diminishing role in child care

This section shows how parents' engagement in risky behaviours and youth disassociation from family life is fracturing the already weak bonds present in some families. This relationship is evident in parents' diminishing active role and their lack of demonstrated responsibility for their children. As a response to this, grandparents are taking on a greater role in caring for

¹⁸⁵ In 2010 the community leaders, in collaboration with the local council and the Northern Territory Department of Health, established the Volatile Substances Management Plan which, according to some participants [e.g. SP06], seemed to be effective in managing and containing the problem. Further details are provided in chapter eight.

¹⁸⁶ 'Sniffers' is a local term for someone who regularly sniffs petrol. Some participants [e.g. SP02, SP03] were of the opinion that when these one or two culprits were in the community they would often peer-pressure other young boys into sniffing petrol. Participants clearly stated that young girls do not sniff petrol anymore.

children which places greater stress on family relationships. Three participants referred to grandparents being overburdened by the need to take care of grandchildren as a problem contributing to social stress. An older participant commented:

Some men he run off and leave the wife behind with all the children. He find another lady, like cheating, and doesn't take care of the children. Then families are breaking up and the grandparents need to take care of all those wudud¹⁸⁷. [CM17]

Participant CM17 explained that family violence and cheating are two reasons why the parents 'don't take care of the children' and is furthermore contributing to family breakdown. In this circumstance, the event resulted in the grandparents being left with the responsibility to care for children, which shows another strength of social supports in Bininj kinship. Grandparents and other Aboriginal kin are known to have a positive and strong role in parenting children as part of a wholistic approach to child rearing (Hammill, 2001; Lohoar, Butera & Kennedy, 2014); however, an overreliance on other relatives to care for children (rather than the parents) is shown in this study to contribute to the fracturing of parent-child relationships.

A second participant also commented on the role grandparents take in caring for their grandchildren:

Parents don't want to help other family members to get their kids to school. They too busy drinking and smoking kundalk. Then grandparents need to care for the kids. [Q27]

Participant Q27 identified that parents engaging in unsafe behaviours is creating a greater need for grandparents to care for the children, in part because the parents' role is absent. Also, parents' absence places greater pressure on other family members to help with preparation for school. In both situations, grandparents needed to care for their grandchildren and this replaced the everyday role parents should adopt. This issue has been raised in the broader literature which shows that this is not an issue solely related to this study (Hammill, 2001).

A non-Indigenous service provider was also concerned about the diminishing role parents have in caring for children, particularly in terms of children's preparation for school. The service provider identified the complexities associated with over-delivery or inappropriate

¹⁸⁷ 'Wudud' means child or children in Kunwinjku.

delivery of government services, which despite good intentions, can further contribute to the diminishing role of parents:

I think [parents] lose their sense of purpose in community when it comes to their kids. Because there are all these excellent resources for children but you've got the police driving around, the GEC¹⁸⁸, the Remote Schools Attendance Strategy team, you've got Clontarf, Girls Academy and the school bus. You've got all these people going around trying to get kids to school, where's the sense of purpose for the parents? [SP06]

The participant questioned how the oversupply of government services in the area of primary and secondary education was further removing the need for parents to be actively engaged in children's care and preparation for school.¹⁸⁹ He further explained:

You've got people going to wake them up; they get to school and get given breakfast, recess and lunch; the parents don't have to provide food; then they are getting dropped home after school. The sense of purpose for parents is almost like "we don't have to do anything".

Participant SP06 recognised that, while these government services are well intentioned in attempting to ensure children participate in school, they unintentionally have a negative consequence. That is, by performing parents' role for them, they are unintentionally reinforcing a dependence on welfare supports because parents' roles as caregivers are becoming superfluous.

Participant SP06 argued that there are too many actors involved in the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) and, in his opinion, this creates an oversupply of government services. All sourced from government funding, there is a team of police officers, government staff and third-party service providers involved in education and school attendance. From informal conversations with a few of these individuals involved in RSAS, their approach to the

¹⁸⁸ Acronym for the Government Engagement Coordinator.

¹⁸⁹ At this particular time, these service providers and government officials were trialling a new strategy to increase school attendance. For a two to three week period, on multiple occasions throughout the year, federal government staff, members of the Northern Territory Police, and Aboriginal residents (employed by government through the Remote School Attendance Strategy) would knock on doors throughout the community to ask parents to send their children to school. They would wait at the doorsteps until the child was sent to school. This was a non-confrontational way of politely asking families to comply with school attendance requirements imposed by the federal government.

complex situation was along the lines of “There’s no easy solution to these complex problems. We have to start somewhere.” For them, their time and resources invested into children’s school attendance was worth it for those children to have the opportunity for gaining an education.

Contrary to this, participant SP06 was of the opinion that the oversupply of service providers is disempowering for parents because it takes away from their role and responsibility in providing for their children’s daily needs. In his opinion, the parents’ diminishing role in their child’s activities, such as school attendance, passively allows alcohol and substance misuse to occur with little outside intervention as though it were ‘the norm’. The next section examines the implications of poor parent-child relationships and how children can become detached from family life.

6.4.4 Impaired parental-child attachment

Three participants argued that there is a close connection between the complex problems discussed above, specifically how parental absenteeism and distance creates an environment where children are more likely to become disengaged or detached¹⁹⁰. In this study, impaired parent-child attachment is expressed through different symptoms including children not listening to and showing disrespect to parents and elders, engaging in youth delinquent behaviour, and seeking greater support from their peers and less support from parents and family. This section explains how a fracturing in family relationships and parents’ emotional distance is contributing to early signs of youth delinquency.

One participant highlighted the range of complexities which act as barriers to children’s school attendance and participation:

Children sometimes don’t go to school because they see people fighting, many problems and smoking kundalk. Then they develop bad habits too. The parents do their own way and kids are floating around.

¹⁹⁰ The concept of child disengagement or detachment discussed by participants in this study is similar to the idea of attachment theory discussed in the criminology literature. In a meta-analysis of 78 publications, Hoeve et al. (2012) find that a child’s poor attachment to his or her parents is strongly linked with the child’s risk of developing delinquent behaviours. Originally developed by Hirschi (1969), social control theory suggests that attachment is an emotional bond between a parent and child that is important in developing informal social control. Through this emotional bond, the child internalises the social norms of society and, in theory, this bond protects the child from engaging in delinquent impulses because the child is emotionally invested in adhering to the normative expectations of his or her parents (Hirsch 1969 in Hoeve et al., 2012).

Then they start to say: “You don’t take care of me. You aren’t my Mum. You’re not my Dad. I do what I want to.” Kids are just floating around with no parents. [Q37]

Participant Q37 highlighted the range of social stressors which can impact on children’s ability to fully participate in school. These stressors include ‘many problems’ such as violent behaviour and marijuana use in the household.¹⁹¹ The participant clearly links these social problems with parents ‘doing their own way’ and ‘kids floating around’. Both the parents and children become disengaged from family life and, because the child feels there is a lack of care and support, the child’s reaction is to rebel and reject the authority of his or her parents. Then the kids are ‘floating around with no parents’, which furthermore implies that there is a lack of control over the child’s behaviour and is possibly a sign of emotional child neglect. This example was similar to the concerns raised by two participants below.

In the qualitative data, 19 participants mentioned that they were concerned about children not attending school. The reasons provided for children not attending were: children staying up late [SP06] because they were prowling or walking around at night or because they were playing cards [CM12, CM17], the presence of bullying and teasing in school [Q26], the child is smoking marijuana [CM14, Q18], a lack of parental support in preparing children for school [Q23], for many complex reasons including FDV in the household [Q37] and as part of youth delinquent behaviour such as break-ins and theft [SP02, SP03]. The different reasons for school absenteeism have been explored throughout chapters five and six.

Two quotes below arose from casual interviews I had with two service providers in two separate years. During the data collection phase in 2016, I interviewed these two service providers in a casual manner when we began talking about the unsafe behaviours they observe in the community. They commented:

When the parents spend too much time on kundalk, the Club and card games, the kids start doing their own way. They say: “where is my pocket money for drink? You spend all the money at the Club.” Then they don’t want to go to school, start breaking in and sniffing. [SP02, SP03]

¹⁹¹ These issues were mentioned before and are further explored in section 6.5 in relation to collective social stress and trauma.

Participants SP02 and SP03 identified that when parents excessively engage in unsafe activities children ‘start doing their own way’ and are reluctant to listen and respond to parental authority. In this example, the participants described a child who is concerned about the lack of pocket money to purchase a soft drink, which is a consequence of parents spending the household’s financial resources on unnecessary and unsafe activities.¹⁹² Furthermore, the parents are not providing that strong interpersonal support for the child which the child feels is absent, which is indicated by ‘the parents spend too much time on kundalk’. This combination of problems is leading to the child’s disengagement from school and a breakdown in what he or she perceives as acceptable behaviour.

During the third field visit, we again discussed youth disengagement in the community. In months prior to this conversation, the community experienced tremendous problems with youth gangs, which involved break-ins at the teachers’ houses and theft such as stealing a vehicle from the GSSC to hoon around the neighbourhood. We discussed these problems and how participant SP02 tried to help:

A few months ago, we had big problems with young boys breaking in. They did that and then I went to speak to them about it and one boy just walked away. He wanted to do his own thing. But I said: “Hey why you go to do that? The Balanda come here to help us.” He said: “My parents don’t care about me. They do their own thing and I do my own thing.” But I talked to him and explained that I can help and there are people here that can help him. Eventually, he started to listen, but it is very sad. [SP02]

Participant [SP02] reinforced how the child felt emotional distance from his parents due to a lack of support, attention, care and connection. This emotional disconnection meant that the child sought support from his own peers, through forming a street gang, and then rebelled against informal authoritative structures (i.e. parental figures) by engaging in unruly behaviour (i.e. theft and dangerous driving). For one day, the GSSC closed for trade to regain control over the situation and bring those boys to the attention of the police. However, from my

¹⁹² Although soft drinks are not a necessary item, this piece of data shows signs that material deprivation could be present where the child feels he or she is not being provided the basic necessities. Participant Q31 referred to children wanting to win money at card games to buy a soft drink and participant Q19 referred to people being ‘stressed out’ because they do not have money for soft drink or ganja; consequently they sniff petrol. Participant Q23 specifically mentioned material deprivation, quoted on page 8.

understanding, this attempt was unsuccessful and the gang continued to roam the streets at night.

As parents become more distant from a child's life, a breakdown in family structure has ongoing effects on the child's behaviour. One participant held the view that the breakdown in the traditional family structure has negative effects on children's behaviour:

When parents are separated, [the kids] think they got no parents. She or he become a big person and do what they want. Some parents don't have the power and don't talk to them in strong way. Children are the boss of them. That's not right. [Q18]

Participant Q18 explains that when a parental relationship breaks up the children often challenge parental authority by not listening and rebelling. This describes a situation where the child could be developing symptoms of delinquent behaviour, including challenging authority and disengaging from family life. Participant Q18 indicates that children adopt poor manners because the parents do not exhibit strong disciplinary techniques.

These findings show that parental distance, including the lack of care, support and nurturing required for healthy child development, is missing among some families reported by participants in this study. These expressions of parental distance from the child's life highlight ways in which elements of emotional neglect are present. Children not listening to and respecting the informal authority (e.g. parents or elders) could be the beginning of more serious defining patterns,¹⁹³ which lead to children to become detached or disassociated from the parent-child relationship. The next section unpacks Indigenous perspectives on youth delinquency to identify how these behaviours impact on child development in Gunbalanya.

6.4.5 An alternate perspective on youth delinquent behaviours

Youth delinquency, otherwise known as early or adolescent onset offending, is a well-known risk factor for offending in adulthood.¹⁹⁴ A history of offending is a known barrier to

¹⁹³ I suggest that children's disobedience towards authority figures could be a sign of delinquency, but this behaviour could also be associated with a child's autonomous learning and development that is common in Indigenous societies.

¹⁹⁴ Moffitt (1993) proposes there are two different offending profiles for youth with antisocial behavioural disorder: these are adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent. Adolescence-limited antisocial behaviour can

employment and is a risk factor for financial stress, substance and behavioural dependency, mental health problems and interpersonal and family violence (W. Forrest & Edwards, 2015; Loeber & Farrington, 2000; Loeber, Farrington & Petechuk, 2003). In this study, participants identified several types of behaviour amongst youth that created neighbourhood problems and contributed to the fracturing of positive social norms. As already discussed, youth delinquent behaviours include substance and behavioural dependency, aggressive behaviour including fighting, bullying and conflict, disobedience and rebelling against parental authority, peer pressure and learned behaviours amongst peers, theft (including taking money or a vehicle without asking), humbug and payback, and dangerous and underage driving. One participant was concerned about youth carrying weapons in the street:

Young people walking around at night with a machete and scraping the ground and banging on the fences. I can't sleep because of this. Some of them are in school, others are not. They don't have respect for their elders – they're just cheeky ones. [Q47]

Participant Q47 described three aspects of youth delinquency which were: 1) carrying a weapon in public, 2) causing a public disturbance and 3) showing a lack of respect for authoritative figures such as elders. Truancy and decisions on school attendance among youth are influenced by a multitude of factors including neighbourhood danger and crime (Christle, Jolivet & Nelson, 2005); while the above example highlights that school absenteeism is an indicator of youth disengagement in broader aspects of family life and engagement in delinquent behaviour [Q47].

Two participants articulated that incarceration has a role to play in youth delinquency [CM09 and CM08]. In one of these examples, CM08 explained that incarcerating young people exacerbates their disengagement and further contributes to internalised anger:

In that jail, [young boys] get more mad and they'll get a really bad attitude. When they come back to Gunbalanya or somewhere, they will say to other people "yeah I've been to jail. I'm not frightened of anyone. Not even policeman. I can fight anyone"... Yeah it's really bad

persist in early adulthood but their propensity to engage in criminal behaviour desists thereafter. This type of antisocial behaviour originates in social process, is often learned from the external environment. In comparison, life-course-persistent antisocial behaviour originates in early childhood and results from neuropsychological functions (e.g. low intellect or attention-deficit disorder), as well as the surrounding criminological environment (e.g. patterns of drug use, poor parent-child relationship).

when [young fella or lady] go to jail. They get really bad attitude over there. [CM08]

Participant CM08 explained that young people who have spent time in youth detention develop a ‘bad attitude’ and experience internalised anger and aggression, which exacerbates physical conflict and the person’s lack of respect for police officers. The participant went on to say that young people get aggressive and ‘force each other to do bad things’ such as firing a slingshot at people passing by.

Two-ways education, involving Bininj and Balanda ways, was seen by participants as the appropriate response and solution to these problems.¹⁹⁵ This participant, a young person in her early 20s, associated a lack of respect among young people with ‘being uneducated’:

Kids are too busy on Diva Chat, Facebook, watching TV, and parents spend too much time drinking. The parents don’t spend enough time with their kids. Then the kids go walking around at night and they don’t get up to go to school. They’re not educated, that’s why they have no respect. [CM04]

Participant CM04 believes young people are consumed by technology and Western influences which have replaced the need for everyday human interaction. The flow-on effects of neighbourhood problems, already discussed in detail, include children walking around at night and not attending school.

Participant CM04 related a lack of education with a lack of respect when she commented ‘that’s why they’re not educated’. Fifteen other participants were concerned that children did not attend school and one other participant [CM12] associated a lack of education with young people making the ‘wrong choices’ and breaking Balanda law¹⁹⁶. Meanwhile, a lack of two-ways education was seen as part of the problem of customary Aboriginal practices breaking down and the inability of the Western system of governance to provide an answer to these ongoing problems, specifically the need to create leaders among the next generation. Chapter seven further explores how Bininj law functions as a mechanism of social regulation

¹⁹⁵ Etherington (2006) suggests that, when undertaking his research in Gunbalanya, participant calls for two-ways education were defensive because in reality they would have preferred that Bininj law was used as the primary education model and Western pedagogy used as a secondary approach.

¹⁹⁶ Balanda law refers to Western laws where to ‘disrespect Balanda law’ is to commit or disregard what is considered a crime.

in enabling respectful behaviours in Kunwinjku society. Bininj law has the potential to provide the informal structures required to enable discipline and respect among young people.

6.5 Intergenerational stress, trauma and violence

This section shows how the intergenerational transmission of community violence and trauma contributes to the cyclic nature of these neighbourhood problems which has deeply felt implications for Bininj people in Gunbalanya. First, the section explores how unresolved conflict and violence are significant problems in the community. The ongoing nature of conflict, aggression and violence which are used as strategies to manage internal and public tensions reinforce the normalisation of these problems in everyday life. Second, intergenerational transmission of social problems is attributable to excessive substance misuse and gambling, community-wide patterns of violence and peer-group learning. Third, this section shows how social stress, worry and trauma affects individuals as well as broader kin relationships. The normalisation of violence, intergenerational problems and trauma are underlying problems in this study which prevent other issues such as interpersonal harm from being addressed.

6.5.1 Normalisation of community violence

Individual expressions of anger, aggression and conflict are strong themes to arise from the findings in this study. Atkinson et al. (2010) indicate that the normalisation of violence, and the high prevalence of grief, stress, and substance misuse, are symptoms of underlying traumatic stress. Experiencing and witnessing violence as a child, including sexual assault, is a risk factor for offending and becoming a perpetrator of violence in adulthood (Atkinson, et al., 2010). In this study, conflict, aggression and fighting are problems simmering at the surface, ready to be ‘activated’ when mixed with harmful substances or stressful situations.

Participants show that collective expressions of violence, frustration and aggression are experienced in various ways. As explored earlier, jealousy and cheating and the associated conflicts and ‘fights’ over social media, and involving the broader family, were common family

violence issues talked about by participants.¹⁹⁷ A non-Indigenous person explained that the normalisation of violence is one of the most important issues affecting the community:

On a daily basis, there's always fighting, and it is the norm within a community like this, unfortunately. Whether it be through young boys fighting over daluk – girls – or, probably more often than not, is a couple – male or female. That's the issue I think is one of the biggest, as it is the norm, and there is no intervention from anyone. [SP06]

Participant SP06 highlights how different expressions of gendered violence¹⁹⁸ have become normalised in the community. By 'normalised' the participant refers to desensitisation of violence in public where 'there is no intervention from anyone' including the police. The inaction of the police in responding to family violence was also raised by numerous service providers and Bininj participants.¹⁹⁹ Fighting and 'talking badly' were the most common expressions depicting conflicts in the public domain.

Family violence and payback are prominent issues where participants reported that 'big trouble' and 'wars' erupt from young people prowling at night, social media and sexual transgressions. Suspicions and blame arise over cheating and jealousy occurs irrespective of whether these suspicions are true or not. From my observations, certain couples were prone to jealousy which the husband sometimes sought to control his wife's movements. Jealousy created barriers to these women's workforce participation and limited opportunities for employment skills development. But again, these are actions I observed in the 'public' domain. I now draw upon some participant reports to show what can happen in the private domain:

These days the husband goes prowling and he finds a girlfriend. The wife finds out about girlfriend and the wife goes to hit girlfriend. But we don't see them because they keep it a secret. These days we got jamon²⁰⁰ and it's against the law. [Q23]

Participant Q23 depicted a scenario above where one member of a couple is cheating behind closed doors where the husband is 'prowling' for a new girlfriend. She described that 'wife

¹⁹⁷ Refer to section 5.4.4 for a detailed description and analysis of issues associated with interpersonal and family violence.

¹⁹⁸ Gendered violence in this case means women fighting women, men fighting men and the broader family over issues such as jealousy, cheating and prowling. Disputes can start over bullying, harassment or jealousy over social media then evolve into family violence involving broader kin relationships unless it was resolved earlier.

¹⁹⁹ The issue of police inaction to violent incidents in Gunbalanya is substantially covered in section 8.4.2.

²⁰⁰ 'Jamon' means police in Kunwinjku.

finds out about girlfriend' and 'goes to hit girlfriend' which clearly depicts how jealousy, cheating and payback can be perpetrated by both women and men. Furthermore, this scenario highlights how Bininj people are increasingly aware of how contemporary legislation is criminalising Aboriginal people for committing violence and this is pushing these practices further into the private domain.

This shows how Indigenous family violence occurs in a social and cultural context that contrasts considerably from violence against women in the Western context. Indigenous family violence must be understood as a holistic concept that encompasses broader patterns of physical, social, emotional and financial violence, intimidation and harassment within the kinship system (Blagg, et al., 2018; Burbank, 1994; R. Holder, et al., 2015; Memmott, et al., 2001; Olsen & Lovett, 2016). Similar incidents of family fighting were reported over cheating relating to social media. One participant commented:

Fighting with that Diva Chat then the trouble comes back to the family. Because of jealousy and cheating around young people, then it makes the elders get into an argument too. There'll be big fight, a war with all the families together. The daluk²⁰¹ goes out walking at night and looks for Bininj. But she's already got a boyfriend. We encourage kids to do the right thing, not fighting. [Q37]

Participant Q37 reported how a single incident, such as cheating, can quickly turn into an intra-family 'war' with 'all the families together'. This is another example of the complexities of family violence in Indigenous communities which can quickly involve the broader kinship network. Similarly, other participants highlighted that the community can be peaceful, but 'trouble' can quickly erupt because "trouble is buried from before" [Q18].

This participant explained that 'trouble' can simmer at the surface because it is buried in people's social networks while it continues unresolved²⁰². Participant CM08 developed this thread further:

Some people got problems from a long time ago, you know that this family has done something to that family a long time ago. And they just keep on going for a long time. And it kills people. But sometimes the

²⁰¹ Kunwinjku word for 'woman' or 'girl'.

²⁰² Previously discussed in chapter five, section 5.4.1.

people look at these young boys and say: “oh, you think you’re very smart”. But they don’t talk to each other you know. They will do it in secret way. Then they will take his shirt or underpants and they will do something with it. The girl or boy gets sick then they will get cancer or something and die. [CM08]

Participant CM08 explained how families have unresolved issues that ‘are buried from long time ago’ because ‘they don’t talk to each other’ about the problem. This shows that when social cohesion breaks down, problems remain dormant and unresolved, this intra-family conflict can arise over another matter. The socially embedded practice where Bininj elders resolve problems internally, without outside intervention²⁰³, is a protective mechanism that is breaking down and this thereby allows problems to linger. Participant CM08 also suggested that people seek redress ‘in a secret way’ indicating that they use “black magic”²⁰⁴ to cause social harm or death.

Black magic is another type of violence occurring across the community. The practices of black magic or sorcery are often covered in mystery which provides a fruitful environment for people to attribute unexpected deaths to accusations of black magic. In addition, public accusations of casting black magic onto another person or object, as an act of revenge and violence, further instils the belief in magic among believers. In other circumstances, black magic can be used to explain an unexpected death, such as a young person who had no known pre-existing health conditions. Other scholars have explored how sorcery is used amongst Indigenous societies as a potential explanation for unannounced deaths and an expression of broader violence (Forsyth & Eves, 2015).

Seven participants mentioned that black magic is a problem when (1) a person does not respect or obey Bininj law, (2) in relation to payback, or (3) when cousins and family members teach black magic to others. These are examples where spiritual and cultural beliefs operate as distal factors in the neighbourhood and affect those who believe.²⁰⁵ These two participants identified that black magic is cast on those who do not respect Bininj law:

²⁰³ Further discussed in section 7.4.

²⁰⁴ Black magic is the term used by Kunwinjku Aboriginal participants to refer to sorcery.

²⁰⁵ Not everyone believed in the presence and existence of black magic and, when I asked three specific individuals on separate occasions, these participants from one family strongly objected to accusations of black magic because they believed that it was nonsense.

In Bininj law, if they don't respect our law they die. A long time ago, they used to kill them with a spear or another way. But we don't do that anymore. Same, if you don't pass the law the old person can sing your name or suck the star. Then you die. [Q27]

We have to look after the old people, otherwise we will get sick. You know, in Bininj way, you could die if you disrespect the old people. [Q26]

Participants Q27 both highlighted how, when people do not respect Bininj law, the Old People can 'sing your name or suck the star'. According to some participants, the unavoidable result of this is sickness then death. Prior to the dispossession of Aboriginal Law, socially acceptable behaviours were enforced through the authority of elders, where the person who disrespected the law could be killed [Q26].

As mentioned above, black magic can be used as a form of payback against another family. One participant identified this as a problem:

Black magic is a very big problem here. When a person tries to kill himself, then the family blame other people. They think it's because of black magic. When that person sings to the star, the star gets red and big then go away. The star will suck the person's blood and they disappear. [Q50]

Similar to participant Q27, this participant detailed how a person can cast black magic, as a form of retaliation or payback to blame, which is believed to cause disappearance or death. Participant Q50 highlighted how black magic can be used as another form of violence where there are unresolved problems between families that can be reignited through payback.

In this sense, violence and death inflicted through black magic is another example of problems caused when social cohesion is impaired and relationships fracture. In contrast, according to participant Q37, some 'good witchdoctors' still exist where "he is born with a gift that he can heal anyone who has black magic on them". This shows that traditional beliefs which remain intact can foster positive connections and informal structures to counteract those structures that are breaking down. These community patterns, where social networks are fracturing or remain intact, are not mutually exclusive but coexist and are complex. While culturally located behaviours can function as community strengths that protect people from

harm; at the same time, fracturing interpersonal relationships can increase the likelihood that culture is used as an excuse to engage in harmful acts.

6.5.2 Intergenerational transmission

The intergenerational aspects of alcohol and substance misuse and problem gambling have been discussed in various sections of this thesis, where younger children were often reported to have learned these behaviours from peers or adults.²⁰⁶ Phillips (2003) contends that situational harmful events, and an accumulation of social and situational stressors, can lead to an ongoing experience of trauma and can manifest in collective and intergenerational trauma. Intergenerational trauma manifests in identity crises and fractured family and social cohesion as part of social dysfunction and dislocation (Phillips 2003). The accumulation of trauma and violence in dysfunctional relationships add to the underlying issues impacting on community safety. Young people are particularly influenced by the harmful behaviours learned early in life, including their observation of violence and experiences of trauma (Atkinson, et al., 2010; Bamblett, Bath, Roseby, Territory & Territory, 2010; Phillips, 2003; Wild & Anderson, 2007).

Five participants in this study were concerned about the intergenerational transmission of violence, particularly where this affects children's wellbeing. Two participants commented:

If they got money then they go away, get beer and come back. When there's no money, there's no problem. In the old days it was the same problem – now passed down from old to young. [Q23]

Children are learning to fight from looking at the adults. They are learning from their parents who are fighting, smoking ganja, humbugging and drinking kunbang²⁰⁷. This is passive learning. [Q37]

Participants Q23 and Q37 both considered how unsafe behaviours are 'passively learned' and how these problems are 'passed down from old to young'. Irrespective of what these behaviours are, the repeated perpetration of these problems enables children to passively observe and consequently repeat these behaviours.

²⁰⁶ See sections 5.4.3 on gambling at card games, 6.3.4 on overcrowded housing and section 6.4 on fractured social norms and controls.

²⁰⁷ Kunwinjku word for 'alcohol'.

Two other participants were concerned about how violence is learned behaviour that they have seen impact on children in the household:

I am worried about my cousin's sister over there. That couple, they're always fighting, making noise and talking bad things. I want to talk to her, but it is hard to find the right time. It's not safe when he is around. They have a young child too, younger than 10 years old, and he will grow up seeing that violence. Maybe he will do the same like the parents. [CM14]

I've been in Gunbalanya for a few years now. I'm thinking of moving back to the outstation because this too much violence here. My son is the one in the light blue shirt over there in the crèche and he has started to hit the other little boys. I certainly didn't teach him that but he learns it over here. My son was born in the outstation and he has learnt behaviour here in town. [CM01]

Participants CM14 and CM01 both referred to different aspects of children learning violence and aggression within the household particularly from their parents. Participant CM14 was concerned about her cousin's sister who often argued and fought with her husband; it worried her that their young child would eventually become a perpetrator of FDV. Similarly, participant CM01 was a victim of her husband's alcohol-fuelled episodes of FDV and she observed her son reproduce aggressive behaviour towards his peers. She believed that her son learnt this aggressive behaviour from the school and home.

These findings show that participants were concerned that children are learning aggression, conflict and violent behaviour as a socially acceptable way of expressing oneself. These examples show intergenerational and normalised aspects of community violence where children learn behaviour from parents' actions (i.e. informal structures) in the neighbourhood environment (i.e. formal structures). Children learn these behaviours through observed repetition and passive acceptance within the household or neighbourhood where they are perpetrated without repercussion or intervention. Other examples of intergenerational problems explored in other parts of this thesis include youth delinquency as behaviours learned from their peers in the household²⁰⁸ and substance and behavioural dependencies²⁰⁹. Findings show

²⁰⁸ Refer to section 6.3.4 on overcrowded housing and section 6.4 on youth delinquency.

²⁰⁹ Refer to section 5.4.2 on marijuana misuse and section 5.4.3 on gambling at card games.

how children become desensitised to these issues and accept violence as a form of self-expression as part of socially acceptable behaviour.

6.5.3 Collective trauma, stress and worry

Inescapable trauma, stress and worry create underlying tensions which surround family environments, and act to increase vulnerability when other complexities or ‘stressors’ arise. In her book, *An Ethnography of Stress*, Burbank (2011) examines how stress and ‘feeling bad’ underlie social and psychological processes which impact on interpersonal harm and ill health in Numbulwar, an Aboriginal community in East Arnhem Land. Burbank (2011, p. ix) comments “I can think of no family that has not been touched by the kinds of trauma so pervasive in this community today: dysfunction, disease and death”. She finds that social relationships create long-term, intergenerational harmful effects. At the same time, a person’s dissatisfaction with being unable to escape their living circumstances – which often include dilapidated housing, an overreliance on Western diet and poor nutrition – contributes to internalised trauma, distress and poor health.

In this study, participants used these terms ‘stress’ and ‘worry’ to explain how community members experience considerable personal and emotional hardships that affect their wellbeing. One participant reflected on this:

Safety for the homelands is important including ganja, grog, family violence and mental health. If people have mental illness, they could do something terrible. People go to live in the outstation because they want peaceful living. They don’t want to worry about things that will harm them... There is a lot of trauma in our communities. People are sad from seeing people harmed, experiencing and hearing about suicide, fighting and people passing away. We hear about trauma a lot.
[CM15]

In the above passage, participant CM15 contrasted the experience of ‘homelands people’ with the experiences of living in town, meaning Gunbalanya. She described how homelands people want a ‘peaceful living’ and it is important that they have access to initiatives and information to help them prevent family violence, stop ‘ganja’ and ‘grog’ entering their community, and prevent mental illness from affecting their families. The participant described how trauma

impacts on people in town because they are ‘sad’ from being harmed and hearing about suicide, interpersonal and family violence and death. In her study, Burbank (2011, p. 5) similarly raises how these hardships create stress because of individual’s inability to control or understand the sources of stress, while they receive little support in their social networks. This can have negative consequences for mental and physical health.

Two participants described that ‘worry’ affects someone close to them but that young people sometimes have trouble talking about their personal problems with family or outsiders:

Sometimes, people have trouble²¹⁰ on their minds – they don’t want to talk about it. They go to Balanda and try to tell them why they haven’t been to the activities for example. Sometimes, that person has had violence at home or Sorry Business. They don’t want to tell that person what’s going on. But, Balanda and JobFind have to listen to that – be sensitive to our feelings. [Q36]

Similar to participant CM15, participant Q36 emphasised how people’s experiences of hearing about violence and death in the community contributes to internalised stress. This suggests that worry and stress influence an individual’s ability to actively engage in the workforce; and furthermore creates internal frustrations when service providers do not listen and the individual is unable to control this aspect of their life. Participant Q36 highlighted the need for service providers ‘to listen’ and ‘be sensitive for our feelings’ which suggests there is a need for greater cross-cultural awareness and empathy for those experiencing adversity.

Family members hearing and seeing other kin being victim to substance abuse and violence causes further worry. A participant commented:

Adults are fighting in the street and some end up in hospital. That causes worry for the family... When a person worries too much, I talk to them and I talk to the family too. [Q47]

Participant Q47 recognised that interpersonal conflict not only affects the individuals involved in the conflict, but the associated worry and stress impacts on broader family members as well. The frequent experience of hearing about and experiencing conflict and fighting has a traumatic impact on family and community wellbeing. Meanwhile, as participant Q47 described, family can be an important support network where kin help each other navigate internal stress and

²¹⁰ This reference to ‘trouble’ is another euphemism for problems, worry or stress.

worry. But, as other participants commented [e.g. CM10 and CM11], there can be cultural impediments to talking about mental health issues with family and other non-family members.

Participants explained that there are underlying reasons why community members have trouble talking about worry or social stress that is impacting on their mental health. In a group conversation, two participants explained:

[Interviewer] *Is mental health a problem here?*

[CM11] *Sometimes people keep to themselves, but they don't realise they can't fix the problem themselves. Other people are trying to help. We need counselling and running workshops.*

[CM10] *Some Bininj feel shame or embarrassment when they talk about these problems. They think they're bad or guilty but everyone needs help sometimes. That's why we have family because we want to help each other.*

[CM11] *Mental health is a big problem. They take that stuff – kunbang or kundalk – and they don't realise that it makes their problems bigger.*

[Interviewer] *Do you think that humbugging contributes to family stress?*

[CM10, CM11] *Yes, it makes stress bigger – for money, for kunbang, kundalk and card games. Just drinking to get drunk.*

The above conversation, participants CM10 and CM11 highlighted how shame, embarrassment and stigma surrounding mental health issues are underlying factors that prevent community members from talking about and seeking treatment for these problems. This was an issue raised by service provider SP06. Humbugging associated with alcohol and substance misuse creates an environment where compounding social stressors impair social and emotional wellbeing. But, as Burbank (2011, pp. 85-91) points out, high levels of social stress and poor mental health also encourage excessive alcohol and substance misuse. These appear to be cyclic problems without a definitive beginning or ending point.

Mental health issues not only affect those using substances and gambling but also the elderly who are unable to spend time in the bush. Two participants detailed:

We want to help with mental health. Otherwise, they come looking for bakki, walking around in the hot sun. Even older people too. Sometimes the older people don't go outside for fresh wind, clean air. They need to spend more time in the bush. [SP02, SP03]

In this example, participants SP02 and SP03 referred to someone with psychiatric problems who often walked around the community looking for cigarettes (i.e. 'bakki'). The boy's mental health problems are beyond the family's capacity to care for him and there are no local services available that can cater for his needs. When family members are taken away for treatment there is sometimes a lack of understanding about where that individual has gone and why. This creates an additional layer of stress and worry due to not-knowing his or her whereabouts. Participants SP02 and SP03 went on to reinforce that the mental health needs of the elderly are important too, particularly when some elderly persons are unable to leave the house and they feel increasingly stressed and isolated as a result.

Various other sources of social stress have been discussed thus far, many of which include those 'getting stressed out' because of substance dependence and behavioural addictions. Participants Q23 and Q37 mentioned that young people "get stressed out" when they "don't have money for kundalk or kunbang" then they "go bengwar". Participants Q47, Q49 and Q51 highlighted these people 'being stressed out' from addiction-related behaviour causes worry for the family and the neighbourhood because of the associated violence, including when family members need to pick them up from hospital. Participants Q18 and Q23 identified that suicide and addiction cause social stress for family members because "they walk around talking like crazy person saying they want to hang themselves". Then family members need to be there to "talk to them" and "talk to the person's family too" [e.g. Q47]. These varied examples show that the reoccurring and frequent nature of social stress in town creates a broader environment that can manifest into traumatic experiences.

6.6 Discussion

The chapter demonstrated how structural aspects of the neighbourhood influence behaviour within family and peer networks, thereby explaining how individual actions are influenced by these structures at the community-level in the social ecological system. These structures create situational opportunities for humbugging and peer pressure to occur, including children learning unsafe behaviours from peers and family members in transient and overcrowded

housing. Structures also create increased opportunities for children and young people to learn how to gamble at card games and consume substances, and thereby increase the chances of early-onset youth delinquency.

These situational opportunities are more frequent when there is a large population of young people who are disenfranchised and disengaged, in part because of the fractured social norms and controls, but also because of the poverty and lack of employment opportunities. The lack of employment opportunities also creates an environment where youth boredom is an issue, including a lack of motivation to engage in constructive activities such as hunting and fishing with kin. Meanwhile, drinking at the GSSC can be the easy way for young people to satisfy their boredom.

Some family members contribute to unsafe behaviours in the neighbourhood while others provide the supportive and care networks that children require for healthy social and emotional development. This chapter drew attention to Aboriginal perspectives on healthy and positive parent-child relationships compared to harmful behaviours where children have become disengaged from family life. Participants described these positive relationships in terms of the parents' care and support for their children; appropriate supervision and preparation for school; and talking to and guiding children to make positive choices in life. However, these positive aspirations for safe behaviour were not always present in every family.

Youth delinquency is an important theme in this thesis. This chapter drew upon threads in chapter five to further expand on the social mechanisms which enable youth detachment, disengagement and consequent delinquent behaviour. Numerous examples showed that multiple risk factors for early-onset youth delinquency were present amongst children, such as: substance and behavioural addictions among parents, parents engaging in unruly behaviours, poor parent-child relationships, relaxed or absent discipline, a lack of emotional support, and a lack of social cohesion. These mechanisms contribute to children challenging parental authority and, in some situations, this created an environment in which children felt like they were not cared for or loved by their parents. In short, some children felt like they did not have parents and behaved accordingly. These social processes are contributing to fractures in social norms and controls (i.e. informal structures) which further compromise the community's potential to develop collective goals and realise their ambitions for positive family relationships.

All these complex social mechanisms occur in an environment where interpersonal violence and trauma are becoming increasingly normalised. Aboriginal people in Gunbalanya with whom I have strong relationships are gentle and caring people who want to live in peaceful neighbourhoods. When I refer to the ‘normalisation of violence’, I am not insinuating that people are always or naturally violent. I am pointing to the lack of internal social controls which enable people to manage and cope with everyday frustrations and stressors. This is a type of resilience that exists internally and within family relationships that enables individuals to deal with internal and external problems. Chapter seven explores how Bininj people use strengths-based strategies to resolve inter- or intra-family conflict without outside intervention. This example is used to explore how aspects of social control can function as an informal protective mechanism. But where these mechanisms have broken down, this situation creates opportunities for problems to flourish until a little problem becomes a ‘big problem’. Fighting and death are symptomatic of these private conflicts which ‘outsiders’ do not see or hear. Some participants believe unexpected deaths to be caused by black magic.

The overwhelming impact that death, violence and disobedience have on the neighbourhood further contributes to social stress, worry and internalised trauma. These social problems are occurring in an already resource-scarce environment where people are worried about the inflexibility of the welfare system, the lack of employment opportunities and scarce financial resources available. These problems are further exacerbated by humbug and peer pressure which are considered problematic. Participants considered the need to share with family members in times of financial hardship as an important and normal part of maintaining healthy family relationships. These traumas are sometimes internalised and remain unattended due to the stigma associated with ‘mental health issues’. Meanwhile, these problems contribute to the intergenerational transfer of dependences, internalised anger and externalised violence, and problems amongst youth. For any of these problems to be adequately addressed, these community safety problems need to be understood within the context of Aboriginal-centred views on healthy whole-of-family development. The next chapter looks further at this point.

7 Kunwinjku perspectives on building respectful relationships: a strengths-based approach

7.1 Chapter overview

This chapter analyses how informal structures in Kunwinjku social and cultural systems²¹¹ moderate behaviours which community members perceive to be acceptable or unacceptable. The chapter furthermore seeks to understand how Bininj people leverage informal structures to enable respectful relationships and safer behaviours amongst their kin. Section 7.2 provides the theoretical context to highlight how the findings in this chapter contribute to academic understandings about strengths-based approaches to crime prevention. Operating in the macrosystem²¹², these informal structures are values, attitudes and beliefs that participants consider important aspects of their everyday lives and also include aspirational aspects of Kunwinjku sociality that have become fractured. Informal structures underpin socio-cultural dimensions of Bininj people's lives, influence the decisions that individuals make on an everyday basis and inform practices that are the norm in Kunwinjku society.

Section 7.3 identifies the Kunwinjku values and beliefs that participants associate with their ambition to manage unsafe behaviours and build healthy relationships in their family and the community. As already mentioned²¹³, Kunwinjku values, which inform one approach to building healthy and respectful relationships, involve listening to each other, working together and helping and respecting each other. Following this, the section examines whether these values are practiced in contemporary Kunwinjku life. Third, the section unpacks how Bininj participants envisage mutual respect and how this might be strengthened through everyday

²¹¹ This chapter primarily focuses on the values, attitudes and beliefs, which participants identified, enhance mutual respect and safety. This is not to suggest that Bininj law does not encompass formal structures in child rearing, learning and development; however, the data available from this study limits the scope of the analysis to informal mechanisms. Certainly, further research needs to assist non-Indigenous people understand how Aboriginal law can reduce harmful and delinquent behaviours in remote areas.

²¹² As indicated in section 7.2, protective factors occur at different levels in the social ecological system, however this chapter specifically concerns itself with the values and beliefs in Kunwinjku society that guide Bininj people's social, moral and cultural framework. This framework guides the options available to and decisions made by individuals at the macro-level. These factors are the fundamental basis of Kunwinjku society across the West Arnhem homelands and townships. While the data from this thesis draws upon participants located in Gunbalanya at the time of the interview, their connection to country is embedded in how people position themselves and spans their society more generally. Therefore, these factors are further removed from chapter six's discussion on community-level indicators of community safety and operate at the societal level.

²¹³ Refer to section 5.2.1 for an intercultural definition of community safety.

aspects of Kunwinjku society. Four, the section explores how participants value ceremonies and passing on Bininj law as a method of regulating respectful behaviour and strengthening relationships in Kunwinjku society. Then the section identifies the challenges to using these customary practices as part of ‘two-ways education’ as a method of strengthening social norms.

Section 7.4 analyses how Bininj people leverage informal controls in their kinship networks to regulate and enable behaviour change. Second, the section shows how these strategies are used to resolve problems internally by talking to the family directly and without outsider intervention, with the broader aim of diverting young people from the justice system. Third, the section exposes some of the challenges community members face in mobilising these informal strategies to address community safety without outside intervention.

Section 7.5 highlights how strengths-based strategies can be adopted in services responses to improving safety by emphasising the importance of compassionate and empathetic communication. As previously mentioned, elders in Gunbalanya identified that appropriate consultation and service coordination needs to be improved for a more effective and targeted response to community safety. The remaining sections show positive examples of intercultural responses to administering safety services that have been considered effective and culturally inclusive. For services to adequately address neighbourhood problems, Bininj and Balanda service providers need to work together with the community and show empathy and respect. These types of strengths-based, culturally inclusive responses can enable workers to navigate the complex issues that arise in Bininj socio-cultural contexts by coordinating and collaborating on ways of addressing internal problems.

7.2 Theoretical background

Few researchers have enquired about the community strengths or protective mechanisms that Indigenous societies exhibit including those that are culturally specific (Homel, et al., 1999; Wundersitz, 2010). This chapter’s findings challenge criminological discourse that primarily measures ‘safety’ based on indicators of crime, violence and antisocial behaviour. The findings offer a locally grounded, Indigenous-centred understanding of how protective factors enable communities to strengthen family relationships (Blagg, 2016; Cunneen & Tauri, 2016); and the findings examine how locally-defined values and practices can enable discipline, respect and social cohesion according to the principles of Bininj law.

This chapter contributes to the emerging literature on strengths-based discourse across multiple disciplines including Indigenous health and positive criminology (B. Fogarty, et al., 2017; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1987; Natti & Segev, 2015). For B. Fogarty, Lovell, Langenberg, and Heron (2017, pp. 20-21), strengths-based approaches include: *asset-based approaches* which utilise existing positive attributes, characteristics and resources of the individual or group; *resilience* involves the ability to withstand adverse circumstances through mental, emotional, social and spiritual strength; *protective factors* are non-physical, non-medical elements that counteract risk factors; and *holistic approaches* privilege Indigenous ways of being and knowing. This framework is useful to understand Indigenous experiences of strength-based approaches and how this could be used to improve community safety interventions.

