COMMUNITY ART
A Form of Place-Making for Culturally Diverse Communities
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1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of the research. The introduction provides the problem setting that sets the scene and explains the motivation behind the research. The chapter creates the context and overall framework through the thesis statement, research questions and conceptual framework. The chapter concludes with summaries of the thesis chapters.

This thesis is an investigation of the creation of place through community art. The research focuses on the design and implementation of community art projects within a public space that allow local people to express their culture and their local story through collaborative processes. The purpose of the art projects is to provide an opportunity for a community and local stakeholders to work in partnership to stimulate the interaction of community members and creatively address the issues of social isolation and the resistance of cultural expression. Community art projects allow local people to take pride in where they live, create a sense of place for people that come from culturally diverse backgrounds and provide a sense of ownership that will encourage locals to care and maintain for their local area.

1.1 Problem Setting

Since 1945 6.8 million people have come to Australia as new settlers. Australia has experienced 64 years of post-war migration and a population increase from 7 million to 21 million today (Department of Immigration and Citizenship website, 2009). The end of World War II influenced the stimulation of migration in to Australia with agreements being reached with Britain, some European countries and with the International Refugee Organisation. Today one in four Australian’s are born overseas and have come from more than 200 different countries. The migration program has catered for 168 700 places in Australia in 2009-10 and will continue to plan for a growing rate in the future (Department of Immigration and Citizenship website, 2009).

Sydney continues to grow at a rate of 34,000 people per year. The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy indicates that 70% of those people will be accommodated within the existing city and 30% will be in new green field locations (2004). In Australia 84% of migrants reside in Sydney, which is home to 1.2 million people born overseas. Furthermore, 52% of people living in Sydney are migrants or children of migrants (NSW Metropolitan Strategy, 2004). As
represented in Figure 1 the majority of the population settled on the coast of Sydney. As the population grew between 1917-1945 sprawl moved towards the west of Sydney and other urban areas were settled, such as Bankstown and Parramatta. After World War II, and the abolishment of the ‘White Australia Policy’ migrant influx has influenced sprawl to move to Greenfield areas. As Sydney’s population continues to grow at a rapid rate the western fringe of Sydney, predominately rural and low density housing, will become occupied over the next twenty years.

The book ‘Who’s your City’ by Richard Florida analyses the importance of ‘Place’. Florida discusses the importance of choosing the right place for migrants to reside in a foreign country in order to be able to comfortably express their culture and maintain and an attachment to their homeland, ‘Place affects how happy we are in other, less palpable ways. It can be an island of stability in a sea of uncertainty and risk” (2008; 14). The lack of security can make migrants feel segregated and alone and often only communicate with their cultural groups and religious organisations. When groups segregate themselves from the rest of the
community it can create territorial barriers and hostility from other groups living in the same community, “In addition to the state of our finances and our professional life, where we live can hugely determine how happy we are within ourselves. Where we live can determine whom we meet, how we meet them, and our opportunities for spending time with our friends and loved ones” (Florida, 2008; 25). Feelings of hostility and insecurity can cause social isolation and contribute to an overall unhealthy community, especially for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The problem setting for this research can be seen as two fold: cultural change and public space. As settlement patterns of migrant communities spread across Sydney, the pre-existing concept of activities and the form of a place are questioned. Different cultures are changing the face of established neighbourhoods which can be welcomed with varying degrees of acceptance or resistance by local communities, local government and planners. The creation and promotion of public space is a powerful opportunity to generate cultural engagement, community interaction and eliminate neighbourhood hostility within a community.

Furthermore there is a lack of focus on public spaces as neutral and universal environments to promote cultural engagement and local community interaction. The role of creating a public space is to “alleviate the fracturing of community life, alleviating isolation, and bringing together diverse interest, ages and cultures” (Skeenar, 2004; 19). Randolph, 2006, and Thompson, 2003, agree that the changing shift in suburban and town centre design, towards urban consolidation, calls for greater consideration in the relationship of design between private domain and public space because it has contributed to a loss of community engagement and a hindrance to creating a socially active neighbourhood. Skeenar suggests that the privatisation of the public domain through retail developments, car parks, driveways and garages, changing lifestyles and greater reliability on technology, such as the internet and mobile phones, as a primary social connector leaves public spaces empty and silent with minimal activity. This is seen as confronting and unattractive and has reduced community safety, neighbourhood vitality and diminished people’s desires to use public space (2004).

As spatial planning influences the shape of our city and the way we live it is important to remember that planning instruments such as Local and Regional Environmental Plans (LEP’s and REP’s), State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP’s) and Development Control Plans (DCP’s) prescribe the way an area should look and feel. However planning
instruments do not consider cultural paradigms or social inclusion. Public space is often seen as an engineering function for Council rather than an opportunity to engage the community, “Planning and designing for culturally diverse communities is an interesting challenge. There is a lack of understanding for the use of public spaces, what activities and occasions these precincts will be host to, and little experience in the processes of creating them” (Skeenar, 2004; 20). The complexity of diverse communities and changing demographics means the design process is more difficult than it surfaces. The public domain needs to be more than decorative open space because it can have an intrinsic role in addressing underlying community issues (Skeenar, 2004). Localised planning needs to consider and provide for local communities and diverse cultures. There needs to be a shift from creating individual cultural precincts, like Chinatown, and move to a more integrated neighbourhood character.

The concept of CCD is relatively new and the full benefits and costs of CCD projects are not completely understood. Due to this lack of foresight local governments remain hesitant to make CCD projects a priority of council business and remain uncertain on planning strategies for cultural communities. However it is important to create cultural opportunities that the community can contribute to by removing the old paradigms of planning. Communities constantly demonstrate the importance of creative and lively neighbourhoods by the way they handles their public assets. The way a community takes care of a playground in a local park, treats public venues and use public spaces illustrates the respect and pride they have for their own area. To encourage people to care for their local neighbourhood they need social infrastructure that represents their local identity and the community needs to be part of the creation process in order to feel a sense of ownership and pride for their local spaces, “Involving the people will make and remake their own mythology and create something that is truly unique” (Westbury, 2008; 2) and “As areas grow the reality is to realise what people can bring to a place and celebrate it” (Skeenar, 2004; 4). Therefore the thesis will demonstrate that the use of community art as a place-making strategy can create a space at a local level that reflects the identity of the local community.

1.2 Thesis Statement and Research Questions

Cultural planning is a relatively new phenomenon in Australia that provided a new direction and focus within the Planning discipline. The need and want of useful public space is increasing within communities and areas subject to greater social change and disconnect from
one another are relying more and more on public spaces to promote community engagement (CCD NSW website, 2009). The recent shift in local planning philosophy to address community issues through increased community participation and interaction has stimulated the role of cultural planning in improving and contributing to resource and program decision-making. Community Cultural Development (CCD) is becoming a more imperative priority for local governments and has become an essential planning tool within local strategies.

The thesis will focus on community art as a form of place-making for culturally diverse communities. The research will be supported by case studies of successful public spaces that have been created through effective place-making strategies that illustrate a community’s collaborative story or message. The case studies will explain the need and purpose of the project and what strategies were used in creating spaces that supports the ideas, values and message of a specific community. The thesis will be concluded with an analysis on the meaning of place; evaluating the effectiveness of chosen strategies and possible future recommendations for CCD.

The thesis aims to:

- Demonstrate the importance of place-making for culturally diverse communities through community art
- Provide examples of community art as a form of place-making to stimulate CCD within culturally diverse communities.
- Provide strategies and recommendations for the community and local government to embrace CCD

1.3 Conceptual Framework

To achieve the thesis objectives it is imperative to create an understanding of the main concepts used within the research. The framework defines: community art, place-making, CCD and culturally diverse communities.

Community Art

Community art is an effective tool in illustrating a community’s image, story or simply telling the tale of time. Community art is used as a powerful mechanism to illustrate the
heritage of an area and often celebrating the very aspect of the community that was lost to poor public domain design. Examples of Community art can include; sculptures, mosaics, fountains or water elements, installations, earthworks and environmental artworks, decorative, ornamental or functional elements, murals, drawings, painting and monuments, and more recently street furniture. Community arts are usually displayed in town centres, parks, community facilities, libraries and plazas (Place Partners website, 2009).

**Place-Making Strategies**

Place-making is the process of creating a space into a place for a specific community. Place-making is about relationship building between the community and between the community and the space, “Place-making is the process of creating physical environments that provide economic, intellectual, cultural, emotional and sensory nourishment for the people who will use those places” (Place Partners website, 2009). Place-making aims to create places of the soul that make all people feel welcome, safe and secure. Place-making strategies provide the intervention between creating a space into a place in order to a local identity.

**Community Cultural Development**

Community Cultural Development (CCD) describes the processes of artists working with communities to explore and express people’s views and concerning issues, while helping them to foster new skills along the way. CCD is the exchange of skills and experience of various stakeholders to create a project that stimulates the interaction of community members and creatively addresses issues affecting communities. CCD addresses social exclusion, cultural rights and social change through the collaboration of community engagement and art to create change and allow people to empower their own space. On a CCD project the artists role is to facilitate and empower the community rather than produce their own artistic vision (Keighery, 2009; 1).

**Culturally Diverse Communities**

Multiculturalism is a term used to describe a society of different cultures. Around the world immigrants of different countries come together to live in a shared neighbourhood with their own cultures and languages. Culture is the ‘a set of beliefs, behaviours, attitudes, values,
goals and practices that are characteristics of an organisation or group’ (Department of Immigration and Citizenship website, 2009).

1.4 Significance of the Research

The research of this thesis is significant because it will contribute to the emerging and growing principle of CCD within the Planning discipline. Cultural planning is a recent phenomenon within society and as governments, planners, professionals, academics and local communities are beginning to recognise the importance of cultural diversity and social inclusion within neighbourhoods. This research will provide Planners, artists and facilitators an opportunity to understand the difference community art can make to a space and the benefits it can have to a community. Planners often under estimate the benefits of cultural development through CCD projects because of the unpredictability of community engagement and the quality of the community spectrum so governments are reluctant to budget for social infrastructure that cannot be guaranteed a success.

Providing the opportunity for cultural and linguistically diverse communities to contribute to local planning and decision-making of local strategies, plans and policies is imperative in reflecting the true demographics of a neighbourhood and provide accurate planning for future communities. CCD and a greater focus on place-making strategies has provided prominence in addressing social exclusion, social change and cultural rights through the interaction of social, political and economic stakeholders. CCD is seen as the way forward in engaging with the community and providing the widest and most inclusive consultation for local governments, whilst allowing culturally diverse communities to feel safe and comfortable in providing their opinions, feelings and emotions.

The specific study of community art as a form of place-making is evolving as a popular option for governments and facilitators to consult with communities. Community art will allow people to illustrate their stories in a collaborative process that encourages the empowerment of cultural rights and social inclusion. CCD and community art can pave the way for social change through the creation of place. Community art projects provide a tangible outcome that can encourage community members to be inspired and want to take part in future projects. Community art adds to the aesthetic of a space and provides people with a sense of home and community. When the community contribute to the implementation
of community art projects they will care for and maintain the infrastructure, encouraging community members to take pride in where they live and improving the quality of their spaces thus encouraging them to come together more regularly to care for their neighbourhood.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology for this thesis consists of three main components: a comprehensive literature review, in-depth interviews with field experts and project managers and site analysis of the three chosen case studies and their surrounding environment.