Literature on developmental prevention draws relationships between how protective factors and personal resilience prevent children and adolescents from developing youth delinquent behaviours (Farrington, et al., 2016; Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Hopkins, et al., 2014; Loeber, 1990; Manning, Smith & Homel, 2013). Protective factors operate at the personal level, in family relationships and in community or neighbourhood networks (France & Homel, 2007), and are considered attributes that improve an individual's response to various at-risk situations preceding the adoption of unsafe behaviours (Glowacz & Born, 2015). These factors prevent an individual exposed to multiple risks from developing maladapted behaviours (Glowacz & Born, 2015). Protective factors can be situational or extrinsic – that is, operate in the individual's nearby social or structural environments, such as family, peers or school networks; alternatively, they can be intrinsic to the individual as part of his or her personal characteristics, self-control and sense of self (Glowacz & Born, 2015).²¹⁴

Little is known in academic literature about the role culturally-specific protective factors play in enabling Indigenous adults' and children's resilience, including withstanding the challenges of neighbourhood problems and unsafe behaviours in one's immediate environment (Farrington, et al., 2016; Fleming & Ledogar, 2008; Homel, et al., 1999). In fact, the literature focusing on culturally specific protective factors in Indigenous populations has mostly analysed large-scale quantitative data and these studies have, for the most part, lacked a critical analysis of how the concepts used in these data sets apply to the population being generalised

²¹⁴ Some factors can operate both as risk factors and protective factors. For example, peer group membership can provide social support (i.e. protective factor) while also contributing to peer pressure that may lead to delinquent behaviours (i.e. risk factor).

about. Scholars such as Fleming and Ledogar (2008) and Hopkins, et al. (2014) have questioned whether it is possible to measure protective factors because of how they vary across different populations and because of their indirect influence in preventing neighbourhood problems.

Social cohesion, mutually recognised social expectations, trust and solidarity are factors known to help protect neighbourhoods, including disadvantaged and high-crime neighbourhoods, from harm afflicted through adverse situations (Browning, Dietz & Feinberg, 2004; Morenoff, Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001; Sampson, Raudenbush & Earls, 1997). Generally, we know that community context has an indirect influence on individual choices to engage or not to engage in harmful behaviours (Fitzgerald & Carrington, 2008). I further suggest that context shapes the choices available to the individual irrespective of whether the behaviours are deemed acceptable or not acceptable to the group.

As an example, the Mt Theo Program near Yuendumu, in the Northern Territory, is well known for its successes in eradicating petrol sniffing and reducing other substance misuse in Central Australia (Preuss & Napanangka, 2006; Stojanovski & Campbell, 2001). Stojanovski (2010) explains the Mt Theo Program was successful in eradicating petrol sniffing because, by them spending time on the outstation, this program helped restrict young peoples' negative and harmful behaviours and replaced those behaviours with positive and meaningful futures. By eliminating the availability of petrol, young people had fewer opportunities to use substances and were more likely to adopt positive behaviours including learning about cultural practices through story-telling, hunting and fishing amongst other activities. The broader literature suggests that youth programs held in remote locations must be accompanied by a multifaceted approach that also involves rehabilitation and preventative programs in town amongst a range of capability and community development initiatives (Lopes, Flouris & Lindeman, 2013; Nous Group, 2003). This chapter contributes to the literature by exploring how community context in remote Indigenous Australia fosters social control to prevent unsafe behaviours, and how these contexts shape individuals' decisions to choose prosocial behaviours.

Indigenous societies have complex historical traditions, kinship systems and rules and regulations that predate European settlement by well over 60,000 years. For this time, these societies survived with the appropriate laws and regulatory frameworks to guide moral behaviour (Etherington, 2006; Berndt & Tonkinson, 1988). But what influence do these formal structures have on contemporary neighbourhood problems and perspectives on safety and

building prosocial behaviours? In West Arnhem Land, Bininj law is a moral framework for living as a responsible and respectful adult²¹⁵ in Kunwinjku society and has been passed down through generations via ceremonies; knowledge is transmitted through storytelling, and hunter-gatherer practices (Etherington, 2006).

Etherington (2006)²¹⁶ finds that Bininj law is a form of pedagogy which governs how and what children are taught including what it means to be a Kunwinjku adult, how to relate to each other in Kunwinjku society and how to live well.²¹⁷ Etherington's (2006) findings show that Bininj law is a regulatory framework in Kunwinjku society that socialises children into behaving with discipline and respect; however, to what extent these customary practices still apply in the contemporary era is uncertain. This chapter highlights areas where these formal regulatory functions have become fractured or less equipped to manage harmful and socially unacceptable behaviour in Kunwinjku society.

7.3 Understanding Bininj people's aspirations for a safer community

This section explores how Kunwinjku values and everyday practices can strengthen family relationships and enable positive behavioural norms, and furthermore it considers what factors participants identify that create stronger family relationships including what values participants teach their children. Section 7.2.1 unpacks how these Kunwinjku values contribute to everyday practices that strengthen and maintain respectful relationships within the family. Section 7.2.2 delves deeper into what Bininj participants consider 'respectful' behaviour as a social norm and what controls are in place to reinforce this behaviour. Section 7.2.3 illustrates everyday practices in Kunwinjku society where parents and elders play an active role in teaching children, and where expressions of cultural survival reinforce positive social norms. Then

²¹⁵ Bininj law as a moral framework for Kunwinjku society applies to children too. However, children are considered to still be learning Bininj law (Etherington, 2006).

²¹⁶ Steve Etherington (2006, pp. 17-18) was a Reverend and school teacher in West Arnhem Land for over 18 years (from 1977-95). He learnt to speak Kunwinjku and helped establish a bilingual education program in Gunbalanya.

²¹⁷ In a practical sense, what constitutes Bininj law, how it is transmitted and passed down through generations and who is authorised to teach it are incredibly complex phenomena that have been studied at length elsewhere (Berndt, 1951; Brown, 2014; Spencer, 1914). For the purposes of this thesis, I draw upon selected aspects of Bininj law that participants mentioned in this study. I argue that enabling respectful relationships in Kunwinjku society is inseparable from Bininj people's maintenance and connection with the principles of Bininj law.

section 7.2.4 explores the challenges that parents and elders face in attempting to engage children in intergenerational about Bininj law.

7.3.1 Kunwinjku values in modern society

Bininj participants explained how respect is a core value in Kunwinjku society, where listening to each other and sharing, helping and looking after each other are the foundations of respectful relationships.²¹⁸ Participants used the expression ‘sharing with family’ in different contexts to explain that families helped each other when they were in financial need or when families return after a successful hunting and fishing trip. For some, ‘sharing with family’ involved sharing turtle, magpie goose, fish or other bush foods collected [Q31]. As important aspects of spending time together and helping each other, participants talked about teaching young people stories about ceremony [e.g. Q19, Q26, Q27] and Christian stories [Q01, Q06, Q18, Q37 and Q40]. Some participants talked about the importance of respecting the country and passing on traditions to the next generation, such as stories about rock art and the history of the land [Q19, Q27, Q36, Q41, and Q50].

Family members spending time together and telling stories were important practices for many participants [e.g. CM10, Q25 and Q32]. This participant talked about the importance of teaching children about the kinship system:

We sit together with the kids and tell stories. We tell them about grandfather and grandmother, and family lines. Family tree too. Some kids want to know family line whose family and kinship you belong to.

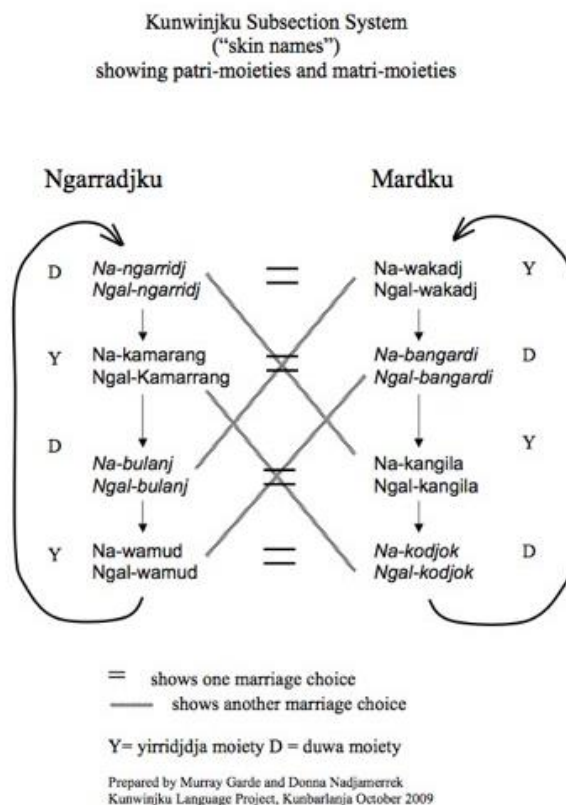
[Q25]

Participant Q25 emphasised that traditional practice of sitting down together to teach children about ‘family lines’ was important for children to know how the kinship system works and who they belong to. In Kunwinjku society, Bininj people define kinship, including spirituality, identity and relatedness, with the moiety system using patri-moieties and matri-moieties known as Dhuwa and Yirritja. These two moieties are divided into eight subsections or ‘skins’ which

²¹⁸ As discussed in section 5.2, Bininj participants identified that, for them, the term ‘community safety’ means helping each other, listening to each other, working together, and sharing and respecting each other. These are the aspirational values of Kunwinjku society in attempting to build healthy and functional family relationships.

define the potential marriage options for each individual and how individuals refer to others in the kinship system, see Fig. 7.1 (Bininj Kunwok Language Project, 2017).

Fig. 7.1. Marriage options in the Kunwinjku subsection system or “skin names” used in West Arnhem Land



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Source: Garde & Nadjamerrek (2017)

Sharing stories with each other, or ‘having a yarn’ and laughing together, were a core part of building positive relationships while family members spent time ‘out bush’ hunting or fishing and at the outstations. Participants identified these practices by explaining how they build strong relationships:

Visiting other family, looking after one another, respect the family, trust the person and show love for the community. These things make me feel strong and good. [Q13]

Looking after each other, caring and sharing with each other, and going hunting and fishing together. [Q54]

We are looking after each other, talking to each other. We like to visit our family in the outstation. Last month, we had the ceremony in Manmoyi outstation. That was really good. [Q47]

Strong family. We sit down and have a yarn, tell stories. [Q57]

These four participants each emphasised slightly different elements of how families enable respectful relationships when being ‘out bush’ and visiting families on their outstations; meanwhile, these practices are a core part of everyday life amongst many Bininj families. Each of these participants valued spending time together where having a ‘strong’ family meant showing trust, love and compassion as well as sitting down and ‘having a yarn’.

Yarning together, telling stories and entertaining each other were important for some participants [Q57 and Q32], as identified above. Comparatively, the term ‘telling stories’ is actually rich with meaning that needs to be unpacked because many participants used the term to refer to passing on stories about the dreamtime and teaching children about Bininj law [e.g. Q50, Q36, Q27 and Q19]. Carroll (1996) documented 40 short versions of stories associated with bark paintings by Kuwbinjku artists and R. Berndt and C. Berndt (1994) compiled 195 short stories from 24 different language groups in West Arnhem Land. Aside from their role as entertainment, Etherington (2006) argues that storytelling can also form part of the Kunwinjku pedagogy which socialises and teaches children about Bininj law. The stories follow a broad range of genres and purposes which are used to: convey moral lessons in Kunwinjku society; reinforce behavioural expectations and norms; provide a country or clan’s historical information about the ‘Old People’; and elders use stories to reminisce about the ‘old times’ such as the mission days (Etherington, 2006).

Story telling is not only a mechanism to teach people about Bininj law, but people also adopt this practice to share stories about their spiritual and religious teachings. Some participants shared how their involvement in the fellowship, including sharing the word of God at the Sunday service, was helping them build stronger relationships in the family:

I feel good when everyone is helping each other, sitting down together and telling stories. We are sharing the word of God and Jesus at the fellowship. God loves everyone, that’s number one. We are sharing the

word of God with family and children – it is for everyone. God loves everyone. When I go to Maningrida I share for my brother, his kids and my sister and her kids. The word of God is important for everyone.
[Q01]

Participant Q01 identified that helping each other, spending time together and telling stories together helps keep her family strong. Sharing the ‘word of God’ with everyone, including families and children, strengthens social norms in the community.

The importance of Christian values was also raised by seven other participants, one of whom person said:

If we follow Jesus, nothing bad will happen. Jesus will always protect us. He’ll always be there – the Holy Spirit. That is the most important thing that we can never forget. [Q37]

Participant Q37 believed that Christian teachings and values were important in protecting the family from ‘bad things’ and enabling a positive environment. In contrast, another participant challenged whether Christian values were genuinely enabling all the appropriate elements for healthy child development.

When I returned to Gunbalanya in September 2017, I talked to several elders about these Kunwinjku values to gather different perspectives on whether and how Bininj families still practiced these values. One participant responded:

I have seen two models of family. In Gunbalanya, there are Christian families and non-Christian families. The non-Christian families drink and smoke and get up to mischief. Not everyone but some of them. Then the Christian families do not drink and smoke etc. but at the same time they do not send their children to school and do not work. They just sit around and do nothing, and their children do not get an education. I cannot understand why they do not value an education. It’s a problem because their children will suffer, and they will not get a job later.
[CM15]

We then talked more broadly about the choices that people make, including the behaviours which this participant viewed as a hindrance to children’s development. Participant CM15

reinforced that the value systems in Kunwinjku families are changing and traditional Kunwinjku values are infrequently practiced which is evident when people do not show respect for each other.

The participant reflected that, in the months prior to my visit, many children in one neighbourhood in Gunbalanya were walking around at night, carrying and banging a machete, playing loud music and banging on the walls and doors.²¹⁹ The participant then questioned:

Is that respecting each other and respecting your neighbours? Many people don't care and don't think about the wellbeing of their neighbours or that they might be sleeping. [CM15]

Then she emphasised her earlier point that there are many people in her neighbourhood who are respectful but she was frustrated that even these Christian families do not send their children to school or attend the required CDP activities.

7.3.2 Respectful relationships in Bininj law

The following sections illustrate how different aspects of Kunwinjku society, including ceremonies and traditional teachings, seek to enable respectful relationships amongst kin. This process of enabling respectful relationships and reinforcing the moral code taught through Bininj law faces challenges because of ongoing processes of cultural change. In this section, participants explain their interpretation of how Kunwinjku values and aspirations for a safer community are embedded in everyday aspects of Bininj livelihoods.

Building respectful relationships and reinforcing discipline amongst young people is synonymous with how Bininj law is taught through ceremonies. A respected elder taught me this lesson in the following conversation that occurred in the second month of my fieldwork, in July 2017. We were discussing Kunapipi²²⁰ happening at Manmoyi outstation when she stated:

²¹⁹ These issues were already discussed in-depth in sections of this thesis, specifically section 5.4 on neighbourhood problems and section 6.4 on youth delinquency.

²²⁰ Kunapipi means 'men's initiation ceremony' and can also be referred to as 'men's business'.

[CM07] *We will need to check with my yabok²²¹ if the family have decided to close the road. Because no one is allowed to see these boys when doing Men's Business.*

[Interviewer] *Why isn't anyone allowed to see the boys?*

[CM07] *This is because the boys need to go through ceremony. They need to hunt and fish and find water by themselves. [Short pause]*

[CM07] *When bininj or daluk go through ceremony, they have more respect from family members. When a man or woman hasn't passed the law, they aren't respected and they get a lot of humbug. They just fight and hit each other.*

[Interviewer] *So, is passing the law important in improving community safety?*

[CM07] *Yes – bininj and daluk who have passed the law have more respect.*

Participant CM07 associated 'passing the law' or 'men's business', meaning following the lessons from Kunapipi and other initiation ceremonies, with advancing in Bininj society and gaining respect from kin. In this case, gaining respect meant the ability to avoid humbug, fighting and other conflict. Similarly, another participant mentioned that 'passing the law' enables discipline and respect in young people's behaviour:

The Bininj law stopping you from hitting and stealing. It's our law. It stops the silly business. In east Arnhem, kids go to ceremony instead of going to jail. The kids go out bush and they have to pass the law. Learn discipline and respect. [Q23]

Participant Q23 highlighted that there are community-led initiatives in East Arnhem where the family send the children to ceremony instead of jail, as a preventative mechanism, where they need to survive in the bush and 'pass the law'. This process allows them to learn discipline and respect from the elders. To further elaborate on this point, Etherington (2006) explains the role of the ceremonial curriculum in teaching young people the moral framework of Kunwinjku society. Etherington (2006, p. 199) states that this curriculum includes the finer detail of the

²²¹ Yabok means 'sister' in Kunwinjku.

Kunwinjku kinship system, behavioural protocols with opposite sex siblings, moral training about the admonishment of adultery and theft, respecting one's ancestors particularly old men, and lectures on taking Bininj law seriously.

A different participant also raised the issue of how Balanda law, particularly sending people to jail, is replacing the formal structures that previously enforced behaviour through Bininj law:

Those people arguing and fighting, I tell them: "You're not a real ceremony man. You need to respect our law." In the old way, people used to die from not respecting Bininj law. They would kill them for that. Now, in Balanda way, those people go to jail instead. [Q50]

Participant Q50 shows how the values of Bininj law can be used to regulate desirable behaviours where the person rejects unsafe behaviours, which in this case was arguing and fighting.²²² The above quote shows an everyday situation where a culturally authoritative person reinforced the moral lessons in Bininj law where the participant calls out undesirable behaviours. He challenged the perpetrator by saying 'you're not a real ceremony man' then he commanded the perpetrator to 'respect our law'. The participant then explains that the 'Old People' would kill a person for disrespecting Bininj law²²³, a point I raised earlier in the previous chapter.²²⁴

Another elder provided her perspective on how Bininj ceremonies teach people to respect each other:

Ceremonies and thinking of families coming together helps people to respect each other. First, it's the parents, you need to learn from them, listen as you are growing up. Then when you are parents, it's your responsibility for your children. Ceremony responsibilities help young ones show respect and make the right choices. [CM10]

²²² This anecdote also shows how Bininj people intervene directly in neighbourhood problems by using the principles of Bininj law to admonish the unruly behaviour. This is what Warner (2007) refers to as direct intervention as part of the broader concept of collective efficacy.

²²³ Etherington (2006, p. 197) identifies how four ceremonies 'keep you going straight': these are Wubarr, Mardayin, Lorrhkon, and Kunapipi. In Etherington (2006), MM explains that if someone would break the law from one of these four ceremonies that that person's death would be sanctioned. MM says that this is because these laws contain the law of the senior people on how to behave appropriately in Kunwinjku society.

²²⁴ Refer to section 6.5.1.

This elder described two elements to building respectful relationships: (1) parents and elders teach Bininj law to young people (i.e. ceremonies), and (2) maintain healthy family connections (i.e. family coming together). Positive family relationships involve children learning from their parents²²⁵.

Passing on Bininj law is a fundamental process in which children become ‘educated’ and learn the social values and principles that underpin what it means to be a responsible Kunwinjku adult. One participant showed this:

Lawyer is same like Bininj law. A lawyer goes to university for many years and gets a good education. Bininj law is like the same but it's our law. You got to follow the law and pass ceremony many times to earn that respect. [Q23]

Participant Q23 further developed this notion of what respect means in Kunwinjku society where an educated person who has authority over how the ceremony is conducted and how the spiritual procedures are upheld is central to this process of being educated in the Bininj way. Becoming educated in Kunwinjku society requires a young person to undertake ceremonial responsibilities and participate in the learning process many times until he or she has the teachings of the elders. As the person passes through the different ceremonial stages, that person earns more respect within the community. This respect is reinforced when the person upholds the values and principles of a responsible Kunwinjku adult. A different participant [Q27] highlighted that young people learning through ceremonies is important to Kunwinjku society because Western law changes ‘every year’ but Bininj law stays the same across multiple generations.

Another participant further developed this by relating these practices to how children learn positive behaviours:

*The ceremony is our school. The young people need to learn both ways.
They go to the city to learn white ways. When we show them Aboriginal*

²²⁵ The English language does not encompass the entirety of how Bininj envision their family relationships. When Bininj refer to ‘family’ they often mean the extended family in which the caring and support for their familial roles is shared between aunts and grandparents. When participants refer to ‘parents’, they refer to their direct parents although non-biological parents can also be adopted to be primary care-givers.

school, it teaches responsibility, discipline and how to behave according to our law. How to be a good Bininj person. [Q50]

Participant Q50 explained that the ceremony is a form of school where young people need to learn about responsibility, discipline and how to behave as a respectful adult, according to the principles of Bininj law. The participant emphasised this by explaining that to behave according to the law is to learn ‘how to be a good Bininj person’.

The participant contrasted this against the challenges of providing two-ways education where young people learn predominantly ‘white ways’ which do not provide this type of education involving discipline and respect. Like many others, participant Q50 mentioned that young people in Gunbalanya need a culturally-informed education that involves teaching children about painting dreamtime stories and teaching these stories to the next generation [Q50]. Culturally informed approaches to working together and learning from each other require both Bininj and Balanda to learn from each other. While Bininj need to learn more about both Bininj and Balanda law, Balanda need to learn more about Bininj law by listening to Bininj people in the workplace and in social scenarios, visiting outstations, and participating in cultural events including ceremonies [CM10].²²⁶

7.3.3 Everyday practices in Kunwinjku society

This section delves deeper into the everyday practices that Bininj people engage with that enable stronger family relationships through promoting cultural survival. As outlined above, for Bininj people passing on traditional beliefs, law and values is an integral element to building healthy relationships in the family and community. These participants emphasised the importance of passing on knowledge to the next generation as the elders and their ancestors have done through generations:

It’s very important that we pass on the knowledge that our ancestors gave us to the next generation. Teach our kids so they can learn and they can teach their kids. [Q38]

²²⁶ This point is further explored in section 7.5 to understand how this approach to working two-ways and building mutual respect between Bininj and Balanda can be incorporated to improve community safety services.

This is a peaceful community and we are all connected. We have to pass on the knowledge because these are our ancestry from long time. They can't be fighting over that grog – it's a shame, you know. [Q18]

Participant Q38 highlighted that raising children to be respectful adults required them to pass on the knowledge from ancestors to the children, and participant Q18 valued being connected as a community of Bininj people. This person took pride in the fact that Kunwinjku knowledge and law has been passed down through generations and it is an ancient civilisation that has developed through this process of passing on the law. However, fighting and grog were jeopardising the peace in the community.

One participant shared his perspective in depth about how educating children in both Bininj and Balanda law was important and how this person teaches children about traditional practices:

We should take the kids bush walking and show the children where their country is, how to choose bush tucker in the different seasons and how to make woomera. The Old People²²⁷ used to show us how to make woomera and then we used to hunt and look for bush tucker. They took us bush walking, but there's no Old People here anymore. [Q50]

Participant Q50 shared that taking children bush walking used to be an important part of cultural education. During a bush walk, the elders or 'Old People' used to talk to the children about spiritual stories that are embossed in the landscape and talk about how to use plants, seeds and roots to craft materials or paints. The participant identified that it is important to teach children where their country is, how to choose bush tucker²²⁸ in the different seasons, and how to make different hunting instruments including the 'woomera' – a tool used to throw a spear. The practice of making spears is considered 'men's business' whereas other instruments, such as crafting hook sticks and digging sticks, are considered 'women's business'.

²²⁷ Etherington (2006, p. 143) writes that Kunwinjku speakers use the term 'the Old People' to refer to people in different social positions: firstly, 'the Old People' refers to the older generation of grandparents and great-grandparents; and secondly, the term refers to adults who were living when the speaker was a child (who may now be deceased or not).

²²⁸ Bush tucker is an Australian term for traditional bush foods.

Etherington (2006, p. 144) articulates how the term ‘the Old People taught us’ is a common phrase that Kunwinjku speakers use to explain how the Old People were responsible for teaching a spiritual and moral framework for children to learn what it means to be a respectable Kunwinjku adult. These teachings involved learning bush survival skills, principles of discipline and morality taught through ceremonies, and language skills. Furthermore, Etherington (2006, pp. 149-150) identifies that the Old People “did not merely teach or pass on the moral code” but they were considered exemplars of the moral code. The Old People enforced strict behavioural rules, such as avoidance behaviours or polite and obedient interactions amongst kin.

The introduction of a Western education system has displaced the role of the Old People in providing these moral lessons and enforcing the traditional value system and laws; and in the meantime, modern entertainment and the presence of the GSSC has displaced the traditional story-telling time which previously occurred before bedtime (Etherington, 2006). Similar to Etherington (2006), participants commonly said: “they took us bush walking” but there’s “no Old People here anymore”. This highlights how this practice has become fragmented because many ‘Old People’ or elders have passed away and this knowledge is not being practiced by the current generations. Knowledge, stories and lessons were taught from the Old People, or elders and adults, to younger people – and these stories embodied the principles of Bininj law.

This participant described the different ways traditional Bininj practices, knowledge and law are taught to children and passed onto the next generation:

When spending time at the outstation, they can sit there and learn about father country and mother country: the land, water, fire and air. We do that at ceremony last week. [Q50]

Participant Q50 indicated that the homelands or outstations play a key role in providing a space for cultural teachings. Each Bininj child is endowed with different spiritual obligations, stories and languages that are passed down depending on where their mother and father come from and where they are placed in the kinship system. Along with another participant [CM09], the participant quoted above refers to having a strong sense of identity. Essential to knowing this identity, the participant explained, young Bininj people need to know where they come from, who they belong to and that they will eventually become their country.

Teaching young people these practices, beliefs and values occurred at formal events, such as ceremonies, but also in everyday life when people went hunting, fishing and when family spent time together, sharing stories. Several participants reflected upon the everyday practices which allow them time and space to share stories and teach young people about traditional practices:

We are making baskets in the morning. Us ladies, we like sharing stories, going out bush where there's no kunbang, kundalk. We like the community but then spend two or three weeks out bush, teaching the kids and telling them stories about when we were young in the mission days... We teach our children about the hook stick and bush foods – yam and cheeky yam – and collecting Pandanus dyes for making baskets. [Q11]

Participant Q11 explained about 'women's business' where they like to weave baskets starting by collecting Pandanus²²⁹ leaves and dyes to colour the leaves. Meanwhile, spending time in the outstation offers relief where there's fewer disturbances. The outstations also offer time and space to teach children about how to make hook sticks and hunt for bush foods, including yam and cheeky yam²³⁰.

Further elaborating on similar ideas, other participants also explained how they teach their children about preparing bush foods the 'right way':

We talk about how to cook file snake and turtle. I show them the right way to cook file snake and turtle, you know, the law way. When you cook it the wrong way, the spirits will bring the rain. We got to show them culture – the right way. [Q18]

I take them out in the bush, on their country, and we go stay there. I teach them Bininj way – we go look for yam and fishing and looking for file snake. [Q25]

²²⁹ Pandanus leaves (scientific name: *pandanus spiralis*) are found in the tropical savannah. Bininj women use these leaves to prepare fine fibre and twine for knotted bags and coil-woven baskets (Bininj Kunwok Language Project, 2017, 2018).

²³⁰ Cheeky yams are bush foods in West Arnhem Land which are poisonous if not prepared the correct way. The toxins are removed by slicing them and soaking them in running water for a day or longer (Bininj Kunwok Language Project, 2017).

Participant Q18 offered her belief that when bush tucker, such as file snake²³¹ and fresh water long-neck turtle, are prepared in the incorrect manner then the spirits will bring the rain. She emphasised that children need to be shown according to the practices of Bininj law. In addition, participant Q25 highlighted that being on country is important to look for yams, go fishing and hunt for file snake. These are common pastimes I experienced when spending time with Bininj people.

The principles of Bininj law in everyday Kunwinju society are not always practiced in everyday life and this is a present challenge for Bininj elders as they seek to maintain the traditional values system. In traditional society, hunting and fishing trips were accompanied by lessons where young people would listen attentively, according to participants. Other participants questioned whether, in the contemporary era, these trips were accompanied by the moral teachings about avoidance behaviour, learning about relational kin and respecting one's elders. For several elders, communicating and teaching these stories to young people was pivotal to the children's ability to learn and adopt respectful behaviours, and in turn prevent harm and trouble in the community.

One old man explained that passing on the law through stories is the only way to overcome the challenges imposed by Western governance and culture:

We're in the middle of our knowledge way. It's important we have wisdom and cultural knowledge. It's the only way to make it a better future – show them the passages. Show the public the paintings, corroboree²³² and videos of weaving or painting... People too shy to share their stories. That's not the way. I have to make my kids proud by showing them about dance and story. I shared with the kids, now they are graduated, and they don't do violence. They are smart one! That's the only way. [Q36]

This participant was of the view that, to improve outcomes for the next generation, it is vital that the community work towards teaching Balanda and Bininj about the practices of Bininj law through stories, dance, weaving and painting. He explained that children have to 'graduate'

²³¹ The Arafura file snake, otherwise called *kedjebe* in Kunwinjku, is an aquatic reptile that grows to around 2.5 metres and is a favourite bush tucker among Bininj people (Bininj Kunwok Language Project, 2017).

²³² Kunwinjku term for 'dancing' at ceremonies or around the fire.

from Bininj law²³³ and be proud of their identity and history, and that this is the only way to prevent violence.

The same old man further described how Bininj people need to show respect for their country and the ancestral stories because these stories show how the Old People have survived on the land, and these stories belong to the next generation:

There are five tribal languages that belong to this country. We are sharing one water, we're all connected. Before, when the community began, we had to learn to live together because these tribes would sometimes fight. Now it's one big tribe. We all live together... New government decisions all the time. You cannot see the green grasses and the green leaves. Things aren't getting better for the next generation. Children aren't learning about culture or who they are from all these policies, instead there is lots of fighting, causing trouble and other bad things. We need to think about how to make a better future for them. [Q36]

The participant continued to explain that, in the old days, there were different tribal groups who spoke different languages and, in the contemporary period, all these tribal groups live together in the community and everyone is connected. Meanwhile, governments are increasingly impacting on how Bininj people live but these changing government decisions are not improving the lives of the next generation. From these policies, children are not learning about their identity, and instead, they are often causing trouble. For the participant, the lives of the next generation can be improved through an ongoing process of transgenerational learning about Bininj law.

Other participants believed that Injalak Arts Centre played a significant role in providing this cultural education by telling Bininj and Balanda about the stories by showing them the traditions and ancestral stories that have been passed down through painting. This was believed to be keeping culture and traditions alive [Q42]. This attempt by elders and community leaders to enhance cultural survival and prevent further language and knowledge loss in the region is

²³³ The phrase 'graduate from Bininj law' is a euphemism for attending and passing ceremony.

not without challenges. The following section delves deeper into some of the interpersonal challenges impacting on the community's attempt at cultural survival.

7.3.4 Bininj approaches to enabling positive behaviours

Participants raised several challenges that they have witnessed or experienced to explain how some people do not practice these traditional values, beliefs or practices. The overwhelming influence of Western culture on Bininj people was seen by some participants as part of the problem:

Lots of influence here. Kids don't want to learn traditional culture, listen to culture, law and about the land. We need more support for ceremony, a balance between Balanda and Bininj laws. Then the kids don't want to walk all night. [Q42]

This participant mentioned that the competing cultural influence of Western and Bininj practices is contributing to the troubled behaviour amongst youth. For the participant, these unsafe behaviours amongst youth occur and children are less willing to listen and learn about culture, law and the land. This participant argued that Bininj people need more support to hold ceremonies to strike a balance between Western and Aboriginal education.²³⁴

Others held the opinion that there is greater disrespect among people including youths because these people do not listen to the elders and the teachings of Bininj law. This is a barrier to building respectful relationships in community, where this person commented:

People don't listen to the old ladies, and when she says, "stop fighting, arguing" nothing happens. They don't listen. [Q31]

Participant Q31 emphasised that 'listening' to the old ladies was important in reducing unsafe behaviours but this respect for the old ladies is diminishing. Another participant mentioned that

²³⁴ Etherington (2006) argues that, from his perspective, Bininj people's proclamation about the need for two-ways education was a defensive mechanism. He believed that they did not necessarily want two-ways education but that his participants recognised that Balanda education was having a strong impact on the educational capabilities of children, in that they were less capable in demonstrating Bininj notions of an 'educated' person. In my research, there were selected participants who advocated for two-ways and bilingual education. For others, perhaps they had conceded that Balanda education was here, and it was not going away.

her elders played an important role in showing her how to care for children and teach them the ‘right way’, but the children do not listen to her teachings. She said:

Our elders taught us how to take care of children, teach them. That’s what I am doing. I try to teach them and show them the right way. But what can you do if they don’t listen? We talk to them about kundalk and kunbang and taking care of family. But who is going to be there when we pass away? [Q51]

Participant Q51 explained that she follows the lessons of her elders but this practice of instilling positive messages into her children’s lives is becoming less effective. She is worried that her children will not be capable of teaching Bininj law when she passes away. This issue was also raised by another participant who stated: “we try to show them Bininj law, but they don’t believe us” [Q47]. This is one way in which children learn autonomously in Indigenous societies however, in Gunbalanya, with increasing cultural fragmentation the choices available to young people are growing. This occurs whilst the social fabric of Bininj law becomes less effective in maintaining social order. These social processes create an environment where children choose to engage in more Western practices which creates a generational conflict regarding socially appropriate, respectful and moral behaviours.

These issues raised about children ‘not listening’ to the lessons of parents and elders was further developed by another participant who provided a different perspective on the issue. She offered:

Some kids don’t have respect because they don’t have stories from the Old People. There’s plenty of food out bush. The children can learn healthy food, long-life and free-one²³⁵ too. No pay for bush food. Some parents don’t let the kids go bush and the kids send text message, prowling and all that. The good parents let them go bush and learn from the stories and lessons. Without the law, we got no stories²³⁶. They do what they want – bininj and daluk. The Aboriginal kids have stories from the older people. They should sit down and listen to those stories, but they want to do their own way. [Q23]

²³⁵ This refers to the fact that bush foods can be collected without the cost of fuel.

²³⁶ This reference to ‘stories’ refers to knowledge.

Participant Q23 contrasted two types of families in Gunbalanya: first, in some families the parents ‘don’t let the kids go bush’ and this results in the kids arguing over text messages and other unsafe behaviours. In the second type of family, the ‘good parents’ let them go bush and the children learn stories and lessons about bush food, the Old People and the law. She emphasised that, without stories and lessons, Aboriginal kids are lawless and without guidance, rules and discipline. This participant suggested that the way to resolve these problems is for parents and elders to ‘sit down and listen to those stories’ while recognising that the modern society challenges these traditional practices when children often ‘do their own way’.

When I returned to Gunbalanya in September 2017, I talked with this participant again about her perspectives on culturally inclusive ways to enable positive behaviour change among young people. After acknowledging the recent community safety problems with youth gangs, she offered her perspectives on ways to build positive behaviours:

The only way you get those young boys to stop being trouble-makers is: (1) those bininj find daluk and she tells him to stop and then he starts to make the right choices; (2) the second way is that the Old People talk to him and show him the right path. But we don’t have many Old People anymore that knows the stories. [Q23]

Later, this participant challenged this second point because, from her perspective, there are few elders or Old People around who know these stories. We talked further about cultural and language fragmentation where the pre-missionary languages, such as Mengerre, Wuningark, Gunwinggu, Gagadju and other languages of the region are disappearing. She explained that she learns her mother’s language to keep it alive but there are few knowledgeable speakers left. She spends time with an old lady and listens to her speak her mother’s language. But there are other challenges to maintaining cultural and language integrity amongst other distant kin. She mentioned that sometimes people come to ask her to speak that language with them. Then the next day, the same person asks again ‘what word is that’ and ‘what does that mean’. For her, this is frustrating because these persons lack the ability to listen and absorb the knowledge, and in other situations, ‘they start asking for bakki or kunwarde²³⁷’. Reflecting upon this, she says, after being humbugged for money and cigarettes, she gave up and only shares this knowledge with close family.

²³⁷ Kunwarde means ‘money’ in Kunwinjku.

7.4 Resolve problems the Bininj way

This section explores the informal strategies that Bininj people use to resolve problems in their neighbourhood. ‘Talking gently to young people’, ‘talking to resolve the problem’ and ‘talking at a community meeting’ represent three strategies which participants used as ways of resolving neighbourhood problems without outside intervention. Section 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 show how these informal strategies occur outside the mostly Western domains regulation and service delivery. For Bininj, these different ‘talks’ are everyday mechanisms used to de-escalate or resolve a problem. Section 7.4.3 then shows how community meetings are also a strategy used to de-escalate a situation, but participants indicate that this strategy is practiced infrequently.

7.4.1 Talking gently to young people

During the earlier months of the data collection, in July 2016 I was invited by some of the strong elders in the community to participate in a Culture Camp on Manmoyi Outstation to celebrate NAIDOC Week²³⁸. Funding for the events was organised through the Jabiru clinic and the structure and proceedings for the three days were organised by the elders who lived on the outstation. Children visited from different nearby communities including Maningrida, Gunbalanya and Jabiru. On the first and second days, the boys and girls were separated to learn about their traditional gendered roles, such as men’s hunting roles and women preparation of Pandanus and string. Then they would come together to learn about how they work together to make string for an axe and spear, amongst other items.

On the last day of the event, we were organising the camp and preparing breakfast for the children before sending them back home. An incident happened where a Balanda person who was helping organise some of the children and she became frustrated that the child did not listen to her and she raised her voice. This child came from a troubled background including his membership in a youth gang. The child’s carer spoke to the Balanda woman in disagreement with her approach to disciplining the child. She said:

These are my children and I am responsible for talking to them and disciplining them. You have no right to interfere. [FN 06.07.16]

²³⁸ NAIDOC Week stands for ‘National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee’ and is an annual event of national significance in Australia which Australians use to celebrate Indigenous culture. In Gunbalanya, we more often called this week ‘Bininj week’.

At that point, my auntie took me by the hand and said, ‘let’s walk this way to get some fresh air’. We talked about the incident further when she said:

It’s not right what she did because she does not realise that you have to talk to these children gently. You cannot talk to them in a harsh way. Because they have trouble at home, you do not know how they might react. You have to talk to them gently, in a soft way. Otherwise, they might go for a walk into the bush and never come back. I will talk to that Balanda lady after and she will understand. [CM09]

My observation of this event was the first time I realised that, for Bininj, ‘talking gently to young people’ was an important action which people use to enable behaviour change among young people.²³⁹ The participant above recognised that those particular young children involved were vulnerable because of the complex scenarios they experienced at home and in their community. For these reasons, the elders involved saw that it was important that their carer talked to them gently without outside intervention from the Balanda woman.

Other participants similarly talked about the need to talk to young people gently, which was a strategy sometimes used by Bininj when dealing with young people with mental health issues. As mention earlier²⁴⁰, participant CM14 identified that ‘talking to young people’ is one approach to developing a positive relationship between parent and child to resolve social stressors which could be symbolic of mental health issues. In her view, parental care can be enacted by talking together about personal issues and this practice assists in the development of mutual respect between parent and child. According to participant CM14: “I sometimes say to them ‘sit down, calm down and let that thing go away’.” Personal issues in this case were expressed through stress and the participant thought that, in this example, the child felt that social pressure about finding a boyfriend could be contributing to the social stress. She commented “they need someone to talk to, just like I talk to my girls” to highlight that parents play an important role in guiding young people through these issues.²⁴¹

²³⁹ In section 7.3, several participants have raised how young people ‘do not listen’ which indicates how this strategy for resolving problems is becoming less effective. This is another example of traditional social controls are becoming fractured because of the increasing influence of Western culture.

²⁴⁰ Refer to section 5.4.5.

²⁴¹ Participants also referred to spending time together and talking or telling stories together as an everyday practice they use to build positive and respectful relationships. See section 7.3 for further examples of this practice.

In the questionnaires, I asked participants who they would talk to if they saw a young person who was at-risk of self-harming behaviour.²⁴² The role family members and particularly the role elders play in mediating problems and talking to young people was important for some participants:

When a person worries too much I just talk to them and I talk to the family too. We talk to family members first because we don't want the trouble coming back. But the family don't listen sometimes. When we ask them to stop playing music then they say: "I don't want to stop."

[Q47]

Participant Q47 identified that she would talk to the young person herself and talk to the family to help that young person. She explained that 'talking to the family' can be difficult is and not always effective in resolving problems. Participants often considered it important that they talk to the family, before involving outsiders, because the family may retaliate in blame or other trouble as part of payback.

In a semi-structured interview, one participant located 'talking to kids' as a culturally informed practice that should be led by Bininj people as a form of justice diversion. He elaborated:

... We need to resolve problems the Bininj way and talk to kids gently, nicely. It seems that there needs to be more programs for younger people getting in trouble with the law. Instead of sending them to prison or to a youth detention, there needs to be an Elders council to get together and talk about the problem with the family, the young person and agree on a way of fixing the problem. If they get into trouble with the law, we need to say to them: "look, you understand what you did? Do you think it was the right thing to do? Do you understand how you hurt your family?" Talk to them gently so they can understand what they did and agree on a punishment. [CM08]

Participant CM08 claimed that talking to young people gently and nicely helps them understand how they should respect and listen to their elders. He was of the view that there should be a

²⁴² As per Appendix C, question 16 asked – who would you talk to if you knew someone who worried too much and s(he) might do something bad? Questions 15 and 17 asked similar questions on FDV and youth delinquent behaviour, respectively.

greater emphasis on justice diversion where an elders' council is responsible for holding meetings between the family and the young person, that way they can agree on a way of fixing the problem. Participant CM08 unknowingly articulates an approach to restorative justice including family conferencing and remediation. A service located in Darwin, Anglicare Australia provides occasional youth diversion activities in Gunbalanya and Jabiru for first-time offenders of non-serious acts (Anglicare NT, 2017).²⁴³ This suggests that further research is needed to understand how effective remediation and restorative justice practices reduce reoffending and unsafe behaviours, and how Bininj elders living on the homelands can support young people to rebuild positive social norms and relationships in their own lives.

7.4.2 Talking to trouble-makers

One participant explained that, when there is a problem in community, she resolves the problem by talking to the strong people in her family. She preferred to resolve the problem internally without intervention from outsiders:

When we have a problem, we fix it in our way. When we see people fighting in the street, it's not good to get involved. Then we have to call "000" and it causes trouble. It's best to talk to our family. Like, I talk to my aunty and other family. They are strong. [Q12]

Participant Q12 raised the issue that there is often a reluctance for community members to report incidents to the police because of the fear and threats that the family might bring through payback.²⁴⁴ 'Talking to elders' and 'strong people' were important strategies that participants identified they use to avoid involving outsiders, including the police. This was also highlighted by a different participant:

²⁴³ The Anglicare NT Youth Diversion Program uses restorative justice principles, including diversionary activities, reintegration support, and victim-offender remediation. In the year 2016-17, Anglicare in collaboration with local organisations in Gunbalanya and Jabiru provided 20 diversionary activities attended by 455 young people. 27 young people were supported with case management and victim offender conferencing, and the program worked with one young person and their family to support reintegration into community (Anglicare NT, 2017).

²⁴⁴ Some Bininj service providers and community members clearly would prefer to avoid attracting the attention of the police. Various authors have explored the historical and contemporary reasons why many Aboriginal people seek not to attract the attention of the police; these reasons include (but are not limited to) unfair treatment, over-policing and hyper-incarceration of Australian Indigenous peoples (Blagg, 2016; Cunneen, 2001; Porter, 2016; Sarre, 2005).

When there's a fight in the street, we talk to elders when the person is sober. They can help solve the problem without calling jamon²⁴⁵. We talk to elders because when we call the police, the person will be banned from the club. We talk one language, we are all connected. You know, this causes problems. So, when the person is sober we go talk to them. [Q26]

Participant Q26 highlighted that, if she would report an incident involving violence to the police, then the perpetrator would mostly likely be banned from the GSSC. This would likely attract payback for the person who reported the incident because this reporting behaviour attracted the attention of the police and other authorities. Instead, participant Q26 said she would attempt to resolve the problem by asking the elders to talk to the perpetrator, the next day, when he or she is sober. In comparison, other participants reported that they preferred to resolve the problems internally then talk to police or other service providers as a secondary opinion, if they need support or the first intervention was not sufficient [Q18, Q19].

Some elders informed me that, if they saw people fighting in the street, they would discipline the perpetrators themselves. This participant has extensive experience working in community safety services and she reported how she would deal with incidents of FDV herself:

[Interviewer] *What would you do if you saw a man and woman fighting in the street?*

[Q25] *I sort it out – I growl at them. When there's man and woman fighting, we wait until they calmed down. We explain that there is djorra²⁴⁶ and no more family violence. Then we can go with Safe House and help them.*

[Interviewer] *What would you do if you saw a young person causing trouble in the community, such as walking around, dangerous driving etc.?*

²⁴⁵ Jamon means 'police' in Kunwinjku.

²⁴⁶ Djorra means 'paper' in Kunwinjku and is a common reference to different forms of documentation including legislation as part of Balanda law.

[Q25] I would growl at them for that too!... Prowling. She go walking around at night. He need to go visit other family. Then when they are sober I go tell them off and they are banned from the club.