Literature Review

The literature review forms the conceptual and theoretical framework of the thesis. The literature for the conceptual framework focuses on space and place theory and place-making, CCD, with a specific focus on community art project as the form of connection between people and place. Literature was selected from a wide range of sources including libraries, various organisations, the internet, books, journal articles and government publications.

In-depth Interviews

The in-depth interviews provided information about the methods of place-making used for the chosen case studies and opinions and recommendations on cultural planning. The interviewees are considered professionals in the field of cultural planning and community art. The interviewees included:

- Vandana Ram – Cultural Planner, Bankstown City Council
- John Skennar – Artist Planner and Facilitator for Greenacre Community Art Project
- Beatriz Cardona – Cultural Planner and Project Manager for Llandilo Multicultural Footprints
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Site Analysis

In addition to literature reviews and in-depth interviews I conducted site visits to the locations of the chosen community art case studies:

- Greenacre Project, Waterloo Road, Greenacre
- Llandilo Multicultural Footprints, Collin Street, St Marys
- Nelson Park, Nelson Street, Fairfield

The site visits allowed me to gain an understanding of the scale, detail and effect of the community art project in relation to the space, surrounding area and community. It has allowed me to recognise the projects value in its real context and evaluate the success the project has had within the surrounding community.

Use of Photos

During my site visits I took photos of the community art projects and the surrounding area to illustrate the projects within my thesis. The photos will complement the case study information and will provide the reader with the overall context of each project.

Also the facilitators and project managers of each project provided me with pictures before the areas upgrade, during the upgrade, the implementation of the project and the celebration of the open day of each project. These pictures are essential in illustrating the impact of the community art project on the surrounding area and its demographics.

1.5 Chapter Summary

The need for useful public space is growing within communities subject to social change and disconnect from one another. The promotion of cultural planning and the construction of social infrastructure through community art projects allows local people to take pride in where they live, create a sense of place and provide a level of ownership which empowers them to care and maintain for their local area.

Chapter two will define culture and describe the emergence of cultural planning, chapter three will provide a theoretical framework on space and place theory and its related
constructs, and chapter four, five and six investigates three community art case studies: Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program, Llandilo Multicultural Footprints and Nelson Park, Fairfield. The projects provide examples of community art as a form of place-making to stimulate CCD within culturally diverse communities. The thesis concludes with a final chapter on the meaning of place and strategies, recommendations and benefits for the community and local governments to embrace CCD through community art.
2.0 Introduction

The chapter will define culture and the concepts of culture and place and discuss the emergence of cultural planning. The purpose of the chapter is to provide an overview of the history of cultural planning in order to understand the context of cultural planning today and comprehend its value within the planning discipline.

2.1 Culture

Culture is the “shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shape and influence perception and behaviours” (Soanes, et al as cited in Oxford Dictionary, 2009). Cultures are not fixed or fixable and are the intangible landscape that creates the character of an area. The character of an area is defined by “the people that live there and the way they communicate with each other, exchange ideas, explore possibilities and collect and curate the collective and personal histories of an area” (Westbury, 2008; 1). While the hard infrastructure of a city can be identified, such as public buildings, landmarks and monuments, culture is living, something that grows and never ends, and is barely measureable, “Culture is a setting that reflects the inner and outer worlds of the people that live there and it emerges from the “nature of human motivation, passions, interactions and enthusiasms” (Westbury, 2008; 2).

Culture and place come together when the stories and symbols of a community’s culture are illustrated in places people relate to through personal experience, social groups, heritage, spiritual values and community values. The concept of culture and place is evolving where different places lead to the creation of physical outcomes that have a cultural meaning (Brecknock, 2002). By creating cultural stages for a city great places are born and fostered. It is where unique ideas flourish and catalysts for culture interact to bring about a collaborative change to their city (Westbury, 2008).

2.2 Cultural Planning History

The ‘White Australia’ policy was enabled by the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 which described the type of immigrants that were permissible in Australia. After the Second World War the policy was abolished and by 1966 the government allowed migration from ‘distinguished’ non-European countries but the policy was primarily based on assimilation.
The assimilation policy expected migrants to shed their cultural identities, including their native languages, and adopt the Australian culture and way of life. It became evident that large numbers of migrants whose first language was not English suffered hardships when settling in Australia. Most were Europeans of non-British origin who had come to Australia after the Second World War. By 1973, the word ‘multiculturalism’ had been introduced and minority groups were forming local and national associations to promote their cultures and languages within the mainstream (Department of Immigration and Citizenship website, 2009).

Migration has contributed to Australia’s emergence as one of the most multi-ethnic and dynamic societies in the world. Ethnic groups have established community language schools, ethnic media, businesses, diverse religious and cultural activities and organisations, provides a variety of foods, restaurants, fashion, art and architecture in cities and suburbs around the nation. Immigration supports Australia’s economy by providing the people and skills needed to ensure productivity and growth, and assists in supporting population growth (Department of Immigration and Citizenship website, 2009).

Cultural planning is a relatively new phenomenon in Australia that provided a new direction and focus within the Planning discipline, “In the mid to late 1980s, the Australian Council for the Arts initiated lecture tours by cultural planning practitioners from America and England....these speakers were to promote the arts and cultural planning as a vehicle to create more liveable communities” (Conroy, 2003; 31). In Australia newly initiated ideas and programs were aimed at local governments, artists, designers, community officers and allied professional associations to provide an extension of the principals and practices of social work initiated in the 1970s. There was minimal infrastructure and organisation for cultural planning activities at a local level and funding for such projects often came from federal or state government agencies. The lack of funding for cultural projects meant local councils were reluctant to recognise the role of culture within local planning (Conroy, 2003).

It has only been in the last 20 years that Council has acknowledged the role of cultural planning in improving and contributing to resource and program decision-making to address community’s issues, concerns and needs by employing Cultural Planners to work with less advantaged and less accessible communities. Councils began integrating public art expenditure with the Corporate Management Plans which represented a shift in local
government perspective on cultural planning and was now considered core council business with specific funding each year.

2.3 Cultural Planning Today

Within local government today there is a broad diversification of cultural workers including: cultural planners, arts managers, arts facility managers, community cultural development workers and arts officers and facilitators. Under the Local Government Act, 1993 and Local Government Regulation (Amended), 1998 the NSW State Government required every local council to create a social plan that addressed the needs of: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, elderly, people with disabilities, youth, culturally and linguistically diverse, women and children. The social plan is a subset of the council’s Management Plan and is reported through the Annual Report. Each plan is for a four year period and has a specified budget. In 2003 Cultural Planning Guidelines were created by the NSW Ministry for the Arts to define cultural planning principles and recognise the links with other planning processes. The guidelines were thought to be a necessity in planning principles today. Currently council Management Plans are not legally binding and have no connection with LEPs and DCPs. Cultural planning is supported through state government agencies such as Planning NSW, Department of Local Government, CCD NSW and NSW Ministry for the Arts (2003).

In general, there is a lack of planning for cultural infrastructure and planning approaches need to define how cultural infrastructure will address issues of access and diversity and consider how to balance urban development with cultural priorities (Dang, et al, 2007). Although many Council’s across NSW have commissioned cultural policies or plans there is little consistency in regards to rules, regulations or responsibilities for the development of cultural policy (Conroy, 2003).

2.4 Chapter Summary

It has only been in the last 20 years that local governments have acknowledged the role of cultural planning in improving and contributing to resource and program decision-making to address community’s issues, concerns and needs. It is becoming increasingly popular among local councils to employ cultural planners and adopt public art and cultural plans and policies. These policies or plans aim to provide the framework for community and Council collaboration in order to create a process of community cultural development.
1.0 Introduction

The most recent planning discipline is concerned with the interactions of people within their external environments. The concept of ‘place’ provides a fundamental foundation for researchers and practitioners to develop strategies, plans and policies to approach local issues of human-environment interactions. The thesis seeks to make a contribution to the recent literature on the determinants of cultural planning and the changing nature of community art.

The following intends to provide a summary on the type of information, opinions and recommendations provided by researchers and policy makers to stimulate CCD at a local scale. The following will provide a theoretical framework on the current literature on space and place theory, built form as place, and connections people have with place.

3.1 Space Theory

“The essence of civilised life is sharing space with others without intruding or being intruded upon” (Greenbie, 1981; 1). Spaces are dimensions of the human landscape that people create or use for different purposes. Spaces can either be public or private depending on the ownership of the space. Other than our homes and workplaces the remainder of our time is spent in spaces in which we consider public. In Australia these places are the areas in which we express our democratic right to be ourselves, participate in cultural and community events, share with family and friends, meet people and socialise (Brecknock, 1997).

Public space is defined as a space that is accessible to the public for individual or group activity. It is an area without hindrance and barriers in which people have a freedom to be themselves within the rules of the law. (Brecknock, 1997)

Spaces are either unconditional or conditional. It is becoming more difficult to distinguish between public and private places due to the complexity of our capitalist system. It is the themes of ownership, access and identity that dictates the management and design of a particular place. It is these themes that create the transition between public and private space and create the interfaces of various urban spaces (Skeenar, 2004). An unconditional space is accessible to everyone such as a park or public space within a town centre. However whilst government still owns the land the area can be tendered out to companies or organisations for the management of the space who can exercise access and control to the area, such as hiring
security to patrol the area. Then there are spaces that create the illusion of a public space, such as shopping centres, in which people can access at certain times of the day and can be used for various purposes. However when the doors are locked and security patrols the area a shopping centre can hardly be called public, and thus is a conditional space because of its written or unwritten rules and acceptable behaviour.

After considering the ownership and access of public spaces it is important to focus on the identity of a place. The identity of public spaces can either be proxemic or distemic. Proxemics, as described by anthropologist Edward T. Hall, is the study of spatial distances between individuals in different cultures and situations. Proxemics measures the way people interact in different places. Proxemic spaces are “spaces which are full of meaning to locals, rich with personal and communal history and governed by very specific cultural mores” (Brecknock, 1997; 3). It is about providing a close connection with a place and sense of self-identification. Conversely, Greenbie states that distemic spaces are of larger scale to proxemic spaces and has a greater cross-cultural experience, “large city spaces tend to be generally distemic, where no one feels any sense of personal association with the place” (1981; 3). People that are local to the area can feel a sense of place, however if you are just visiting the area then you would not be able to appreciate what the personal and communal attachment and closeness locals share for a space.

The solution to successful public spaces is not to over design or over clutter. The most successful spaces are those that involve the communities input to portray their local culture, “those parts of the city that are actively shared by people with diverse cultural values and codes of conduct must be readily intelligible to all” (Greenbie, 1981; 3). As times change public spaces it is important to retain and enhance local identity in order to create a culturally rich and responsive environment, “we have to teach people not to accept impoverished places and environments, from local to civic. We have to teach architects that architectural egotism is a sin, and that great architecture can be produced within the constraints of the urban context. We have to train urban designers to work with local people in local environments” (Lynch, 1960; 5). As the shift from unconditional traditional public spaces moves to conditional spaces it is important to retain the concept of proxemic spaces through elements of culture and local identity.
3.2 Place Theory and Related Constructs

The ideas of space and place work in collaboration with each other and as Tuan, 1974, believes one cannot exist without the other. Space is more abstract than place and do not have a differentiated spatial function or form to other spaces, however as we get to know the space better and endow it with value and meaning it becomes a place (Tuan, 1974). We feel place as secure and stable but a space as open and unsettled. If we think of feng-shui and the idea of chi or the energy of place the movement is what enlivens a space, but people need to be able to feel stillness and to pause to grasp the meaning of the space to provide it with value in their mind so as to recall it as a place.

Furthermore it is the range of experience and knowledge within a space that allows people to recognise the area as a place. Experiences can be direct and intimate or it can be indirect and conceptual. Drawing attention to senses, images, sounds, concepts, memories and experiences people have had in a particular space allows them to recognise it as a place with value in their mind (Tuan, 1974). Place can be considered as an object. It has a concentration of value, however the value is intangible. The built architectural form instigates our senses to make places active and reflective in our mind and allows us to remember the experiences we have had in that place (Tuan, 1974).

Place

Place is a subjective element to a person’s life. “Place is the countless areas of space that we have bounded or controlled, which range in scale from room to continent” (Sacks, 2001; 232). Places and peoples identity have a strong relationship, “Place is about belonging and the relationships with other people in that place and how we relate to the physical qualities within that place” (Skeenar, 2009). Space is an element of the human landscape but place is an area with cultural and social significance to a person or group, “human experience of the world is of an inter-subjective space, an arc of encompassing language and history with which is formed a sense of tradition, of place and of one’s self in that place” (McHugh, 2005; 137). Place is an important concept for social action theory. People do not experience themselves together with other people but they consider the place and environment they are in. When there are various people in one place it becomes a ‘commonplace’ and thus that group of people and their actions cannot be isolated from the existence of the place. This
‘commonplace’ is made of diverse culture and rich social identity, “what we are is not best seen in isolation from our place because a place is even part of what ‘we’ – persons- are” (Raffell, 2006; 84). Thus, place plays an important role to the self identity of a person that place and person “furnish the other with an instance of plurality” (McHugh, 2005;144-5).

Our senses create an awareness that reminds you of different experiences in that space that creates an emotional image or definition of what that place means to you, “Places are doubly constructed; most are built or in some way carved out but they are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood or imagined” (Gieryn, 2000:465). How people identify with space measures and describes a deep analysis on personal identity formation and social constructs and actions, “personal identity is no longer seen as a matter of sheer self-consciousness but now involves intrinsically an awareness of one’s self” (Easthope, 2004; 130). Tuan states people may identify to places stronger than others and this bond between people and place is referred to as topophillia (1977). Topophillia is a person’s attachment or relationship to place and is influenced by their personal feelings, memories and thoughts of a particular space. These feelings create a ‘sense of place’, whether it being a feeling of optimism and security or a negative discomfort that contrasts them to places. (Duncan and Duncan, 2001; 41).

**3.3 Built Form as Place**

Symbols within our environment provide the glue that bonds people to place which contributes to people’s feelings of place identity, “The urban fabric contains symbols (icons) that tell us something about ourselves and something about those to whom they belong” (Hull, et al, 1993;109). Such symbols include; natural environments, public buildings, house, places associated with historic events or significance and shopping areas. These icons give a distinctive character to an area and symbolise the social groups people belong to and the history people have within the area. “Place-based meanings tell us something about who we are and who we are not, how we have changed and what we are changing into, encounters with objects or places from our past have ‘the power to recreate in us, briefly, vivid sensations of an earlier self’”(Hull, et al, 1993;110). Place identity is subjective and subtle and will evoke a ‘sociocultural residue’ that reflects the community that lives there, allowing people to differentiate one place from another and create a strong perceptual image of the place through its distinctive characteristics (Hull, et al, 1993).
Place-Making

In order to plan for place identity you need to encourage development practices that promote and exploit existing or potential place identity in a space which will encourage the psychological investment in people’s local, physical neighbourhood. Place identity is a cultural construct of the built environment that needs to be assessed and managed through sensitive land development efforts (Hull, et al, 1993). Place-making strategies are used to stimulate cultural and social development through an integrated process to create sustainable and resilient communities, current and future. Communities with a shared vision of a healthier, integrated neighbourhood through the creation of social capital come together through democratic processes to create a project that tells their local story or message, “Place-making is important because it brings the community together to achieve a project and there is something amazing about the passive levels of engagement between people that are in the same place to achieve the same purpose” (Skennar, 2009). Place-making is what enlivens a place and reflects the community and cultural identity of an area. Place-making provides an understanding of how people feel about being in a public space, individually and together, and facilitates a process so all their needs are fulfilled in the spatial structure of the space.

The types of place-making strategies used depends on the artist and/or facilitator, the local council and their budget, the demographics of a community and the techniques used. The strategies are designed to bring people together to share their ideas about creating a successful place. The artist will work with the community to design concepts and map out ideas and then work with the available materials and resources to build a place in collaboration with the community. Some place making strategies include; stakeholder involvement and engagement, community capacity mapping, walking the ‘beat’, listening posts, inspiration evening, design and marketing material and engaging key players in to the community (Keighery, 2009:8). Place-making strategies include talking to the local community, community groups and local businesses to have a wider and more accurate consultation, “setting up community reference groups and approaching the people that know the area well and the local issues that need to be addressed is important because community projects usually attract Anglo-Saxon and older community generations and often does not draw younger of cultural communities” (Skennar, 2009).
Cultural planners rely on background familiarisation by talking to local people, liaising with local networks and analysing local demographics to understand about what’s local about the place and why the project would be important to the local people. The place-making process is about being as inclusive as possible in consultation and understanding what place they visit in their local area and what places they don’t. Place-making is about imagining the types of spaces that people want and telling their story within those spaces. The story should explain why the space is special and how it reflects self identity for a particular community.

3.4 Connections with people as manifested in place

Place identity maybe a subset of a sense of place in that it influences peoples connectedness or relatedness to a place, “Places cannot exist without us. But equally important we cannot exist without places” (Sack, 2001; 233). This statement provides the essence of the interdependence between people and place. It is our social constructs that create place and without people places would not exist and would merely be spaces. Places are about how we use spaces and thus “turn space in to a humanized landscape” (Sack, 2001; 233). Once people differ between a space and a place “groups begin to form boundaries to differentiate themselves from the other” which leads to stereotyping and social exclusion (Easthope, 2004; 131). Till, 1993, explains that group formation encourages spatial divisions and territorial identities and contribute to a person’s sense of place and feeling of belonging. The process of breaking down the barriers of spatial division will create a community that shares the same feeling and image of ‘place’ and become a common place for all cultures and demographics to share.

CCD Projects

The creation of a CCD project is complex when working with diverse communities and changing demographics. To understand the underlying issues of a community and barriers to participation relevant and flexible research methods need to be developed for each particular community, “As cities, towns and suburbs grow there is an opportunity to realise and celebrate what people bring to place and make this central to our thinking….there is a growing need to take a less mechanistic and rational approach to the making of places that recognises the human and emotional dimensions to space and provide place structures that are focused on achieving this” (Skeenar, 2004; 6).
CCD projects provide an opportunity to engage culturally diverse communities in the place-making process in order to reflect the changing nature of a particular community. CCD projects need to meet three principal concepts: philosophy, practice and process. These principals are essential in creating a successful and equitable project. The philosophy element has three principal concepts; access, equity and participation. Access is about creating physical access for all community members to participate, language accessibility so all members can understand, the use and programming of activities needs to be easy for all people to use and the ease of becoming involved in a CCD project needs to be simple. Equity is providing equal treatment to all participants involved; equal in content and value of each culture or community members contribution and Participation in the creation of the content and processes involved in creating the project. The advantages of adopting philosophy concepts is that it creates community engagement through arts and empowers individuals. A CCD project puts them in contact with other members of the community that they may not usually communicate with and helps them articulate issues and concerns that are common in particular groups of people. However the challenge is to convince people of the value of the CCD project as people may become suspicious of the artist or government groups intentions and afraid of the outcomes of the project (Keighery, 2009; 2-3).

Practice is about creating the communities vision in to a tangible space. The advantages of CCD is that it feeds the creative spirit of people that often don’t get the opportunity to show their skills and provides the artist and the community with different ideas and approaches to art work (Keighery, 2009). A CCD project provides a unique opportunity for community members to engage for mutual benefit. Artists need to find a balance where they can provide contribution to the artwork and let go of their own vision and individual practices because as Vivenne Bennett once said “Artists aren’t special kinds of people, people are special kinds of artists” (1970).

Process is the process involved in evolving the concept into the product or space. Process includes community participation in decision making from the beginning of the project to its implementation, documentation and evaluation. When the community participates in the CCD process they develop a sense of ownership of the project and take responsibility for its outcomes and ongoing maintenance and survival. The CCD process is often labour intensive and requires time, attention and significant funding which means the slow implementation
will often create part time involvement by participants and disparate points of view from the group (Keighery, 2009).

Funding for CCD projects usually come from local councils and government agencies such as Council for the Arts and CCD NSW. Materials can be donated by local suppliers, shops and the local council. Local councils will play an imperative role in coordinating the project by engaging an artist, providing funding and materials, supplying a space for communities to meet and work and engaging with other government, political, high profile and local stakeholders on behalf of the community members involved in the CCD project. An artist engaged in a CCD project needs particular skills to produce a project in collaboration with the community and often the local council. These skills include; being organised, listening, networking, planning, problem solving, goal setting, patience, flexibility, people skills, attention to detail, artistic skills, acquiring resources and equipment, high level of commitment, ability to create an artistic vision, delegating, teaching skills and recognising the community’s skills.

Community Art

Place-making strategies can bring together communities for a range of pursuits including theatre, music, dance and creation of artworks. One of the most common and effective place-making strategies used today is the creation of community art. Artists and facilitators use community art as a means of allowing communities to express and portray their thoughts, images and feelings in a collaborative process with other community members. Artists help communities create a place that represents their story through artistic training, critical thinking and interpersonal skills, “It is the artist’s position to uncover, express and re-purpose the assets of place” (Nowak, 2007;7). In order to recognise and harness community assets the skill of dialogue and working together is paramount to the creation of successful community art.

The twentieth century saw the development of three equally important types of art in public spaces. Through to the 1970s Australian art was considered a stand-alone principal with a relatively simplistic approach. Art soon became tied to the built environment when the notions of art and community cultural development became common practice in the second half of the twentieth century. During the 1980s and 90s local governments facilitated
opportunities for residents to work with artists on culturally significant projects. The artists role shifted from the creation of ‘Plonk Art’ or stand-alone decorative art to the creation of locally significant art, known as community art. The changing nature of community art has forced it to have a major role in place making and community building. The new focus meant artists were needed to have a deeper understanding of the economic, social, cultural, historical and environmental local values and constraints to a neighbourhood in order to produce an artwork that reflected the local stories. The three types of art resulted in varied stakeholder involvement and public art diversity (Brecknock, 2001).

Art in public spaces can fall in to a range of sliding scales relating to the intent of the project, the use of the artwork and the process of integration. The scale of ‘intent of the artwork’ is about the initial conception and creation of the artwork itself. At one end of the scale there is a high level of community input and consideration, which is considered community art, creating a high degree of community ownership and pride towards the artwork, and at the other end of the scale is stand alone object art created only by the artist without consideration to its location within the public space.

The next scale is the use of the artwork. The artwork can either be a functional object or a site-specific artwork. At one end artists can be employed to create street furniture or other functional objects for a specified public space that is responding to the requests of the community, such as the construction of a park bench or fencing around a playground, at the other end is a creation of individual expression of the artist based purely on site context and a general understanding of society (Place Partners website, 2009).