Participant Q25 spoke from a position of someone who is a well-respected leader in the community and a strong person. She stated that she would ‘growl’ at a couple involved with FDV and speak to them, explaining that there are laws around FDV and about Charlie King’s “No More” Campaign²⁴⁷. In this example, the participant is leveraging the regulatory environment to enable behaviour change amongst other community members. She uses her knowledge about the laws around FDV to explain that interpersonal violence is not acceptable, therefore deferring responsibility and deflecting payback. Compared to the second half of the conversation where the participant comments that, if people are causing trouble and they have been drinking at the club, then she would ‘go tell them off’.²⁴⁸

7.4.3 Talking at a community meeting

Several people mentioned that problems could be resolved among Bininj without intervention by the police or other service providers. Balanda are sometimes called upon to support Bininj people when there is a difficult problem which may involve payback or other complexities. As Bininj leverage their social networks to talk about alcohol and substance misuse, family violence or youth delinquency then they are effectively regulating the behaviour amongst community members. They are deciding on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour by leveraging their status as leaders. These two participants made different references to elders resolving problems using community meetings:

If people are causing trouble, we should have a community meeting and talk to the family members involved. [Q37]

If there are people causing trouble in the community, we need to have community meeting to take action on this problem. [Q38]

²⁴⁷ Refer to chapter eight for further details on the role Charlie King’s “No More” campaign had on the Gunbalanya community.

²⁴⁸ Reflecting upon this, participant Q25 comments were interesting because she was not concerned about potential payback she might receive in response to her reprimanding of this behaviour. There were a selected few people in community, who were well-regarded as strong and influential Bininj leaders, who mentioned to me “they do not bring trouble to my house because they know who I am” [SP02, SP03 and CM15].

These two participants indicated that, when people are ‘causing trouble’, community meetings are seen as the appropriate mechanisms for resolving problematic behaviour. Participant Q38 referred to ‘trouble in the community’ which indicates that these issues are greater than a small interpersonal problem and could involve different families. Community meetings are also informal mechanisms that Bininj people use to divert young people away from police attention.

Some participants were concerned that this strategy which sought to regulate behaviour is infrequently used and, as an informal structure, has started to break down. This participant raised this issue:

*The Old People used to make meeting when there's stealing or trouble.
Meeting when there's stealing or trouble. Meeting to stop the problem.
But now – lark²⁴⁹. We need to take the kids out bush so the mother and
father can rest. Maybe the problem calms down then. [Q23]*

The above quote refers to the Old People being elders who have deceased. This was common that participants referred to these people having passed and therefore traditional practices have broken down, or they are no longer practiced. Yet, many community members did not realise that there are elders who are strong in the community and they are needed to take over this leadership. But these elders are not present in all families and do not have the knowledge that the Old People had because social and cultural practices are changing.

There are elders who work hard to gather input from community members and create collective action. One well-respected elder said:

*We should have a community meeting about safety. Everyone getting
together to talk about it, helping each other. We need to talk about
speed bumps, people playing cards and police taking action. Also, then
young boys walking around with machete – they're destroying those
signs like the bus stop and the give way sign and the speed sign. The
lights in our street are broken too. They go off and on all the time.
[Q47]*

This participant positioned community meetings as a way of collaboration amongst Bininj, and potentially between Bininj and other service providers. The meetings were seen as a method of

²⁴⁹ Lark means ‘nothing’ in Kunwinjku.

talking about issues and helping each other through collective action to resolve neighbourhood problems. Two other participants mentioned that there is a need to reinvigorate discussion groups on community safety issues, such as participant Q14 who held the view that “community does not have a great understanding and involvement around community safety”.

In Gunbalanya in 2016, I worked with elders from the community alongside a service provider working at the Safe House who attempted to resurrect the Strong Women’s Group. The aim of this strategy was to hold regular group meetings and discussions about community safety in the three neighbourhoods in Gunbalanya. We made various attempts to hold these meetings and worked for long hours preparing scones and fruit for snacks, as well as talking to different senior spokeswomen in different families. But, admittedly, our attempt was unsuccessful in establishing ongoing community safety forums beyond this initial meeting.

There are two reasons for this. First, the organising of these group discussions was seen, by some community members, as the role of the Safe House worker; meanwhile, the Safe House worker was of the view that these forums need to be community-driven. For a period, the Safe House worker was successful in creating the momentum for the Strong Women’s Group but eventually this died off and the Safe House worker left Gunbalanya.²⁵⁰ Second, at the handful of Strong Women’s Group meetings I was involved with, the same elders advocated for, attended and lead the discussions at those meetings. This small group of women who led the discussions were direct kin. Without the verbal and physical presence of these three to four women, few meetings attracted enough women to be worth proceeding.

Community members’ desire for collective action on community safety issues is hindered by the existing social conditions to which people have become conditioned. Part of this problem is that the same small group of individuals speak up and take action. Meanwhile, people do not feel sufficiently empowered to act upon their ambitions and goals. This is evident in interviews where participants too often commented on ways to resolve problems where other people ‘should’ act, such as ‘they should do this’, where participants referred the need for Balanda to provide activities and services to resolve the problems or elders should resolve the problem by working with Balanda.

²⁵⁰ I am not sure if there are other reasons why the Strong Women’s Group meetings stopped occurring, although I am sure that they would not be held if the Safe House worker did not organise them.

I suggest that this expectation has been enabled by a service delivery model that relies on subjecting Bininj people to services, rather than as active contributors in designing and being empowered by services. This is evident in the range of short-term programs that fly-in and fly-out with minimal consultation; the sub-contracting of government services where few local Aboriginal people are involved in organising, running or managing; and the ongoing expectation that a ‘whitefella’ will be making decisions over how locally administered services are run. These ongoing disabling factors point to a state of community disempowerment which desperately needs to be changed, along with a push for a broader focus on strengths-based approaches which build capability and empower from the bottom-up.

Similarly, Dudgeon et al. (2014) argue that mainstream wellbeing programs often lack an understanding of the interdependence between individual and collective empowerment, healing and trauma management. They suggest that harm prevention and safety promotion programs, such as family wellbeing, mental health and suicide prevention programs, need to link individual and collective empowerment goals for Aboriginal people at the local level. Aspects of individual empowerment are essential elements or beliefs and attitudes associated with “becoming or being empowered”, which includes enhancing one’s sense of self-worth, efficacy, autonomy, ability to analyse problems and act upon them, and control over life circumstances (Dudgeon et al., 2014, p. 439). Collective empowerment includes the strengthening of social networks and enhancing organising capacity including decision-making, community connectedness and the ability to reach consensus on goals-oriented strategies and realise those goals. (Dudgeon et al., 2014, p. 440).

7.5 Towards a two-ways approach to mutual respect

This section draws upon some examples of strengths-based approaches to improving community safety including where a culturally inclusive and sensitive approach was used to enable respectful relationships. Several participants have mentioned the importance of working together and cross-culturally to improve safety which this involves mutual respect between Bininj and Balanda.²⁵¹ Section 7.5.1 draws upon the Kunwinjku values of working together and respecting each other to understand how these values can be embedded within contemporary service responses to community safety issues. These values should not solely

²⁵¹ Refer to section 5.2.1 on Kunwinjku values underpinning the term ‘community safety’; section 5.2.3 on intercultural approaches to improving safety; and section 7.3.4 on two-ways education.

apply to Bininj people but also need to be embraced by Balanda service providers. Section 7.5.2 investigates if and where these principles are used in contemporary practices, including where there are service gaps. Drawing upon strengths-based examples, the remaining sections analyse situations where there has been a collaborative response amongst different agencies to mediate complex scenarios, including ‘following-up’ on potentially escalating problems and scenarios which might involve payback.

7.5.1 Mutual respect between Bininj and Balanda

For an ongoing dialogue to occur between community leaders, families and service providers, there must be an established sense of mutual respect between Bininj and Balanda. As previously mentioned, some aspects of facilitating mutual respect are working together, helping each other and listening to each other. This is described by participants as a two-ways dialogue where each person contributes to the discussion where power-sharing is a valued part of the process:

We need two-ways respect. Bininj and Balanda working together, helping each other. But it doesn't always happen like that. [Q23]

Participant Q23 commented that two-ways respect is important where Bininj and Balanda are working together and helping each other, and while this is important for the participant, this does not always occur in practice. Another participant further highlighted that decision-making needs to be shared between Bininj and Balanda:

Balanda need to start listening to Bininj. This is our community. They don't want just come here and make their own decisions. They have to start listening. [SP03]

Participant SP03 mentioned that Balanda need to listen to community leaders and talk to them about changes in procedures, rules and regulations. Additionally, the hierarchical nature of government organisations can further impede this informal collaborative approach that Bininj have mentioned. While many organisations are based on the Western mode of governance, this can conflict with Kunwinjku values and norms regarding who has the authority to speak about issues affecting the community.

Other participants have informally reported incidents where visiting management staff disrespected Bininj workers . The participant explained:

Balanda should come to community to sit down, talk with us and listen. But they come to make themselves big boss. They don't listen, just change the rules all the time and don't talk to us about it. There was one person who came and talked down to us. She disrespected us and we don't want her to come back. [Q26]

Participant Q26 explained her perspective on respectful engagement and communication. The participant reflected upon one incident that occurred in her organisation, where she became frustrated that a Balanda woman disrespected the workers by talking down to them. In addition, the Bininj workers felt disrespected and judged because the visitor did not want to use the facilities provided. This outsider was not from the community and she lacked the sensitivity in working with cultural respect. The visitor enacted the Western approach to top-down leadership when she did not acknowledge that the people who were her employees were also community leaders who were culturally well respected.

Some participants informally commented on the lack of felt trust between their non-Indigenous colleagues and themselves, where their colleagues had 'not listened' (which was likely a euphemism for 'being rude') and there was a felt sense of inequality between their contributions to the workplace. A participant phrased this in a more positive light:

More sports for women and men in the afternoon. Balanda and Bininj have access to the vehicle. That way, they feel important in that job. Let them run the program so they feel valued. [Q10]

This participant said that Bininj should feel valued and important in their everyday work, and as part of this Bininj and Balanda should share the work which could include access to the vehicle.

These findings show Bininj people's frustrations with the everyday rules enforced by service providers and regulatory frameworks enforced by different governments. This sense of disempowerment was further compounded in Gunbalanya when there was poor communication between the local council and community members. As an example, participant SP04 highlighted that the council changed the rubbish bin collection days and did not effectively

communicate this with the community. He used this example to highlight the lack of communication between the operation of services in Gunbalanya and community members. In contrast, the style of communication that Bininj participants found appropriate is going out into community, sitting down and talking with people, but this was less often practiced.²⁵²

7.5.2 The nature of engagement between families and service providers

Some respondents were dissatisfied with the nature of engagement by service providers. Of the three participants who mentioned this, one participant commented that this disconnection between service providers and Bininj families was due to a lack of engagement and consultation on-the-ground:

We need to ensure we have community input and engagement on local services. More service providers should engage and ask our advice.

[Q14]

Participant Q14 held the view that gathering community input is important to gather the appropriate advice. While public discourse mostly uses the terms ‘consultation and engagement’, these terms are often laden with the expectation of formality and procedure in ensuring all the boxes have been ticked. Commonly, Bininj preferred informal approaches that involved visiting one’s house and having a yarn.

Some people felt that some service providers stayed in the office too much which was perceived as ‘the Balanda way’ of doing things, whereas some participants mentioned that “they need to come talk to families” which involved visiting their house, sitting down and talking about the problem. Two participants indicated that one way of better engaging community members is to hold public meetings about community safety outdoors:

We need more meetings need to be out in the open – in Banyan or Arrguluk²⁵³ shelter. If the meetings are out in the open then the community will listen and talk to each other about it. Not just doing

²⁵² I observed three agencies that adopted this approach and these service providers were perceived among community members to have a positive relationship with Bininj community members.

²⁵³ Banyan, Arrguluk and Middle Camp are the three neighbourhoods or ‘camps’ in Gunbalanya.

things in Balanda way. That way, if there are changes the community will listen and we can tell everyone. [SP02, SP03]

Participants SP02 and SP03 highlighted that, if service providers hold meetings out in public, then this will enhance community engagement because residents will ‘listen and talk to each other’ about the issues. But, isolating issues to office compounds creates a divide between Balanda and Bininj where community members do not feel comfortable in entering those spaces. The participants suggested that this might enable better communication and information flows. Similarly, another participant indicated that he is dissatisfied with the nature of engagement from some service providers:

Some Balanda don't get out in community. They need to do something, like, walk around, visit families and talk to families. And whoever has a problem, they need to go talk to that fella. And they can say: “we will take you to do good things – take you hunting or a trip down south. So, you can look and your mind will become open and you'll respect all the people then do something good to them.” [CM08]

Participant CM08 explained that resolving personal problems can be achieved through strengths-based programs where ‘doing good things’ can help open people’s minds up and people will learn to help and respect others. But, he was of the view that this often does not happen because service providers often isolate themselves, working from their offices rather than being out in the community.

These findings highlight how consultation and engagement needs to occur across the community rather than with just a selected few. Community engagement need to occur as part of a long-term, ongoing process (that is not time-specific) of relationship-building with strengthening rapport, trust and mutual respect between service providers and all Bininj people across the community. This process of building mutual trust and respect enhances perceived legitimacy and awareness amongst Bininj community members.

As evidenced above, relationships between service providers and Bininj people are perceived to be fractured when culturally biased practices are in place. Bininj participants requested enhanced face-to-face communication with open meetings, which they identified would be more appropriate in working with Bininj people. With improved communication, and relationships build on trust and rapport, these social networks are more likely to persuade and

influence people to adopt positive behaviours or seek help where necessary. For this to happen, agencies need to improve their ways of communicating and working with Bininj people, including working with community leaders to ameliorate delinquent behaviour. Other authors have raised similar issues on what constitutes culturally appropriate and respectful communication and engagement processes in community governance and health service delivery (Hunt, 2013; Dudgeon & Ugle, 2014; Hunt, Smith, Garling & Sanders, 2008).

7.5.3 Respectful relationships between team members

Partnership-based approaches to crime and violence prevention, through service integration and collaboration, have featured as a prominent area of interest in the public domain, as discussed in chapter four. There are various models to service integration and coordination, and generally, this approach to delivering family violence prevention is viewed as a best practice approach (see e.g. Blagg et al., 2018; Breckenridge et al., 2015). In Gunbalanya, participants often referred to the need for services to ‘work together’ on improving safety. Participants often had their own views on the everyday ways of collaborating which include ‘following-up’ on one’s promises, listening to your team members, building the capacity of the workforce and being a trustworthy person. The following sections elaborate on approaches to service integration and collaboration from a locally-grounded view.

There were some strategies that service providers used as collaborative strategies to build mutual trust and collegiality. A former Night Patrol Coordinator discussed the importance of team work and building capacity within the team to ensure that their service was effective in servicing the community’s needs. Participant SP01 explained that, when he initially came to work in Gunbalanya, there was an ‘old lady’ who was his mentor. She used to say: “You Balanda don’t listen!” and she would tell him off. Through building this relationship, the participant learned that listening is integral to building positive relationships in the community.

He reinforced that building his team ‘up strong’ was integral which involved team members demonstrating proactive behaviour and everyone listening and contributing to discussions by providing new information from the community and advice on how to manage emerging or potential problems [SP01]. He stated that listening was an important element of team work:

I have team meetings with my team and we talk about it. Sometimes we have slight differences of opinion, but I listen to my team because they know the community better and they know the culture. They know that payback can be very hard, and we have to be careful about that. [SP01]

Participant SP01 emphasised that listening and respecting the advice of Bininj co-workers was an important part of team work and communication. Trusting their advice is important because they know how everyone is connected via the kinship and the particular sensitivities that can arise where payback is concerned. Bininj workers are also the ‘eyes and ears’ of the community because ‘people are talking’ and they see issues arise on a daily basis [SP01].

7.5.4 ‘Following-up’ on your promises

Several participants raised the issue that service providers in Gunbalanya often work in silos where there is little communication and collaboration between agencies. Yet, working collaboratively and being forward-thinking, rather than relying on a reactive approach to service delivery, was seen as critical to responding and addressing community safety issues [SP01, SP04 and SP05]. One way in which service providers achieved this collaborative approach was through following-up incidents the next day with the appropriate actions. These actions could involve talking to the family or the perpetrator about the incident and liaising with the Health Clinic, the police, the GSSC or the Women’s Safe House to ensure the appropriate services reach the individual. Participant SP01 outlined this approach:

The important thing is that service providers work together. We need to share information, work together and share ideas at meetings. But when you consider confidentiality it can be more difficult, and for this reason, many people don’t easily share information ... the follow-ups are important particularly in terms of mental health. We refer those people to the mental health team here in Gunbalanya or to the clinic. The most important thing is that we act immediately. With follow-ups, for example, if there is a missing person because sometimes in the evenings they want to commit suicide. We act immediately – not tomorrow, not in an hour’s time, but we act immediately! [SP01]

Participant SP01 outlined his approach to building a collaborative work practice in responding to community safety issues. He emphasised that following-up after an incident occurred during the evening is critical to the responsiveness of a services. Following-up on the incident can only be effective when service providers share information, work together and share ideas at meetings and in their regular work practice. However, patient confidentiality can be an impediment to providing an effective service, which is a barrier to residents receiving treatment or the services they require to address the underlying problem. I further enquired how these follow-ups happen, and the participant outlined his team's approach:

With the follow-ups, it's very sensitive. It could be self-harm or suicide. When it is that problem, I make sure that we report it to the clinic or we go to the police. Otherwise, we go there and speak to the person – it could be either myself or my team members. We tell them: "ma, we care about you, you have children. Why you want to do that? We don't want you to do those sorts of things, we care about you. The community need you, your family needs you. Who is going to be there to take care of your kids?". You do it in a nice, compassionate way and show empathy. [SP01]

The participant mentioned that follow-ups might be completed multiple times in situations, even a week or two later, when the staff approach the person to check how the client is feeling. Then the participant further explained:

My team members have family connections and they know the person. I ask my team members: "did you follow up with that person? Is he or she okay?" And they respond: "Yeah kamak – all good." That is where we get respect from them and they may apologise in situations where they were drunk and they realise that they should not have done that. We make sure we follow up immediately that night or we do it the next day. The person could be vulnerable that's why the follow-up the next day is so important. [SP01]

The participant identified two important elements where following-up is critical. Firstly, participant SP01 checks in with his team members to ensure that follow-ups are undertaken which was identified by participant SP01 as an important element of listening and

communicating within the team. By following-up with the person involved, and showing empathy and compassion for their circumstance, the service provider gains respect for residents by seeking to help where possible. Being timely and responsive to the client's needs is particularly important when the person is 'vulnerable' or at risk of suicide.

In another example, the client may reciprocate respect when he or she apologises for behaving in an unacceptable manner and they "realise they should not have done that" [SP01]. This is one example amongst others where the Night Patrol works cross-culturally, by leveraging the strengths of both Bininj and Balanda ways of working, to achieve the most favourable outcome. For minor neighbourhood disturbances, one desirable outcome is the diversion of young people away from the justice system.

Following on from this, I asked the participant how timely other service providers are when following-up on incidents. He answered:

Not all of them [follow up in a timely manner]. We are still struggling with some of them, because they do follow up but only in their way. They're making it hard for us when they could immediately follow up. When we give information to them, they need to follow up at least the same day. Because that incident would have happened the night before but sometimes it takes a long time for them to follow up... In a nutshell, there are good providers here and we have to set our differences aside to work together. [SP01]

From the participant's perspective, some service providers were often slow in following-up incidents and referrals after the incident had occurred. This is a core part of the everyday operations of an organisation where service providers need to work collaboratively, with other service providers and to expand their client base, to address underlying issues contributing to impaired community safety.

Several participants informally told me about how personal politics between service providers is an impediment to sharing information and working collaboratively between agencies. Some Balanda would use these personal grievances as an excuse to avoid working with other individuals or use their own personal politics as a reason to only work with some individuals. If this is true, this is detrimental to the effectiveness of the organisation and the community participating in that service. Personal allegiances can open opportunities for

collaboration, but they can also narrow the scope of their work, whereby individuals working in these organisations are more inclined to align themselves with their preferred colleagues instead of expanding the reach and clientele of their service.

Another community safety worker explained how (s)he works within the guidelines of both Bininj and Balanda laws to enable behaviour change amongst community members who are engaged in potentially harmful behaviours:

Last year, there were a lot of problems. Fighting, breaking in and petrol sniffing. Now everything is settled down. We talked to family about safety. It's starting to work and they're listening. We work two-ways – culture way and we follow the law. We don't want coppers to be involved. Particularly if Bininj have problems with the law. They can settle down. So, they can understand the law. [FN 27.10.2016]

This participant highlighted how community safety workers play important roles in justice diversion, preventing an incident from escalating and involving the police. To achieve this, the participant 'talks to families' and explains the Balanda law to encourage them to change their behaviour by 'understanding the law'. The following section delves deeper into this point by drawing out this approach to working two-ways.

7.5.5 Service coordination to mediate family problems and payback

Several researchers have noted the important responsibility cultural 'outsiders' have in maintaining confidentiality and impartiality when intervening in grog or violence-related manners (Brady, 2004a; Lloyd, 2014). There is increasing recognition that non-kin workers owe no obligation to the perpetrators or victims of violence. This social position can be leveraged in complex socio-cultural environments where blame and responsibility are externalised in the form of, for example, retribution against those who interfere in 'private' issues (R. Holder, et al., 2015). Holder, Putt and O'Leary (2015, p. 16) suggest that it might be this relationship between the "authorising other" and local Aboriginal people that has led to increased attention given to service partnerships.

One participant suggested that there are many rules in place which are designed to improve community safety, but these can present challenges to the Night Patrol team. Participant SP01 indicated that 'working smarter' can be achieved by leveraging the role of the

authorising other in formal operations roles, such as those involving the police, the GSSC, the Health Clinic and the Night Patrol. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was established between these organisations to manage unruly or unsafe behaviours. The MoU allowed the police and GSSC employees to create short- and long-term bans on the sale of liquor at the GSSC to individuals who had been found to commit FDV, public intoxication at the GSSC or who have health concerns. A participant explained:

When the people went to the Club and then they get banned. Previously, the Night Patrol used to give names to the Club. We are the first line of duty and first line of defence in the community, we see a lot of things. But, we had to make changes because there was one young fella that was banned from the Club, and he went to a different place to drink alcohol. Then he got killed on the road. Then the parents ask questions and the mother asked me if I was working that night and if we gave the name to the club. [SP01]

Participant SP01 illuminated that the GSSC, the police and WARC created the MoU in order to separate the role of the Night Patrol from this process of enforcing liquor restrictions on individuals. In this case, the Night Patrol did not provide the young fella's name to the GSSC where the participant commented "otherwise there would have been payback", and he then reinforced that this is one reason why listening and respecting the advice of your team members is critical to team work. The participant went on:

Luckily, in this case, we didn't give the name to the club. She asked me and I said "no we're not putting his name forward to the club to have him banned. I can promise you that." But the family banned him – they went to the club. That is why we have the MoU in place. We do not give the names to the club. We tell the police about it and they forward the names to the club. We do this so that my team members are out of line of fire. At the moment, this is working, I have not had any complaints. [SP01]

Participant SP01 explained that the service delivery framework has to work with the socio-cultural practices of Bininj workers. The MoU process is an example of working cross-culturally. This approach leverages the role of the authorising other in forwarding the

names of individual perpetrators to the police who then actions prohibiting him or her from visiting the GSSC for a specified period²⁵⁴. Individuals with restricted access have their names publicly displayed near the bar service area.²⁵⁵ Participant SP01 emphasised that the police have the power to enforce these regulations:

There are some incidents where people could have been seriously harmed. This is why we had to act and give the names, not to the club, but to the police and get them banned from the club. [SP01]

7.6 Discussion

This chapter contrasted three strengths-based approaches to enabling respectful and safe behaviour within the community. The findings showed that the approach most prominent in these expressions of strengths-based approaches was similar to the asset-based typology outlined in B. Fogarty et al. (2017, p. 20). The key elements of an asset-based typology is that it utilises existing positive attributes, characteristics and resources of family or community. These assets enable individuals and groups to withstand adverse circumstances, which is similar to the concept of ‘protective factors’. Yet, the concept of protective factors does not easily allow for the fluidity and relationality of values, practices and beliefs expressed by Bininj participants. The third strengths-based approach explored in this chapter was a holistic approach that involves privileging Indigenous worldviews.

An asset-based typology of strengths-based approaches was drawn out as participants explained the various culturally-informed mechanisms which they use to manage unsafe behaviours, de-escalate a situation and enable respectful relationships. In some circumstances, participants used their cultural authority as an accomplished person in Bininj law to call out or challenge unsafe behaviours. Second, community members seek to de-escalate situations by talking to that person as an informal preventative mechanism in a private domain, only involving the family members, without outside intervention from Balanda. Third, Bininj people

²⁵⁴ The period of the bans varies according to the situation. Temporary bans are commonly for three months, six months or a year. Sometimes the suspensions are for a longer period where the person is required, sometimes by court order, to undertake alcohol and other drugs counselling or undertake other requirements of the suspension order.

²⁵⁵ Public shaming, while diverse in its strategies and processes, has been discussed by various authors in critical literature on restorative justice in Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts (Blagg, 1997, 2002; Braithwaite, 1997; Cuneen, 2008).

seek to enable respectful, disciplined and safe behaviours through the practices of Bininj law. These practices are often based on Kunwinjku values of mutual respect including helping one another, listening and sharing with each other.

A holistic approach to understanding how to enable respectful behaviours in the community was integral to these findings. Participants highlighted how Bininj law is the foundation of Kunwinjku society and, without knowledge of Bininj identity including kinship system and ancestors, young people will not have the appropriate foundations to become respectful adults. This knowledge is transmitted and passed on through various mechanisms, including story-telling, ceremonies, and hunter-gatherer practices. These practices embody different ways in which Bininj people express, teach and convey the moral lessons and history of the land. Ceremonies and living on country were seen by participants as the foundations to learning discipline and respect which are key to combating the challenges created through unsafe structural environments or relationships in Gunbalanya.

This chapter showed the tensions between participants' visions for developing a safer community, through building respectful relationships based on customary values, beliefs and practices, and how this is playing out within the changing nature of modern Kunwinjku society. In Gunbalanya, acculturation is impacting on young people's awareness and interest in sustaining customary practices and enabling cultural survival of Bininj law. This was demonstrated in participants' perspectives on language loss and the impaired prominence of Bininj law, a perception that the Old People have passed on, and young people are perceived to lack awareness of avoidance behaviours and kinship structure. In Indigenous societies across Australia, Brady (1995) argues the reconnection of Indigenous people with their cultural and spiritual identity is integral in recovery from societal dysfunction and addiction.

These concerns further highlight issues raised by Etherington (2006), specifically that Kunwinjku values including the prominence of Bininj law as the moral framework of Kunwinjku society, is becoming less dominant in modern-day Gunbalanya; and meanwhile, Western systems of governance and culture are replacing customary practices which is further damaging the social fabric of Kunwinjku society. In this study, Bininj participants perceived that these Western systems were not effective in promoting positive child development nor did they enable respectful behaviours among young people. For participants, the only way to enable respectful behaviours amongst young people is through connecting them to ceremonies and teaching customary knowledge.

Cross-cultural ways of delivering community safety services can mitigate risk factors associated with community safety issues, including payback and suicide-risk. In this chapter, two positive examples of how cross-cultural ways of working can achieve positive outcomes. First, several participants argued that a forward-thinking, proactive approach to following-up on community safety incidents can prevent a problem from escalating. A proactive approach utilised Bininj people's awareness of family-ties and their ability to de-escalate a problem when persons involved have calmed down. This respectful process enables community safety workers to prevent serious issues, such as suicide-risk, from eventuating; and additionally, it allows workers to garner respect from community members by being helpful and looking out for their interests.

In the second example, service coordination mediated problems, such as payback, to protect community safety workers and work towards managing unsafe behaviours. This example showed how leveraging the role of the authorising other can enable workers to manage unacceptable behaviour by banning individuals from the GSSC. This approach required mutual trust and collaboration between different agencies to utilise local knowledge about safety incidents and undertake operations in a safe way that protects Bininj workers from trouble associated with payback. The next chapter looks at how Western approaches to service delivery are perceived to be managing unsafe behaviour in Gunbalanya.

8 Improving safety through service delivery? Examining contemporary interventions

8.1 Chapter overview

This chapter draws upon mixed methods data to understand how well local services are improving community safety in Gunbalanya, and whether these services seek to enable the positively-inspired values, attitudes and beliefs that participants identify as contributing to a safer community. In achieving this, the chapter identifies opportunities and challenges in how services manage unsafe behaviours. I argue that locally-based community safety services in Gunbalanya²⁵⁶ have a strong focus on program rules and administration, including an overemphasis on compliance and third-party responsiblization²⁵⁷, while there is insufficient emphasis on strengths-based approaches that enable positive behaviour-change among at-risk clients. A lack of service collaboration and integration between service providers²⁵⁸ creates system siloes and a disjuncture between community members' expectations of service effectiveness compared to those services delivered. This case study shows services that are heavily reactive and focused on regulating behaviours are insufficient in addressing neighbourhood problems and harmful behaviours. Meanwhile, these reactive services miss the opportunity to function as preventative services that address deeply embedded social problems.

To begin, section 8.2 highlights how community politics, insufficient community control over service delivery and high staff turn-over among service providers are prominent issues which compromise the integrity of community safety services in Gunbalanya. Using the mixed methods data, section 8.3.1 analyses Bininj participants' perceptions of service effectiveness in Gunbalanya. This includes an analysis of if or how well participants were aware of the different service providers in Gunbalanya, with the broader aim of understanding the potential

²⁵⁶ In the Northern Territory, a broad array of services exists to address a range of issues affecting community safety such as community corrections, courts, child safety, youth diversion, youth suicide prevention, elder abuse and safety. To refine the scope of this study, this chapter specifically focuses on locally-based community safety services in Gunbalanya. The services referred to in this chapter are all permanently located in Gunbalanya. Further details on the service providers included in the study are provided in section 3.3.

²⁵⁷ Section 4.2 discussed how neoliberal approaches to community safety seek to defer the responsibility for a program's success on to the individual receiving a service. A notion of third-party policing, including its unintended and adverse effects, are developed through the course of this chapter (refer to section 8.4).

²⁵⁸ The term 'service provider' is used to refer to any person in the community employed to deliver or manage a program, service, intervention and initiative. A broad interpretation of this term is used to generally refer to these people and their role in the community.

service gaps. Section 8.3.2 seeks to understand participants' reporting behaviour which delves into the concepts of community trust and collective efficacy.

Section 8.4 demonstrates how community safety services in Gunbalanya experience challenges in coordinating their efforts to address persistent safety issues. As a result, many services show signs of being predominantly reactive and less focused on safety promotion and harm prevention. Section 8.4.1 presents Bininj participants' perspectives on how community policing, through the Night Patrol, should be responsive to the values and needs of the Gunbalanya community. In contrast, the governance changes to the Night Patrol service presents challenges in how the team respond to community expectations of their service, particularly in terms of managing their own workplace safety. Policing generally presents even greater challenges for improving community safety, where service providers claim that the manner of policing is reactive and there is a lack of cooperation and coordination between the police and other services. Findings indicate a culture of disrespect between the local police and Bininj community members, which impairs the effectiveness of safety services and regulatory efforts.

Section 8.5 proposes that future approaches to improving community safety in Gunbalanya could better utilise a harm prevention and safety promotion platform. Section 8.5.1 highlights some areas where service collaboration could break away from the siloed approach to service delivery. Better service integration requires enhanced communication between service providers themselves, and between service providers and community members. Section 8.5.2 suggests areas where further investment is needed to engage a harm prevention approach through enhancing awareness about community safety issues; through for example alcohol and other drug abuse and FDV. Then section 8.5.3 shows areas where a focus on strengths-based approaches to behavioural change could enhance community capacity to respond to underlying issues, such as disrespectful and harmful family relationships. This chapter highlights areas where capacity building and empowering local action could enhance community-led solutions for positive behaviour change that addresses the issues underlying impaired community safety.

8.2 Background: understanding the service delivery context

This study occurred during a period when there was poor collaboration between service providers and community members; community leaders were challenging the underlying power structure in Gunbalanya; and these leaders sought greater ownership over key assets. Bininj participants were overwhelmingly of the view that assets – such as the GSSC, the airport and the general store – were built by the Bininj elders during the missionary days and they should be owned and run by the community (see Fig. 8.1). At the time of writing, these assets were owned by the former West Arnhem Mayor, Mr Lothar Siebert. During my fieldwork, one participant reflected on the issue:

I wish the Club was not here. It should be owned by the community and traditional owners. It belongs to us. They need to give it back.

The Board of Directors of the AAC were recently successful in regaining ownership over the general store and, on 1 July 2015, they celebrated the transfer of ownership to the AAC with the Gunbalanya community. The ambition of the AAC is to build community leadership, promote safety and family wellbeing, support homelands people including improvements in housing and with ceremonies, and increase Bininj employment opportunities wherever possible. After six years of legal suits and negotiations with the WARC, instructions were finally given by WARC to facilitate the transfer of the Gunbalanya general store. The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation continues to manage the store on behalf of the AAC. In December 2016, the AAC launched a renovated and expanded community store with enhanced capacity to employ and train local staff. Several months later, the process had begun for the AAC to regain ownership over another important community asset – the GSSC.

For over a decade, the GSSC was managed by a German-born Territorian, Mr Lothar Siebert, who had been living in Gunbalanya since 1982. Lothar's brother, Alex Siebert, also played a significant role in managing the liquor licence and premises of the GSSC during certain periods. After almost five years in the Mayoral position, and many more years as a public official in the West Arnhem region, in February 2017 Mr Lothar Siebert was forced to resign from his position as Mayor of West Arnhem after he had taken a second job as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Doomadgee Aboriginal Council in remote northern Queensland (McKenna & Aikman, 2017; WARC, 2017a).

Fig. 8.1. The Oenpelli General Store in 1980^a and the Ardjumarllal Store and Takeaway in 2017^b



^a Source: NAA: A8598, AK29/4/80/2 (reproduced with permission)

^b Source: Simone Georg

In *The Australian*, on 1 February 2017, reporters McKenna and Aikman (2017) claimed that Mr Siebert expected to more than double his previous income of \$90,000, from his position as Mayor of West Arnhem with an additional \$130,000 from his new salary as the CEO of the Doomadgee Council. Furthermore, the reporters' accusation that Mr Siebert was 'double-dipping' into public money mirrors community concerns discussed with me privately throughout the course of my research. McKenna and Aikman's accusation also occurred amidst

growing frustrations in the Gunbalanya community²⁵⁹. Gunbalanya residents were frustrated about the lack of transparency over how the GSSC was being run, including the lack of accountability and transparency over revenue, and Mr Siebert's apparent conflict of interest between his position as a businessman of the community's most lucrative assets²⁶⁰ and his position as the Mayor of West Arnhem. Mr Siebert had not breached any legal instruments by accepting the two positions (of Mayor of West Arnhem and CEO of the Doomadgee Council) because the positions were separated by state borders (McKenna & Aikman, 2017). Mr Siebert reacted to public frustrations about his actions by remarking that he would "talk to his own mob" when he got back home to Gunbalanya and "if they want me gone then I will be gone" (Aikman, 2017; McKenna & Aikman, 2017).

Two days later, in *The Australian* on 9 February 2017, Aikman (2017) wrote that the community of Gunbalanya had responded to Mr Siebert's promise to consult with 'his own mob'. In a letter dated 2 February 2017, as a Board Member of the AAC, Mr David Narndal wrote to Mr Siebert to firmly state:

No need to wait, sir, until you get back for your answer. The Ardjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation, with over 350 community members and representing all three town camps, the outstations and the traditional owners, today resolved to send this clear reply to your question: We want you gone! (Narndal, in Aikman, 2017)

Several days later, Mr Siebert resigned from his position as Mayor of West Arnhem and subsequently moved to undertake his position in Doomadgee. The GSSC continued its liquor licence under a different licensee, and meanwhile WARC claimed to own the property lease for the establishment. At the time of writing, the AAC were in the legal process of challenging WARC to regain control over the property lease and the management of the GSSC. The AAC's ambition is to enhance local ownership, leadership and management over how liquor is distributed in the community, and to improve how proceeds from liquor sales are used to contribute to community development outcomes. These series of events undoubtedly show the

²⁵⁹ Community frustrations were evident in the Facebook post made by the Mentor and Co-Manager of the Injalak Arts Centre, Felicity Wright, where 130 'reactions', 28 'shares' and 22 comments expressed distaste over the hypocrisy of this occurrence.

²⁶⁰ Land ownership on native title land, such as Arnhem Land, is a challenging concept that makes it difficult to assess exactly who owns what assets. From my understanding, Mr Siebert managed the Gunbalanya Air Charter Service, owned several aircraft in Gunbalanya, and managed the Gunbalanya service station. At the time of writing, land ownership and asset ownership was being legally disputed by Aboriginal landholders in the community.

continuing disputes regarding Aboriginal-ownership over liquor licencing, as well as community leaders' desire for greater control over liquor availability and distribution²⁶¹ and their endeavour to ameliorate the conflicts of interest that potentially arise when liquor is sold for profit in Aboriginal communities.

This achievement symbolises successes in Bininj leadership and ownership over community assets and briefly illustrates how, at the time I undertook this research, Gunbalanya was undergoing significant changes in its power structure and constitution. Powerbrokers and gatekeepers play a significant role in remote Indigenous communities in terms of allowing researchers to 'gain access' to the field site. My participation in this field site, and my experiences of 'gaining access' to service providers, influences my perception of service delivery in this area. For some interviews, gaining access to individual service providers occurred smoothly. Part of this was influenced by the fact that these individuals had already given their resignation to leave the position. So, despite that WARC was resisting and stalling granting me access to local service delivery organisations (which is undoubtedly due to my affiliation with the AAC²⁶²), these individuals understood the risk-aversion that their managing superiors were renowned for and they disagreed with this approach. Some participants challenged these gatekeepers' risk-aversion tactics by participating in the interview, while knowing very well that they would not be working in the community for much longer.

High staff turn-over has a significant impact on service delivery in Gunbalanya. The data collection for this study was undertaken from April to November 2016. When I returned to Gunbalanya in September 2017, most of the non-Indigenous service providers I interviewed the year prior had left the community²⁶³. In fact, there were only two non-Indigenous participants who remained in Gunbalanya after I had returned. Several WARC staff members had resigned and left the community prior to my fieldwork in 2017, even those who actively created barriers to granting permission for my research to proceed. In addition, Indigenous and

²⁶¹ This point was explored in-depth in chapter two where I provided a historical analysis of how Gunbalanya gained ownership over the liquor licence after it had been initially run by Balanda at the Border Store from 1969 to 1978.

²⁶² I first gained permission from the AAC and developed relationships with particular community leaders in September 2015. When I returned to Gunbalanya in April 2016, I commenced the process to seek permission from WARC. The CEO of WARC was disgruntled with my approach to seeking permission because I had asked the AAC before I asked his permission. I explained that, while I was located in Canberra, I had spent six months attempting to find the 'right person' within WARC who might process my application however no one had been able to point me in the right direction.

²⁶³ This reinforces the point made earlier by participant CM10 that Bininj people have always and continue to live on the lands of West Arnhem. Balanda are welcome to stay in Gunbalanya to help the community, but they need to be respectful in how they behave in the community (see section 7.4.3).

non-Indigenous participants were significantly dissatisfied with the style of policing during the time of data collection. By the time I returned to Gunbalanya, all of the police officers had changed including the Officer in Charge. The Officer in Charge responsible for overseeing policing in the community has a significant influence over the style and approach to policing.

Unhelpful and uncooperative tensions created by service providers and public officials in Gunbalanya's governance overlaid the latent community politics that exists in this domain. While I attempted to position myself as an independent researcher²⁶⁴, I became unwillingly and unintentionally entangled in aspects of community politics including through the ethics process²⁶⁵ and in interviews where participants accused other service providers of not performing their role adequately.²⁶⁶ These problems are symptomatic of a larger issue – selective cooperation and collegiality between service providers. These behaviours contradict the fundamental Kunwinjku values which participants used to highlight how mutual respect and cooperation between all community members, irrespective of Indigeneity, are integral to harm prevention and improved safety.

At the same time, these problems contributed to the immense frustration that community leaders endure in order to achieve better outcomes for children's education, improved safety and increased employment. Uncooperative behaviour was frustrating for Bininj community leaders because these service providers were employed from elsewhere to undertake their program for the community's benefit. Bininj people were often cognisant of non-Indigenous service providers' temporary status as community members, meaning that non-Indigenous people were welcome in community to work with Bininj people to advance the social, economic and cultural development of the community. At the same time, these non-Indigenous workers come from elsewhere whereas Bininj people belong to the land and remain permanently bonded with their country. Bininj people will always be permanently attached to West Arnhem Land, and eventually these non-Indigenous service providers will return to their home. These are my interpretations of the underlying issues occurring in service delivery in Gunbalanya, which I detail in this chapter.

²⁶⁴ In my role as a researcher, I attempted to remain 'independent' of community politics which meant that I did not 'take sides' in community politics. Instead, I listened to different perspectives but I did not actively contribute to these discussions.

²⁶⁵ The challenges I experienced in gaining permission were discussed in section 2.5.4.

²⁶⁶ These accusations appear to be true as similar issues were highlighted by numerous participants. However, on occasion, I was taken aback by the impolite manner in which some service providers participating in this study talked about others.

8.3 The current state of service delivery in Gunbalanya

This section uses the mixed methods data to explore community members' perceptions of community safety services in Gunbalanya, including how well respondents perceived the services were preventing harm and improving safety. This is compared with the qualitative responses from the questionnaires to delve into possible reasons behind respondents' answers. Section 8.2.2 engages with the concept of trust and collective efficacy to understand respondents' willingness to report issues to the relevant service providers. Then section 8.2.3 presents two programs that were perceived by participants to have improved awareness of FDV and reduced incidence of petrol sniffing.

8.3.1 Perceptions on service effectiveness.

This section presents findings from the questionnaires that enquired about community members' perceptions of community safety services in Gunbalanya. Question 14²⁶⁷ asked how well respondents thought services were helping make Gunbalanya a stronger place (refer to Appendix C), which I used as a conversation starter to learn about the gaps and opportunities in service delivery. The services in this list are those which are permanently based in Gunbalanya and include some which are not directly related to community safety, such as the Gunbalanya School or the Child and Family Program²⁶⁸. The purpose of including these types of services was to allow greater flexibility in respondents' answers.

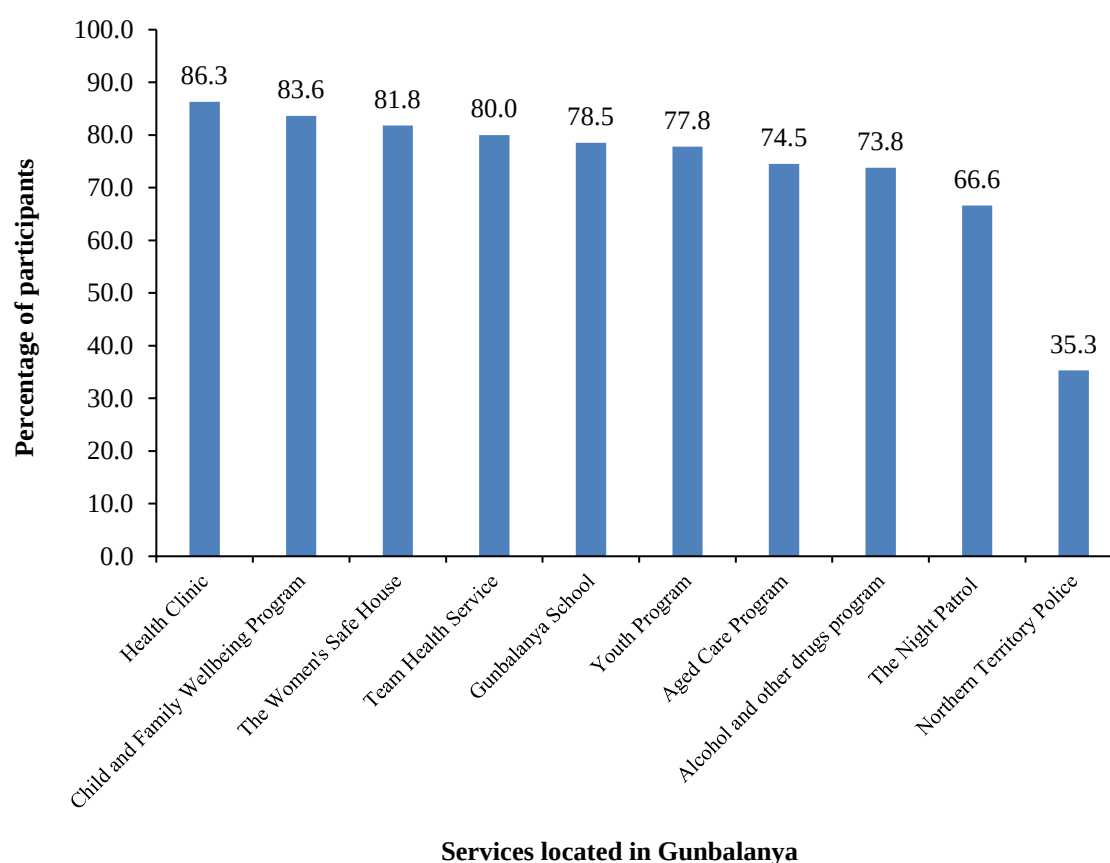
Based on questionnaire results, most participants stated that locally based services were either helping or helping very much to improve community safety (see Fig. 8.2). In order from those rated most effective to least, these services were: the Health Clinic (86.3%), the Child and Family Wellbeing Centre (83.6%), the Women's Safe House (81.8%), Team Health

²⁶⁷ The question used a Likert Scale response where '5' indicated the service was working very well and '1' indicated the service was not helping improve safety. A '0' response indicated the respondent did not know enough about the service to answer the question. Refer to Appendix C.