The final scale is the process of integration between the artist and community. At one end the artist comes together with the community to integrate ideas to create a project in total collaboration where there is no way of differentiating the input form various disciplines, community members or artist and at the other end the artist works in total isolation from the community (Place Partners website, 2009).

Once an artist has been selected the artist needs to form ideas for the artwork. An artist needs to consider the relevance of the artwork to the space, local values, cultures and people, suitability of the work for an outdoor display, its maintenance and conservation requirements, relationship of the work to the site and host community, the appropriateness of the scale of
the artwork and how the artwork meets the goals of the community. Site selection is one of the most important factors to a successful artwork. The artwork should be located in an area that experiences high pedestrian traffic, easily visible and accessible, serve to activate the site, enhance the streetscape, create a place of congregation and activity and establish a local landmark (Place Partners website, 2009).

Cultural planning needs to work to promote the words of Francois Matarasso, “culture is the expression of human values. When we express ourselves we create meanings where there were none, and consequently change the way in which we and others behave…it is, indeed, perhaps the only thing which can save the city” (2000). Planners need to provide cultural markers for particular neighbourhoods that underpin our social and civic life and thus Councils need to shape its own creative approach and move beyond established practices in order to enrich the life of the city (Brisbane City Council, 2003).

3.5 Chapter Summary

The ideas of space and place work in collaboration with each other and one can not exist without the other. Symbols within the urban fabric are the glue that bonds people to place which contributes to people’s feelings of place identity. Place-making strategies are used to stimulate cultural and social development through an integrated process to create sustainable and resilient communities, current and future. CCD projects, such as community art projects, provide an opportunity to engage culturally diverse communities in the place-making process in order to reflect the changing nature of a particular community.
4.0 Introduction

In South Western Sydney the changing cultural landscape is becoming more apparent. New residents and communities bring with them cultural practices that change the physical and cultural fabric of the city. The old and new communities need to share the limited public space and often have conflicting needs and uses for the space. Establishing a balance between the two communities can provide an enrichment of the fabric and life of the suburb. The following chapter will investigate the need and benefit of the Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program. The chapter will provide a site analysis on the suburb of Greenacre and investigate the community art and social infrastructure that was incorporated into the local plan. The chapter will conclude with the benefits of the community art project for the older Anglo-Saxon community and the increasing migrant community.

4.1 Greenacre Town Centre

Location

Greenacre is a suburb located in the South West of Sydney. It is approximately 17 kilometres from Sydney’s CBD and located off the Hume Highway. Greenacre is bounded by Boronia Road, Juno parade, Roberts Road and Liverpool Road (see Figure 2). Greenacre is part of City of Bankstown and Municipality of Strathfield local government areas. Greenacre Town Centre is the heart of Greenacre. The town centre is based along Waterloo Road and is the spine for the local business district.

Figure 2: Map of Waterloo Rd, Greenacre
Source: Whereis.com website, 2009
Land Use

The suburb of Greenacre is predominantly low density residential zoning. Waterloo Road has a mix of business, residential, special use and open space zones (see Figure 3). The surrounding area is home to many schools and large parks and open space.

![Greenacre Zoning Map](source: City of Bankstown Council website, 2009)

4.2 Site Analysis

Settlement

Settlement of Greenacre dates back to the Aboriginal inhabitants, the Eora people. Europeans first came to the area in 1795 and in 1813 Governor Lachlan Macquarie commissioned Mr William Roberts to build the Great Southern Road, now known as the Hume Highway, to encourage more settlement in the area. The change in migration policy after World War II and major public housing investment by the Housing Commissioner saw the population boom. The area of Greenacre, previously known as East Bankstown, was established in 1899. The area first acquired its name when an acre of land was cleared to make way for the first road which contrasted the surrounding lush green land. In 1909 the Green Park Estate was the first subdivision of the area. After European settlement a large number of Asian migrants occupied the area, followed by an influx of Italian and then Middle Eastern migrants.
1970s. Migration was aided by the large low and medium density public housing development. (City of Bankstown website, 2009).

Social/Community Profile

The statistics for the community profile of Greenacre have been derived from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census, 2006, and provided by City of Bankstown website. The Council has collaborated the profile of Greenacre with the surrounding suburb profiles of Chullora and Mount Lewis. Chullora is two kilometres North West of Greenacre and Mount Lewis is two kilometres South West of Greenacre. This collaboration is not considered to have an impact on the profile of Greenacre due to their close proximity to Greenacre Town Centre and similar nature in population and housing status.

The locality of Greenacre, Chullora and Mount Lewis had a population of 21,770 in 2008, which is an increase of approximately 4,000 people in 2006. The majority of the population is born overseas, 67.6%, and currently the largest number of migrants came from Lebanon, 14.8%, followed by Vietnam, Italy and Korea, as shown in Figure 4. A large proportion of people born overseas come from a non-English speaking background, and 22.9% of the population do not speak English well or not at all. Majority of the population speak Arabic at home, 39.4%, followed by Greek and Italian at 5% and 3% respectively. and 31% of the population is Muslim and 28% Catholic. There has been an increase of 1,566 Muslims living in the locality, 31%, and a reduction of 863 people of Christian denominations, 28%, between 2001 and 2006. The demographics in the area are changing and are becoming more culturally diverse, “there is an aging Anglo community and a new diverse population in Greenacre.

There is a large Arabic community throughout the business centre that services the local area” (Skeenar, 2009). The majority of people live in separate housing, 68.8%, and 25.4% live in medium density dwellings. A high proportion of the population earned a low income of less than $400 per week, 53.4%, and 9% earned a high income of over $1000 per week. Bankstown City Council was ranked seventh on the Socio-Economic Index for Areas of Disadvantage (SEIFA) within the LGA (ABS, 2006).
Open Space and Recreation

Numerous parks and reserves are located along Waterloo Road and surrounding Greenacre Town Centre contains including: Roberts Park, Allum Park, Lockwood Park, Gosling Park, Greenacre Heights Reserve and Northcote reserve. Northcote Reserve can be accessed from Waterloo Road and Northcote Road and is the closest recreation area to Greenacre Town Centre. City of Bankstown Council has recently invested $28,000 in upgrading the park to make it family friendly with a basketball and handball court, bench seating, concrete footpath and turfed area, as illustrated in the figures below.

Traffic and Transport

Arterial roads throughout Greenacre include Waterloo Road, Hume Highway, Juno Parade and Boronia Road. Greenacre is not connected to a railway station but is serviced by public and private bus services that operate along the main road. Buses operate to Bankstown, Burwood and Strathfield train stations from Waterloo Road and nearby streets.

Carparking

Waterloo Road provides time restricted parking on the street. There is a designated car parking area of approximately 20 car spaces for the local supermarket ‘Abu Salim Supermarket’, and there is parallel off-street parking on Boronia Road, Noble Avenue and Banksia Road.
Business Profile

Greenacre town centre is a shopping strip of local independent shops along Waterloo Road. The local shops, seen in Figure 5, reflect the culturally diverse nature of the community and include: Classy Clothes The Church Of Christ, Thong Loi Hot Bread, Peters Hardware, Malaysian Restaurant, Behind the Veil, Arabic Grocery Store, Nassar Taxation, Khodar’s Pharmacy, Solomon and Co. Solicitors, Halal Butcher, Abu Salim Supermarket (Figure 6), El Khayil Lebanese Restaurant, Jad’s Barber, Joe Youseef Loan Market and Chouman Lawyers. It is clear that the demographics are reflected in the business district of Greenacre, providing the cultural goods and services required locally.

4.3 Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program

Background

City of Bankstown’s Town Centre Improvement Program (TCIP) aimed at upgrading and reinforcing the role of suburban shopping centres and cultural and physical hubs for residents, “providing a restored and enlivened physical appearance to shopping precincts and amenities and ensure that the structure and functioning of these centres supports the long-term viability of the area” (TCIP Factsheet, 2004). Council’s TCIP focuses on public domain improvements in local town centres and communicating the image and identity of different communities through community facilities and social infrastructure, “Council’s program was aimed at being much more than a footpath or kerb and gutter project, instead focusing on the vertical not the horizontal, and the impressions of the place that remain in people’s minds” (Ram, 2009).
Planning for the TCIP commenced in 2005 and was completed by late 2007 and early 2008. The desired outcomes of the program varied according to the perspective of the community and the structure of the plans allowed Council to involve the local community in the direction of growth for each particular town centre. Involving the community in the design and priorities of each town centre, selection of materials, trees and other urban details created a level of community ownership for their local area. The Greenacre TCIP aimed at supporting and enhancing local businesses and the community by supporting as many collective issues as possible such as safety, accessibility, traffic management, asset maintenance, social exclusion, community awareness and cultural divide, “Greenacre had an image problem: there were rapes and drive by shootings and the media portrayed the area as a ghetto, there were challenges within the community… I had a friend that moved from Greenacre, I asked her why did you move and she said she was sick of all the drive by shootings and the neighbours she just couldn’t relate too” (Skeenar, 2009). The TCIP provided an opportunity to repair the dilapidated image Greenacre suffered.

One of the biggest priorities within the TCIP was the proposed social infrastructure. The program planned for the development and placement of community-based public art along Waterloo Road. John Skeenar, the chosen Artist Planner for the project, states that “the local shopping precinct had seen better days and needed a revamp to stop the decline of local people shopping in the area…..the revitalisation of the area created a healthier local centre by providing a local meeting place for the whole community to enjoy” (2009). The community art projects provided the foundation for community participation and revitalizing the image and identity of Greenacre. Greenacre TCIP was undertaken with a fixed budget of $1.5 million, $75,000 or 5% of which was allocated at project commencement to community-based public artwork creation and installation. Much of the artworks infrastructure could be incorporated into the capital project budget because of the physical use of the artwork. The incorporation of community-based public artwork met the objectives outlined in the Bankstown Council Cultural Plan.
Objectives

The objectives of the community-based public art within the TCIP:

- Provide a place where all local people feel welcome and comfortable being in the public domain
- Make a place people are proud of and drawn to
- Provide art that was interactive, symbolic, imaginative and represented Greenacres local identity (TCIP Factsheet, 2004).

Process and Stakeholder Involvement

Bankstown Council held a competition for artists to develop a theme or themes for Greenacre Town Centre based upon research and exploration of Greenacre’s character and sense of place. Three finalists were selected and the concepts were placed on public exhibition and the community could vote for their favourite concept at the Council or Greenacre Neighbourhood Centre. John Skeenar’s twin themes of ‘Sharing the Knowledge’ and Telling Your Story’ was selected and formed the basis for the five public artworks featured in Greenacre Town Centre. Local artists were employed to work with Skeenar to create images of the area and portray the history of Greenacre. The artworks were incorporated into the proposed site layout and design, and where possible were included in to essential infrastructure and capital budget (Greenacre TCIP Factsheet, 2008).
Skeenar’s place-making strategies began with background familiarisation. This included spending time in the local area and observing the day-to-day activities of locals, meeting residents and people shopping within the town centre. A Community Reference Group, see Figure 9, was formed in mid 2005 with an open public meeting of interested residents, community members and artists. John Skeenar, Artist Planner (Figure 10) worked with Council’s community development and design team, local community groups, local artists Noeline Holten, Jamie Eastwood, Joanne Saad, Peter Day, and photographer Murmur Sayed Ahmed to lead community workshopping, design, construction and installation processes of the artwork. Open community meetings were held, local businesses were directly consulted with one on one, and direct approaches made to local social and community groups including: Greenacre Neighbourhood Centre, local Aboriginal, Senior’s, migrant and women’s social support networks and nine local mixed denomination primary and high schools. Community consultation for the TCIP ended in June 2007 (Skeenar, 2009).