²⁶⁸ The Child and Family Program provides early childhood education and parenting support for mothers. This program also includes a healthy-eating component and often hosts guests to provide awareness and education programs.

(80.0%), the Gunbalanya School (78.5%), Youth program (77.8%), Aged Care program (74.5%), Alcohol and other drug program (73.8%), and the Night Patrol (66.9%). In contrast, only 35.3 per cent of participants rated the Police as helping or helping very much to improve community safety. Section 8.4 further analyses reasons why respondents perceived the Night Patrol and the Police to be less effective in improving safety in the community. Overall participants highlighted two main issues with local policing: a lack of timeliness and responsiveness when community members report an emergency, in addition to police officers' disrespectful behaviour and attitudes experienced by community members.

Fig. 8.2. Questionnaire respondents' perspectives on how well services are working in Gunbalanya (%)



Note: A higher the percentage in the graph indicates greater perceived efficacy of the selected service in Gunbalanya. To calculate the valid percentage, missing values were excluded including participants who did not know enough about the service to answer.

Source: Q14 from the questionnaire results.

Fig. 8.3 shows the missing values were excluded from the questionnaire results²⁶⁹ presented in Fig. 8.2. From the missing values, I excluded non-responses and those who stated the question was not relevant to them (e.g. a man's comment about the Women's Safe House). After this, I was left with responses for which participants answered that they were not aware of the service provider's role in Gunbalanya. Twenty respondents stated they did not know enough about Team Health (the mental health service provider) to answer the question and nine respondents did not know about the alcohol and other drugs program. This is a significant finding considering that alcohol and drug-related problems and mental health problems were found to have a major impact on community safety in Gunbalanya.

I suggest the visibility of service providers in the three neighbourhoods²⁷⁰, and whether they interacted with community members at their homes, played an important part in influencing people's perceptions of whether these service providers were helping make Gunbalanya a safer place.²⁷¹ Participants emphasised this in the open-ended part of the questionnaires where respondents commonly answered:

*I don't see them walking around here in the camps or visiting families.
What do they do all day? Maybe sit in their office, only work in Balanda way.* [e.g. CM08, Q33]

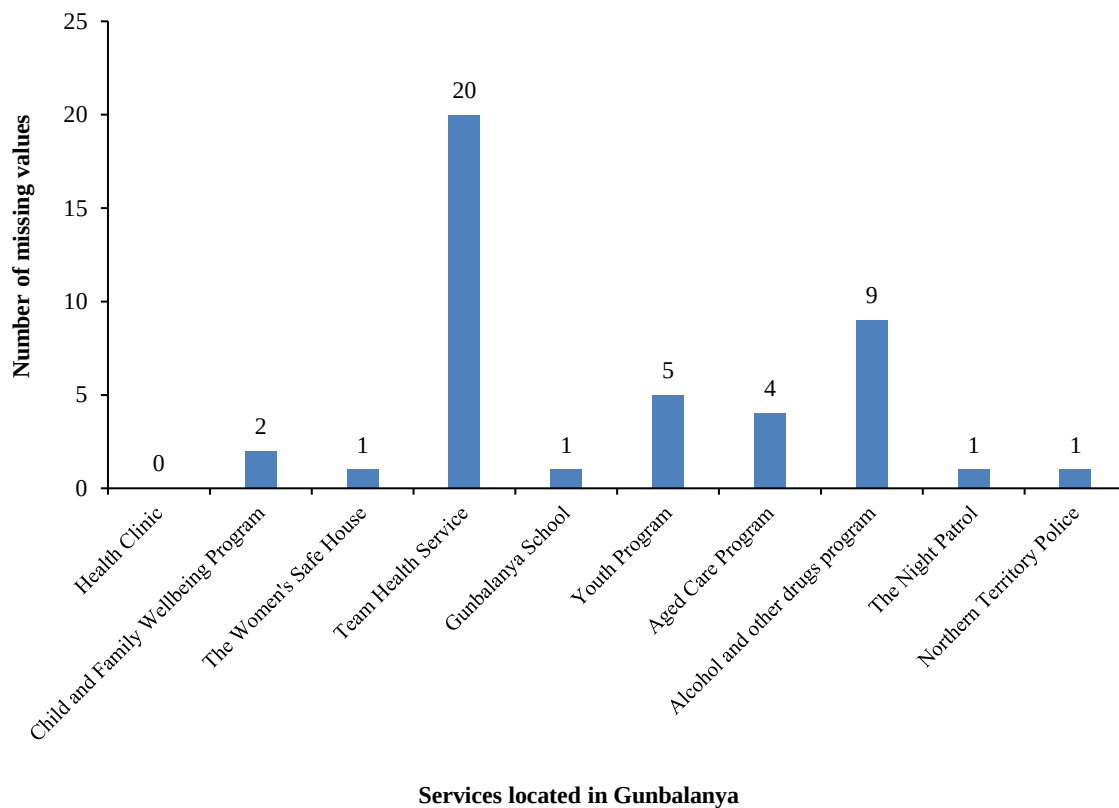
This highlights that there may be insufficient service-community engagement as some service providers are not actively attempting to expand their client group, targeting at-risk clients or promoting community engagement and awareness about what and how their service operates in Gunbalanya. This issue is discussed later in section 8.5.3.

²⁶⁹ Missing values included those who responded that the individual did not know enough about the service to answer the question were separated by using separate codes. A separate variable was created for participants who did not know about the service and this information is presented in Fig. 8.3.

²⁷⁰ These neighbourhoods or camps are called Arrguluk, Banyan and Middle Camp.

²⁷¹ The importance participants placed on service providers spending time visiting families in the neighbourhoods or camps was discussed in section 7.5.2.

Fig. 8.3. Questionnaire respondents who were not aware of service providers' roles in Gunbalanya (number)



Note: Missing values include respondents who do not know enough about the role of the service provider to answer the question. It does not include those who did not answer the question.

Source: Missing values from questionnaire results from Q14 in this study.

8.3.2 Willingness to report a crime to service providers

In the criminology literature, collective efficacy is a term used to describe how community members leverage formal and informal mechanisms to self-regulate crime and disorder in their own locality (Sampson, et al., 1997). Trust, social cohesion and reciprocal expectation to intervene – thereby exerting informal social control over disorder – are known qualities that influence individuals' decisions to intervene directly (i.e. the individual challenges unsafe behaviour verbally or physically) or indirectly (i.e. report the behaviour to the police or other service provider) (Warner, 2007). Perceived police legitimacy, and the nature of policing including whether the police engage in community-oriented policing, are factors known to influence reporting behaviour (Kochel, 2012).

Table 8.1 presents the data from questions 15-17 in the questionnaire, which enquired about respondents' reporting behaviour. I asked respondents who they would tell if the respondent witnessed the following: FDV, a person who was at-risk of suicide, and youth delinquent behaviour. Each of these three issues was explained using terminology that was appropriate in the local context.²⁷² These were multiple response questions where participants could answer as many responses as they chose. After missing values were excluded, Table 8.1 provides the valid percentage based on the total number of responses. This data shows that, at the time of the questionnaire, respondents were relatively equally likely to report public incidents of FDV to the Night Patrol (28.3%), the Police (26.7%), or a close family member (25.0%). In the case of youth delinquency, respondents were more likely to report this to the Police (36.5%) compared to other service providers including the Night Patrol (25.2%) or family members (23.5%).

²⁷² FDV was explained with the phrase 'man and woman fighting in the street'. This made it clear that it was a public episode of violence in which study participants might consider intervening; compared to FDV which is heard but not seen behind closed doors in which, based on my interview data, I knew that community members would not consider intervening. Suicide-risk was described using the phrase 'someone who worried too much and you think she or he might do something bad'. Youth delinquency was described using the phrase 'you knew someone was often causing trouble in the community like drinking, making noise late at night or dangerous driving'. Refer to Appendix C.

Table 8.1. Questionnaire results on respondents' willingness to report selected community safety problems to authority figures or community members (% of responses).

Respondents' willingness to report to selected authority figures	Community safety problems		
	Domestic violence	Suicide-risk	Youth delinquency
Family member	25.0	21.1	23.5
Community elders	10.0	7.0	8.7
Night Patrol	28.3	19.5	25.2
Police	26.7	25.8	36.5
Clinic staff	6.7	17.2	3.5
Bininj Health Worker	1.7	3.9	1.7
Teacher	0.0	0.8	0.9
Team Health staff	0.0	4.7	0.9
No one	1.7	0.0	0.0
Total responses¹	120	128	115
Total percent²	100	100	100

Notes:

- 1) The results are from multiple response questions where participant could provide as many answers as necessary (i.e. 'responses'). 'Responses' refers to the number of answers provided by participants in total, for each question.
- 2) The valid percentage represents a percent of the total responses. To calculate the valid percentage, missing values (no=8) were removed from the percent calculation and the denominator was the total responses for each community safety problem. The sample for these questions was 47.

Source: Questionnaire results from Q 15-17 in this study.

As discussed earlier, trusted members of one's family were reported by participants to be important in resolving problems without involving service providers. Family members were often called upon to host a meeting with the perpetrator's family or talk to the person directly, which sometimes required waiting until that person had calmed down or was sober [Q25]. Payback or fear of retaliation was a commonly cited reason why participants preferred to resolve matters internally, indicated by subtle references to "this causes problems" or "we don't want trouble coming back" [Q06, Q26, Q47]. Other participants reported that they would attempt to resolve the problem internally by "talking to them in good manners way" [Q09] or growling at them [Q25]. After this, some participants stated they would involve the police or

clinic staff only if their assistance was needed [Q18, Q19]. One participant stated she would not tell anyone if she witnessed FDV [Q57].

Two key findings are revealed by this data. First, this reinforces that family members are relied upon by participants to resolve internal disputes including FDV and that the fear of reprisal or payback is a common concern amongst community members which influences reporting behaviour²⁷³. Second, respondents appear somewhat willing to report certain incidents to the police, perhaps when the initial response mechanisms (i.e. resolving problems internally) fail, which is surprising given the qualitative feedback respondents provided on the effectiveness of local police²⁷⁴. The literature on self-reported surveys explores reasons why citizens in disadvantaged communities call upon the police to respond to a crime (Cantor & Lynch, 2000). Findings show that citizens are more likely to report a crime to the police if: the incident was serious in nature, a member of the household has reported an incident and had positive experiences interacting with the police, and the police conducted routine or follow-up activity (Cantor & Lynch, 2000; Conaway & Lohr, 1994; Kochel, 2012).

8.3.3 Programs reported to have improved safety

This section highlights some areas where participants perceive that services or programs have improved safety and wellbeing in the community. Section 7.5 explored how service providers working in a cross-cultural context were improving outcomes by working with empathy and respect. On a related matter, this section highlights how two programs, which focus on FDV and petrol sniffing, have been reported as successful in their influence in reducing harm associated with these issues.

8.3.3.1 *Family and domestic violence (FDV)*

Some participants certainly believed that FDV had “calmed down” or reduced in the past year [Q31, Q26] and even over the past five years [SP01].²⁷⁵ The reasons for this change were:

²⁷³ Participants’ concerns about payback in response to reporting incidents do not just apply to incidents involving FDV. Payback could also be a concern if a person is banned from the GSSC, as a result of his or her behaviour, or if a person is blamed for another person’s death, including suicide.

²⁷⁴ Section 8.4 delves deeply into this issue of community members’ lack of trust in the local police.

²⁷⁵ The results overall show that FDV and other forms of violent behaviour are still certainly a prominent issue affecting community safety in Gunbalanya, and in recognising this, many participants clearly believed that FDV continues to be a major issue. However, this section briefly touches on the successes in community collaboration to address FDV to show that some initiatives are enabling positive behaviour change in Gunbalanya.

increased collaboration between the Night Patrol and the Safe House had provided proactive and effective responses to domestic conflicts, including where these agencies followed-up the incident by visiting the family and providing mediation between the husband and wife [Q46]; female victims of FDV were proactively seeking the protection of the Safe House before incidents arose [SP01, Q31]; and finally, increased information about Domestic Violence Orders (DVOs) and mandatory reporting²⁷⁶ was regularly provided to the Night Patrol and Safe House teams [SP02, SP03, CM16], and the Bininj workers would then share this knowledge with members of their families [Q25].

Some participants attributed these successful reductions in FDV incidents to recent programs initiatives that had increased awareness about violent behaviour and had promoted proactive behaviour in the community [Q22, Q25, Q26 and Q31]. Programs such as Charlie King's "No More" campaign were seen to be a more positive way of addressing community safety issues because the program helped create awareness about respectful domestic relationships [CM16, Q22]. In May 2016, the Gunbalanya community held a rally alongside the Northern Territory Police, local service providers and numerous other organisations. Charlie King's "No More" Campaign aims to challenge the attitudes and behaviours of people using violence and encourages communities to develop plans of action to improve safety (CatholicCare NT, 2018). The campaign uses sport, particularly Australian-rules football, as a vehicle for bringing men together and promoting positive relationships with each other and in the broader community (CatholicCare NT, 2018).

The launch of the campaign in Gunbalanya involved a community march, talks with school children about respect, talks with a mother's group, a football match and a community BBQ. To launch this program, the organising required different sectors of the community to come together including traditional owners, community leaders and service providers. The event was funded through the federal DPMC (CatholicCare NT, 2018).

²⁷⁶ In the Northern Territory, mandatory reporting provisions in the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* (see section 124A) requires any adults who believe, on reasonable grounds, another person has caused or is likely to cause serious harm to another person with whom the other person is in a domestic relationship. The term 'domestic relationship' is broadly defined to include carers' relationships, extended family members and intimate personal relationships (NTG, 2009). Participants did not refer to other forms of mandatory reporting legislation, such as on child abuse and neglect.

Several Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants felt that the event increased awareness about family violence, and its implications, and was helping to reduce violence in the community:

We had big mob problem with DV but not anymore because of Charlie King. If no money, the women get a hiding. The men don't care about children - they just want ganja and kunbang. We show the women the "no more" sign and then we have got no more domestic violence. Domestic violence problem has stopped because we report them to the police. [Q22]

Participant Q22²⁷⁷ held the opinion that, prior to Charlie King's "No More" Campaign, FDV was a much bigger problem than it is currently. (S)he explained that increasing awareness and the collective ownership taken over the issue of FDV in the community has helped reduce the occurrence of the problem. This has given community safety workers the capacity to leverage off the campaign in explaining that FDV is unacceptable behaviour.

Similarly, increased awareness over the illegality of FDV has enabled women to leverage this, in their role as service providers and family members, to challenge and report men's abuse. This participant explained how this has helped:

When there's man and woman fighting, we wait until they calmed down. We explain that there is djorra²⁷⁸ and no more family violence. Then we can go with Safe House and help them... Night Patrol working well and Safe House too. Domestic Violence going down because NAAJA come to help, talking to service providers. Husband and wife fighting because he want other daluk²⁷⁹. That's what's happening. We talk to other daluk about it – no more fighting. I told all the bininj²⁸⁰ and daluk. Now it has stopped – it worked now. [Q25]

As part of the participant's role as a community safety worker, when responding to FDV (s)he waits until the couple have calmed down and then they talk to them about the problem including

²⁷⁷ Identified as 'currently working in safety services'. For the Indigenous service providers, I chose to use non-gender specific language to protect their anonymity.

²⁷⁸ Djorra means 'paper' or 'documents' in Kunwinjku.

²⁷⁹ Daluk means 'woman' or 'girl' in Kunwinjku.

²⁸⁰ In this case, bininj means 'Aboriginal man' in Kunwinjku.

what legal rights they have in this case. As part of the participant's role, the team receive training from the Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) about Mandatory Reporting on FDV and child neglect, and other regulatory instruments, such as Domestic Violence Orders (DVOs), to help them create awareness and understanding in the community. The participant was supportive of the training the team receive from NAAJA, and other agencies such as Northern Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service, and in their opinion this approach was helping reduce the incidence of FDV.

One service provider commented that this increased awareness and education about FDV, and increased services at the Women's Safe House, have encouraged women to proactively seek those services. He said:

Domestic violence is still a big concern here because there are still non-reported cases. You see women and men walking in community who are clearly injured with a swollen face or broken arm. Was it reported? We don't know... But five years ago, domestic violence assaults were through the roof. But now people are standing up, people start talking. Now there's more education and now there's a Safe House here. The women are becoming more proactive – there are women who go to the Safe House when the men come out from the club, or start with the abuse, then they take the kids to the Safe House. [SP01]

Participant SP01 indicated that FDV incidents are still underreported. An issue also mentioned by another service provider [SP05] is that FDV is still a stigmatised issue in the community. The stigma and shame surrounding FDV, and the threats of payback from family members, are two issues which contribute to the underreporting of FDV. At the same time, from participant SP01's perspective, over the past few years the increased education has enabled women to become more proactive in responding to FDV. Proactive behaviour occurs when the women seek out the services of the Safe House prior to experiencing a potential assault, for example when the men return from the GSSC.

8.3.3.2 Volatile Substance Abuse (VSA) Management Plan

As already mentioned, most participants stated that the incidence of petrol sniffing had reduced and was rarely a problem since the Volatile Substance Abuse (VSA) Management Plan had been implemented. Ten participants stated that petrol sniffing is rarely a problem but sometimes it becomes a problem during the dry season when there is no kundalk²⁸¹. One participant explained that, even though there is a VSA Management Plan, there are occasionally issues with petrol sniffing:

Then when the river crossing goes up those cars get stuck in the community. Then you have a whole lot of people stuck in community with unleaded fuel in them. And the sniffers can of course tell the difference straight away. That's why sniffing during the wet season goes up. Because they can't get marijuana, alcohol or anything like that. Because they're not at the age of going to the club or anything. They're younger kids, like 12, 13 or 11 [years old]. Then there's peer pressure and all that. They break into the shop and steal some things because they're hungry. [SP04]

The participant explained that, even though unleaded fuel is prohibited in the community, some Balanda occasionally still bring unleaded fuel into the community even though the VSA Management Plan is in place, either by accident or on purpose. This was also a concern of two other service providers [SP01]. Instead of standard unleaded fuel, Opal fuel is a low-aromatic unleaded fuel that does not contain properties that allow a person to become intoxicated when the fuel is sniffed (BP, 2018).

When petrol sniffing was a significant problem in Gunbalanya, community leaders worked with service providers to enact several initiatives to curb this form of substance abuse. In 2010, the Northern Territory Department of Health provided funding under the VSA Program to address petrol sniffing in Gunbalanya. The Alcohol and Drugs worker worked with 30 identified sniffers through that VSA program by undertaking follow-up consultations and counselling as well as strengths-based programs. A service provider explained that one of these strengths-based programs utilised the musical skills of some of the 'sniffers':

²⁸¹ Refer to section 5.3.2 on neighbourhood problems and section 6.4 on fractured family relationships and youth delinquency.

The bloke up there in the picture, he's really good with music. He used to have a music program and was employed under VSA funding. I even said to him: "what you're doing with your music programme is really great." And I have a really old-school way of operating through counselling and education. They're not coming to see me, they're getting engaged through music. [SP04]

Participants SP04 explained that the music program, funded under the VSA funding, was used as a vehicle to provide young boys with counselling and education. The service provider utilised their talents by helping a group of boys organise a trip to the Barunga Festival to play in the Battle of the Bands event. The boys won \$1000 for second prize at the concert. The service provider commented:

[The boys] give out the money evenly, so they even give their supporters too, "Here Bill here's 50 bucks." It was all evenly spread it. [SP04]

Due to these locally grown initiatives, the participant stated that the incidence of petrol sniffing had already reduced and then the planning and consultation for the VSA Management Plan had begun. The participant recalled:

... The most important part is that the words in the document aren't the words of government, they are the words of the people in Gunbalanya. Even though it's put in government speak. But that's what they wanted in it. There was a big meeting here at the club and then it was sent back to the community for comment. Then it was put through the process of being legislated. [SP04]

In the VSA Management Plan it states that the plan articulates the ideas of the Gunbalanya community on ways to prevent VSA, including petrol sniffing, and it aims to develop a framework for action to support and care for people suffering from VSA (WARC, 2010). The Plan formalises the penalties for illegal possessing, storing and supplying volatile substances but does not make it an offence to inhale or have in one's possession an item for inhaling a volatile substance (WARC, 2010). The participant explained the role of an 'authorising person' in managing the availability of unleaded fuel:

You see, they have this thing called "authorised persons". And they can go in and check your car for what type of fuel you have and what's

in the container. See if you had a VSA officer out here then you can become a trained authorised person. That would give you the authority to check people's cars. [SP04]

The VSA Authorised Person(s) are responsible for administering the *Volatile substance Abuse Prevention Act* and are persons nominated by the VSA Management Committee and authorised by the Minister for Health and Families. These persons are expected to be a resident of Gunbalanya and engaged in a community safety program, such as the Alcohol and Other Drugs Program (WARC, 2010, p. 6). The Authorising Person's role is to identify and reduce potential harms related to VSA by liaising with the police (WARC, 2010, p. 6), which may include searching vehicles for prohibited volatile substances [SP04].

A service provider reported that the VSA Management Plan made a considerable difference to the incidence of sniffing by giving the community greater power to manage the problem. He reflected on a situation when he noticed this change:

I bumped into this young fella. I asked: "Are you still sniffing or what?" He said: "Nah, nah nothing." "How did you do that?" He said: "I was here before and you showed me that thing about what petrol does to your brain and your body. I give up." I said: "oh good on ya!" I was feeling really down before then but that really made my day. I was happy for him because he gave up. [SP01]

This is an example where community-led initiatives, when controlled by the community, can be assisted by Western regulatory frameworks. As highlighted by these findings, substance misuse can be addressed through long-term partnerships between government and community organisations that utilise Western regulation to manage an issue. The impact of these partnerships is highly influenced by how these organisations engage and involve substance-users in the service. Similar issues have been identified in the literature on volatile substance abuse management and relevant government policy (d'Abbs & Brady, 2004; d'Abbs & MacLean, 2008).

8.4 Community policing: the challenges of community engagement

This section examines the clash between externally enforced regulatory frameworks and on-the-ground service provision. Regulatory frameworks, such as mandatory reporting, are designed to mobilise community members to identify FDV and report the event to authorities; however, this objective cannot be achieved without community members' trust in local police²⁸². These findings question whether core community safety programs (such as Aboriginal patrols and policing) have sufficiently earned community trust and how these services are less able to manage neighbourhood problems.

8.4.1 Gunbalanya's Night Patrol service

Night Patrols, otherwise known as Aboriginal patrols or Indigenous community patrols, are Indigenous-led initiatives that have mostly been established by local elders or community leaders as a localised response to neighbourhood problems. Blagg (2016) and other authors²⁸³ have argued that Aboriginal patrols are a demonstration of Indigenous sovereignty over community safety and justice where crime-related problems are prevented in a manner that reflects Aboriginal values and customary practices.

Also, Porter (2016) argues that Aboriginal patrols are a form of decolonising self-governance where community leaders have adopted their own approaches to promoting safety and steering young people away from institutionalised state police. But, in the contemporary policy environment, Aboriginal patrols have become reliant upon public funding that is conditional upon government rules that decide what is considered an appropriate, effective and responsive service. This Western perspective on funding and operational parameters clashes with Aboriginal aspirations for how these patrols should be governed (Porter, 2017). This section explores how, in Gunbalanya, the Night Patrol service is faced with cultural clashes between a local preference for justice diversion and the need to adhere to Western regulation when operating the service.

²⁸² This section builds on the concepts of collective efficacy discussed in section 8.3.2 and third-party policing discussed in section 4.2.

²⁸³ See other publications on Aboriginal patrols by Harry Blagg and other authors: Blagg and Anthony (2014); Blagg and Valuri (2003); Blagg and Valuri (2004).

8.4.1.1 Night Patrol's role and operating framework

In Gunbalanya, the Night Patrol's core objectives are to work towards children's safety and to divert people away from the justice system. Improving children's safety was interpreted by a former Night Patrol employee as to "pick up kids and take them to a place of safety" which could include encouraging them to leave card games and take them to a guardian at home; alternatively, it could also involve helping other agencies get children to school in the morning. The operational framework explicitly states that the service is not a security agency and has no legitimate policing role. This means, officially, the staff are not permitted to search vehicles which they suspect are carrying illicit substances into the community, and they are not allowed to physically intervene in interpersonal conflict. A service provider explained the procedure when a public fight occurs:

We try in a very safe way to divert them or take them to places of safety when there's a fight. We take the culprit and drop him or her at home or with family. And if the problem is ongoing we have to follow that up the next day. If it is a serious incident that has taken place, then we have to report that to the police. In most cases, the family will sort it out. Because another part of our job is to divert people away from the justice system. [SP01]

Participant SP01 explained the procedure requires the staff to wait until the conflict has ended, however if the conflict is serious and ongoing then the Night Patrol staff or the bystanders need to report the incident to the police. If there is a person injured, then the Night Patrol assist by transporting the individual to the clinic for treatment. Following up on incidents and resolving the underlying problem is a part of their ability to work two-ways.

The official procedure in reporting and responding to incidents is important to understand because this impacts on how community members engage with the service and their perceptions of whether the Night Patrol is helping to improve safety. A significant part of the Night Patrol's role is dependent on the responsiveness of the local police in collaborating on incidents which the Night Patrol's Coordinator reports, either informally during the day or in an emergency where the resident calls the emergency '000' number. A participant identified the complex scenarios that arise when needing to ensure the safety of staff and the community:

This procedure is – when we get to the incident and there's a lot of people fighting with weapons. The operational framework says we can intervene

when it is 'safe' to do so. It doesn't say what type of incident we can respond to. It just says if it is 'safe' to do so. Say, for example, 20 or 30 people are fighting with weapons. Before we used to stop and intervene and now we don't do it anymore. We get the hell out of there and, say, we get to the scene and it's unsafe, our safety comes first. We stand a safe distance and then we phone the police. We explain to them what's happening there. [SP01]

The participant explained that, prior to the new operating framework²⁸⁴, the Night Patrol would physically intervene in fights that were serious in nature. Not every incident would be interrupted but this decision would depend on the moment. The participant identified that, nowadays, they intervene when “it is safe to do so” which means that the staff often rely upon the Coordinator to make decisions about what is deemed as safe for his or her staff. The importance of Work Health and Safety is elevated when the Night Patrol staff are regularly exposed to risky scenarios as part of their employment. From another perspective, this means that the effectiveness of local services is highly dependent on a responsive and reliable police force. But when the police force is understaffed, and they are often busy responding to late night incidents, this adds another layer of complexity.

The Night Patrol's regular operations are reliant on an effective police response particularly when an incident involves weapons or FDV. Participant SP01 explained the procedure: when the Night Patrol become aware that the incident involves FDV then they immediately phone the police and the Night Patrol staff take the wife and child(ren) to the Women's Safe House. According to Northern Territory legislation²⁸⁵, the incident must be reported to the authorities. However, the participant rightly pointed out:

... It doesn't say that we must report it or someone else can report it on behalf of that person. So, we always inform the Safe House or the clinic. The clinic then phone the police. We always inform the Safe House Coordinator, or the workers can immediately inform the police.

²⁸⁴ The Night Patrol was previously funded through the local council however, in recent years, the federal government has contributed funding to support the ongoing operations of the Night Patrol. This has meant a change in the Night Patrol's organisational capacity and operating parameters.

²⁸⁵ As mentioned before, this refers to Northern Territory's mandatory reporting provisions in the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* (see section 124A).

Participant SP01 explained that the mandatory reporting legislation does not make it clear who needs to report incidences of FDV to the police or the mandatory reporting line. This is an important point because violence occurs in a complex socio-cultural environment where the Night Patrol worker who reported the incident could be blamed or receive payback from the husband's family because he was potentially charged for the offence, particularly if there is a DVO in place. In these situations, the mandatory reporting legislation, similar to the DVO scheme, attempts to protect the rights of individuals experiencing FDV however, unintentionally, the legislation can potentially compromise the safety of those involved in community safety services. In these circumstances, non-Indigenous people without kinship ties become incredibly important in their role as the 'authorising other'.²⁸⁶

Furthermore, the legislation criminalises those perpetrating the violence while it fails to seek a preventative approach through rehabilitation and education. One problem is that there are three types of DVOs and most people are only aware of one type of DVO. Meanwhile, a police officer can impose a DVO without active consent from the victim of FDV and, if the partner or family member does not know much about DVOs, then he or she can be found in breach without being fully informed about the DVO process and what has occurred. If a person has been found to be in breach, then they are likely to be found guilty of a criminal offence and the case will proceed to court. In this sense, the DVO process criminalises the behaviour of FDV and further contributes to the incarceration of Indigenous people in disadvantaged areas, while there are few services and little funding available for organisations to improve legal education in this area.

8.4.1.2 Understanding the challenges

Night Patrols are well established as a locally-grown response by Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory to the rising violence and incarceration rates (Blagg & Valuri, 2003). Their purpose is for local Aboriginal people to patrol their own community, by foot or vehicle, as a form of situational prevention²⁸⁷ and justice diversion, without involving the police. As

²⁸⁶ As detailed in section 7.5.5, the 'authorising other' is defined as individuals who owe no obligation in the Aboriginal kinship system and who have become important in leveraging this social position to manage payback and other forms of violence.

²⁸⁷ Situational prevention is a primary prevention field of criminology which aims to reduce practical or attractive opportunities for criminal behaviour to arise (Clarke, 1983).

already discussed, Night Patrol workers are known to use local knowledge to address issues internally and this requires staff to build trust and respect with Bininj community members.

Fig. 8.2 showed that 66.6 per cent of questionnaire respondents perceived that the Night Patrol was helping or helping very much to improve safety in Gunbalanya.²⁸⁸ An additional 11.8 per cent stated that the service was sometimes effective and 21.6 per cent stated the Night Patrol was less or not effective at the time of the interview. Given that Night Patrols commonly begin as a community-driven initiative, it is surprising that in Gunbalanya the service did not receive higher recognition of their legitimacy in the community. This section draws upon the qualitative data to understand these results.

In the qualitative data, 20 questionnaire participants stated that Night Patrol are helping the community with patrols, talking to ‘the card games mob’ [Q33], stopping ‘the drunk mob’ and preventing fights [Q31, Q34], and they are ‘making it safer for the community’ by responding to missing persons [Q33]. Whereas, six respondents stated that the Night Patrol are not working well or are not helping the community; and of these responses, one questionnaire participant explained his response:

Night Patrol just driving around past the people fighting. They don’t stop them. We need strong people from town to help them. Police don’t care. When we call them, they don’t come. They not doing their job.
[Q47]

Participant Q47 was concerned that the Night Patrol do not have enough power to intervene in public conflicts and there is a lack of engagement from the local police. This issue was similarly raised by participant CM08 who proclaimed:

The Night Patrol doesn’t have any power. I don’t see them stopping all the drunk people that are fighting. [CM08]

There seems to be a misunderstanding about the role of the Night Patrol in responding to community safety issues. Previously, there was an Old Lady²⁸⁹ who was a strong cultural leader in Gunbalanya; she would respond to serious incidents, including those involving weapons, and confront assailants to intervene in public interpersonal violence. Now, the Night Patrol

²⁸⁸ Refer to section 8.3.1.

²⁸⁹ ‘Old Lady’ is a term used to refer to this person. A pseudonym is used as part of the cultural protocols associated with Sorry Business.

have a new operating framework which mandates that there are rules when responding to serious incidents (i.e. fights involving weapons and FDV). One reason for this is to ensure the Workplace Health and Safety of staff members while on duty. When responding to serious incidents, the Night Patrol or the witnesses involved are required to call the police. This creates confusion amongst community members who are not aware of the rules and the reasons for them.

One participant understood that there were changes in how the Night Patrol was being run and, nonetheless, wished that the service answered more to the community's needs. She articulated:

I think that Night Patrol should be a flexible service that works to help the community. It shouldn't be too hard. A while ago, there was a family stuck at the Border Store and they were there for hours. The Night Patrol should patrol up to the Crossing. [Q10]

Participant Q10 expressed her opinion that the Night Patrol should be more responsive to community needs by helping families if they are stranded at Cahill's Crossing, which is located approximately 15 kilometres outside the community. But the Night Patrol team are not permitted to patrol beyond the airport. Similarly, another participant [CM04] saw that the Night Patrol should operate for longer hours²⁹⁰ because young people avoid trouble when the service is operating, children begin walking around at night after 2am, and grog is brought from outside around 4am.²⁹¹

Others said that the Night Patrol cannot always be relied upon to respond to sensitive matters, such as FDV, because one's family members may be working that night. The participant was concerned that:

You sometimes feel scared to call the Night Patrol because they may be family, and when you do call, your own family may get angry with you. This is what we call "payback". You're just one person and you have to deal with your husband's family alone. [CM02]

²⁹⁰ At the time of data collection, the Night Patrol operated Monday to Saturday from 7pm onwards. On the nights when the GSSC was operating (i.e. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday), the Night Patrol service would run until around 2am. On other nights, the service might finish earlier.

²⁹¹ The issue of young people walking around at night or loitering was identified neighbourhood problem by participants in Gunbalanya. Details are provided in section 5.4.

For participant CM02, the possibility that one's family member(s) can be working at the Night Patrol that night can foster fear of reprisal and isolation. Other reasons why participants held the opinion that the Night Patrol service is not always effective was sometimes based on who was running the patrols at the time.

Some participants [e.g. SP06] observed that sometimes the staff are reluctant to enforce children's need to return home when card games are running for hours into the night. But when I talked to some Night Patrol staff they commented that they try to talk to those families playing card games and they 'just talk back' and they're very rude. This indicates that stronger interventions are needed to regulate and manage the social harms associated with card games. This also provides further evidence to suggest why a community-oriented approach to policing, that is collaborative with local agencies, is required to prevent social harms.

Six participants stated that a more collaborative approach, where the police worked with the Night Patrol and assisted them in responding to incidents, would improve how neighbourhood problems are addressed. One participant remarked:

The Night Patrol are good, but they need help with the patrols. I live in Jabiru and over there we have the Night Patrol. There the police are doing patrols with the Night Patrol. This is what we need to improve safety. [CM01]

Similar to participants CM04 and Q28, the participant above commented that she was supportive of the Night Patrol service but their capacity to engage in situational prevention, through patrolling the streets, could be enhanced if the police worked alongside them. This could potentially help to legitimise their power in the community where community members know that the law must be obeyed. From a different perspective, a Night Patrol worker claimed:

... Bear in mind that is not actually the Night Patrol's job to stop that mob when they fight or misbehave or whether they take cannabis or sniff petrol – that's actually the police officers' job. So, we need to work together with the help of the community. [SP01]

Similar to the other participants mentioned, participant SP01 firmly stated that community members misinterpret the Night Patrol's role in the community. The Police are the actors responsible for intervening in conflicts and confiscating illicit substances while the Night Patrol's role is to divert people away from the justice system and take them to a place of safety.

Their roles are complementary and, to actively enhance community safety services, these two agencies need to work together on common goals and priorities.

8.4.2 Policing for improved community safety?

Policing in remote Aboriginal communities needs to be community-oriented and collaborative with Indigenous leaders and operating service providers to avoid reproducing the colonial powers of the state (Cunneen, 2001). Cunneen (2001) argues that the unequal and neocolonial relations between Indigenous Australians and the police, including the over-criminalisation and incarceration of Indigenous people, is symbolic of the failure of the state to decolonise policing as an institution.

Blagg (2016, p. 87) writes that one of the inherent flaws in the current system of policing remote Indigenous communities is that police officers arrive from elsewhere with a pre-determined set of ideas on how policing operates and this formula is superimposed on remote Indigenous contexts. Policing in remote Indigenous communities is inherently an unequal process with little capacity for Indigenous control and decision-making over how police operate in their communities, including the goals and priorities that are set, whereby police administer a legislative code of practice that is governed by Western law (Blagg, 2016, pp. 85-86; Cunneen, 2001).

In Gunbalanya, community leaders welcomed a police presence in the community that was preventative and collaborative on issues affecting young people and adults. Community members often called upon police to manage or address family violence, prevent drug running and manage social disorganisation caused by young offenders including gang membership. But the nature of policing in Gunbalanya was problematic because it lacked respectful engagement and collaboration. Police officers demonstrated an unwillingness to work with service providers and community leaders, and their approach lacked a preventative, community-oriented approach. This section unpacks the challenges of engagement between the locally stationed police, service providers and community members. It seeks to understand how, at the time of data collection, these fractured relationships between Bininj people, service providers and the police were unhelpful in managing social disorganisation and provided a punitive, reactive approach to policing.

8.4.2.1 Perspectives from service providers

Service providers also found police response times an impediment to effective service delivery in the community. As mentioned in section 5.2.2, participant SP06 voiced his frustrations when the police do not attend serious episodes of interpersonal violence. Similarly, another service provider explained the challenges she faced in getting an appropriate response from the police:

I am constantly challenged with current resources of our local police. The numbers we have here really needs to be addressed again. At the moment, there are three police officers and with that number of staff the station cannot be staffed 24/7. They only work sometimes, and they have no visible presence in the community. This is where support will fall over. This is where any violence or difficult disrespectful behaviours will escalate in community if there is not a strong presence from the local police and a timely response to situations. [SP05]

Participant SP05 located the problems associated with policing in terms of police numbers, operating hours and their visibility in the community. At the time of the fieldwork, the Gunbalanya police station had been allocated five allocated positions, including three permanently stationed police officers²⁹² and two unfilled positions. The inability of the police to adequately respond to incidents in a timely manner was certainly influenced by the understaffing of stationed police officers at the time, amongst other issues. Meanwhile, a round-the-clock availability of the police is required to manage FDV and other unsafe behaviours [SP05].

For either a lack of resources or a lack of willingness, the police during the time of my fieldwork did not run patrols in community and did not make concerted efforts to liaise and communicate with elders or community members. Some service providers noted the difference between styles of policing enacted when a different Officer in Charge was operating the Gunbalanya police station. Participant SP05 noted that the former police sergeant was accustomed to liaising with community members as a primary prevention strategy. He would talk to young men about FDV and positive behaviour. But, in the time that I undertook this

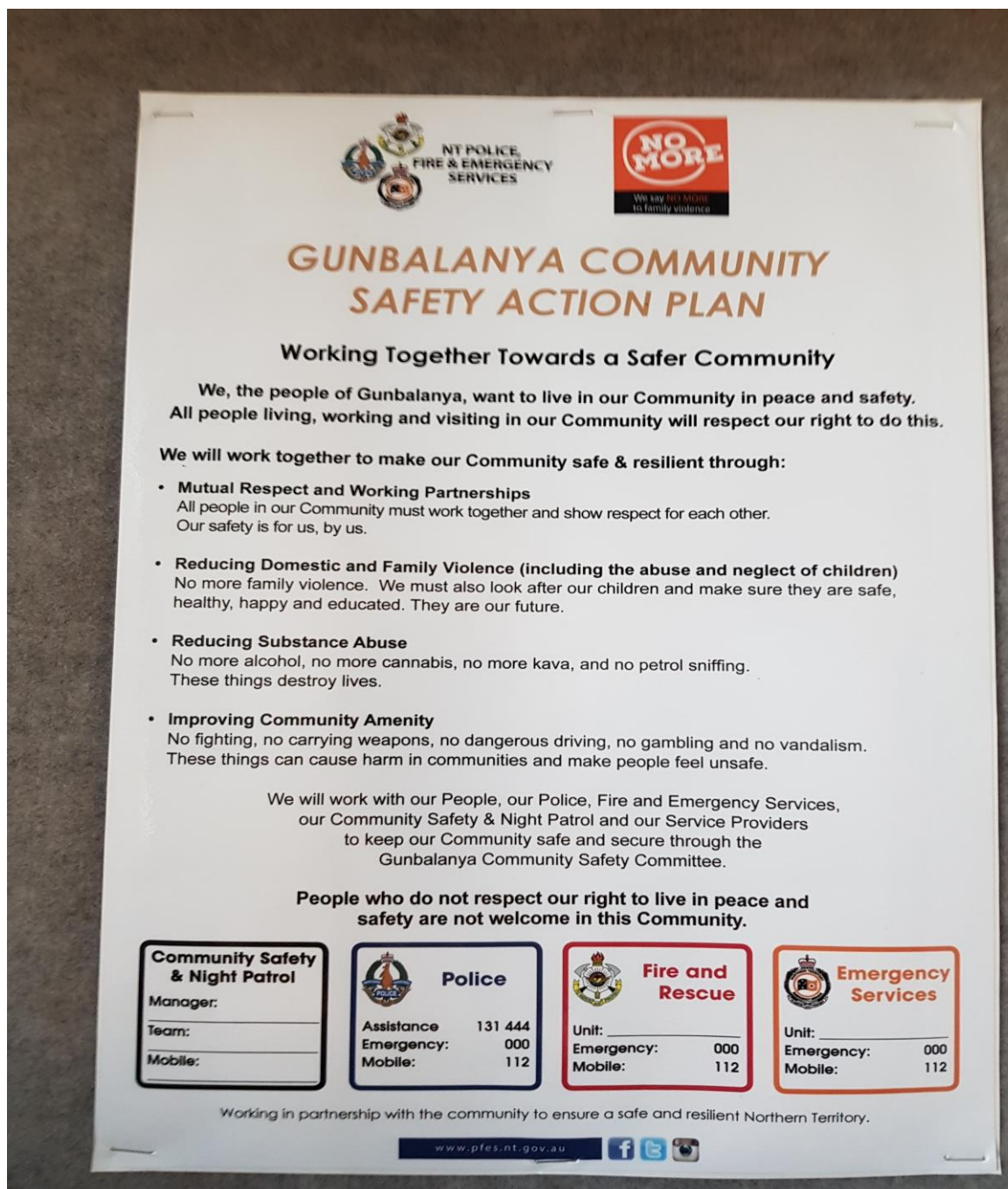
²⁹² By 'permanently located' police officers, I mean that these officers lived in the Gunbalanya community for a specified period of time. Remote police officers are on rotation and are eventually forced to move, as directed by head office, even if they and the community express the preference to remain stationed in Gunbalanya. This is different to visiting police officers, such as the CEPO and the Regional Commander or other senior officers.

research, I rarely saw the police out in community and the Community Safety Action Plan (CSAP) was never acted upon. Participant SP05 commented:

There are no police on duty on the weekends. They are not conducting patrols in the community and they are not liaising with community members – the primary preventative strategy that police are encouraged to take. These expectations are not impossible. [SP05]

The participant argued that the police need to have a presence in the community and a good relationship with residents to be a preventative arm of community safety, rather than simply reacting in emergencies. Above, participant SP05 stated that there is a lack of communication between the police and residents and this should be part of their regular operations. Furthermore, she was frustrated that the CSAP had not been progressed in her time working in community which was supposed to be the main primary collaborative, strategic tool to improve safety (see Fig. 8.4).

Fig. 8.4. Gunbalanya's Community Safety Action Plan



Source: Simone Georg, publicly displayed document.

On my first field visit to Gunbalanya in September 2015, I first met with the Community Safety Reference Group which was a formation of strong Bininj leaders, some of whom also comprise the Board Members of the AAC. At the meeting, I was presenting my work on community safety along with senior police officers and other discussions from community safety workers. This meeting was well-attended by WARC staff, including the Night Patrol Coordinator, the Northern Territory Government staff including housing and corrections staff, and the federal government's remote engagement staff. At the meeting, the Community Safety Reference Group signed off on the CSAP (see Fig. 8.4). This plan outlined the Reference Group's visions for a collaborative, partnerships-based approach to improving community safety²⁹³ and included many of the issues discussed in previous chapters, such as cyber safety, card games and school attendance. By the time I returned to Gunbalanya the following year, a new Officer in Charge had arrived in the community and I never saw the CSAP in action.

8.4.2.2 Perspectives from community members

Research with disadvantaged communities indicates that residents' experiences and perceptions of higher levels of police misconduct and reduced legitimacy are inversely linked to collective efficacy including reporting crimes to the police (Kochel, 2012). Police legitimacy is measured by a number of indicators including response times, respectful behaviour when interacting with the public, demonstrating professionalism, addressing the concerns of the public and providing quality routine police services (Kochel, 2012). Indicators of poor service quality in policing the Gunbalanya community were reported by participants in this chapter.

Nine Indigenous respondents commented that the police are ineffective because they do not respond to incidents when the emergency number is dialled. A common complaint among participants was that police attend an incident when 'its too late' or when the problem is over:

The police are sleeping, not doing anything. We phoned them about people fighting and they never move. No one comes. [Q18]

²⁹³ I was informed that the contents of the original CSAP contained the issues that the Arrguluk Reference Group had decided upon during previous consultations. The Arrguluk Reference Group were the key decision-making body representing community perspectives on community safety issues. Fig. 8.4 shows the most recent version of the CSAP.

As described above, ‘the police are sleeping’ was a common expression among participants who wanted to explain that the police are ineffective because they stay in the police compound until there is an emergency, and even then, they are unlikely to attend an incident.

Other participants mentioned that the police only come when the incident has been resolved, hours later or the next day. These two participants offered:

Police are sleeping. Police are not patrolling. Jamon²⁹⁴ only come when someone was fighting then when they die. When there’s a big problem, the jamon come the next day. [Q27]

Participant Q27 identified that police patrols would be beneficial to improving safety but, again, the police only attend an incident when the problem has escalated into a more serious incident, particularly when a person is seriously injured or has possibly died. These issues were also raised by others [Q21] who stated that the police only make brief appearances, which could be in response to minor regulatory enforcements (e.g. registration offences), instead of preventing and managing violent conflict.

Other participants explicitly mentioned that the police have often failed to respond to FDV incidents. Two of the nine participants commented:

When there’s a man and woman fighting, like domestic violence, we call the police, but they don’t come. Sometimes it takes 4 to 5 hours until they come. Then it’s all over. [CM17]

You see, I have family who lives in Darwin. My sister works for Night Patrol there. When we report family violence here in Gunbalanya, the police aren’t coming. In Darwin, they come straight away. [CM14]

Participant CM17 reported that, in cases of FDV, the police respond many hours later when the incident ‘is all over’. This is particularly alarming given the apparent contrast between policing operations and mandatory reporting legislation on FDV.²⁹⁵ Yet, based on these reports, the police in Gunbalanya have failed to gain the trust and respect of the local community because of their ineffectiveness in responding to reported incidents of FDV. Secondly,

²⁹⁴ ‘Jamon’ means police in Kunwinjku.

²⁹⁵ As already mentioned, the Northern Territory has legislation which makes reporting FDV mandatory. Any adult who becomes aware of FDV is legally required to report this to the police or another service representative, such as a health worker.

participant CM14 felt that people in Gunbalanya are inadequately serviced by the police compared to people in other cities, such as Darwin.

During my third visit to Gunbalanya, I discussed these findings with several service providers to understand their perspectives on how policing had changed over the previous year. One person informally mentioned that, in order to get a same-day response from the police, an Indigenous person reporting an incident must mention the ‘magic words’: weapons, death or suicide. The only way that an Indigenous person can get a response from the ‘000’ emergency hotline is by saying: (1) that the person is being assaulted with a dangerous weapon, (2) someone is bleeding and could die if the person is not attended to, or (3) proclaim a suicide attempt. This was similarly mentioned when I attended a community consultation meeting about the Northern Territory Aboriginal Justice Agreements in Jabiru in September 2017.

With these issues in mind, an important question to answer is what style or approach to policing do community members in Gunbalanya seek, and how could this better improve community safety? Previously, I drew upon the perspectives of community elders to highlight how they envision a safer community in terms of effective consultation with community leadership and collaborative relationships where Bininj and Balanda are working alongside each other.²⁹⁶ One participant articulated this approach:

Police are not working well. We need more jamon, talking to community more and helping bring kids to school. Talking with parents to help the community. [Q44]

Participant Q44 expressed that policing in Gunbalanya is problematic because there needs to be more police ‘talking to community’ including the parents, who are possibly causing problems, and helping get children to school.²⁹⁷

Eight participants were of the view that the police should actively patrol Cahill’s Crossing to prevent illicit substances from entering the community. Two participants commented:

We need the police at the crossing often, they need to stop the ganja coming in. It’s a real problem. If we could stop the people bringing in the grog and

²⁹⁶ Refer to section 5.2.

²⁹⁷ In Gunbalanya, the police on occasion do help with the RSAS program in a broader attempt to boost school attendance. This is commonly the CEPO.

ganja – like the police could wait at the crossing more – this place would be much better. [Q14]

We are telling people to not get outside grog, running for grog. That's the worst one. They forget their families. But they don't always listen to us. We want the police to stay at Cahill's Crossing. Jabiru police can help too – to stay at the turn off, change it around one day to the next. Sometimes the Gunbalanya police can stay there day shift then the next day Jabiru police can stay at the three ways [highway turnoff to Gunbalanya] at night shift. [Q37]

Participants Q14 and Q37 voiced that there should be preventative elements to policing by helping the community to prevent illicit grog entering Gunbalanya. Participant Q37 argued that vehicle inspections at Cahill's Crossing should be ad-hoc and sporadic.

Gunbalanya is situated on the border between Arnhem Land and Kakadu National Park and participants often described the community as being the 'gateway' to Arnhem Land. If substances cross the East Alligator River at Cahill's Crossing then these substances have the potential to reach many other Arnhem Land communities, such as Maningrida and Ramingining. I am aware that, on some occasions, the Northern Territory Police establish inspection stations anywhere along Arnhem Land and Oenpelli Road Highways²⁹⁸; this is the only road that enters the western side of Arnhem Land. But, participants also reported that people are known to hide until the police disappear and then return with grog around sunrise.

The issue of police patrols for illicit substances was also raised at a community forum for the Northern Territory Justice Agreement consultations in Jabiru. Indigenous representatives of community organisations raised their concerns that, during police inspections, different rules were being applied to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who were found to be carrying illicit substances in a prescribed community. An individual observed an example where, when an Indigenous person was carrying grog into Arnhem Land, the police confiscated the car. But when a non-Indigenous person was carrying grog into Arnhem Land where the amount being carried was over the limit or did not have a permit to carry, the police tipped the liquor out. This person was of the opinion that, if there are rules in place, then the police cannot apply them differently. A similar issue was also raised by a service provider who

²⁹⁸ This is between the intersection between the Arnhem Land Highway and the connecting road between Arnhem Land and Gunbalanya, near Jabiru.

suggested that the rules around permits and liquor licencing should apply equally to everyone irrespective of skin colour or Indigeneity [SP04].

8.4.2.3 *Attitudes and behaviours by police officers*

Police resourcing was not the only challenge identified by service providers and community members, but also the lack of respectful behaviour shown by police officers. The stories presented in this section show the lack of demonstrated trust, respect and professionalism among selected police officers in managing incidents. Frustrated with police misconduct in Gunbalanya, a participant anonymously reported that there was an incident where a lady was waiting on the doorstep of the police station, waiting for an officer to answer the door bell. She had been abused by her husband and she wanted to apply for a DVO. She was told by a police officer to “fuck off” [FN 01.11.2016]. Citing another case, the participant reported a second incident where a father showed up to the police station with his child. He alleged that the child had been sexually abused because the mother was not taking care of the child. The father already had a DVO issued against him. An off-duty police officer saw him outside the police station and he told the father “take the kid to the clinic yourself” [FN 01.11.2016].

Alarminglly, the situations described above were not one-off incidents where I heard service providers and community members accusing the police of inappropriate conduct involving swearing, dismissive attitudes and a lack of trust in reports by Bininj people. One participant commented how the police sometimes demonstrate a lack of respect for private property:

In another house, three weeks ago, the police came to take the kids to school. But they took the girl in a rough way. They took her by the arm from our home, but they didn't ask to come inside our boundary. They are not allowed to do that, it's our home. They didn't ask permission to come into our home.
[Q33]

Participant Q33 explained that, as part of the RSAS program, the police visited her house to bring her children to school, but she believed their conduct was inappropriate. Another example showed how poor police conduct creates disrespect between the police and the community.

Two participants, in separate interviews, expressed their frustrations about one incident to show how the police showed a distinct lack of trust for Bininj people:

[CM08] *My ex-wife called me up and said to me: “the police told me, ‘ay, you, you’re a lying woman.’” That’s what they were saying to her.*

[Interviewer] *And they said she is a lying woman?*

[CM08] *Yeah. And she rang me up, that’s why I rang them up I talked to them and they said “and where are you now?” I said: “I’m at [the Balanda building] now.” Then they said: “alright now, let’s go look for your son.” And I said: “but why did you call my ex-wife a lying woman and that she need help?” That’s what is wrong with the policeman here. They don’t trust us [Bininj people].*

Participant CM08 went on to explain that the police do not trust Bininj people and, after the incident above, he told the police that he was at the government building and the police subsequently attended the incident quickly. He believed that the police responded quickly because Balanda have the power to complain about police misconduct but, from his perspective, authorities would be less likely to listen and trust Bininj people about these allegations. In this case, the participant wanted police assistance because his son had drunk excessive amounts of liquor. His son had recently been threatening self-harm and the participant believed his son was suicidal.

Later, in a separate interview, I talked to the person who the police accused of ‘being a liar’. We were completing the questionnaire and, in response to my question about what services are helping to make Gunbalanya a safer place, she responded:

Police don’t help. They told me: “You’re a liar” and hung up on me. My son is a good boy. But sometimes his friend comes and tells him about grog in the community. This boy puts ideas in my son’s head. Then I see him drunk in the street and trying to buy kundalk. I want to see him do the right thing, not get into trouble. [Q51]

Participant Q51 was emotional about her son’s substance dependency issues. The police, from her perspective, were obstructive and rude in trying to resolve this personal problem which could have quickly escalated into an emergency. This shows an example where community members have called upon the police to act in a preventative capacity, and they failed to act with empathy and sensitivity.

One participant highlighted how the lack of cultural competence among police officers could further exacerbate existing problems amongst community members:

Jamon have to be careful with confidential information. There was a problem the other day where someone was drunk and had grog in the community. They were walking around and calling abuse. And the jamon came up to me and said "So-and-so told me that Mary²⁹⁹ brought grog into the community last night. Have you seen her?" But, they shouldn't tell me about who told them that or who did those things because the jamon can leave this community but we Bininj people are here forever. We live here and there could be payback for us. You know, if that person goes to jail, the family could blame us and make trouble for us. [CM10]

Participant CM10 described a scenario where the police released confidential information by naming an individual who had committed an offence and, in releasing this information, the police officer behaved inappropriately in the community. Participant CM10 explained that, by releasing this information, she could become the victim of blame and payback if the perpetrator gets prosecuted for bringing liquor into the community without a permit. Payback and blame do not only occur if an alleged offender is prosecuted, but a Bininj person could experience blame at the mere suspicion that (s)he has disclosed or revealed a culprit to the police.³⁰⁰ The participant aptly states that the police behaviour in this circumstance was insensitive and an inappropriate way of behaving in Gunbalanya. This sentiment was also echoed by other participants in that they welcomed Balanda to come and learn from Bininj people, but they expected that Balanda would learn to respect the way things are done and behave appropriately.

²⁹⁹ The actual name has been removed to protect the individual and a pseudonym is used.

³⁰⁰ This highlights how participants are fearful of payback. While retribution may occur if someone was found to have reported someone to the police, this participant was concerned that she may receive payback if someone perceives that she has reported someone to the police. Because of the secrecy surrounding blame, payback and the related conflict, it was often ambiguous in participants' stories exactly who was blaming whom and how closely they were related.

8.5 Ways forward: community perspectives on how to improve services

This section highlights the service gaps in, and opportunities for, improving community safety in Gunbalanya.³⁰¹ Table 8.2 provides a summary of participants' views on how programs and services in Gunbalanya could be improved in their capacity to respond to the complexity of community safety issues in Gunbalanya. This section draws on these findings and participants' views to highlight the disjuncture between Bininj people's self-identified needs, service providers' aspirations for improved systems and the reality of how services are delivered.

8.5.1 Whole-of-community collaboration and engagement

Several participants indicated that coordination and collaboration between service providers is problematic because there is a lack of communication between agencies. Bininj participants and service providers stated that they would like to see all agencies working together and helping each other, including the police, the Health Clinic, the Safe House, the Night Patrol, the GSSC and the Alcohol and other Drugs Program [e.g. CM09, SP01, SP04 and SP05]. One participant provided his perspective on how agencies work in isolation, which creates multiple siloed services across the community services sector in Gunbalanya:

³⁰¹ Questions 18 and 19 in the questionnaires asked participants about how well they believed local services were improving community safety in Gunbalanya or whether the service was less effective. These questions were similarly asked during the semi-structured interviews with Bininj participants and service providers.

Table 8.2. Bininj participants' and service providers' views on how to improve community safety services in Gunbalanya

Type of program	Target participants	Addressing gaps
Education and awareness about family violence	Men, women and young people	Respectful relationships programs that engage men and young boys Programs to repair relationships and keep people together Awareness programs for men and women to learn more about FDV
Increased counselling and mediation support	Men, women and young people	Healing programs for people who show addiction related behaviours Mentoring and leadership program for people who need healing
Strengths-based behaviour programs	Adults with suspected substance misuse issues Young people approaching 16 years	Integrating positive, strengths-based messages within behaviour and education focused programs Mandatory education workshops for young people and people who have been banned from the GSSC Behaviour change programs for men and women
Increased self-management of card games	Adults and children who play card games too much	Community leaders need to decide when people can play card games Police and Night Patrol need to help community enforce card game regulations There should be a designated area where people can socialise and play cards Children should not be allowed to play cards Posters and programs which raise awareness about the negative effects of card games on children and families
Community safety action plan	Bininj and Balanda – everyone working together	A community safety action plan which has been agreed upon by community leaders and is enforceable by local police Service providers would like to see increased collaboration and engagement across different sectors on safety issues Bi-annual meetings to update and provide accountability in achieving action under the community safety action plan

Type of program	Target participants	Addressing gaps
Increased services for the elderly	Elderly or sick people who are vulnerable and need assistance	An aged care centre for the elderly including recreational centre, washing room and kitchen A place where elderly persons are safe from humbug, abuse and theft More excursions for the elderly to go swimming, fishing and spend time in the bush
Engaging the outstations in spiritual healing programs on their homelands	Young people	Justice diversion programs which engage outstations and cultural leaders in the solutions. These need to be community-driven initiatives which embrace a preventative approach to law and justice Develop trauma and addiction healing programs which utilise outstation communities in the solution and embrace Bininj law, customary practices, beliefs and values

What does not work well is places working in isolation. As an example, the school are hard to get into there. They have their own regime. Then the Shire does their own thing and if they get called upon to attend something they may. Now we have the GEO's position³⁰² in the community which would have been done by the Shire in the past – the coordination I mean. Now the Shire concentrates more on water and rates but not on community social issues. Even though we have the Women's Safe House, the Night Patrol and the Aged Care. I am not saying that people aren't working together but there is big room for improvement. [SP04]

Participant SP04 was of the opinion that inadequate cohesion between agencies contributed to the siloed effect of service delivery. In addition, the micro-politics in the community further creates tensions and barriers to collaboration and communication. Siloed service delivery is a considerable impediment to providing effective services in Gunbalanya that targets ongoing problems and meets the needs of at-risk clients [CM09, SP01 and SP05].

In a later part of our interview, participant SP04 moves on to say that communication between agencies and the community is an important factor. There are constant changes in how services are run but agencies could do better in getting out into the community and explaining how particular services have changed to improve public awareness, through for example information sessions.³⁰³ The need to improve communication between agencies was also raised by other participants. As an example, participant SP04 suggested that there needs to be an online information portal or fortnightly triage meetings to quickly share information and ensure the appropriate clients are referred to after-care services. This would ensure that the needs of at-risk families, groups or individuals are provided for and help agencies focus on delivering services where they are needed most.

Improvements to the manner in which services are run, including increased collaboration and service integration, needs to be part of a broader community safety strategy that is led and

³⁰² Government Engagement Officer is a position created as part of the Northern Territory Intervention in 2007. Their role is to coordinate federal government business including stakeholder management and overseeing funding and program delivery.

³⁰³ Section 7.5.2 drew upon Bininj participants' perspectives on the need for improved dialogue between Bininj and Balanda people including the need to work 'two-ways'. In contrast, this section uses mostly perspectives from service providers to indicate areas where the service providers' approach to collaboration and service integration could be improved.

run by community leaders. As indicated earlier, participant SP05 raised their concerns about the lack of action taken on progressing the CSAP in Gunbalanya and that unregulated gambling continues without intervention or regulation. In her view, in Gunbalanya unregulated gambling is tolerated which contrasts with how the issue is managed in Darwin where gambling is regulated through a gaming authority that mandates accountability in gambling procedures. This accountability structure ensures that people who wager excessive amounts in a short period, or show signs of problem gambling, receive the appropriate attention and are directed towards the appropriate services. However, participant SP04 noted the rules are different in Gunbalanya:

*But there, we have people gambling on the streets and wagering money every day. But there is no accountability or regulation of what's happening here. Card games are one of the three biggest sources of problems in this community.*³⁰⁴ [SP05]

From the interviews held, the findings suggest that disconnected working relationships between service providers in Gunbalanya could be a product of reactive approaches to service delivery. Being reactive in delivering a service is often not intentional but a response to the resource-constrained funding environment. This impacts on how responsive service providers are to attending community consultations and meetings, even when the content of these meetings is directly relevant to their work. At the same time, attending public consultations is important to show support for the community leaders, in order to show that service providers are supporting the community voice and listening to their directions. I often found that this level of engagement was missing in Gunbalanya.³⁰⁵

8.5.2 Education and awareness on community safety issues

Previously, I explored how different services and programs have made incremental and valuable steps towards increasing awareness, decreasing stigma and enhancing community capacity to respond to and address FDV.³⁰⁶ At the same time, there is still much progress to be

³⁰⁴ This issue is further discussed in section 8.5.3.1.

³⁰⁵ During 2016 and 2017, I worked with community members and several service providers to help organise at least 5 public workshops and meetings. These meetings were for various purposes, including disseminating the results of this study. On multiple occasions, I observed service providers were selectively engaged with events occurring outside their immediate stakeholder networks.

³⁰⁶ Refer to section 8.3.3.1.

made in reducing alcohol-related harm, including how alcohol and other drug misuse contributes to FDV. This section looks at some areas where potential improvements could be made.

8.5.2.1 Alcohol and other substances

Several community members were supportive of counselling and other healing programs that addressed the causes of addiction and alcohol-related problems [CM15, Q10 and Q36]. Counselling services are held through the alcohol and other drugs program but, based on results discussed in section 8.3.1, there is potentially a need to increase outreach services and improve community engagement with this service. This program would also benefit from training and employing Bininj community members to help run the service.

Some participants were more aware of the AOD program, but they enquired how the program was helping families deal with their problems at the time. Two participants requested practical advice for men and women equally to deal with their problems [Q12 and Q25]. Of these two participants, one reported:

The Alcohol and Drugs Workers comes to help us with problems. We, my husband and I, talked to him and we answered his questions. But he didn't give us ideas on how to fix the problem. We said, "Yes when my husband drinks, he can get angry." But he didn't help us fix the problem. [Q12]

This statement points to the need to listen and follow up on issues that arise when sitting down and talking to clients about their issues. By following up, the service providers would be able to assist the client with further advice and guidance on addressing the problem. This is an opportunity to link-up services with the Safe House to deliver whole-of-family counselling and support to help that couple manage their problems. FDV support services are further discussed in the following section.

Other participants requested increased attention be paid to safe drinking programs for young people before they reach the age of 18 years old. This was considered important for participant Q36 because she was concerned that young people, who are banned from the GSSC,

are tempted to drive to Darwin and at risk of being involved in a potentially fatal accident.³⁰⁷ To address issues such as these, participant SP05 argued that there needs to be increased focus on mandatory education, treatment and workshops for those who experience alcohol and other drug related problems:

I just can't understand why, when this community has considerable trouble with addiction and problematic alcohol consumption patterns why there is no mandatory education program for those that have trouble with drinking. Whether it be alcohol-related violence, fighting in the street while intoxicated or other offences for which an individual has been reported. [SP05]

Participant SP05 held the view that the investment of financial and human resource into alcohol and other drug treatment (e.g. treatment and peer-support meetings), education and awareness programs was insufficient to address the widespread impact that substance dependency and addiction is having on the community. For participant SP04, addiction was further contributing to the normalisation of violence and other neighbourhood problems and, in her view, there is a lack of staff to ensure a responsive and timely commitment to addressing the problem. This was similar to a point made by participant Q10 who questioned why there is no mandatory mentoring program or anger management and education program for those that get banned from the GSSC – for men and women. Participant Q10 stated that gaining access to the GSSC should be based on their completion of a similar program.

8.5.2.2 Family and domestic violence (FDV)

During a public consultation meeting in November 2016, I shared some preliminary findings with community leaders and some service providers. An issue that the meeting attendees were particularly passionate about was considering whole-of-family support to repair relationships affected by FDV. Community leaders called for services which address how FDV, in addition to regulatory frameworks such as mandatory reporting and the DVO scheme, is contributing to the breakdown in family relationships. They suggested there needs to a broader strategy to help re-connect families to rebuild relationships, including through counselling, and more behaviour change programs for men. This strategy would involve encouraging families to put the 'culture

³⁰⁷ This issue was mentioned by participant CM16 in section 5.2.2.

of blame' aside. These community leaders were well-aware that the Safe House Coordinator was active in community progressing some of these objectives, but they were of the view that further investment is needed in this area.

The Safe House Coordinator explained her approach to family mediation and counselling which seems to be aligned with community leaders' perspectives. She explained that community members also requested the need to keep families together:

People feel comfortable talking to me because I'm disengaged with family. I take the approach that when everything has settled down, I go talk to the family – husband and wife together. I try to keep the family together, firstly, because there is no-where else to go and, secondly, because that's what these women will want. They don't want to leave the family and husband. It's family conferencing. [FN 01.11.17]

This participant stated that she works hard to ensure that she provides a wrap-around support service for the whole family to be able to address the problem. The Women's Safe House provides emergency assistance for those experiencing FDV including three days of crisis emergency accommodation. At the end of this period, the women then often have to return home or they stay with another family member.

Resourcing for the Women's Safe House compromises the service's capacity to increase awareness and education about FDV. A participant confirmed that often her clients do not understand the entirety of FDV. Rather most clients think that this type of violence is only physical where there is a broad spectrum of behaviours that need to be considered including stalking, intimidation and harassment. She articulates:

I conduct education programs with community members. I market the education sessions as 'Family Wellbeing' not as FDV programs because I am trying to de-stigmatise the topic of domestic violence. But my time is stretched and there's only one of me. When I have community members in here then they are very engaged and they enjoy the session. But it's difficult getting them in here in the first place. [FN 01.11.2017]

The participant commented that her time and resources are stretched, and while she would like to organise education workshops, she has limited capacity.

The participant further highlights that some external agencies sometimes visit Gunbalanya to deliver education workshops on related issues, however this is insufficient to address the community-wide problem of violence:

There are snippets of education coming but these are often ad hoc education sessions that just reach a small number of people. I have asked many service providers to come out here, including the Healing Foundation and Anglicare, but no one has made an effort. The Healing Foundation came once before the end of financial year. NAAJA help us with legal stuff and that's good. [FN 01.11.2017]

The participant argued that while there are some short-term fly-in fly-out programs that run workshops to increase FDV awareness in Gunbalanya, there needs to be significantly more investment in this area. From my observations, these short-term programs often occur over two to three days and they have primarily been with Bininj people already engaged in local service delivery in addition to some programs being run through CDP. Community leaders have expressed their view that there needs to be greater emphasis on explaining concepts such as FDV in Kunwinjku by employing local staff to promote awareness and developing resources in the local language.

The lack of awareness about FDV is important in addressing this issue not only to reduce incidence or increase reporting behaviour, but also to enable community members to comply with the existing regulatory and legal frameworks. Bininj people in Gunbalanya are becoming increasingly aware that FDV is a punishable crime under Western legal frameworks, such as the mandatory reporting legislation. However, many Bininj people are insufficiently aware about the DVO Scheme to ensure compliance and that there are three types of DVOs which might be imposed by the police. Two participants indicated their frustrations with this strategy of managing FDV because, in their opinion, the DVO scheme was sending the men to jail, allowing women's violence to occur against men without punishment, and these multifaceted problems were contributing to the breakdown in family relationships. Meanwhile, there was a lack of emphasis on local services repairing relationships and keeping the family unit together .

8.5.2.3 Mentoring and support for men

As discussed in section 8.3.3, Charlie King's campaign has enabled community members and service providers to begin a dialogue about the problem of community violence by helping to reduce the stigma and shame around the issue. Further to this, four participants pointed to the need for increased focus on men's leadership programs, a men's place or shelter, and counselling programs for men³⁰⁸ [CM10, CM15, Q38 and SP05]. Part of the focus should be targeting young people with substance dependency on alcohol and other drugs and supporting men to change their behaviour including with regard to anger management. One of these participants said:

The thing is that we don't have a place for men to go, like a Men's Shelter. Men need a place to relax and calm down. A place where they can talk to each other and learn together... The SCfC Program³⁰⁹ runs a Father's Day Program where a man helps by teaching the men to cook – it's a good program. [Q38]

Participant Q38 expressed her wishes that FDV programs do not solely focus on women but also increase awareness about how men need to change their behaviour. A similar comment was made by participant SP05 who suggested that a men's space for gathering is “*fundamentally important*” to enhance men's capacity for leadership and healing. One program that does enable respectful behaviours among men is provided by the Northern Territory Government.

8.5.3 Strengths-based approaches to behaviour change

Participants suggested that programs seeking to improve community safety and address the range of complex issues associated with neighbourhood problems need to engage in both education and awareness through strengths-based behaviour change programs that target clients in need. These various strategies need to be accompanied by community-led solutions for managing problems at the core of community safety issues. As an example, section 8.5.3.1

³⁰⁸ Men's behaviour change programs are being increasingly used to address FDV in Indigenous communities. The Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services runs a five-day mandated, psycho-educational Family Violence Program specifically for male offenders, who have experiences of FDV (NTG, 2015). In addition, Charlie King's “No More” campaign also focuses on positive behaviour change among men. Both of these initiatives were supported by the elders in Gunbalanya.

³⁰⁹ This is the Stronger Communities for Children Program run by the federal government.

discusses participants' desire for better ways of managing unregulated gambling at card games. Section 8.5.3.3 discusses participant concern for those vulnerable to harmful behaviours, specifically elderly persons who need extra support. Then section 8.5.3.3 highlights how programs that address youth delinquency need to target the clients most involved with unsafe behaviours.

8.5.3.1 Strategies for addressing problems associated with card games

Ten participants suggested that gambling at card games should be regulated in some form, whether that regulation enforces time restrictions on gambling in public spaces or creates restricted zones for gambling. Undoubtedly, the strategy needs extensive public consultation and must be led and managed by the community. One participant reinforced this point by claiming:

We, as a community, should make a decision that people can play cards during the daytime – that's all. But not during the night time because the cards wakes all the kids up. [CM08]

Participant CM08 located the responsibility for making decisions on when and how card games are permitted on community members. Two non-Indigenous participants were supportive of community-led initiatives that regulate and create accountability measures for managing the problems associated with card games [CM16 and SP05]. One of these participants found it difficult to believe that all over Australia there is a gambling licencing body to manage problem gambling, yet there is no intervention in Gunbalanya from any service providers or regulatory agencies. She believed the lack of regulation is further contributing to what has been known for years as a 'problem of addiction' and its associated detrimental effects [SP05].

This contrasted with other participants who did not want to see a community-led response and simply said:

The police and the teachers should talk to the parents and they should play cards between 4 o'clock and 9 o'clock. [CM17]

Nonetheless, several participants asserted that there needs to be a time restriction on card games in public – some stated that 9pm was the latest time they should play [SP02, SP03, Q18 and CM17] and others were of the opinion that 4pm should be a time limit [CM14]. For these types of strategies to work then all sectors of the community need to work together to decide on the

strategy and then enact it in everyday practice involving police enforcement, council regulation and community-driven decision-making. However, the ultimate challenge to this approach is that first community members need to recognise that there is a gambling problem [SP04]

Interestingly the community's appetite for regulating gambling at card games seems to change periodically. As an example, one participant pointed out that having a regulated space for gambling would help separate adult activities from public spaces, with the broader aim of preventing children from learning to gamble. This regulated space would have opening hours and gambling at card games outside of these would be prohibited. She suggested:

In Canada, they built a casino – the parents could go gamble in the casino and no children there. The revenue can be used for the community. We could have one here and it could be community-owned and all the money goes back to the community. We need something different so the money goes back to the community. That will stop the kids from playing cards. Someone could watch out for the kids while the parents go to the casino. [CM15]

Participant CM15 indicated that regulating gambling at card games by creating a dedicated space would allow people to socialise and minimise the harm associated with gambling, particularly considering its impact on children. However, when I returned to Gunbalanya in September 2017, that participant's perspective seemed to have changed. She was then of the view along with other participants that card games are more harmful than beneficial and there need to be stricter rules in place to ensure children are cared for and they attend school.

8.5.3.2 Targeted programs to address youth delinquency

This thesis examined how youth delinquency was a prominent issue in Gunbalanya where disengaged youth are significant contributors to neighbourhood problems and this issue contributes to a breakdown in family relationships.³¹⁰ Participants located the solutions within the values, beliefs and practices of Bininj law where young people learning about kinship, identity and undertaking ceremony would help enable positive relationships and behaviours,

³¹⁰ Refer to sections 5.4 and 6.4 on the various contributions disengaged children and young people make to unsafe behaviours and neighbourhood problems. The influence of structural factors is explored in section 6.3.

including discipline and respect.³¹¹ Similarly, participant Q37 indicated that community elders need to be involved in strengths-based programs to enable behaviour change among youth:

The Strong Women need to get together and do activities with young people. Take them turtle hunting, playing sports and tell them stories and history. Recognise each other in families and help each other. Take young people – 20 years old to 30 years old – out for activities. That's the age that they are trouble makers. Even younger ones too. [Q37]

Participant Q37 affirmed that programs aimed at enabling positive behaviours need to be embedded within customary practices. In addition, young people generally engaged in activities was seen by participants to keep young people 'out of trouble'. Other suggestions included: open the swimming pool to the public seven days per week, increased cultural activities including bush camps, a junior police club for young children, and create a BMX³¹² track for school children to prevent them from playing on the road [Q42].

From another perspective, participant CM15 strongly believed there needs to be stronger engagement between service providers and different families, particularly young men who are engaged in harmful behaviours such as theft, gang membership, dangerous or drunk driving and reoffending. She asserted that these issues are ongoing problems and without addressing the core issues, which she highlights might be substance dependency on alcohol and other drugs, then these problems keep on happening. Additionally, young people increasingly come in contact with the criminal justice system and reoffending is an issue the participant was concerned about.

Participant CM15 mentioned that counselling, mentoring and support for young men are avenues to address the deeper problems contributing to community safety. In Gunbalanya, there is a child and youth wellbeing program in community which engages in strengths-based approaches to improving mental health and reengaging children with their family or school. Surprisingly, there seems to be a lack of emphasis in service delivery on targeting young people who engage in delinquency or in youth gangs until they have actually reached the criminal justice system, including those with mental health and psychiatric disorders.

³¹¹ Further analysis about the challenges and opportunities in utilising customary practices with strengths-based approaches to enabling behaviour change was provided in section 7.3.4.

³¹² BMX is a commonly used acronym for 'bicycle motorcross' which is a common non-motorised track or off-road recreational sport for young people in Australia.

Four participants identified that there need to be more programs for young people who engage in unsafe behaviours [CM08, Q37, Q38 and Q42]. As an example, this participant suggested that there need to be more activities for young children during the holiday period:

In the wet season, the trouble starts. This community becomes like an island. The children get bored but we need their minds to be occupied. We need a variety of activities for kids aged 10 and below. The activities should cater for daluk and bininj, and both age groups: older ones and younger ones. We need to have activities for mothers too – to keep them away from gambling and ganja. Keep their minds off it.
[Q38]

Participant Q38, along with others, suggested that young people need activities to keep ‘their minds occupied’ and away from gambling and ganja. This aligns with the evidence available in the literature which firmly points to the benefits of physical activity in deterring young people away from early onset delinquency, as well as reducing boredom and improving mental health, self-esteem and problem-solving skills (Morris, Sallybanks & Willis, 2003; Rossi, 2015; Tatz, 1994).

Several service providers in Gunbalanya provide a range of programs that provide activities for young people to engage in sports and other strengths-based activities.³¹³ These activities mostly target school-aged children or young adults, perhaps there is a lack of engagement with delinquent youth. While there seems to be a great range of strengths-based programs assisting school-aged children, there does not appear to be an organisation or program that specifically engages with delinquent youth. This is an area where community leaders are seeking more attention.

8.5.3.3 Increased support for the elderly

In Gunbalanya, elderly persons are particularly vulnerable to financial abuse and verbal assault as a result of addiction-related behaviour.³¹⁴ Some participants strongly argued that the elderly

³¹³ WARC runs a youth recreation and holiday program, in conjunction with other organisations operating in this area including Clontarf Academies, Role Models and Leaders Australia, TEAM Health and the AAC (under the Stronger Communities for Children Program).

³¹⁴ Refer to sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 for discussions on the vulnerability of the elderly to humbug, personal theft and verbal abuse. Furthermore, section 6.5.3 highlights that elderly persons are vulnerable to mental health problems where they experience a lack of mobility beyond the home.

need safe spaces away from humbug and other ‘trouble’. Participant Q15 was concerned that many elderly persons do not have a home and have to live with their children and grandchildren but “they would be safer in a centre with a big, high fence with a big paddock and big dog. It’s safer for them then” [Q15]. Another participant suggested that there could be community safety zones that do not tolerate unsafe behaviour in the home:

We should have a community safety zone because some people don’t want humbug and don’t want trouble in the house. This could be like a Neighbourhood Watch program or protection in the house. It would send a message to everyone “we don’t drink here and we don’t want trouble”. This is important, especially for old people because they don’t want smoking kundalk in the house and they don’t want people at home late. They need to sleep. [CM15]

Participant CM15 indicated that a Neighbourhood Watch Program would help where families could display signs for ‘safe houses’ to deter unsafe behaviours and delinquency, where people could leverage off a broader regulatory framework to challenge these behaviours in their neighbourhood. This would allow elderly persons to keep away from people causing neighbourhood disturbances.

Three other participants also mentioned the need to have a safe place for elderly persons, but they were of the view that there needs to be a dedicated Aged Care or Respite Centre. One participant offered her perspective:

I’m worried about some old people. They are left by themselves. They need to put something together for old people’s home. Put them together and look after them. There they could wash their clothes, get some food and put their money away. Darwin is too far away. They should be able to stay with their families here. Aged care provider should have meetings with the family, whoever is caring for the elderly person. We need house cleaning and washing for old people at the Aged Care Centre. Take them out for the day, swimming or fishing and hunting. [Q10]

Participant Q10 indicated that elderly persons are vulnerable to mental health issues and other problems when left by themselves. Alongside this, others commented about the need for an

aged care centre with a washing machine, lockers, cooking and cleaning facilities and a recreational area with a television; that aged care workers better communicate with the family who are responsible for the elderly person; and regular activities with elderly persons that include trips for fishing and collecting Pandanus leaves to help reduce anxiety and improve wellbeing [Q15, Q25 and Q38].

8.6 Discussion

This chapter analysed how community safety services are experienced and perceived to be working by community members and service providers in Gunbalanya. I offer this chapter's analysis of the challenges and opportunities in community safety services in the spirit of saying, 'we can do better'. Everyone who has stayed and worked in an Indigenous community contributes to these issues in some way. Community safety is not only an Indigenous issue, but it underpins the way in which we engage, seek advice and work with Indigenous elders, leaders and community members. In other fields of research, one would refer to this as cultural safety; rather I suggest that 'cultural safety' is an administrative term for working with empathy, compassion and respect. There are police officers and other service providers who live by these values in their everyday work and I do not wish to disregard their efforts in this portrayal of service delivery. However, administrative hurdles associated with research ethics, and the time needed to undertake these processes, restricted my access to some inspiring individuals. As a result of these unavoidable omissions, the perspective provided in this chapter is based on the 78 participants with whom I spoke.

Section 8.4 presented the challenges in compliance and regulation of Aboriginal patrols, in terms of their funding and operational capacity, compared to the Indigenous aspirations for a safer community. This occurs alongside the conflicts that occur between policing in a resource-constrained environment and the existing legislation that seeks a bureaucratic solution to reducing FDV. The Night Patrol service in Gunbalanya emerged as a local response to complex community safety issues. Now, the service relies upon public funding to meet its ongoing operational requirements, which mandates the organisation's compliance with existing workplace regulations. This influence of external governance on the Night Patrol service does not seem to be well understood amongst community members, which compromises the service's perceived legitimacy. This is another example of a disconnection between the domain of service delivery in Gunbalanya and the lived reality of those living on the periphery of these

process. There seems to a portion of the community who interact little with and distance themselves from the perceived Western domain of service delivery in their own community.

Second, at the time of data collection, policing in Gunbalanya showed considerable signs of impaired legitimacy. In this sense, impaired legitimacy was evident in the findings by: participants' perceptions of poor response times, a lack of faith or trust in the police, experiences with a lack of empathy and respect demonstrated by police officers, perceptions of unfair or unequal treatment compared to non-Indigenous people, a lack of collaboration with service providers, and a lack of community liaison or routine community-oriented policing. This is not to say that all police officers who worked in Gunbalanya during this time showed poor conduct; however this is the reputation of the police and their demonstrated capability in responding to the community's problems, including their willingness to work with local service providers. As indicated earlier, the Northern Territory is the most policed jurisdiction in Australia (refer to section 4.3.2.2). Where policy is to improve reporting behaviour and collective efficacy, community-oriented policing needs to be incorporated into routine police activity in Aboriginal communities and this approach cannot be confined to Aboriginal Liaison Officers or CEPOs. To improve community safety in Gunbalanya, increasing the police quota will contribute to the solution but also the nature and approach to policing must be reviewed and changed.

As discussed in chapter four, reducing the impact and harm of FDV is a key priority for Australian policy to improve community safety in Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016). This chapter showed how government regulation and services that seek to improve the response to these issues are being experienced on the ground. A key finding is that the attempt to regulate FDV is potentially exposing community safety workers and community members to greater harm. Mandatory legal reporting requires all adults in the Northern Territory, and particularly community safety workers, to report incidences of FDV to the authorities. Yet to comply with this legislative requirement would mean that the community safety workers would expose their vulnerabilities to payback and retaliation.

The Night Patrol team have developed innovative responses to avoid this unintentional danger, however in doing so, they risk non-compliance with these regulatory frameworks. Meanwhile, the DVO scheme is perceived by participants to be contributing to the increased incarceration of Indigenous men while failing to provide the appropriate education and

awareness about the different types of DVOs and how individuals might be affected. At the same time, service providers are bearing the brunt of a resource-constrained environment in which increased funding to FDV services is not reaching some remote communities. Awareness and education in Kunwinjku language, particularly about what FDV means, is a critical area that requires further investment.

Long-term sustainable outcomes for improving safety are only possible where there is a greater emphasis on local Indigenous training, employment and leadership. Greater attention is needed to the role Indigenous residents can play in their own communities; this role needs to be supported from within the service delivery framework and not as an extra role that Indigenous workers have to adopt outside of working hours. However, as discussed in chapter seven, this comes with its own challenges as culturally responsive services leverage off the role of the ‘authorising other’ and this involves a collaborative and community-driven approach.

One area that needs this attention is unregulated gambling in public spaces. From my experience, there are no programs or interventions in Gunbalanya that have sought to enhance community awareness of or address the underlying problems of gambling at card games. Meanwhile, as explored in chapters five and six, this issue is having a profound impact on child and family wellbeing and contributing to the flow-on effects to other neighbourhood problems. Regulation and interventions in this area need to be community-driven, where service providers including the police and other agencies, work alongside community leaders to deliver on ground-up aspirations for a safer community.

9 Looking towards future options for community safety policy and research

Indigenous community safety is a complex concept where physical, social and emotional harms are multilayered and interrelated. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's model, this thesis proposes a concept of Indigenous community safety based on how Kunwinjku people in Gunbalanya understand safety in their home, neighbourhood and community. This new concept offers a multifaceted and culturally relevant approach to understanding safety that incorporates Indigenous ways of understanding how social systems are embedded in the kinship system and their cultural identity. For Bininj people in this study, improving community safety requires Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to build respectful relationships and address neighbourhood problems that impair mutual trust and social cohesion. Neighbourhood problems encompass a range of unsafe behaviours at the interpersonal level (e.g. card games, alcohol and substance misuse and FDV) and community level (e.g. weak parent-child relationships, youth delinquency, intergenerational issues). These problems can be addressed by reconnecting youth with their spiritual and cultural responsibilities.

The findings of this research show that a holistic approach is needed to address this complex problem where the primary focus is on preventing harm and improving community safety. Underlying these problems are widespread patterns that tolerate disruptive neighbourhood problems and violence as acceptable behaviour (which could be but is not necessarily criminal in nature). But interventions that solely focus on reducing crime and violence are inadequate because these interventions only address the superficial issues which occur in the public domain and they do not address the core interpersonal and community-level problems. To address these problems, interventions need to engage in a range of preventative (e.g. awareness and education), remedial (e.g. counselling) and diversion (e.g. resolving disputes internally) activities that are embedded within the local cultural framework. The thesis concludes by briefly elaborating on the originality of this concept and then highlighting some policy and research implications.

9.1 Defining community safety in Gunbalanya

In Gunbalanya, community safety is considered a multilayered concept that incorporates both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worldviews on the social, cultural, emotional and financial dimensions to harm and social strength. Aboriginal participants in this study defined the term ‘community safety’ using the Kunwinjku words – *karrwokbekarren*, *karrinahnarren* and *karrbidyidkarmarren* – meaning listening to one another, looking after one another and working together or helping each other, respectively. These words also articulate the strengths-based notion of Bininj law that guides the fundamental values and moral framework of Kunwinjku society, where the aspirations for a safer community rely on building respectful relationships. This chapter summarises the culturally integrated model of community safety developed through this research with Kunwinjku people in Gunbalanya.

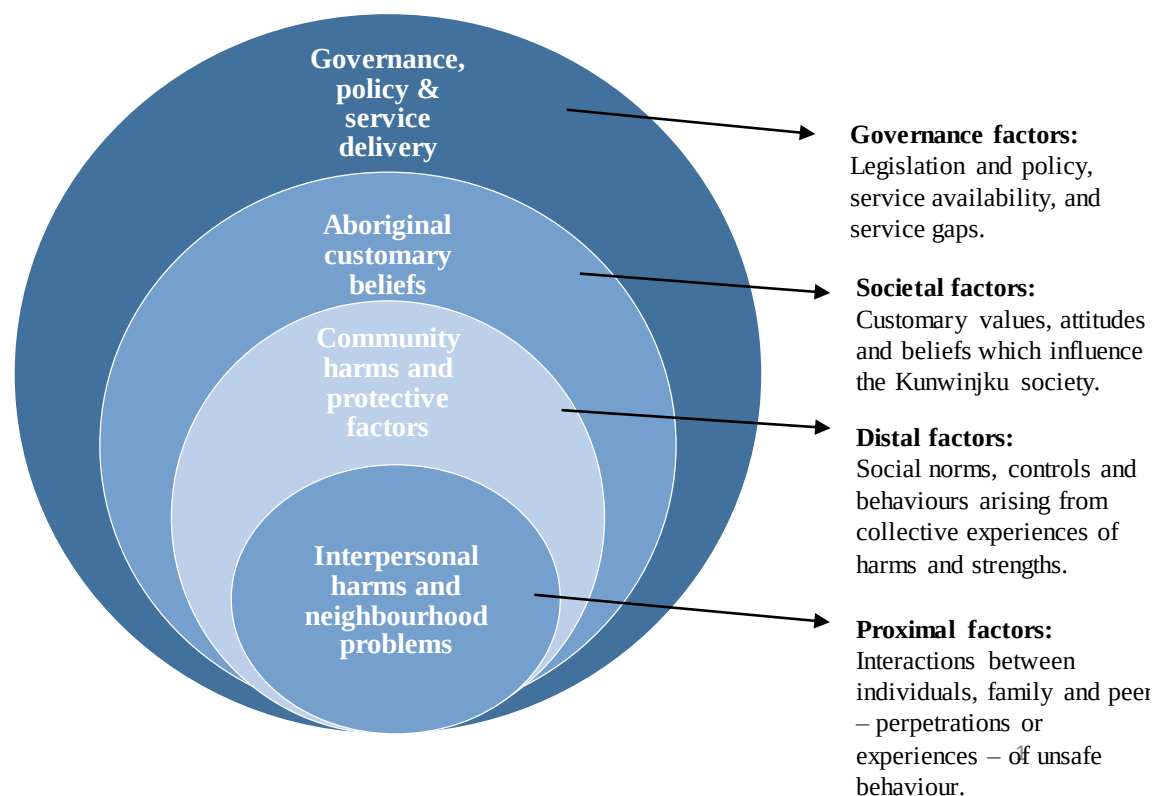
Respectful relationships entail enhancing strong parent-child connections with direct parents and in the broader kinship structure; improving intra-family communication and relationships; enriching young people’s knowledge and respect for Bininj law; as well as increasing cooperation and mutual respect between Bininj and non-Aboriginal people. To reduce the impact on harmful behaviours and neighbourhood problems, this model of community safety articulates that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people need to work together on improving services to enable positive behaviour change. Positive behaviour change can address the core problems in Gunbalanya where it works towards reducing the impact of substance dependency, problem gambling and rebuilding respectful relationships.