A competition was run with the local high schools to develop an image for one of the structures to reflect the theme *Young People in Greenacre their identity and Coming together of all nations as one*. Two images were selected, one from Bankstown Girls High School and the other from Punchbowl Boys, and the chosen images were sent to digital printing labs to enlarge the images. Skeenar ran workshops with local primary school children to explore themes of *Contemporary Greenacre* through cultural heritage, ethnic designs and patterns, poetry and items of personal cultural significance. The images were collected, photographed, scanned and arranged utilising digital technology and applied to the sculpture cladding. Skeenar worked with the fabricators to create the infrastructure in which the artworks would be displayed. Peter Day hand painted the tile wall to illustrate Greenacre’s transition from
early settlement to post-war migration. Noeline Holten is the local Aboriginal artist that hand-painted the artworks that depict local indigenous people on a journey, referred to as ‘walkabout’. The consultation, design and implementation of the artworks took nearly three years to complete. The Launch party, pictured in the figures below, for the TCIP was held in March 2008 and invited all local stakeholders, residents, businesses and local entertainment to take part (Greenacre TCIP Factsheet, 2004).

![Launch Party](image1.png)

**Figure 11: Launch Party**
*Source: Skeenar, 2007*

![Community in McGuigan Place](image2.png)

**Figure 12: Community in McGuigan Place**
*Source: Skeenar, 2007*

### Project Outcomes

The five public community-based public artworks are based on the themes of ‘Sharing the Knowledge’ and ‘Telling Your Story’. Numbers have been used to portray the sharing of knowledge across cultures with the numerals of Greenacre’s 0,1,2,3 ‘Sculpture Path’ leading from Greenacre’s Library to McGuigan Place, acting as symbols of inter-cultural learning in Greenacre today. Each numeral has been developed as an artwork that portrays the use of numbers in different languages represents the history of different cultural settlement over time reflecting the theme of history. The numerals 1,2,3 form a path along Waterloo Road leading into McGuigan Place and the Council hopes to place the number ‘0’ within the ground of Greenacre Library to complete the ‘sculpture path’. Two Welcome Walls are located at the gateways to Waterloo Road, each reflecting local Indigenous tradition (Greenacre TCIP Factsheet, 2004).

- **Welcome Wall – “Meeting Place”** is located on the corner of Waterloo Road and Wangee Road. The “Meeting Place” was designed by Noeline Holten and Jamie Eastwood and tells the personal story of Noeline as an indigenous woman. The Welcome Wall is a hand painted artwork that depicts the importance of a meeting
place where tribes met on a journey, and includes designs representing Elders sitting down, rivers, waterholes and people dancing around a fire. The hand stencils were made with participation of local children (Greenacre TCIP Factsheet, 2004).

- Welcome Wall – “The Goanna” is located on the corner of Waterloo Road and Boronia Road, also designed by Noeline Holten and Jamie Eastwood. The artwork features a Goanna because it is the totem to different tribes in the country. Each design on the wall is a symbol; the lines represent rivers running through the land, the circles are watering holes and the curved designs are where the Elders sit (Greenacre TCIP Factsheet, 2004).

Figures 13 and 14: Welcome Wall
Source: Jamleoui, 2009

Figure 15: Welcome Wall excerpt
Source: Jamleoui, 2009

Figure 16: Goanna totem on Welcome Wall
Source: Jamleoui, 2009
• Number 1 – “1” is located on the western side of Waterloo Road, at the Arcade leading to Greenacre Library. The large “One” infrastructure is painted yellow is used a community notice board. The images within the numeral are of hand movements and are symbols of cross-cultural communication (Greenacre TCIP, 2004).

Figure 17: ‘Number 1’  
Source: Jamleoui, 2009

Figure 18: Community Noticeboard in ‘Number 1’  
Source: Jamleoui, 2009

Figure 19: Image by Bankstown Girls  
Source: Skeenar, 2007

Figure 20: Image by Punchbowl Boys  
Source: Skeenar, 2007
Number 2 – “II” is located at the entry of McGuigan Place and designed by Joanne Saad. The sculpture is a 5 metre high shade structure in the shape of the Roman Numeral Two ‘II’ and is set at the entrance of the local community gathering space, McGuigan Place. The sculpture is covered with images and words depicting cultural significance. The schools involved in developing the images include Al Noori Muslim Primary, Banksia Road Primary, Chullora Primary, Greenacre Primary, Holy Saviour and St John Vianney (Greenacre TCIP Factsheet, 2004).
• Number 3 – “Arabic Numeral Three” set on the far side of McGuigan Place forms an enclosure to the playground and a children’s seating wall. The hand-painted tile wall tells the story of Greenacre’s transition from early settlement with images of farm animals to post-war migration. The shape of the Arabic numeral three can be seen when viewed from the southeast corner of McGuigan Place (Greenacre TCIP, 2004).

![Arabic Numeral Three](Image)

**Figure 25:** Arabic Numeral Three
*Source: Jamleoui, 2009*

![Enclosed playground](Image)

**Figure 26:** Enclosed playground
*Source: Jamleoui, 2009*

**Project Success**

The TCIP has been considered a success by Bankstown Council because “Greenacre now has an improved purpose-designed gathering space in McGuigan Place, which can be utilised for staging of events, children’s play area, community gathering and meeting, and adds to the amenity of the streetscape” (Greenacre TCIP Factsheet, 2008; 3). Vandana Ram, the Cultural Planner working with Skeenar on the art projects, says “the artworks are simple yet striking integrated features of the centre and hold significance to the local community through the
way they have been crafted, they lend to the distinct identity and image of Greenacre” (2009). The artworks won the Local Government Cultural Award in 2008 for cultural infrastructure, “the artworks were competing against buildings and library upgrades, this recognises a meeting space as cultural infrastructure so it is important to recognise that culture happens in a public, informal and indirect ways and is a resource space for people to use and interact” (Ram, 2009). Skeenar believes that the creation and implementation of the artworks are a success, however the creation of place is only the first stage, the next stage is activating place, “the next stage needs more work which is about activating place, the project was about creating a sustainable meeting place for locals to meet and develop sustainble relationships, the space and infrastructure is there the next step is to attract the local people” (2009).

4.4 Connections with people as manifested in place

The community-based art works create a whole other layer to the refurbishment of Greenacre. The artworks have not only provided an improved amenity to Greenacre Town Centre but created a cultural fabric that is tangible and accessible within physical open space. The artworks represent culture, self-identity and the local community through the images portrayed of the cultural heritage, ethnic designs and patterns, poetry and items of personal cultural significance. The community artworks narrate the cultural identity of the local people and provide imperative benefits to creating a sustainable community, “explaining to the people that the artwork is about telling their story, it’s not just coming from nowhere and people get excited to tell their story, their story becomes a collaborative story and they feel their personal identity portrayed in a space, this space becomes special to them” (Skeenar, 2009). Providing an area that is accessible to the whole community means people will be encouraged to spend time in the public domain and interact with other people they would not usually meet, “A man that attended the Launch day told me that I could not walk down the street without people looking at me because I am black, now I can come here and meet many other people like me” (Ram, 2009). Creating places such as McGuigan works at alleviating social isolation and cultural resistance and provides an area where all people feel welcome and proud to live in Greenacre.

The artworks tell the tale of time for Greenacre, illustrating the settlement of the area, post-war migration and the people of today. The numeral design and the changing cultural landscape on the Arabic numeral three and welcome walls with Indigenous artworks illustrate the changing cultural landscape. The incorporation of the Arabic numeral elucidates the
emerging Arabic population within Greenacre and the large proportion of overseas born and non-English speaking within the community, reflecting the shift from the original Anglo-Saxon settlers. The illustrations focus on the community profile and now the demographics are embedded in to the heart of Greenacre.

By involving the local community in planning decisions for their local centre and giving them an opportunity to provide their personal mark within the development of the community artworks it develops a sense of place within the locality, a feeling of belonging within the community and a level of ownership for the artworks and space. The place-making strategies used by Skeenar have worked to accurately portray the community and provided an enlivened space for people to congregate in an informal, neutral and universal area. The strategies have been successful in forming a place that represent the current identity of the local people. Furthermore positive place-making has been achieved through the focus on the positive attributes of the local area by the use of poetry and symbols of cultural significance. Creating a common place for people to share makes people feel welcome, comfortable and proud to live in Greenacre.

4.5 Chapter Summary

The five public community-based public artworks are based on the themes of ‘Sharing the Knowledge’ and ‘Telling Your Story’. Numbers have been used to portray the sharing of knowledge across cultures. The numerals of Greenacre’s 0,1,2,3 ‘Sculpture Path’ leading from Greenacre’s Library to McGuigan Place are symbols of inter-cultural learning in Greenacre today. The community artworks provide a narration of the local community and accurately represent the community through their own images of items of personal and cultural significance. The place-making strategies used to develop the community art have been successful in acknowledging the changing cultural landscape of Greenacre.
5.0 Introduction

Historically post European settlement in Sydney’s West has been small townships along the Cumberland Plain. As the city grows the gaps between each town are filled causing communities to merge and overtime experience remarkable change. The following chapter will research the suburb of Llandilo in Western Sydney. It will provide an analysis on the physical, economic, environmental, social and cultural makeup of the suburb. This analysis will form the context of the Llandilo Multicultural Footprints project. The objectives, methods, outcomes and success of the project will be explored to illustrate a community art project used as a form of place-making for the existing Chinese and Maltese communities.

5.1 Llandilo

Location

Llandilo is a suburb located North West of Sydney’s CBD. The suburb is approximately 23 kilometres squared and is located in the northern part of the City of Penrith’s LGA. Llandilo is bounded by South Creek on its eastern boundary, Berkshire Park on its northern boundary and Cranebrook on its western border, represented in Figure 29 (Penrith City Council website, 2009).

Figure 29: Llandilo Location Map
Source: Whereis.com website, 2009
Land Use

Llandilo is a rural suburb with small farms approximately one to two acres in size. Llandilo Town Centre is the heart of Llandilo and is based on Seventh Avenue. This area is not zoned commercial due to the minimal nature of the existing shops (Penrith City Council LEP, 2005).

5.2 Site Analysis

Settlement

The original inhabitants of the Penrith area were the Dharug Aboriginal people. The European settlement in the area dates back to from the early 1800s when the first land grants were made. The area remained relatively uncultivated till the 1940s when the Penrith and Hawkesbury area experienced growth. Significant population growth occurred in the 1950s and the location of large factories in the area spurred residential growth around the Great Western Highway and railway lines. The area continues to grow with the release of land for urban development. Most of the land development occurred in newly created suburbs of St Clair, Cranebrook and Erskine Park, however the fringe areas, such as Llandilo still remain...
largely rural. Llandilo originally formed part of Samuel Terry’s grant of 950 acres in 1818. In 1860 the area was sold as the Llandilo estate and was subdivided in 1888. The area was developed as orchard blocks and the name is derived from the Welsh town of Llandilo Fewr. The area is still remnant of the rural settlement with large subdivisions and minimal commercial activity (Penrith City Council website, 2009).