Findings from this research demonstrate the complexities Aboriginal young people face in attempting to navigate Bininj and Balanda languages, rules and regulations on moral and acceptable behaviour. This undoubtedly points to the challenges in maintaining their own cultural identity as Aboriginal people while parents and community elders hold the hope that Bininj law can still guide young people into being knowledgeable and educated Bininj adults. Research findings show that positive behaviour change amongst young people must be positioned within the authority and guidelines of Bininj law. Aboriginal relationality and connectedness to land and kin is the essence of their social fabric that maintains a sense of morality and order. This approach must be incorporated into local services and programs to achieve positive behavioural change. The following section details the core problems that impair community safety in Gunbalanya, and the implications for service delivery.

9.2 An intercultural concept of community safety

The study developed a multilayered concept of community safety in Gunbalanya. Underpinned by social disorganisation theory and an adaptation of ecological systems theory, the findings show there are four dimensions to this concept: interpersonal harms and neighbourhood problems; community harms and protective factors; Aboriginal customary practices and beliefs; and governance, policy and service delivery (refer to Fig. 9.1 and Table 9.1). As detailed in this chapter, these dimensions of this community safety model are a guide to understanding the multi-layered and complex nature of neighbourhood problems and behavioural factors that either impair or enhance community safety in Gunbalanya. While in reality, community safety issues are not static, they change over time and there is frequent interactivity between the layers. These layers represent scenarios where residents frequently negotiate safety in the structural environment of their neighbourhood, community and society as well as within their social and cultural networks.

Fig. 9.1. Social ecological model of community safety in Gunbalanya



References: Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979), Belsky (1980) and Heise (1998).

Source: Mixed methods thematic analysis used in this thesis.

Table 9.1. Summary of key findings – community safety issues in Gunbalanya, according to the social ecological model used in this study

Interpersonal harms	Community harms
• Gambling particularly at card games. • Availability of illicit alcohol and other drugs, including marijuana use • Petrol sniffing • Public intoxication • Young people loitering, especially at night • Young people using social media particularly Diva Chat and Facebook • Cheating on spouse and jealousy. • Interpersonal, domestic and family violence • Sexual assault • Dangerous driving or driving under the influence of alcohol • Vehicle and personal theft • Mental health issues and suicide risk • Elder abuse including swearing, theft and assault • Depression, anxiety, anger management problems and other mental health issues. • Humbugging	• School absenteeism • Families breaking up or children being taken away • Lack of parental supervision, discipline or guidance. • Children learning to gamble and learning violent behaviour from parents • Substance dependency particularly marijuana • Overcrowded housing and transient living patterns • Financial insecurity, unemployment and lack of means to earn an income • Boredom and lack of activities for young people • Cultural fragmentation including loss of traditional dialects and language groups • Poor literacy skills in local Aboriginal languages • The fear and usage of black magic to intimidate, threat and harm others • Ongoing patterns and normalisation of violent behaviour • Intergenerational stress, worry, and trauma

Social and cultural protective factors	Strengths of local service delivery
• Family spending time together e.g. telling stories • Family members taking care of children particularly children or the elderly • Spending time camping on one's homelands or outstation • Practicing traditional lifestyles including hunting, fishing, camping etc. • Practicing traditional handicrafts including bark painting or basket weaving • Passing on traditional law by teaching or learning about dreamtime stories • Participating in traditional Kunwinjku ceremonies • Practicing mutual respect based on kinship rules and relationships, including teaching children about skin and kinship • Disciplining children by talking to them gently • Football and other sports	• Community members value the availability of a wide range of safety services • Police are welcomed by community members but the approach to policing should not be punitive • Aboriginal patrols help manage youth delinquency, but there are service gaps • Regulation needs to be driven by community with the assistance of police and other service providers • Appropriateness of services to the community's cultural and governance needs • Strong social networks of service providers and connection with family groups in the community are valued by Indigenous residents • Integration of services providers into the community as well as with other providers • Ability of service providers to identify and engage at-risk youth • Community members' capacity to identify and respond to FDV, youth delinquency and suicide attempts

9.2.1 Interpersonal neighbourhood problems

At the interpersonal level, neighbourhood problems are proximal indicators of harm that participants perceived were a safety problem in their local area. This sphere is the centre of community safety issues in Gunbalanya and is an adaptation of what Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to as the micro and mesosystems. In this thesis, participants' perceptions of harm and safety were guided by their interaction with their physical environment and their psychological involvement in engaging with that problem. Perceptions of interpersonal harm or crime are not necessarily correlated with prevalence, but rather, provide a unique lens through which we can understand the issues that sometimes occur in the 'private domain' in Gunbalanya. These perspectives also allow 'outsiders' to understand safety and crime-related issues from an alternate perspective, beyond the Western measurements of crime.

These neighbourhood problems were not isolated behaviours or events but rather they occurred within a complex web of relationships that had flow-on effects across individuals' social networks. Core problems at the interpersonal level are: interpersonal and FDV, adults gambling at card games, and alcohol and substance misuse. The flow-on effects of these core problems were symptomatic of the patterns of socially disruptive behaviour that led to greater problems at the community-level. These effects were often evident through other neighbourhood problems: specifically, mental health issues including stress and anxiety, suicide-risk and addiction-related behaviours, young people loitering at night and engaging in other disruptive behaviours, poor school attendance, promiscuity, cheating, jealousy and payback, and theft and dangerous driving.

Participants considered the issue of gambling at card games to be the most significant impediment to community safety in Gunbalanya. An example of the associated flow-on effects include children walking around at night when there is limited parental supervision due to gambling or substance misuse. This creates opportunities for other problems to occur such as children learning to use substances and their engagement in unlawful entry, theft and dangerous driving. This has long-term implications for parent-child relationships, educational attainment and youth delinquent behaviours.

More broadly, it is surprising that few academics have published on gambling-related harm as a consequence of unregulated card games in the Northern Territory, with a few notable exceptions (M. Fogarty, Breen, Coalter & Gordon, 2016; Stevens & Bailie, 2012). The bulk of the literature positions Indigenous card games as a mode of resource distribution, a practice

that is culturally and historically embedded within Indigenous society, and an Indigenous mechanism for challenging Western dominance in various forms of community life (Altman, 1985; M. Fogarty, 2013; Goodale, 1987; D. Martin, 2011). Furthermore, gambling related harm is nearly absent from community safety interventions in remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

Findings in this thesis show gambling is indirectly a significant source of harm in Gunbalanya, and this issue is symbolic of the broader patterns in addiction-related behaviour as well as socioeconomic disadvantage in remote areas. Gambling-related harm prevention must be incorporated in community safety strategies including through self-governed and managed regulation and remedial programs that raise awareness of how gambling impairs family relationships.

9.2.2 Community-level neighbourhood problems

Community-level neighbourhood problems are considered distal factors in the social ecological system where the patterns in unsafe or harmful behaviours interact with structural problems in the neighbourhood. This is an adaptation of the exosystem in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model. Formal structural factors which contribute to the impairment of harm and safety in Gunbalanya include a lack of employment opportunities, dependence on welfare support, and overcrowded housing. These structural conditions present situational opportunities for harmful behaviours to occur, including peer pressure among adolescents and children learning unsafe behaviours (e.g. gambling and substance misuse). Repeated patterns of behaviour at the community level impair positive values, attitudes, and social norms and controls; and in the process, they fracture family relationships and social cohesion. This section highlights the main underlying problems at the community level – socioeconomic disadvantage, fractured social norms, and intergenerational issues.

9.2.2.1 *Socioeconomic disadvantage*

Socioeconomic disadvantage is widely recognised as a significant contributor to the high rates of Indigenous crime and incarceration in Australia and in disadvantaged communities internationally (Sampson, 1991; Commonwealth of Australia, 1997; McCausland & Vivian, 2010; Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). Findings in this thesis elaborate on how socioeconomic disadvantages contribute to intergenerational problems among youths, and how

this disadvantage facilitates people's engagement in other harmful behaviour. A lack of employment opportunities and overcrowded housing are two areas that require further policy focus.

In Gunbalanya, underemployment, unemployment and a reliance on welfare supports contribute to broader issues such as social and financial stress amongst Bininj residents. These issues enable youth boredom and adults' playing card games as a means to increase the household budget. Gambling can create further financial stress and humbug where people search for money to play cards in order to acquire alcohol and other substances. When humbug is refused, this can result in interpersonal conflict and damage mutual trust and social cohesion. In addition, some participants suggested that children experienced neglect when there was insufficient money to purchase food and this furthers children's emotional distress.

Secondly, overcrowded housing creates opportunities for intergenerational learning of harmful behaviours, including alcohol and substance misuse and broader patterns of youth delinquency. This can occur when there are groups of young people who are disengaged, lack motivation and experience boredom; and they use peer pressure to encourage others to drink, smoke and commit theft, amongst other disruptive behaviours. In addition, overcrowded housing was accompanied by transient living spaces with frequent visitors which collectively increased the vulnerability of children to maltreatment and sexual assault.

These findings highlight how government policies seeking to improve Indigenous community safety require a holistic approach that recognises the relationships between how safety outcomes influence (and are impacted by) other indicators of social and economic development such as housing, education and employment. Further research is needed that builds on these findings to better understand these theoretical links and to develop practical interventions that lead to economically sustainable communities in the Northern Territory.

9.2.2.2 Fractured social norms, trust and cohesion

Youth delinquency and the fracturing of parent-child relationships was a significant concern among participants in this study. Participants articulated that their aspirations for healthy and positive parent-child relationships involved parents' care, support and 'thinking about' the children, appropriate supervision and preparation for school, and parents talking to and guiding children on making positive choices in life. Meanwhile, Aboriginal children's autonomous learning and decision-making is seen as a cultural attribute that can enable greater

independence and self-sufficiency among young people. This is a social and cultural strength, however this research showed that in Gunbalanya some young people feel that their parents' care, love and support is distant and sometimes afar. These positive aspirations were not always present when interpersonal relationships and appropriate social norms and controls were fractured.

Participants suggested that, in some families, children are not being cared for because their parents engage in unsafe behaviour, such as excessive alcohol consumption, marijuana use and gambling; rather than providing the nurturing and direct supervision that many children require. Leaving children unattended without supervision for long periods presents situational opportunities for child assault to occur. Addiction-related behaviour among parents creates environments where children are vulnerable to adverse developmental outcomes, including school absenteeism and fewer educational opportunities, emotional estrangement or 'detachment' and early-onset youth delinquency.

Participants described youth delinquent behaviour to include aggressive behaviour, disobedience and rebelling to authority figures, peer pressure and learned behaviours from peers (including substance misuse, personal or property theft), humbug and payback, dangerous driving and engagement with the criminal justice system. These unruly or unsafe behaviours were seen by participants to stem from young people's lack of respect and education in Balanda and Bininj systems. A lack of two-ways education was seen as part of the problem because Balanda regulatory frameworks are unable to address the underlying problems and meanwhile, there is a lack of emphasis on Bininj cultural maintenance and survival.

9.2.2.3 Intergenerational trauma and violence

The normalisation of community violence was used as an example to show how the breakdown in social norms, controls and cohesion has adverse impacts on relationships across the community. This breakdown in social norms allows aggression, conflict and violence to occur as a mechanism for attempting to resolve problems, even though these acts of harm enable further violence and poorer relationships. Payback including blame and retaliation is a prominent issue in this intercultural concept of community safety; it impairs social cohesion and the ability of community members to identify and respond to crime.

Payback is an act of threat, intimidation or violence that is perpetrated between kin as a form of retaliation, blame or revenge. Forms of payback mentioned in this study include

interpersonal conflict, black magic and vehicle theft. This act is often in response to community members having been perceived to report crime or harmful behaviour to the authorities, particularly if a person then receives the attention of the police or is banned from the GSSC. These behaviours are some of the underlying issues that impair mutual trust and social cohesion that can facilitate collective efficacy. Impaired collective efficacy further prevents community members from directly or indirectly intervening in neighbourhood problems. All these community-level problems add to the already present social stress and worry that occurs in many families which contributes to collective trauma and creating an environment where inter- and intra-family conflict is ready to surface.

Further research is needed to understand the applicability of this concept to other Indigenous communities in Australia. Based on the literature, there is evidence to suggest that other Northern Territory communities experience similar problems compared to Gunbalanya (Phillips, 2003; Putt, et al., 2011; Shaw & D'Abbs, 2011; Willis, 2010). But as Memmott (2010) points out there are often regional, cultural and linguistic differences among Indigenous populations that might influence how they view a problem and the solutions identified. Future research in this area needs to explore the comparability of this study's findings to other remote regions of Australia and work with remote communities to develop place-based community safety strategies. Alongside this approach, a mixed methods approach is needed that develops measurable targets for improving safety while ensuring there is sufficient focus on locally grounded perspectives.

9.2.3 Towards a culturally integrated approach

The two remaining aspects to this concept of Indigenous community safety are Aboriginal customary beliefs and governance, policy and service delivery. Based on the findings from this study, these two spheres operate as separate components of the macrosystem in Gunbalanya. Social and cultural attributes, such as trust, social cohesion and positive social norms, operate as part of the macrosystem because they encompass the cultural values, beliefs and attitudes which are embedded across people's social networks (refer to Fig. 9.1). But these social and cultural strengths can also operate at the community level when, for example, parents are positive role models for their children.³¹⁵ Governance, policy and service delivery occasionally penetrate the first and second inner most circles of the ecological model; however their failure

³¹⁵ Bininj perspectives on positive role models and parenting are provided in section 6.4.1.

to address core issues at multiple levels, in the private and public domains at the interpersonal and community levels, result in these services mostly operating in the macrosystem. This means service delivery and regulatory functions only occasionally penetrate the centre of community safety issues.

On the contrary, Bininj participants argued that for services to build a safer community that policy and services need to embed two-ways of working that combines Bininj customary beliefs, values and practices with Western systems of governance. Bininj people aspire to improved safety through respectful relationships, culturally integrated programs that address core neighbourhood problems, and collaborative partnerships between service providers and community elders. This thesis highlights how the governance and regulation of community safety services is misaligned with Aboriginal aspirations for a safer community in Gunbalanya. The contemporary approach to regulation and governing safety services relied heavily on regulating social behaviours to be ‘responsible’ and complicit with the normative expectations of the state; rather than focusing on preventing harmful patterns in behaviour and building positive social norms. This thesis concludes by highlighting areas where these two spheres could be combined with the goal of developing a culturally integrated approach to building safer communities.

9.2.3.1 A national community safety and justice strategy

In Australian states and territories, community safety has never been more salient than at present. An accumulating number of government inquiries, royal commissions and policy redevelopments³¹⁶ highlight the overwhelming need to reconsider how Australian policies (in their effect and intention) reduce FDV, child maltreatment, and detention rates. Recent government inquiries prioritised the need to: improve data on the prevalence of Indigenous community safety indicators (i.e. family violence, child maltreatment and youth recidivism rates); for policies and programs to focus on intergenerational change for young people at risk of experiencing detention and child protection; improved engagement between Aboriginal

³¹⁶ More specifically, these various inquiries and policy developments include: the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017c); the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017b); and the Royal Commission into Family Violence (State of Victoria, 2016). These government inquiries occurred whilst other policy re-developments are occurring; namely, the Fourth Action Plan to extend the *National Framework to Protection Australia's Children 2009-2020*, and the Fourth Action Plan 2019-2022 to expend the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22*.

community organisations and services that deliver programs to reduce family violence and child maltreatment; and improved coordination between a whole range of preventative and family-support services (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017a, 2017b; State of Victoria, 2016).

Findings from this thesis suggest that these policy objectives are merely symptomatic of a broader problem – that is, the lack of strategic oversight that provides a national long-term and practical intervention in Indigenous community safety. The Closing the Gap strategy is the only policy framework which provides an overarching vision of the government’s priorities for Indigenous community safety. At present, consultation for the Closing the Gap Strategy’s revitalisation is underway, however the government’s proposal has not clarified how the strategy’s redevelopment intends to create accountable measures for improving safety and reducing incarceration rates, child protection and FDV. These were areas that were neglected in the first iteration of the strategy and are likely to be areas which require most attention. A long-term national strategy for improving Indigenous community safety and justice should be a national priority; however, it is questionable whether the Closing the Gap’s policy architecture has the potential to meet the needs of Indigenous Australians (see Markham, Jordan & Howard-Wagner, 2018).

A national strategy for community safety and justice is needed to break away from siloed policies and services. The new strategy should incorporate flexible regional plans that build partnerships between Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the community sector. These regional plans should enhance communities’ decision-making power over what issues are considered a priority and how they are addressed. The responsibility for negotiating these agreements needs to be distanced from centralised agencies based in Canberra and these agreements need to devolve power for genuine negotiation at the community level. In achieving this, the strategy could incorporate the various Aboriginal Justice Agreements that exist at present and those currently in progress including in the Northern Territory.

9.2.3.2 Collaboration and community safety partnerships

Governance of community safety initiatives must be built on relationships of mutual trust, respect and power-sharing across different sectors – between government, community organisations, and Indigenous elders. This is without a doubt fundamental to successful consultation and engagement that builds on Indigenous aspirations for community development and incorporates these ideas within service design and implementation. However,

in the contemporary policy environment, the regulation of behaviours appears to take priority over the achievement of positive long-term outcomes. In Gunbalanya, the community sector shows signs that current funding arrangements enable services that are reactive and have less capacity for community liaison and prevention (e.g. FDV awareness). To deliver awareness programs, service providers rely on fly-in fly-out workers that have short-term contracts which deprive local Kunwinjku-speakers of the opportunity to deliver these programs.

Delivering services in partnership with Aboriginal elders and across government and the community sector is not without its challenges. This thesis contributes to the mounting evidence on the effectiveness and coordination of community safety services in remote Indigenous areas. In Gunbalanya, Bininj elders argued that building mutual respect is fundamental to improved community safety and it requires Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to listen to each other and work alongside each other in designing culturally safe solutions. This must be part of an ongoing process in which the police and health, wellbeing and education services actively collaborate with community elders; and in the broader endeavour that elders can assist service providers to intervene in a safe and appropriate manner. Culturally integrated solutions are required that reconnect young people with their identity and their cultural and spiritual responsibilities. Bininj elders envision this process as an essential part of rehabilitation and healing for those affected by delinquency and substance problems.

Self-managed regulations and controls over community safety affairs have featured strongly in Gunbalanya's history over past decades. In the 1970s, Bininj elders and community members campaigned for the right to make decisions over how alcohol is controlled and distributed on their land. The legacy of this strength in community leadership and governance exists today through the GSSC and the continued support this initiative has across the community; and this example furthermore demonstrates the positive effect self-managed controls over regulation can have on community development outcomes. At the same time, the management of alcohol-related harms in Gunbalanya continues to present challenges. This study's findings show that participants were concerned about the interpersonal and community effects of addiction-related behaviours including their association with gambling and alcohol and marijuana misuse.

9.2.3.3 *Regulating for mutual responsibility*

Government policies and regulation increasingly impose mutual responsibility and accountability requirements in welfare expenditure and in community safety. This was overtly present in welfare conditionality schemes, where CDP enforced adults' attendance at 'work-like' activities with the threat that, in the event that they did not comply, their welfare payments would be suspended. Similarly, this push towards mutual responsibility for policy outcomes is also subtly embedded in community safety regulation, such as management of Aboriginal Patrols and mandatory reporting. Governance and regulation has privatised the responsibility for crime management where individual citizens are mandated and required to comply with the normative expectations of the state, such as reporting FDV to the authorities. Mazerolle and Ransley (2006) argue that this privatisation of policing functions has unintended effects including a punitive approach that prioritises incarceration over rehabilitation and retaliation from FDV offenders, thereby increasing victims' vulnerability.

In Gunbalanya, community safety workers and residents experienced the disempowering effects of an externally imposed approach to regulating crime-related behaviour. Aboriginal residents are increasingly pushed to take greater responsibility for crime management through the Night Patrol, victims' proactive behaviour in seeking FDV services, mandatory reporting for FDV and the CSAP³¹⁷. With transition to federal government funding, the Night Patrol were required to restrict their operations to comply with Work Health and Safety regulations and were no longer permitted to perform work that was comparable to a security agency. The unintended effects of these new requirements meant that the Night Patrol were considered less legitimate and trustworthy by residents because patrol workers were no longer permitted to intervene in serious incidents such as FDV. While Aboriginal participants were willing and often did report FDV to the police, the police were infamous for inadequate and untimely responses where Aboriginal people felt disrespected and culturally unsafe.

Reporting crime and violence to the police or other authority figures can and often does have serious repercussions for Aboriginal people in their communities. The criminalisation of FDV, alongside awareness raising initiatives, has been effective in deterring spousal violence in Gunbalanya. Participants recognised that FDV is illegal and unacceptable behaviour and this

³¹⁷ Implicitly, the CSAPs incorporate this rationale that police and residents are required to work together, and community leaders need to take greater responsibility for identifying and responding to trouble-makers. Although, as already discussed, the CSAP never eventuated in practical action in Gunbalanya during my fieldwork.

progress would not have been possible without preventative programs, such as the “No More” campaign and legal education on FDV. Yet significant work still needs to be done to enhance Bininj residents’ awareness about the different types of FDV regulation, including mandatory reporting and the DVO scheme. Several Bininj participants reported that they know male family members who have been charged for breaching their DVO, even though they did not know about the three types of DVOs and the repercussions of such a breach. A review of the current funding for FDV prevention is desperately needed that considers the ways in which local service providers can be funded to deliver FDV and legal education in the local Aboriginal language.

These are some of the many reasons why regulation of harmful behaviours needs to be flexible and adaptable to the local circumstance where elders should have the authority to make decisions on how neighbourhood problems are managed locally. Regulation and governance of services needs to be driven by local elders to ensure that these interventions achieve their intended aim and do not jeopardise the safety of Aboriginal staff and residents. Without a doubt, this cannot be achieved without the support and collaboration of police, WARC staff and other service providers who play significant roles as the ‘authorising other’. These avenues for managing neighbourhood problems are integral to promoting positive social norms and behaviours. Further research is needed to explore the intended and unintended effects of how federal and state-imposed regulation of community safety services is impacting on the reporting of FDV and the capability of services to achieve positive outcomes. In addition, researchers and policy thinkers require a better understanding of the protective mechanisms that Aboriginal people use to leverage and enable positive behaviour change in their own communities.

9.2.3.4 Collective efficacy in Aboriginal contexts

Collective efficacy is a term used to describe how neighbourhood groups have shared beliefs and common goals which they use to combine resources to provide mutual support, form partnerships and work together to solve problems, thereby improving the quality of their lives. There are different forms of collective efficacy including direct and indirect interventions. This thesis used examples from Aboriginal dispute resolution mechanisms where Bininj community leaders used customary practices and their mutual beliefs in respectful behaviour to resolve problems without involving outsiders. These customary practices were actualised through

talking gently to young people, as a form of discipline and guidance, or holding a community meeting to resolve the problem. This latter example was a form of indirect intervention in neighbourhood problems where the community leaders work together by discussing a resolution aimed at a longer-term goal. Interventions I have observed include elders who send young people to their outstation for discipline and to learn respect according to the practices of Bininj law.

Intervening directly in neighbourhood problems occurred as participants described community leaders talking gently or firmly with young people and using the principles of Bininj law to confront perpetrators of immoral or harmful behaviours. Chapter seven drew upon examples where talking to young people directly was a common strategy that Bininj people used to encourage perpetrators to change their behaviour. This strategy was not only used when someone was engaging in unlawful behaviour, but community leaders often described personal circumstances to me where their son or daughter had mental health and ‘attitude problems’. They recalled that their strategy of helping a young person was to sit-down with them and provide support, love and positive encouragement, particularly in terms of attending school and actively engaging in employment. These are also examples of how social and cultural strengths operate as protective factors at the community level (refer to Fig. 9.1).

These findings show that, despite the ongoing social and cultural challenges experienced in Gunbalanya, community leaders and residents actively demonstrate agency in resolving problems in their social networks. These processes of talking to each other and holding a meeting between families are informal mechanisms that people use to repair the social fabric and enable and instil positive social norms. The occurrence and effectiveness of these social processes often go unrecognised and are not often properly understood by service providers and Balanda.

9.2.3.5 Integrating the two knowledge systems

Further research is needed to better understand the everyday mechanisms and long-term strategies that Indigenous communities use to strengthen positive social norms and control, improve community trust and social cohesion, and enable positive behaviour change among young people. This thesis merely scratches the surface of how traditional livelihoods can rebuild the social, cultural and moral framework of Indigenous societies. Undoubtedly, a

culturally integrated approach is needed that incorporates cultural and spiritual healing and assists young people with rehabilitation from substances, suicide-risk and criminal behaviour.

Findings from this research showed that traditional ceremonies were one avenue through which elders teach young people about earning respect from family members, and that young people's journey through ceremonial passages helps them heal from their personal trauma. Ceremonies teach young people discipline, respect and how to conduct oneself under traditional law. Homeland, ceremonies and the knowledge of elders have great potential to enable positive behaviour change among young Indigenous people and to assist them recover from criminal engagement. In Gunbalanya, elders and service providers strongly supported two-ways interventions that combined traditional knowledge and modern practices that would assist young people recover and heal from mental health issues and substance misuse. An Aboriginal resident offered this final suggestion:

We should have an area on the homelands, and what can happen is you get someone with cultural knowledge who can be caretaker. We can set up two or three houses on an outstation away from Gunbalanya. The young person can go there for two weeks and then return to town for a week, and repeat the cycle. The person can spend many weeks at the outstation. When you send them out there, they can learn about their drug of choice: alcohol or whatever it may be. There they are also learning about cultural knowledge in the treatment and then they come back to town. That way the pressure is off and they can learn about living with peer pressure. What I am saying is that those breaks in between teach people how to live drug and alcohol free. So when somebody comes up and says: "Come on. We'll go sniff or go over here and do this." The person will be able to say: "No you mob. We've just come back from two weeks of learning about our culture." They will be able to say "no" and talk about what those things do to your heart and your pancreas. So by the time you come back to community, you've been in and out of community half a dozen times. Then they'll be able to think "I don't have to be forced to go to the club or be forced to go sniffing or smoking kundalk." It's about working on people's self-esteem so they can manage peer pressure. That's what I suggest should happen.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Unpublished archival data collected from the Church Missionary Society (CMS) collection at the Northern Territory Archive

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Appendix B – Schedule of semi-structured interview questions

Interview schedule for community members

These questions were used in the earlier semi-structured interviews (from April to September 2016) with Aboriginal residents and community leaders to enquire about the key issues in improving community safety in Gunbalanya, including the social stressors that contribute to harmful incidence and the social strengths that make people feel safe. The questions were often adapted according to the issues the participant raised and how comfortable they were in speaking about different issues.

Question No.	Interview Question
1.	<u>Facilitator:</u> Explain who you are, why you are in Gunbalanya and what the research is about. Seek informed consent using the Information Sheet and the Verbal Consent Form from participants. Ask permission to record the session.
2.	What does ‘community safety’ mean for Kunwinjku-speaking people? Some people have used the words <i>Kunwok Karninahnarren</i> to talk about community safety. Which Kunwinjku words would you use to describe community safety?
3.	Part of this project is to help define the key issues that are considered important in improving community safety here in Gunbalanya. In your experience, what are the most important issues impacting on community safety in Gunbalanya?
4.	Do you feel that Gunbalanya is a safe place?
5.	Are there particular times of the week that are less safe?
6.	What times of the day or night do you feel is least safe?
7.	Are there locations in the community which you consider less safe than others? If so, why do you think that these locations are ‘trouble-prone’?
8.	I would like to explore how different aspects of a person’s home environment impact on whether an individual feels safe or less safe. This can impact on children’s choice to attend school and an adult’s choice to go to work. ○ What issues contribute to stress in the household? ○ How do some of these social stresses influence each other.

Question No.	Interview Question
9.	Do you think that humbugging contributes to social stress?
10.	How does kunbang (“alcohol”) cause problems amongst family members?
11.	Is kundalk (“ganja”) a problem here? If so, how does that cause problems in community?
12.	Many people in community talk about how card games can create problems. In your opinion, do card games contribute to conflict amongst families? Do card games cause social or financial stress? Do the card games impact on children’s wellbeing?
13.	W what strategies do you think would be appropriate to address the problems associated with card games?
14.	Part of this research focuses on understanding how Bininj law helps make people stronger and safer. Tell me about the positive aspects of living in this community. What are the community’s strengths or positive features?
15.	Some elders in the community are worried because the younger people do not respect Bininj law. How do you think that Bininj law can help keep young people safe? If so, how?
16.	What are the values of Bininj law that help keep people safe?
17.	In your experience, how do you think that cultural respect for both Bininj and Balanda law helps keep the family peaceful?
18.	<i>WRAP UP THE SESSION</i>

Interview schedule for service providers

These questions were used to guide interviews with non-Aboriginal people in a service provision role. These questions were then tailored to the individual's role in service provision and adapted as the interview evolved.

Question No.	Interview Question
1.	Facilitator: Seek informed consent using the Information Sheet and the Verbal Consent Form.
2.	Can you explain to me the role you currently play in community safety services? Only answer this question if you feel comfortable in doing so. You can also keep the answer broad by saying things like "I work in the area of criminal justice". Or you can elaborate if you feel comfortable doing so.
3.	What is the demographic profile of your client base? What I mean is, is your client base mostly men, women and younger or older?
4.	In your professional opinion, what are the most important community safety issues in Gunbalanya?
5.	From your experience, how do you find young people's understanding and awareness of Western law?
6.	Some elders are concerned that young people don't respect the law. How do you find young people's attitudes towards adhering to the law? From your experiences, are you able to share some insight into why some people don't adhere to the law? How does your experiences in Gunbalanya compare with other communities? Is your workload higher, lower or relatively similar to other communities?
7.	I know from my previous visit to Gunbalanya that you place a great emphasis on working in a culturally respectful manner with clients and their families. I am interested in hearing, from your perspective, how is cultural competence an important part of your work? What successful strategies have you used in the past to engage with hard-to-reach families?

Question No.	Interview Question
	What successes have you had in encouraging behaviour changes among clients? What strategies have not worked with clients? This could either be something you have observed or noticed in your field.
8.	In your role, how are you required to work with service providers in Gunbalanya? What are the strengths of service provider relationships in Gunbalanya? What are the challenges of working with service providers in Gunbalanya?

Appendix C – Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am Simone Georg, a PhD student at the Australian National University in Canberra. I am in Gunbalanya for six months to do a project called: *How can service providers use risk and protective factors to improve Indigenous community safety? Examining inter-agency responses.*

I would like to hear from you about the issues you consider important in improving community safety. This includes things you have seen or heard that make you feel unsafe as well as the community strengths that you feel help make Gunbalanya a safe place. It is important that everyone – Indigenous and non-Indigenous – feels safe and welcome in this community.

You can share your opinion by completing a 20-minute survey. Everyone in the community is welcome to participate but you **MUST** be over 18 years old.

Please think about the information here before deciding if you would like to participate.

Confidentiality

Your information is **confidential**. This means that I will not tell anyone that you participated or about the information you shared. The survey is **anonymous** and no one will be able to tell which answers you put down. Confidentiality will be provided to the extent allowed by law.

Participation is voluntary

You can choose to participate or you can choose to say “no”. You have the right to choose and I will not be offended if you do not want to participate. If you do participate, but then would like to change your mind, you need to do this before December 2016. I will destroy data gathered from people who withdraw. You do not need to give a reason to withdraw.

What will I do with the information?

I will use the information collected through the surveys to prepare a community report. I will return around August 2017 to give the information back to the community. The community report will tell government, the police and service providers what changes community members would like to see in the future. The information will be used to prepare a PhD thesis and other publications.

Where will I keep your information?

This paper will be kept in a locked box and only I have the key. Another copy will be kept on the computer. Only I can access the computer because it has a password that only I know. The information will be destroyed 5 years after I have completed the project and published the results.

How will the research help the community?

I am working with the Arrguluk Reference Group on the project. I will return to Gunbalanya next year to present the community report to community elders, service providers and government staff. By sharing your experiences, you can help improve local services and promote a safer community for everyone.

Talking about these problems can make you feel sad. If you know someone who worries too much, or you need someone to talk to, I suggest that you call Lifeline on 13 11 14. If you or someone else is in danger, please call Night Patrol on 0457 965 983 or call “000” for the police.

In collecting your personal information within this research, the ANU must comply with the Privacy Act 1988. The ANU Privacy Policy is available at https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppi/document/ANUP_010007 and it contains information about how a person can:

- Access or seek correction to their personal information;
- Complain about a breach of an Australian Privacy Principle by ANU, and how ANU will handle the complaint.

Thank you for your time in listening to this information.

Yours sincerely,

Simone Georg

Doctorate of Philosophy Scholar
Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
The Australian National University

To enquire about the research project, or change your consent preferences, please contact the researcher, Simone Georg, via mobile or email.

My contact information:

Ms Simone Georg
Doctorate of Philosophy student, Centre for
Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
M. 0414 388 502
M. 0484 336 317 (Telstra network)
E. Simone.Georg@anu.edu.au

Primary Supervisor:

Dr Janet Hunt
Deputy Director, Centre for Aboriginal Economic
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Ph. (02) 6125 8209
E. Janet.Hunt@anu.edu.au

The ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the ANU Human Research Ethics Committee, Protocol 2015/655. If you have serious concerns about how this research has been conducted, please contact:

Ethics Manager

The ANU Human Research Ethics Committee
The Australian National University
Telephone: +61 2 6125 3427
Email: Human.Ethics.Officer@anu.edu.au

Background information

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other or I prefer not to say.

2. What is your rough age?

- ☐ 18-24 years ☐ 25-30 years ☐ 31-40 years
☐ 41-50 years ☐ 51-60 years ☐ 61 + years

3. Do you currently or have you previously worked in the area of community safety?

This includes working for the Night Patrol, the Safe House, the Police or a counselling service.

- ☐ Yes, I currently work for a community safety service.
☐ Yes, I have worked for a community safety service before.
☐ No

4. Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

- ☐ Yes, I am Bininj from Arnhem Land.
☐ Yes, I am Aboriginal from somewhere else including Torres Strait or Maori.
☐ No.

When is it unsafe?

5. In the past month, have you avoided going somewhere during the day because it was unsafe?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. In the past month, have you avoided going somewhere at night because it was unsafe?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Which times of the day is it unsafe in Gunbalanya?

(You can tick more than one box.)

- ☐ Early in the morning, 1am until 6am.
☐ Morning, 6am until 12 noon.
☐ Afternoon, 12 noon until 6pm.
☐ Evening, 6pm until 1am.
☐ It is always a safe place.

Physical safety in the community

8. How much of a problem do you think the following behaviours or issues are in Gunbalanya?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where a higher number means a more serious problem. Circle 0 if you don't know enough about the issue to answer.

	Not a problem	Little problem	Medium problem	Big problem	Very big problem	Don't know
Adults fighting in the street	1	2	3	4	5	0
People drunk in the street	1	2	3	4	5	0
Sly grog in the community	1	2	3	4	5	0
Smoking kundalk (ganja)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Petrol sniffing	1	2	3	4	5	0
Young people walking around at night	1	2	3	4	5	0
Diva Chat	1	2	3	4	5	0
Prowling	1	2	3	4	5	0
Domestic violence	1	2	3	4	5	0
Husband and wife fighting	1	2	3	4	5	0
Dangerous or drunk driving	1	2	3	4	5	0
Sexual assault	1	2	3	4	5	0
People or children stealing cars	1	2	3	4	5	0
Theft from homes	1	2	3	4	5	0

Are there any other problems you would like to add?

Notes:

9. From the issues we just talked about, what are the three biggest issues?

1.

2.

3.

Social stress in the local area

10. Some behaviours do not cause physical danger but they can cause stress in the community. Stress can build up and make a problem bigger. How much of a problem do you think these issues are in the community?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where a higher number means a more serious problem. Circle 0 if you don't know enough about the issue to answer.

	Not a problem	Little problem	Medium problem	Big problem	Very big problem	Don't know
Children not going to school	1	2	3	4	5	0
Parents not supervising children at night	1	2	3	4	5	0
People hurting the older people	1	2	3	4	5	0
People playing loud music late at night	1	2	3	4	5	0
When people can't find kundalk (addiction)	1	2	3	4	5	0
People taking money from old people	1	2	3	4	5	0
Too much worry (poor mental health)	1	2	3	4	5	0
Worry that a person might do something bad (suicide)	1	2	3	4	5	0



Adults playing card games all night	1	2	3	4	5	0
Children playing card games	1	2	3	4	5	0
Children living away from parents	1	2	3	4	5	0
Too many people staying in one house	1	2	3	4	5	0
Not enough jobs or money	1	2	3	4	5	0
Boredom	1	2	3	4	5	0
Payback	1	2	3	4	5	0
Cheating on partner	1	2	3	4	5	0
Jealousy	1	2	3	4	5	0
Anger management problems	1	2	3	4	5	0
Humbugging	1	2	3	4	5	0

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Notes:



Strong culture, strong family

11. What are the good things about living in this community? What are the strengths of living in this community?

1.

2.

3.

12. What parts of family life make you feel stronger in Gunbalanya?

Listed below are a number of things that Australian families do to help keep the family strong. Some of these things will only be relevant to Bininj families and other things are important for all people in Gunbalanya. Think about these family strengths and tell me which things help keep families in Gunbalanya strong.

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where a higher number means the activity helps make family life stronger. Circle 0 if you don't know or the issue is not relevant to you.

	Not at all	A little bit	In the middle	Yes, it helps	It helps very much	Don't know or not relevant
Telling stories together	1	2	3	4	5	0
Taking care of children	1	2	3	4	5	0
Taking care of older people	1	2	3	4	5	0
Going to the homelands, out bush or camping	1	2	3	4	5	0
Hunting and fishing together	1	2	3	4	5	0
Learning or teaching dreamtime stories	1	2	3	4	5	0
Ceremonies	1	2	3	4	5	0
Respecting the Old People	1	2	3	4	5	0
Following Bininj law	1	2	3	4	5	0
Respecting our skin	1	2	3	4	5	0
Talking to children about skin	1	2	3	4	5	0
Making dilly bags, floor mats or baskets	1	2	3	4	5	0
Painting our dream stories	1	2	3	4	5	0
Parents looking after children	1	2	3	4	5	0
Everyone helps care for children	1	2	3	4	5	0
Talking gently to young people	1	2	3	4	5	0
Football and other sports after school or on weekends	1	2	3	4	5	0
Is there anything you would like to add?						

Notes:

Cultural stress and safety

13. How much of a problem do you think the following behaviours are where you live?

Some people are worried because young people are not listening to the old people. They are forgetting who they are and not learning Bininj law. In some cases, young people are losing their way and making bad choices. How much of a problem are the behaviours below affecting families in Gunbalanya?

Please circle a number on the scale from 1 to 5, where a higher number means a more serious problem. Circle 0 if you feel the question is not relevant or you don't know enough about the issue to answer.

	Not a problem	Minor problem	Moderate problem	Serious problem	Very serious problem	Don't know or not relevant
People don't respect Bininj law	1	2	3	4	5	0
People don't "pass the law" through ceremony	1	2	3	4	5	0
People don't spend enough time hunting or fishing	1	2	3	4	5	0
People don't know about their skin and identity	1	2	3	4	5	0
Young people don't respect their elders	1	2	3	4	5	0
People don't marry according to their skin	1	2	3	4	5	0
People don't know about their dreaming and story	1	2	3	4	5	0
People don't spend enough time in the bush or at the outstation.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Some Balanda don't listen to Bininj	1	2	3	4	5	0
Some Bininj don't respect Balanda law	1	2	3	4	5	0

We are losing our languages. Everyone only speaks Kunwinjku or English.	1	2	3	4	5	0
Children are learning to fight from looking at the adults	1	2	3	4	5	0
People using black magic	1	2	3	4	5	0
Is there anything else you would like to add?						
Notes:						

Local services in Gunbalanya

14. Do you think these services help make Gunbalanya a stronger place?

I would like you to think about how much these services are improving the lives of old people, young people and children in Gunbalanya. Do you think that these services are helping manage bad behaviour (e.g. fighting, drinking and ganja) in the community?

	Not at all	A little bit	In the middle	Yes, it helps	It helps very much	Don't know what this mob are doing
Night Patrol	1	2	3	4	5	0
Police	1	2	3	4	5	0
Safe house	1	2	3	4	5	0
Team Health	1	2	3	4	5	0
Health Clinic	1	2	3	4	5	0
Alcohol and Drugs Program	1	2	3	4	5	0
Youth Program	1	2	3	4	5	0
Aged Care Program	1	2	3	4	5	0
Child and Family Program	1	2	3	4	5	0
Gunbalanya School	1	2	3	4	5	0
Notes:						

15. Who would you talk to if you saw a man and woman fighting in the street?

☐ Family members	☐ Community elders	☐ The Night Patrol
☐ The Police	☐ Clinic Staff	☐ Bininj Health Worker
☐ Teacher	☐ Team Health Staff	☐ Youth worker
☐ Aged Care	☐ No one	☐ Other:

16. Who would you talk to if you knew someone worried too much and s(he) might do something bad?

☐ Family members	☐ Community elders	☐ The Night Patrol
☐ The Police	☐ Clinic Staff	☐ Bininj Health Worker
☐ Teacher	☐ Team Health Staff	☐ Youth worker
☐ Aged Care	☐ No one	☐ Other:

**17. Who would you talk to if you knew someone that was often causing trouble in the community?
For example, 'causing trouble' means drinking, making noise late at night or dangerous driving.**

☐ Family members	☐ Community elders	☐ The Night Patrol
☐ The Police	☐ Clinic Staff	☐ Bininj Health Worker
☐ Teacher	☐ Team Health Staff	☐ Youth worker
☐ Aged Care	☐ No one	☐ Other:



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18. From your experience, what is it about safety services that are working well?

19. From your experience, what is it about safety services that are NOT working well?

Thank you for participating in the survey. I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to share your stories and experiences. It is important in helping the community plan for the future. I will be back in the community around August 2017. Would you like to hear more about the research later on?

Best wishes,

Simone Georg

**Appendix D – Community report prepared for the AAC,
by S. Georg, September 2017**

KARRIYIKARMERREN ROWK: EVERYONE WORKING TOGETHER. TOWARDS AN INTERCULTURAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WEST ARNHEM LAND



September 2017

Report prepared for the Ardjumallarl Aboriginal Corporation

This report provides an overview of the preliminary findings from the community safety research project, undertaken in Gunbalanya from April to November 2016. The research uses a case-study approach to develop an intercultural framework for understanding and improving community safety.

Prepared by Simone Georg, PhD Scholar at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University
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KARRIYIKARMERREN ROWK: EVERYONE WORKING TOGETHER. TOWARDS AN INTERCULTURAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SAFETY IN WEST ARNHEM LAND

REPORT PREPARED FOR THE ARDJUMALLARL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This community report has been prepared to consult with and inform the Adjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation, as representatives of the community of Gunbalanya, about the community safety research project.

WHO DID I TALK TO?

The project was undertaken in consultation with the Corporation between April to November 2016. It engaged 23 people in semi structured interviews (or “yarning”) which included 6 service providers and 17 community members. These stories were then used to design questionnaires (“djorra”) about safety and strong communities. Using the djorra, I talked to 55 people – young and old ones, dalkuk and bininj, different people from different families.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT COMMUNITY SAFETY?

Bininj people use different words to describe ‘community safety’ in Kunwinjku. The three Kunwinjku words people talked about were:

- *Karriwokbekarren* means listening to one another.
- *Karrinananarren* means looking after one another and respecting each other.
- *Karribidyidkarrmerren* means working together or helping each other.

This is important because these words show the Kunwinjku values that Bininj and Balanda can work towards for improving community safety. Listening to each other, helping each other and respecting and looking after each other are the key values that create healthy and safety relationships.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES AFFECTING COMMUNITY SAFETY IN GUNBALANYA?

Using the questionnaires, community members identified how much of problem different community safety issues were. This is based on their personal experiences – things they have seen or heard. The results showed that outside kunbang or sly grog, kundalk or marijuana use, dangerous driving, mental health issues and adults playing card games were the main problems in the community. Based on the average result, participants in the research reported that these issues occur regularly and are a significant concern.

Participants also identified there are other safety issues which somewhat regularly in the community. These are adults fighting in public (or interpersonal violence), adults drunk in public (or

public intoxication), young people walking around at night or prowling, social media particularly Diva Chat and Facebook, domestic violence and personal and property theft.

There was a larger than average number of missing values for the variable “domestic violence”, which means that some people did not want to talk about the issue. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject I suggest that readers interpret this mean value with care.

HOW ARE SERVICE PROVIDERS HELPING MAKE THE COMMUNITY SAFER?

The questionnaire results show that, on average, the participants say that most services are helping make the community a stronger, safer place. Although some participants did not know what or who some of the service providers were. 20 questionnaire respondents mentioned that they did not know about Team Health’s services and 9 respondents did not know enough about the Alcohol and Other Drugs program.

A common theme that emerged from the data is that participants were concerned with slow police responses to emergency “000” phone calls. This was particularly a concern for respondents who had previously called about a domestic violence or another type of serious incident. There are several factors which influence police response times: for example, the decision on the police response in relation the seriousness of the incident is made in Darwin, police resourcing on the day or whether the police were attending other calls amongst other reasons.

Some participants mentioned that they would like to see better cooperation and coordination between services, particularly between the police, the Night Patrol and the Safe House. Prevention of illicit liquor being brought into the community was a major problem and seems to sit outside the responsibility of all service delivery organisations. Questionnaire respondents commonly mentioned that they would like to see the Night Patrol and the Police act on this issue. Equally, something that was not mentioned in discussions, this issue is also the responsibility of family members to encourage behaviour change within their own social networks.

WHAT PROGRAMS OR SERVICES WOULD COMMUNITY MEMBERS LIKE TO SEE IN THE FUTURE?

There are a range of services or programs which research participants have identified would help address the issues discussed in this consultation report. A table is provided in the report which summarises the key information and groups these ideas according to the following themes: education and awareness about family violence, counselling and mediation support, strength based behaviour change programs, self-regulated card games, the need for a community safety action plan, improved services for the elderly and engaging the outstations in healing and justice diversion strategies. Recommendations or action items are provided based on the feedback I received during the final consultation phase.

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FOREWORD: A MESSAGE FROM SIMONE GEORG

I am honoured to present his book to the Adjumarllal Aboriginal Corporation. As leaders of the community of Gunbalanya, I thank you for welcoming me in your community, your lives and on your homelands. I also thank my mum and aunties – Donna, June, Lois and Hagar Nadjamerrek – for always supporting and caring for me. I thank my brother Ron Mangiru for the endless adventures and laughs during my time in Gunbalanya.



This book contains stories from 78 Bininj and Balanda community members and service providers that were collected in 2016. Before I explain more about the project, I would like to explain your rights and responsibilities with this project we call “research”. This book belongs to the Corporation, as custodians from homelands across West Arnhem Land and leaders of the Gunbalanya community. You have the right to decide how this information is used.

Each individual story belongs to the individual who shared the information. All participants who shared information asked to remain anonymous. This means their name is not in the book. This information is also confidential. This means I did not tell anyone “he said that” or “she said that”. The information is private and I keep it locked away in a safe place. You have the right to access the detailed information. If you request this in writing, I can provide you with the written stories. To keep participants’ voices safe, all names will be removed before I provide this information.

This project was used to create several books. As a PhD student, I am required to produce a thesis. A thesis is a large university book with lots of information in it. I will own the thesis but the research participants will own the moral copyright for the quoted stories inside. This means that these stories will always belong to participants and I cannot change that. There will be other publications that come from the thesis. You are welcome to have a copy of these publications upon request.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

Everyone in Gunbalanya is passionate and knowledgeable about how to create a safer, healthier and respectful place for children to grow up and families to live. This project looks at how people in Gunbalanya understand “community safety” and how service providers use the concept in their everyday work. It looks at what social stress is causing problems for children, families and old people. I also enquired about how good things about family and community life are contributing to people feeling safer, such as ceremonies and spending time on outstations. I also learnt about the values that Kunwinjku people practice in keeping families strong such as listening, learning and respecting each other.

This is important because people from Canberra, such as government mob, politicians and researchers, understand community safety issues differently. People in Canberra want to help Kunwinjku people by designing programs, such as activities for old people or at the outstation, and providing funding for services. But sometimes they do not understand what is important for Kunwinjku people in improving safety. This project collects the stories of Kunwinjku people and Balanda service providers so that I can bring those stories to Canberra and Canberra people can learn from Kunwinjku people.

WHAT DID I WANT TO FIND OUT?

The aims of the research are to:

- Understand how community safety is understood by community members, service providers, police and government staff in a remote community.
- Identify what the main risks are that contribute to harmful behaviour. After this, we can understand how the different risks are connected and influence each other.
- Talk about the positive aspects of community life or “community strengths” that contribute to people feeling safe. These community strengths can be spiritual, cultural or social aspects of Bininj or Western law, or physical things that people do.
- Learn how service providers, the police and government staff are working together to improve community safety.

WHO DID I TALK TO?

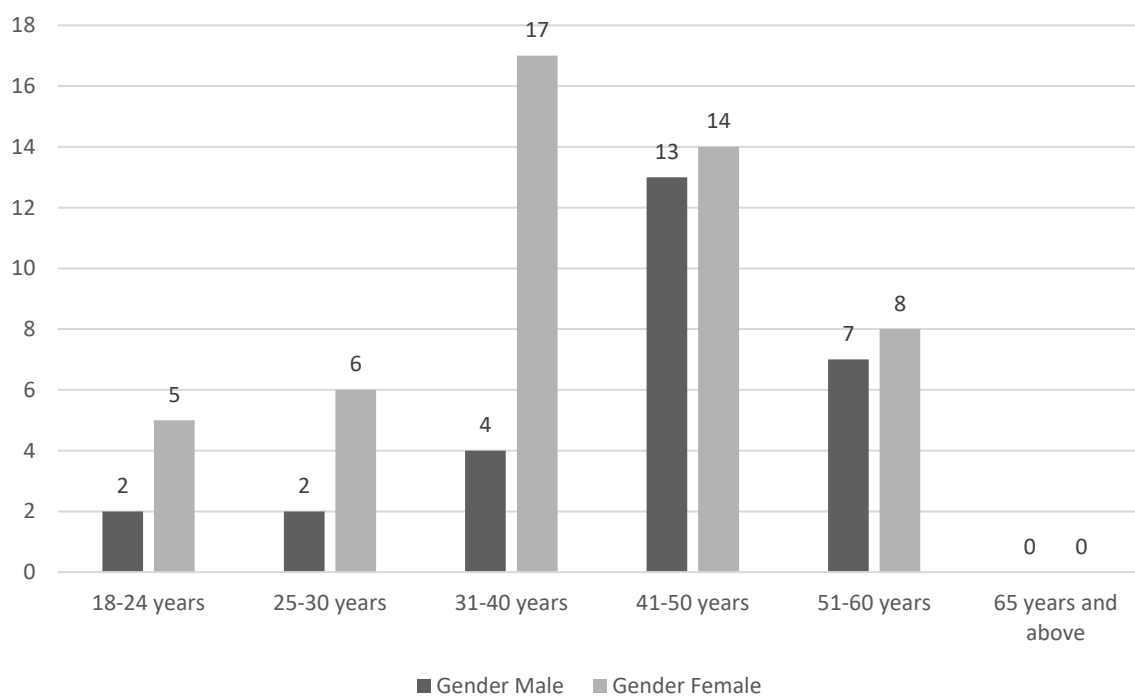
From April to November 2016, I spent eight months in Gunbalanya and the nearby area. The purpose was to listen, learn and speak to Kunwinjku people and service providers. I spoke to 23 people which included both service providers and community members. From these 23 people, I did 14 formal interviews and 5 casual conversations. I used these stories

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to create a *djorra* (questionnaire) on all the things that Kunwinjku people yarned about in the interviews and casual conversations.

Then I worked with Ron Mangiru and Michelle Holdstein to sit down and talk to families using that *djorra*. With that *djorra*, we collected more stories about things people had seen or heard that make them feel unsafe and good things about community that make them feel stronger. The information in this book contains the stories of the 23 people who participated in the earlier interviews and the 55 people who completed the questionnaires. This is explained in the graph below. As explain in **Figure 1**, through the project I aimed to talk to all different people – younger ones, older ones, men and women, Bininj and Balanda. I also wanted to talk to people from different houses and different families so that everyone had the opportunity to give their voice. This is important because community safety affects everyone. By speaking to a range of people, I gathered interesting information on what services community members would like to see in the future and aspects of community life they would like to see change.

Figure 1. Total research participants by gender and age.



HOW DID I ANALYSE THESE RESULTS?

The semi-structured interviews were analysed using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. I used this software (i.e. NVIVO) to code phrases or words that people used in their interviews (i.e. In-Vivo nodes). The aim was to use the phrases exactly how

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people described them to ensure I captured the meaning of these words in how they were intended. Then I searched for relationships between the different codes to understand how the different issues being discussed in the interviews are related to each other or if they are unique cases. Understanding the relationships between codes then assisted me to find the key themes in the research. The themes in this case were social and cultural safety, behavioural factors, neighbourhood problems and regulation and service delivery.

The questionnaires were analysed using a mixed-methods approach. This means the information in the questionnaires were participants' descriptions of events or scenarios (i.e. qualitative data). Plus, the information contained numbers which presented quantified summaries of people's experiences of safe and unsafe incidents (i.e. quantitative data). The quantitative data was analysed using interdependence statistical tests which analysed the relationship between variables using Chi-Squared and Spearman's Correlation (i.e. non-parametric). These tests showed whether a significant relationship existed and how strong the relationship was. These results were compared with the qualitative data to understand the nature of the relationship and provide an in-depth understanding of the problems occurring. If you would like more information about this, I will provide a more detailed methodological analysis in the thesis.

RESEARCH FINDINGS FOR THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PROJECT.

The structure for the remainder of this consultation report is as follows:

Section 3.1. identifies how Kunwinjku people describe the concept of community safety in their own way.

Section 3.2. outlines the key themes that arose from the community safety research project. It provides the structure to this intercultural (Balanda and Bininj together) concept of community safety.

Section 3.3. shows the good things that Bininj people value about their families and community. These are the positive things that they attribute to feeling safe.

Section 3.4. explains how different neighbourhood problems in Gunbalanya are connected and influence each other.

WHAT DOES COMMUNITY SAFETY MEAN FOR PEOPLE IN GUNBALANYA?

I yarned with 23 people about what community safety means for them. I asked them what values are important in improving safety for everyone in the community – Bininj and

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Balanda. Two Bininj community members described how to talk about the concept of community safety in their own words, in Kunwinjku.

We use different words to talk about community safety. Karriwokbekarren means listening to one another. Karrinanarren means looking after one another. Karribidyidkarmerren means working together or helping each other. [CM09]

Karrinahnarren means everyone looking after each other, respecting each other. And, look at the school logo – there's our word karribidyikarmerren meaning 'helping each other'. [CM17]

There is one more word we use to talk about community safety. We use Karriyikarmerren rowk to talk about everyone coming together, Bininj and Balanda, working together on these issues. This word is important because it everyone includes community representation and service providers together.

These words show the Kunwinjku values that Bininj and Balanda can work towards for improving community safety. Listening to each other, helping each other and respecting and looking after each other are the key values that underpin community safety, according to these two participants. These could be aspects of family and home life or they could be the principles of working together on community safety issues.

Being connected through Bininj law, kinship and country was strongly connected to being and feeling safe. Three participants described that environmental issues were important because of the crocodiles in the billabong and river systems and because of weather extremes, such as cyclones at the outstations in the wet season [CM03, SP04, CM17].

Being on country is healing. There's no humbug there, we don't see bad things. It's just quiet time and thinking about stories about old people – you know those dream-time stories. [CM10]

Gunbalanya should be safe for everyone – Indigenous and non-Indigenous. For accident, sick, for kids, for everything, from any bad things that come your way... In the old days, there were no kunbang and there was plenty of fresh air. Sometimes trouble but people help each other and respect each other. In the mission days, mum and dad make sure it's safe from the rain or prowlers. Not too hot in the wet season and dry season. [CM09]

There was a strong sense in the interviews that community safety can be improved when all different areas of the community – child education, health, the arts centre, employment and frontline safety services – work together on safety issues. Being able to combine these

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aspects of community safety requires Bininj and Balanda to come together, to make important decisions together, and to help each other.

We need to be able to work together to make the community safer. This could be with domestic violence, grog running, gundalk, robbing people and making sure our kids are safe. They need to go to school too. [CM15]

We can make a difference if everyone works together. The most important thing is the children. The night patrol, the police and the clinic – everyone. Everyone needs to work together. [SP01]

The behaviours that cause people to feel unsafe – such as domestic violence, outside *kunbang*, theft and children walking around at night – do not happen in isolation of each other. When I yarned with community members and service providers, many people talked about how safety issues are all connected and influence each other.

For example, when there is outside grog in the community this causes other trouble that make people worried. Outside *kunbang* increases the chances that people will be intoxicated and fight in front of the children, trouble might start and people will be less able to attend work or school the next day. This is one reason why working together on these issues is important for community safety. Without Bininj and Balanda working together across all aspects of the community, these aforementioned issues (i.e. domestic violence, grog running, theft, school attendance and children's safety) will only be addressed in isolation and services have less resources available to create long-term change.

OVERARCHING THEMES FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY IN GUNBALANYA

Participants described a range of issues that they believed help define community safety. I have used the following terms to group these issues into four themes to help describe the overall results. I would like your feedback on my interpretation of community safety issues.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SAFETY

Social and cultural factors are strong aspects of Bininj law which help keep women, men and children safe and secure. These things include ceremonies, dreamtime stories, respecting the Old People and the country, positive sense of identity (Bininj and Balanda) and kinship which help people feel and be safe. Participants talked about how Bininj law is changing and that not everyone respects the law. When people do not respect Bininj law, this can lead to community safety problems. For example, some young people marry too quickly and with the wrong skin. Another aspect of social and cultural safety is the way in

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which Bininj and Balanda work together to create cooperative, helpful and respectful workplaces for employees and services for the community.

BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS

Behavioural factors can be positive actions which people take to make people feeling safer or they could be harmful actions that indirectly contribute to people feeling unsafe. These behavioural factors are: (1) part of the roll-on effect from neighbourhood problems, and (2), part of the reoccurring trouble that that hinders adults being able to participate effectively in the workforce, children attending schooling and everyone leading healthy lives. There are positive examples of behavioural factors: such as strong parenting, resisting humbugging and peer-pressure, community ownership and leadership, and spending time with family and children. But there are also problems which occur when neighbourhood problems happen too often, such as: children not attending school because they are playing card games and walking around at night. Or parents are not spending enough time taking care of children because they spend too much time on kundalk or at the Social Club.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROBLEMS

Neighbourhood problems are socio-physical safety issues which most prominently affect community safety. Neighbourhood problems include card games and gambling, interpersonal violence, family violence and sexual assault, public intoxication, alcohol and substance misuse (particularly marijuana or “gundalk”), mental health issues, dangerous driving, and personal and vehicle theft. Seasonality can affect the frequency of these issues, such as petrol sniffing in the wet season and sly grog in the dry season.

GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Regulation and service delivery help keep people safe where Bininj and Balanda work together on issues that are important to reduce neighbourhood problems and improve mental health and wellbeing. Some participants described the challenges and opportunities of the current service delivery environment and the important of having appropriate regulations in place to manage, for example alcohol supply and availability. Section 3.5 shows the questionnaire results which describe participants’ perceptions of the effectiveness of community safety services. Section 3.6 shows the range of service gaps which questionnaire participants have identified would assist improve community safety.

We need to think about all these problems holistically because Kunwinjku people are all connected. Many people talked about that family is there to support, help and respect each other. These are the important things that people should consider when thinking about what it means to feel safe and secure.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SAFETY

The most prominent aspect of social and cultural safety is undoubtedly the ways in which Bininj law provides safety and protection for residents of Gunbalanya and the outstations. Integral to this aspect of safety is parents' and elders' role in passing on that law as well as young peoples' responsibility to listen, obey and respect Bininj law.

[CM07] We will need to check if the family have decided to close the road. Because no one is allowed to see these boys when doing Men's Business.

[Interviewer] Why isn't anyone allowed to see the boys?

[CM07] This is because the boys need to go through ceremony. They need to hunt and fish and find water by themselves.

[CM07] When bininj or daluk go through ceremony, they have more respect from family members. When a man or woman hasn't passed the law, they aren't respected and they get a lot of humbug. They just fight and hit each other.

[Interviewer] So, is passing the law important in improving community safety?

[CM07] Yes – bininj and daluk who have passed the law have more respect.

After this conversation with a respected elder, I began to understand the role of ceremonies in improving community safety. 'Respect' was a frequently used term to symbolise listening and following these rules and traditions that have been passed down from generation over tens of thousands of years.

Ceremonies and spending time on the homelands was also seen by some participants as a way of healing young people and teaching them to make the right decisions in life.

The Bininj law stopping you from hitting and stealing. It's our law. It stops the silly business. In east Arnhem, kids go to ceremony instead of going to jail. The kids go out bush and they have to pass the law. Learn discipline and respect. [Q23]

Instead of kids going to prison, they should go through ceremony for one year. They should spend one year on the outstation and go through kunapipi. [Q26]

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In the above quotes, participants explained that ceremonies and learning the law encourages young people to learn discipline and respect for one another. It is a form of healing and awakening, where a participant further explained that with this form of healing young boys can learn how past mistakes have harmed people and how they have done the wrong thing [CM08].

Respect for family, culture and country were integral to how Kunwinjku people create safe, prosperous and healthy environments in which they live. Respect for each other was often described as: listening to each other, spending time together, looking after each other, helping each other, taking care of vulnerable people (specifically, the elderly, people with mental illnesses and young children) and obeying the lessons from elders and parents.

Sometimes we run out of power card. We ask family for money. We respect each other families. Then another time we give them power card. [Q19]

I feel good when everyone helping each other, sitting down together and telling stories. We are sharing the word of God and Jesus at the fellowship. God loves everyone, that's number one. We are sharing the word of God with family and children – it is for everyone. God loves everyone. When I go to Maningrida I share for my brother, his kids and my sister and her kids. The word of God is important for everyone. [Q01]

We are making baskets in the morning. Us ladies, we like sharing stories, going out bush where there's no kunbang, kundalk. We like the community but then spend two or three weeks out bush, teaching the kids and telling them stories about when we were young in the mission days. We teach our children about the hook stick and bush foods – yam and cheeky yam – and collecting pandanus dyes for making baskets. [Q11]

We look after each other, especially the little ones. Pick up the kids from clinic, pick up milk for baby [name removed]. We looked after her until Mum came home from work. [CM10]

The participants amongst many more described the aspects of family and community life which make them feel stronger, healthier and safer. Sharing with family was used in different contexts to explain that families helped each other when they were in financial need or when one family went hunting and fishing then shared the turtle, magpie goose, fish or other bush foods [Q31]. As important aspects of spending time together and helping each other live a good life, participants talked about teaching young ones about dreamtime [e.g. Q19, Q26, Q27] and Christian stories [Q01, Q06, Q18, Q37 and Q40]. Some participants

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talked about the importance of respecting the country and passing on traditions, such as dreamtime stories about rock art and footsteps through the country, to the next generation [Q19, Q27, Q36, Q41, and Q50].

This section briefly explained one aspect of social and cultural safety which Kunwinjku people discussed in the semi-structured interview and questionnaires. Bininj law, kinship and traditions are complex phenomena that cannot be succinctly explained in this report. Kunwinjku people are the experts in their own livelihoods and are often willing to share this with Balanda who are open to listening, respecting and learning from Bininj people and their stories. An old man explained:

There are five tribal languages that belong to the country. We are sharing one water, we're all connected. Before, when the community began, we had to learn to live together because these tribes would sometimes fight. Now it's one big tribe. We all live together. [Q36]

Bininj people are all connected and when Balanda come to stay in Gunbalanya they must respect that it is Aboriginal land and, as another elder described: “[Balanda] must think how they are going to come and be with Bininj people” [CM10]. While there are many Balanda who respect and value Bininj knowledge and perspectives, there were reported incidents which compromised Bininj people’s physical safety because Balanda disclosed and reported identified information to a community member. This disrespected the Bininj involved. It is important to remember this because social and cultural safety can only be achieved when there is mutual respect between Bininj and between Bininj and Balanda.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROBLEMS IN GUNBALANYA.

During the semi-structured interviews, Bininj and Balanda people identified a range of neighbourhood problems that they viewed as being unsafe for the community. As I already mentioned, these issues were: adults fighting in the street (i.e. interpersonal violence), adults drunk in the street (i.e. public intoxication), sly grog, gundalk (i.e. marijuana use), petrol sniffing, prowling or young people walking around at night, Diva Chat (i.e. social media), family and domestic violence, dangerous or drunk driving, sexual assault, vehicle or personal theft, mental health and suicide risk, and gambling and card games. I used these issues identified in the interviews to design the questionnaires. This means that the issues identified as community safety problems come from the Gunbalanya community.

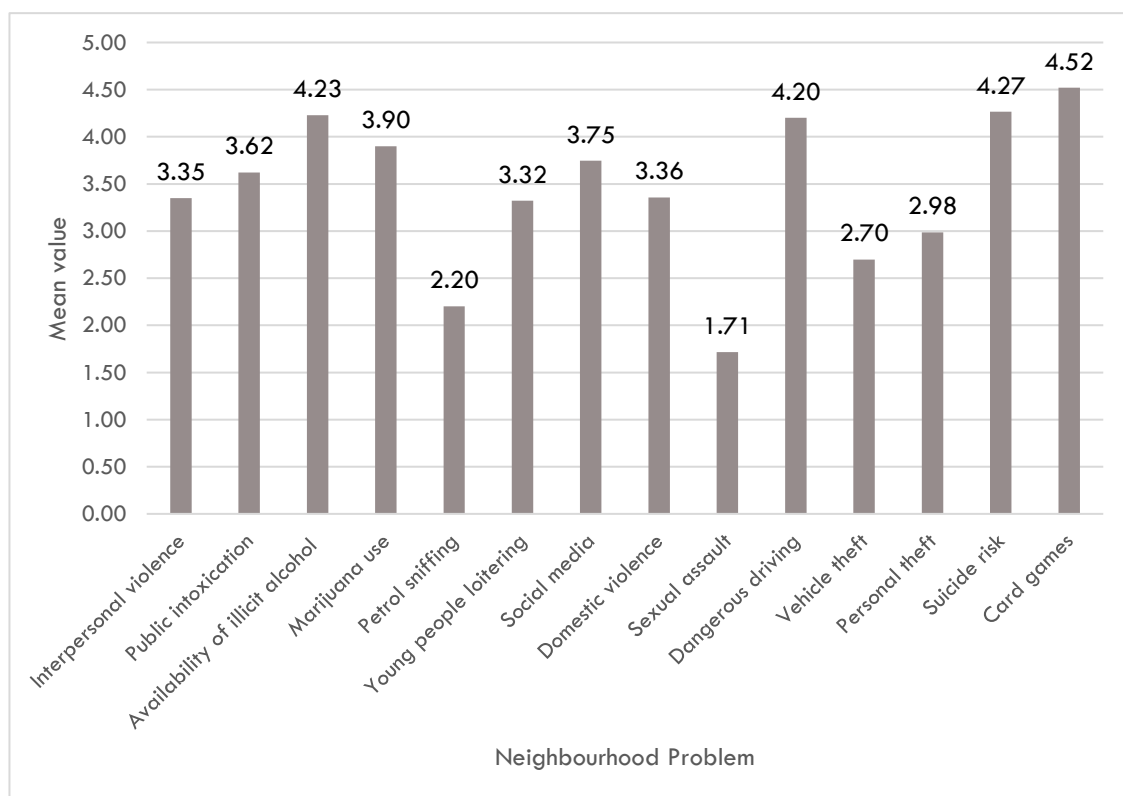
When completing the questionnaires, I talked to Bininj and Balanda about things they saw or heard at home or in the community that made them feel unsafe. **Figure 2** is a summary of the results from the questionnaire (Q8 and Q9) where it asks participants issues they think are a problem in the community. Participants answered the question based on a

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1-5 response where “1” represents the issues is not a problem and “5” represents the issue is a very big problem. It is important that you understand that these are indications of participant’s perceptions of neighbourhood problem and these do not represent actual crime rates.

According to Figure 2, the respondents from the questionnaire results demonstrated that the major issues perceived to be a problem in Gunbalanya are: sly grog, gundalk or ganja use, prowling and social media, domestic and family violence, dangerous driving, gambling and card games, and mental health and suicide risk. Amongst participants, these issues were perceived to be sometimes a problem (rating “3”), a moderate problem (rating “4”) or big problem (rating “5”). When completing the questionnaires, participants also provided extra information about when, how and why these neighbourhood problems exist. The following section explores how these neighbourhood problems are connected with broader behavioural factors.

Figure 2. Mean results from questionnaires for neighborhood problems affecting community safety in Gunbalanya.



Note: Y-axis shows how big the problem is: “0” means this issue is not a problem, “3” means that the issues sometimes happens, and “5” means that this is a very big problem.

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ALCOHOL, GROG AND 'KUNBANG'

Harmful experiences associated with and uses of liquor were one of the most frequently discussed issues in this study. The main problem discussed was the problems associated with liquor being brought into the community from outside, which is more commonly referred to as "grog running" or "sly grog". Grog running was identified as a problem during the dry season because of the accessibility of the community via land.

Many participants explained that grog running is a problem in the community. If the police patrolling Cahill's Crossing, this would prevent many of the problems in the community.

4.30am or 5am because more drunks come soon. Mornings the drunks come about 4am and bringing grogs from wherever they go for grog run – Darwin or other places... [The police] need to wait at the crossing over night to stop those grog runs. Those people they drive to Gunbalanya late at night when everyone is sleeping. They bring ganja too. [CM04]

Alcohol consumption in the community is often not seen as a standalone problem but, in excess when high-alcoholic products are consumed, was seen as the centre of the problem.

Trouble is buried from before. When the outside grog comes, the people start drinking and then the problem comes up again. It's a peaceful community but when the grog comes the trouble starts.

Adults fighting is sometimes a problem, then it blows up into a big problem. This is when there's grog running it blows up. [Q20]

Embedded within the three quotes above are the connections between the central issues of sly grog with other intersecting issues that I highlighted in the quantitative analysis. People bringing grog into the community are also bringing ganja – these problems are related to each other. Both these problems are exacerbated when there is a recent payment, such as a Centrelink benefit or a royalty benefit.

Strong alcohol is seen to exacerbate social stress and other 'trouble' that simmers at the surface or is buried within people's social networks. Trouble is sometimes used as a euphemism for quarrels, fights, brawls, swearing and other disruptive behaviour. No participants said that the sale of mid- or low-strength alcohol (e.g. light or mid-strength beer at the Social Club) was a major problem in the community. Some participants explained that they preferred that people were able to socialise with an after-work drink at the Gunbalanya Social Club by reminiscing about the Border Store in the 1970s.

Gunbalanya was a dry community then. People used to walk to the Border Store for grog. Many were killed from drowning or fighting.

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*And some just disappeared, the family never knew what happened.
[CM11]*

The strong Christian people shifted the club from the Border Store to Gunbalanya. We didn't want takeaway. We don't want the mess in our community. The club here is good, just light beer. [CM10]

Long time ago, there was a club at the Border Store. They used to go there and die or disappear. Then the Bininj people built the club here. We don't want our people dying for grog. Young people going to Darwin to drink and then they get stabbed or die in car accident. They were banned from the Club. [SP02, SP03]

The Border Store operated as a licensed venue from est. 1971 until 1980 until the Bininj people took over the license from Mr and Mrs Hill. Over the ten years, there was considerable controversy over whether the Border Store should be permitted by the government to operate as a licensed venue. Many people were hurt and killed because of the availability of liquor close to the Oenpelli mission. Around 1980, the Bininj people were successful in advocating for their right to own and manage the license for the Border Store and this license was transferred to, what is currently known as, the Gunbalanya Social Club. The strong Bininj elders wanted to manage the liquor licence with the endeavour to provide the community with a safe and self-managed area for people to drink. This was viewed as the best alternative because it meant that people could drink in a safe environment rather than travelling to Coinda or Darwin to drink.

MARIJUANA OR “KUNDALK” MISUSE

Research participants reported that marijuana use was a significant problem affecting the community. Based on the questionnaire results, marijuana use was significantly associated with other variables: specifically, public interpersonal violence, the availability of sly grog, young people using social media, domestic violence, prowling and theft from homes.

Some participants explained the relationship between marijuana use and prowling, fighting and grog.

Once they have gone to ceremony and now they're men – they think they don't have to go to school anymore, they don't play sports so much. Even engaging them at times, particularly the fifteen to sixteen-, seventeen- to nineteen-year olds. Because they are smoking ganja, tobacco and prowling at night, hanging out and about. They don't sleep until 3 or 4 [o'clock] in the morning then they're sleeping until late the next day.

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Yeah, I think so. Too many people in staying in one house and forcing each other to do bad things. Smoking, going out and breaking in. [CM08]

When they come out from the club, they play cards. Some, when they win money, they want to buy kundalk and kunbang at the club. And, the kids, they don't want to go to school because they're playing games all night. [CM12]

The above quotes show that marijuana use is a risky activity engaged in when prowling and 'walking around' or 'hanging out'. It is furthermore associated with breaking in and 'forcing each other to do bad things' [i.e. peer pressure]. Other participants mentioned that marijuana use is associated with grog running because importing these two illicit substances occurs at the same time.

The patterns in these quotes suggest that smoking marijuana is a behaviour associated with engaging in other activities but is not a predominant safety issue alone. The behaviour is problematic because many participants discussed the problems that arise when people do not have the resources to procure the substance. When without marijuana, they are 'going walking around in the hot sun' and they go "bengwar".

We are worried that young people might do something crazy if they don't find this one [gestures smoking], you know kundalk [marijuana]. Maybe one day, they will try swim across the river or go for a walk because they don't find that stuff here. Before they used to do that a long time ago. People used to swim across the river to get grog. Now there's too many ginga [crocodiles]. [CM17]

Too much worry is a very big problem. When some people don't have money for kundalk or kunbang they go bengwar. They walk around talking like crazy person saying they want to hang themselves or other time they climb up the [power] pole. [Q23]

Mental health is a big problem. They take that stuff – kunbang or kundalk – and they don't realise that it makes their problems bigger. [CM11]

There seems to be a strong relationship between alcohol and substance misuse and mental health issues including suicide risk. Clearly demonstrated in the above quotes, these participants showed grave concern for young people who show substance dependency issues. These participants explained that the serious problems exist where these community members are not able to acquire these substances. I suggest that this is an area that requires further intervention because of the widespread nature and seriousness of the issue. The focus does not need to be on addressing substance misuse but should focus on

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treating the underlying behaviours and patterns of addiction. This issue will be further discussed in relation to card games.

There are additional reasons why marijuana use is a serious problem in Gunbalanya. Children are learning to smoke marijuana because often their siblings and parents are smoking in the presence of children. In an environment where there is inadequate or infrequent parental supervision, children are free to walk the streets at night, smoke marijuana and play cards.

Those young kids their parents are drinking and smoking all night and they don't look after the children. [CM04]

When the parents spend too much time on kundalk, the Club and card games, the kids start doing their own way. They say: 'where is my pocket money for drink? You spend all the money at the Club.' Then they don't want to go to school, start breaking in and sniffing. [SP02, SP03]

Young people, children, are smoking ganja – even small ones like 10 years old. The young ones want to be adults and they are copying them. Then they don't go to school because they are up all night with the parents and smoking ganja. It's happening everywhere. [CM14]

The above quotes illustrate the transgenerational impact of neighbourhood problems in Gunbalanya. Community members' engagement with risky substances and underlying patterns of addiction illuminate how these behaviours have a broader impact on child development outcomes. Adults smoking marijuana frequently impairs school attendance rates because children are more likely to develop youth delinquency patterns: through walking around the streets at night, using marijuana themselves and engaging in other delinquent behaviour such as breaking into people's homes or the local store.

GAMBLING AND CARD GAMES

Based on the questionnaire results, the variable 'adults playing card games' was significantly associated with 15 social issues. These social issues were public interpersonal violence (i.e. "adults fighting in the street"), marijuana misuse (i.e. "gundalk"), children playing card games, cheating, jealousy and payback, people stealing and hurting the elderly, school absenteeism and a lack of parental supervision, mental health problems and suicide, addiction problems (i.e. "when people can't find kundalk they go bengwar"), and neighbourhood disturbances at night (i.e. "people playing loud music all night"). This data suggests that card games and gambling are activities at the core of neighbourhood

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problems, including interpersonal and domestic violence, poor school attendance outcomes and youth delinquency.

It is important to note that card games are not always perceived to be a problem. The problems begin when people gambling excessively and in social interactions surrounding card games particularly those involving children.

Some people think that card games is a hobby for those that don't work. Gambling is a way to catch up, yarning and that's the only way to see people. Otherwise, they think people won't come to your house for a cuppa. But addiction is a problem too. Maybe some people are playing cards too much. Card games have an effect on children: they like playing cards too. It is a social thing too. Sometimes I like to try my luck, but not often, only sometimes.
[CM15]

The effect card games have on children is a strong theme that arises from the findings. Participants have mentioned that: children want to win money to give to their parents, they play cards because they learn this behaviour from their parents, or simply because of the lack of adult supervision (because their parents are away playing card games). For a range of reasons, this leaves children unsupervised therefore the children walk around the streets at night or they play card games themselves. This has a significant impact on school attendance and is one of the core issues affecting community safety in Gunbalanya.

I work as a school attendance officer. When we go up to their house, stand there and knock on the door. We call out: "okay, wake all your kids up. It's time for all your kids to go to school. Wake up. We got breakfast over there and everything for the kids." Then they say: "Oh later, later. We are tired." I say: "but, why are you tired?" "Oh, I was playing cards all night." That's what they say. Some people would prefer to play cards all night and let their kids go prowling. [CM08]

Yes, card games is a problem. The kids want to play and make money, they don't want to go to school. People fight because the family want to share the money when he wins money and says: "But it's my luck. I want to keep it." Then there's a punch up and fighting because he won't give money. [CM10]

Participants often described scenarios where family members have attempted to refuse humbug. Various interviews describe where people's attempts to "say no" commonly results in conflict including verbal and physical assault. Yet, many individuals attempt to be strong and reject payback threats from family members.

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Social issues surrounding card games seems to have a considerable impact on the welfare of the elderly. Elders abuse was an issue also discussed when completing the questionnaires.

People are hurting older people at the card place. They're humbugging them for money and taking their card. [Q49]

People are ripping off money from the old people. They take their basics card or key card and do with it what they want. [Q50]

Sometimes they push old people around. Talk bad words, take their key card. These elders need to sit with them down and talk. [Q19]

Elders abuse was identified by the three questionnaire participants above who identified that some community members verbally and financially abused 'the old people' because they were looking for money or their key card. Personal theft was caused by the need to address the causes of poverty. This often occurred because the perpetrator had already used his or her financial resources on card games, alcohol consumption (at the Social Club or on sly grog) or marijuana use.

Personal theft or 'taking things without asking' was a problem associated with a general pattern of addiction and delinquency where the social norms and controls within certain families had broken down.

Old people getting robbed all the time – people looking for money. It makes me sad when people disrespect old people. Some people go into their houses at night and take things – money. I like taking care of older ones. My father in law, I used to care for him: wash him, cloth him and carry him. I did all that and soon I will do that for my mum. [CM14]

The participant quoted above described the vulnerability of the elderly when left by themselves. When alone, elderly persons are more vulnerable to personal theft and different types of abuse. Their call for increased services and amenities for the elderly come from a position of kindness and generosity in caring for their needs.

INTERPERSONAL, FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There are various triggers or causes of stress which are associated with 'family fighting'. These triggers include jealousy and social media [Q23, Q37, Q40], humbugging and financial stress [Q27], and alcohol and substance misuse, including when there are not enough funds to buy substances [Q27].

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If they got no child, they still fighting [domestic violence]. With lots of child, stop fighting. It's your first son or daughter, you should be proud. But Bininj men are different. They need to learn. [Q23]

Yeah, the young people sometimes rush and have wrong skin boyfriend. Then the promised skin comes and it starts fights. [Q26, Q33]

Fighting with that Diva Chat. Because of jealousy and cheating around young people, then it makes the elders get into an argument too. We encourage kids to do the right thing, not fighting. [Q37, Q40]

Sometimes husband and wife are smoking together. Then when they don't have it, they get stressed and fighting with each other. [Q27]

Too many people in one house is a big problem. Everyone is sharing manme [food] and children take what they want. Then everyone is fighting for that manme. Maybe [sic. husband and wife] split up because there's no money for kids. [Q23]

There's anger problems when people drink. They fight over money, kunbang and when they go to the club. [Q50]

During the interviews and questionnaires, many Bininj people did not distinguish between interpersonal violence (i.e. "fighting") and family or domestic violence. From my understanding, the first reasons for this is because of how the Kunwinjku language uses the term "fighting". There does not seem to be a direct word for family or domestic violence in Kunwinjku as these concepts are used in English. In English, the concept of family and domestic violence captures a broad spectrum of issues such as physical, emotional, social, financial and spiritual abuse, exclusion or alienation. This suggest that there are different understandings of what the concept means and I suggest that further resources need to be invested into educating women and men about family and domestic violence. Raising awareness and education about these issues is not isolated to the Gunbalanya community but is a process happening in broader Australia as we all learn about the effects these issues have on diverse Australian communities.

A normalised pattern of violence amongst some families is creating an environment of passive learning and delinquent behaviour amongst children.

Children are learning to fight from looking at the adults. They are learning from their parents who are fighting, smoking ganja, humbugging and drinking kunbang. This is passive learning. [Q37, Q40]

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My son is the one in the light blue shirt over there in the creche and he has started to hit the other little boys. I certainly didn't teach him that but he learns it over here. My son was born in the outstation and he has learned behaviour here in town. [CM01]

As children are growing up amongst adolescent and parental acceptance and perpetration of violent and aggressive behaviour, the children are learning to reproduce these behaviours amongst their peers. Outstations were often seen as the safe places where fighting, kundalk and kunbang were absent, however some people mentioned that these issues were encroaching on the outstations even though people live there for “peaceful living” [CM12, CM15, and Q23].

Some questionnaire participants commented that the available services and programs to educate residents about domestic violence and its illegality are having a positive effect.

When there's a man and woman fighting, we wait until they calmed down. We explain that there is djorra [“paper”] that says “no more family violence”. Then we can go with them to the Safe House and help them. [Q25]

Night Patrol working well and Safe House too. Domestic violence going down because NAAJA come to help, talking to service providers. Husband and wife fighting because he want other daluk. That's what's happening. We talk to other daluk about that so they stop fighting. I told all the Bininj and daluk. It worked and the fighting is stopped now. [Q25]

Domestic violence has gone down. Last year, it was a big problem but now it has calmed down. [Q26, Q33]

Several participants commented on the positive effect that Charlie King's “No More” campaign in May 2016 has had on raising public awareness about domestic violence. Despite this, family and domestic violence, including payback, is a challenging issue for many people to engage with; which was evident in how many participants avoided discussing the issues related to domestic violence (e.g. either responding “I don't know” or simply discussing ‘fighting’ not domestic violence). I suggest that ongoing resources and efforts are needed in this area.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE RISK

There are several issues impacting on mental health and suicide risk in Gunbalanya. Based on the analysis of the questionnaire results, findings suggest that there is a significant relationship with eight variables. These variables are: social media, sly grog, marijuana use,

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domestic violence, elder abuse, substance addiction (i.e. “when people can’t find kundalk, they go bengwar”), poor mental health and young people walking around at night.

Some participants described mental health issues in relation to when a person ‘walks around in the hot sun’.

We want to help with mental health. Otherwise, they come looking for bakki [cigarettes], walking around in the hot sun. Even older people too. Sometimes the older people don’t go outside for fresh wind, clean air. They need to spend more time in the bush. [SP02, SP03]

When the person walks around in the day, it’s hot, or at night, we know they need more support from family – maybe sisters or brothers. We need to help them. The person has too much worry, stressed out from the kundalk, kunbang. Or it’s Sorry Business and there’s too much humbug. The person might do something bad. We need to keep an eye on them and away from humbug. Only people with respect for one another should spend time with the person and support them. [Q19]

In the above quotes, participant [Q19] described that sometimes a person walks around in the hot sun because he or she is stressed out from family problems, ‘too much worry’ and the absence of addictive substances. These behaviours communicate a scenario where a person is struggling to meet the needs of their addiction and is contemplating ‘doing something silly’ or ‘something bad’ – which were common euphemisms used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants to refer to a suicide attempt.

I asked a participant why there are people who ‘walk around the in hot sun’. Throughout the interview, this participant emphasised the problems young people face in managing “big problems with grog, gundalk and thinking bad things”. She further explains:

Young people getting stressed and I don’t know why. Maybe they are thinking about finding a boyfriend. I sometimes say to them “sit down, calm down and let the thing go away.” This is important for young girls because otherwise they may do something bad [suicide]. They need someone to talk to, just like I talk to my girls.

The parents aren’t there caring for their children. They need to sit down and talk to them so the young ones will listen. That way, the young people can respect their elders. [CM14]

Based on the interviews I conducted, the reasons behind this are the ability to meet their physical needs: specifically, alcohol, marijuana and courtship. These three issues were found

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to have a significant relationship with suicide risk (i.e. “worry that a person might do something bad”) in the questionnaire results. Furthermore, it is interesting that the questionnaire results found a significant relationship with social media (i.e. “Diva Chat”) and how participant CM14 talked about the origins of some mental health issues in association with searching for a partner.

The reality for many people in remote communities is the accumulation of different origins of social stress place great strain on their relationships and they experience considerable anxiety. Additionally, there are other issues occurring within their family networks that place greater strain on their daily lives: financial constraints, humbugging, death and funerals, family separation, and a lack of parental support or guidance (in some circumstances).

There are a range of different issues occurring which more broadly contributes to an individual’s poor mental health. These issues are not occurring in isolation. They are associated generally and I do not believe it is possible to demonstrate a causal relationship. Some participants explain these problems using the phrase ‘causes stress’:

Humbugging causes stress in the family and makes family problems bigger. Then, you know, people fight a lot. Too many people in the house makes people stressed too. There are people coming and going, and you don’t know them all. There may be older ones smoking ganja in the house then the little ones want to become adult. They smoke too. [CM14]

When there’s a bengwar man who comes and asks for money, I just give it to him. I say: “Here take it, it’s your money. Make your own choice how to spend it.” That’s because I don’t want him to hang himself over drugs. [Q50]

At this stage in the data analysis, I suggest that ‘social stress’ is the key issue intertwined with expressions of unsafe behaviours which contribute to poor mental health outcomes. I question whether it is possible to develop discrete ‘risk factors’ because this concept promotes the idea that these issues are discrete variables which are mutually exclusive. Whereas in reality, the relationships between different social stressors is a more fluid association and does not seem to exhibit a causal relationship.

[Interviewer] *Is mental health a problem here?*

[CM11] *Mental health is a big problem. They take that stuff – kunbang or kundalk – and they don’t realise that it makes their problems bigger.*

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[Interviewer] Do you think that humbugging contributes to family stress?

[CM10, CM11] Yes, it makes stress bigger – for money, for kunbang, kundalk and card games. Just drinking to get drunk.

There seems to be a personal conflict between the problem of social stress and these other interrelated issues. Kunbang, kundalk and card games cause a range of different problems in the community: including when people are not affected by these substances. In fact, one of the common problems identified when undertaking the questionnaires was that a different set of problems began when people were looking for money to buy substances.

Card games causes stress on the family. People are trying to win money for other things. When they don't have grog or ganja, it makes them stressed. It's a big problem. [CM14]

Yesterday this man was cut on the cheek in the clinic here because his son wanted money to buy dope and he wouldn't give it to him. So he hit his father. That all ties in with community safety because it can be quite a harrowing experience for people. [SP04]

The two quotes above also show that substance users often go to extreme lengths to leverage their personal relationships and financial circumstances to procure substances. Looking for money to buy a substance creates certain vulnerabilities in which theft, verbal abuse and conflict occur.

DANGEROUS DRIVING AND ROAD SAFETY

Dangerous driving was a category that emerged from the semi-structured interviews. I then further pursued this theme using the questionnaires. The three themes which I found to have a significant relationship with the variable 'dangerous driving' were: sly grog, walking around at night, social media and theft from homes. After analysing the questionnaire results, the findings suggest that dangerous driving: (1) occurs randomly as part of delinquent behaviour, and / or (2) it is associated with other variables that were not tested for in the questionnaire.