**Social/Community Profile**

The suburb of Llandilo has a population of 1,526 and the ratio of male and female is relatively equal. The majority of the population is Australian born, 1,149 or 75%, with a small proportion born overseas, 375 or 25%. The main non-English speaking communities in this area are Chinese and Maltese and were one of first settlers in the area (see Figure 31). The majority of this population speak English well, 144, and 47 do not speak English at all. The area is all separate low density housing and has 395 families living in the suburb. Approximately 230 households have an income more than $1000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 2006).

![Figure 31: Country of Birth (top 10) for Llandilo’s population](source: ABS, 2009)

**Open Space and Recreation**

There is only one park in Llandilo named McGarrity’s Hill. The area was land owned by the McGarrity family who left the area for the local council in 1969 (Penrith City Council website, 2009).
Traffic and Transport

Street names in Llandilo were given numbers as their names, such as First and Fifth Avenue, when the area was first subdivided in 1888 (Penrith City Council website, 2009). Arterial roads include Seventh Avenue because the local town centre is located mid way through and Ninth Avenue because Xaviar College is located towards the end of the road. The traffic is minimal and is usually subject to people living in the area. The closest train station is Penrith located in the City centre and a private bus company, Westbus Pty Ltd, operates in the area.

Carparking

There is no designated car parking in the area as residents will park on the side of the road and in private properties.

Business Profile

The local town centre consists of IGA express, Llandilo cafe, Local Bottle Shop and a Post Office. The town centre also includes Llandilo Hall, St David’s church, Llandilo Public School and Llandilo Bush Fire Brigade, as illustrated in the images below.

![Figure 32: Llandilo Town Centre](image1.jpg)

Source: Jamleouii, 2009

![Figure 33: St David’s Church adjacent to Llandilo Hall](image2.jpg)

Source: Jamleouii, 2009
5.3 Llandilo Multicultural Footprints

**Background**

Nepean Migrant Access (NMA) is an independent, not for profit organisation governed by a management Committee and funded by the Federal and State Governments. NMA addresses the needs of CALD communities in the Penrith and Hawkesbury LGA. The organisation runs projects that aim to eliminate barriers faced by CALD rural communities with low English language proficiency, minimal support networks and social, economic and health implications that disadvantage the communities. Such projects include hosting Harmony Day, Oral History projects, information sessions on farming, Centrelink payments, aging and disability services and English support programs, (NMA website, 2009). These programs allow the NMA to work with CALD rural communities to help facilitate their settlement process and help them reach equality of opportunity, participation and improved quality of life, “The demographics of Llandilo include large numbers of Maltese and Chinese people who have been in the area 20 years or more and are mostly farmers. Despite this long history of settlement there are few activities or projects targeting these communities and they live isolated from mainstream services and programs, especially the Chinese farmers. However they have made a significant cultural and economic contribution to the area through their farming activities and local architectural designs” (Cardona, 2009).

The Maltese and Chinese communities living in Llandilo are dynamic communities that are proud of their heritage. They are communities that are in constant transformation and are continually negotiating identity within Australia. Llandilo Multicultural Footprints is a project that aimed at bringing together the CALD communities of Llandilo together by making a mosaic to reflect their local presence and cultural heritage. The ‘Footprints’ project is located outside Llandilo Hall, pictured in Figure 34, and consists of two benches and a table decorated by a mosaic artwork illustrating the Maltese landscape and Chinese symbols. The project was conducted between February and June 2008.
Objectives

The purpose of the project is to develop the grounds around Llandilo Hall to reflect the presence and the contribution of the Maltese and Chinese residents in the area. Given that the Maltese and Chinese represent the two main CALD groups in the area and that the Llandilo Hall is the key meeting place for these groups, the project aimed at developing the area outside the hall to reflect the community’s presence and contribution to the cultural, economic and artistic life of the area.

Process and Stakeholder Involvement

The project had many partnerships with key stakeholders in the Penrith and Hawkesbury area. The stakeholders included: Penrith City Council, Sydney West Area Health Service, Penrith Women’s Health Centre and Aged Care Assessment Team, TRI Community Exchange, Department of Primary Industries and the Maltese Welfare Association.

Through workshops held by the NMA with CALD rural communities in the Penrith and Hawkesbury region between 2001 and 2005 the Llandilo Maltese and Chinese community was specifically targeted as one suffering social isolation and lack of community interaction due to language barriers and large distances between neighbours and support and key services (Cardona, 2009). The workshop facilitator, Dr. Beatriz Cardona, placed a grant application to the Magnetic Places Community Cultural Grants Program at Penrith City Council for funding to create a mosaic artwork outside Llandilo Hall. The application explained that the hall was used by two cultural groups, Maltese and Chinese, however the two communities never interacted. The artwork will provide an opportunity for the local community to come together to work in a collaborative process to create an artwork that reflected their heritage and culture. The application was successful in obtaining $5000 of funding and the Maltese and Chinese community was invited to be part of the art work process (Cardona, 2009).

The project involved three workshops to create the mosaic art works:

Day 1

The first day consisted mainly of designing the area adjacent to Llandilo Hall. The group of Chinese and local neighbours decided to create a small seating area of two benches and a wall with a circle shaped area on the floor. The circle would be used for the Chinese community’s mosaic and the wall of the bench would be used for the Maltese community mosaic. The
Chinese community decided they would use the word ‘Harmony’ in the centre of their design and the word ‘Lucky’ on either side in Chinese. The Maltese community decided to spell ‘Malta’ on either side of their artwork on the wall in English. Both communities decided that two cherry trees should be planted on either side of the wall to represent the local farms. Between day one and day two the landscape gardener cut out a concrete circle in the designated area, built the wall and two benches, and stuck plain mosaic tiles for the community to paint in the chosen areas and planted two cherry trees (Cardona, 2009).

Day 2

The second day was about designing the mosaic. Both communities changed their initial artwork designs to ensure they reflected the communities accurately. The Chinese community agreed on two dragons between their chosen words rather than a fish and lotus and the Maltese community designed a Maltese landscape to represent their homeland rather than cultural symbols and the Maltese flag. Both communities chose the colours they want to paint their mosaic tiles (Cardona, 2009).
Day 3

The final day involved the communities working together to make the mosaics and painting the bench seating around them. The Maltese community had to make alterations to the bench as it was too high and represented a gravestone to the Chinese community, which is offensive in their culture. A BBQ was held by the locals and became a family cultural day for the rural community of Llandilo.

Project Outcomes

The outcome of the project was three fold: provided a meeting place for the local community to share, created an artwork that represented the Maltese and Chinese communities in Llandilo and reflected their heritage, provided an opportunity for the two communities to meet and interact.
Chapter Five – Llandilo Multicultural Footprints

Project Success

The project marked a significant milestone in the Llandilo community. The project focused on creating and enhancing community development through cultural promotion and represented an important step towards social cohesion and community harmony, “many members have expressed their pride in this mural and in the message it sends to the rest of the community” (Cardona, 2009). The project proves that this CALD community wants to work in maintaining and acknowledging their heritage in Australia showing their cultural pride and warranting wider community acceptance. Cardona says “working in partnership with the Chinese farmers generated a great deal of interest in knowing about each other’s farming activities and produce. Many of the Maltese residents were unaware of Chinese farmers living nearby. Meeting them and working together on the project created bonds between both communities” (2009). This proves that the project was successful in eliminating social isolation and creating community cohesion where people got to know each other and interact with people they usually wouldn’t approach.

The Llandilo Multicultural Footprints was selected by the NSW Community Arts in 2009 as an example of best CCD practice. And it has been showcased internationally to inspire local planners and cultural workers. Dr. Beatriz Cardona explains that the success of the project was partly due to its ability to forge strong partnerships with support networks and key services, “the partnerships provided key resources, skills and expertise to build the capacity to deliver the project….the CALD communities involved are responsible for the development, outcome and success of the ‘Footprints’ project” (2009). The project can be considered successful in breaking down language barriers and illustrating the importance of community relationships in building sustainable communities.
5.4 Connections with people as manifested in place

The ‘Footprints’ project is a perfect example of how place-making strategies can turn a commonly used space into a place of cultural significance for a community. The rural community of Llandilo had a culturally diverse community experiencing social isolation and disconnect from the mainstream community due to language barriers and communication difficulties but it was the place-making intervention that provided an opportunity to create cultural engagement and community interaction. The community building exercise is the most important component of the ‘Footprints’ project because the project acted as a way of facilitating collaboration between the two communities and the community outcomes created.

The mosaic mural of the Maltese landscape and the Chinese cultural symbols recognises the local community and gives them a visual recognition of their presence in the area. The ‘Footprints’ project illustrates the fluid nature of ‘place’ and the need for individuals to make connections and develop a sense of continuity in the area they live. Development of spaces where people can interact and discuss common aspects of their life, such as farming techniques and rural lifestyles, provides a place that is significant to them and an area to strengthen their ability to access information and resources. The place-making intervention has been successful in facilitating a sustainable community in Llandilo.

5.5 Chapter Summary

Llandilo Multicultural Footprints is a project that aimed at bringing together the CALD communities of Llandilo together by making a mosaic to reflect their local presence and cultural heritage. The ‘Footprints’ project is located outside Llandilo Hall and consists of two benches and a table decorated by a mosaic artwork illustrating the Maltese landscape and Chinese symbols. The community building exercise is the most important component of the ‘Footprints’ project because the project acted as a way of facilitating collaboration between the two communities and the community outcomes created.
6.0 Introduction

Over time local public space can become derelict and abandoned if neglected and not maintained. Areas with minimal attention can be havens for illicit and criminal activity. When disused public space is located in residential areas it creates a feeling of apprehension and threat. This will deter people from spending time outside in the public domain and will contribute to social isolation and an overall unhealthy community, especially for people suffering language barriers and cultural resistance. The following chapter will focus on Nelson Park, Fairfield in Western Sydney. The chapter will analyse the areas profile surrounding Nelson Park and examine the upgrade of the park and it’s incorporation of cultural expression of the Samoan community within the park upgrade.

6.1 Nelson Park, Fairfield

Location

Nelson Park is located in the heart of Fairfield and is under the jurisdiction of Fairfield City Council. The park is located in Nelson Street and surrounded by Sackville Street and Hardy Street. Fairfield is a suburb located in the South West of Sydney, approximately 32 kilometres from Sydney’s CBD and located off the Hume Highway. (Fairfield City Council website, 2009).

Figure 31: Nelson Street, Fairfield Location Map
Source: Whereis.com website, 2009
Land Use

Fairfield ranges from densely populated suburban and commercial districts to rural properties. Nelson Park is surrounded by residential development and Nelson Street is predominately medium density ranging from townhouses, duplexes and walk-up apartment buildings. Adjacent to the park is the Fairfield Tongan Congregation.