Participants from semi-structured interviews suggest that dangerous driving occurs as part of socially dysfunctional behaviour amongst young men.

There needs to be more mentoring and support for men to change their behaviour. Otherwise the problems just keep happening: like drunk driving, ring leaders, breaking into the shop and recidivism. [CM15]

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This participant describes the activities that young people engage in when they use peer pressure amongst other young people. Although I have described these behaviours as ‘youth delinquency’, other participants related these sets of behaviours as young men being disengaged.

Getting young boys at the same age, especially once they have gone to ceremony and now they're men – they think they don't have to go to school anymore, they don't play sports so much. Even engaging them [is difficult] at times, particularly the fifteen to sixteen, seventeen to nineteen-year olds. Because they are smoking ganja, tobacco and prowling at night, hanging out and about. They don't sleep until 3 or 4 [o'clock] in the morning then they're sleeping until late the next day. [SP06]

Other participants highlighted incidents when individuals commit vehicle theft and ‘driving around’ because of payback when another person resists humbug and peer-pressure.

Sometimes if the person is drunk and they humbug for money. The person doesn't want to give grog money so the other one gets angry. They take the car and go driving around, because of payback. Sometimes with no license too. [Q18]

The other week someone was dangerous driving. They nearly missed the pole over there and nearly missed our fence. My little boy was shaking, really scared. I told him: ‘Don't worry. We sit down and pray, it'll be alright. The Lord Jesus will help us.’ [Q18]

Children's safety was a commonly cited reason why dangerous driving is a problem in the neighbourhood. Meanwhile four participants [CM03, CM04, CM12, CM13] highlighted that basic situational prevention techniques could easily address the problem: these being speed bumps and speed limit signs. Two participants [CM03, CM04] also requested that the police assist by checking license and registration.

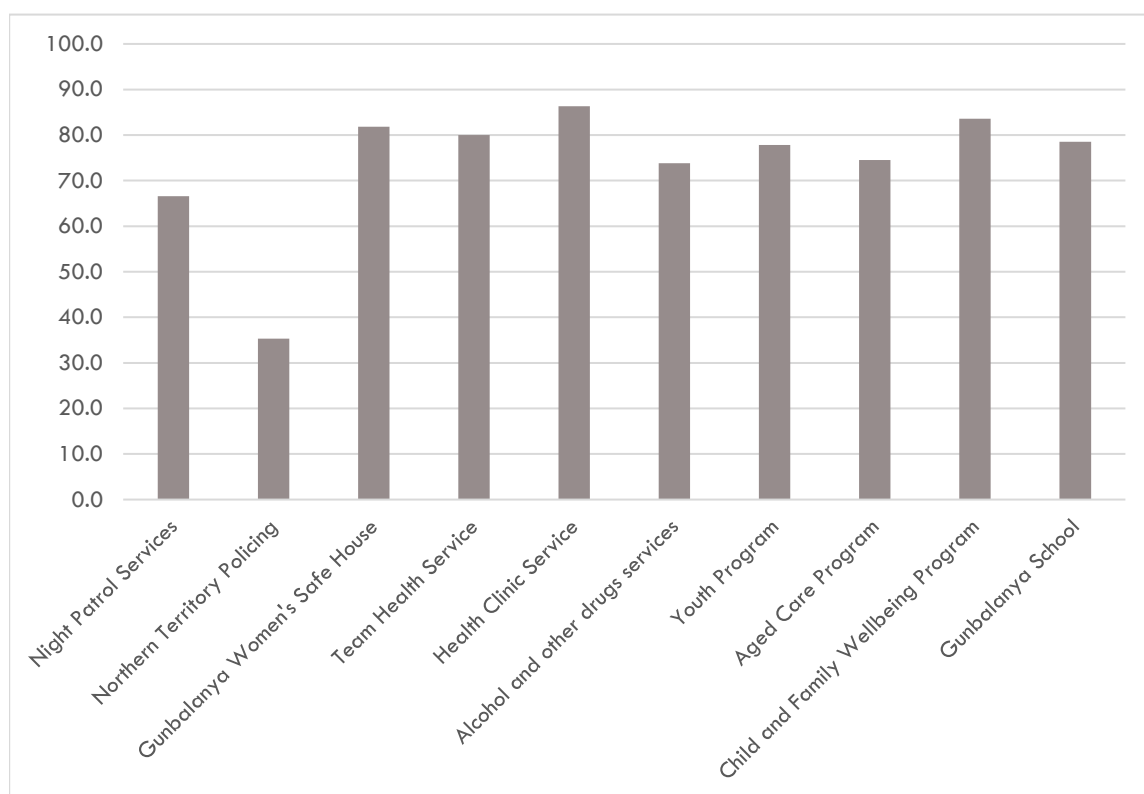
HOW ARE SERVICE PROVIDERS HELPING MAKE THE COMMUNITY SAFER?

In the questionnaires with community members, one of the questions asked: “how well are these services helping to make Gunbalanya a safer place?” The purpose of the question is a conversation starter to understand more about community safety services that are addressing the aforementioned problems. The results in **Figure 3** show the descriptive statistics for responses where the service was rated either as ‘working well’ or ‘working very

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well'. A higher value in the graph means that respondents believed that the service was helping the community and those was true for most local services. Remember that these are based on individual perceptions and experiences of the service not a thorough evaluation.

Figure 3. Descriptive statistics from questionnaires on community members' perception of services working well or working very well.



Note: These results contain valid percentages only. This means that missing values have been excluded, including 'I don't know responses'

There were many people who did not know what or who some of these service providers were. 20 questionnaire respondents mentioned that they did not know what services Team Health provided, and 9 respondents mentioned that they did not know about the Alcohol or Other Drugs program. These responses were removed from the results above before I calculated the result.

The prominent finding from this exercise is that respondents overall find that the style of policing in community is not suitable to their needs. The slow response times was one issue mentioned during the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

There have been times when the men come back from the social club, they've been drinking too much and they get violent. You can call the

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night patrol but not everyone trust them because they will not intervene if it's domestic violence. You have to call the police but it takes too long for them to come. [CM01, CM02]

Usually, I think there is a very slow police response. Like we have had a couple of issues here where there's been fights, it has been quite violent, and to get through to the police there is no direct number here. So you always have to go through "000" they always ask you whether or not there is... "What's happening: is it still going on?" And then by the time it's gone through that whole "000" process it is quite frustrating that it takes such a long time until there is a presence here. [SP06]

When there's a man and woman fighting, like domestic violence, we call the police but they don't come. Sometimes it takes 4 or 5 hours until they come. Then it's all over. [CM17]

There are several reasons for slow police times, such as staff availability or police were occupied attending to other calls. Despite these reasons, respondents commonly cited that slow police responses were a problem in the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

Another issue that arose was the tension between the approach to policing services in Gunbalanya and the community safety issues in Gunbalanya. The police have an important role to play because they are a 24-hour service however they also cannot be responsible for responding to all issues.

We need more police doing night patrols near the three ways towards Gunbalanya. You know the one heading to Mamadewerre. You know the problem is that these young boys think that they can get away with it and that needs to stop. The police need to support us and help teach these young boys that they can't do that. Maybe the police can rotate shifts. The Jabiru mob help patrol the highway sometimes and the Gunbalanya mob can help other times. [CM10]

Police and Night Patrol are working well. They are patrolling in the Night. We want them to patrol the Crossing and wait for grog runners. They do that sometimes. [Q11]

We need police 24/7 at the Border Store to stop the grog running; it's the main thing. [Q18]

There were respondents who mentioned that they see the policing working hard, doing patrols and helping make the community safer. Prevention of illicit liquor being brought into the community was a major problem that seems to sit outside the responsibility of all

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service delivery organisations. Questionnaire respondents often mentioned that they would like to see the Night Patrol or the Police act on this issue. Equally, this issue is also the responsibility of family members to encourage behaviour change within their own social networks. This is not the responsibility of one organisation or service, but everyone needs to work together to develop prevention strategies that would work effectively in preventing grog running.

The other main issue to arise from these results is that there seems to be a misunderstanding about the role of the Night Patrol in responding to community safety issues. While previously, there was an Old Lady who was a strong cultural leader in Gunbalanya. Previously she would respond to violent incidents (including those involving weapons) and confront assailants to intervene in public interpersonal violence. Now, the Night Patrol have a new operating framework which mandates that there are rules when responding to incidents, such as serious fights involving weapons and domestic violence. One reason for this is to ensure the workplace health and safety of staff members. In responding to serious incidents, the Night Patrol are required to call the police or the witnesses involved are required to call the police. This creates confusion amongst community members who are not aware of the new rules or the reasons behind them.

But I don't see them out there stopping all the drunk people that are fighting. No way, they just get frightened from them. You need to go to the drunken people and talk to them in a gentle way. Let that person listen to you, let the person hear you and they will calm down.
[CM08]

I think that Night Patrol should be a flexible service that works to help the community. It shouldn't be too hard. A while ago, there was a family stuck at the Border Store and they were there for hours. The Night Patrol should patrol up to the Crossing. [Q10]

From another perspective, there were many people who mentioned that Night Patrol are working well by patrolling the community and keeping everyone safe.

Night Patrol are doing good job patrolling the streets. [Q20]

Night Patrol are driving around and sort out the driving problem.
[Q22]

Overall questionnaire respondents provided positive feedback about the nature and role of community safety services in the community. The challenge present is community members' awareness and knowledge about service provision which potentially suggests that non-emergency services are not accessing all families across the community. The second challenge is community members often request service providers to take action on issues which are outside the scope of the service. Meanwhile, there are not enough resources

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available to fill that service gap (e.g. preventing the importation of illicit grog or responding to domestic violence incidents). The core question that needs to be considered is how could programs and services better encourage positive behaviour change and education to prevent these forbidden or harmful activities from occurring?

SERVICES WHICH COMMUNITY MEMBERS WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE FUTURE

There are a range of services which community members identified which would address some of the issues mentioned in Section 3.4 titled 'Neighbourhood problems in Gunbalanya'. In **Table 1**, I organised these into the thematic areas: education and awareness, support through counselling and mediation, strengths-based behaviour programs, increased self-management of card games, community safety action plan, services for the elderly, and engaging the outstations in spiritual healing programs on the outstations.

Earlier in this report, Section 3.4.3. explained that elderly persons were particularly vulnerable to humbugging, theft and verbal or physical abuse when people are looking for money to play cards or use substances. This was a considerable concern amongst participants where they identified several service gaps in Gunbalanya.

I'm worried about some old people. They are left by themselves. They need to put something together for old people's home. Put them together and look after them. There they could wash their clothes, get some food and put their money away. Darwin is too far away. They should be able to stay with their families here. [Q10]

Some old ladies don't have a home. They have to live with the kids. It will be safer for them with a big, high fence with a big paddock and big dog. It's safer then. The Aged Care should build an area for them with TV room. Too much humbug in the house. This is to take care of the old ladies. It should be like this in every community. [Q15]

At this time of the year, our elderly can't get any sleep. It affects their health and they don't feel like eating. We need a place for them, like a Respite Centre. It could be a place for counselling for people with Drug and Alcohol problems too. For example, CAPS do something similar. [Q38]

Participants in this study strongly felt that there needs to be future investment into aged care services in the local community, including the need for a Respite Centre or an Aged

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Care home. While, some people were troubled by the need for the elderly to have to leave the community to receive the appropriate treatment and care.

Many participants offered helpful suggestions on how to improve current mental health, domestic violence and addiction treatment services. Participants discussed the need for services to reach out to families, sit down and talk to them about these problems. Similarly, some people identified the need for increased counselling services whether they are for healing, trauma counselling or addressing domestic violence.

I would like to see more counselling programs in the community. Service providers should sit down with families, especially men going through problems, and go bush together. Counselling programs are important to address alcohol and addiction in the community... There needs to be more mentoring and support for men to change their behaviour. Otherwise the problems just keep happening: like drunk driving, ring leaders, breaking into the shop and recidivism. [CM10]

Several participants identified that there is a need for counselling and family mediation in the community. This idea was raised in relation to mental health services, domestic violence and alcohol or marijuana use which is likely because these issues are interconnected. Discussion that focused on domestic violence raised that there needs to be a focus on whole-of-family engagement in the counselling process and that further harms could be experienced when families are separated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

During the final community consultation phase in September 2017, some stakeholders suggested that I provide recommendations in the community report. In Table 1, I provided a list of services or programs which the research participants suggested that are either enhanced, strengthened or built in Gunbalanya. In some senses, this might be considered recommendations from the research participants. Below I provide a list of my own recommendations which are based on my professional experience as a researcher and my opinion. Please note that while I endeavoured to undertake extensive consultation across the safe, law and justice sector it was not possible to talk to all service providers or agencies involved in delivering relevant programs. This was because of time restrictions and because of the range of investments into law and justice in the Northern Territory.

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Aged Care Services

- The Gunbalanya community would further benefit from an aged care centre which provides palliative and long-term care for elderly people. This would be a place which provides short-term accommodation, entertainment and personal facilities and develops long-term care plans with the relevant families.
- There is a need for further investment into services for the elderly and mental health patients where they can spend multiple days healing in the bush or at an outstation.

Alcohol treatment and rehabilitation

- The community would benefit from an expanded healing program which encompasses education and awareness to young people approaching 18 years old, people banned from the club, people affected by domestic violence and general outreach services. Research participants have mentioned that they would like to see different service providers sitting down and talking to families about all these things.
- Problems associated with alcohol and other drugs are affecting a significant portion of the community. The Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) program would benefit from trained mentors and community advocates who work alongside the AOD worker.

Mental health

- There is a strong need for formal counselling on mental health and substance use issues. The community would strongly benefit from a permanently located mental health nurse which has strong connections to clients and families in need.

Gambling regulation and self-management

- The intergeneration effect and addiction-related behaviour associated with card games and gambling more broadly in the Gunbalanya community are serious issues that need to be addressed. Card games are social activities and are not always harmful, but it can when children are observing the games. Community leaders and representatives need to get together to make important decisions on how to manage these social problems, whether it be through establishing a designated, age-restricted area for card games or enforcing time restrictions (e.g. no card games after 8pm). Whatever is decided, these rules need to be enforced two-ways: by community members or leaders and with the assistance of police and the Night Patrol.

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Northern Territory Police

- Community members requested on numerous occasions the assistance of permanently stationed police officers with a range of matters. Although people do need to be mindful that the police is an emergency service and cannot be there to fix all problems. Simply increasing the number of police in a remote community is not the magic solution.
- Regular and randomly timed spot checks of vehicles (including Land Permit and the possession of liquor) entering Arnhem Land would help reduce the problems with sly grog. At the same time, families need to take ownership over this issue and devise strategies for internal regulation to support this endeavour.
- Remote communities would benefit from a preventative, proactive model of policing that is focused on relationship building. Where community members have a trusting and respectful relationship with individual police officers then this is more likely to promote collective efficacy, meaning an increased initiative to monitor, identify and respond to crime. I understand the policing matters are complex and the ability to make specific recommendations in this area is outside my expertise on crime prevention.
- Community Engagement Police Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers are invaluable to promoting community awareness of policing issues. One potential avenue for enhancing the relationship between community and local police could be to expand these programs.
- Expanding the Neighbourhood Watch Program and introducing this concept in Gunbalanya was suggested by a participant in this study.

Governance and service delivery structure

- Service delivery infrastructure would benefit from enhanced information flows and communication across all sectors. There seems to be some confusion amongst community members on the role of some services (e.g. Night Patrol) and then there is a lack of awareness across the community about other services (e.g. Team Health and AOD Program).
- There are a range of ad hoc, short term funding for a range of programs which many people do not hear about (i.e. the health sector). The Gunbalanya Notice Board on Facebook and at the Council office and the Ardjumallarl Store would be possible options for enhancing communication across the community.

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- Service providers and community members identified that many services are working in silo and there needs to be regular meetings across sectors. This could be short, regular meetings (e.g. 15-30 minutes a fortnight) or quarterly updates.
- A community safety action plan was developed by the Northern Territory Police and the Community Safety Reference Group several years ago. This action plan should be reviewed and possibly be brought back into action. This community report could also be used to further strengthen or verify those actions identified on the plan.

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Table 1 – Services and programs which community members have identified would help address community safety issues.

Type of program	Target participants	Addressing gaps
Education and awareness about family violence	Men, women and young people	Respectful relationships programs that engage men and young boys. Programs to repair relationships and keep people together. Awareness programs for men and women to learn more about family and domestic violence.
Increased counselling and mediation support	Men, women and young people	Healing programs for people who show addiction related behaviours. Mentoring and leadership program for people who need healing.
Strengths-based behaviour programs	Adults with suspected substance misuse issues. Young people approaching 16 years	Integrating positive, strengths-based messages within behaviour and education focused programs. Mandatory education workshops for young people and people who have been banned from the Social Club. Behaviour change programs for men and women.
Increased self-management of card games	Adults and children who play card games too much.	Community leaders need to decide when people can play card games. Police and night patrol need to help community enforce card game regulations. There should be a designated area where people can socialise and play cards. Children should not be allowed to play cards. Posters and programs which raise awareness about the negative effects of card games on children and families.

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Type of program	Target participants	Addressing gaps
Community safety action plan	Bininj and balanda – everyone working together.	A community safety action plan which has been agreed upon by community leaders and is enforceable by local police. Service providers would like to see increased collaboration and engagement across different sectors on safety issues. Bi-annual meetings which updates and accountability in achieving action under the community safety action plan.
Increased services for the elderly	Elderly or sick people who are vulnerable and need assistance.	An aged care centre for the elderly including recreational centre, washing room and kitchen. A place where elderly people are safe from humbug, abuse and theft. More excursions for the elderly to go swimming, fishing and spend time in the bush.
Engaging the outstations in spiritual healing programs on their homelands	Young people	Justice diversion programs which engage outstations and cultural leaders in the solutions. These need to be community-driven and grown initiatives which embrace a preventative approach to law and justice. Develop trauma and addiction healing programs which utilise outstation communities in the solution and embrace Bininj law and values.

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Appendix E – Descriptive statistics from the questionnaire results

Descriptive statistics from Q8 in the questionnaires on neighbourhood problems in Gunbalanya.

Variable label	Sample	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Adults fighting in the street	53	1.00	5.00	3.4717	1.21851
People drunk in the street	54	1.00	5.00	3.6667	1.16554
Sly grog is available in the community	54	1.00	5.00	4.2778	1.08882
People smoke gundalk (ganja)	53	1.00	5.00	3.9623	1.32958
People sniff petrol	53	1.00	5.00	2.2358	1.28079
Young people walking around at night	53	1.00	5.00	3.7830	1.18691
Young people prowling at night	47	1.00	5.00	3.8830	1.48621
Young people using Diva Chat	49	1.00	5.00	4.1327	1.31805
Domestic violence	47	1.00	5.00	3.5851	1.36859
Husband and wife fighting	29	1.00	5.00	3.5172	1.37894
Dangerous or drunk driving	52	1.00	5.00	4.2981	0.98648
Sexual assault	35	1.00	5.00	2.3143	1.65869
People stealing cars	51	1.00	5.00	2.7745	1.50105
Theft from homes	50	1.00	5.00	3.1400	1.48475

Descriptive statistics from Q10 in the questionnaires on social stress in Gunbalanya.

Variable label	Sample	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
School absenteeism	53	1.00	5.00	3.9057	1.06092
Lack of parental supervision	51	1.00	5.00	4.1961	0.84899
People hurting the older people	51	1.00	5.00	3.9412	1.04712
People playing loud music at night	52	1.00	5.00	3.4423	1.27439
When people can't find kundalk, they go bengwar	54	3.00	5.00	4.4259	0.76730
People taking money from old people	49	1.00	5.00	4.0408	0.97808
Too much worry, poor mental health	54	1.00	5.00	4.0741	0.94872
Worry that a person might do something bad, like commit suicide	54	1.00	5.00	4.2778	0.97935
Adults playing card games all night	54	1.00	5.00	4.5926	0.74018
Children playing card games	54	1.00	5.00	4.2593	1.04944
Children are living away from their parents	54	1.00	5.00	3.9259	1.14681
Too many people staying in one house	53	1.00	5.00	4.0566	1.23125
Not enough jobs or money	54	1.00	5.00	3.9352	1.25910
Young people are bored, sitting around doing nothing	54	1.00	5.00	3.6481	1.24245
Payback from partners family	52	1.00	5.00	4.0577	1.16170
Cheating on partner	52	1.00	5.00	4.3077	0.80534
Jealousy	55	1.00	5.00	4.4636	0.92723
Anger management problems	53	1.00	5.00	4.0472	1.08426
Humbugging	55	1.00	5.00	4.3545	1.16537

Descriptive statistics from Q12 in the questionnaires on social and cultural strengths amongst families Gunbalanya.

Variable label	Sample	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
People don't respect Bininj law	54	0.00	5.00	3.7130	1.37224
People don't "pass the law" through ceremony	53	0.00	5.00	3.5472	1.61205
People don't spend enough time hunting or fishing	53	0.00	5.00	3.5849	1.26238
People don't know about their skin and identity	53	1.00	5.00	3.6038	1.40520
Young people don't respect their elders	53	1.00	5.00	4.1038	1.03477
Young people don't marry according to their skin	53	2.00	5.00	4.6792	0.64371
People don't know about their dreaming and story	53	1.00	5.00	3.5189	1.48700
People don't spend enough time in the bush or at the outstation	53	1.00	5.00	3.5377	1.36526
Some Balanda don't listen to Bininj	53	0.00	5.00	4.1226	1.02331
Some Bininj don't respect Balanda law	53	0.00	5.00	3.7453	1.39925
We are losing our languages. Everyone only speaks Kunwinjku or English.	53	0.00	5.00	3.7830	1.47254
Children are learning to fight from looking at the adults.	53	2.00	5.00	4.5377	0.88714
People are using black magic	53	0.00	5.00	4.3113	1.38059
People don't respect Bininj law	54	0.00	5.00	3.7130	1.37224
People don't "pass the law" through ceremony	53	0.00	5.00	3.5472	1.61205
People don't spend enough time hunting or fishing	53	0.00	5.00	3.5849	1.26238
People don't know about their skin and identity	53	1.00	5.00	3.6038	1.40520
Young people don't respect their elders	53	1.00	5.00	4.1038	1.03477
Young people don't marry according to their skin	53	2.00	5.00	4.6792	0.64371

Descriptive statistics from Q13 in the questionnaires on social and cultural problems amongst families Gunbalanya.

Variable label	Sample	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
People don't respect Bininj law	54	0.00	5.00	3.7130	1.37224
People don't "pass the law" through ceremony	53	0.00	5.00	3.5472	1.61205
People don't spend enough time hunting or fishing	53	0.00	5.00	3.5849	1.26238
People don't know about their skin and identity	53	1.00	5.00	3.6038	1.40520
Young people don't respect their elders	53	1.00	5.00	4.1038	1.03477
Young people don't marry according to their skin	53	2.00	5.00	4.6792	0.64371
People don't know about their dreaming and story	53	1.00	5.00	3.5189	1.48700
People don't spend enough time in the bush or at the outstation	53	1.00	5.00	3.5377	1.36526
Some Balanda don't listen to Bininj	53	0.00	5.00	4.1226	1.02331
Some Bininj don't respect Balanda law	53	0.00	5.00	3.7453	1.39925
We are losing our languages. Everyone only speaks Kunwinjku or English.	53	0.00	5.00	3.7830	1.47254
Children are learning to fight from looking at the adults.	53	2.00	5.00	4.5377	0.88714
People are using black magic	53	0.00	5.00	4.3113	1.38059
People don't respect Bininj law	54	0.00	5.00	3.7130	1.37224
People don't "pass the law" through ceremony	53	0.00	5.00	3.5472	1.61205
People don't spend enough time hunting or fishing	53	0.00	5.00	3.5849	1.26238
People don't know about their skin and identity	53	1.00	5.00	3.6038	1.40520
Young people don't respect their elders	53	1.00	5.00	4.1038	1.03477
Young people don't marry according to their skin	53	2.00	5.00	4.6792	0.64371

Descriptive statistics from Q14 in the questionnaires on the perceived effectiveness of community safety services in Gunbalanya.

Variable label	Sample	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Night Patrol Services	51	1.00	5.00	2.2059	1.30834
Northern Territory Policing	51	1.00	5.00	3.1373	1.43902
Gunbalanya Women's Safe House	44	1.00	5.00	1.7727	1.13841
Team Health Service	30	1.00	5.00	1.9000	1.12495
Health Clinic Service	51	1.00	5.00	1.6863	1.14000
Alcohol and other drugs services	42	1.00	5.00	2.1667	1.24776
Youth Program	45	1.00	4.00	1.9333	0.98627
Aged Care Program	47	1.00	5.00	2.0000	1.17954
Child and Family Wellbeing Program	49	1.00	5.00	1.7449	1.15525
Gunbalanya School	51	1.00	5.00	1.8824	1.29456

Appendix F – Qualitative thematic network analysis maps on factors influencing community safety in Gunbalanya

Legend:



Set: a collection of nodes that contain qualitative data.



Node: qualitative data on one community safety issue.



Relationship node: where qualitative data on two issues intersect.

List of maps:

These maps show the results from the qualitative thematic network analysis undertaken with NVIVO software. Each map shows the inter-related issues that participants associated with these individual factors during the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. I have broken each map down into individual neighbourhood problems to improve their visual presentation.

Map 1. Community safety issues in Gunbalanya.

Map 2. Alcohol misuse and related issues.

Map 3. Marijuana misuse and related issues.

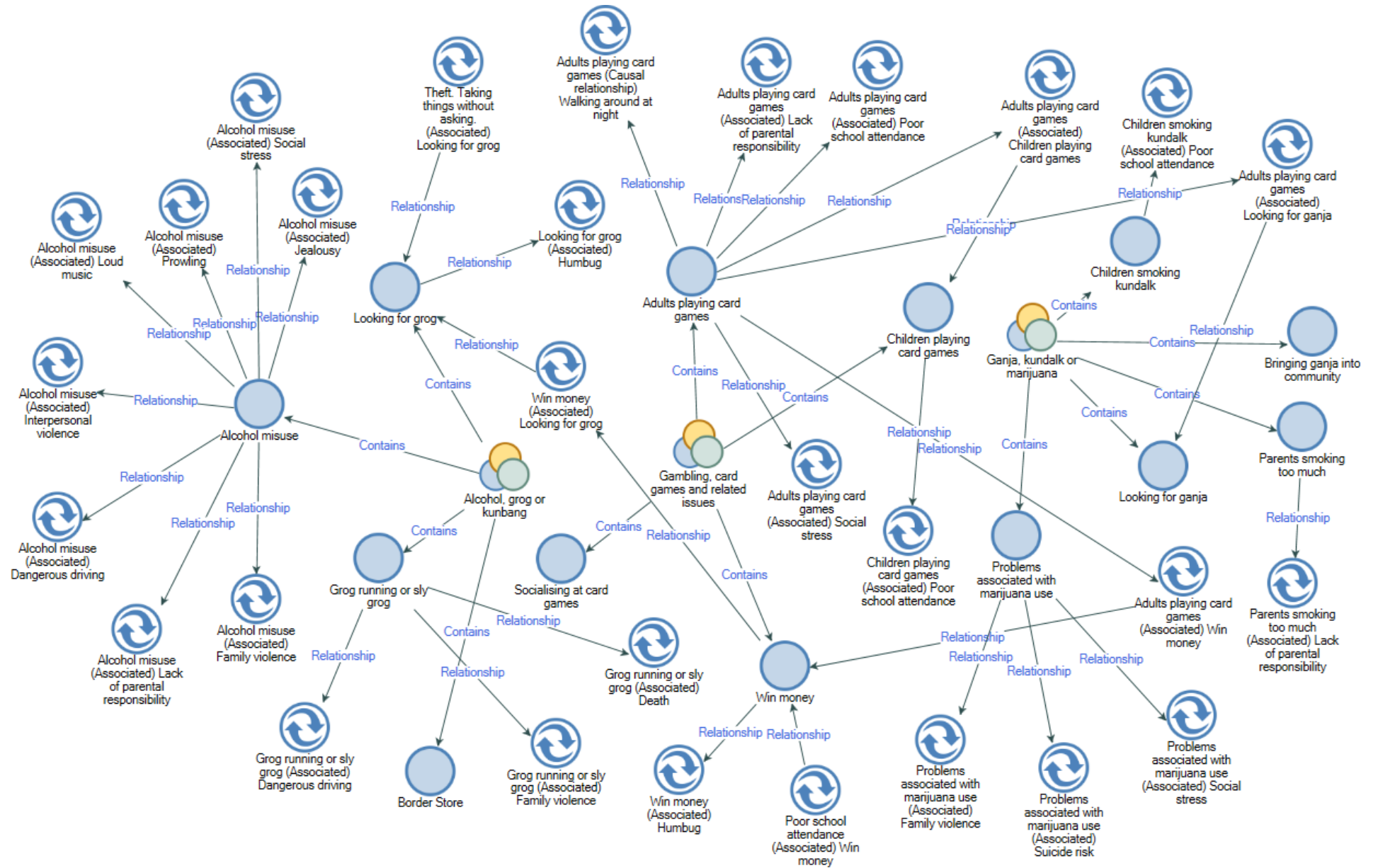
Map 4. Gambling, card games and related issues.

Map 5. Interpersonal, family and domestic violence and related issues.

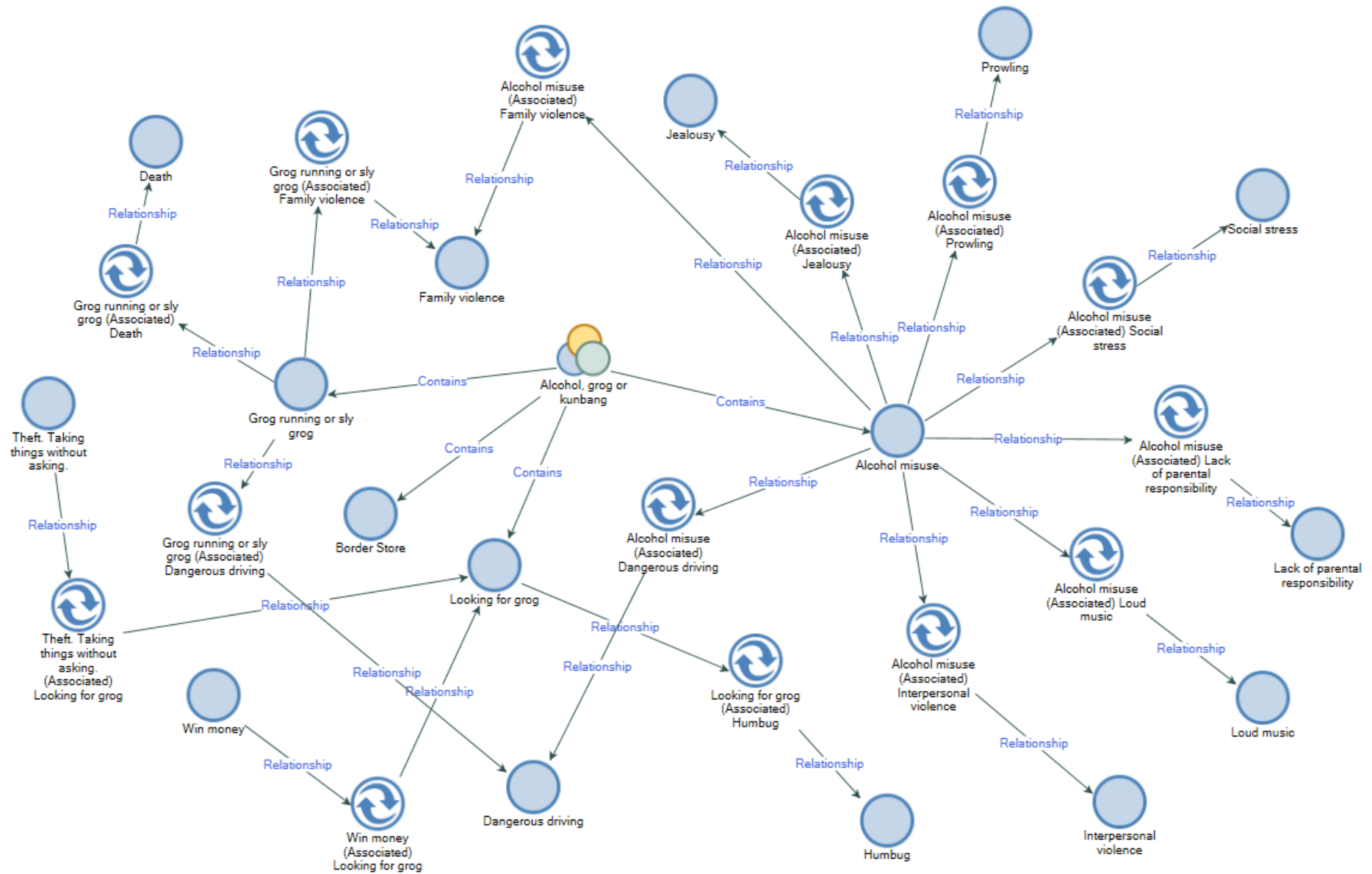
Map 6. Mental health and issues related to social stress.

Map 7. Dangerous driving and road safety-related issues.

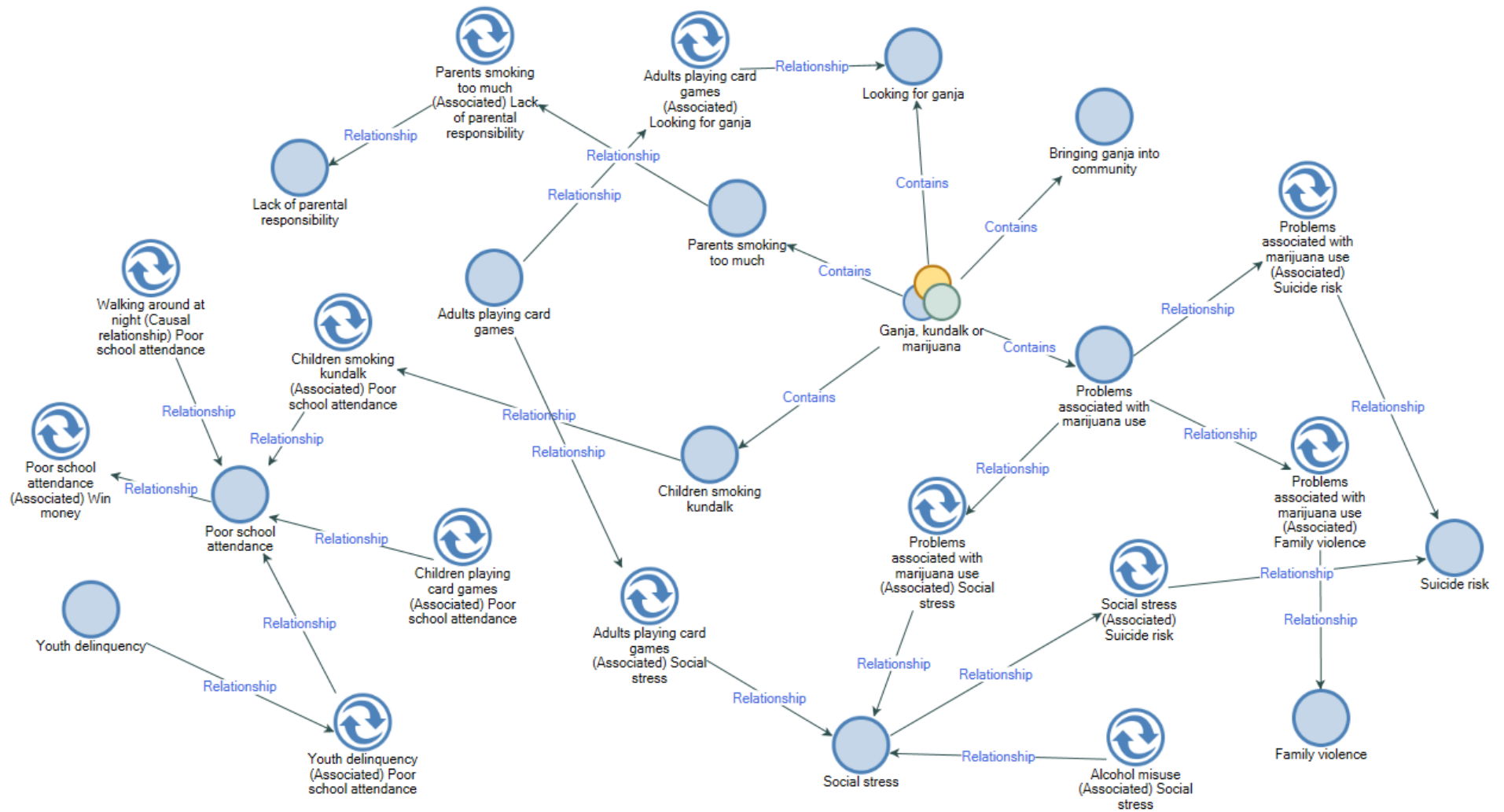
Map 1. Community safety issues in Gunbalanya.



Map 2. Alcohol misuse and related issues.

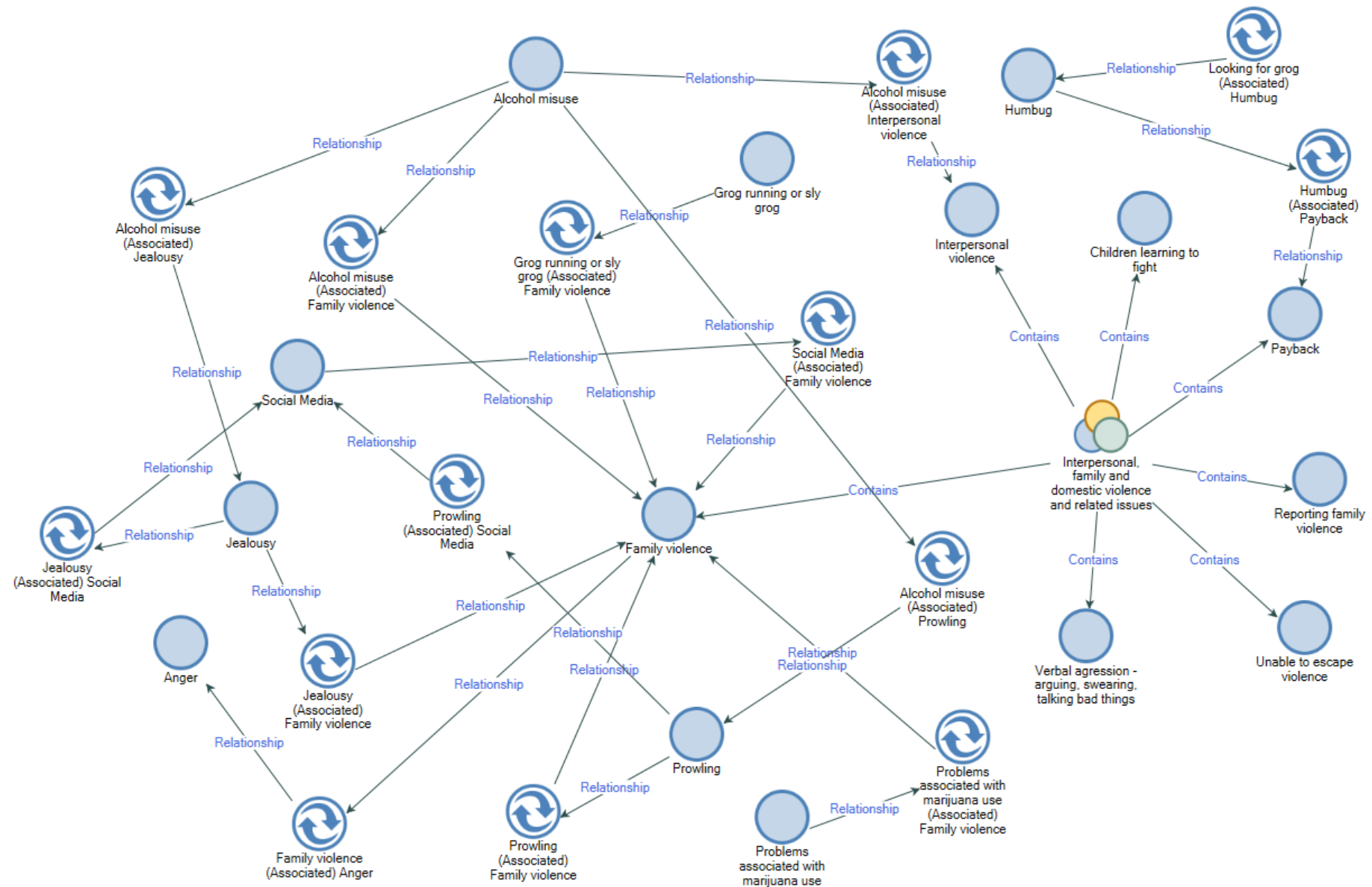


Map 3. Marijuana misuse and related issues.

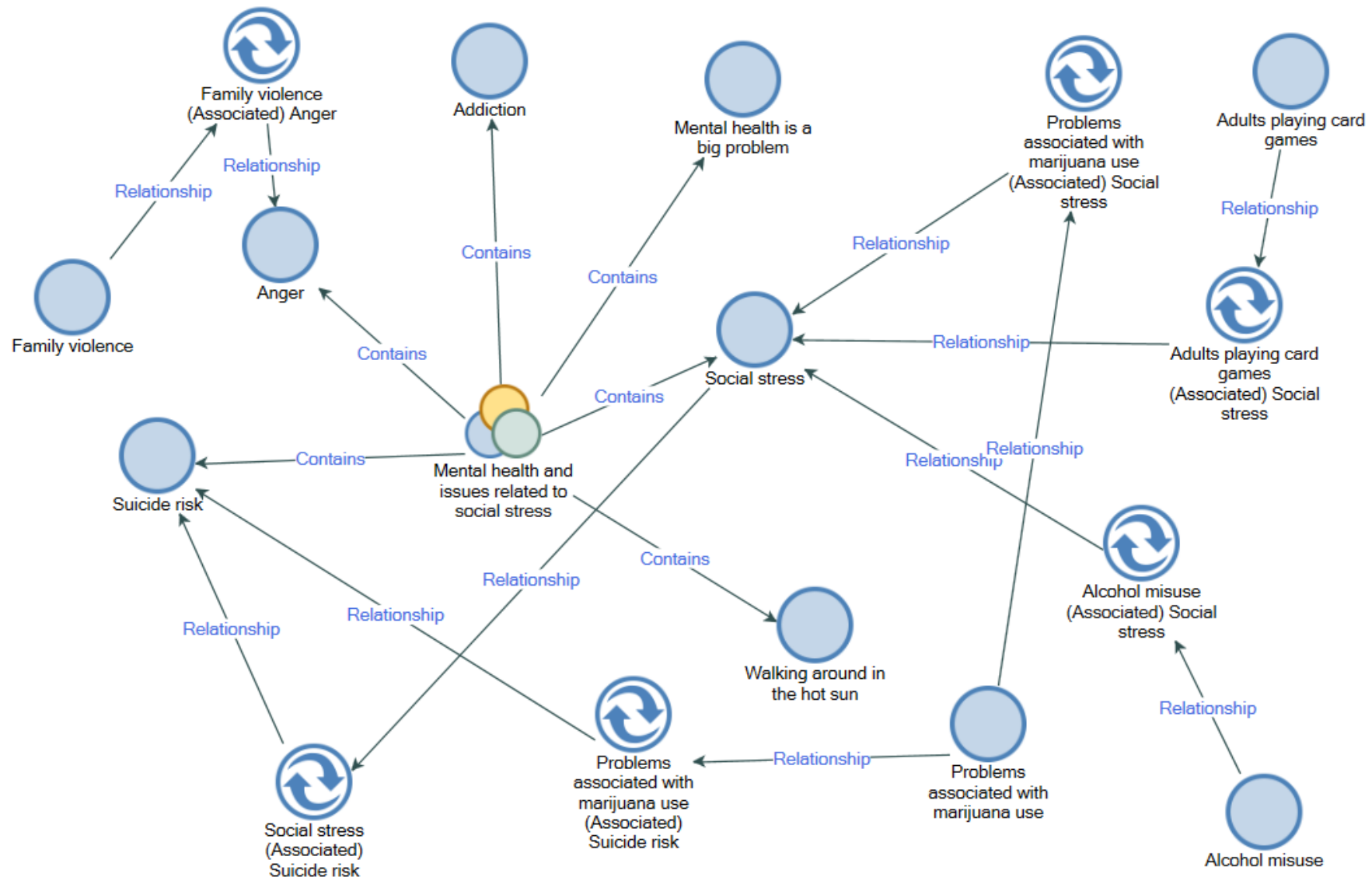


[illegible]

Map 5. Interpersonal, family and domestic violence and related issues.



Map 6. Mental health and issues related to social stress.



Map 7. Dangerous driving and road safety-related issues.