6.2 Site Analysis

Settlement

Settlement of the area dates back to the original inhabitants known as the Cabrogal tribe, in which the name Cabramatta is derived from. The first land grants in the area were made in 1791 and the first township was in Smithfield. The first railway line that went through Fairfield was established in 1856. The “Township of Fairfield” was the first commercial district in the area supporting the timber industry. In 1948 large amounts of land were developed for migrants by the NSW Housing Commission due to migrant influxes. Migrants of British and European backgrounds established their homes and businesses in Fairfield, followed by a number of refugees from Indochina (Fairfield City Council website, 2009).
Social/Community Profile

Fairfield has a population of 15,429. The majority of the population is born overseas, 60.6%, and currently the largest number of migrants came from Iraq, 17.8%, followed by Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Italy, see figure below. “Fairfield City Council is the most ethnically diverse local government area in Australia with residents coming from 130 countries….70 different languages are spoken at home and only a third of residents speak English at home” (Berryman and Finch, 2000; 14). The largest proportion of people born overseas come from a non-English speaking background, 58.2%, and 32.4% do not speak English well or not at all, “many people that settle within the Fairfield LGA have arrived in Australia as refugees, or have been admitted as migrants under the family reunion program. Their backgrounds are sometimes traumatic backgrounds, their education fragmentary or disrupted, and their skills frequently unmarketable in their new country” (Berryman and Finch, 2000; 76-7). Majority of the population speaks Arabic or Assyrian at home, 13.7% and 13.3% respectively, followed by Vietnamese, 9.2%, and Spanish, 5.5%. The majority of the population are Catholic, 35.4%, followed by Buddhism, another form of Christianity and Islam and there has been an increase in all religions since 2001 except for the Orthodox denomination. (ABS Census, 2006)

![Figure 47: Country of Birth (top 10) for Fairfield’s population](Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing (Enumerated))

The majority of people live in separate housing, 42.1%, 28.9% live in medium density dwellings and 19.7% in high density, reflected in the images below. A high proportion of the population earned a low income of less than $400 per week, 56.1%, and 5.8% earned a high
income of over $1000 per week. Fairfield City Council was ranked the first on the Socio-
Economic Index for Areas of Disadvantage (SEIFA) within the LGA (ABS, 2006). The
majority of the population’s lack of proficiency in English has contributed to high
unemployment levels and due to the affordability of housing in the area Fairfield is an
attractive place for migrants to live (Berryman and Finch, 2000).

Figures 48 and 49: Medium density dwellings in Nelson Street
Source: Jamleoui, 2009

Open Space

Other than Nelson Park other major parks in the locality include Fairfield Park, Makepeace
Oval & Athletic Field.

Traffic and Transport

Fairfield is accessible by car, train and bus. The area can be accessed through the M5, M4,
Westlink M7, Hume Highway, Cumberland Highway. Fairfield has a train station, private
buses that operate within the area and T-Way provides a bus connection between Liverpool
and Parramatta, via Fairfield (Fairfield City Council website, 2009).

Carparking

Carparking within the Fairfield locality is unrestricted on-street parking and parking within
private parking.
6.3 Nelson Park Upgrade

Background

‘Celebrating Diversity’ is the slogan that Fairfield City Council uses to promote the diverse cultural groups living in the locality. The major priority of the council is to manage the differences between the diverse populations and the government agenda. The success of the council depends on “successful cross-cultural negotiation” and sensitively managing cultural divide (Thompson, et al, 2003; 4). Louise McKenzie is the landscape architect involved with the strategic planning and construction of open space within the Fairfield LGA. McKenzie worked closely with community groups and external stakeholders to upgrade Nelson Park through the interdisciplinary exchanges of community art and landscape design.

Fairfield Council’s Park Improvement Program is set over a 13 year term with initiatives to improve 130 parks within the LGA with a $13 million budget. The works included in the program include: providing recreational opportunities for the local community, both passive and active, tree planting, bush regeneration, creek environmental works, trimming overgrown shrubs, restoring pathways, creating visibility and a more safer environment, improving playgrounds, circulation pathways, providing shade structures and artworks from local artists (Fairfield City Council website, 2009).

Nelson Park was one of the designated parks to be upgraded within the Improvement Program. Nelson Park was recognised as one of the parks that was underused in the locality because it was generally recognised as unsafe by parents and children wanting to use the park, “it was generally realised that few parents liked using the local park due to poor security and the use of these areas by local youth and the socially dysfunctional” (Randolph, 2006). The park was viewed as an abandoned paddock during the day and subject to behavioural problems at night. This led to the abandonment of the park by local families and impacted the way people could interact in the public domain (McKenzie, 2009). When the residents were surveyed about the concerns and improvements of Nelson Park they quoted “the place needs fixed rubbish bins to encourage users to place their rubbish in the bins instead of just tossing in the park” and “drug addicts occupy the park at night” emphasising the unsafe environment drug users created making the park difficult to enjoy (Nelson Park Survey, 1996).
Fairfield Council made it one of their priority actions to restore the park to provide locals the opportunity to interact with each other in the public domain without feeling apprehensive or insecure. The Council allocated a $60,000 budget to upgrade the park by providing new seating, playground equipment, fencing and rubbish bins and alleviate the concerns of the community, including: rubbish, drug use, needles, car access, vandalism and gangs. Through McKenzie’s work as the Council’s landscape designer and constant consultation and liaising with the Parks Design Team an element of community art was ‘weaved’ in to the upgrade to provide a component of the local community.

**Objectives**

The Parks Improvement Program “aims to provide unique, exciting and accessible environments for play, recreation and social interaction, promote community ownership and pride and achieve a sustainable balance between recreational use and the natural environment” (Fairfield City Council website, 2009).

**Process and Stakeholder Involvement**

**Origin of the idea**

- In 2001 Louise McKenzie, Council’s Landscape Design Officer received an invitation from Neil Rogers, member of Council’s Indigenous Flora Park group, to attend the Casula Powerhouse Weaving Garden meetings. At this meeting McKenzie met Keren Ruki, Maori weaving artist. Ruki raised the opportunity of establishing a weaving garden in Fairfield City LGA to plant Flax, a common plant used by the Maori and Islander communities to weave baskets, clothing, mats, nets and other common items.
(Soanes, et al, as cited in Oxford Dictionary, 2009). Ruki currently sourced her flax from the foreshore near Tamarama Beach but the area was cited as a bush regeneration zone and the flax was to be removed. McKenzie explored potential weaving garden locations that would be appropriate for a flax garden. The garden required a well-defined park away from bush regeneration. Through consultation with the Parks Design Team, Ruki and local Pacific Islander Groups including Fairfield Immigrant Women’s Health Centre and the Fairfield Tongan Group Nelson Park in Nelson Street, Fairfield was selected as the most appropriate site (McKenzie, 2009).

**Consultation, Design and Construction Process**

- In March 2002 the Artists brief for Nelson Park and Bareena Park was prepared and expressions of interest were sent out to artists to incorporate community culture within the park upgrade. Henryk Topolnicki and Philippa Johnson, trading as ‘Art.is.an.Option’ were selected as Project Artists in April 2002. Topolnicki and Johnson liaised with Ruki to discuss weaving patterns and developed ideas for expressing weaving through metal. A sketch design plan was prepared and Art.is.an Option held community consultation session with the local community and distributed a survey to local households (McKenzie, 2009).

- In May 2002 the design team held a pre-design meeting to discuss constraints and opportunities associated with the design and maintenance issues. A Park Open Day was held in Nelson park during which residents were surveyed and asked to comment on the sketch plan. This consultation identified artwork opportunities within fencing, seating and bollards (McKenzie, 2009).

- In March 2003 a redesign of the original concept was completed to accommodate half a basketball court (McKenzie, 2009).

- In April 2003 invitations to quote Nelson Park upgrade was sent out to Landscape contractors and the artists’ sketches were completed (McKenzie, 2009).

- In May 2003 the final designs from Art.is.an Option were completed (McKenzie, 2009).

- In June 2003 engagement of Landscape contractors was complete (McKenzie, 2009).
• In September 2003 landscape construction was completed (McKenzie, 2009).

Media

• In June/August 2004 Arts and Culture Update magazine wrote an article on the community arts aspect of the Nelson Park upgrade.

• In July 2004 City Life magazine also wrote an article on the park upgrade.

Weaving Event to Launch Nelson Park

• A weaving event to launch the opening of the park was organised on 25 September, 2004. Consultation for the event was conducted with: Eman Sharobeen, Director Fairfield Immigrant Women’s Health Centre, Immigrant Women’s Health Centre, Fairfield, Lizzie Stevens and Fairfield Maori Women’s Group, Mahana Mu and Fairfield Samoan Women’s Group (McKenzie, 2009).

• The launch event included: Egyptian Weaving opportunities, Samoan Weaving Display and a performance from the Fairfield Tongan Congregation group, traditional dances including: Capahaka by Merrylands High School students, information stall on Council Services, information on Pacific Wave and a sausage sizzle with fruit and drinks. The event acknowledged the indigenous people of the land as the traditional owners. Ruki also sourced flax species suitable for weaving from a Maori gardener at Mt Tomah Botanic Garden and a ceremony of planting the flax was held in the park with associated traditions conducted by Te Ruinga Haeta, a Maori Elder. Weaving demonstrations were held by Ruki and the community participated in the digging, planting and watering of the plants (McKenzie, 2009).

Figure 52: Samoan Women weaving flax
Source: Fairfield City Council website, 2009

Figure 53: Traditional ceremony and dancing
Source: Fairfield City Council website, 2009
Project Outcomes

The Nelson Park upgrade included an element of community art that represented the local Samoan community groups. The fencing, bollards and seating were designed to represent the weaving of flax as a traditional material used in clothing and everyday items through a metal weave. The metal weave provides a subtle community artwork throughout the park design to represent the Samoan community that use flax from the park.
Project Success

The project is considered a success by McKenzie, Parks Design Team and Fairfield Council because the park has received a revamp that has attracted locals back to the park. The park has been cleared of all the rubbish and deterred drug users and youth that previously occupied the site. The park is now used by local children and their parents and the new play equipment and basketball court have attracted school children in the locality.

The flax plants still bring the Islander communities to the park and has raised the profile of weaving within their community. An exhibition of Samoan and Maori weaving is held at Fairfield Museum and Stein Gallery which was developed through the park upgrade process and consultation with the Women’s Groups. Also Nelson Park was visited by Blacktown City Council who is interested in setting up a weaving garden in the Blacktown area. The group included representatives from emerging African communities, Blacktown Council Arts Officers, local Health Workers and Police Liaison Officers.

6.4 Connections with people as manifested in place

In this case study the process of community and artist integration is different to that of Greenacre and Llandilo’s community artwork projects. McKenzie has selected Nelson Park as the most appropriate place for planting flax and incorporated the community artwork in the design of the upgrade not as a specific cultural project. The intent of the artwork differs from the other case studies in that the community involvement in the creation of the concept was
varied or and were not part of the implementation of the artworks. McKenzie and the design team have incorporated the artwork in the functional objects of the park and focused on representing one particular community due to their ‘natural’ connection to the park. McKenzie and Fairfield Council have focused on the need for an accessible and safe public domain due to the lack of private external space and comfortable and welcoming areas for the large proportion of migrants living in the locality. Creating a public space for the whole community to use is seen as imperative to alleviating social isolation caused by cultural resistance, lack of common language and communication with migrants from other countries and territorial boundaries as reflected within the demographic profile.

The park is not recognisable as a culturally defined park or marked with cultural symbols to stereotype the park. The weaving metal design in the park furniture provides a subtle element of community artwork complimenting the everyday Australian park design with standard play equipment, concrete paths and landscaping. The inclusion of metal weaving reflects the Samoan community and adds cultural identity to Nelson Park, “often the only indication that there might be a special relationship between each of these parks and its users is given in the inclusion of community artwork; often a mosaic, mural or sculpture. This artwork plays a key role in establishing a relationship between park and community. Developed from residents’ memories and anecdotes, and from the drawings done by local children at the Open Day, the artwork both nurtures and manifests a bond between community and place” (Thompson et al, 2003).

McKenzie has taken the opportunity to emphasise the image of the community and illustrating symbols of importance to activate the park in a positive way. McKenzie uses a balance of the urban environment and social community aspect to achieve this, indicating that planting sets out the design of the park and is often much harder to change over time. However as the community grows and changes community art can become outdated and irrelevant in representing future community’s and thus portraying art within benches and other street furniture is more easily replaceable over time (McKenzie, 2003).

McKenzie states that cultural development begins with the community art project but really is stimulated through the park Open Day. The Open Day celebrating and showcasing the artwork is just as imperative as the Park upgrade and consisted of music, dance and festivity that attracted the community and brought them together for a mutual purpose; to interact with their neighbours and find out what’s going on in their local neighbourhood. ‘Celebrating
Diversity’ is the key motto for Fairfield Council and Nelson Park has achieved the perfect example of this. The park upgrade has built upon the experiences of the community and changed their perspective of their local neighbourhood as an intimidating and neglected park attracting troubled youth to a family friendly local park and the community artwork has created a subtle richness to Fairfield whilst still achieving the economic, social and environmental goals of the park upgrade project.

6.5 Chapter Summary

Nelson Park was one of the designated parks to be upgraded within the Improvement Program. The park was viewed as an abandoned paddock during the day and subject to behavioural problems at night. This led to the abandonment of the park by local families and impacted the way people could interact in the public domain. The fencing, bollards and seating were designed to represent the weaving of flax. This provided a subtle community artwork throughout the park design to represent the Samoan community that use flax from the park. The upgrade provided an opportunity to emphasise the image of the community, illustrating symbols of importance to activate the park in a positive way.
7.0 Introduction

The settlement patterns of migrant communities are continuing to spread across Western Sydney and are changing the face of local established neighbourhoods the use of our existing public domain. The following chapter will summarise the position of the thesis and provide recommendations and strategies for local governments to incorporate within their local planning, with a specific focus on community art as a place-making strategy for culturally diverse communities.

7.1 Meaning of Place

Place is a space that we have an intrinsic and emotional awareness for because of particular memories, feelings and images we experience in that space. *Topophilia* is a person’s attachment or relationship to place and this influences a person’s ‘sense of place’. Where a person lives is heavily reliant on their happiness because of their opportunity to interact with other people and feel welcome and comfortable in their local spaces. As migrants move to Sydney different cultures are becoming more evident in our local spaces and how we respond to these changes will affect the way communities communicate with each other. For migrants their sense of place is questioned and their feelings of comfort and security are reduced because of their reluctances to interact with the wider communities in which they live. The creation and promotion of public spaces, as neutral and universal environments, are a powerful opportunity to generate cultural engagement, community interaction and eliminate neighbourhood hostility within a community. Benefits of social inclusion and the breakdown of cultural resistance and territorial boundaries can be generated from CCD projects such as community art. Promoting community art through relevant place-making strategies that reflect a community’s local identity encourages people to care for their local neighbourhood and feel a sense of ownership and pride for their local spaces.

The direction is to create a vision where people are forced to engage with other community members and provide an opportunity to establish new relationships with their neighbours in their own community. It is through CCD projects that residents can reflect on their personal impact on the vision and outcome of the project and realise what kind of force they can have to change the community. (Born, 2006). CCD projects allow people to see results thorough tangible and permanent outcomes so people can say ‘wow that looks great maybe next time we can be involved in a project like that’. The more that’s produced that people can touch and
visualise the more people want to be part of the creation and ownership process (Skeenar, 2009).

Promoting community building can work to bring together people of diverse backgrounds and provide a tangible cultural landscape that reflects the changing nature of established neighbourhoods. The community building exercise is just as imperative as the community art outcome. The processes of design, creation and implementation where all local stakeholders can take part provides an opportunity for community interaction and cultural exchange where planners can work with the community to understand underlying community issues and concerns. These processes will allow Planners to make more objective and informed local planning decisions that can benefit communities at a social, environmental and economic level. Planners will be able to recognise the common goals and aspirations of a community and build sustainable relationships to inform planning processes. Thus the connection between culture and planning becomes clear and culture can be used as an effective planning mechanism.

When local government or any other funding agency take part in community art or other CCD projects it needs to be understood that they are investing in cultural capital that will only provide an intangible return of a stronger and resilient emerging neighbourhood. CCD is important in instigating the shift in local planning to focus on community and Council collaboration and creating a process of communicating and addressing local issues and concerns through the promotion of community interaction. Breaking down territorial barriers and cultural resistance needs to become a priority so people become comfortable and secure in where they live and promote a healthy and sustainable environment.

7.2 Recommendations

Throughout my research I have reflected on the notion of place-making and CCD projects and the benefits provided to the communities examined in the chosen community art case studies. Together with my research and an interest in cultural and social planning I have considered possible recommendations for local communities, local government, facilitators, artists and any other stakeholders that would take part in community art or other CCD projects to stimulate public spaces and encourage cultural exchange within established neighbourhoods. My recommendations and strategies are:
• Local governments need to regularly identify the current social, political and economic concerns and influences of a community and recognise what needs to be changed to allow communities to grow and prosper. This can be achieved through a ‘bottom up’ process of community collaboration.

• Councils need to focus on the changing demographics of communities and align local plans and strategies to focus on implementing collaborative processes.

• Council needs to develop methods of sustainable communication and relationship building for local communities through place-making intervention strategies.

• Place-making strategies should always begin with local observation. The power of observation can allow planners to recognise what is important for local people.

• As CCD becomes an emerging stream within the Planning discipline facilitators need to have a role in educating the community and Council’s about the benefits of community art within a locality and the benefits of the community building exercise used to create the arts projects. This could be achieved through tool kits to help boost the awareness of CCD projects.

• Facilitators and artists need to encourage diverse views to come from the community and provide opportunities of cultural exchange by meeting their own neighbours.

• CCD projects need to focus on network building between other resident and community groups to encourage the breakdown of territorial barriers that are formed informally within localities.

• CCD needs to become a priority for local government business through permanent and annual funding they can encourage CCD principles to help establish a sense of place and pride for locals.

• Facilitators and furthermore local government need to recognise that neighbourhoods are full of people with underutilised skills and including them in local projects can eliminate the ideas of simple citizen participation and create community empowerment. Local government needs to focus on the skills of the community and provide an asset-based approach to local projects.
• Local communities need to shift their idea of local government as the provider of spaces within the LGA and share the responsibility of creating great ‘places’. This can be achieved through inclusive participation and centralised decision-making.

• Local government needs to eliminate bureaucratic ‘red tape’ and provide projects like community art to delegate responsibilities to the community and provide them with a sense of empowerment through the creation of their own spaces.

• Local revitalisation plans need to be broken down into manageable ‘chunks’ to encourage the local community to get involved and focus on the positive attributes of their area rather than the negative impacts and inconvenience caused by local upgrades.

• The community cannot partner with a government divided by departments. There needs to be a whole-of-government approach to place-making and a holistic community focus.

• Community art projects should not be created in isolation from other Council redevelopment plans, but an interdisciplinary approach should become common practice to include cultural planning.

7.3 Chapter Summary

Promoting community art through relevant place-making strategies that reflect a community’s local identity encourages people to care for their local neighbourhood and feel a sense of ownership and pride for their local spaces. Recommendations and strategies have been provided to complement the emerging phenomenon of CCD projects within the Planning discipline.
Chapter Eight - Final Thoughts

8.0 Introduction

The following chapter will review the thesis statement, explain the limitations of my research, provide possibilities of future research and finalise the thesis with concluding remarks.

8.1 Review of Thesis Statement

The thesis explains the nature and emergence of Cultural planning and the need and wants of useful public space within communities subject to greater social change and disconnect from one another.

The thesis has provided a focus on community art as a form of place-making for culturally diverse communities through the support of three case studies of successful public spaces through the use of community art and effective place-making strategies that illustrate a community’s collaborative story or message. The case studies provided a background to the project and described the strategies used in creating spaces that supports the ideas, values and messages of a specific community.

The thesis aims to has thoroughly demonstrated the importance of place-making for culturally diverse communities through community art with examples of culturally diverse Western Sydney communities and provided strategies and recommendations for the community and local government to embrace CCD projects.

8.2 Limitations of the Research

The research provided a focus on successful community art projects used to stimulate cultural exchange and community interaction only to address social issues of social isolation or fractured community life. It is essential to note that the research is limited in that it has only focused on Western Sydney communities and not all established communities suffer from fractured community life. Furthermore there could be community art projects with varying scales of intent and participation across Sydney that have not benefited from CCD projects such as the ones discussed.
8.3 Future Research

Future research options could include:

- Other CCD projects such as community gardens or historical projects,
- A focus on other localities such public housing areas or ghettos, and
- Focus on specific migrant communities or purely Australian born communities struggling with community cultural development.

8.4 Concluding Remarks

Place-making is powerful because it comes from the real need and concerns of real communities. Place-making processes are about feeling the emotions and senses a community feels and improving a space so as to reflect the cultural identity of the local community. Place-making will become an integrated part of the planning discipline in the near future because it works at provided successful spaces at a small scale and encourages different local stakeholders to work in collaboration to achieve locally relevant and meaningful projects. These are the projects that communities and local government can be proud of and can resonate to other local communities wanting to do achieve the same thing. The breakdown of local territories can encourage community interaction and cultural exchange and the work of CCD projects like community art can provide a tangible cultural landscape locals can identify with.
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Community Art – A Form of Place-Making for Culturally Diverse Communities

ABSTRACT

As settlement patterns of migrant communities spread the pre-existing concept of activities and the form of a place are questioned. Different cultures are changing the face of established neighbourhoods which can be welcomed by various degrees of acceptance or resistance by local communities, local government and planners. The creation and promotion of public space is a powerful opportunity to generate cultural engagement, community interaction and eliminate neighbourhood hostility within a community. The role of creating culturally influenced public spaces is to alleviate isolation and the fracturing of community life by bringing together people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

This thesis is an investigation of the creation of place through community art. The research will focus on the design and implementation of community art projects which allow local people to express their culture and local stories through a collaborative process with other local stakeholders. The thesis investigates three case studies: Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program, Llandilo Multicultural Footprints and Nelson Park Upgrade, Fairfield. All three projects illustrate the ways in which communities can come together to improve their local neighbourhood, creatively address local issues and eliminate cultural barriers through the promotion of public space. Community art projects allow local people to take pride in where they live, create a sense of place and provide a level of ownership which empowers them to care for and maintain their local area.
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Chapter One

Introduction
Chapter Two

Cultural Planning
Meeting place

A meeting place is one of many important areas for our people where tribes meet on a journey ‘walkabout’. After a ceremony these places would also be used for our dance that is called the ‘corroboree’.

In my tribe women are not allowed to do this dance or they will be cursed with bad luck.

The curved designs on the left of this wall represent our elders sitting down, the lines are our rivers or running water, the circle is the watering hole. In the centre are people dancing around fire.

Local artist Noeline Holten with Jamie Eastwood
Chapter Four
Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program
Chapter Five

Llandilo Multicultural Footprints
Chapter Six

Nelson Park Upgrade
Chapter Seven

The Meaning of Place
Chapter Eight

Final Thoughts